



**EMPORIUM VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

**CAMERON COUNTY**

**COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT**

**FOR THE PERIOD**

**JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011**



## CONTENTS

Background.....	1
Letter From the Auditor General .....	3
Status of Prior Finding .....	5
Finding and Recommendation:	
Finding – Untimely Receipt of State Aid .....	6
Accompanying Expenditure Information .....	7
Report Distribution List .....	9



## BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, Act of April 9, 1929, (P.L. 343, No. 176), and the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act, as consolidated by the Act of November 23, 2010, (P.L. 1181, No. 118), at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.*, the Department of the Auditor General's duty is to audit the accounts and records of every volunteer firefighters' relief association to determine that funds received under the Foreign Fire Insurance Tax Distribution Law, Act of December 18, 1984, (P.L. 1005, No. 205), as amended, 53 P.S. § 895.701 *et seq.* (commonly referred to as Act 205), are properly expended.

The Emporium Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association, herein referred to as Emporium Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association, is a charitable organization that was formed primarily to afford financial protection to volunteer firefighters and to encourage individuals to participate in volunteer fire service.

Act 118 governs the overall operation of the volunteer firefighters' relief association. The relief association's bylaws define the specific operational procedures by which the volunteer firefighters' relief association conducts business. To fulfill its primary purpose, Act 118 authorizes specific types of expenditures and prescribes appropriate volunteer firefighters' relief association investment options. Within the parameters established by Act 118, it is the responsibility of the volunteer firefighters' relief association to choose investments in a proper and prudent manner.

Volunteer firefighters' relief associations receive public tax monies, and the association officers therefore have a responsibility to the public to conduct the association's financial affairs in a businesslike manner and to maintain sufficient financial records to support the propriety of all association transactions. Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are also responsible for ensuring that the association operates in accordance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures.

Act 205 sets forth the computation of the Foreign Fire Insurance Tax Distribution paid to each applicable municipality throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The amount of the distribution is based upon the population of each municipality and the market value of real estate within the municipality. Upon receipt of this distribution, the municipality must allocate the funds to the volunteer firefighters' relief association of the fire service organization or fire service organizations, which is or are recognized as providing the service to the municipality.

BACKGROUND (Continued)

The Emporium Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Emporium Borough	Cameron	\$10,798	\$12,154	\$15,709
Lumber Township	Cameron	\$ 1,755	\$ 1,975 *	\$ 2,713
Portage Township	Cameron	\$ 1,225	\$ 1,378	\$ 1,570
Shippen Township	Cameron	\$13,143	\$14,793	\$20,395

\* The 2011 state aid allocation from Lumber Township was not deposited by the relief association, until January 3, 2012, subsequent to the audit period. Refer to the finding in the Finding and Recommendation section of this report.

The volunteer firefighters' relief association and the affiliated fire service organization are separate, legal entities. The Emporium Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association is affiliated with the following fire service organization:

Emporium Volunteer Fire Department



**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of the Auditor General  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018  
Facebook: Pennsylvania Auditor General  
Twitter: @PAAuditorGen**

**EUGENE A. DePASQUALE  
AUDITOR GENERAL**

Mr. Dale B. Griffith, President  
EMPORIUM VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'  
RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
Cameron County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Emporium Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association pursuant to authority derived from Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Section 403 of The Fiscal Code, Act of April 9, 1929, (P.L. 343, No. 176), and mandated by the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Act, as consolidated by the Act of November 23, 2010 (P.L. 1181, No. 118), at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7411 *et seq.*, for the period January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2011.

We conducted this compliance audit in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* applicable to performance audits, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our audit results and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our audit results and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The objectives of the audit were

1. To determine if the volunteer firefighters' relief association took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report; and
2. To determine if the volunteer firefighters' relief association received and expended state aid and accumulated relief funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures.

Our audit was limited to the areas related to the objectives identified above.

Volunteer firefighters' relief association officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that the Emporium Volunteer

Firefighters' Relief Association's administration of state aid and accumulated relief funds complies with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures including the safeguarding of assets. In conducting our audit, we obtained an understanding of the volunteer firefighters' relief association's internal controls as they relate to the association's compliance with those requirements and that we considered to be significant within the context of the audit objectives, and assessed whether those significant controls were properly designed and implemented. Our audit procedures also included tests of documentary evidence supporting the Emporium Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Emporium Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash, investments, and certain other assets and liabilities as of December 31, 2011, with the custodians of the funds, debtors, creditors, and financial institutions to the extent necessary to satisfy the audit objectives. Additionally, we performed procedures to provide a reasonable assurance of detecting instances of violations of legal and regulatory requirements or violations of provisions of contracts that are significant within the context of the audit objectives.

