

**ATTESTATION REPORT  
OF  
HITCHCOCK COUNTY COURT**

**JULY 1, 2014, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2016**

**This document is an official public record of the State of Nebraska, issued by  
the Auditor of Public Accounts.**

**Modification of this document may change the accuracy of the original  
document and may be prohibited by law.**

**Issued on June 21, 2017**

# HITCHCOCK COUNTY COURT

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<b><u>Comment Section</u></b>	
Comment and Recommendation	1
<b><u>Financial Section</u></b>	
Independent Accountant's Report	2 - 3
Financial Schedules:	
Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions - Agency Funds - For the Period July 1, 2015, to December 31, 2016	4
Schedule of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions - Agency Funds - For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2015	5
Notes to Financial Schedules	6

# HITCHCOCK COUNTY COURT

## COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

During our examination of the Hitchcock County Court, we noted a certain deficiency and other operational matters that are presented here.

This comment and recommendation is intended to improve the internal control over financial reporting or result in operational efficiencies in the following area:

### **Segregation of Duties**

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

We noted that the office of the County Court lacked a segregation of duties, as one person was capable of handling all aspects of processing transactions from beginning to end. A lack of segregation of duties increases the risk of possible errors or irregularities; however, due to a limited number of personnel, an adequate segregation of duties is not possible without additional cost. Further, personnel are under the direction of both the Nebraska State Court Administrator and the Presiding Judge. We have included this comment in previous examinations. We consider this to be a material weakness.

We recommend the County Court and 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.

*County Court's Response: While the Hitchcock County Court realizes that authorization or approval of transactions, recording of transactions, and custody of assets should normally be segregated activities, the reality is this is a one-person office which does not make that a possibility. It is also realized that the lack of personnel prohibiting the Court from having a proper internal control structure is based upon the size and caseload of Hitchcock County. The Court recognizes that it would not be a financially sound decision for the Supreme Court to add more personnel and this area of concern has not changed nor is it likely to change in the foreseeable future. The current personnel strives to ensure all duties are completed accurately and in a timely manner. There is also now the additional benefit of financial specialists reviewing the Court's work.*

It should be noted this report is critical in nature, as it contains only our comment and recommendation on the area noted for improvement and does not include our observations on any accounting strengths of the County Court.

Draft copies of this report were furnished to the County Court to provide management an opportunity to review the report and to respond to the comment and recommendation included in this report. The formal response received has been incorporated into this report. The response has been objectively evaluated and recognized, as appropriate, in the report. A response that indicates corrective action has been taken was not verified at this time, but it will be verified in the next examination.



## NEBRASKA AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Charlie Janssen  
State Auditor

Charlie.Janssen@nebraska.gov  
PO Box 98917  
State Capitol, Suite 2303  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509  
402-471-2111, FAX 402-471-3301  
www.auditors.nebraska.gov

### HITCHCOCK COUNTY COURT

#### INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT

We have examined the accompanying Schedules of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions of the Hitchcock County Court as of and for the period July 1, 2015, to December 31, 2016, and the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015. The County Court's management is responsible for the Schedules based on the accounting system and procedures set forth in Note 1. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the Schedules based on our examination.

Our examination was conducted in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the standards applicable to attestation engagements contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the examination to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Schedules are based on the accounting system and procedures set forth in Note 1, in all material respects. An examination involves performing procedures to obtain evidence about the Schedules of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions. The nature, timing, and extent of the procedures selected depend on our judgment, including an assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the Schedules, whether due to fraud or error. We believe that the evidence we obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the Schedules of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions for the period July 1, 2015, to December 31, 2016, and the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015, are based on the accounting system and procedures prescribed by the Nebraska Supreme Court, as set forth in Note 1, in all material respects.

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we are required to report findings of deficiencies in internal control, violations of provisions of contracts or grant agreements, abuse that is material to the Schedules, and any fraud and illegal acts that are more than inconsequential that come to our attention during our examination. We are also required to obtain the views of management on those matters. We performed our examination to express an opinion on whether the Schedules are presented in accordance with the criteria described above and not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the internal control over the Schedules or on compliance and other matters; accordingly, we express no such opinions. Our examination disclosed a certain finding that is required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*, and that finding, along with the views of management, is described in the Comment Section of the report.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of management, the Supreme Court, others within the County Court, and the appropriate Federal and regulatory agencies, and it is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties. However, this report is a matter of public record, and its distribution is not limited.



