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ROBERT HARRIS ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF THE AICPA

LAS VEGAS (October 20, 2009) – Robert R. Harris, CPA, who served on both the board of directors and governing Council of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, today became the Institute’s chairman. His term is one year.

In this role, Harris, 56, leads the world’s largest body of CPAs. The Council elected him to his new position at its fall meeting, which concludes today.

In his inaugural speech, titled “Changes in Latitude, Changes in Attitude,” Harris underscored the importance of international issues, including sustainability, the practice of considering environmental and social costs of doing business when measuring an organization’s performance. Harris regards sustainability as one of his missions as chairman.

“As a person who is concerned about his environment, I urge our profession to take the lead in integrating sustainability into financial reporting and embedding it in our day-to-day decision-making,” he said.

“Currently, there are no official rules on how an organization should report on sustainability,” Harris continued. “To my fellow CPAs in public practice, let’s take the lead in developing guidance on how sustainability can be incorporated into today’s business planning and how this can increase a company’s value. If you work in business and industry, now is the time to make sustainability a key pillar in your business planning.”

The AICPA Council yesterday viewed a videotaped message on sustainability from the Prince of Wales. The Institute is involved in Accounting for Sustainability, a project the prince founded in 2004. Members of AICPA leadership attended the prince’s December 2008 Accounting for Sustainability Forum in London at St. James’s Palace State Apartments.

Harris then spoke about the country’s economic crisis, referring to the past year as “our financial 9/11.”

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“The mortgage industry imploded,” he said. “Banks, insurance companies and American car makers needed billions from the federal government to avoid collapsing. Millions of homeowners are defaulting on their mortgages and credit card loans and no longer have jobs. It took something of this magnitude, bringing us to the brink of our country’s financial collapse, to compel changes.

“We need rules and regulations for financial institutions that balance their entrepreneurial spirit with their fiduciary responsibility.”

Harris has a lengthy history of service to the AICPA. From 2003 – 2008, he served as chairman of the National Accreditation Commission, which oversees the Institute’s four specialized credentials, Personal Financial Specialist (CPA/PFS), Accredited in Business Valuation (ABV), Certified Information Technology Professional (CPA.CITP) and its newest, Certified in Financial Forensics (CFF).

He chaired the 150-Hour Task Force in 1999-2001 and served on the Private Companies Practice Section, Work/Life and Women’s Initiatives, Quality Review, and Life and Disability Insurance Executive Committees, as well as the State Legislation and Finance Committees.

He is managing director of Harris, Cotherman, Jones, Price & Associates, CPAs, in Vero Beach, Fla. In his role as a consulting and testifying expert, he speaks to attorneys and CPAs throughout the country on professional standards and malpractice issues.

He was president of the Florida Institute of CPAs from 1990-1991 and a member of the Board of Governors from 1985-2001.

Harris graduated from Stetson University with a B.B.A. in Accounting.

About the AICPA

The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (www.aicpa.org) is the national, professional association of CPAs, with more than 360,000 CPA members in business and industry, public practice, government, education, student affiliates, and international associates. It sets ethical standards for the profession and U.S. auditing standards for audits of private companies, non-profit organizations, federal, state and local governments. It develops and grades the Uniform CPA Examination.

The AICPA maintains offices in New York, Washington, D.C., Durham, N.C., Ewing, N.J., and Lewisville, Tex.

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