



OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR

E-Update

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**State Auditor
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1. Avoiding Pitfalls – Disaster Recovery Plan
2. Pension Update
3. TIF Basics Training Update
4. Office of the State Auditor at the State Fair

1. Avoiding Pitfalls – Disaster Recovery Plan

Our hearts in the Office of the State Auditor go out to the southeastern Minnesota communities that have been impacted by the flooding. They have a lot of work ahead to recover, and we wish them the best.

This recent flooding highlights the need for public entities to adopt a disaster recovery plan to ensure continued governmental operations if faced with a disaster or a major computer breakdown. For example, counties would need to continue with the preparation of payroll, the calculation of tax assessments and settlements, and the recording of receipts and disbursements.

We recommend that a disaster recovery plan include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A list of key personnel, including the actual recovery team, who should be available during the recovery process;
- A description of the responsibilities of each member of the recovery team, and of all other entity employees;
- A plan as to how the entity will continue operations until normal operations are re-established;
- A list of materials the entity needs to continue operations and how they will be obtained;
- Identification of the space to be used by the entity during the disaster; and

- A schedule for developing and periodically reviewing and updating the plan.

The Minnesota Disaster Management Handbook, including sample resolutions that local units of government may need during a disaster, is found at:

http://www.dps.state.mn.us/dhsem/uploadedfile/dis_man_hand.pdf .

Disaster planning guidance specifically for cities and counties is available on the Department of Public Safety's Homeland Security and Emergency Management website at:

http://www.hsem.state.mn.us/HSem_view_Article.asp?docid=243&catid=11

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2. Pension Update

Volunteer Fire Relief Association Working Group

The Volunteer Fire Relief Association Working Group will convene again this fall. As you may recall, the Working Group was formed by the Office of the State Auditor in 2004 to bring together the major volunteer fire relief association stakeholders to develop relationships, facilitate communication, discuss relief association issues, and make the pension process easier and more effective. Legislative proposals of the Working Group became law in 2005 and 2006.

The Office of the State Auditor is seeking municipal representatives to serve on the group. If you are a finance director, clerk, treasurer, or administrator that works with your affiliated relief association and would be interested in becoming a Working Group member, please forward your contact information to Rose Hennessy Allen at (651) 296-5985 or Rose.Hennessy-Allen@state.mn.us. We would like to have representatives on the Working Group from across Minnesota, to share their perspectives and give balance to the group. Teleconferencing is available for those that may live outside of the metro area.

Pension Update – Investment Transition Guidance

The Office of the State Auditor has received many phone calls over the past week from relief associations that are invested with the Edward Jones investment company. As explained in last week's E-Update, the company

made a corporate decision to no longer service relief associations in Minnesota. The Pension Division has released a special newsletter to address some of the questions that have arisen. If you have questions regarding the matter please view the newsletter posted on the Office of the State Auditor's website at www.auditor.state.mn.us. Click on the link for "Pension Division Newsletter – August Volume 2" on the main page under "What's New at the State Auditor's Office."

3. TIF Basics Training Update

The TIF Division will be conducting five TIF Basics training sessions in the fall. The TIF Basics sessions provide a two day entry-level general overview of TIF. The first day will be devoted to explaining the basics of TIF. Anyone who needs a basic or refresher course on TIF is encouraged to attend. Day two will be devoted to assisting TIF representatives responsible for filling out annual TIF reports. This session will be limited to 10-12 people. The dates and locations of the training sessions are as follows:

September 19 and 20 - Eveleth	
October 3 and 4 - Little Falls	(Day 1 and 2 FULL)
October 24 and 25 - Wabasso	
November 1 and 2 - Chanhassen	(Day 2 FULL)
November 8 and 9 - Stewartville	

A registration form can be found on the Office of the State Auditor's website at www.auditor.state.mn.us. The agenda and information presented will be the same at each location and are provided at no cost to attendees. Pre-registration is required. The deadline for registration is five business days prior to each session. If you have questions, please contact the TIF Division at (651) 296-4716 or (651) 296-9255 or by email at tifdivision@auditor.state.mn.us.

4. Office of the State Auditor at the Minnesota State Fair

The Office of the State Auditor has an informational booth in the Education Building on Cosgrove Street. Our booth is staffed 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. through Labor Day. Stop on by and try to solve our audit mysteries. Our younger visitors can solve an Office of the State Auditor word search.