

**AUDIT REPORT
OF
HOWARD COUNTY COURT**

JULY 1, 1998 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1999

HOWARD COUNTY COURT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<u>Comments Section</u>	
Comment and Recommendation	1
<u>Financial Section</u>	
Independent Auditors' Report	2 - 3
Financial Statement:	
Statement of Changes in Assets and Liabilities - Agency Funds - For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1999 - Exhibit A	4
Notes to Financial Statement	5
<u>Government Auditing Standards Section</u>	
Report on Compliance and on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with <u>Government Auditing Standards</u>	6 - 7

HOWARD COUNTY COURT

COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

During our audit of Howard County Court, we noted a certain matter involving the internal control over financial reporting that is presented here. The comment and recommendation is intended to improve the internal control over financial reporting in the following area:

Segregation of Duties

Good internal control includes a plan of organization, procedures, and records designed to safeguard assets and provide reliable financial records. A system of internal control should include proper segregation of duties so no one individual is capable of handling all phases of a transaction from beginning to end.

We noted the office of the County Court had a lack of segregation of duties since one person is capable of handling all aspects of processing a transaction from beginning to end. Due to a limited number of personnel, an adequate segregation of duties is not possible without additional cost. Personnel are under the direction of both the Nebraska State Court Administrator and the Presiding Judge. We have noted this comment in previous audits.

We recommend the County Court along with the Nebraska State Court Administrator review this situation. As always, the cost of hiring additional personnel versus the benefit of a proper segregation of duties must be weighed.

It should be noted that this report is critical in nature since it contains only our comment and recommendation on the area noted for improvement and does not include our observations on any strong features 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 comment and recommendation 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.

STATE OF NEBRASKA
Auditor of Public Accounts



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HOWARD COUNTY COURT

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

We have audited the financial statement of Howard County Court as of and for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1999, 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.

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards 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 that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

As discussed in Note 1, the financial statement presents only the Court's Agency Funds activity and is not intended to present fairly the financial position and results of operations of Howard County Court in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

In our opinion, the financial statement referred to above presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Agency Funds of Howard County Court as of June 30, 1999, and the related activity for the fiscal year then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

In accordance with Government Auditing Standards, we have also issued our report dated October 28, 1999, on our consideration of Howard County Court's internal control over financial reporting and our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grants.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Deann Hayfman CPA". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The letters "CPA" are written in a slightly more upright, blocky font at the end of the signature.

Deputy State Auditor

October 28, 1999

HOWARD COUNTY COURT
ST. PAUL, NEBRASKA
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
AGENCY FUNDS

For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1999

Exhibit A

	Balance July 1, 1998	Additions	Deductions	Balance June 30, 1999
ASSETS				
Cash and Deposits	\$ 26,119	\$ 254,696	\$ 258,089	\$ 22,726
LIABILITIES				
Due to State Treasurer:				
Regular Fees	\$ -	\$ 36,262	\$ 36,262	\$ -
Law Enforcement Fees	-	2,124	2,124	-
Interest	-	1,038	1,038	-
State Judges Retirement Fund	-	1,887	1,887	-
Automation Fees	-	33	33	-
Legal Services Fees	-	2,184	2,184	-
Due to County Treasurer:				
Regular Fines	-	87,855	87,855	-
Overload Fines	-	2,675	2,675	-
Regular Fees	-	6,700	6,700	-
Due to Municipalities,				
Regular Fines	-	374	374	-
Trust Fund Benefits, Payable	26,119	113,564	116,957	22,726
Total Liabilities	\$ 26,119	\$ 254,696	\$ 258,089	\$ 22,726

See Notes to Financial Statement.

HOWARD COUNTY COURT
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT

June 30, 1999

1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

A. Reporting Entity

The Howard 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 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 service expenses of the Court which are paid by the Nebraska Supreme Court or the operating expenses which are paid by Howard 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 has been prepared on the modified accrual basis of accounting. Under this basis of accounting, fines, fees and receipts relating to trust funds are shown as additions to assets and an increase in the related liability when received because they are generally not measurable until actually received. Likewise, disbursements are shown as deductions to assets and a decrease in the related liability when a check is written.

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 State Statute 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 State Statute Section 77-2326.04, R.R.S. 1996, to be secured either by a surety bond or pledged collateral securities.

The June 30, 1999, carrying amount of total deposits which includes a checking account was \$22,726. The bank balance was \$38,658. All funds were entirely covered by federal depository insurance.

STATE OF NEBRASKA
Auditor of Public Accounts



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HOWARD COUNTY COURT
**REPORT ON COMPLIANCE AND ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL
REPORTING BASED ON AN AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS PERFORMED
IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS**

We have audited the financial statement of Howard County Court as of and for the year ended June 30, 1999, and have issued our report thereon dated October 28, 1999. The report was modified to emphasize that the financial statement presents only the Agency Funds of Howard County Court. We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

Compliance

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether Howard 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 that are required to be reported under Government Auditing Standards.

Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit, we considered Howard 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 assurance on the internal control over financial reporting. However, we noted certain matters involving the internal control over financial reporting and its operation that we consider to be reportable conditions. Reportable conditions involve matters coming to our attention relating to significant deficiencies

in the design or operation of the internal control over financial reporting that, in our judgment, could adversely affect Howard County Court's ability to record, process, summarize and report financial data consistent with the assertions of management in the financial statement. A reportable condition is described in the Comments Section of the report as Comment Number 1 (Segregation of Duties).

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 statements being audited may occur and not be detected within a timely period by employees in the normal course of performing their assigned functions. Our consideration of the internal control over financial reporting would not necessarily disclose all matters in the internal control that might be reportable conditions and, accordingly, would not necessarily disclose all reportable conditions that are also considered to be material weaknesses. However, of the reportable conditions described above, we consider comment number 1 to be a material weakness.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the court, the appropriate Federal and regulatory agencies and citizens of the State of Nebraska and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Deann Hayfner CPA". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deputy State Auditor

October 28, 1999