

**AUDIT REPORT
OF
ADAMS COUNTY COURT**

JULY 1, 2000 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2001

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ADAMS COUNTY COURT

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ADAMS COUNTY COURT

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

During our audit of the Adams 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. ***Segregation of Duties:*** One individual was capable of handling all aspects of processing transactions from beginning to end.
2. ***Investments:*** The County Court's financial records incorrectly reflected \$259,008 in investments as assets on hand, despite the investments having been previously paid out in full by the County Court.
3. ***Unclaimed Property:*** Funds outstanding for over three years were not remitted to the State Treasurer as unclaimed property.
4. ***Restrictive Endorsement of Checks:*** Checks on hand were not restrictively endorsed.

More detailed information on the above items is provided hereafter. It should be noted that this report is critical in nature since it contains only our comments and recommendations on the areas 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 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.

ADAMS COUNTY COURT

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. 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 was capable of handling all aspects of processing transactions from beginning to end. However, 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.

2. Investments

Sound accounting practices require financial records accurately reflect all assets in the County Court's possession. In addition, functional use of the Nebraska Court Administrator's JUSTICE roll-over redemption program requires investment activity, particularly redemptions, be run through the County Court's bank accounts to provide comprehensive investment accountability.

At June 30, 2001, the County Court's JUSTICE financial records showed investments totaling \$259,008 on hand. However, these investments had previously been paid out in full and, therefore, were no longer on hand at fiscal year end. Furthermore, these investments continued to be shown in the financial records as on hand at the time of the audit. In addition, interest earned on investments was not being receipted or adjusted onto the case balances in a timely manner and investment redemptions were being paid out directly by financial institutions rather than run through the County Court's bank accounts.

We recommend the County Court promptly receipt or adjust interest as soon as it is notified of such earnings. We further recommend all investment redemptions be run through the County Court's bank accounts, following the process provided in the Nebraska Court Administrator's JUSTICE roll-over redemption program.

ADAMS COUNTY COURT

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3. 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, 2001, the County Court had 78 checks, totaling \$3,482, and three case balances, totaling \$513, which had been outstanding for over three years. In February 2002 the County Court remitted \$2,175 in unclaimed property on its manual accounts. No remittances were noted on the County Court's JUSTICE financial accounts.

We recommend the County Court comply with State Statutes and promptly remit all such required fees, monies, or costs as directed by the State Treasurer.

4. Restrictive Endorsement of Checks

Good internal control requires checks be restrictively endorsed immediately upon receipt. The practice of holding checks unendorsed increases the risk of loss, theft, or misuse of County Court funds.

During a surprise cash count, 16 checks on hand, totaling \$1,198, were not restrictively endorsed. These 16 checks on hand represented all checks on hand at the time of the cash count.

We recommend all checks received be restrictively endorsed immediately upon receipt.

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ADAMS COUNTY COURT

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

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We have audited the financial statement of Adams County Court as of and for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2001, 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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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 presents only the Court's Agency Funds activity and is not intended to present fairly the financial position and results of operations of Adams County Court in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

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In our opinion, the financial statement referred to above presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Agency Funds of Adams County Court as of June 30, 2001, 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 May 8, 2002, on our consideration of Adams County Court's internal control over financial reporting and our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grants. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards and should be read in conjunction with this report in considering the results of our audit.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dawn Haffner CPA". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the date.

May 8, 2002

Deputy State Auditor

ADAMS COUNTY COURT
HASTINGS, NEBRASKA
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
AGENCY FUNDS

For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2001

	Balance July 1, 2000	Additions	Deductions	Balance June 30, 2001
ASSETS				
Cash and Deposits	\$ 338,253	\$ 1,095,781	\$ 1,211,497	\$ 222,537
LIABILITIES				
Due to State Treasurer:				
Regular Fees	\$ 13,874	\$ 154,932	\$ 154,243	\$ 14,563
Law Enforcement Fees	776	8,085	8,160	701
Interest	69	805	834	40
State Judges Retirement Fund	681	7,996	7,954	723
Automation Fees	6	68	71	3
Legal Services Fees	820	8,768	8,804	784
Due to County Treasurer:				
Regular Fines	24,767	255,505	257,963	22,309
Overload Fines	3,225	12,000	13,625	1,600
Regular Fees	1,819	16,122	15,281	2,660
Witness Fee Fund	591	5,300	4,981	910
Due to Municipalities:				
Regular Fines	345	4,932	4,720	557
Regular Fees	252	1,949	1,954	247
Trust Fund Benefits Payable	291,028	619,319	732,907	177,440
Total Liabilities	\$ 338,253	\$ 1,095,781	\$ 1,211,497	\$ 222,537

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

**ADAMS COUNTY COURT
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

For the Year Ended June 30, 2001

1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

A. Reporting Entity

The Adams 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 services expenses of the Court, which are paid by the Nebraska Supreme Court, or the operating expenses, which are paid by Adams 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 as 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 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.S.Supp., 2001 to be secured either by a surety bond or as provided in the Public Funds Deposit Security Act.

The carrying amounts and bank balances of total deposits, consisting of checking accounts and savings accounts, 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, 2001	\$ 222,537	\$ 290	\$ 222,247	\$ 269,775

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, during the entire year.

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ADAMS 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

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We have audited the financial statement of Adams County Court as of and for the year ended June 30, 2001, and have issued our report thereon dated May 8, 2002. The report was modified to emphasize that the financial statement presents only the Agency Funds of Adams County Court. 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.

Compliance

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether Adams 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. We noted a certain immaterial instance of noncompliance that we have reported to management of Adams County Court in the Comments Section of this report as Comment Number 3 (Unclaimed Property).

Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit, we considered Adams 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 a certain matter involving the internal control over financial reporting and

its operation that we consider to be a reportable condition. 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 Adams 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, we believe the reportable condition described above is a material weakness. We also noted other matters involving internal control over financial reporting that we have reported to management of Adams County Court in the Comments Section of the report as Comment Number 2 (Investments) and Comment Number 4 (Restrictive Endorsement of Checks).

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.



Deputy State Auditor

May 8, 2002