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Save the Date for the 2013 ICE Exchange



Mark your calendar for the first-ever [ICE Exchange](#) and start making your [travel plans](#)!

The [Institute for Credentialing Excellence](#) is thrilled to provide you a forum for networking with industry peers to both share and discover practical insights into the success of national and international credentialing organizations. Join us this November in Florida for a rewarding annual conference program that offers keynote speakers, concurrent sessions, special interest groups, and plenty of networking events to grow your skills as a credentialing professional and situate your organization as an innovator within the credentialing community.

Sponsor and Exhibit at ICE Exchange

Increase your organization's visibility and gain lasting recall when you sponsor or exhibit with ICE. [Access the 2013 prospectus](#), view the current floor plan, and confirm your support of ICE's mission online today!

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The ICE Academy: Certification 101 Online Modules

The [ICE Certification 101 Online Modules](#) are designed as training tools for new certification staff and as an on-boarding tool for volunteer leaders. They provide staff members and volunteers the basic knowledge needed to effectively perform in their respective roles.

This dynamic training tool will allow you to educate your staff and volunteers in the best practices of administering a certification program based on the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) *Standards for Accreditation of Certification Programs*. These on-demand modules include interactive assessments that will allow you to measure how quickly your staff and/or volunteers are grasping the concepts.

The six modules include:

- The Business of Certification

- Program Governance and Operations
- Policies and Procedures
- Psychometric Concepts and Analyses
- Assessment Development and Delivery
- Legal Concepts Related to Credentialing

Purchase of the modules indicates confirmation that you have read and agree to the [Course Subscription Agreement](#). To purchase, please visit the online [ICE Store](#).

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The ICE Academy: Credentialing Marketing for Non-Marketing Professionals

Not a marketing guru? Don't have the budget to hire a full-time marketer or a firm?

Register for ICE Academy's 2013 [Credentialing Marketing for Non-Marketing Professionals](#) course presented by Ragan P. Cohn, CAE of the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants. This eight-week summer course provides the practical information and resources you need to effectively communicate the value of your credentialing program.

Save the Dates:

Full course: June 26 - August 21, 2013

Live webinar dates:

Wednesday, June 26, 2013, 1 p.m. EDT kick-off call
 Wednesday, July 31, 2013, 1 p.m. EDT

Course format:

Offered through a mix of live webinars and self-paced coursework, this blended approach allows you to learn the most in formats that fit your schedule and lifestyle. Enrollment in the course provides you the following:

- Practical templates, resources and on-demand coursework
- An interactive workbook
- Two live coaching webinars, about one hour each: Strategic Marketing Plan Coaching session and Tactical Marketing Plan Coaching session

Upon completing the course, you will be able to:

- Identify what customers value the most about your program
- Develop and execute strategic and tactical marketing plans
- Send the right messages to the right audience
- Measure the success of your efforts

Message from the Chair

Change is Ever-Present

By Denise Fandel, CAE, MBA



What can happen in an industry in 10 years? Quite a bit if you look at the past years of credentialing industry history. In 2003, the predominant forms of communication were phone, fax and email. Facebook and Twitter were still ideas. With the exception of the largest certification programs, most organizations were administering tests via paper and pencil, and the revision to the *APA Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (APA Standards) was four years old.

Recertification and continuing competence decisions were based on an accumulation of continuing education activities. The ICE/NCCA Standards revisions were published and one year from implementation.

Fast-forward to 2013: The number, speed and breadth of change continue:

- The APA Standards, under review since 2009, will publish revisions this year.
- The majority of test sponsors, both large and small, now administer computer-based exams.
- More item development is occurring in an online environment.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act was modified in 2008.
- Recertification and continuing competence discussions that prompted Standards 19 and 20 of the current ICE/NCCA Standards continue with the public demanding research data to support the efficacy of continuing competence requirements.

As a leader in the credentialing industry, the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) is committed to quality. The ICE/ NCCA *Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs* outline the standards on which a quality certification program is organized.

Recognizing there have been changes in the credentialing industry, the ICE Board announced the Standards Revision Project. A diverse group of more than 65 individuals submitted applications earlier this year to be considered for the main and working committees. The Main Committee, through the leadership of Paul Grace and Larry Fabrey, has begun the process of a thorough and careful review of the current standards.

