Comptrollers Meet in March for the 2012 NASC Annual Conference
By Brenda Bolander, State Comptroller of Oklahoma and 2011-12 President of NASC

Known as Oklahoma’s favorite son, Will Rogers once said, “A man only learns by two things, one is reading, and the other is association with smarter people.” As president of NASC this year, it has been my privilege to associate with and learn from the state comptrollers and other members of NASACT from around our great nation at an intensified level and with a broader view than ever before. These distinguished leaders are devoted, knowledgeable, and prudent public servants, working to improve the functioning of our state governments.

We have a great opportunity coming up in March to expand both our knowledge and our associations. The NASC annual conference is coming to Oklahoma City, and we are certainly looking forward to hosting this excellent educational and networking event. The conference is being held in the beautiful, historic Skirvin Hotel in the heart of Oklahoma City. The Program Committee, chaired by Richard Eckstrom with Kim Wallin as vice-chair, has assembled a program of significant topics and notable speakers that are sure to generate lively discussions and exchanges of ideas among conference attendees. Most importantly, this conference focuses on the issues facing state comptrollers and fosters the occasion to learn from one another.

To encourage attendance at the 2012 NASC Annual Conference, the NASACT Executive Committee recently extended its travel assistance program. Each state comptroller will be eligible to receive a reimbursement of up to $750 to go toward registration or travel-related costs. The travel assistance funds may be used for the NASC principal or his/her designee to attend the conference. I hope each of the comptrollers can join us for this essential conference in Oklahoma City in just a few weeks.

Since the last NASC conference in 2011, nine new (or interim) comptrollers have been named in their respective states. The NASC Outreach Committee has assigned mentors and provided information about the association and the upcoming conferences. It is my honor to extend a hearty welcome and invitation to join us to these state comptrollers:

- Scot Arehart, Alaska (replacing Kim Garnero, retired)
- Ricky Bejarano, New Mexico (replacing Anthony Armijo, retired)
- Todd Jerue, California (replacing Fred Klass)
- Martin Eckhart, Kansas (replacing Kent Olson)
- Diane Langham, Mississippi (replacing Leila Malatesta, retired)
- Wes Mohling (interim), Nebraska (replacing Michael Keays)
- Stacy Neal, Missouri (replacing Mark Kaiser, retired)
- Joy Sebastian (interim), Oregon (replacing John Radford, retired)
- Dean Seki, Hawaii (replacing Bruce Coppa)

Another important conference coming up is the 2012 Middle Management Conference on April 16-18, in Little Rock, Arkansas. This conference is tailored to address the training needs of middle management staff in the offices of state auditors and state comptrollers. This is a significant conference for our staff to network with others in similar roles across the states and to discuss many pertinent subjects affecting us today.

The NASC Executive Committee members have served admirably this year, providing leadership and support as we

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carry out the roles of the committee. It has been my pleasure to work with each of the following members of the 2011-2012 Executive Committee this year:

- Richard Eckstrom, South Carolina, vice president
- Kim Wallin, Nevada, secretary/treasurer
- Clark Partridge, Arizona, immediate past president
- David McDermott, Colorado
- David Von Moll, Virginia
- John Reidhead, Utah
- Donna Jones, Idaho

In addition to the Executive Committee members, I am grateful to the numerous other comptrollers who not only participate in NASC, but who also contribute their staff time and expertise to participate in our various committees and work groups, develop written responses, provide testimony in public hearings, extend personal contacts to national leaders, perform technical analysis, participate in information sharing groups, and respond quickly to the NASC technical inquiry network. This year several of our members participated in work groups focused on compliance with the President’s Executive Order aimed at streamlining requirements for grants to state and local governments in order to improve program outcomes. The order was issued in February last year, and work groups from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget began their work in March, which culminated in August when the report was issued. In Oklahoma, we established a parallel work group with the state agency federal funds coordinators to a new venture to connect with a different set of financial managers in the agencies and to learn more about the concerns and challenges that our agencies confront in managing the federal funds.

