



Where is the new Standard?

Scott Andrews Secretary to the Consensus Group

At the annual conference in Denver, I and many others stated that the new edition of the ACCT standard would be published, "soon, maybe even this spring." I am sorry to report that will not be the case. Let me describe what has occurred and what process will be followed moving forward. Remember, publishing the standard is about following a process of approval which has a number of steps and requirements assuring all voices are heard.

In February, the Consensus Group voted to publish the standard. One member of the Consensus Group had concerns about some of the language in the standards and voted "no with Comment." This required a re-circulation of the ballots which is an opportunity for each member of the Consensus Group to review the negative comments and decide if they wanted to change their vote. The re-circulation ballot requires members be given 15 days to review their vote. Fifteen days later, the ballots had been affirmed and no one changed their vote. Now we can publish the standards? Not so fast.

The ANSI procedures require that all people who could not resolve their NO with Comments vote, are afforded a window of time to appeal the decision. The Consensus Group member who voted No with Comments, has been told they have a set period of time to file an appeal. This has created a delay in the publication while the due process of the procedures is followed.

This may seem like a pain and or a small point of order. It is not. The ability of any materially affected person to have their voice heard and to not be run over by the majority is a key part of writing a consensus standard. This is a slow way to write standards and it is important to assure all voices are honored.

So, what happens now? The appeal window will close in early May. If there is an appeal filed, it will be completed before approval is requested from ANSI. If there is no appeal, the request to publish will be forward to ANSI. That approval will take between 2 and 8 weeks. Then the standard will get dropped into book forms and the multiple versions created. The standard will then be available to members and the public.