

**LAUREL RUN FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION, LAUREL RUN BOROUGH,
LUZERNE COUNTY, WILKES-BARRE, PA. 18702**

LUZERNE COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2008 TO DECEMBER 31, 2010



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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 Laurel Run Fireman's Relief Association, Laurel Run Borough, Luzerne County, Wilkes-Barre, PA. 18702, herein referred to as Laurel Run 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 Laurel Run Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipality:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
Laurel Run Borough	Luzerne	\$3,754*	\$3,376	\$3,800

* The 2008 state aid allocation from Laurel Run Borough was not deposited by the relief association, until September 8, 2009. 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 Laurel Run Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association is affiliated with the following fire service organization:

Laurel Run Volunteer Fire Department

Mr. John Bonk, President
LAUREL RUN VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Luzerne County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Laurel Run 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, 2008 to December 31, 2010.

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 findings 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 Laurel Run 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 Laurel Run Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Laurel Run Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's cash, investments, and certain other assets and liabilities as of December 31, 2010, 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, 2008 to December 31, 2010, found the Laurel Run Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association took appropriate corrective action to address the findings 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 Laurel Run Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2010, had a cash balance of \$6,449 and no investments.

Finding – Untimely Deposit of State Aid

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

February 15, 2011

JACK WAGNER
Auditor General

LAUREL RUN VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDINGS

COMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Laurel Run Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has complied with the following prior audit findings and recommendations:

- Inadequate Minutes of Meetings

By maintaining detailed minutes of all relief association meetings.

- Inadequate Signatory Authority for the Disbursement of Funds

By requiring more than one signature on all negotiable instruments.

LAUREL RUN VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Untimely Deposit of State Aid

Condition: The Laurel Run Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association did not deposit the 2008 state aid allocation it received from Laurel Run Borough, in the amount of \$3,754, until September 8, 2009, which was 330 days after the Laurel Run Borough check date of October 13, 2008.

Criteria: The foreign fire insurance tax allocation was distributed to the municipal treasurer, who forwarded this state aid to the volunteer firefighters' relief association on October 13, 2008, which is within the 60 days of receipt, as required by Section 706 (b)(2) of the Act of December 18, 1984, (P.L. 1005, No. 205). Upon receipt of the state aid allocation, the relief association should ensure the funds are deposited in a timely manner.

Cause: The relief association failed to establish internal control procedures, which require that all income received be recorded and deposited in a timely manner. According to relief association officials, the previous treasurer forgot to deposit the 2008 state aid check received from Laurel Run Borough.

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

Recommendation: We recommend the relief association officials adopt internal control procedures to ensure the timely deposit of all income received. 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.

LAUREL RUN VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
 ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
 FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2008 TO DECEMBER 31, 2010

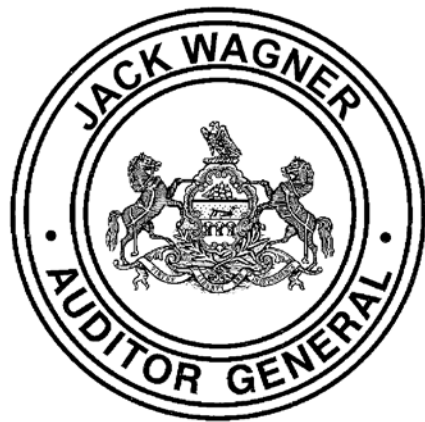
Act 118 at 35 Pa.C.S. § 7412 states: a volunteer firefighters' relief association is an organization formed primarily for the purpose of affording financial protection to volunteer firefighters against the consequences of misfortune suffered as a result of their participation in the fire service. The 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	\$ 100
Total Benefit Services	\$ 100
Fire Services:	
Equipment purchased	\$ 11,819
Equipment maintenance	1,604
Training expenses	300
Total Fire Services	\$ 13,723
Administrative Services:	
Miscellaneous administrative expenses	28
Total Administrative Services	\$ 28



LAUREL RUN VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Laurel Run Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. John Bonk, President

Mr. Paul Fallon, Vice President

Mr. John D. Mosley, Jr., Secretary

Mr. Daniel Gildea, Treasurer

A report was also distributed to the following municipality, which allocated foreign fire insurance tax monies to this relief association.

Ms. Catherine M. Koulik, Secretary
Laurel Run Borough

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.