



OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR

E-Update

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State Auditor
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1. Deadline: Submit County Summary Budget Data by January 18, 2008

Minnesota Statute § 6.745 requires all Minnesota counties to provide summary budget data to the Office of the State Auditor no later than December 31 of each year. This information helps state policy makers identify overall trends in county revenue and spending decisions. County officials can also use it to compare their budget trends with the trends of similar counties.

The on-line form and instructions are available on the Office of the State Auditor's website at <http://www.auditor.state.mn.us>. The User ID and Password used to submit your County Financial Reporting Form are valid for submitting your 2008 budget information. This reporting cycle, the deadline for submitting the information is **January 18, 2008**. We recognize this date is past the statutory deadline, but it is necessary due to timing issues for county auditors. We will be pursuing legislation to modify the statutory date.

If you require assistance in completing the reporting form, please call Government Information Director Dave Kazeck at (651) 297- 3682 or email at Dave.Kazeck@state.mn.us. If you need a new User ID and/or Password please email Jessica Schwartz at Jessica.Schwartz@state.mn.us.

2. Office of the State Auditor Survey

The Office of the State Auditor is conducting a survey on the use of administrative penalty programs by local governments. The survey was sent to all cities and counties by either mail or email. If you did not receive the survey, please call Julie Wroblewski at 651-297-3681 or email her at Julie.Wroblewski@state.mn.us as soon as possible to ensure you are able to complete it by the December 21st deadline.

3. Training Opportunities

- **CTAS Training**

A CTAS training session is scheduled for December 20, 2007. The training session begins at 9:00 a.m. and will end at approximately 1:00 p.m. Lunch is on your own after the training session. Please call Dave Kazeck at (651) 297-3682 to register. The training session will be held at the Office of the State Auditor, Suite 500, 525 Park Street, St. Paul, MN. Directions to our office may be obtained from our website at <http://www.auditor.state.mn.us>.

- **Office of the State Auditor Seminar**

On January 31, 2008, the Office of the State Auditor will hold a professional seminar for those working with local government finances. The location will be the Ramada Mall of America in Bloomington, formerly the Thunderbird Hotel. Topics will include internal controls, accounting, legal compliance and auditing issues. More information, including a final agenda and registration form, should be available by next week's E-Update on December 14.

4. Update: 2008 Local Government Compensation Limit

Minnesota law sets a compensation limit for local government employees. The limit is adjusted each year based on the Consumer Price Index. For 2008, the limit will be \$144,711.

Detailed information on the compensation limit is available from the Department of Employee Relations at <http://www.doer.state.mn.us/lr-Salarycap/salarycap.htm>.

5. Update: Pension

State Fire Aid Forfeiture Deadline

The Office of the State Auditor is pleased to announce that all volunteer fire relief associations submitted their 2006 reporting year forms prior to the forfeiture deadline on November 30. This is the first time since the 2002 reporting year that everyone submitted their forms to avoid forfeiture of state fire aid. Thank you to the relief association trustees, municipal representatives, accountants, and the Pension Division team that worked right up to the deadline to ensure that reporting forms were submitted.

Working Group Report

The Office of the State Auditor's Volunteer Fire Relief Association Working Group held its fifth meeting of the year on Thursday, December 6. The Group reviewed draft legislation for eight proposals that had been discussed during the previous meetings. The Group adopted language for each proposal, making just a few minor changes. The members decided to hold an additional meeting to continue its discussion on return to service issues and discuss possible topics for next year's Working Group.

To view the Working Group proposals, please visit the "Fire Relief Association Working Group" section of our website at www.auditor.state.mn.us. The final meeting of the season will be held on Tuesday, January 8, from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm at our Saint Paul office. If you have questions regarding the Working Group please contact Rose Hennessy Allen at (651) 296-5985 or Rose.Hennessy-Allen@state.mn.us.

As you know, the changes adopted by the Working Group are merely proposals for the legislature to consider. They do not become law unless and until they are passed by the legislature, and signed by the Governor.

6. Avoiding Pitfalls: Security for Portable Computing and Media Devices

Notebook computers, USB flash drives, and other removable media devices, are particularly susceptible to loss. In addition, they are more likely to be used outside a secure network environment. As a result, extra care needs to be taken to protect the devices and any "not public" data contained on them.

All computers should be secured with a strong password. To protect both the data and the computer equipment, the following security measures should also be considered:

- Government data should not be stored on personal computers, personal USB flash drives, and other similar personal equipment.
- “Not public” data should be stored on a notebook computer or removable media device only when there is a business need.
- Data stored on a notebook computer or a removable media device should be strongly encrypted.
- When removable media are no longer in use, they should be securely destroyed.
- When disposing of computers, the hard drives should be securely erased.
- Cable locks should be used for all computers, except while in transit.
- Computers should not be left in an unattended vehicle.

The Minnesota Office of Enterprise Technology’s security policy for portable computing devices is found at:

http://www.state.mn.us/mn/externalDocs/OET/Portable_Computing_Devices_Policy_200604_122706031624_Portable%20Computing%20Devices.pdf

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