

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

LIST OF PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

**GFOA CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR
EXCELLENCE IN FINANCIAL REPORTING**



COMMISSIONERS OF CHATHAM COUNTY

CHATHAM COUNTY COURTHOUSE
124 BULL STREET
P. O. BOX 8161
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31412

<http://www.chathamcounty.org>

(912) 652-7869 VOICE
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PETE LIAKAKIS
Chairman

PRISCILLA D. THOMAS
District 8
Vice Chairman

DEAN KICKLIGHTER
District 7
Chairman Pro Tem

HELEN L. STONE
District 1

JAMES J. HOLMES
District 2

PATRICK SHAY
District 3

PATRICK K. FARRELL
District 4

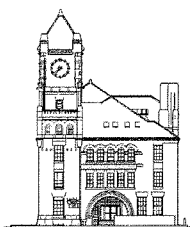
HARRIS ODELL, JR.
District 5

DAVID M. GELLATLY
District 6

R. E. ABOLT
County Manager

R. JONATHAN HART
County Attorney

SYBIL E. TILLMAN
County Clerk



December 10, 2008

The Chairman and Members
Board of County Commissioners
Chatham County, Georgia

The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report of Chatham County, Georgia (County) for the year ended June 30, 2008, is hereby submitted to meet the requirements of local ordinances and state statutes. Those requirements state that the County must annually issue a complete set of financial statements presented in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and audited by an independent firm of certified public accountants.

Responsibility for the accuracy of the data and the completeness and fairness of the presentation, including disclosures, rests with management. Management hereby asserts that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, the financial report is complete and reliable in all material respects. All disclosures necessary to enable the reader to gain an understanding of the County's activities have been included.

The Management's Discussion and Analysis is designed to be an objective and easily readable analysis of the County's financial activities on both a short-term and long-term basis. This letter of transmittal is designed to compliment the MD&A and should be read in conjunction with it. The County's MD&A can be found immediately following the Independent Auditors' Report.

The firm Karp, Ronning & Tindol, CPA, was selected by the Board of County Commissioners to provide independent audit services. The auditor's report on the basic financial statements is included in the Financial Section of this report. In addition to meeting the requirements set forth in state statutes, the County is required to undergo an annual single audit in conformity with the provisions of the federal Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 and the related U.S. Office of Management and Budget's Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organization. The auditor's report on internal controls and compliance with applicable laws and regulations, including the schedule of findings and questioned costs, are found in the Single Audit Report, separate from the CAFR document. The findings enumerated in the Single Audit Report relate to the financial activities and transactions of the period July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2008. No significant deficiencies or material weaknesses were noted for the period. The Single Audit Report can be obtained from the County's Finance Department.

Profile of the Government



The County, incorporated in 1777, is located in the southeastern part of the state and has a land area of 455 square miles with a population of 241,411. The County is empowered to levy a property tax on both real and personal property located within its boundaries.

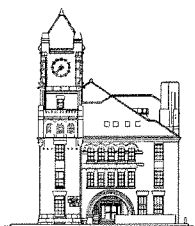
The County has operated under the county-manager form of government since 1985. Policy making and legislative authority are vested in the governing Board of Commissioners consisting of a Chairman and eight Commissioners. The Board's responsibilities include passing ordinances, adopting an annual budget, appointing committees, and hiring the County Manager and the County Attorney. The County Manager is responsible for carrying out the policies and ordinances of the governing county commission, for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the County, and for appointing the heads of the County's departments. The Chairman and County Commissioners are elected for a four-year term with the current term expiring on December 31, 2008. In November 2008 all members of the current Board were re-elected for the next term.

The County provides a full range of services including public safety, health and social services, judicial functions, planning and zoning, parking, sanitation services, recreational activities, cultural events, general administrative services, and the construction and maintenance of highways, streets and infrastructure. Public transportation services are provided by one of the County's component units, Chatham Area Transit. Information on all of the County's component units can be found in Note I A. of the Notes to the Basic Financial Statements.

The County's financial reporting entity incorporates the activities of three component units. The County is considered a primary government. The financial activities of the Chatham Area Transit Authority (CAT) are included as an enterprise fund in the County's financial statements as a part of the primary government. Financial activities of the Chatham County Board of Health and the Live Oak Library System are reported separately from the primary government on the Statement of Net Assets and the Statement of Activities.

