

RECORDER OF DEEDS
BEAVER COUNTY
EXAMINATION REPORT
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2004 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

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Independent Auditor's Report

Mr. Stephen H. Stetler
Acting Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Revenue
Harrisburg, PA 17128

We have examined the accompanying statements of receipts and disbursements (Statements) of the Recorder of Deeds, Beaver County, Pennsylvania (County Officer), for the period January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2007, 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*.

Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

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, 2007, 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 Statement 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)

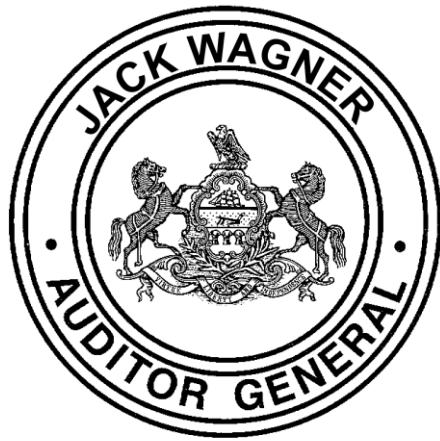
The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*. However, we did note an other matter that, while not required to be included in this report by *Government Auditing Standards*, has been included in the finding below:

- Failure to Assess Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice Fees On Certain Documents Filed.

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.

January 30, 2009

JACK WAGNER
Auditor General



RECORDER OF DEEDS
BEAVER COUNTY
REALTY TRANSFER TAXES
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2004 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

Receipts:

Realty Transfer Taxes (Note 2)	\$ 18,474,868
Disbursements to Commonwealth (Note 4)	<u>(18,474,868)</u>
Balance due Commonwealth (County) per settled reports (Note 5)	-
Examination adjustments	<u>-</u>
Adjusted balance due Commonwealth (County) January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2007	<u><u>\$ -</u></u>

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

RECORDER OF DEEDS
BEAVER COUNTY
WRIT TAXES AND JUDICIAL COMPUTER SYSTEM/ACCESS TO JUSTICE FEES
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2004 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

Receipts:

Writ Taxes	\$ 69,966
Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice Fees	<u>1,074,820</u>
Total Receipts (Note 2)	1,144,786
Commissions (Note 3)	<u>(2,099)</u>
Net Receipts	1,142,687
Disbursements to Commonwealth (Note 4)	<u>(1,142,687)</u>
Balance due Commonwealth (County) per settled reports (Note 5)	-
Examination adjustment (Note 6)	<u>1,456</u>
Adjusted balance due Commonwealth (County) January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2007	<u><u>\$ 1,456</u></u>

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

RECORDER OF DEEDS
BEAVER COUNTY
NOTES TO THE STATEMENTS OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2004 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

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.

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:

<u>Ta</u>	<u>Commission</u>
Realty Transfer	1%
Writ	3%

Commissions of \$184,749 were paid to the County by the Department of Revenue which are not reflected in the Statement.

RECORDER OF DEEDS
BEAVER COUNTY
NOTES TO THE STATEMENTS OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2004 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

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	\$ 18,474,868
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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	\$ 1,142,687
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5. Balance Due Commonwealth (County) For The Period January 1, 2004 To December 31, 2007

This balance reflects a summary of monthly transmittal reports as settled by the Department of Revenue. The balance does not reflect adjustments disclosed by our examination.

6. Examination Adjustment

The examination adjustment represents interest earned on Commonwealth funds during the examination period that was not remitted to the Department of Revenue.

7. County Officer Serving During Examination Period

Janice J. Beall served as Recorder of Deeds during the period January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2007.

RECORDER OF DEEDS
BEAVER COUNTY
REALTY TRANSFER TAXES
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2004 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

Finding - Failure To Assess Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice Fees On Certain Documents Filed

Our examination disclosed that the Beaver County Recorder of Deeds office did not assess the Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice (JCS/ATJ) fees as mandated by law on Right of Way (easement) documents. The Recorder of Deeds office recorded 1,194 Right of Way documents and did not assess the \$10 JCS/ATJ fees on any of these documents. The total dollar amount not assessed was \$11,940.

The following state statute addresses the assessment of the JCS/ATJ fee that was not properly assessed:

- Title 42 Pa. C.S. §3733 provides for the collection of the JCS/ATJ fee. It requires the Recorder of Deeds office to assess the JCS/ATJ fee to Deeds of any form, Mortgages, Mortgages Assignments, Mortgage Releases, Mortgage Satisfaction Pieces, Installment Sales Agreements, Leases for a term of 30 years or longer, and Easements.

The office is responsible for assessing fees as mandated by law. The failure to correctly assess the JCS/ATJ fees resulted in a loss of revenue to the Commonwealth.

This incorrect assessment occurred because the office was not aware or up-to-date on laws and regulations regarding the proper assessment of Commonwealth fees.

Recommendation

We recommend that the office review the law noted above to ensure that the JCS/ATJ fee is assessed as mandated by law.

Management's Response

The Recorder of Deeds responded as follows:

By Memorandum dated October 24, 2002 from Zygmunt A. Pines, Esquire Court Administrator of Pennsylvania Supreme Court, we were informed of a new filing fee effective November 1, 2002 on the recording of deeds, mortgages and other documents.

RECORDER OF DEEDS
BEAVER COUNTY
REALTY TRANSFER TAXES
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2004 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

Finding - Failure To Assess Judicial Computer System/Access To Justice Fees On Certain Documents Filed (Continued)

Management's Response (Continued)

The new \$10 fee would be collected on the following types of documents: 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.

Right of way documents were discussed with our state solicitor and we were told not to include them, since there is a difference between a right of way and an easement. To date, I have not received any written notification from the Courts, Treasury Department, or the Department of Revenue directing this office to collect the \$10 fee on right of ways.

During our current Pennsylvania state audit, I was informed that we must add the additional \$10 fee to right of ways. I have released a memo and posted the information on our web site stating effective January 1, 2009, an additional \$10 is required to be added to the recording fee for right of ways, pursuant to Act 122 of 2002.

Auditor's Conclusion:

We appreciate the county office's effort to correct this condition. During our next examination, we will determine if the office complied with our recommendation.

RECORDER OF DEEDS
BEAVER COUNTY
REPORT DISTRIBUTION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2004 TO DECEMBER 31, 2007

This report was initially distributed to:

Mr. Stephen H. Stetler
Acting Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Revenue

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

Recorder of Deeds
Beaver County
Beaver County Courthouse
Third Street
Beaver, PA 15009

The Honorable Janice J. Beall	Recorder of Deeds
The Honorable David A. Rossi	Controller
The Honorable Tony Amadio	Chairperson 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.