The committees will be meeting throughout the summer and will ultimately recommend revisions to those standards where the practice of credentialing necessitates a change to the current standard. The recommendations should be available for public comment later this year. It is anticipated the final document will be published in 2014.

What will the credentialing industry look like in 2023? How will the advent of Google Glass, tablets and iPads change the way we do things? How will the concerns we have today about data security be changed by the fast-paced changes in the industries in which we work? Will there be discussions about

continuing education, or will the standard expectation of consumers and employers be recertification by examination?

The only thing certain is change is coming. Self-reflection is an important part of quality improvement, whether it is a certificant or certification program. The Standards Revision Project is critical to the continued growth and relevance of the credentialing industry. I am excited for the future of our industry! I would love to hear from you. Email me at ICEchair@credentialingexcellence.org.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise Fandel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small blue mark above the "d" in "Fandel".

Denise Fandel, CAE, MBA
ICE Chair

Digital 'Badges' Emerge as Part of Credentialing's Future By Frank Catalano

For decades, the most common form of a professional or educational credential has been a paper certificate (or, for college graduates of a certain age, a "sheepskin" on parchment).

That is changing in a small, but significant, way. Due to a combination of foundation activity and technology standards, the digital "badge" is rapidly gaining traction as a new representation of a credential and has the potential to become an accepted marker of knowledge, skills or achievements — up to, and including, professional credentials.

What Is a Badge?

The concept is familiar to anyone who ever was in Scouting: learn or demonstrate a skill, earn a merit badge. But rather than requiring cloth and a needle to apply, these new badges are purely digital — and, if developed to adhere to new standards, can be shared so that the evidence behind the claim the badge represents travels with it.

Older versions of digital badges were static graphic images. Perhaps they were earned by a kid as a gold star equivalent for solving a puzzle on a website (or, more impressively to hardened nerds, for besting aliens or trolls in a massively multiplayer online game). Perhaps they were awarded by a corporate training department to employees who sat through an online course on internal procedures.

But these old-style badges lacked two characteristics that would give them real value to both the earners and the people they hoped to impress: a verifiable way for others to view how and why they'd been earned, and a method to share and display the badges outside of the closed systems that issued them. Not to mention that purely image-based digital badges have less value than a Scouting merit badge to the outside world because they're so easy to duplicate — no special cloth needed, just cut and paste.

The new breed of digital badges have critical features image-only badges lack: metadata that's embedded inside to tie the badge back to how it was earned and who issued it, and a technical standard that makes it easy for those who have earned badges to share them.

What's an "Open" Badge?

Open badges are being driven by the nonprofit Mozilla Foundation, the organization best known for the Firefox web browser and which has a stated mission of promoting "openness, innovation and participation on the Internet."

Much of the early push for open badges was as a way to formally recognize informal learning that happens outside of an educational institution, or to capture smaller "chunks" of education or skills that don't neatly fit into the current model of transcripts or degrees.

But in the process of working toward the first official, version 1.0 release of the Open Badge Infrastructure, it became clear that an open digital badge offers a mechanism for representing skills, knowledge and accomplishments that can go far beyond hobbyists or self-motivated learners.

In 2011, the MacArthur Foundation held a [competition](#) to fund promising uses of open badges. Among the winners with familiar names (NASA for robotics, Disney-Pixar for wilderness explorers, and — not surprisingly — the Girl Scouts) were others that have direct workplace application: BadgeWorks for Vets, which gives returning military personnel badges to represent military skills and training for use in applying for civilian jobs, and the National Manufacturing Badge System, which under the aegis of the National Association of Manufacturers and its nonprofit Manufacturing Institute recognizes advanced manufacturing skills obtained by both students and workers.

And under the Open Badge Infrastructure, these badge-shaped credentials — even those earned from different issuing organizations — can be combined, or stacked, and easily shared on job sites, social networks and directly with employers.

How Can This be Used for Credentialing?