Pat Reding, CPA, CFE  
Assistant Deputy Auditor  
Lincoln, Nebraska

June 19, 2017

**HITCHCOCK COUNTY COURT**  
**TRENTON, NEBRASKA**  
**SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**  
**ARISING FROM CASH TRANSACTIONS**  
**AGENCY FUNDS**

For the Period Ending December 31, 2016

	Balance July 1, 2015	Additions	Deductions	Balance December 31, 2016
<b>ASSETS</b>				
Cash and Deposits	\$ 12,024	\$ 241,066	\$ 229,240	\$ 23,850
<b>LIABILITIES</b>				
Due to State Treasurer:				
Regular Fees	\$ 1,605	\$ 34,571	\$ 33,817	\$ 2,359
Law Enforcement Fees	195	3,062	3,085	172
State Judges Retirement Fund	622	12,182	12,150	654
Court Administrative Fees	844	17,411	17,552	703
Legal Services Fees	663	10,702	10,736	629
Due to County Treasurer:				
Regular Fines	3,969	69,140	69,361	3,748
Overload Fines	875	27,225	26,700	1,400
Regular Fees	436	8,421	8,759	98
Petty Cash Fund	-	30	-	30
Due to Municipalities:				
Regular Fines	-	775	775	-
Trust Fund Payable	2,815	57,547	46,305	14,057
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 12,024</b>	<b>\$ 241,066</b>	<b>\$ 229,240</b>	<b>\$ 23,850</b>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the schedule.

**HITCHCOCK COUNTY COURT**  
**TRENTON, NEBRASKA**  
**SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**  
**ARISING FROM CASH TRANSACTIONS**  
**AGENCY FUNDS**  
For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2015

	Balance July 1, 2014	Additions	Deductions	Balance June 30, 2015
<b>ASSETS</b>				
Cash and Deposits	\$ 19,977	\$ 158,338	\$ 166,291	\$ 12,024
<b>LIABILITIES</b>				
Due to State Treasurer:				
Regular Fees	\$ 2,731	\$ 22,997	\$ 24,123	\$ 1,605
Law Enforcement Fees	274	2,208	2,287	195
State Judges Retirement Fund	816	6,903	7,097	622
Court Administrative Fees	1,756	12,497	13,409	844
Legal Services Fees	914	7,440	7,691	663
Due to County Treasurer:				
Regular Fines	7,345	39,367	42,743	3,969
Overload Fines	1,700	30,750	31,575	875
Regular Fees	678	3,595	3,837	436
Due to Municipalities:				
Regular Fines	318	1,420	1,738	-
Trust Fund Payable	3,445	31,161	31,791	2,815
Total Liabilities	\$ 19,977	\$ 158,338	\$ 166,291	\$ 12,024

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the schedule.

**HITCHCOCK COUNTY COURT**  
**NOTES TO FINANCIAL SCHEDULES**

For the Period Ended December 31, 2016, and Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2015

**1. Criteria**

**A. Reporting Entity**

The Hitchcock 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 Schedules of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions of the County Court reflect only the Agency Funds activity of the County Court, including the receipts and their subsequent disbursement to the appropriate entities for which they were collected. The Schedules do not reflect the personal services expenses of the County Court, which are paid by the Nebraska Supreme Court, or the operating expenses, which are paid by Hitchcock County.

**B. Basis of Accounting**

The accounting records of the County Court Agency Funds are maintained, and the Schedules of Changes in Assets and Liabilities Arising from Cash Transactions have been prepared, based on the accounting system and procedures prescribed by the Nebraska Supreme Court. Under this system 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. Likewise, disbursements are shown as deductions to assets and as 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. § 25-2713 (Reissue 2016). Funds are generally consolidated in an interest-bearing checking account; however, the County 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. § 77-2326.04 (Reissue 2009) to be secured either by a surety bond or as provided in the Public Funds Deposit Security Act.