

**AUDIT REPORT  
OF  
DOUGLAS COUNTY COURT**

**JULY 1, 2003 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2004**

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**Issued on January 10, 2005**

# DOUGLAS COUNTY COURT

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# DOUGLAS COUNTY COURT

## SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

During our audit of Douglas County Court, we noted certain matters involving the internal control over financial reporting and other operational matters that are presented here. These comments and recommendations are intended to improve the internal control over financial reporting or result in operational efficiencies in the areas as follows:

1. ***Unclaimed Property:*** The County Court did not remit trust balances which were over three years old and had not been reported to the State Treasurer in accordance with State Statute.
2. ***Records Retention:*** The County Court could not locate a Bond Assignment Form.
3. ***Trust Balances:*** Trust balances which are not associated with a case need to be reviewed on an ongoing basis to determine what, if any, action needs to be taken to resolve the accounts.

More detailed information on the above items is provided hereafter. It should be noted that this report is critical in nature as it contains only our comments and recommendations on the areas noted for improvement and does not include our observations on any accounting strengths of the Court.

Draft copies of this report were furnished to the Court to provide them an opportunity to review the report and to respond to the comments and recommendations included in this report. The Court declined to respond.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesy extended to our auditors during the course of the audit.

# DOUGLAS COUNTY COURT

## COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Unclaimed Property

Neb. Rev. Stat. Section 25-2717 R.R.S. 1995 requires the County Judge to notify the State Treasurer regarding any fees, money, or costs due or belonging to persons which have not been paid or demanded within three years from the date the funds were paid to the County Court, and, at the direction of the State Treasurer, to remit such funds to the State Treasurer for deposit pursuant to the Unclaimed Property Act.

As of June 30, 2004, the County Court had 97 checks, totaling \$8,244, which had been outstanding for at least three years and had not been remitted to the State Treasurer in accordance with the Unclaimed Property Act. We further noted three trust balances, totaling \$25,273, did not have any activity since June 30, 2001.

We recommend the County Court work to promptly remit all unclaimed property in its possession in accordance with State Statute.

### 2. Records Retention

Nebraska Records Retention and Disposition Schedule 18, as issued by the Nebraska State Records Administrator, Section 18-7-4, states the original papers filed in misdemeanor cases, including those originally filed as a felony but disposed of in the County Court as a misdemeanor, may be disposed of five years after the judgment was entered. Good internal control requires adequate supporting documentation be retained by the County Court.

One of the 15 cases tested for adjustments could not be traced to supporting documentation. The portion of a bond that was not paid back to the defendant was adjusted over to fees. However, there was no supporting documentation from the defendant authorizing the assignment of their bond to fees.

We recommend the County Court retain all records, at a minimum, according to the Nebraska Records Retention Schedule.

### 3. Trust Balances

Good internal control and sound business practice require trust balances received by the County Court be reviewed on a regular basis to determine what action should be taken on those accounts.

# DOUGLAS COUNTY COURT

## COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(Continued)

### 3. Trust Balances (Concluded)

We noted seven of ten traffic trust balances tested, totaling \$901, were not applied to cases in a timely manner. Without a regular review of trust balances, there is an increased risk a case listed as outstanding will either not have proper further action taken, or that the amount collected may have been erroneously applied to the wrong case.

We recommend the County Court review trust balances on a regular basis to determine what action, if any, needs to be taken to resolve the accounts.

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## DOUGLAS COUNTY COURT

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### INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

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Mr. Frank Goodroe  
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We have audited the accompanying financial statement of Douglas County Court as of and for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2004, as listed in the Table of Contents. The financial statement is the responsibility of the Court's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statement based on our audit.

Tim Channer, CPA  
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Except as noted in the fifth paragraph, we conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statement is free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statement. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

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As discussed in Note 1, the financial statement was prepared on the basis of cash receipts and disbursements, which is a comprehensive basis of accounting other than generally accepted accounting principles.

Also, as discussed in Note 1, the financial statement presents only the Court's Agency Funds activity and does not purport to, and does not, present fairly the assets, liabilities, and results of operations of Douglas County Court for the year then ended in conformity with the cash receipts and disbursements basis of accounting.

We were unable to obtain a management representation letter from the Presiding Judge of Douglas County Court. The Presiding Judge declined to make the representation as required by generally accepted auditing standards.

In our opinion, except for the effects of such adjustment, if any, as might have been determined to be necessary had we been able to obtain the management representation letter from the Presiding Judge, the financial statement referred to above presents fairly, in all material respects, the assets and liabilities arising from cash transactions of the Agency Funds of Douglas County Court as of June 30, 2004, and the related activity for the fiscal year then ended, on the basis of accounting described in Note 1.

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated November 23, 2004, on our consideration of Douglas County Court's internal control over financial reporting and our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* and should be considered in assessing the results of our audit.

