



GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
NEWS RELEASE

HOLD FOR RELEASE
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GFOA's 2009 AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNMENT FINANCE

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS--The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) announced the winners of its 2009 Awards for Excellence in Government Finance. The GFOA's most prestigious award recognizes contributions to the practice of government finance exemplifying outstanding financial management. The awards stress practical, documented work that offers leadership to the profession and promotes improved public finance.

This year six awards were given for contributions to the profession of public finance. This year's Awards for Excellence winning entries encompass innovations in areas of accounting, auditing, and financial reporting; economic development and capital planning, e-government and technology; management and service delivery; and pensions and benefits. The winners of the 2009 Awards for Excellence will receive their awards at GFOA's annual conference in Seattle, Washington, at the annual business meeting on Tuesday, June 30.

Toledo City Public Schools, Toledo, Ohio
Financing Our Future—Authentic Community Engagement and Learning around Public School Finance

Category: Accounting, Auditing, and Financial Reporting

This creative project uses materials from the district's CAFR and data on Ohio Public School Finance to explain financial and economic issues to voters and encourage brainstorming solutions for school finance reform. The materials cover authentic community engagement and learning, financial reporting and financial literacy, and understanding community feedback. The process also can be used to engage citizens in the budgeting/reporting process

Contact: Daniel M. Romano, III, Treasurer/CFO, 420 E. Manhattan Blvd., Toledo, OH 43608 (419)729-8370; fax: 419/671-8474; Daniel.romano@tps.org)

City of Savannah, Georgia
Civic Master Plan for the East Riverfront

Category: Economic Development and Capital Planning

This is an example of early involvement and leadership by the financial management team in an economic development project. The city's financial management played a critical role in the civic master planning process, identifying funding for a consultant, and working with private sector to implement the process. As a result of the public/private collaboration coordinated by the city's finance team, the city created a flexible zoning entitlement and helped establish a tax allocation

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district. The finance team was instrumental in securing state and federal funding for part of the city's commitment.

Contact: Christopher P. Morrill, Assistant City Manager—Management and Financial Services, City of Savannah, PO Box 1027, Savannah, GA 31402 (912/651-6420; fax: 912/650-9898; Chris_Morrill@SavannahGa.Gov)

**Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts
Business Intelligence for Government Transparency: Where the Money Goes**

Category: E-Government and Technology

Where the Money Goes Web site offers transaction details for all state agencies and higher education institutions. An intuitive interface and search capability is available to anyone interested in efficient use of tax dollars and seeing how the state's money is being spent. As the data was being compiled, duplication in state contracts was discovered and merged, saving the state \$4.8 million, and an additional \$3.8 million in expected savings was identified.

Contact: Cindy Gray/Heather Hall, Project Management Office Manager/Project Manager, LBJ State Office Bldg., 111 E. 17th St., Austin, TX 78711 (512/463-6970 or 512/463-9248; fax: 512/475-0279; cindy.gray@cpa.state.tx.us or heather.hall@cps.state.tx.us)

**Johnson County, Kansas
Revitalized Purchasing Card Program Leads to Phenomenal Growth**

Category: Management and Service Delivery

A multi-step plan to enhance the performance of the county's purchasing card system increased the number of purchasing card transactions from 14 percent to 72 percent. By educating and training users, implementing new reconciliation software, and working with the vendor bank to develop best practices and maintain strong internal controls, security and accountability were improved. This greatly improved the efficiency of the labor-strapped department from having to deal with a great number of purchase orders and reimbursement checks for small amounts.

Contact: Kevin Hiskey, Deputy Finance Director, 111 S. Cherry St., Suite 2400, Olathe, KS 66061 (913/715-0530; fax: 913/715-0577; Kevin.hiskey@jocogov.org)

**City of Winston-Salem, North Carolina
Master Trust and Investment Pool for OPEB and Pension Benefits**

Category: Pensions and Benefits

The City of Winston-Salem provides easy-to-follow documentation for its Master Trust and Custody arrangement. The concept allows the fiduciary trusts to be set up for multiple benefit programs (pension, separation, post-employment benefits), while still allowing for centralized investment management, cash flow management, and accounting for the benefit programs. A key advantage is that it consolidates reporting for multiple benefit plans while cutting the cost of custody and trust services—hard cash savings that are in addition to the actuarial contribution savings.

Contact: Denise C. Bell, Chief Financial Officer, PO Box 2511, Winston-Salem, NC 27102 (336/747.6900; fax: 336/727.2566; denisb@cityofws.org)

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**North Central Texas Council of Governments / City of Carrollton, Texas
Shared Services for OPEB Actuarial Reporting**

Category: Pensions and Benefits

The purpose of this project was to provide all local governments within Texas access to high-quality, low-cost actuarial valuations, without each government having to write its own request for proposal and go through a selection process. While the primary purpose of the actuarial services is complying with GASB Statements 43 and 45, it also represents an opportunity for governments to improve their retiree health practices, leading to expected savings. The shared services approach providing a uniform process and saving taxpayer money is particularly beneficial to small or rural governments.

Contacts: Monte Mercer, Deputy Executive Director, NCTCOG, 616 Six Flags Dr., PO Box 5888, Arlington, TX 76005 (817/695.9121; fax: 817/640.7806; mmercerc@nctcog.org) and Bob Scott, Chief Financial Officer, City of Carrollton, TX (972/466.3103; Bob.Scott@ci.carrollton.tx.us)

For more information about the GFOA's Awards for Excellence in Government Finance, please visit www.gfoa.org; e-mail AwardsforExcellence@gfoa.org; or call 312/977-9700.

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The Government Finance Officers Association is the major professional association serving the needs of 17,600 appointed and elected local and state-level government officials and other finance practitioners. It provides top-quality publications, training programs, services, and products designed to enhance the skills and performance of those responsible for government finance policy and management. The association is headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, with offices in Washington, D.C.