

DISTRICT COURT 08-2-01
NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY
EXAMINATION REPORT
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008

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Independent Auditor's Report

Mr. C. Daniel Hassell
Acting Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Revenue
Harrisburg, PA 17128

We have examined the accompanying statement of receipts and disbursements (Statement) of District Court 08-2-01, Northumberland County, Pennsylvania (District Court), for the period January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008, pursuant to the requirements of Section 401(c) of *The Fiscal Code*, 72 P.S. § 401(c). This Statement is the responsibility of the District Court's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on this Statement based on our examination.

Our examination was conducted in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the standards applicable to attestation engagements contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. An examination includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the Statement and performing such other procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances. We believe that our examination provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

We are mandated by Section 401(c) of *The Fiscal Code* to audit the accounts of each district court to determine whether all moneys collected on behalf of the Commonwealth have been correctly assessed, reported and promptly remitted. *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States include attestation engagements as a separate type of audit. An attestation engagement performed pursuant to *Government Auditing Standards* involves additional standards that exceed the standards provided by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Accordingly, this attestation engagement complies with both *Government Auditing Standards* and Section 401(c) of *The Fiscal Code*.

Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

In our opinion, the Statement referred to above presents, in all material respects, the operations of the District Court as it pertains to receipts made on behalf of the Commonwealth for the period ended December 31, 2008, in conformity with the criteria set forth in Note 1.

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we are required to report findings of significant deficiencies in internal control, violations of provisions of contracts or grant agreements, and abuse that are material to the Statement and any fraud and illegal acts that are more than inconsequential that come to our attention during our examination. We are also required to obtain the views of management on those matters. We performed our examination to express an opinion on whether the Statement is presented in accordance with the criteria described above and not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the internal control over reporting on the Statement or on compliance and other matters; accordingly, we express no such opinions.

A control deficiency exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent or detect misstatements on a timely basis. A significant deficiency is a control deficiency, or combination of control deficiencies, that adversely affects the District Court's ability to initiate, authorize, record, process, or report data reliably in accordance with the applicable criteria such that there is more than a remote likelihood that a misstatement of the District Court's Statement that is more than inconsequential will not be prevented or detected by the District Court's internal control. We consider the deficiency described in the finding below to be a significant deficiency in internal control over the reporting on the Statement:

- Bank Deposit Slips Were Not Validated.

Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

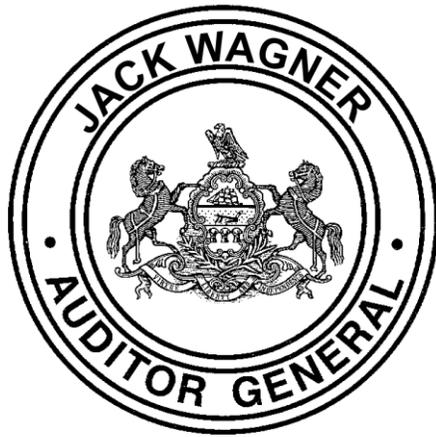
A material weakness is a significant deficiency or combination of significant deficiencies that results in more than a remote likelihood that a material misstatement of the Statement will not be prevented or detected by the District Court's internal control. Our consideration of the internal control over reporting on the Statement would not necessarily disclose all matters in the internal control that might be significant deficiencies and, accordingly, would not necessarily disclose all significant deficiencies that are also considered to be material weaknesses. We consider the significant deficiency described above to be a material weakness.

The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue, the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, and the District Court and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

December 2, 2009

JACK WAGNER
Auditor General



DISTRICT COURT 08-2-01
NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008

Receipts:

Department of Transportation		
Title 75 Fines	\$	86,548
Motor Carrier Road Tax Fines		675
Overweight Fines		150
Littering Law Fines		148
Child Restraint Fines		150
Department of Revenue Court Costs		90,998
Crime Victims' Compensation Bureau Costs		25,122
Crime Commission Costs/Victim Witness Services Costs		17,986
Domestic Violence Costs		6,034
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Fines		1,000
Department of Agriculture Fines		370
Fish and Boat Commission Fines		100
Game Commission Fines		2,312
Emergency Medical Service Fines		34,168
CAT/MCARE Fund Surcharges		101,671
Judicial Computer System Fees		45,305
Access to Justice Fees		11,262
Constable Service Surcharges		5,308
Miscellaneous State Fines		200
		<hr/>
Total receipts (Note 2)	\$	429,507
Disbursements to Commonwealth (Note 3)		<hr/> (429,507)
Balance due Commonwealth (District Court) per settled reports (Note 4)		-
Examination adjustments		<hr/> -
Adjusted balance due Commonwealth (District Court) for the period January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008	\$	<hr/> <hr/> -

Notes to the Statement of Receipts and Disbursements are an integral part of this report.

