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**ST. HELENA PARISH CLERK OF COURT
Greensburg, Louisiana**

**General Purpose Financial Statements and
Independent Auditor's Reports**

As of and for the Two Years Ended June 30, 1987

Under provisions of state law, this report is a public document. A copy of the report has been submitted to the audited, or reviewed, entity and other appropriate public officials. The report is available for public inspection at the Baton Rouge office of the Legislative Auditor and, where appropriate, at the office of the parish clerk of court.

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ST. HELENA PARISH CLERK OF COURT

Greensburg, Louisiana

General Purpose Financial Statements
As of and For the Two Years Ended June 30, 1997
With Supplemental Information Schedules

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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Honorable Herman Nowell
Clerk of Court
St. Helena Parish
P.O. Box 308
Greenburg, Louisiana

I have audited the accompanying general purpose financial statements of St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court, Greenburg, Louisiana, a component unit of St. Helena Parish Police Jury, as of and for the two years ended June 30, 1997, as listed in the table of contents. These general purpose financial statements are the responsibility of the St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court. My responsibility is to express an opinion on these general purpose financial statements based on my audit.

Except as discussed in the following paragraph, I conducted my audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, contained in the *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. These standards require that I plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the general purpose financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the general purpose financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall general purpose financial statements presentation. I believe that my audit provides a reasonable basis for my opinion.

I was unable to obtain reconciled and identifiable balances for a portion of the Advance Deposit Fund, an amount of approximately \$24,000. The St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court has not been able to reconcile these individual checker balances in the Advance Deposit Fund for suits filed prior to March 1, 1998. Therefore, I was unable to verify all of the unratified deposit balances to others as June 30, 1997 and 1996. The effects on financial statements of not reconciling the individual checker balances cannot be reasonably determined.

In my opinion, except for the effects of such adjustments, if any, as might have been required with respect to the deposit balances due to others referred to above, the general purpose financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court as of June 30, 1997 and 1996, and the results of its operations for the years then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

My audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the general purpose financial statements taken as a whole. The combining and individual fund and account group financial statements and schedules listed in the table of contents are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the general purpose financial statements of St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court. Such information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the general purpose financial statements and, in my opinion, is fairly presented in all material respects in relation to the general purpose financial statements taken as a whole.



Monroe, Louisiana
October 10, 1997

COMBINED BALANCE SHEET
ALL FUND TYPES AND ACCOUNT CATEGORIES
YEARS END, 1997 and 1998

	Governmental Fund Type - General Fund	Primary Fund Type - Agency Funds	Account Group - Special Fund Assets	TOTAL Assets/Liabilities (Net)
ASSETS	1997	1998	1997	1998
Cash and cash equivalents	\$34,048	\$118,773	-	\$152,821
Receivables	-	-	\$4,260	\$4,260
Accounts receivable	5,713	-	-	5,713
TOTAL ASSETS	\$39,761	\$118,773	\$4,260	\$152,794

LIABILITIES AND FUND EQUITY

	1997	1998	1997	1998
Liabilities				
Accounts payable	\$504	-	-	\$504
Due to General Fund	-	\$808	-	\$808
Unassigned deposits	-	\$48,179	-	\$48,179
Total Liabilities	\$504	\$49,087	-	\$49,681
Fund Equity				
Investments in general	-	-	\$24,260	\$24,260
Fund balance	\$5,283	\$68,179	-	\$73,462
Unassigned - unappropriated	\$5,283	\$68,179	\$4,260	\$77,822
Total Fund Equity	\$10,566	\$136,357	\$28,520	\$135,244
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND EQUITY	\$10,566	\$136,357	\$28,520	\$135,244

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

**COMBINED STATEMENT OF REVENUES,
EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES -
ALL GOVERNMENTAL FUND TYPES - GENERAL FUND
For the Years Ended June 30, 1997 and 1996**

