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## Auditor's Office wins top honor

**LONG BEACH:** City department earns a gold for towing division inquiry.

By Paul Eakins Staff Writer



City Auditor Laura Doud heads a staff of 17.

LONG BEACH — City Auditor Laura Doud's office has received the highest award that is given out by an international auditors association.

The Association of Local Government Auditors, or ALGA, this week awarded the Knighton Gold Award to Doud's office for its audit last year of Long Beach's Towing Operations Division.

Doud said she has

worked hard since her election in 2006, when she defeated former City Auditor Gary Burroughs, to produce audits that provide solutions for city departments and that ensure that taxpayers' money is safe.

"It's really the culmination of everything that we've been working hard here to do," Doud said of

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## AUDIT

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the award.

Doud's Towing Operations audit said that a lack of oversight and controls in the division had created "a high risk of fraud."

Towing Operations collects and deposits \$5 million to \$6 million in impound fees and other payments each year, much of it in cash. The audit said that 21 employees had access to that money and to transaction records, which they could have altered or deleted without anyone knowing.

Notable to the ALGA judges was the audit's potential to have a significant impact and the innovative manner in which the audit was conducted, Doud said. Towing Operations altered its policies to have better cash controls following Doud's audit.

Doud's office received a second award from ALGA as well. Her Web site, [www.CityAuditorLauraDoud.com](http://www.CityAuditorLauraDoud.com), received a Silver Award for its informative content and ease of navigation.

ALGA was founded in 1989 and has more than 300 organizational members and more than 2,000 individual members worldwide. Its membership includes financial oversight departments of many major U.S. cities, such as Denver, Dallas, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco and San Jose.

This isn't the first time Doud has been recognized by ALGA.

She also won a 2007 Silver Award for her Web site, and she received an honorable mention last year for her 2008 audit of the Long Beach Museum of Art.

That audit showed that the museum wouldn't be able to make a \$3 million payment on bonds that had funded its expansion, leaving the financial burden on the city's shoulders. A second audit revealed that 144 pieces of artwork, 23 more than museum officials were previously aware of, were missing from the museum's collection.

Doud has also conducted reviews of the Police Department, the annual Sea Festival contracts, the Queen Mary and the proposed Los Cerritos Wetlands land swap, which she said had "serious risks."

When she took office, her first move was to have an outside firm audit her department, which hadn't been done in 20 years. Doud is up for re-election April 13, but she doesn't have an opponent.

Doud said she gives credit to her 17-member staff, which includes 10 auditors, for winning the Gold Award and other honors. She is just the coach, she said.

"The game ball goes to them," Doud said.

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