Other activity at the federal level includes a number of legislative changes that affect state comptrollers. Just as the reporting requirements of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act begin to wind down, the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act was introduced; removal of employer-provided cell phones as a taxable item was a welcome relief; and the repeals of the expanded 1099 reporting and the three percent federal withholding on vendor payments were considered victories. Concerted efforts were focused on the successful repeal of the three percent tax withholding, and I am thankful to Kinney Poynter and Cornelia Chebinou and her staff for their robust efforts in this repeal and to the many comptrollers and other state officials who wrote letters, made phone calls and provided testimony over the last six years to bring this to a successful close.

There continues to be a flurry of activity around the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, from pronouncements and other due process materials to the future of the board’s funding. NASC’s Committee on Accounting and Financial Reporting is proactive in responding to these with written comments and oral testimony. NASC’s GASB Statement 54 Work Group provided critical analysis and communication to ready our financial reporting staffs for the new fund balance presentation required for this past year. Several other NASC committees and work groups focus on various elements of comptroller functions. The work these groups perform is vital to improving operations in our offices. All of these activities provide excellent opportunities to share knowledge and expand our associations.

Another quote from Will Rogers that seems to fit the times in which we live is, “Chaotic action is preferable to orderly inaction.” With that I wish to express my appreciation for the level of organization that Kinney Poynter and Kim O’Ryan, NASC program manager, and all the other staff at NASACT bring to our multitude of activities, accomplishing these in a professional and rather orderly manner. This has been a great year.

NASC 2012 Schedule of Events

Tuesday, March 20
- NASC Executive Committee (8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.)
- NASC Committee on Accounting and Financial Reporting (3:00 p.m.)
- NASC Executive Committee (4:00 p.m.)

Wednesday, March 21
- Conference sessions
- Comptroller’s roundtable

Thursday, March 22
- Conference sessions
- Comptroller’s roundtable
- NASC business meeting

Friday, March 23
- Conference sessions
- Comptroller’s roundtable

Travel Assistance
$750 of travel assistance will be made available to state comptrollers or their designees (members in good standing or new state comptrollers) to attend. Reimbursements will be made following the conference.

Call for NASC Resolutions
Resolutions for consideration at the NASC annual conference should be sent to Resolutions Committee Chair John Reidhead (UT) at jreidhead@utah.gov or Kim O’Ryan at koryan@nasact.org. Please send resolutions by Friday, March 2.

Call for NASC Roundtable Topics
NASC will hold three roundtable sessions at the conference, one each day on March 21, 22 and 23. Suggested topics are still being accepted and should be emailed to Kim O’Ryan at koryan@nasact.org by Friday, March 2.
Public Pensions Continue to Gamer Interest on the Hill

Public pension plans continue to be of great interest to lawmakers on Capitol Hill. While the Public Employee Pension Transparency and Accountability Act introduced early in 2011 seems to have made little progress, the issue of the sustainability of public pensions and their effect on state and local government budgets continues to surface, notably in two concerning reports issued over the past several months.

The first report, entitled “States of Bankruptcy Part 1: The Continuing State Pension Crisis,” was put together by Republican staff of the Joint Economic Committee. The report projects that a number of state pension plans will run out of money in just over five years if private accounting standards are utilized.

The report concludes by stating that the state pension crisis is virtually unavoidable and that the federal government’s role in “bearing the burden of irresponsible states” can be mitigated through preempted actions. The report further indicates that there will be future research on the issue. Finally, Congressman Jim DeMint (R-SC) was quoted in the press indicating that the report reveals the need for federal legislation “to force states to use honest accounting, fix their pension debt and protect taxpayers from the mother of all bailouts.”

Another report issued by Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), the ranking member on the Senate Finance Committee, also warns of the growing state and local pension crisis and alludes to the idea that federal intervention is necessary. The report, entitled “State and Local Government Defined Benefit Pension Plans: The Pension Debt Crisis that Threatens America,” not only claims that the public pension crisis is ravaging state budgets, but it goes even further to question the use of defined benefit plans in the public sector. Senator Hatch also issued a press statement, accompanying the release of the report, which states that he will be putting forward ideas to reform public pension programs in a meaningful way that will not leave taxpayers on the hook.

