I am delighted with the positive feedback recently received during CFMA's Annual Conference & Exhibition in Phoenix, AZ; encouraged by the number of firms committing multiple employees to achieve certification; and optimistic that the ICCIFP's future is bright.

In keeping with tradition, this year’s Annual Conference offered excellent educational sessions, delicious food, and outstanding networking and entertainment! If you’ve never been to CFMA’s Annual Conference, I encourage you to attend to learn about new trends, keep current with industry standards in practice, network with other CFMA members and CCIFPs from across the country, and return to work feeling energized.

I had the pleasure of addressing attendees on the state of the ICCIFP during the Welcome & General Session I on Monday, June 5. When I asked for CCIFPs to stand and be recognized, I was thrilled that close to one-third of the room responded. It shows that CCIFPs are active in CFMA, even though we represent only about 12% of membership. Also at the Conference, I challenged attendees for 100 new applications to become certified, with my ultimate goal of increasing the number of certified CFMA members to 2,000.

As I prefer to speak without a teleprompter or notes, I unintentionally left out my closing point: “Earning your CCIFP designation is the difference between a job in construction financial management and a career.”

While the Institute has made significant progress in improving the process of obtaining certification, our other primary goal of increasing awareness (and improving the value) of the designation is ongoing. What does certification mean for the industry? There are benefits to contractors, service providers, and CCIFPs alike that we’ve mentioned before:

- It serves as third-party verification of the industry’s body of knowledge based on a nationally accredited standard. Certification is a means of prequalifying yourself as a competent CFM and demonstrates you are the right person for the job.
- It keeps talented people in the industry and identifies skilled individuals possessing the knowledge and experience to develop into leadership positions. This is especially critical for future generations of leaders, as professional development and certification are both important to Millennials as they enter the workforce.
- Top-performing companies recognize that properly trained employees often lead to direct, measurable bottom-line results. With today’s ultra-competitive marketplace, ensuring your most valuable assets (your people) are working at an optimal level cannot be overlooked.
- It provides professional credibility to service providers like public accountants and sureties, giving them a competitive advantage over other firms. Stand out to prospective and current clients and show that your firm understands the commitment to ethical, responsible, and transparent financial management.

Certification is a powerful validation of your knowledge and experience that will only become more valuable as the industry evolves. Now more than ever, employers need to be certain that they have the best talent available in advance of key changes to the industry (such as implementation of the new revenue recognition standard). Auditors and sureties will be carefully scrutinizing financials to ensure accurate reporting.

Place yourself – and your company – in the best position possible. Your opportunity to become a CCIFP awaits and it takes only about five minutes to apply. Stand out – become a CCIFP! ■