



Articles

heraldindependent.com

<a href="#">Home</a>	<a href="#">News</a>	<a href="#">Sports</a>	<a href="#">Obits</a>	<a href="#">Opinion</a>	<a href="#">Local Features</a>	<a href="#">Calendar</a>	<a href="#">Entertainment</a>	<a href="#">Classifieds</a>
----------------------	----------------------	------------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------	-----------------------------

### Subscription Forms

## Comptroller General helps protect your wallet

10 hours ago | 138 views | 0 | 3 |

If you're the person who keeps up with bills and balances your family checkbook, you can definitely relate to the role of a comptroller general.

That's my title, state comptroller general. Many folks in state government simply refer to me as "the CG."

That's a peculiar title, even a little old fashioned. So it's not surprising when I meet people outside state government who ask about the responsibilities of my job and the agency I direct, the Office of Comptroller General.

My equivalent job title at a company in the private sector would be chief financial officer, or CFO. CFOs typically have extensive training and experience in accounting.

I've been a certified public accountant for years, assisting companies and governments as they deal with accounting and financial issues. (Trivia: Somewhat surprisingly, I'm the first certified public accountant to serve as comptroller general in South Carolina.)

As the state's comptroller general, I have several accountants on staff. We monitor the accounting done by state agencies, and we work with them when they have problems or questions. And every day we make sure state government's complex statewide accounting system remains in balance.

Because I work with so much detail, some lightheartedly refer to me as a bean counter. I don't mind saying I am, and I try to excel at it. After all, the beans we count are your tax dollars. So I think you'll agree that our care and precision in the way we operate the state's accounting system is important.

My agency performs many critical functions that include:

- Monitoring spending by state agencies. Every year the General Assembly gives each agency a budget. We compare agency spending to annual budgets as a safeguard against agencies spending more than they were authorized.
- Making thousands of vendor payments each month on behalf of state agencies. Agencies let us know when their bills need paying. Then we review their paperwork and process payments.
- Processing payroll twice a month for about 45,000 state employees.
- Analyzing accounting records and preparing reports to respond to requests from the General Assembly.



Articles

· Compiling South Carolina's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, which supports the state's top AAA credit rating.

· Maintaining the S.C. Fiscal Transparency Website, a project I launched a few years ago to publicly disclose the details of state, local and federal government spending in South Carolina using the Internet (<http://www.cg.sc.gov/fiscaltransparency/Pages/default.aspx>) as a fast, no-cost way of making this important information available to anyone who wants it.

My position is an elected, statewide, constitutional office. As comptroller general, I'm one of five members of the important S.C. Budget and Control Board, which is responsible for state property transactions, major construction projects, and landlord services for state agencies.

But as you can see from the duties of the CG's Office, they're professional in nature and not political. And that's exactly the way I run it – as a professional financial services agency.

This year I served as president of the National Association of State Comptrollers, and last month I invited state comptrollers from all over the country to come to Columbia for our annual meeting.

We had record attendance. One of our highlights was a lunchtime motivational talk by University of South Carolina Athletics Director Ray Tanner, who won back-to-back national college baseball championships while the Gamecock's head baseball coach. He spoke of the importance of caring for teammates, being passionate about work, and truly enjoying it.

Now, these comptrollers came to South Carolina from states representing all parts of the political spectrum. But with us it wasn't about politics. It was about our jobs. It was about our common tasks, about our common challenges and problems, and about common solutions based on ideas we shared freely.

When we got together last month, we were on common ground focusing on the heart of what we as comptrollers do – and that's to serve the citizens of our states daily by delivering the most professional financial services possible.

*Richard Eckstrom, a CPA, is the comptroller general of South Carolina and commander of the S.C. State Guard.*

Share This Article |

#### similar stories

**Converting state government to 'Transparency 2.0'** | 7 days ago


**Investing in your child's education** | 11 days ago

**Incumbent Wilkes states political platform** | 21 days ago

**Councilman urges support of current mayor** | 21 days ago

**Healthcare taking same route as NFL's helmet rule** | 17 days ago

Comments (0)

 Post a Comment