	1997	1996
Revenues		
Licenses and permits	\$1,975	\$2,525
Court costs, fees, and charges	100,360	99,394
Fees for recording legal documents	45,071	46,299
Fees for certified copies	10,360	10,496
Use of property and money - interest	6,749	4,494
Miscellaneous	27,160	24,865
Total Revenues	<u>194,727</u>	<u>187,993</u>
Expenditures		
Personal services and related benefits	104,379	109,297
Materials and supplies	4,429	6,739
Operating services	24,641	23,919
Capital outlay		
Travel and other charges	14,230	5,642
Total Expenditures	<u>147,679</u>	<u>145,597</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIT) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES	(2,952)	(5,203)
FUND BALANCE AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>39,176</u>	<u>43,383</u>
FUND BALANCE AT END OF YEAR	<u>\$36,223</u>	<u>\$38,179</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

COMBINED STATEMENT OF REVENUES,
 EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES -
 BUDGET (GAAP BASIS) AND ACTUAL -
 ALL GOVERNMENTAL FUND TYPES - GENERAL FUND
 For the Years Ended June 30, 1997 and 1998

Revenues	1997			1998		
	Budget	Actual	Variance - Favorable (Unfavorable)	Budget	Actual	Variance - Favorable (Unfavorable)
Litigation and permits	\$2,000	\$4,875	\$2,875	\$2,700	\$3,426	\$726
Costs (costs, fees, and charges)	183,000	103,288	79,712	54,000	55,584	1,584
Fees for sociological documents	48,000	48,871	871	45,500	48,188	268
Fees for certified copies	18,000	19,280	1,280	10,000	10,408	408
Use of property and money - interest	8,000	8,748	748	4,000	4,408	408
Miscellaneous	27,000	27,585	585	30,000	24,888	(5,112)
Total Revenues	\$90,800	\$84,776	(\$6,024)	\$100,200	\$102,312	\$2,112
Expenditures						
Personnel services and related benefits	104,000	114,318	10,318	158,000	188,287	30,287
Materials and supplies	4,500	4,478	(22)	8,700	8,738	38
Operating services	24,000	24,845	845	24,800	25,913	1,113
Capital outlay	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel and other charges	74,000	18,230	(55,770)	5,500	5,042	(458)
Total Expenditures	156,500	161,871	5,371	196,000	238,000	42,000
EXCESS (DEFICIT) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES	(65,700)	(77,095)	(11,395)	(95,800)	(135,688)	(39,888)
FUND BALANCE AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	38,182	38,178	(4)	40,560	40,560	0
FUND BALANCE AT END OF YEAR	\$28,282	\$28,223	(59)	\$28,160	\$28,178	\$18

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this statement.

ST. HELENA PARISH CLERK OF COURT
Greensburg, Louisiana

Notes to the Financial Statements
For the Two Years Ended June 30, 1997

INTRODUCTION

As provided by Article V, Section 28 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974, the Clerk of court serves as the ex-officio notary public; the recorder of conveyances, mortgages, and other acts; and has other duties and powers provided by law. The clerk of court is elected for a four-year term.

I. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

A. BASIS OF PRESENTATION

The accompanying general purpose financial statements of the St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court, a component unit of the St. Helena Parish Police Jury, have been prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) as applied to governmental units. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) is the accepted standard-setting body for establishing governmental accounting and financial reporting principles.

B. REPORTING ENTITY

As the governing authority of the parish, for reporting purposes, the St. Helena Parish Police Jury is the financial reporting entity for St. Helena Parish. The financial reporting entity consists of (1) the primary government (police jury), (2) organizations for which the primary government is financially accountable, and (3) other organizations for which nature and significance of their relationship with the primary government are such that exclusion would cause the reporting entity's financial statements to be misleading or incomplete.

Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statement No. 14 established criteria for determining which component units should be considered part of the St. Helena Parish Police Jury for financial reporting purposes. The basic criterion for including a potential component unit within the reporting entity is financial accountability. The St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court is financially independent, other than certain operating expenditures of the Clerk's office that are paid or provided by the parish police jury as required by law. Also, the St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court is an independently elected parish official, who is solely responsible for the operations of his office, which include the hiring and retention of employees, authority over budgeting, responsibility for deficits, and the receipt and disbursement of funds.

