

# STATE OF MINNESOTA

## Office of the State Auditor



**Rebecca Otto**  
**State Auditor**

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MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE REPORT  
PREPARED AS A RESULT OF THE AUDIT OF

**MARTIN COUNTY**  
**FAIRMONT, MINNESOTA**

YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2012

## **Description of the Office of the State Auditor**

The mission of the Office of the State Auditor is to oversee local government finances for Minnesota taxpayers by helping to ensure financial integrity and accountability in local governmental financial activities.

Through financial, compliance, and special audits, the State Auditor oversees and ensures that local government funds are used for the purposes intended by law and that local governments hold themselves to the highest standards of financial accountability.

The State Auditor performs approximately 160 financial and compliance audits per year and has oversight responsibilities for over 3,300 local units of government throughout the state. The office currently maintains five divisions:

**Audit Practice** - conducts financial and legal compliance audits of local governments;

**Government Information** - collects and analyzes financial information for cities, towns, counties, and special districts;

**Legal/Special Investigations** - provides legal analysis and counsel to the Office and responds to outside inquiries about Minnesota local government law; as well as investigates allegations of misfeasance, malfeasance, and nonfeasance in local government;

**Pension** - monitors investment, financial, and actuarial reporting for approximately 730 public pension funds; and

**Tax Increment Financing** - promotes compliance and accountability in local governments' use of tax increment financing through financial and compliance audits.

The State Auditor serves on the State Executive Council, State Board of Investment, Land Exchange Board, Public Employees Retirement Association Board, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, and the Rural Finance Authority Board.

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**MARTIN COUNTY  
FAIRMONT, MINNESOTA**

**Year Ended December 31, 2012**



**Management and Compliance Report**

**Audit Practice Division  
Office of the State Auditor  
State of Minnesota**

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**MARTIN COUNTY  
FAIRMONT, MINNESOTA**

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**MARTIN COUNTY  
FAIRMONT, MINNESOTA**

SCHEDULE OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2012

**I. FINDINGS RELATED TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AUDITED IN  
ACCORDANCE WITH *GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS***

INTERNAL CONTROL

ITEM ARISING THIS YEAR

12-1 Ditch System Accounting and Reporting

**Criteria:** Ditch system accounting records on the County's General Ledger should be maintained in a manner that provides accurate information for financial statement reporting. All Board-approved special assessment liens put on ditch systems should be added to the County tax system for the year in which payments are scheduled to begin.

**Condition:** During our review of the County ditch systems, we noted errors in the accounting for and reporting of ditch system activity. Audit adjustments were proposed and are reflected in the financial statements.

**Context:** Errors noted in the accounting and reporting of ditch activity, resulting in audit adjustments, included:

- instances where ditch damages were netted against special assessments, and the related revenues and expenditures were not reported in the financial statements;
- some instances of ditch damages paid in 2013, which were not reported as accounts payable at year-end 2012;
- cross-county billings of 2012 expenditures were reported as revenues rather than a reduction of related expenditures;
- three Board-approved, one-year assessments payable in 2013 were not added to the tax system;

- one special assessment was added to the system but was not officially approved by the Board; and
- instances of special assessments paid or applied against ditch damage payments were not marked as paid in the tax system.

**Effect:** Ditch expenditures and special assessments amounts were misstated in the financial statements. Special assessments were not correctly billed on the tax statements for the year for which they were assessed.

**Cause:** Control procedures over ditch system and special assessment record keeping, and accounting for assessments paid and/or reduced by damages due, are not adequate to identify errors occurring in the County ditch accounting and related tax systems. The errors in the systems lead to errors in the financial statements.

**Recommendation:** We recommend that the County implement accounting procedures necessary to identify errors made in the ditch accounting system and related tax system. This may include implementing more rigorous review procedures, the use of checklists, and/or additional training for personnel working within the systems. Any overpayments should be refunded and abatements should be made as necessary to correct the errors.

Client's Response:

*The County will implement accounting procedures necessary to identify errors made. The County will review procedures with all personnel working in the system and give additional training that is needed.*

**II. OTHER FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

MINNESOTA LEGAL COMPLIANCE

PREVIOUSLY REPORTED ITEM NOT RESOLVED

05-3 Individual Ditch System Deficits

**Criteria:** Drainage system costs are required by Minn. Stat. § 103E.655 to be paid from the ditch system account for which the costs are being incurred. If money is not available in the drainage system account on which the warrant is drawn, this statute allows for loans to be made from ditch systems with surplus funds or from the General Fund to a ditch system with insufficient cash to pay expenditures. Such loans must be paid back with interest.