The release of the two reports indicates potential intrusion by the federal government into areas that have been traditionally left to the states. Early last year the issue of bankruptcy protection for states and a series of hearings on public pension plans prompted state and local organizations, including NASACT, to issue a fact sheet on bankruptcy, municipal bonds and public pensions. That fact sheet has been updated and is available at www.nasact.org/washington/downloads/announcements/02_12_Fact_Sheet.pdf.

Unemployment Goes Down, Unemployment Insurance Fraud Rises

As more people come off the unemployment rolls and the country’s unemployment rate continues to drop, those receiving unemployment insurance (UI) benefits should decrease in number as well. However, recent high-profile audits and investigations have uncovered serious levels of fraud being perpetrated by those who have already returned to the workforce. The extent of the fraud came to light this month, as nearly 130 million dollars in overpayments were found to have been paid to those who should not have received them.

Inmates already investigated for a total cost to the state’s Unemployment Insurance Agency was not correctly classifying claimants’ status, resulting in lost fraud-related penalties of between $81-190 million dollars over a three-year period.

Combatting UI fraud has taken on new importance, after the latest DoL report released on January 31, which indicated that nationwide, the improper payment rate for UI is about 11 percent, which amounted to $17 billion in 2010. The report focused on determining if the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) had effective controls over the states’ detection of overpayments of traditional state-funded UI benefits and federally-funded emergency benefits. What the DoL audit found was that the ETA did not measure the effectiveness of improper payment detection activities for the $126 billion in federally-funded emergency benefits, and that states detected only $1.3 billion (19 percent) of the estimated $6.9 billion in detectable overpayments from federally-funded emergency benefits. DoL concluded that:

“The lack of a performance measure for detecting federally-funded emergency benefit overpayments hampered ETA’s ability to monitor state performance. As a result, ETA may be missing opportunities to detect and collect billions of dollars in overpayments of federally-funded emergency benefits.”

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**News From Washington**

**IRS Delays Hearing and Comment Deadline for Governmental Plan Definition**

The Internal Revenue Service has extended the comment period on its Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking concerning the definition of governmental plans. The new comment deadline is June 18, 2012. A public hearing will also be conducted on July 9.

The IRS has become increasingly concerned with some state and political subdivisions that have applied for governmental plan status. Plans that are designated as “governmental plans” under section 414(d) of the Internal Revenue Code are exempt from ERISA Titles I and IV, as well as federal non-discrimination, minimum participation, minimum funding standards, and Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation premiums. Section 414(d) generally defines a governmental plan as:

“...a plan established and maintained for its employees by the government of the United States, by the government of any state or political subdivision thereof, or by any agency or instrumentality of any of the foregoing.”

In determining whether an entity is an agency or instrumentality of a state or a political subdivision of a state, the proposal sets forth a facts and circumstances test, taking into consideration the following factors:

- **The state or political subdivision controls the entity’s governing board or body.**
- **Members of the governing board or body are publicly nominated or elected.**
- **A state (or political subdivision thereof) has fiscal responsibility for the general debts and other liabilities of the entity (including funding responsibility for the employee benefits under the entity’s plans).**
- **The entity’s employees are treated in the same manner as employees of the state (or political subdivision thereof) for purposes other than providing employee benefits (for example, the entity’s employees are granted civil service protection).**
- **In the case of an entity that is not a political subdivision, the entity is delegated the authority to exercise sovereign powers of the state or political subdivision (such as the power of taxation, the power of eminent domain, and the police power).**

Other factors include:

- **The entity’s operations are controlled by a state (or political subdivision thereof).**
- **The entity is directly funded through tax revenues or other public sources.** However, this factor is not satisfied if an entity that is not otherwise an agency or instrumentality is paid from public funds under a contract to provide a governmental service or is funded through grants by the state or federal government.
- **The entity is created by a state government or political subdivision of a state pursuant to a specific enabling statute that prescribes the purposes, powers, and manners in which the entity is to be established and operated.** However, a nonprofit corporation that is incorporated under a state’s general corporation laws is not created under a specific enabling statute.
- **The entity is treated as a governmental entity for federal employment tax or income tax purposes (such as, the authority to issue tax-exempt bonds under section 103[a]) or under other federal laws.**
- **The entity is determined to be an agency or instrumentality of a state (or political subdivision thereof) for purposes of state laws.** For example, the entity is subject to open meetings laws or the requirement to maintain public records that apply only to governmental entities, or the state attorney general represents the entity in court under a state statute that only permits representation of state entities.
- **The entity is determined to be an agency or instrumentality of a state (or political subdivision thereof) by a state or federal court.**
- **A state (or political subdivision thereof) has the ownership interest in the entity and no private interests are involved.**
- **The entity serves a governmental purpose.**

The final definition will be significant for plans and their sponsors, as inclusion of certain remote political subdivision employees could cause plans to be out of status and subject to ERISA and other requirements.

Written comments and an outline of topics for those individuals wishing to testify are due June 18. Specific information on how to submit comments can be found at www.irs.gov/pub/irs-tege/reg_157714_06.pdf.

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**Unemployment Insurance**

States have offered several solutions to address this problem:

- **Illinois:** Garnishing tax returns of people wrongfully collecting unemployment insurance benefits.
- **Louisiana:** A toll-free hotline and a web portal for reporting suspected fraud has been created, making for a simple way for citizens to whistle blow on suspected fraudulent activity.
- **Oregon:** The Investigations Unit performs audits of UI claims each quarter. This audit compares weekly claims for UI against the quarterly wages reported by employers. If the wages reported by an employer appear to overlap weeks claimed without reported earnings, the Investigations Unit conducts an audit.

The full DoL audit from January 2012 can be found at www.oig.dol.gov/public/reports/oa/2012/18-12-001-03-315.pdf.
NASACT Announces Two-Part Webinar Series on Implementing AICPA’s Clarity Project

NASACT, in conjunction with the Association of Government Accountants and the Association of Local Government Auditors, is pleased to announce a two-part webinar series on implementing the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants’ Statement on Auditing Standards No. 122. The first webinar, Clarifying the Clarity Standards: An Overview, will be held on February 29. Part two, Clarifying the Clarity Standards: Group Audits, will be held on May 2.

It has been years in the making, but with the issuance of SAS No. 122, Statements on Auditing Standards: Clarification and Recodification, the AICPA’s Auditing Standards Board completed a major portion of its “Clarity Project.”

SAS No. 122, also known as the “Super SAS,” brings together and codifies 39 clarified SASs that the ASB had finalized, but had not issued, during the past three years. Because the Clarity Project spanned several years, some of the earlier clarified standards needed to be updated to reflect, among other things, amendments to certain SASs and changes in SAS titles, terminology, and formatting that were introduced towards the latter part of the project. In preparation for SAS No. 122, the clarified SASs were reviewed and refined to identify and eliminate inconsistencies and to verify cross-references.

SAS No. 122 also adds a preface to the codification of the statements on auditing standards titled Principles Underlying an Audit Conducted in Accordance With Generally Accepted Auditing Standards. These principles provide a framework that is helpful in understanding and explaining an audit. Further, these principles address the purpose of an audit, the personal responsibilities of the auditor, the auditor’s actions in performing an audit, and auditor reporting.

The February 29 webinar will provide an overview on:

- Which standards changed?
- Which standards are still being worked on?
- How much is different?
- How will the new standards affect my audits?
- What do I need to know now?

This webinar will discuss the answers to those questions and allow you the opportunity to ask your own.

Join Randy Roberts, professional practice director for the Arizona Office of the Auditor General, for this informative two-hour training session. Randy served as a member of the Auditing Standards Board from 2008 through 2010 during the majority of the deliberations of the Clarity Project. He has served, and continues to serve, on various AICPA task forces.