ST. HELENA PARISH CLERK OF COURT

Cosmopolis, Louisiana

Notes to the Financial Statements (Continued)

The financial statements of the St. Helena Parish Police Jury will not be misleading if the data of the St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court is not included. Accordingly, the accompanying financial statements present information only on the funds maintained by the clerk of court and do not present information on the police jury, the general government services provided by that governmental unit, or the other governmental units within the parish.

C. FUND ACCOUNTING

The clerk of court uses funds and account groups to report on its financial position and the results of its operations. Fund accounting is designed to demonstrate legal compliance and to aid financial management by segregating transactions relating to certain government functions or activities.

A fund is a separate accounting entity with a self-balancing set of accounts. On the other hand, an account group is a financial reporting device designed to provide accountability for certain assets and liabilities that are not recorded in the funds because they do not directly affect net expendable available financial resources.

Funds of the clerk of court are classified into two categories: governmental (General Fund) and fiduciary (agency funds). These funds are described as follows:

General Fund

The General Fund, as provided by Louisiana Revised Statute (R.S.) 15:761, is the principal fund of the Clerk's office and accounts for the operations of the Clerk's office. The various fees and charges due to the Clerk's office are accounted for in this fund. General operating expenditures are paid from this fund.

Agency Funds

The Advance Deposit and Registry of Court Agency Funds account for assets held in an agent for others. Agency funds are custodial in nature (assets equal liabilities) and do not involve measurement of results of operations.

General Fixed Assets

Fixed assets used in governmental fund operations (general fixed assets) are accounted for in the general fixed assets account group, rather than in the governmental funds. General fixed assets provided by the parish police jury are not recorded within the general fixed assets account group. Fixed assets are valued at historical cost or estimated historical cost if historical cost is not available. No depreciation has been provided on general fixed assets.

ST. HELENA PARISH CLERK OF COURT
Greensburg, Louisiana
Notes to the Financial Statements (Continued)

The account group is not a fund. It is concerned only with the measurement of financial position and does not involve measurement of results of operations.

D. BASIS OF ACCOUNTING

Basis of accounting refers to when revenues and expenditures are recognized in the accounts and reported in the financial statements. Basis of accounting refers to the timing of the measurements made, regardless of the measurement basis applied. The governmental funds are accounted for using a form of current financial resources measurement focus.

The accompanying general purpose financial statements have been prepared on the modified accrual basis of accounting. The governmental funds use the following practices in recording revenues and expenditures:

Revenues

Recordings, convictions, court attendance, criminal costs, et cetera, are recorded in the year they are earned.

All other revenues are recorded when received.

Expenditures

Expenditures are generally recognized under the modified accrual basis of accounting, when the related fund liability is incurred.

E. BUDGET PRACTICES

Annually, the Clerk of Court adopts a budget for the General Fund. The budget is prepared on the modified accrual basis of accounting. All appropriations contained in the budget lapse at year end.

Formal budget integration (within the accounting records) is not implemented. However, the budget and expenditures are reviewed periodically by the Clerk of Court as a form of management control. Budgeted amounts included in the accompanying financial statements include the original adopted budget and all subsequent amendments.

The proposed budget for the 1996 and 1997 fiscal years were made available for public inspection at the Clerk's office by June 1, 1995 and 1996, respectively.

ST. HELENA PARISH CLERK OF COURT
Greensburg, Louisiana
Notes to the Financial Statements (Continued)

F. ENCUMBRANCES

Encumbrance accounting, under which purchase orders, contracts, and other commitments for the expenditures of moneys are recorded in order to reserve that portion of the applicable appropriation, is not employed by the clerk's office.

