“The shadow of crisis has passed, and the State of the Union is strong,” said President Obama during his 2015 State of the Union address. It would be nice if the construction industry crisis had truly passed, but some sectors are still stagnant while others are just beginning to experience some sustained growth. “Cautious optimism” seems to be the mood among most construction sectors.

Through these challenging times, CFMs were able to negotiate cash flow challenges, sometimes-contentious banking and surety relationships, and often-difficult personnel decisions. If you were not at the decision-making table before the downturn, you should be now. Your company should already know your abilities; now let the CCIFP designation tell the rest of the world.

**ICCIFP’s Year in Review**

Like the CCIFPs we serve, we wanted to demonstrate our merit according to an external governing set of criteria. This year, the Institute achieved ANSI accreditation of the CCIFP designation. As part of the accreditation process, we formally committed to continual improvement, and we have already advanced in several areas.

I was delighted to see the enthusiasm of our CCIFPs who contributed their skills and ideas to the Institute. This year, the number of applicants for certification increased more than 27% over last year, and the ICCIFP is on the brink of issuing certificate #1,200. While certification continues to appeal to CFMs, those professionals who support CFMs (e.g., CPAs, sureties, and insurance brokers) have shown increased interest as well.

We also completed the implementation of a new examination, thanks in large part to the efforts of Tony Stagliano and Past ICCIFP Chairman Marj Weber. I had the privilege to participate in question writing this year, and my appreciation for the time and commitment from them and their committee grew exponentially.

Our Internal Audit Committee has continued its efforts to complete the approved audit schedule, and its recommendations continue to improve our organization. Our policies and procedures manual has been implemented, thanks to our committee chairs and especially the leadership of two Past ICCIFP Chairmen: Gordon Marshall and Bruce Weir. Our next significant document, our Operations Manual, will be complete by our annual meeting on June 26, 2015 in Chicago.

We also redoubled our efforts to provide new value to our CCIFPs this year. The Strategic Planning Committee met in Baltimore this fall and started the process of focusing the Institute for the next five years. We shifted our marketing to not only making certification appealing to CFMs, but also to those who hire and engage CCIFPs. We will also continue to educate bankers, sureties, risk managers, and attorneys on the value of certification in their business partners.

The thread that runs throughout all the exciting new initiatives this year is the ICCIFP’s relationship with CFMA, the source and resource for all our certified persons. It is through the relationships we form at CFMA, as well as the education and informational opportunities CFMA offers, that we continue to grow as CFMs. I would not have had the opportunities of the past year if not for my membership in CFMA. A highlight of my year was dinner with Steve Tenney and Stuart

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**Thanks to Hayles & Howe**

Ornamental Plasterwork and Scagliola for its continued support of the ICCIFP
Binstock at the Sage Summit 2014. Their leadership is a valuable asset not only to CFMA, but also to the Institute.

**Personal Acknowledgements**

One of the top benefits of being an Institute officer is the opportunity to work with talented and insightful CFMs. At the ICCIFP’s 10th Anniversary celebration in Las Vegas, I had the privilege of getting to know some of the men and women who created the Institute from the ground up. Their combined knowledge and experience remains an amazing resource for the Institute, but most important to me personally were the kind words they shared.

The Institute Board of Trustees and Executive Committee have provided thoughtful questions and brilliant ideas to keep the Institute moving forward. I know that we are all in good hands as Bob Biehl takes the reigns. I only hope to be as sage an Immediate Past Chairman as John Rogoz was to me. And, the accomplishments of this year would not have been possible without the support of ICCIFP Executive Director E. Christopher Zaucha. His boundless energy, experience as a past Institute Chairman, and passion for certification and CCIFP recognition have challenged me to keep pace.

I would like to thank my Hayles and Howe family for giving me the time and support to dedicate to the Institute. They all know my Tuesday mornings are dedicated to ICCIFP calls, and none of them blink when Chris visits and takes over an office. I am grateful for their patience.

Finally, I have to thank my husband for his support and for smilingly being the best “arm candy” at any conference.

Thanks for a great year, and here’s to even bigger and better things to come! ▶

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**Talk to BKD’s Tim Wilson**

While we serve clients far and wide, we believe in connecting with organizations like CFMA that are committed to sharing industry knowledge and resources. So it’s only natural that CFMA has designated BKD a Principal Partner for accounting and related services. We appreciate the opportunity to serve CFMA members and share our thought leadership on important topics like revenue recognition.

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