Part 2 of the webinar series will explain the new concept of “group audits” and the impact it will have on auditors of government entities. Instructors for the May 2 webinar will be Mr. Roberts and Jeff Markert, partner, Department of Professional Practice, KPMG.

SAS 122 changes the focus in audits that involve the work of another auditor from “the coverage by each auditor” to “the extent of the involvement of the group engagement partner” (formerly referred to as the “principal auditor”).

The May 2 webinar will provide:

- An overview on planning, testing and reporting considerations for group audits, both as a group auditor and a component auditor.
- A determination as to whether an audit is a group audit.
- A discussion on the appropriate application of auditing and reporting guidance relative to governmental opinion units and multi-location audits.

Throughout the webinar, specific application to government auditors will be provided.

Registration for both webinars is now available on NASACT’s website at www.nasact.org.

Register Today at www.nasact.org!

Feb 29 Clarifying the Clarity Standards: An Overview
2:00 - 3:50 p.m. Eastern Time

May 2 Clarifying the Clarity Standards: Group Audits
2:00 - 3:50 p.m. Eastern Time

CPE (each): Two credits
Cost (each): $249.00 per group (unlimited attendance) or $50 per person
More Info: Visit www.nasact.org/conferences_training/events.cfm

NASACT News – February 2012
New at www.nasact.org

- NASACT’s response to the Federal Register notice on a support fee for the Governmental Accounting Standards Board by the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, or FINRA, at www.nasact.org/nasact/positions/congressional.cfm.

- 2012 Fact Sheet on state and municipal bankruptcy, municipal bonds, and state and local pensions at www.nasact.org/washington/downloads/announcements/02_12_Fact_Sheet.pdf.

- NSAA technical inquiries on the following topics at www.nasact.org/nsaa/technical/index.cfm (members only content):
  - Performance Audits – Using Risk Assessment to Determine Audit Objectives
  - Performance Evaluations
  - Pay Differential for Certifications
  - Teammate Software Licensing

- Observations of the January 24-26, 2012, meeting of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board at www.nasact.org/nasact/positions/GASB.cfm. The meeting observations are linked at the bottom of the page (members only content).

- NSAA’s response letter to the AICPA Auditing Standards Board’s exposure draft of a Proposed Statement on Auditing Standards entitled The Auditor’s Consideration of an Entity’s Ability to Continue as a Going Concern (Redrafted) is posted at www.nasact.org/nsaa/positions/aicpa.cfm.

- A letter from state and local groups urging Congress to reject a proposal to limit municipal tax exemption for high income earners at www.nasact.org/nasact/positions/congressional.cfm.

- A letter from state and local groups urging consistency of the definition of “municipal securities” in the proposed Volcker Rule at www.nasact.org/nasact/positions/congressional.cfm.

NSAA Accepting Award Submissions, Seeks Judges

NSAA is now accepting submissions for the 2012 Excellence in Accountability Awards. Awards will be given in four categories:

1. Performance Audits: Large (2,000 + audit hours)
2. Performance Audits: Small (< than 2,000 audit hours)
3. Forensic Reports (new category in 2012)
4. Special Projects

Submissions are due by 5:00 p.m. Eastern time on Wednesday, February 29. All entries must be submitted electronically. Award winners will be recognized at the NSAA annual conference in June in Madison, Wisconsin.

Info Sharing Spotlight: Transparency

At the next meeting of the NASC Transparency Information Sharing Group (February 28 at 3:00 Eastern time), representatives from Massachusetts will discuss the state’s transparency website. For more info, email Kim O’Ryan at koyran@nasact.org.

