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## **Sarasota County receives budget award**

Sarasota County's Office of Financial Planning and Chief Financial Planning Officer Jeff Seward have received the highest form of professional recognition in governmental budgeting for their work in preparing the county's budget.

The Government Finance Officers Association has presented Sarasota County with its Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the county's Fiscal Year 2009 budget. The GFOA judged the county's budget as "... one of the strongest budgets they had reviewed," according to Seward.

To receive the budget award, Sarasota County had to meet nationally recognized guidelines designed to assess how well a budget serves as a policy, financial and operations document, as well as a public information resource. Budget documents must be proficient in all four categories to receive the award.

"In a year when we were constantly in a state of change and uncertainty and making decisions much, much later than usual, this award represents a significant achievement," Seward said. "The budget reflects the work of the entire organization, not just the Office of Financial Planning. This award really belongs to the entire staff of Sarasota County."

The Government Finance Officers Association is a nonprofit professional association serving 17,500 government finance professionals throughout North America. The GFOA's Distinguished Budget Presentation Awards program is the only national awards program in governmental budgeting. Award recipients have pioneered efforts to improve the quality of budgeting and provide excellent examples for other governments.

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