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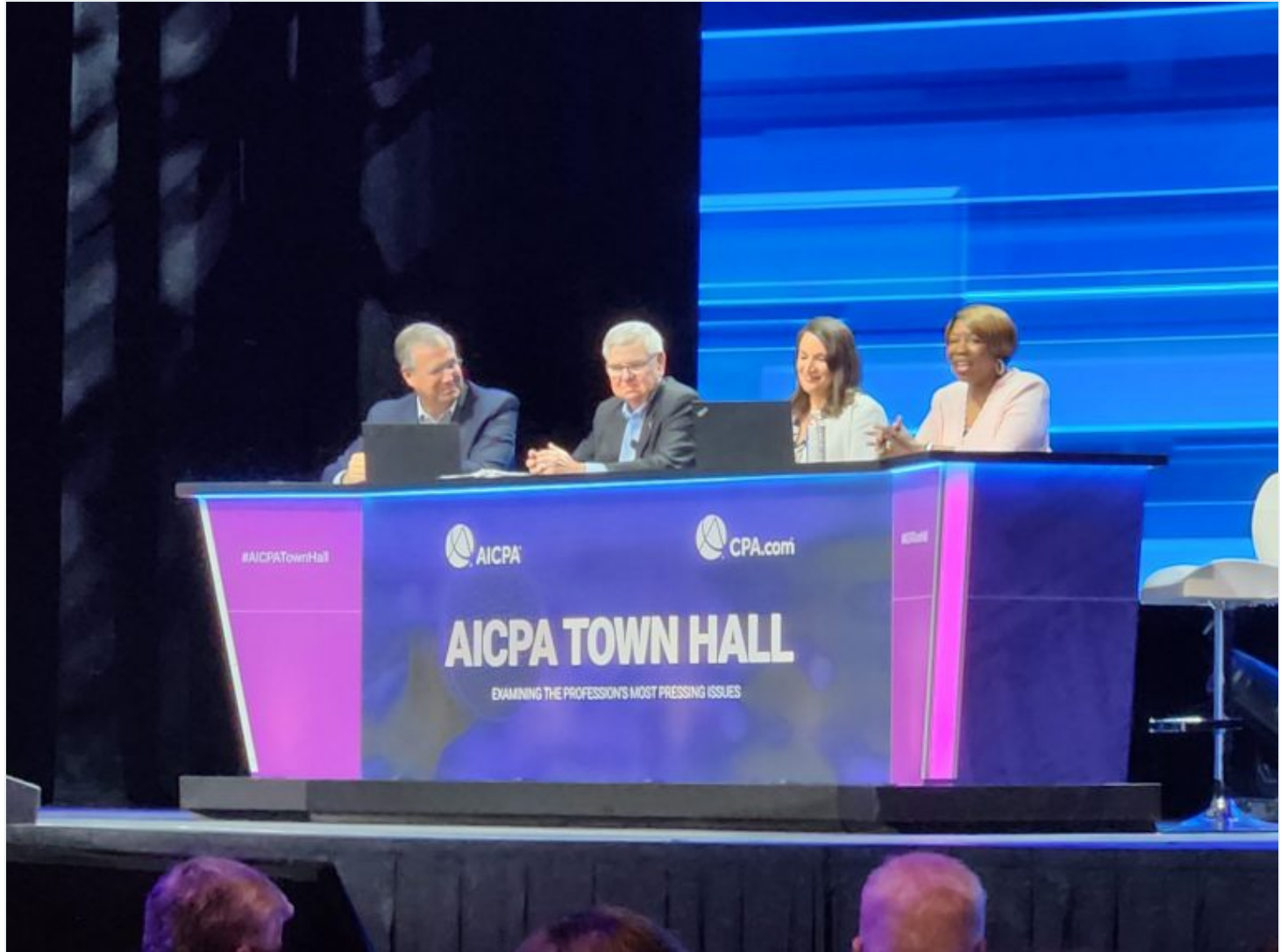
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ACCOUNTING

AICPA Broadcasts 100th Town Hall Video from Engage Conference: CPA Profession is 'Resilient and Rising'

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Isaac M. O'Bannon • Jun. 08, 2023



As the AICPA & CIMA hosted its annual Engage Conference in Las Vegas this week, it also broadcast its 100th AICPA Town Hall live from the Dolby Stage before more than 1,000 live attendees, and thousands more watching live online.

