



The State Scanner

State of Alabama, Office of the State Auditor

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Getting It Right—Agency Spotlight

Best Practices of Veterans Affairs

- SOUND POLICIES THAT ARE FOLLOWED
- CONDUCT BI-ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDITS
- OPEN COMMUNICATION WITH ALL DEPARTMENTS
- EMPLOYEE ACCOUNTABILITY
- COMMITMENT FROM ADVA COMMISSIONER REAR ADMIRAL W. CLYDE MARSH

Inside this issue:

From the Desk of Sam Shaw, State Auditor	2
Employee Corner	2
Where in Alabama?	3
Where in Alabama? [Part 2]	3
Property Pointers & Leadership Moment	4
Did You Know—FAQs	4
Contact Information	4

In each issue, this article spotlights an agency that consistently receives the coveted “Perfect Audit.” In this issue we spotlight the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs (ADVA). Their policies and procedures have ranked them as one of our top performers. This year marked their fifth consecutive perfect audit. We asked Property Manager Willie Moore to share their best practices with us.

AUD: How many locations are involved in the ADVA property audit?

ADVA: We have 79 different locations audited each cycle.

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

ADVA: There are 2,156 items with a value of \$2,902,726 in the system.

AUD: What are some of your biggest challenges you face in properly tracking all the property, and how have you overcome these challenges?

ADVA: The major challenge I have is the fact that I have 79 locations spread throughout the state. Some people work several locations and have a tendency from time to time to move an item from one location to another

without proper authority. I have put a policy in place to prohibit moving any item without my approval. I conduct in-house bi-annual audits, and keep a good line of communication open with all department personnel in respect to property items.

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



Department of Veterans Affairs Property Manager Willie Moore.

ADVA: As far as tracking new items, the key is maintaining good communication with my accounting section to confirm when new property is expected so I can ensure it is placed on inventory in a timely manner. For lost, destroyed or transferred items, I complete the SD1 and identify which category the item falls into and send a copy to the

Auditor’s Office. If items are stolen, we contact the local police authority and file a report along with the SD1, then forward on to the Auditor’s Office.

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

ADVA: The greatest improvement I have made was to purchase property scanners, which allows us to conduct our bi-annual audits more timely and accurately. This has greatly contributed to my last five perfect audits.

AUD: What is Commissioner W. Clyde Marsh’s philosophy or commitment regarding personal property of Veterans Affairs?

ADVA: Rear Admiral W. Clyde Marsh comments, “My philosophy is to train employees with the knowledge and tools necessary to do the job. I also stress responsibility and accountability. Although teamwork is always important, everyone is responsible for their

(continued on page 2)



**Samantha "Sam" Shaw,
State Auditor**

Property managers and agency directors play a vital role in asset management.

From the Desk of Sam Shaw, State Auditor

With the holiday season rapidly approaching, let us pause and celebrate the blessings we have received this year at Thanksgiving. We often get caught up in the hustle and bustle of Christmas without stopping to celebrate this joyous occasion with family and friends.

That being said, we have made great strides within the Office of State Auditor the past few years, starting with a couple of my predecessors. They laid the groundwork in getting the asset management database operational and in getting agencies bar-coded. I am very grateful for that. We have tweaked the process with improvements and policy changes. These changes have paved the way for agencies' ability to receive perfect audits. Property managers and agency directors/commissioners have played a vital role in this process. Without their dedication and commitment, we would not have the success we have had in asset management. We will continue to strive toward 100% perfect audits and toward 100% of agencies bar-coded.

My focus is still the same as it was when I took office almost four years ago—raise awareness and accountability in asset management. My promise to the various property managers across State agencies, and to the taxpayer, is that I will continue to push for high accountability in asset management of State-owned personal property. You deserve nothing less, and you have my word on it!

Wishing you a very happy holiday season and many blessings as we usher in 2011 in the coming weeks.

Sam Shaw, State Auditor

Getting It Right *(continued from page 1)*

piece of the puzzle when it comes to providing services to veterans regarding information, counseling, and assistance. ADVA employees are also responsible and accountable for the security, operation, and safekeeping of the equipment or professional tools they use. The bottom line is to treat veterans and others the way you would want to be treated and to take care of ADVA equipment

as you would your own."

