

DENVER BUSINESS JOURNAL

OCTOBER 19-25, 2012

POWER BOOK
METRO DENVER'S TOP BUSINESS NEWSMAKERS

Anton speaks out on country's financial health

BY HEATHER DRAPER
DENVER BUSINESS JOURNAL

Gregory Anton, founding partner of Anton Collins Mitchell LLP, a Denver-based accounting and consulting firm, spent the last year trying to sift through the politics surrounding the nation's growing deficit to educate Americans about the severity of U.S. financial problems.

In his role as chairman of the American Institute of CPAs (AICPA), a national professional organization for certified public

ACCOUNTING, BANKING & FINANCE

INDUSTRY LEADER

GREGORY ANTON

FOUNDING PARTNER
ANTON COLLINS MITCHELL LLP
DENVER
303-830-1120
WWW.ACMLLP.COM

accountants, Anton led the launch of a nonpartisan education campaign and U.S. government fiscal analysis called, "What's at Stake? A CPA's Insights into the Federal Government's Finances."

Anton studied the last four years of financial statements for the federal government. In fiscal year 2011, the U.S. government had a net accumulated deficit of \$14.8 trillion and \$46.3 trillion in social insurance obligations, such as Social Security and Medicare, for a total \$61 trillion deficit. The \$46.3 trillion figure is included only in a footnote in the government's financial statements, Anton said.

But despite the dire situation the United States faces, he's optimistic the country will find a way to get back on track, even if it takes several years, and begin chipping away at the deficit.

"The problem is becoming known; the conversation is happening," Anton said. "That's a good sign."

The CPA profession is calling on policy makers and the public to engage in a national dialogue to improve the nation's financial health. As part of that discussion, Anton



KATHLEEN LAVINE | BUSINESS JOURNAL

Gregory Anton is a founding partner of Anton Collins Mitchell in Denver, and served as chairman of the American Institute of CPAs, a national professional organization for certified public accountants.

crisscrossed the United States, educating average Americans about the nation's financial situation. He said he learned as much from the people he spoke with as they did from him.

"It's been incredibly rewarding," Anton said. "I got to discuss with the Obama administration the views from a nonpartisan CPA perspective of the financial status of the country. I got to move the needle and give back in a small way."

Anton led AICPA during its 125th anniversary, when the national organization worked on several fronts to raise awareness not only about the nation's finances, but also about legislation and issues nationally and internationally affecting businesses and the accounting profession.

At 48, he was one of the youngest CPAs ever to chair the organization.

"As chairman of the AICPA, Greg has done a remarkable job creating a nonpartisan financial educational campaign to teach both citizens and government officials about fiscal responsibility," said Barry Melancon, president and CEO of the AICPA.

"It's no secret that the U.S. government faces enormous budget and financial challenges that go beyond any single election cycle. But few members of the public and policy makers truly understand how the process works and what needs to be done," Melancon said. "As a CPA, he knew that this is not a sustainable course for the country. As a concerned citizen and CPA, he chose to do something about it."

Anton has done all this while running Anton Collins Mitchell, a CPA firm he co-founded in 2002 that has grown significantly since its inception. In 10 years, ACM has grown from one office in Denver, three partners and 24 employees to three offices (Denver, Boulder and Greeley), 16 partners and directors, and 100-plus employees. Accounting Today named the firm among the "100 Best Firms to Work For" in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

"I had two huge support systems this year — my family and my firm," Anton said. "My wife [Julie] stepped up big time, and I had huge commitment from the firm. Plus, I was able to bring back what I learned and unleash it at the firm and with clients."

His passion to make the nation better for future generations also is evident in his philanthropic work, which includes being a member of the Governor's Early Childhood Leadership Commission and the CEO Roundtable of Executives Partnering to Invest in Children, and serving on the board of Junior Achievement-Rocky Mountain Inc.

"We haven't done a good job managing our own fiscal responsibility," Anton said. "We have to pass knowledge to the next generation to leave it in a better place than ours."