DISTRICT COURT 08-2-01
NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY
NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008

1. Criteria

The Statement of Receipts and Disbursements provides a summary of receipts and disbursements by category. The categories and the amounts of fines, costs, fees, and surcharges assessed are based on Pennsylvania laws and regulations.

The Statement was prepared in accordance with reporting requirements prescribed by the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue. Under this method, only the Commonwealth portion of cash receipts and disbursements are presented, revenues are recognized when received, and expenditures are recognized when paid.

2. Receipts

Receipts are comprised of fines, costs, fees, and surcharges collected on behalf of the Commonwealth. These fines, costs, fees, and surcharges represent collections made on traffic, non-traffic, civil, and criminal cases filed with the District Court.

3. Disbursements

Total disbursements are comprised as follows:

District Court checks issued to:

Department of Revenue	<u>\$ 429,507</u>
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4. Balance Due Commonwealth (District Court) For The Period January 1, 2006 To December 31, 2008

This balance reflects the summary of monthly transmittal reports as settled by the Department of Revenue.

5. Magisterial District Judge Serving During Examination Period

Michael F. Mychak, Esquire, served at District Court 08-2-01 for the period January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008.

DISTRICT COURT 08-2-01
NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008

Finding - Bank Deposit Slips Were Not Validated

Our review of the district court's accounting records disclosed that the office copy of the bank deposit slip was not validated by the bank. For all 45 deposits tested, the district court received a validated receipt from the bank, but this only confirmed the total amount deposited and not the actual make up of the deposit (i.e. cash and check mix).

The district court was not aware that the receipt given by the bank was not proper validation.

Good internal accounting controls require that the amount of each check and the total amount of cash deposited are identified on the deposit slip. The office copy of each deposit should be brought to the bank to be validated. If the office receives a receipt from the bank, the actual make up of the deposit needs to be validated.

Without a good system of internal control over funds received by the office, the possibility of funds being lost or misappropriated increases significantly.

Recommendation

We recommend that the district court secure the bank's validation on the court's copy of the deposit slip or a separate validated receipt from the bank that includes the actual make up of the deposit (i.e. cash and check mix).

Management's Response

No formal response was offered at this time.

DISTRICT COURT 08-2-01
NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY
OBSERVATION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008

Observation - Improper Assessment of Costs

Our examinations of the Northumberland County District Courts revealed that the courts were assessing a \$15.00 flat rate postage fee to cover the additional administrative costs related to establishing installment payment plans on summary traffic and non-traffic cases as outlined in an Administrative Order signed on December 31, 2003. This Administrative Order authorized Northumberland County District Courts to assess this cost on all summary cases when the defendant in the summary case requests and is permitted to make installment payments.

Because the Judicial Code (42 Pa.C.S.A. § 1725.1) provides an itemized list of expenses to be paid for the various causes of action, and it carves out exceptions for the postage costs and which party shall pay the postage costs, Northumberland County should be charging the proper party with actual postage costs, and not a blanket postage charge of \$15.00 to defendants. Actual postage costs are known the moment documents are mailed and, therefore, are easily attainable and billable to the proper party to a cause of action.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Northumberland County District Courts discontinue assessing the above-cited fee. We further recommend that Northumberland County Courts assess fees and costs as intended by the appropriate state statutes.

Management's Response

The Magisterial District Judge responded as follows:

Flat postage rate was mandated by Order of Court of Common Pleas of Northumberland County dated December 31, 2003.

Auditor's Conclusion

As previously stated, a flat rate fee cannot be assessed for postage because postage costs are easily attainable and billable to the proper party to a cause of action. Northumberland County should be charging the proper party with actual postage costs, and not a blanket postage charge to defendants.

DISTRICT COURT 08-2-01
NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY
REPORT DISTRIBUTION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2008

This report was initially distributed to:

Mr. C. Daniel Hassell
Acting Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Revenue

The Honorable Zygmunt Pines
Court Administrator of Pennsylvania
Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts

The Honorable Michael F. Mychak	Magisterial District Judge
Brandy L. Yasenchak, Esquire	District Court Administrator
The Honorable Charles E. Erdman, Jr.	Controller
The Honorable Samuel Deitrick	Chairman of the Board of Commissioners

This report is a matter of public record. Copies of this report may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 318 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120. To view this report online or to contact the Department of the Auditor General, please access our web site at www.auditorgen.state.pa.us.