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National Awards Presented for Excellence in Government Auditing

Winners from Washington, D.C.; Texas, and California

Philadelphia (May 21, 2008) -- Gene L. Dodaro, chairman of the National Intergovernmental Audit Forum (NIAF) and Acting Comptroller General of the United States, presented this year's David M. Walker Excellence in Government Performance and Accountability Awards at the 17th Biennial Forum of Government Auditors in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania today. NIAF, which chose the winners, renamed the award this year in honor of the former Comptroller General, who left the U.S. Government Accountability Office in March to head the newly formed Peter G. Peterson Foundation.

"David Walker's nearly decade-long tenure at GAO was marked by continuous efforts to improve government programs and services and better align them with modern needs to serve the American people. Walker worked with all levels of government to help achieve these goals. The winners today represent this commitment to the best in government service," said Dodaro.

The NIAF award recognizes federal, state, and local auditors for outstanding efforts to transform their own operations, improve overall government efficiency and effectiveness, and hold government entities accountable for results. This year's recipients are Gordon Milbourn, Assistant Inspector General for Audit in the U.S. Postal Service's Office of Inspector General; John Keel, CPA, the Texas state auditor; and Sharon Erickson, city auditor in San Jose California.

- At the Postal Service Inspector General's Office, Milbourn helps oversee the largest federal civilian agency and one of the nation's major employers. Milbourn's office was responsible last year for recommendations that generated \$3.5 billion in financial benefits for the Postal Service. He is also recognized for pioneering innovative techniques, particularly a value proposition approach to auditing, that improved how his office does business.

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- In the Texas state government, Keel encouraged greater use of private auditing firms and built stronger ties between the State Auditor's Office and the internal audit community in Texas. He is also recognized for improving training opportunities available to local and state internal auditors. Among his other accomplishments, Keel headed a key investigation in 2007 that examined problems plaguing the Texas Youth Commission.

- After becoming the Public Auditor for the city of Palo Alto, California, in 2001, Erickson issued a series of hard-hitting and highly-regarded reports on a range of city services, from utilities to the police force to public pensions. Known for her professionalism, collaboration, and tact, Erickson has seen many of her recommendations adopted, even on sensitive subjects. Erickson is now the city auditor in San Jose, California.

Established in 1973, NIAF is an association of audit executives from all levels of government that seeks to address common problems; enhance government performance, transparency, and accountability; and build public trust. The biennial forums bring together audit professionals from across the country to discuss major trends, issues, and challenges facing government auditors. This year's topics include accountability in Iraq reconstruction, the economy's impact on government operations, and new developments in financial management and information technology.

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