Mark Your Calendar: Upcoming Information Sharing Calls

**February**
- NASC Paperless Accounts Payable Information Sharing – February 23
- NASC Transparency Information Sharing – February 28

**April**
- NASC Internal Controls Information Sharing – April 12
- NSAA Human Resources Information Sharing – April 25

**May**
- NASACT Committee on Accounting, Reporting and Auditing – May 1
- NASC State Government Payroll Information Sharing (expanded call, with participation from the IRS) – May 9
- NASC Travel and P-Card Information Sharing (expanded call, with participation from Visa and MasterCard) – May 16

Get Involved!
For information on participating in any of these calls, contact NASACT’s headquarters office at (859) 276-1147.
NASACT Executive Committee to Meet in March

NASACT’s Executive Committee is scheduled to meet on Tuesday, March 20. The meeting will be held in conjunction with the 2012 NASC Annual Conference in Oklahoma City, which will immediately follow on March 21-23. The committee meeting agenda will include the following items:

Reports by NASACT strategic committees

- Training and Professional Development Committee – Co-chairs: Ronald Jones (AL) and Linda Long (WA)
- Committee on Accounting, Reporting, and Auditing – Co-chairs: Auston Johnson (UT) and David McDermott (CO)
- Faster Financial Reporting Work Group – Co-chairs: Walter Kucharski (VA), Clark Partridge (AZ), and Beth Pearce (VT)
- Financial Management and Intergovernmental Affairs Committee (FMIAC) – Chair: Clark Partridge
- Membership Development – Chair: Rebecca Otto (MN)

Reports by NASACT’s administrative committees:

- Personnel – Chair: Ronald Jones (AL)
- Budget – Chair: Calvin McKelvogue (IA)
- Strategic Plan – Chair: Martin Benison (MA)
- Time and Place – Chair: James Lewis (NM)

Reports by task forces and other affiliations:

- FAF Trustee/GASB Board Selection Task Force – Chair: Ronald Jones (AL)
- Government Accounting Standards Board Advisory Council – NASACT representative: Martin Benison (MA)

Reports by NASACT’s secretariats:

- NASC – Brenda Bolander (OK), president of the National Association of State Comptrollers
- NSAA – David Vaudt (IA), president of the National State Auditors Association

If you have items you wish to have brought to the attention of the Executive Committee, call the headquarters office at (859) 276-1147 or the Washington office at (202) 624-5451.
Register Today for the NASACT Middle Management Conference!

April 16-18 • Little Rock, Arkansas

The 2012 NASACT Middle Management Conference is scheduled for April 16-18, in Little Rock, Arkansas. This conference is tailored to address the training needs of middle management staff in the offices of state auditors and state comptrollers.

The conference is being planned by the NSAA Auditor Training Committee, chaired by Glen Fowler (CA), and the NASC Middle Management Committee, chaired by Greg Griffin (GA). Topics will include leadership development, an update on standards from the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, a Yellow Book update, a clarity standards review, effective writing, performance measures, and roundtables devoted to performance audit, training issues and finance topics. An agenda is available at www.nasact.org/conferences_training/events.cfm.

Hotel

The Peabody Hotel, located on the banks of the Arkansas River and in the heart of the bustling River Market District, has been chosen as the conference hotel. A special negotiated rate of $86/night has been offered. The deadline to receive this rate is Thursday, March 16. To book your room, call the Peabody Hotel at (800) 732-2639 and ask for the NASACT Middle Management Conference group rate.

More Information

Questions regarding the 2012 NASACT Middle Management Conference may be addressed to Donna Maloy at dmaloy@nasact.org or (859) 276-1147. Details about the conference, including registration, can be found at www.nasact.org/conferences_training/events.cfm.

Would Your State Like to Host Middle Management 2013?

Hosting NASACT middle management is a great way to bring your staff to the conference without the expense of airfare and hotel. Hosting the conference involves limited assistance in identifying an appropriate conference hotel and support in the form of attendance. Would your office be interested in hosting the conference in April 2013? If so, please contact Sherri Rowland at srowland@nasact.org or Kim O’Ryan at koryan@nasact.org for additional details.

NASACT to Host 31st Annual Tennessee Training Seminars

This April and May will find NASACT participating in the thirty-first annual Tennessee Government Auditing Training Seminars. The seminars represent a long-standing and successful partnership between NASACT and the Tennessee Office of the Comptroller of the Treasury.