Budgetary Controls

The County maintains extensive budgetary controls. The objective of these controls is to ensure compliance with legal provisions embodied in the annual appropriated budget approved by the County Commission and to provide appropriate disclosures to the general public. Activities of the General Fund, special revenue funds and debt service fund are included in the annual appropriated budget. Project-length budgets are prepared for the capital project funds. The level of budgetary control (i.e. the level at which expenditures cannot legally exceed the appropriated amount) is the





department level within each fund. The County also maintains an encumbrance accounting system as one method of maintaining budgetary control. Although encumbrances lapse at year end, outstanding encumbrances are re-appropriated as part of the following year's budget.

Local Economic Condition and Outlook

The region has a varied manufacturing and industrial base which adds to the area's relative economic stability. Major industries with headquarters or divisions located within the County's boundaries or in close proximity include aircraft manufacturing, construction equipment manufacturing, paper products, chemical manufacturers, refrigerated trailers, sugar, and dental equipment.

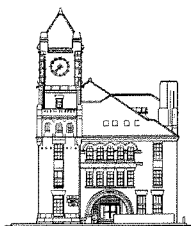
The Port of Savannah is a catalyst for the area's economic growth. The port is the farthest inland port on the East Coast and is the nation's fourth busiest container port. Although the port has a number of private businesses with docking facilities, the Georgia Ports Authority has the largest wharfing facilities for cargo handling. More than 2.3 million TEUs (twenty foot equivalent unit containers) were processed at the GPA's Garden City terminal in fiscal 2007, a 14.5% increase over 2006. Through August 2008, the Port's year-to-year TEU trade was up 9.8% from the prior year. Infrastructure improvements at the port will allow it to triple its capacity over the next few years.

The majority of the area's employment is in the service sector. The County's central business district enjoys stable growth with a variety of stores, specialty shops, hotels and commercial businesses. The combination of convention facilities, a vital historic district and over 2,200 hotel/motel rooms have produced a steady tourism and convention trade for the area. The Savannah Area Convention and Visitors Bureau estimates local hotel occupancy rates through June 2008 to be 64.8% as compared to a State-wide average of 59%.

The County is also home to Hunter Army Airfield. Fort Stewart is located nearby near Hinesville, Georgia, covering over 280,000 acres. The two military installations employ approximately 25,000 military employees and 3,942 civilian employees.

According to the Georgia Department of Labor, the County's June 2008 unemployment rate was 5.4 percent while the state's average rate was 6 percent and the national average was 5.5 percent. The County has an employed labor force of approximately 129,450.

The County's tax digest continued a trend of steady growth in 2008, especially within the real and personal property category. The County's Consolidated 2008 net tax digest grew 7.84% while the unincorporated tax digest grew by 5.27%.



Cash Management Policies and Practices



The County takes full advantage of temporarily idle funds by pooling its cash to ensure the most competitive rates on its investments. Interest income is allocated to the various funds based on their average monthly balances. In 1985 the County began use of the State's Georgia Fund 1 Pool which frequently provides higher rates of return than those available locally. The County also invests in other fiscal instruments as authorized by Georgia statutes including U.S. government and agency instruments. In accordance with State statutes, the County collateralizes its deposit accounts at 110%. At year end, all account balances were collateralized.

Since the major portion of current property tax revenue is not received until December annually, the County has in the past issued tax anticipation notes or utilized interfund loans to provide necessary liquidity to pay expenditures during the year. However, in fiscal 2008, the County did not require the use of short-term debt. The Chatham Area Transit Authority, which operates separately from the County, did utilize a line of credit to meet short-term cash needs. Short-term borrowing and interfund transactions are fully disclosed in the Notes to the Basic Financial Statements.

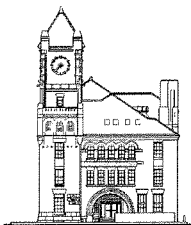
Debt Administration

Chatham County's financial condition is demonstrated by the AI rating of its bonds by Moody's Investor Services and AA from Standard and Poor's Corporation. The county was reviewed by Moody's and Standard and Poor's in October 2005.