AUD: What advice can you give agencies that have problems with tracking all personal property and inputting new items in a timely manner?

ADVA: Stress to your agency heads the awesome responsibility you have as

property manager for the agency and point out you can be cited by the Auditor's Office and the Examiners of Public Accounts for non-compliance or failure to input items into the system.

Thanks Veterans Affairs for a job well done! Keep up the good work.

Employee Corner—Green Fleet News

This article was submitted by Searcy Rushing, who is the State Equipment Management Coordinator designee.



Think Green!

"I want to express my thanks to Patty Toney and Karen Barron from the State Auditor's Office for their assistance and support to my staff and the Base Line Inventory Working Group in development, distribution, and gathering

of data for the Initial Inventory and Analysis Report required by the recently passed Green Fleet Act 2009-650. It is essential for each agency to return your completed report back to Patty as soon as possible. This is a very important report and is required to be completed by every State Agency, Board and Commission. Please ensure that each field has complete and accurate data. Failure to return the required data by your agency could have a major impact on whether your agency is allowed to pur-

chase vehicles in the future and/or what type of vehicles will be authorized for your agency. In addition, the new law requires that copies of all reports will be forwarded to the Green Fleet Review Committee for their review and they will present their findings to the Permanent Joint Legislative Committee on Energy Policy."

For assistance or questions, please contact Patty Toney at 334-242-7036 or Patty.Toney@auditor.alabama.gov.

Where in Alabama . . . ?

...has the State Auditor's Office been lately? They have been traveling up and down Alabama's highways and byways with the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC). If you are a history buff, like a couple of our State Audit Inventory Officers, there are many interesting places and things to see around this great State of ours.

Property Inventory Officer Gail Marchant states, "Over 75% of our inventory is historic objects. They are the artifacts that make up the permanent collections at our historic sites. Many of the antiques are over 100 years old. In order to adapt to an inventory system based on costs, we provide approximate values for these objects." Because of the historical nature of the items, the AHC maintains an inventory of items less than \$500 as well. They have a total of 5,056 items with a total value of \$3,795,135 with just 1,579 of them valued greater than \$500. There are eleven different historic houses, forts, parks and other sites, including the State Capitol.

With items of such historical significance, and items that can be mobile at times, one would think it next to impossible to keep track of everything. Marchant explains that when items are received, site directors and AHC personnel responsible for the assets are required to submit an Equipment Inventory Form attached to the invoice and Material Receipt to the accounting department. Copies are then forwarded to Gail for her to assign a property number and enter it into Protégé. "Anytime an item is moved or transferred, a Property

Change Memo is sent to me so that we have a paper trail of changes." The AHC also uses PastPerfect collection management software to manage the permanent, historical collection. Staff at each site have access to enter information into this database. "The system also allows staff to import pictures of the artifacts and antiques. All of this helps maintain our perfect inventory audits."

Executive Director, Frank W. White states, "As executive director of the Historical Commission, it is my goal to continue the excellent work of our property inventory officer, Gail Marchant. We are responsible for a large amount of personal property and historical artifacts. I am totally committed to protecting these assets for the citizens of Alabama."

Marchant adds, "The history, antiques, and artifacts at these locations cannot be replaced; therefore, the Historical Commission strives to preserve and protect our inventory for generations to come. Being involved with NPMA (National Property Management Association) furthers my skills and knowledge in asset management and accountability." With five perfect audits, that is a testament of a job well done.

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



Magnolia Grove in Greensboro: boyhood home of Spanish-American War hero and U.S. Congressman Richmond Pearson Hobson, who was also an advocate of women's rights and civil rights.

"I am totally committed to protecting the historical artifacts for the citizens of Alabama."
Executive Director
Frank W. White

Where in Alabama . . . ? [PART 2]

...have you been this year? Did you know that 2010 is The Year of Small Towns and Downtowns? Its not too late to catch an event before the end of the year. Next year will bring The Year of Alabama Music. To see a listing of events and attractions, visit the Alabama Department of Tourism website, www.alabama.travel, to help plan your trip. It just makes sense to vacation here in Alabama.