Additionally, individual ditch systems should be maintained with a positive fund balance to display solvency. As provided by Minn. Stat. § 103E.735, subd. 1, a fund balance to be used for repairs may be established for any drainage system, not to exceed 20 percent of the assessed benefits of the ditch system or \$100,000, whichever is larger.

**Condition:** The County had individual ditch systems with deficit cash balances and deficit fund balances at December 31, 2012.

**Context:** At December 31, 2012, 53 ditch systems had negative cash balances totaling \$937,775, and 16 ditch systems had deficit fund balances totaling \$294,013.

**Effect:** The County is not in compliance with Minnesota statutes by having ditch systems with negative cash balances. Ditch systems with negative fund balances indicate that measures have not been taken to ensure that an individual ditch system can meet financial obligations.

**Cause:** Expenditures have been made for ditch systems with insufficient cash to cover the expenditures. Additionally, special assessments levied for systems have not been sufficient to meet all obligations of the system.

**Recommendation:** We recommend that the County eliminate the cash deficits by borrowing from eligible funds with surplus cash balances under Minn. Stat. § 103E.655. Individual fund balance deficits should be eliminated by levying assessments pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 103E.735, subd. 1, which permits the accumulation of a surplus cash balance to provide for the repair and maintenance of the ditch systems.

Client's Response:

*The Drainage Office will work with the Commissioners to levy enough dollars to cover repairs and projected repairs that will happen. They will also work toward having a small amount available in the funds to cover minor repairs. The County will look at borrowing dollars from other systems that have surplus dollars to cover deficits that happen during the year until levies are collected.*

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REBECCA OTTO  
STATE AUDITOR

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## **REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING AND ON COMPLIANCE AND OTHER MATTERS BASED ON AN AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS PERFORMED IN ACCORDANCE WITH *GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS***

### Independent Auditor's Report

Board of County Commissioners  
Martin County

We have audited, 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, the financial statements of the governmental activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of Martin County as of and for the year ended December 31, 2012, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the County's basic financial statements, and have issued our report thereon dated May 24, 2013.

### **Internal Control Over Financial Reporting**

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered Martin County's internal control over financial reporting to determine the audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinions on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the County's internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the County's internal control over financial reporting.

Our consideration of internal control over financial reporting was for the limited purpose described in the preceding paragraph and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies and, therefore, material weaknesses may exist that were not identified. However, as described in the accompanying Schedule of Findings and Recommendations we identified a deficiency in internal control over financial reporting that we consider to be a material weakness.

A deficiency in internal control over financial reporting exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements on a timely basis. A material weakness is a deficiency, or combination of deficiencies, in internal control over financial reporting such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the County's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. We consider the deficiency described in the accompanying Schedule of Findings and Recommendations as item 12-1 to be a material weakness.

## **Compliance and Other Matters**

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether Martin County's financial statements are free of material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, 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 or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

## **Minnesota Legal Compliance**

The *Minnesota Legal Compliance Audit Guide for Political Subdivisions*, promulgated by the State Auditor pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 6.65, contains seven categories of compliance to be tested: contracting and bidding, deposits and investments, conflicts of interest, public indebtedness, claims and disbursements, miscellaneous provisions, and tax increment financing. Our study included all of the listed categories, except that we did not test for compliance with the provisions for tax increment financing because the County has no tax increment financing.

In connection with our audit, nothing came to our attention that caused us to believe that Martin County failed to comply with the provisions of the *Minnesota Legal Compliance Audit Guide for Political Subdivisions*, except as described in the Schedule of Findings and Recommendations as item 05-3. However, our audit was not directed primarily toward obtaining knowledge of such noncompliance. Accordingly, had we performed additional procedures, other matters may have come to our attention regarding the County's noncompliance with the above referenced provisions.

## **Other Matters**

Martin County's responses to the internal control and legal compliance findings identified in our audit have been included in the Schedule of Findings and Recommendations. The County's responses were not subject to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and, accordingly, we express no opinion on them.

## **Purpose of This Report**

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting, compliance and the provisions of the *Minnesota Legal Compliance Audit Guide for Political Subdivisions* and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the County's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the County's internal control over financial reporting and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose.

*/s/Rebecca Otto*

REBECCA OTTO  
STATE AUDITOR

*/s/Greg Hierlinger*

GREG HIERLINGER, CPA  
DEPUTY STATE AUDITOR

May 24, 2013