Auditor of Public Accounts
Mike Harmon

Harmon Releases Audit of Adair County Sheriff's Office

FRANKFORT, Ky. – State Auditor Mike Harmon today released the audit of the 2015 financial statement of Adair County Sheriff Harrison Moss. State law requires the auditor to annually audit the accounts of each county sheriff. In compliance with this law, the auditor issues two sheriff's reports each year: one reporting on the audit of the sheriff's tax account, and the other reporting on the audit of the fee account used to operate the office.

Auditing standards require the auditor's letter to communicate whether the financial statement presents fairly the receipts, disbursements, and excess fees of the Adair County Sheriff in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. The sheriff's financial statement did not follow this format. However, the sheriff's financial statement is fairly presented in conformity with the regulatory basis of accounting, which is an acceptable reporting methodology. This reporting methodology is followed for all 120 sheriff audits in Kentucky.

As part of the audit process, the auditor must comment on non-compliance with laws, regulations, contracts and grants. The auditor must also comment on material weaknesses involving the internal control over financial operations and reporting.

The audit contains the following comments:

A lack of adequate segregation of duties exists over all accounting functions. The sheriff's bookkeeper collects payment from customers, prepares deposits, writes checks, posts transactions to the receipts ledger, posts checks to the disbursements ledger, and prepares monthly and quarterly reports. The sheriff or another employee did not document oversight of any of these activities.

Lack of oversight could result in the undetected misappropriation of assets and inaccurate financial reporting to external agencies, such as the Department for Local Government. This

condition is a result of a limited budget, which restricts the number of employees the sheriff can hire or delegate duties to.

The segregation of duties over various accounting functions such as opening the mail, preparing deposits, recording receipts and disbursements, and preparing monthly reports, or the implementation of compensating controls, is essential for providing protection from asset misappropriation and inaccurate financial reporting. Additionally, proper segregation of duties protects employees in the normal course of performing their daily responsibilities.

The sheriff should separate the duties involved in receiving cash, preparing deposits, writing checks, posting to ledgers, preparing monthly bank reconciliations, and comparing financial reports to ledgers. Since this is not feasible, cross checking procedures should be implemented and documented by the individual performing the procedure.

A few examples of cross checking procedures could include the sheriff or another employee preparing the bank reconciliation, reviewing the bank reconciliation, and initialing or signing off on it. The deposit could be prepared by one employee and reviewed and initialed by the sheriff or another employee. The sheriff, or another employee, could review and initial the monthly and quarterly reports after comparing them to the receipts and disbursements ledgers.

Sheriff's response: No response.

The sheriff's responsibilities include collecting property taxes, providing law enforcement and performing services for the county fiscal court and courts of justice. The sheriff's office is funded through statutory commissions and fees collected in conjunction with these duties.

The audit report can be found on the auditor's website.

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