The constitutional debt limit for direct general obligation bonds is 10 percent of the assessed value of taxable property within the County. The constitutional debt limitation applies to all general obligation bonds authorized. Additional general obligation bonds may be authorized if approved by a majority of those voting in an election held for that purpose. Capital leases and contractual obligations are presented in Note III. F and G and constitute a debt, general obligation, or a pledge of the faith and credit of the County.

Financial Planning Efforts

The County incorporates financial planning in its decision making and budget processes. The financial policies adopted by the Board in fiscal 2004 continue to be used as a guideline for fiscal management. The County Commissioners, with assistance from staff, utilize a five year forecasting model for the two main operating funds and the enterprise funds. The model shows the impact of current year's decisions in "out" years, including the effect on fund balance, as well as the impact of millage rate / service fee changes. This model is also utilized as recurring revenues or expenditures are considered.





In early 2006 the Board of Commissioners asked each department for their top five goals for five years. The Board then conducted budget workshops to review the goals presented, discuss the County Manager's proposed budget, and formulate Commission goals. The goals were further refined and simplified during the fiscal 2009 budget process. The fiscal 2009 budget was adopted in June 2008.

Each February the Board receives the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program which outlines the County's CIP needs for the next five years. For the past three years the Board has held workshops to discuss the projects and identify funding. The end result of this process will be new facilities or more well-maintained facilities for the County's citizens.

Internal Audit

The internal audit function is the responsibility of the Internal Audit Department. Internal audit is an independent appraisal function that examines and evaluates the activities of the County's various departments, agencies, and officials. The Internal Audit Director reports to the County Manager.

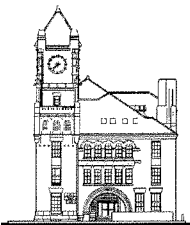
Risk Management Programs

The responsibilities of the County's risk management programs are i) to identify recurring exposures to loss, ii) provide assistance in eliminating or minimizing losses, and iii) control the cost of those exposures by recommending the use of retention, non-insurance transfer, loss prevention, and the purchase of commercial insurance.

The County evaluates claims on a case-by-case basis using all immunities and defenses permitted under the law. Claims are paid from two sources - the Catastrophic Claims Fund and the Risk Management Fund. In order for a claim to become eligible for payment from the Catastrophic Claims Fund, the claim must exceed \$100,000. Expenses of the Risk Management Fund relate to workers compensation claims, insurance premiums or reasonable physical damage and bodily injury claims resulting from the County's operations.

Contributions to the Risk Management Fund are charged to other county funds based upon the County's cost allocation plan. The County's self-funded workers compensation program purchases specific excess insurance with a per claim retention of \$400,000 to protect against catastrophic occurrences.

The net assets of the County's Risk Management Fund and Catastrophic Claims Fund are specifically reserved for payments of directly related liabilities. The Catastrophic Claims Fund had net assets of \$1,738,495 at year end. The County's Risk Management Fund provides centralized accounting for risk management activities. The fund had a net assets balance of \$1,895,297 at year end.





Group health obligations are recorded in the Health Insurance Fund and administered through the ACCG-Group Health Benefits Program. The ACCG-Group Health Benefits Program's Minimum Premium arrangement functions similarly to the former self-insured program; however, this financing mechanism is legally considered a fully insured program. Employees currently have the option of choosing between two health delivery systems: (1) Blue Choice Health Maintenance Organization (HMO); or the (2) Blue Choice Preferred Provider Organization (PPO). Through the ACCG's administrative partner, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia, Inc. and/or Blue Cross Blue Shield Healthcare Plan of Georgia, Inc., all programs have developed contracts with selected health care providers to reduce health care costs.

County contributions to the Health Insurance Fund are based on the provider's projections of future costs allocated based upon the number of eligible full-time employees. Under the provisions of the current ACCG/Blue Cross Blue Shield fully insured program, the County no longer purchases specific and excess insurance coverage.

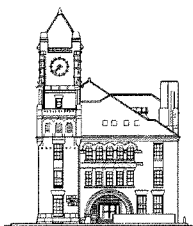
As of June 30, 2008, the net assets of the Health Insurance Fund totalled \$2,522,394, an increase of \$849,017 from the prior year. Claims expenses, including incurred but not reported claims, decreased approximately \$900,000 million over 2007 levels, adjusted for retiree health claims. Effective July 1, 2007, retiree health claims were accounted for in the OPEB Trust Fund.