Are you ready for a road trip? Here are some top picks.

- **RTJ Golf Trail:** With cooler temperatures, it is the perfect time to catch a round of golf. Of course, for those of you who are avid golfers, anytime is the perfect time for golf. Visit www.rtgolf.com for more info.
- **Huntsville:** The U.S. Space & Rocket Center is hosting The Chronicles of Narnia: The Exhibition through January 5. CSI: The Experience runs January 21 through May 1. Huntsville Botanical Gardens hosts Galaxy of Lights, and don't forget Santa's Village at Alabama Constitution Village. For event locations, dates, and information, see www.huntsville.org.



- **Bellingrath Gardens & Home:** Now through December 31, experience the holiday tradition of *Magic Christmas in Lights*. For details, see www.bellingrath.org.

- **Montgomery Zoo & Mann Wildlife Learning Museum:** The weather is still nice to take the kids or grandkids to the zoo for a fun and educational experience. The baby giraffe and white Bengal tiger cubs are a must see. Open daily 9:00—5:00.

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*Adding another layer of
governmental accountability for the
citizens of Alabama.*

Property Pointers

Value—Webster's defines value as, "That for which something is regarded as useful or desirable; utility, merit, or worth." Property Managers are of great value to each State agency. Asset management is sometimes a thankless task, much like parenthood. However, just like with parents, where would we be without them—the property manager that is? We add value to our agency when we efficiently manage all assets, including those deemed sensitive in nature. When equipment is lost or damaged, it can be expensive to replace or repair the items. With budgets as they are, agencies can't afford to be lax in the control of their assets. So you see, property managers are of great value! Thank you for the valuable job you do for this State.

Leadership Moment

Do you sometimes feel changing your life or your course in life is next to impossible? Noted author Dr. John Maxwell states, "Hope is the foundational principle for all change." When you fail at a task or goal, do you look for excuses and someone to blame, or do you look to understand the failure?

Maxwell lists six steps to change your life: "1) When you change your thinking, you change your beliefs. 2) When you change your beliefs, you change your expectations. 3) When you change your expectations, you change your attitude. 4) When you change your attitude, you change your behavior. 5) When you change your behavior, you change your performance. 6) When you change your performance, you change your life. You are responsible for the changes that you make in your life, but the good news is, you can make the changes you need to make in your life." With a little effort, you CAN do it!

Did You Know? FAQ's



Important Dates to Remember:

Thursday, December 9, 2010—Capitol City Chapter NPMA Christmas luncheon at 12:00 noon, Forestry Commission Auditorium. Cost is \$10, catered by King's Table Catering. Contact Glenda at 334-844-4648 ext.

NPMA—Are you a member? If not, we want to encourage all property managers to join NPMA. Being a member of a professional organization related to your job adds value to you and your career. For membership information or to join, visit www.npma.org.

224 or at Glenda.Senn@ads.alabama.gov for reservations by **December 1**. Anyone involved with property is welcome to attend. Drop off payment at the Auditor's Office or mail payment to Glenda Senn, Alabama Dept. of Forensic Sciences, P. O. Box 3510, Auburn, AL 36831-3510. Checks should be made payable to Capitol City Chapter NPMA.

Q: How do the 'Green Fleet' bills passed in the 2009 legislative session affect me and my agency?

A: The Green Fleet legislation only affects those agencies with fleet vehicles. Agencies will be required to file a form at the end of each fiscal year to the Green Fleet Coordinator with the following information for each vehicle: make and model of vehicle, mileage and number of miles driven, gallons of fuel purchased, etc. For a copy of the bill, go to the Secretary of State's website, www.sos.alabama.gov, click on the Government Records tab, select Legislative Acts. Under Legislative Acts Search Options, select Act Number, then key in 2009-650 and search. The bill will be displayed for you to read and print for future reference. In this issue, see message from Searcy Rushing, State Equipment Management Coordinator, in the *Employee Corner* article.