

The State Scanner



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Getting It Right—Agency Spotlight

Each quarter, this space spotlights an agency that consistently receives the coveted “Perfect Audit.” This quarter the Alabama Department of Revenue is in the spotlight. Their policies and procedures have ranked them as one of our top performers. This year was their third consecutive perfect audit. We asked Property Manager Susie White to share their best practices with everyone.

AUD: *How many locations are involved in the Department of Revenue property audit?*

REV: We have 21 locations that are audited - six in Montgomery and 15 throughout Alabama.

AUD: *How many items does Revenue have in the system, and what is the value of the items?*

REV: There are 3,476 items with a value of \$6,723,836 in the system.

AUD: *What are the biggest challenges you and your department face in accurately tracking all the property owned by Revenue, and how have you overcome these challenges?*

REV: Our biggest challenge is in keeping up with the changes in the “Person Responsible” when employees retire or relocate to another division. We have overcome this by working closely with the ITD division property manager. When a request is received to update computer equipment, we then contact the division property manager to have them fill out the proper paperwork to send to us to update the system.

AUD: *What procedures does Revenue have in place to track items, including new items, and items transferred to other agencies as well as Surplus—What are your Best Practices?*

REV: To ensure we have all new items accounted for and entered into Protégé, we reconcile a monthly new additions report. We refer to the property manual as a guide for reporting lost, stolen and destroyed items as well as work closely with the division property managers to

encourage them to report to us these situations as soon as they know about them. When transferring items to another agency, we verify the items are correct before the property manager picks up the items. The SD-1 is completed and the system is updated. We work with Jamie Hollingsworth on items sent to Surplus to schedule delivery and make sure all items are numbered and accounted for properly.

AUD: *What improvements were made to your agency’s procedures to decrease the time and cost involved in completing the property audit?*

REV: We set up a schedule with Patty and the auditors before the audit begins with the dates, times, and locations. We then send this information to the division property managers to let them know the schedule, and they inform their coworkers so they will be prepared. With everyone working together, we went from a month long audit to two weeks this last audit.

AUD: *What is the philosophy of Commissioner Tim Russell regarding the state-owned personal property of the Department of Revenue?*

REV: Commissioner Russell supports property management and states, “The personal property of the Department of Revenue are the assets entrusted to us by the citizens of the State of Alabama. Since we have been granted this trust, it is our responsibility to safeguard those assets to the highest degree possible. Our wonderful employees take this responsibility seriously and are constantly striving to maintain control in a manner that will lead to a perfect audit.”

AUD: *Any advice for other agencies having problems?*

REV: Encourage and work closely with the division property managers and the property inventory officers to let them know you are

Best Practices of Revenue

- MONTHLY NEW ITEMS REPORT
- FOLLOW ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES
- ENCOURAGE AND WORK CLOSELY WITH ALL PROPERTY PERSONNEL
- BE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST PROPERTY PERSONNEL WITH ISSUES
- KEEP PROPERTY RECORDS CURRENT
- COMMITMENT FROM REVENUE COMMISSIONER TIM RUSSELL

available to assist them. Include property personnel in the decision making process. Stay on top of everything to avoid getting behind. If something doesn’t work, replace it. Last, but not least, have fun and enjoy what you do.

Thanks Revenue for a job well done!



Revenue Property Manager Susie White with Alan Smith, Inventory Control Officer.



From the Desk of Sam Shaw, State Auditor

In the premiere issue of The State Scanner, I touched on my goal of having all agencies on the statewide asset management system Protégé. The majority of State agencies have complied; however, there are agencies remaining that are not on Protégé.

Let’s look at the advantages and disadvantages of Protégé. One of the main advantages to being on our system is that the inter-departmental inventory has to be conducted annually, whereas those not on Protégé are required to conduct their inventory twice each year. This doubles the workload on your agency personnel. Protégé can be updated immediately with changes and additions for those on our system, otherwise updates can only be done every four months. This leads to discrepancies between our office and the agency being audited as well as the Examiners of Public Accounts. Agencies on our system know which items our SAIOs are searching for prior to their audit. This saves valuable time for the agency as well as our staff. And last, but certainly not least, there is no cost involved for the agency. We provide training and support to agencies on Protégé.

Improved efficiency, accuracy and no cost sounds like a win, win situation. If your agency is not currently on Protégé, please contact my office for additional information or to schedule a meeting to discuss.

Sam Shaw, State Auditor



The State Scanner

Where in Alabama...?

Forestry personnel battling a wildfire.

The primary responsibility of AFC is wildfire suppression, but educating the public in forest management and protection is also a major focus.

...has the State Auditor's Office been lately? Recently, our State Audit Inventory Officers (SAIOs) were literally tracking through the woods with the Alabama Forestry Commission which presents several physical challenges in performing the property audit.