Pensions and Other Post-Employment Benefits

Chatham County administers a defined benefit pension plan for its employees. The plan is actuarially evaluated each year to determine its funding needs and to ensure its ability to pay retirement benefits to its members. Each year the County has met its annual required contribution under the plan, and the County had a net pension asset of \$233,695 at year end.

Investments of the plan follow State law governing the investment authority for the Fund, as described in Note III. A., Deposits and Investments. As of June 30, 2008, the net assets of the plan were \$114,724,554. Subsequent to the end of the fiscal year, the financial markets entered into a period of unusual turbulence. The deteriorating economy and financial markets have deflated investment values. This has resulted in a decline in the Pension Fund's market value of \$22.5 million through October 31, 2008.

In response to GASB Statement 45 Accounting and Financial Reporting by Employers for Postemployment Benefits other than Pensions, during fiscal 2008 the County established a separate trust fund to account for its retiree health care and life insurance costs. Transactions related to the pre-funding of OPEB benefits as well as pay-as-you-go claims expenses of \$4,070,125 have been recorded in the OPEB Trust





Fund. For fiscal 2008, the County made contributions totalling 81.6% of its Annual OPEB Cost, leaving a Net OPEB Obligation, or annual unfunded portion, of \$1,791,876. The County is reviewing various methods to further manage the liability including the use of Medicare Advantage plans.

Awards & Acknowledgments

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the County for its comprehensive annual financial report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2007. This was the twenty-fourth consecutive year that the County has received this prestigious award. In order to be awarded a Certificate of Achievement, the County must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual financial report that satisfies both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal requirements.

A Certificate of Achievement is valid for a period of one year only. The County believes that the 2008 comprehensive annual financial report continues to meet the program's requirements, and is submitting the report to the GFOA to determine its eligibility for another certificate. In addition, the County also received the GFOA's Award for Distinguished Budget presentation for its Adopted Annual Budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008. The County's budget document was judged proficient in several categories including policy documentation, financial planning and organization.

The Finance Director would like to extend her thanks and appreciation to all parties who have provided their support and encouragement to the Department throughout the past year. This includes the County Manager, the County Board of Commissioners, the Director of Human Resources and Services, and the Fixed Assets Coordinator. In addition thanks and appreciation go out to all members of the Finance Department in some way involved in the audit process. The hard work and dedication of Finance Staff is reflected each year in the final report document and in any subsequent awards received.

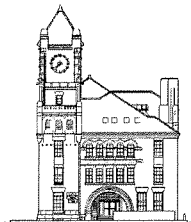
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. E. Abolt".

R. E. Abolt
County Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Linda B. Cramer".

Linda B. Cramer
Finance Director



**CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE**

Finance Director	Linda B. Cramer
Assistant Finance Director	Vacant
Financial Services Manager	Lesha Lanier
Budget Officer	Read Dehaven
Senior Accountant	Roger Deschenes
Senior Accountant	Lynn Stennett
Special Projects Accountant	Vida Hill
Special Projects Accountant	Joyce Prescott
Accountant I	Janie Brooks
Accountant I	Melva Sharpe
Payroll Administrator	Sherri Cadman
Risk Manager	Chuck Voelker
Administrative Assistant	Delores Stokes

**CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA
PURCHASING DEPARTMENT**

Fixed Asset Coordinator	Syrina Mitchell
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**CHATHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

2005-2008

CHAIRMAN	Pete Liakakis
VICE-CHAIRMAN	Dr. Priscilla D. Thomas
CHAIRMAN PRO-TEM	Dean Kicklighter
DISTRICT ONE	Helen L. Stone
DISTRICT TWO	James J. Holmes
DISTRICT THREE	Patrick Shay
DISTRICT FOUR	Patrick K. Farrell
DISTRICT FIVE	Harris Odell, Jr.
DISTRICT SIX	David M. Gellatly
DISTRICT SEVEN	Dean Kicklighter
DISTRICT EIGHT	Dr. Priscilla D. Thomas

