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Contact: **Mike Foley**
State Auditor's Office: (402) 471-2111

State Auditor Mike Foley Releases Report on the Nebraska Library Commission

State Auditor Mike Foley announced today the results of a review of the finances of the Nebraska Library Commission's electronic gaming initiatives.

The report documents the use of State funds to purchase a "PlayStation 2" electronic video game system and related accessories and software. Library Commission employees then videoed and photographed themselves assembling and demonstrating the toys during work hours and posted the videos and photos to public YouTube and Flickr web sites (see YouTube example below of the Nebraska Library Commission Rock Band video).

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7I84RvK7LuE>

The report describes the matter as an inappropriate use of public funds and questions whether the activities of the Commission were consistent with its mission. The report also observes, "It is common knowledge that children enjoy games and toys, so there appears to have been little need to purchase the games. Moreover, none of the games purchased were so complicated or out of the ordinary as to require the Commission to demonstrate their use to library staff and others."

The report also looks at the practice of Commission employees conducting or attending "events" in the virtual world, such as a Halloween Party, held during work hours and paid for by public funds. Commission employees then created imaginary persons known as "avatars" who attended the events.

State Auditor Foley said, "From my experiences as the father of six children, I am well aware that public libraries offer computer game software for loan to library patrons. But, do we really need state employees to use public funds to buy and play with toys and games during work hours to prove the games are popular with children?"

A complete copy of the report can be found under "What's New" on the State Auditor's web site: <http://www.auditors.state.ne.us>