Auditor Staff Celebrate 12th Consecutive Financial Award

Auditor Controller’s staff gather to celebrate their continued winning ways.

Each year, the Auditor Controller’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 and for the 12th year in a row, the Auditor-Controller’s Office (ACO) General Accounting Division team has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence Award in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for its 2017 CAFR.
“The Auditor Controller’s Office thanks all our County colleagues for their assistance during the CAFR preparation period with a special thanks to Finance Managers and users,” says Burcu Mousa, Chief Deputy Auditor-Controller, General Accounting Division. “Receiving such a highly sought after award among local governments is exhilarating for the team and provided this team with the much-needed motivation to seek this award again for the CAFR which will be prepared for the fiscal year which ended June 30, 2018.”

The GFOA is a nonprofit professional association serving approximately 16,000 government finance professionals. Reports submitted to the CAFR program are reviewed by selected members of the GFOA professional staff and a Special Review Committee, which comprises individuals with expertise in public sector financial reporting.

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 represent its financial position.

County Executives Honored for Generation of Service

Two of the County’s Department Heads are celebrating milestones in public service this year: 30 years of service here in Monterey County.

Both Treasurer-Tax Collector Mary Zeeb and Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder Steve Vagnini began as employees in the departments they eventually were elected to lead. And while they both have leadership qualities in common, they also both show by example that helping others along the way makes for a fulfilling career.

Steve Vagnini was an employee in the Assessor’s Office and decided to run for the elected position of Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder in 2002. Since then, the office has grown with the times and technology but the leadership has remained the same and that leadership has extended to many County and community efforts.

“When I first came to the County I was just looking for a job and somewhere along the way I came to realize how important the work we do is for our community,” explains Vagnini. “As a Department Head, I have been given the opportunity to work alongside other Department Heads and have
discovered along the way the myriad of services that all our departments deliver to the public. Through this awareness, I have found other outlets to become involved. If County employees could realize that what they do on a daily basis – no matter how mundane it may seem – plays a vital role in a bigger picture and that whatever they may do has a tremendous impact on making our community stronger and better, I believe that they would all take even more pride in their work.”

Vagnini has been a fixture on numerous County committees over the years and outside the office, he has been busy as well. In 2011, he co-founded and serves as President of the Monterey County Chapter of Guitars Not Guns, a nonprofit that provides free guitar lessons and guitars to youth throughout Monterey County.

Mary Zeeb was raised in Salinas but County service was not her first choice. Zeeb diverted from her original goal of working in the banking industry when she took a job at the Treasurer-Tax Collectors Office after college and found it a perfect fit, working her way up to Assistant Treasurer-Tax Collector. In 2010 she ran for the office and became Monterey County’s first female Treasurer-Tax Collector.

Zeeb is not only passionate about her job, but about her community. Over the years she has been active with many local organizations and nonprofit agencies as well as county organizations such as
the Employee Scholarship Program.

“Over 30 years of service and it’s gone by in a heartbeat,” says Zeeb. “When I first started with the Treasurer-Tax Collector’s office, I had no idea I would someday be THE Treasurer. I was very fortunate to have influential people in my life who helped guide my decisions that led me to where I am today. Be it peers, community leaders, or personal friendships, I have always sought to surround myself with individuals that care about what they are doing and making a difference in their community. I encourage everyone to challenge themselves, even just a little bit, and in 30 years, you too may be surprised at what you have accomplished.”

Congratulations Mary and Steve!

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Pets Just Want to Have Fun on Howl-O-Ween

Monterey County Animal Services and the Salinas City Shelter are teaming up once again for a fun and safe way to celebrate Halloween with your pet.

It is the 11th annual Howl-O-Ween Celebration Saturday, October 20th from Noon to 3 p.m. There will be fun at both shelters which are located next door to each other at 144 and 160 Hitchcock Road in Salinas.

This is a pet and family-friendly event.

Check out face painting and the cake walk at the Salinas Animal Shelter and be sure to be on hand by 1 p.m. for the amazing pet costume contest. Do you have a great costume for your pet? Bring it on!

Prizes will be awarded for the scariest, funniest and most creative pet costumes. All dogs must be on leashes and be friendly with other dogs. Cats and other small pets are welcome to compete but need to be in appropriate carriers. Safety first!
Then, take a short walk to Monterey County Animal Services for kid’s activities, crafts and games. Youngsters can earn goodie bags by taking a self-guided scavenger hunt around the shelter.

The real treat of the day is for shelter pets, as both shelters are offering $50 adoption specials, which means this could be the best day ever for one of the many pets waiting for their forever home. Now that would be something to howl about!

You can find out more about Howl-O-Ween and see some of the great pets you can meet at the shelter at the Animal Services Facebook page.