Each seminar lasts two days and provides 16 CPE credits; the events are held at four different locations across the state. They are designed specifically to provide enhanced training to government accountability professionals across the state. “The annual Government Auditing Training Seminars, known as ‘the Road Show’ in Tennessee, have proven to be an invaluable tool for keeping government contracted auditors and our own staff informed about changes in auditing and accounting standards and have improved the quality of government audits in our state,” said Richard Norment, assistant to the comptroller.

The 2012 training seminars will feature the following topics:

• A review of emerging issues in governmental accounting and auditing, including developments from Congress, the U.S. Government Accountability Office, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, and the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board.
• A session about the new Investigative Unit of Tennessee’s Department of Audit.
• Case studies of fraud, waste and abuse in a Tennessee public utility district and local governments.
• An overview of state-specific ethics laws and rules.
• A walk-through of the new Clarity Standards from the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.
• An update on activities of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board.
• An update on the 2011 revision of Government Auditing Standards and single audit/A-133 issues.

Could a Training Program Like This One Be Right For Your State?

A program such as the Tennessee Government Audit Training Seminars would be easily adaptable to other states. If you would like to explore the possibility of an annual training program through NASACT to improve the quality of government audits in your state, contact Kinney Poynter at (859) 276-1147 or kpoynter@nasact.org.
NASACT Welcomes New Officials

**Hawaii**

Hawaii Gov. Neal Abercrombie recently appointed Dean H. Seki to serve as state comptroller in Hawaii’s Department of Accounting and General Services.

Mr. Seki, who has worked as a policy and planning analyst in the department since 2002, is taking over for Jan Gouveia, the department’s deputy director, who had been serving as interim comptroller for the state since October.

Mr. Seki’s appointment is subject to Senate confirmation.

**Wyoming**

Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead, Secretary of State Max Maxfield and State Treasurer Joe Meyer recently appointed Jeffrey C. Vogel as the new director of the state’s Department of Audit. He is appointed to serve a six-year term as director; the appointment requires confirmation by the Wyoming Senate. Mr. Vogel has been the head of the Division of Banking in the Department of Audit since 2002.

Mr. Vogel is replacing Michael Geesey, who left the Department of Audit to head the Wyoming Bankers Association. Mr. Vogel has an accounting degree from the University of Wyoming.

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**Plan Now to Attend NASACT2012!**

Join NASACT President Ron Jones and our Washington State hosts for the 2012 NASACT Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, this August 11-15. The NASACT Training and Professional Development Committee recently sent out the conference topics survey – provide your input to ensure that the conference covers topics you want to hear. One lucky survey participant will receive a free conference registration!

**Conference Hotel - Grand Hyatt Seattle**

The Grand Hyatt Seattle is conveniently located in the heart of downtown Seattle – a short walk from the city’s most distinguished boutiques, restaurants, museums and steps away from the Seattle Space Needle, Seattle Waterfront and Pikes Place Market. This year’s conference rate is $169/night plus applicable tax. To reserve your room, call (206) 774-6300 and ask for the NASACT Annual Conference rate.

**Don’t Forget the Travel Assistance Program!**

NASACT principals (or their designees) are eligible to receive up to $1,000 in travel assistance to attend the annual conference. The funds may be used to cover registration or travel costs for all new members or members in good standing. Additionally, all new NASACT principals will be offered complimentary registration to attend.

**Special Activities**

The host state is planning a number of special events for conference participants, including a dinner cruise on Elliott Bay. A guest program will also be offered. More information about the conference will be available soon!
Everyday, more and more distressed municipalities are in the headlines: Jefferson County, Harrisburg, Central Falls, Benton Harbor, just to name a few. And as the spotlight intensifies, state auditors, comptrollers and treasurers are increasingly being called upon to monitor local governments’ fiscal conditions and step in to provide assistance when the stress becomes too strong.

Beneath the surface, experienced municipal turnaround experts know that every distressed community has unique conditions and needs—there are no “one size fits all” solutions.