Hosted by CPA.com CEO Erik Asgeirsson, the CPE-eligible live broadcast Town Hall events are 1-hour in duration, and were started at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as a means of keeping professionals up-to-date on key issues, regulatory and legislative activities, technology and other news. Due to the pandemic, most firms and other businesses closed physical offices for at least some duration, making it challenging for many professionals to participate in face-to-face networking and interactions with peers.

During the Town Hall broadcast from the Engage Conference, which was the 100th episode, host Erik Asgeirsson, CEO of CPA.com, was joined by AICPA & CIMA CEO Barry Melancon, AICPA VP Lisa Simpson, and former AICPA Chair Kimberly Ellison-Taylor.

These senior leaders of the AICPA & CIMA and CPA.com said that the accounting profession has the “DNA for success” and a track record of resilience in a time of rapid

change, which was especially needed during the heightened challenges of the pandemic, but continue to be essential in the rapidly changing business and technological environment since.

“The world is extraordinarily connected, extraordinarily complex and the need for us to be the sorters of that information as a trusted advisor is only going up,” Melancon said. “The world wants the consistency, objectivity and knowledge that we bring to the table.”

CPAs and Chartered Global Management Accountants “are well positioned because of their expertise, integrity, attunement to broad business issues and commitment to lifelong learning.” To stay relevant, Melancon and other AICPA & CIMA leaders said, the profession must:

- **Retain great people and attract a range of diverse, new entrants to the profession.** Part of this is reflected in [CPA Evolution](#), an initiative to transform the CPA licensure model to recognize the rapidly changing skills and competencies that accountants will require. Another is development of an AICPA-led national strategy to address the CPA pipeline, starting with a detailed [Pipeline Acceleration Plan](#). “Who better than us to tell the story of what it means to be a CPA and CGMA?” asked AICPA chair Okorie Ramsey. “We need all of us out there telling high school and college students why we’re such a great profession.”
- **Maintain quality and trust in the profession.** “Trust is our brand and quality supports that trust, no matter what service we perform,” said Susan Coffey, AICPA & CIMA’s CEO of public accounting. “It’s hard earned – and we’ve earned it – but also easily lost, so we need to be vigilant.” This focus applies to current practice areas, through successful ongoing efforts such as the Enhancing Quality Initiative, and an expansion into newer areas such as data governance, tax planning and environmental, social and governance (ESG) reporting, assurance and advisory services.
- **Accelerate the profession’s digital capabilities.** Innovation and technology are driving transformation within the profession. Examples include development of the modern, data-driven audit – a handful of firms, for example, are already conducting live audits through the Dynamic Audit Solution, an initiative developed jointly by the AICPA, CPA.com and Caseware International – and the potentially seismic impact of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), which CPA.com will help practitioners [explore and assess](#). “What’s important to understand are the use cases related to how generative AI will evolve all areas of

the practice,” said Erik Asgeirsson, president and CEO of CPA.com. “Clearly, it’s going to create a lot of new opportunities.”

An average of 10,000 professionals participate in the bi-weekly (Thursday at 3pm ET) AICPA Town Hall video events, which started in April 2020. Town Hall contributors have included U.S. Congress members, IRS executives, former Treasury officials, regulators, Fortune 500 company CEOs, nationally recognized economists, CPA firm practitioners representing the largest to the smallest firms, finance leaders, futurists, technologists and other thought leaders.

AICPA members have free access to watch and participate in the live events, earn CPE credit, and join the Q&A, professionals can subscribe or gift subscriptions to non-members, or those persons can subscribe to the Town Hall events for \$39 per year from the AICPA. Since their inception, the videos have been viewed more than 800,000 times.

Archived, non CPE-eligible archives, including of the broadcast from the Engage conference, are available at <https://www.aicpa-cima.com/cpe-learning/webcast/aicpa-town-hall-series>.

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