Auditor-Controller Staff Continue Winning Streak

Each year, the County Auditor’s office produces a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, also known as the CAFR. This annual report is a thorough examination of the County’s financial status, operations and activities.

So good is the department’s work on this report that the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has awarded Monterey County its “Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting” for the ninth consecutive year – this time for the County’s CAFR for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013.

“This award speaks volumes about the proficiency, professionalism, knowledge, accuracy and hard work of the professionals in my office,” says Auditor-
Controller Michael Miller. “Please join me in congratulating my staff on their achievement.”

The GFOA is a nonprofit professional association serving approximately 16,000 government finance professionals. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. The award-winning CAFR is a very important financial document for the County, as it provides assurance to the Nationally Recognized Statistical Ratings Organizations (NRSRO’s) and bond insurers that the County’s financials adequately describe and present its financial position.

The 2012-13 CAFR is available on the website of the Office of the Auditor-Controller.

**Military and Veterans Affairs Department Hosts Statewide Training Conference**

The Monterey County’s Military and Veterans Affairs Office has good news to share. It has been awarded the fall 2015 Training Conference sponsored by the California Association of County Veterans Services Officers (CACVSO). CACVSO is an organization of professional veterans’ advocates which supports local Veterans Service Officers, who play a critical role in the veteran's advocacy system and are often the initial contact in the community for veterans, dependents and survivors.

**Did You Know?**

Last year, Monterey County’s Military and Veterans Affairs Office helped bring nearly $25 million in spendable income to the local economy? That is the amount of benefit awards the office secured for veterans and families through counseling and advocacy services.

These training conferences are held three times a year throughout the state to make it easier for counties to send staff to the closest location. MVAO Management Analyst Wes Morrill says training conferences really help staff in their advocacy role.

“Since the focus of our work is advocating for and assisting veterans in obtaining VA benefits they’ve earned through their military service, the focus is on how we can better serve veterans,” explains Morrill. “Training helps with creativity in our approach, particularly helping veterans who have difficulty discussing their military background to ‘open up’ so we can work together to find what benefits may be applicable to their particular situation.”
Morrill says networking during these sessions is particularly valuable, seeing peers’ successful efforts as well as sharing tips on avoiding unnecessary details in getting claims through the VA claims system.

The conference will be held in Monterey October 12-16, 2015 and 80-100 people are expected to attend. Morrill says the whole MVAO staff will be involved in creating training and handling logistics for the event. All training will be coordinated through MVAO Director George Dixon who leads the training committee for the CACVSO and the California Department of Veterans Affairs. And the work doesn’t end there! Morrill says there are off-site tours to be arranged, attendees will certainly want to see the new 50,000 square foot VA clinic which will be under construction as well as the location of the new Veterans Cemetery.

District 4 Announces Scholarship Winners

Two very happy Fourth District students are getting a scholarship boost as they head to college next year. Supervisor Jane Parker is pleased to announce that Michaela Fredrickson and Hoa Nguyen have been selected as recipients of the 2014 Jane Parker Instigator of Excellence Scholarship. Both will receive a $500 scholarship.

The scholarship program was created to recognize graduating seniors who are instigators of excellence in their community and is open to all students who reside within Monterey County’s 4th District.

Meet this year’s recipients:

Hoa Nguyen is a resident of Marina and a graduating senior at Marina High School. She plans to continue her education at UC Berkeley, pursuing a degree in accounting. Hoa is described as ‘independent, determined, and a diligent student with a strong work ethic and intellectual curiosity.’ Hoa was presented with a ceremonial proclamation May 22nd at the Marina High School Awards Ceremony.
Michaela Fredrickson is a resident of Seaside and a graduating senior at Seaside High School who plans to continue her education at a four year university in the fall. She is described as having ‘a winning combination of competence and compassion, a standout leader, and focused with the ability to blossom in difficulty.’ Michaela received her ceremonial proclamation at the June 5th Seaside City Council meeting.

You can find out more about these outstanding recipients as well as applications for the 2015 Jane Parker Instigator of Excellence Scholarship at www.janeparker.org/scholarship.