G. CASH, CASH EQUIVALENTS, AND INVESTMENTS

Cash includes amounts in demand deposits, interest-bearing demand deposits, and money market accounts. Under state law, the Clerk of Court may deposit funds in demand deposits, interest-bearing demand deposits, money market accounts, or time deposits within state banks organized under Louisiana law and national banks having their principal offices in Louisiana. The Clerk may invest in United States bonds, treasury notes, or certificates. Those are classified as investment securities if their original maturities exceed 90 days; however, if the original maturities are 90 days or less, they are classified as cash equivalents. Investments are stated at cost.

H. FIXED ASSETS

Fixed assets are recorded as expenditures at the time purchased, and the related assets are capitalized (reported) in the general fixed assets account group. General fixed assets provided by the parish police jury are not recorded within the general fixed assets account group. No depreciation has been provided on general fixed assets. All fixed assets are valued at historical cost or estimated cost if historical cost is not available.

I. COMPENSATED ABSENCES

The Clerk of Court's office has the following policy relating to vacation and sick leave: Employees of the Clerk of Court's office earn from one to two weeks of vacation leave each year depending on the length of service. Unused vacation leave may not be carried forward. In addition, employees are granted sick leave each year on a use-by-use basis.

The cost of leave privileges, in accordance with GASB Statement No. 16, is recognized as a current-year expenditure in the General Fund when leave is actually taken, and is not accrued as a liability.

J. TOTAL COLUMNS ON STATEMENTS

Total columns on the statements are captioned *Memorandum Only (overview)* to indicate that it is prepared only to facilitate financial analysis. Data in these columns does not present financial position in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. Neither is such data comparable to a consolidation.

ST. HELENA PARISH CLERK OF COURT
Greensburg, Louisiana
Notes to the Financial Statements (Continued)

2. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

At June 30, 1996 and 1997, the Clerk of Court has cash and cash equivalents (bank balances) totaling \$490,134 and \$452,789 as follows:

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>
Demand deposits	\$ 303,470	\$ 267,494
Certificates of Deposit	35,000	35,000
Money market accounts	<u>151,664</u>	<u>150,295</u>
Total	\$ 490,134	\$ 452,789

These deposits are stated at cost, which approximates market. Under state law, these deposits (as the resulting bank balances) must be secured by federal deposit insurance or the pledge of securities owned by the fiscal agent bank. The market value of the pledged securities plus the federal deposit insurance must at all times equal the amount on deposit with the fiscal agent bank. These securities are held in the name of the pledging fiscal agent bank in a holding or custodial bank that is mutually acceptable to both parties. Cash and cash equivalents (bank balances) at June 30, 1996 and 1997, are \$311,362 and \$470,546, respectively. These deposits are secured from risk by federal deposit insurance of \$200,000, for the years ending June 30, 1996 and 1997. Additionally, the bank deposits are secured by \$485,000 of pledged securities (for both fiscal years) held by the custodial bank in the name of the fiscal agent bank (CJA5B Category 2). Even though the pledged securities are considered uncollateralized under the provisions of GASB Statement 3, Louisiana Revised Statute 79:0274 imposes a statutory requirement on the custodial bank to advertise and sell the pledged securities within 30 days of being notified by the sheriff that the fiscal agent has failed to pay delinquent bonds upon demand.

3. RECEIVABLES

The General Fund receivables of \$817 and \$1,915 at June 30, 1996 and 1997, are for recording fees charged to various entities, such as attorneys and title companies. Statements are sent out bi-monthly, and accounts are usually paid in total by statement amount.

ST. HELENA PARISH CLERK OF COURT
Greensburg, Louisiana
Notes to the Financial Statements (Continued)

4. CHANGES IN GENERAL FIXED ASSETS

A summary of changes in general fixed assets for the years ending June 30, 1996 and 1997, follows:

	Balance July 1, 1995	Additions	Deletions	Balance June 30, 1996
Equipment	\$ 24,292	--	--	\$ 24,292

	Balance July 1, 1996	Additions	Deletions	Balance June 30, 1997
Equipment	\$ 24,292	\$ --	--	\$ 24,292

5. PENSION PLAN

Substantially all employees of the St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court are members of the Louisiana Clerks of Court Retirement and Pooled Fund ("System"), a cost-sharing, multiple-employer defined benefit pension plan administered by a separate board of trustees.

