

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY AUDITOR

KANE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

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KANE COUNTY AUDITOR



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COMMUNICATION DEVICES AUDIT REPORT DECEMBER 5, 2006

BACKGROUND:

The audit objective is to gather statistical data on all communication device usage and activity, check for inappropriate use and determine if a written policy exists. For the purpose of this audit, communication devices are defined as cell phones, pagers and hand held radios. During the audit it was discovered that the Information Technologies Department (IT) was assigned the task of centralizing the administration of service plans and equipment purchases for all communication devices in the county.

In summary there are 594 cell phones, 172 pagers and 244 radios totaling 1,010 devices county wide in use. Total cost for all devices was \$267,288 in FY 2005 and \$277,815 for FY 2006 through mid month November.

Ten offices/departments are participating in the centralizing administration of communication devices (county wide program). Three offices/departments are considering participation in the program and ten other offices/departments are not currently participating in the program. [See Exhibit A]

EXISTING POLICY

Each individual office/department is responsible for creating and monitoring their policy.

Since the inception of the county wide program, IT is using their existing policy as a template. Some offices/departments participating in the county wide program have agreed to the IT policy without changes, some have changed the IT policy to fit their needs and others have not adopted the policy at all. An official Kane County policy for communication devices does not exist.

A request for a written policy was sent on November 27, 2006 to the 10 non-participating offices/departments. Of the ten, 3 have a written policy. 1 an informal policy, 1 with no policy and 5 did not respond. [See Exhibit A]

WEAKNESSES FOR CELL PHONES AND PAGERS:

The following are the common weaknesses or pitfalls for cell phone and pager use that could cause the county to expend more than anticipated. A review of these weaknesses or pitfalls should be monitored on a monthly basis by the program administrator and a designated authority from the office/department:

- Minute usage is not consistent with plan usage - under usage is just as important as over usage of minutes.
- Inappropriate usage – personal use, 800 number calls, text messaging, downloading games, downloading music, downloading ring tones, internet access, pix flix (pictures) and data downloading.
- Paying for devices not being used or defined as spare.
- Not identifying the cell phone or pager number on invoice to a specific user.
- Multiple devices for a single user.
- Transfer of devices from one office/department user to another office/department user without approval from administrator.
- Summary invoices from vendor. Detailed invoices from vendors allow administrator to charge back costs to each office/department budget and analyze usage.
- No disciplinary action for misuse.
- Supervision at the office/department level becomes lenient.
- Lack of internal tracking system for usage.
- Unapproved and unmonitored additional charges, such as 411, long distance, roaming and equipment charges.
- Continued service subsequent to user termination or retirement.

FINDINGS:

A review of cell phone and pager usage was performed for fiscal year 2005 and mid-month November 2006 resulting in no material misuse. The types of misuse discovered were phone calls made to 800 numbers that did not appear to be business related, phone calls made outside of business hours including weekends and calls made and received in more than 7 consecutive days. Consideration was made for those offices/departments that require 24/7 county service.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the IT Department continue to negotiate with those offices/departments who are participating in the program to establish a written policy.

It is recommended that a county wide policy be created and approved by the board. Also, include the approved policy in the employee handbook.

It is recommended that the IT Department continue to identify and assign an employee name and office/department with every communication device. If a device is not in use it should be noted so. If a phone is a "pool" phone it should be noted so.

It is recommended that a written explanation be provided to the IT Department for those county employees that appear to use more than one communication device. IT Department should terminate multiple phones for employees, if deemed unnecessary.

It is recommended that the designated vendor(s) provide detailed monthly billing statements to monitor for plan economics, abuse, inappropriate calls and billing errors.

It is recommended that annually the IT Department consider re-bidding of services to account for changes in the industry and technology and to determine if the County can attain improved services and features at a reduced cost.

CONCLUSION:

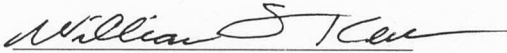
Due to the implementation of centralizing the administration of communication devices, the county has an opportunity to create and implement a program that will assure the taxpayer that money for this resource is efficiently spent and the asset is properly safeguarded. This can be achieved with a fair and enforceable written policy.

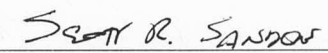
The importance of this resource for the County can not be underestimated. The County, as a whole, uses hundreds of thousands of minutes on a monthly basis. The task to coordinate and administer the centralizing of communication devices with all offices/departments is an enormous undertaking. The IT Department, specifically Director Roger Fahnestock, CFO Bill Lake and Media/Accounting Specialist Lindsey Deveney, is commended for taking on the creation, implementation and monitoring this very important and much needed program.

We would like to express our appreciation to the Elected Officials, Department heads and staff for their generous assistance and cooperation provided during this audit.

In accordance with KCC Sec. 2-192 (c) (2) "within thirty (30) days of receipt of the internal audit report, each county officer, agent or division shall submit a written response to the county auditor, outlining the action that has been taken in response to the recommendations made by the auditor."

Respectively Submitted,


William F. Keck, C.P.A.
County Auditor


Scott R. Sanders
Deputy Auditor

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