**Independent Auditor
Karp, Ronning, & Tindol, P.C.
Certified Public Accountants**

**Russell E. Abolt
County Manager**

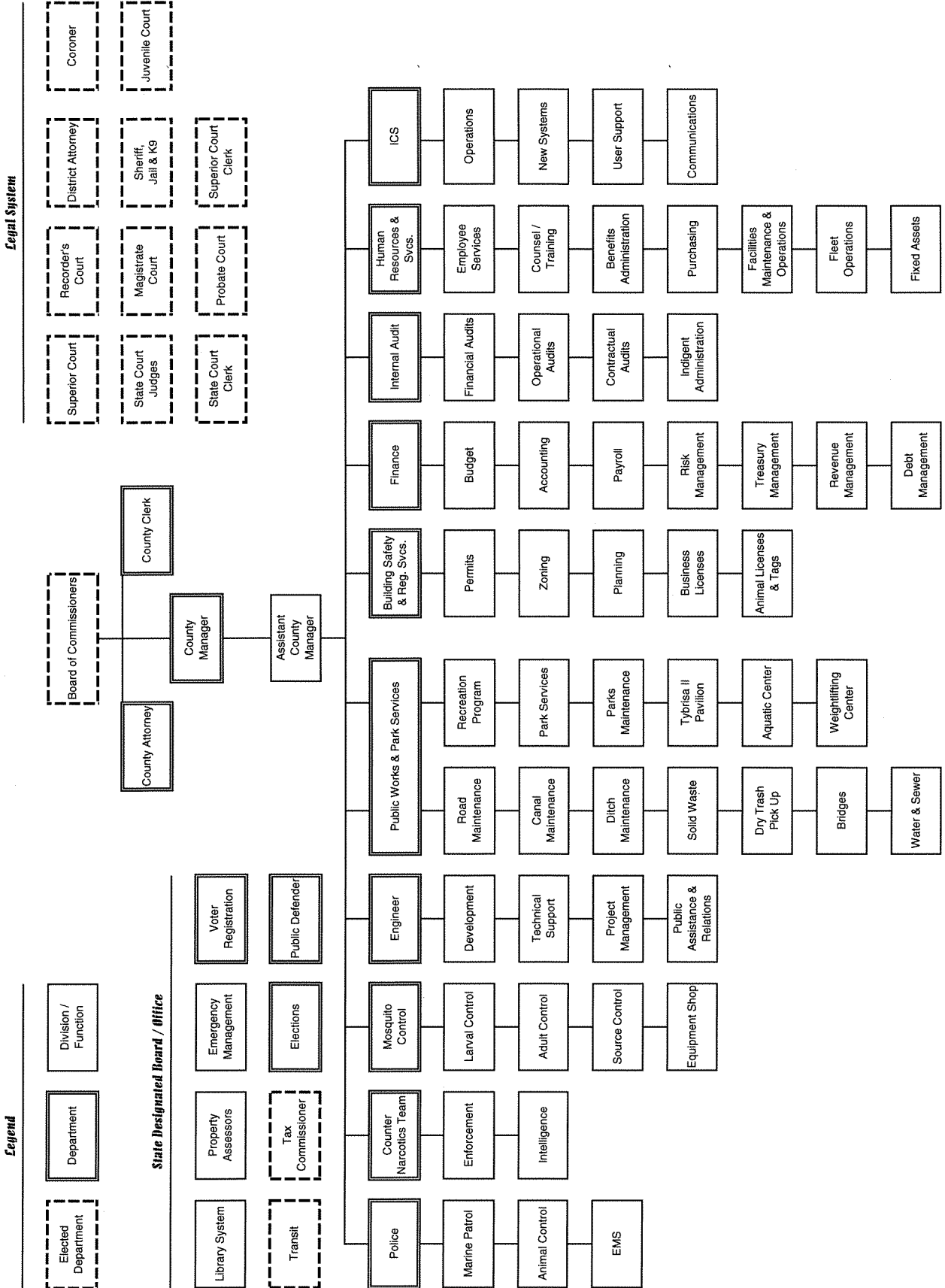
**Patrick C. Monahan
Assistant County Manager**

**R. Jonathan Hart
County Attorney**

**Sybil E. Tillman
Clerk of Commission**

CHATHAM COUNTY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

By Department / Function



Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting

Presented to

Chatham County
Georgia

For its Comprehensive Annual
Financial Report
for the Fiscal Year Ended
June 30, 2007

A Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting is presented by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada to government units and public employee retirement systems whose comprehensive annual financial reports (CAFRs) achieve the highest standards in government accounting and financial reporting.



Oliver S. Cox

President

Jeffrey R. Emery

Executive Director

