



**SINNAMAHER VOLUNTEER FIREMAN'S
RELIEF ASSOCIATION**

CAMERON COUNTY

COMPLIANCE AUDIT REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JANUARY 1, 2010 TO DECEMBER 31, 2011

RELEASED JUNE 2013

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE - AUDITOR GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL



SINNAMAHONING VOLUNTEER FIREMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION

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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 Sinnamahoning Volunteer Fireman's Relief Association, herein referred to as Sinnamahoning 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 Sinnamahoning Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association was allocated state aid from the following municipalities:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Driftwood Borough	Cameron	\$ 557	*\$ 676
Gibson Township	Cameron	\$2,030	\$2,732
Grove Township	Cameron	\$1,680	*\$2,816

* The 2011 state aid allocations from Driftwood Borough and Grove Township were not distributed timely to the relief association. Consequently, these state aid amounts were not deposited by the relief association by December 31, 2011. (See 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 Sinnamahoning Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association is affiliated with the following fire service organization:

Sinnamahoning Volunteer Fire Department



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018
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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Melvin L. Kehl, President
SINNAMAHONING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS'
RELIEF ASSOCIATION
Cameron County

We have conducted a compliance audit of the Sinnamahoning 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, 2010 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 Sinnamahoning 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 Sinnamahoning Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association's recorded financial transactions, tests of the physical existence of inventories, interviews of selected officials and direct confirmation of the Sinnamahoning 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, 2010 to December 31, 2011, found the Sinnamahoning Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association did not take appropriate corrective action to address the finding contained in our prior audit report, as detailed below and discussed in the Status of Prior Finding section of this report. In addition, the results of our audit found the Sinnamahoning Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association, 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 in detail in the Finding and Recommendation section of this report. The results of our tests also indicated the Sinnamahoning Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association expended funds as presented in the Accompanying Expenditure Information and, as of December 31, 2011, had a cash balance of \$8,959 and no investments.

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
Untimely Distribution of State Aid

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



January 31, 2013

EUGENE A. DEPASQUALE
Auditor General

SINNAMA HONING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
STATUS OF PRIOR FINDING

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PRIOR AUDIT FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

The Sinnamahoning Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association has not complied with the following prior audit finding. This finding is noted below and discussed in detail in the Finding and Recommendation section of this report:

- Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
Untimely Distribution of State Aid

We are concerned with the volunteer firefighters' relief association's failure to correct the previously reported audit finding. The association management should strive to implement the recommendation and corrective action noted in this audit report.

SINNAMAHER VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding – Noncompliance With Prior Audit Recommendation –
Untimely Distribution of State Aid

Condition: During the current audit period, the volunteer firefighters' relief association did not receive its 2011 state aid allocations from Driftwood Borough and Grove Township until April 5, 2012 and February 21, 2012, respectively, more than 192 and 148 days, respectively, after the allocations were distributed to the municipalities.

<u>Years</u>	<u>Municipalities</u>	<u>Amounts</u>	<u>Dates Municipality Received Allocations</u>	<u>Municipalities Distributed State Aid</u>
2011	Driftwood Borough	\$ 676	09/26/11	04/03/12
2011	Grove Township	\$ 2,816	09/26/11	02/20/12

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.

Furthermore, prudent business practice dictates that it is the relief association's responsibility to monitor the receipt of the state aid. If the relief association has not received its state aid check from the municipality by December 1, the relief association officers should contact the municipalities to follow up on the status of the distribution of funds due the relief association.

Cause: During the current audit period, the foreign fire insurance tax allocations were distributed to the municipal treasurers on September 26, 2011, who, again, as detailed in our prior audit report, failed to forward the state aid allocations to the volunteer firefighters' relief association within 60 days of receipt, as required by Section 706 (b)(2) of the Act of December 18, 1984, (P.L. 1005, No. 205). Furthermore, the relief association failed to establish internal control procedures requiring that the municipality be contacted to follow-up on the status of the state aid allocations if state aid is not received annually December 1.

SINNAMA HONING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION (Continued)

Finding – (Continued)

Effect: As a result of the untimely distribution of state aid, funds were not available to pay general operating expenses or for investment purposes.

Recommendation: We again recommend the relief association officials adopt internal control procedures to follow-up with the municipalities, when warranted, to determine the status of the state aid allocations due the relief association. 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.

SINNAMAHONING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
ACCOMPANYING EXPENDITURE INFORMATION
FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2010 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	\$ 8,400
Total Benefit Services	<u>\$ 8,400</u>

SINNAMAHERONING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF ASSOCIATION
REPORT DISTRIBUTION LIST

This report was initially distributed to the following:

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Sinnamahoning Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Association Governing Body:

Mr. Melvin L. Kehl, President

Mr. Rich Porter, Vice President

Mr. F. Bruce Whitman, Secretary

Mrs. Donna M. Kehl, Treasurer

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

Mr. Samuel C. Chilcote, Secretary
Driftwood Borough

Mr. Roger Knisely, Secretary
Gibson Township

Ms. Mary Hardinger, Secretary
Grove 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.