An open badge that is rigorous enough in how it's developed, in how the skills or knowledge are assessed, and in the criteria for awarding can represent a "micro-credential" — essentially, a more granular form of credential that is *displayed* as an open badge. Yet it represents a type of credential because:

1. It is not earned until certain criteria are met that are established by the micro-credential sponsor or issuer: demonstrated skills, assessed knowledge or achieved experience;
2. No matter how or where it is displayed by the earner, the micro-credential image carries metadata inside of it that, when clicked, securely validates for what it was issued, by whom and when it expires and might require recertification; and,
3. Validation of the individual micro-credential remains under the control of the issuer (even as the earner can freely share or stack credentials), so unlike a static digital image or a paper certificate, a micro-credential can expire, be revoked or renewed.

So how might a digital micro-credential work for a credential sponsor? In several ways (none of which are mutually exclusive):

- As a precursor to a traditional credential. Certain parts of a full credential might be "chunked" to provide a scaffolded starting point for a larger credential; a separate, less intense entry-level micro-credential could be developed; or an assessment-based micro-credential, created by a credible third party, might satisfy some eligibility requirements for an established credential.
- As an add-on to a traditional credential. These micro-credentials could reflect additional specialized skills that go beyond the full credential, or reflect accomplishment of a certain number of continuing education units or ongoing professional study.
- As a standalone, new credential, reflecting an area of practice that is either emerging or not broad enough to merit a traditional credential, yet is in demand by employers or the market.

In all of these cases, the digital micro-credential has the benefit of being purely digital (no paper handling) and is based on an open standard that no one vendor controls.

How Are They Being Used Today?

Right now, there's a lot of awareness of how open, digital badges can be used for motivation (to reward volunteers and participation) and as markers of accomplishments (to award achieved learning objectives). But current uses tend to be low-stakes — and outside of employment.

That's changing as open badges start to be used to represent workplace credentials. Employers see the need: Interviews with Fortune 500 senior hiring managers conducted by an independent research firm for [Professional Examination Service](#) (which was the first professional credentialing services organization to announce plans to design and issue Mozilla-compliant digital micro-credentials) found that companies thought digital micro-credentials would help them narrow a pool of applicants to those most likely to have the specific skills for a position. And the promise of one-click, secure verification of a claimed micro-credential — including confirmation of whether the credential was current — eased a pain point for many employers.

In addition to the ProExam Digital Micro-Credential, the Mozilla Foundation's [Open Badges website](#) identifies several other organizations planning a workforce presence. In addition to the Manufacturing Institute and [Badges for Vets](#), [Workforce.io](#) is creating badges for entry-level workplace skills and [Coderbits](#) issues more than 500 badges for software developers and designers

What Are the Challenges?

The obvious challenge to micro-credentials represented as open badges is that they're new. Not everyone has thought through both the implications and the applications.

Perhaps less obvious, but equally important:

- Employers have to value digital micro-credentials as much as they do traditional credentials now. (Early research indicates that's likely because they are specific, and are easy to verify.)
- Candidates have to be able to find digital micro-credentials that represent skills, knowledge or accomplishments that are important for them, professionally, and augment traditional credentials.
- Career and social networking websites have to make it simple for earners to display digital micro-credentials (a task Mozilla hopes to ease with its Displayer API for sites, and by not taking a proprietary approach as can happen with a technology driven by one company).

One challenge may be more semantic than technical: psychologically getting over the childhood connotation of the term "badges." That's why some organizations, such as ProExam, have begun calling the workplace versions digital micro-credentials that happen to be displayed as a badge. (Sorry, Scouting.)

What Are the Benefits?

Ultimately, once the barriers are hurdled, digital micro-credentials could have tangible and unique benefits:

- Employers would be able to more quickly identify specific skills they desire in a large candidate pool and more easily verify a claimed credential.
- Candidates could incrementally earn a traditional credential, or reflect post-credentialing achievements, or create their own by combining several micro-credentials.
- Credential sponsors could assess, and issue credentials for, more granular skills or knowledge than they can today in a more cost-effective manner, replacing computer-based or paper testing sites for lower-stakes credentials with Internet-based testing and remote proctoring. And sponsors could monitor the status of issued micro-credentials by building in expiration or recertification dates.

Digital micro-credentials may appear on the surface to be totally new. But embedded in their small size may lie part of the future of credentialing, building in digital bits upon the best practices of the past.

Do you have comments or questions about this article? Log-in to the [ICE Member Community](#) online and join the conversation.