Property manager Jerry Dakins explains, "The AFC has a wide diversity of equipment which includes office equipment, communications equipment, and fire suppression equipment including ATV's, pick-up trucks, truck transports, and large bull dozers. This equipment is located at tower sites, county and regional offices, 911 dispatch centers, volunteer fire departments, and other locations throughout the state. Some areas are in very remote locations requiring four-wheel drive vehicles to access."

The AFC has over 4,700 items valued at more than \$34 million. In addition to State property, they track over 3,000 items of Federal property loaned to the agency and volunteer fire departments for wildfire suppression which is valued at over \$24 million. This equipment has been sent to Georgia, Texas, and Oklahoma along with personnel to assist with wildfires. Frequently, equipment has been in use on active wildfires when the SAIOs arrived to conduct the audit.

Dakins states, "In an effort to become more efficient and better utilize personnel, our agency recently completed a reorganization. As part of this reorganization, we converted from county operations to work-unit operations. Supervisors designated personnel to be responsible for assigned equipment in each county to increase accountability." Hand receipts are used when transferring items between employees, then forwarded on to the property office. The information is updated in Protégé and the agency database, then placed in the asset file. AFC also maintains an Access database with all inventory which allows them to generate a greater variety of reports used in operational and budget decisions.

State Forester, Linda Casey, states, "We have an obligation and responsibility to the tax payers to utilize our funding in the most efficient and cost effective manner. This responsibility includes an accurate and timely accounting of all AFC assets and personal property. The AFC takes this responsibility seriously and our audit results prove our commitment to be accountable to the tax payers of Alabama."

Until next quarter, we'll be "on the road again".



Remote radio repeater tower station and antennae.

Employee Corner

As the ad states, "Membership has its rewards." On Tuesday, November 17, 2009, the Capitol City Chapter of NPMA, along with the State Auditor's Office, will host a one-day educational seminar on State Government Property Management. We are so excited about this seminar. Our speaker line-up for the day includes national leaders within NPMA with Mr. Alva Lambert entertaining us during lunch. The event will be 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Auburn Montgomery (AUM) Taylor Center. We have worked to make the event affordable so property managers from each agency can attend. Early registration cost for NPMA members is \$50 and cost for non-members is \$75 which includes lunch and afternoon snack. After October 19, cost increases to \$65 for NPMA members and \$90 for non-members.

You may wonder if being a property manager means you are a member of NPMA. Unfortunately, it does not. Membership dues are \$100 annually, but members receive discounted rates to seminars during the year, including this one-day seminar.

Membership offers networking opportunities with property professionals from across the nation and a subscription to *The Property Professional*, NPMA's bimonthly publication. A portion of your dues also come back to our chapter to help support us financially, making this one-day seminar possible.

It was suggested recently for the Auditor's Office to compile a Best Practices document from all agencies. We have strived to highlight best practices from various agencies in our newsletter, but having a document with all of them combined would be a benefit for all. Over the next few months, please send Best Practices used by your agency to Kathie Lynch. She will compile them into one document for distribution at the seminar. Also include things you have tried that didn't work so others will avoid the same mistakes and heartaches. Please e-mail Best Practices and Mistakes to Kathie.Lynch@auditor.alabama.gov. Deadline for submission is October 15, 2009. See you at the seminar!

Did You Know? FAQs



Important Dates to Remember:

September 3, 2009 – Next Capitol City Chapter NPMA meeting at the Forestry Commission building at 513 Madison Avenue, Montgomery, 2:00 p.m. Parking behind building in fenced lot.

November 17, 2009 – Capitol City Chapter NPMA one-day seminar on State Government Property Management. We have scheduled speakers from the national level of NPMA. You won't want to miss this event.

Q: *What are the procedures for year end?*

A: Procedures for agencies on Protégé and those not on Protégé are:

- 1.) Have all additions and changes entered before 5:00 p.m. on September 30 when the system will be shut down for end of year processing.
- 2.) Run person responsible report by September 30 to obtain signatures.
- 3.) Run Examiner's Listing for your records.
- 4.) Have all SD1s to Patty Toney by September 18 (start checking now to see if you have any open SD1s) (Instructions: Go to Transfers – Search – when the screen appears, click the down arrow in the Status field – choose Open – then click Search.
- 5.) On October 1, **do not** add any new items **UNTIL** you have printed all your reports.
- 6.) Using the Examiner's Listing figures, you will need to send the year-end report to Patty (preferably by email: patty.toney@auditor.alabama.gov). She only needs the letter, not the actual reports.
- 7.) **For agencies not on Protégé**, please send your Excel file to Patty **no later than September 15**.