



Auditor of Public Accounts
Adam H. Edelen

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Stephenie Steitzer
stephenie.steitzer@auditor.ky.gov
502.564.5841
513.289.7667

Edelen Releases Examination of Garrett Fire District/Department, Finds Rampant Abuse of Tax Dollars, Lack of Oversight

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Oct. 30, 2012) – State Auditor Adam Edelen today released a special examination of the Garrett Fire District and Garret Area Volunteer Fire Department in Floyd County, finding more than \$123,000 in questionable expenditures, hundreds of pornographic videos on department electronics and numerous financial management and oversight problems.

The auditor’s office performed the exam in cooperation with the Kentucky State Police. The exam has been referred to KSP. The former assistant chief/treasurer was reported as a missing person in March before it was learned that he had unexpectedly left the state.

“The magnitude of abuse at such a small fire department is shocking,” Edelen said. “Taxpayers in Floyd County ought to be outraged that one individual appears to have used fire department resources on everything from televisions to chewing tobacco and pornography.”

The exam, prompted by concerns from the Garrett Fire District Board of Trustees and the department chief, contains 17 findings and 72 recommendations.

Among other expenditures, auditors identified more than \$62,000 in questionable cash withdrawals, \$16,500 in restaurant charges, \$4,600 in shopping gift cards from one store and \$839 on fireworks. The exam found the former assistant chief purchased a vehicle with department funds and opened a store credit card in the department’s name without authorization from the board. Two flat-screen televisions, a laptop computer, digital camera, personal care items, alcohol, chewing tobacco and purchases made-out-of-state were charged to the card and paid for with department funds. All the electronics are missing.

“Time and again my office finds lack of proper board oversight is the real culprit when taxpayer dollars are abused,” Edelen said. “I applaud the Garrett fire district board for coming forward with its concerns and implore those who serve on boards – from big school districts to tiny fire districts – to know their responsibilities and take them seriously.”

The exam found the former assistant chief paid himself more than \$8,000 without approval. On at least three occasions, payments made to the district or department totaling \$4,000 were not deposited.

Over 800 pornographic videos were found on a department computer, external drive and USB drive. False financial reporting was provided to the district board and department and various financial records were missing. The district also did not obtain required financial statement audits or submit required financial reports to the state Department for Local Government or IRS. As a result, it lost its tax-exempt status.

The review can be found on the auditor's [website](#).

###

The Auditor of Public Accounts ensures that public resources are protected, accurately valued, properly accounted for, and effectively employed to raise the quality of life of Kentuckians.

For more information, visit auditor.ky.gov and follow Auditor Edelen on Twitter @AuditorKY, facebook.com/AuditorKY and youtube.com/AuditorKY. Call 1-800-KY-ALERT or visit our website to report suspected waste and abuse.