***Frank Catalano** is the chief marketing officer of Professional Examination Service and is a strategist, author and veteran analyst of digital education and consumer technologies. He writes a regular column for the tech news site GeekWire and has been a contributor to the NPR/KQED education site MindShift and the edtech news site EdSurge. He tweets both from [@FrankCatalano](#) and [@ProExam](#).*

Background Checks in the World of Certification

By *Jerald A. Jacobs*

Certification agencies exist, first and foremost, to assist customers/clients/patients, employers, reimbursers and others in assessing proficiency in a field. They serve the public and are therefore quasi-public agencies. Secondly, certification agencies aim to help the certified individual. This is also a worthy cause, but one also addressed by professional societies. What certification agencies do best is setting reasonable standards and criteria for proficiency and then objectively measuring individuals against those standards and criteria. Generally, this can be done scientifically and technically, with valid results. It should be noted as well, though, that there is still a place for potentially more subjective peer-review assessment of certification candidates.

Assessing the legal background, creditworthiness, morality, reputation — grouped best, perhaps, by the term “ethics” — of an individual candidate is always more subjective. A person’s ethics are dependent on a number of factors, such as the mores and customs in the respective field of endeavor, the geographic location and culture, and other variables. Also, relevance is always difficult to determine. For example, is it relevant to know that a candidate for certification in accounting once declared personal bankruptcy?

If background checks are to be done at all, it is probably more practical for them to be performed by a professional society rather than by a certification agency. It also might be best to limit the background check’s effect on, for example, professional society membership rather than on the ability to practice. There are different due process requirements that apply to proficiency assessments versus ethics assessments. This makes it more complicated to do both in one entity or in one process.

Background checks are regularly performed in connection with employment; but the law has not evolved enough to determine what type of background checks would be appropriate in the context of certification. What follows is a summary of various laws regarding background checks and how they may or may not be applicable to certification:

- The Fair Credit Reporting Act places limitations on what creditworthiness checks a third-party company can perform on individuals. Employment, lending, landlord-tenant and commercial transactions can be a basis for a background check agency to conduct this kind of check, but applicability to certification is less clear. If creditworthiness background checks were permitted for certification, it would require seeking authorization and consent from the certification candidate.
- There are various state law prohibitions on consideration of criminal history in the employment context. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has issued guidance on considering criminal background for applicants. ([Click here](#) to read the Pillsbury alert “EEOC Raises the Bar on Employers to Show that Employment Actions Are Job-Related.”) Although applying for a certification program is not the same as applying for employment, certification does provide professional credentials, which may be a gateway to employment. So the same disparate arguments might be lodged against a certification agency based on legal theories of public accommodation or interference with prospective contract rights, as well as under Section 1981, which prohibits racial discrimination in the making of any contract.

Self-help, or “DIY,” background checks, such as in-house checking of social media profiles or Internet searches, are fraught with risks of inconsistent treatment and lack of reliability. Again in the employment context, one candidate might post pictures of a couple of alcohol-heavy parties and leave the impression that there’s a drinking problem, although these may not accurately reflect a usually staid lifestyle, while a candidate who is an alcohol and drug abuser might simply not have much online presence. These kinds of searches also potentially expose an entity to knowledge it would be better off not having, such as information about the candidates’ medical situation, religious or political views, race or ethnicity, family or marital status, etc.

For all of these reasons, we usually recommend against general background checks in the context of professional certification. Some clients have been able to successfully perform them in limited ways for limited purposes, but, by and large, these kinds of screenings seem to be better “housed” within a professional society and its code of ethics enforcement program.



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Conducting Value Proposition Studies to Enhance Credentialing Programs By Patricia Muenzen, M.A.

Why should an individual seek your credential? What will they get out of it? These questions speak to the value proposition for the credential. The value proposition describes, from a customer's (that is, a candidate's) perspective, the benefits they will gain by obtaining your credential. It is a statement of what the credential will deliver to the holder.

The value proposition articulates both the customer "need" that your credential will meet and the reasons why your credential is better than any alternatives. These alternatives include seeking a competing credential (if one exists) or not seeking a credential at all.

