



CATAWBA COUNTY

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August 1, 2011

CATAWBA COUNTY FINANCE OFFICE REPORT WINS NATIONAL HONOR

The work of a local government finance department is extremely detailed, precise and can be hard to understand for many citizens. But a finance office is also asked to communicate the use of tax dollars to the public in an easy to understand manner. For the third straight year, Catawba County's Finance Department has been honored by its peers for creating a report which gives highlights of the County's fiscal year in a summary format.

The County's Finance Department is a winner of the Popular Annual Financial Reporting Award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), for its "Annual Financial Highlights" for the fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2010.

"A panel of independent reviewers has completed its review of your Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR)," said Stephen J. Gauthier, Director of the GFOA Technical Services Center, in a letter to Catawba County Finance Director Rodney Miller.

"We are pleased to notify you that your PAFR for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2010, has substantially met the requirements of the PAFR program. In the absence of authoritative standards governing the presentation, these requirements were based on an evaluation of creativity, presentation, understandability, and reader appeal. The report received a weighted average score of 75.00 percent or above from three of the four highest individual reviews."

The GFOA says the Award is presented to local governments that "produce high quality popular annual financial reports specifically designed to be readily accessible and easily understandable to the general public and other interested parties without a background in public finance". Catawba County has won the GFOA's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Program for 29 consecutive years. But that honor is for the County's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, which is very different from the Popular Annual Financial Report.

"Our Comprehensive Annual Financial Report is just as its name suggests, very comprehensive," said Catawba County's Finance Director, Rodney Miller. "It's a document of several hundred pages that reports the County's financial transactions for each fiscal year in a detailed manner. It's a report that may be best understood by financial professionals. The Popular Annual Financial Report is designed to be shorter, and easier to read and understand."



Catawba County Finance Director Rodney Miller (second from right) received the Popular Annual Financial Reporting Award from the Government Finance Officers Association at the August 1, 2011, meeting of the Catawba County Board of Commissioners, from Catawba County Commissioner Randy Isenhower (center). The award was also presented to Internal Auditor Kenneth Maynor (far left) and Assistant Finance Director Jeanne Jarrett (second from left). Joining Commissioner Isenhower were County Commissioners Barbara Beatty (third from left) and Dan Hunsucker (far right).

Catawba County's Popular Annual Financial Report has traditionally been brief, under twenty pages. It makes extensive use of photographs to explain the information and uses a simple style of writing in brief outlines of the County's history, local economy, economic development and areas which receive County funding. An array of charts and graphs are used in a further effort to make the information easier to understand.

"We have won these awards because of the strong support of the Catawba County Board of Commissioners, the dedication of our staff and their desire to achieve this recognition," Miller added. "The Popular Annual Financial Report, in tandem with the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, helps us provide a more transparent service to citizens, insures more people understand the use of County funds and helps the County achieve and maintain an attractive bond rating."

The Government Finance Officers Association is a non-profit professional association serving over 17,000 government finance professionals throughout North America.