

Message from the Chair



Making a Difference

BY CARL SMITH, CMA, CFM, CPA

I would like to begin this column by wishing everyone a very Happy New Year. I hope all of you had a good holiday season and are now ready for 2006.

With the new year, IMA is beginning to roll out its new brand. By now, many of you may have seen the new tag lines and logos for the Institute. If you haven't, please visit IMA's website at www.imanet.org. The new tag lines are:

**The Institute of Management Accountants...
Advancing the Profession™**

**Certified Management Accountants...
Professionals Driving Business Performance™**

Let's all promote these tag lines and what they mean as well as the benefits of membership in our fine organization.

I recently returned from a two-week trip that included three locations and numerous benefits. The first stop was the 5th Annual Student Conference in Orlando, Fla. More than 400 enthusiastic IMA student members attended this event,

which included a strong professional program along with various social and networking opportunities. The conference was orchestrated by our Student Committee, which is chaired by Dave Eichelberger. The conference chair this year was Dell Ann Janney from Culver-Stockton College in Canton, Missouri. This event is a great member benefit for students and is delivered at minimal cost to them.

I left Orlando for Auckland, New Zealand, where I attended the International Federation of Accountants' (IFAC) Council meeting. This trip was long but well worth it. IMA participates with other world accounting organizations in this prestigious body, and more than 75 country leaders took part in the meeting. The issues they are dealing with are surprisingly similar to many of IMA's issues. How to increase the value of the accounting profession to the public and how accountants can help their organizations in their decision-making processes were

among the topics discussed. IMA is very active in IFAC's Professional Accountants in Business Committee, and Chair-Elect Bill Brower has been our representative the past three years. We are truly gaining the respect of many of these world accounting leaders and will continue to increase our role within IFAC.

The last leg of my travels was to Dallas, Texas, to attend the Chapter/Council Summit of leaders from chapters and councils throughout the country. The purpose of this meeting was to give chapters and councils a voice with key volunteer and staff leaders and for the IMA leaders to gain further knowledge about the programs and initiatives that we might undertake to help chapters and councils reinvigorate themselves. While we didn't leave the meetings with a clear direction, there were a number of issues that were brought up by the local leaders that will be addressed in the near term. In addition, the staff members in attendance—Paul Sharman, Steve Townsend, Scott Weiss, and Kinsey Jenkins—spoke of the IMA initiative to help communities within the organization by developing products and services that will meet their

needs. Some of the communities that come to mind are new professionals, students, women, manufacturing, and CFOs. The point is that we want to begin to address the diverse needs of our members and reach them in a way that adds value.

It has been a hectic time in the IMA, yet it has been rewarding, too. I feel that what I have seen in the past month or so has reenergized my belief that IMA is going in the right direction and will begin to grow.

If you have any comments or observations, please let me know via e-mail at csmith@imanet.org. ■