In considering whether or not to seek a credential, a candidate performs an internal cost-benefit analysis, considering questions such as:

- How will this credential meet my personal and professional needs and goals?
- Are there competing credentials? Why should I choose this one? What makes it better?
- What other benefits will I get? Will it make me more competitive in the marketplace? Will earning this credential get me a promotion or advance my career?
- What will I have to do to maintain the credential?
- How much does it cost? Do the benefits of earning the credential outweigh the costs?

How well you communicate and deliver on the benefits outlined in your value proposition will factor into the prospective candidate's decision-making process.

Defining the value proposition is commonly done in business markets as part of new product development, but it can be done in the credentialing arena as well. It is a matter of delineating the benefits that your "product" (credential) will bring to the "customer" (candidate). Creating a successful value proposition requires an understanding of what it is that candidates are looking for. This may include a mix of intrinsic benefits (e.g., validation of specialized knowledge base, recognition from peers) and extrinsic benefits (e.g., increased marketability, employer recognition).

Once the value proposition is defined, it can serve as a guide for program development efforts. Program requirements and features can be designed to deliver on the value proposition. Marketing and communications can be developed that resonate with candidate values.

When defining the value proposition for a credential, it is important that your organization not make claims regarding the expected benefits of obtaining the credential that cannot be substantiated. This can result in a disconnect between promised and realized benefits and may negatively impact the credibility and growth of the credentialing program.

A value proposition should not be considered a static description. After launching a credential, it is important to examine whether the credential is delivering benefits as promised. Some indicators that it is time to revisit your value proposition are:

- Confusion regarding your brand
- Industry "buzz kill"
- Mismatch between expected and actual benefits
- Program stagnation

- Competitor market penetration

Revisiting the value proposition by conducting a value proposition study can provide great benefit to credentialing organizations in refining the argument for both obtaining and maintaining the credential. A properly designed and executed value proposition study permits the assessment of how well a credentialing program is meeting the needs of current and future credential holders, employers and other stakeholder groups. In addition, the study data can be used to update the credentialing program to better meet stakeholder needs.

Value proposition studies may involve a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods including surveys, interviews, focus groups and industry scans. The perceptions of numerous stakeholder groups — including candidates, certificants, employers, educators, consumers, and thought leaders — are sought. As members of the credentialing ecosystem, all these stakeholders contribute to the perceived value of a credential. The types of questions that can be posed to these different groups are:

- **Candidates:** What have you heard about the credential? How much would you be willing to pay to obtain the credential?
- **Credential holders:** Which benefits did you expect to receive from becoming certified and which did you actually receive?
- **Non-credentialed practitioners:** Why did you decide not to seek the credential?
- **Employers:** What does having the credential say to you about the candidate’s knowledge, skills and abilities? Do you have preferential hiring for certificants?
- **Educators:** Do you recommend that your students seek the credential? Why or why not?
- **Consumers:** Would you request a credentialed practitioner?
- **Thought leaders:** Do you support this credential?

These are sample questions; the actual questions posed will depend on the claims made regarding expected benefits of the credential.

The answers to these questions will show how well the organization is delivering on its value proposition. To the extent that the data indicate that the credential has not delivered as promised, this may suggest a fine-tuning of the credentialing program itself and/or a review and update of the claims that are put forth regarding benefits of the credential.



Patricia Muenzen, M.A., is the director of research at Professional Examination Service (ProExam), a not-for-profit that provides a full set of assessment and advisory services to organizations and institutions that sponsor and issue credentials. During her 21 years at ProExam, she has provided advisory and research services to credentialing organizations representing a broad range of industries and occupations. She holds degrees in psychology from Brown University and Stony Brook University. Muenzen is currently chairing a task force for the ICE Research and Development Committee.

The Troop Talent Act of 2013
By Jeffrey H. Greenwald, P.E., CAE

The Troop Talent Act (S.700/H.R. 1796) is federal legislation that aims to ease the transition of service members from active duty to the civilian workforce. The bill would improve the alignment of specialty skills acquired in the military with civilian credentials or licenses required for employment following service. The Troop Talent Act will match veterans' skills with growth industries.

