RECORDER OF DEEDS

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

EXAMINATION REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2007 TO DECEMBER 31, 2009

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Department of the Auditor General
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120-0018

JACK WAGNER
AUDITOR GENERAL

Independent Auditor's Report

The Honorable Daniel P. Meuser
Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Revenue
Harrisburg, PA 17128

We have examined the accompanying statements of receipts and disbursements (Statements) of the Recorder of Deeds, Northampton County, Pennsylvania (County Officer), for the period January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2009, pursuant to the requirements of Sections 401(b) and 401(d) of *The Fiscal Code*, 72 P.S § 401(b) and § 401(d). These Statements are the responsibility of the county office's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these Statements 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 Statements 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 Sections 401(b) and 401(d) of *The Fiscal Code* to audit the accounts of each county officer 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 Sections 401(b) and 401(d) of *The Fiscal Code*.

In our opinion, the Statements referred to above present, in all material respects, the operations of the County Officer as it pertains to receipts made on behalf of the Commonwealth for the period ended December 31, 2009, 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 Statements 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 Statements are 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 Statements 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 County Officer'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 County Officer's Statements that is more than inconsequential will not be prevented or detected by the County Officer's internal control.

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 Statements will not be prevented or detected by the County Officer's internal control.

Our consideration of internal control over reporting on the Statements was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and would not necessarily identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. We did not identify any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses, as defined above, in internal control over reporting on the Statements.

Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

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 County Officer and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

October 26, 2011

JACK WAGNER
Auditor General

JACK WAGNER

AUDITOR GENERAL

RECORDER OF DEEDS
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
REALTY TRANSFER TAXES
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2007 TO DECEMBER 31, 2009

Receipts:	
Realty Transfer Taxes (Note 2)	$ 37,180,254
Commissions (Note 3)	(371,802)
Net Receipts	36,808,452
Disbursements to Commonwealth (Note 4)	(36,808,452)
Balance due Commonwealth (County) per settled reports (Note 5)	-
Examination adjustments	-
Adjusted balance due Commonwealth (County) for the period January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2009	$ -

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

RECORDER OF DEEDS
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
WRIT TAXES AND JUDICIAL COMPUTER SYSTEM/ACCESS TO JUSTICE FEES
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2007 TO DECEMBER 31, 2009

Receipts:	
Writ Taxes	$ 86,907
Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice Fees	1,378,599
Total Receipts (Note 2)	1,465,506
Commissions (Note 3)	(2,607)
Net Receipts	1,462,899
Disbursements to Commonwealth (Note 4)	(1,462,899)
Balance due Commonwealth (County) per settled reports (Note 5)	-
Examination adjustments	-
Adjusted balance due Commonwealth (County) for the period January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2009	$ -

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

RECORDER OF DEEDS
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
NOTES TO THE STATEMENTS OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2007 TO DECEMBER 31, 2009

1. Criteria

The Statements of Receipts and Disbursements provide a summary of receipts and disbursements by category. The categories and the amounts of taxes and fees assessed are based on Pennsylvania laws and regulations.

The Statements were 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 consist of monies collected on behalf of the Commonwealth. These include monies collected for the following taxes and fees:

- The Pennsylvania Realty Transfer Tax is a documentary stamp tax of 1 percent on the value of the interest in real property transferred by deed.

- Writ Taxes represent a $.50 tax imposed on various types of documents and a $10 tax on notary public commissions processed through the office.

- Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice Fees represent a $10 fee imposed for each filing of deeds in any form, mortgages, mortgage assignments, mortgage releases, mortgage satisfaction pieces, installment sales agreements, leases for a term of 30 years or longer, and easements. These fees were temporarily increased to $23.50 for the period December 8, 2009 to December 31, 2014.

3. Commissions

Acting in the capacity of an agent for the Commonwealth, the Recorder of Deeds is authorized to collect a commission on the Commonwealth portion of taxes as follows:

Tax	Commission
Realty Transfer	1%
Writ	3%

4. Disbursements To Commonwealth

Realty Transfer Taxes

The Recorder of Deeds participates in the Department of Revenue's cash management system for Realty Transfer Taxes. Under this system, the "Agent" deposits Realty Transfer Tax collections to a local account approved and established in the name of the Department of Revenue, thereby eliminating the need for the agent to issue a check to disburse these taxes.

Total disbursements are comprised as follows:

Deposits into the Department of Revenue's cash management account	$ 36,808,452

Writ Taxes And Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice Fees

Total disbursements are comprised as follows:

Recorder of Deeds checks issued to:

Department of Revenue	$ 1,462,899

5. Balance Due Commonwealth (County) For The Period January 1, 2007 To December 31, 2009

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

6. County Officer Serving During Examination Period

Ann L. Achatz served as Recorder of Deeds during the period January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2009.

RECORDER OF DEEDS
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
REPORT DISTRIBUTION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2007 TO DECEMBER 31, 2009

This report was initially distributed to:

The Honorable Daniel P. Meuser
Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Revenue

The Honorable Zygmont Pines
Court Administrator of Pennsylvania
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania
Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts

The Honorable Ann L. Achatz	Recorder of Deeds
The Honorable Stephen Barron	Controller
The Honorable John Cusick	President of County Council

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.