Learn best practices for identifying, diagnosing, and resolving municipal fiscal crises at The Bond Buyer’s Symposium on Distressed Municipalities, March 27-28 at the Hyatt at the Bellevue in Philadelphia.

This first-of-its-kind event is your opportunity to join together with financial managers, struggling communities, and “success stories”—communities that have emerged from fiscal distress—to discuss what standards are emerging for dealing with these challenges.

The tactics and solutions being pioneered in this market are likely to become standard tools for years to come, and there’s no time to wait: early action and intervention is crucial. Join The Bond Buyer to get to the heart of what states, counties, cities and towns are experiencing in the face of further spending cuts and the stigma of additional borrowing.

NASACT Members to Receive Discounted Rate!

NASACT public sector members will receive an exclusive rate of $45. To register contact Dan Perkins at (212) 803-8483 and reference NASACT. For more information on the event visit www.bondbuyer.com/conferences/distressed.

NAIF Seeks Nominations for David M. Walker Excellence Award

The National Intergovernmental Audit Forum is seeking nominations for the 2012 David M. Walker Excellence in Government Performance and Accountability Award. The NIAF sponsors this award, which recognizes and honors government audit professionals who have made sustained contributions to improve government performance and accountability through their leadership in transforming government organizations. The NIAF will recognize one individual at each level of government service: federal, state and local.

The nomination deadline is April 30, 2012. NIAF Chair, Gene L. Dodaro will present the awards at the 19th Biennial Forum of Government Auditors meeting in Alexandria, Virginia at the end of June. Individuals can obtain information about the award and apply for the award online via the audit forum website at www.auditforum.org.

Questions may be directed to Catherine Myrick at (404) 679-1994 or myrickc@gao.gov or Luis Escalante, Jr. at (214) 777-5693 or escalantel@gao.gov.

Apply for the Innovations in American Government Awards

Applications are now being accepted for the $100,000 Innovations in American Government Award. Offered by the Harvard Kennedy School’s Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, the Innovations Award is heralded as one of the nation’s premier awards for the public sector. It recognizes programs that demonstrate creative and effective government at its best.

This year, the Center’s Innovations Program will also continue to identify and promote promising government efforts and partnerships through the Bright Ideas program.

All units of government—federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial—from all policy areas are eligible to apply for recognition.

The top winner of the Innovations in American Government Award will receive a $100,000 grant to support replication and dissemination activities. Top finalists will also receive monetary grants.

Applications and additional information for both initiatives are available at www.innovationsaward.harvard.edu. Applications are due on March 1, 2012.
NASACT2012 Planning Begins!
By Donna Maloy, Conference Manager

Committee Issues Conference Topics Survey

The NASACT Training and Professional Development Committee is working to develop the program for the 2012 conference scheduled for August 11-15 in Seattle, Washington. The committee wants your input on the program agenda! NASACT members are invited to complete the conference topics survey by visiting https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2012NASACTAnnualTopics. Each respondent will be entered into a drawing to win a free registration to the conference, so fill out the survey today! (The survey is open only to NASACT members.) Watch for more details on the conference in the near future!

Corporate Associates: Sign Up Today!

NASACT corporate partners—contact us today to find out how to join the NASACT Corporate Associates Program! The program offers your company various opportunities for exposure and participation at NASACT’s annual conferences as well as other benefits throughout the year, including a company listing on NASACT’s website. As a corporate associate, you will also receive copies of NASACT’s publications and e-distributions.

Whether your goal is networking, staying informed about state government finance, or participating in one of the premier conferences of the year for state government officials, the corporate associates program will benefit your company. The program has four levels of participation: platinum, gold, silver and bronze.

Benefits associated with these levels vary. To view the complete brochure outlining the benefits and to see which companies are currently members, visit www.nasact.org/nasact/corporate/index.cfm. Questions about the Corporate Associates Program may be directed to Donna Maloy at dmaloy@nasact.org or (859) 276-1147.