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Reporting Tips

By Rebecca Otto, State Auditor

I hope you're enjoying this beautiful autumn! This month I want to share some information to assist your township is successfully submitting your statutorily-required financial reporting form.

Convenient Reporting Through SAFES

Most townships access, submit and manage their forms online through the State Auditor's Form Entry System (SAFES). The system is a user-friendly reporting portal that can be accessed through the Office of the State Auditor (OSA) website. It is also the OSA's preferred method of form submission. Township officials can download each year's reporting form, fill it out and then submit it through SAFES. No stamps, no faxes and no papers are involved!

If your township is not already using SAFES but is ready to transition to it, our staff will be happy to work with you to help you submit your form electronically. Once you have tried it, you will be sold! For assistance in using SAFES, please contact us by e-mailing SAFES@osa.state.mn.us. Please include your name, title, township, township mailing address, and phone number. We will respond promptly.

If you're interested in seeing how SAFES works, a brief introductory video can be found on the OSA website, www.auditor.state.mn.us. Once there, find the "Forms" menu item, then select "SAFES". You will then be on the SAFES login page, where you will find a link to a short video. If you do not have high-speed internet, most libraries in Minnesota do, and the librarians are happy to help those who request assistance.

If your township uses the Small City and Town Accounting System (CTAS) Version 8, you can use CTAS to directly report your financial information through SAFES. Easy as pie, as they say!

If you have any questions regarding reporting to the Office of the State Auditor, please do not hesitate to contact the staff of our Government Information Division at GID@osa.state.mn.us. OSA staff members are great and very easy to work with. I know because I have received many very nice e-mails from Township officials over time which have commented on their very positive experience with OSA staff when it comes to reporting. It is a team effort!

For townships not yet reporting through SAFES, we will be sending an e-mail containing an attachment with the reporting forms to all townships we have mailed forms to in the past, rather than automatically mailing a paper form. Once the e-mail is received, the attachment can simply be opened and printed out. If your township still needs us to send a paper copy, please contact us at 651-297-3682 or through the GID@osa.state.mn.us e-mail and we will mail it to you.

Reminder

The 2014 financial information for towns reporting on a GAAP basis of accounting was due to the OSA by June 30, 2015. Towns reporting on a cash basis of accounting were due by March 31.

I want to thank all of the township officials who have completed and submitted your Town Financial Reporting Form to our office. If your township hasn't yet submitted your form, we'd be happy to assist you with any questions. You can contact us at (651) 297-3682. If you call after hours, please leave a message and someone from the OSA will contact you at their earliest opportunity.