The Troop Talent Act is especially important for the future of America's veterans. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported on May 3, 2013, that the unemployment rate for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans was 7.5 percent, mirroring the national unemployment rate for the first time in years. Upon returning home from service, veterans are often burdened with challenges not experienced by civilians, especially finding their place in the professional workforce. The Troop Talent Act would provide information to service members throughout their career in the military to match their experience to civilian credentials. The legislation would establish strict standards for programs that guarantee a credential, in order to prevent credential fraud. Additionally, the Troop Talent Act would expand the current Department of Defense Pilot Program on credentialing to include information technology, so that the skills of service members would be matched to that industry. The Troop Talent Act has been introduced by Senator Tim Kaine (D-Va.) in the Senate and by Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.), and the bill has wide bipartisan support.

The Institute of Hazardous Materials Management (IHMM) supports the intent behind S. 700/H.R. 1796 and looks forward to monitoring the work of the House and Senate to advance the employment prospects of our veterans. In order to achieve this goal, however, military work experience needs to be better understood by all credentialing organizations such as IHMM. In the absence of such recognition, veterans may not meet credential eligibility requirements to be credentialed and, thus, may not be able to find a job in their chosen field.

For example, the Army calls their enlisted jobs MOSs, or Military Occupation Specialties. The Army has around 190 MOSs available for enlisted soldiers. Most civilian licenses and credentials have eligibility requirements that ask for experience relevant to the license or credential. These programs most likely do not have the understanding of what military experience is acceptable to meet the program's eligibility requirements. For example, IHMM offer the Certified Hazardous Materials Practitioner (CHMP) credentials and its work eligibility requirements state "... at least 5 years of relevant experience with responsibilities directly related to the handling of hazardous materials and/or waste in the workplace." The question is: What are the MOSs that pertain to hazardous material storage, movement, packaging, transport, etc.? We believe that the Troop Talent Act should require the development of a system to review civilian credential eligibility requirements so active duty and veterans know their military experience will be eligible to meet civilian credential requirements.

Accrediting organizations are well positioned to support the Troop Talent Act. Veterans need to know that the attributes of accredited credentials demonstrates to potential employer their knowledge and professionalism. Credentials that are accredited through third-party oversight from organizations such as the American National Standards Institute, the Council of Engineering and Scientific Specialty Boards

(CESB), and National Commission for Certifying Agencies drive best practices of personnel. Persons holding accredited credentials, or certificants, demonstrate continued competencies through initial award of a particular credential and by continued competencies through recertification processes. Recertification of credentials drives the market to provide quality professional development activities that meet the certificant's requirement to meet each credential's professional development levels. Accredited credentials also have requirement for proactive surveillance of professionals through adherence to codes of ethics. These are just a few of the attributes associated with accredited credentials. The Troop Talent Act of 2013 needs to recognize that accredited credentials ensure that veterans are investing their time and resources to become professionals in their particular field of practice.

About IHMM

IHMM is an approved accreditation body for personnel certification under ANSI/ISO/IEC 17024, Conformity assessment — General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons. IHMM is also accredited by CESB.

- Two IHMM credentials are accredited under ANSI/ISO/IEC 17024 and CESB:
 - Certified Hazardous Materials Manager (CHMM)
 - Certified Hazardous Materials Practitioner (CHMP)

CHMMs are professionals who have demonstrated, through education, experience and examination, the ability to identify and assess the risks of hazardous materials, mitigate or eliminate those risks, and manage their impact on human health and the environment. CHMPs are professionals experienced in handling hazardous materials in a wide variety of specialties, such as environmental protection, emergency response, safety, transportation, security and cleaning up contaminated sites. Additionally, IHMM is developing the Certified Dangerous Goods Professional (CDGP) credential. CDGP will demonstrate, through experience and examination, that they have the knowledge and skills appropriate for dealing with the transportation and security of hazardous materials/dangerous goods internationally. Detailed information can be provided upon request as well as viewed at www.ihmm.org.



Jeffrey H. Greenwald, P.E., CAE, is executive director of the Institute of Hazardous Materials Management (IHMM) directing programs that provide credentials to hazardous materials management and dangerous goods transport professionals; develops strategies to expand the Institute; represents IHMM to outside agencies, organizations, professionals; fosters relationships with other organizations; and develops relationships, alliances and corporate sponsorships. Greenwald is a registered professional engineer in Virginia. He graduated from the Institute for Organizational Management with a certificate in nonprofit organization management and is a certified association executive (CAE).