November 23, 2004

  
Dawn Hauffman CPA  
Deputy State Auditor

DOUGLAS COUNTY COURT  
 OMAHA, NEBRASKA  
**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**  
**ARISING FROM CASH TRANSACTIONS**  
**AGENCY FUNDS**

For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2004

	Balance July 1, 2003	Additions	Deductions	Balance June 30, 2004
<b>ASSETS</b>				
Cash and Deposits	\$ 7,006,017	\$ 16,673,030	\$ 19,303,648	\$ 4,375,399
<b>LIABILITIES</b>				
Due to State Treasurer:				
Regular Fees	\$ 76,998	\$ 2,045,318	\$ 2,074,976	\$ 47,340
Law Enforcement Fees	2,257	179,418	180,296	1,379
State Judges Retirement Fund	4,732	415,497	417,596	2,633
Court Administrative Fees	8,052	1,285,735	1,281,150	12,637
Legal Services Fees	5,134	470,135	471,595	3,674
Due to County Treasurer:				
Regular Fines	58,930	3,001,052	3,035,302	24,680
Overload Fines	350	75,739	75,339	750
Regular Fees	5,920	269,529	274,853	596
Due to Municipalities:				
Regular Fines	28,295	1,780,402	1,786,872	21,825
Regular Fees	7,347	97,253	99,861	4,739
Trust Fund Payable	6,808,002	7,052,952	9,605,808	4,255,146
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 7,006,017</b>	<b>\$ 16,673,030</b>	<b>\$ 19,303,648</b>	<b>\$ 4,375,399</b>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statement.



DOUGLAS COUNTY COURT  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2004

**1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**

**A. Reporting Entity**

The Douglas County Court is established by State Statute and is administratively operated through the Court Administrator's Office of the Nebraska Supreme Court, which is part of the State of Nebraska reporting entity. The Statement of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions of the County Court reflects only the Agency Funds activity of the Court; the receipts, and their subsequent disbursement to the appropriate entities for which they were collected. The financial statement does not reflect the personal services expenses of the Court, which are paid by the Nebraska Supreme Court, or the operating expenses, which are paid by Douglas County.

**B. Basis of Accounting**

The accounting records of the County Court Agency Funds are maintained, and the Statement of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions has been prepared, on the cash receipts and disbursements basis of accounting. Under this basis of accounting, fines, fees, and receipts relating to trust funds are shown as additions to assets and as an increase in the related liability when received. Likewise, disbursements are shown as deductions to assets and a decrease in the related liability when a check is written. This differs from Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) which requires the accrual basis of accounting. Under GAAP, Agency Funds would be reported in the Statement of Net Assets. Agency Funds are not reported in the Statement of Changes of Fiduciary Net Assets. Agency Funds are used to report resources held by the reporting government in a purely custodial capacity. Agency Funds typically involve only the receipt, temporary investment, and remittance of fiduciary resources to individuals, private organizations, or other governments.

**2. Deposits and Investments**

Funds held by the County Court are deposited and invested in accordance with rules issued by the Supreme Court as directed by Neb. Rev. Stat. Section 25-2713 R.R.S. 1995. Funds are generally consolidated in an interest-bearing checking account; however, the Court may order certain trust funds to be invested separately. Any deposits in excess of the amount insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation are required by Neb. Rev. Stat. Section 77-2326.04 R.R.S. 2003 to be secured either by a surety bond or as provided in the Public Funds Deposit Security Act.

**DOUGLAS COUNTY COURT  
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

(Continued)

**2. Deposits and Investments (Concluded)**

The carrying amounts and bank balances of total deposits, consisting of checking accounts, savings accounts, money market accounts, and certificates of deposit, were as follows:

	Total Cash and Deposit <u>Carrying Amount</u>	<u>Cash Amount</u>	Deposit <u>Carrying Amount</u>	<u>Bank Balance</u>
June 30, 2004	\$ 4,375,399	\$ 3,535	\$ 4,371,864	\$ 4,867,342

However, funds were entirely covered by federal depository insurance or by collateral securities pledged to the Court and held by a Federal Reserve Bank, or by a Bank or trust company in this State other than the depository bank.

# STATE OF NEBRASKA AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

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## DOUGLAS COUNTY COURT REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING AND ON COMPLIANCE AND OTHER MATTERS BASED ON AN AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS PERFORMED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS

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We have audited the financial statement of Douglas County Court as of and for the year ended June 30, 2004, and have issued our report thereon dated November 23, 2004. Our opinion on the financial statement of Douglas County Court was qualified because we were unable to obtain a management representation letter from the Presiding Judge of Douglas County Court. The report was also modified to emphasize that the financial statement presents only the Agency Funds of Douglas County Court prepared on the basis of cash receipts and disbursements. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

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### Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

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In planning and performing our audit, we considered Douglas County Court's internal control over financial reporting in order to determine our auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statement and not to provide an opinion on the internal control over financial reporting. Our consideration of the internal control over financial reporting would not necessarily disclose all matters in the internal control over financial reporting that might be material weaknesses. A material weakness is a condition in which the design or operation of one or more of the internal control components does not reduce to a relatively low level the risk that misstatements in amounts that would be material in

relation to the financial statement being audited may occur and not be detected within a timely period by employees in the normal course of performing their assigned functions. We noted no matters involving the internal control over financial reporting and its operation that we consider to be material weaknesses.

Compliance and Other Matters

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether Douglas County Court's financial statement is free of material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws and regulations, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the determination of financial statement amounts. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit and, accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

We also noted certain additional matters that we reported to the management of Douglas County Court in the Comments Section of this report as Comment Number 1 (Unclaimed Property), Comment Number 2 (Records Retention), and Comment Number 3 (Trust Balances).

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Court, the appropriate Federal and regulatory agencies. However, this report is a matter of public record and its distribution is not limited.

November 23, 2004



Deputy State Auditor