The results of our audit, for the period January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2011, found the Emporium Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association took appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report and, in all significant respects, received and expended state aid and accumulated relief funds in compliance with applicable state laws, contracts, bylaws and administrative procedures, except as noted in the finding listed below and discussed later in this report. The results of our tests also indicated the Emporium Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2011, had a cash balance of \$77,503 and an investment balance with a fair value of \$341,035.

#### Finding – Untimely Receipt of State Aid

The contents of this report were discussed with the management of the Emporium Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association and, where appropriate, their response has been included in the report.

February 28, 2012

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE  
Auditor General



EMPORIUM VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The Emporium Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has complied with the following prior audit finding and recommendation:

- Failure to Maintain a Complete and Accurate Equipment Roster

By maintaining a cumulative inventory roster of all equipment owned.

EMPORIUM VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Untimely Receipt of State Aid

Condition: The Emporium Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association did not receive its 2011 state aid allocation, in the amount of \$2,713, from Lumber Township, until January 3, 2012, which was 99 days after the municipality received the funds, on September 26, 2011, from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Criteria: Section 706 (b)(2) of the Act of December 18, 1984, (P.L. 1005, No. 205), states:

The foreign fire insurance premium tax amount applicable to a municipality served solely by volunteer firefighters shall be paid to the municipality, which shall within 60 days of the date of the receipt of the moneys from the State Treasurer pay the amount received to the relief association fund of the fire department or departments, or fire company or companies, now existing or hereafter organized, inside or outside of the municipality, which is or are actively engaged in the service of the municipality and duly recognized by the governing body of the municipality.

Cause: The relief association failed to monitor the municipality's receipt and distribution of state aid allocations.

Effect: As a result of the untimely receipt of the state aid allocation, funds were not available to pay general operating expenses or for investment purposes. In addition, the untimely receipt of allocations increases the risk that funds could be lost or misappropriated.

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association monitor the municipality's distribution of state aid allocations to ensure that the allocation is distributed to the relief association within 60 days of the date of receipt. For further guidance, please refer to the Auditor General's publication, MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS.

Management's Response: Relief association management agreed with the finding as presented at the audit exit conference and indicated they will take action to comply with the recommendation.

EMPORIUM VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION  
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2009 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7412 states: a volunteer firefighters' relief association is an organization formed primarily for the purpose of affording financial protection to volunteer firefighters against the consequences of misfortune suffered as a result of their participation in the fire service. The organization may contain within its membership the members of one or more fire companies and may serve secondary purposes, as set forth in this subchapter, but only if adequate provisions have been first made to serve the primary purpose.

Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7416 authorizes the investment of relief association funds and outlines the types of benefits and services that can be provided with volunteer firefighters' relief association funds.

Furthermore, all expenditures must be properly authorized as prescribed in the volunteer firefighters' relief association bylaws and approved at an association meeting.

USES OF FUNDS:

Benefit Services:	
Insurance premiums	\$ 21,342
Death benefits	8,000
Relief benefits	5,874
Tokens of sympathy and goodwill	567
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 35,783</u>
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 40,831
Equipment maintenance	9,711
Training expenses	11,064
Total Fire Services	<u>\$ 61,606</u>
Administrative Services:	
Officer compensation	\$ 1,800
Other administrative expenses	3,930
Total Administrative Services	<u>\$ 5,730</u>



EMPORIUM VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION  
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Emporium Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Dale B. Griffith, President

Mr. Shey Chmelar, Vice President

Ms. Jill M. Krieg, Secretary

Mr. Harry E. Mansfield, Treasurer

The following municipalities allocated foreign fire insurance tax monies to this relief association and received a copy of this report.

Mr. Donald G. Reed, Secretary  
Emporium Borough

Ms. Sandra L. Hause, Secretary  
Lumber Township

Ms. Wanda Jordan, Secretary  
Portage Township

Ms. Brandy L. Ferraro, Secretary  
Shippen Township

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. If you have any questions regarding this report or any other matter, you may contact the Department of the Auditor General by accessing our website at [www.auditorgen.state.pa.us](http://www.auditorgen.state.pa.us).