All regular employees who are under the age of 60 at the time of original employment are required to participate in the system. Employees who retire at or after age 55 with at least 12 years of credited service are entitled to a retirement benefit, payable monthly for life, equal to 3 per cent of their final-average salary for each year of credited service, not to exceed 100 per cent of their final-average salary. Final-average salary is the employee's average salary over the 36 consecutive or joint months that produce the highest average. Employees who terminate with at least 12 years of service and do not withdraw their employee contributions may retire at or after age 55 and receive the benefit accrued to their date of termination. The System also provides death and disability benefits. Benefits are established by state statute.

ST. HELENA PARISH CLERK OF COURT

Greenburg, Louisiana

Notes to the Financial Statements (Continued)

The System issues an annual publicly available financial report that includes financial statements and required supplementary information for the System. That report may be obtained by writing to the Louisiana Clerks of Court Retirement and Relief Fund, 11745 Holkome Avenue, Suite 81, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70810, or by calling (504) 293-1162.

Funding Policy: Plan members are required by state statute to contribute 8.25 percent of their annual covered salary and the St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court is required to contribute at an actuarially determined rate. The rates for the years ended June 30, 1996 and 1997, are 10.3 and 11 percent, respectively, of annual covered payroll. Contributions to the System also include one-fourth of one percent of taxes shown to be collectible by the tax rolls of each parish. The contribution requirements of plan members and the St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court are established and may be amended by state statute. As provided by R.S. 11:103, the employer contributions are determined by actuarial valuation and are subject to change each year based on the results of the valuation for the prior fiscal year. The St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court's contributions to the System for the years ending June 30, 1997, 1996, and 1995, were \$13,332, \$13,549, and \$10,959, respectively, equal to the required contributions for each year.

6. CHANGES IN AGENCY FUND BALANCES

	Unsettled Deposits at July 1, 1997	Additions	Reductions	Unsettled Deposits June 30, 1998
Agency Funds:				
Advance Deposit	\$165,471	\$133,779	\$125,782	\$173,468
Registry of Court	165,387	203,390	23,046	375,981
	\$330,858	\$337,169	\$248,828	\$449,649
	July 1, 1998			June 30, 1997
Agency Funds:				
Advance Deposit	\$173,468	\$139,219	\$136,528	\$176,179
Registry of Court	375,981	45,128	88,435	242,994
	\$549,449	\$184,387	\$224,963	\$499,273

ST. HELENA PARISH CLERK OF COURT
Greensburg, Louisiana

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION SCHEDULES
As of and For the Two Years Ended June 30, 1997

FIDUCIARY FUNDS - AGENCY FUNDS

ADVANCE DEPOSIT FUND

The Advance Deposit Fund, as provided by Louisiana Revised Statute 13:842, accounts for advance deposits on suits filed by litigants. The advances are refundable to the litigants after all costs have been paid.

REGISTRY OF COURT FUNDS

The Registry of Court Fund, as provided by Louisiana Revised Statute 13:475, accounts for funds that have been ordered by the court to be held until judgment has been rendered in court litigation. Withdrawal of the funds can be made only upon order of the court.

ST. HELENA PARISH CLERK OF COURT
Greensburg, Louisiana

FINANCIAL FUND TYPE - AGENCY FUNDS
SCHEDULE OF CHANGES IN UNSETTLED DEPOSITS
For the Years Ended June 30, 1997 and 1996

Schedule 2

	Advance Deposit Fund		Registry of Court Fund		TOTAL	
	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996
Unsettled Deposits at Beginning of Year	\$173,488	\$169,471	\$277,961	\$165,187	\$451,389	\$330,658
Additions						
Gifts and bequests	131,762	124,858	--	--	131,762	124,858
Judgements	3,384	4,884	37,540	108,758	41,324	207,248
Interest	4,893	4,349	7,158	8,804	11,281	13,244
Other additions	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total Additions	139,239	134,791	44,728	225,769	184,357	338,529
Reductions						
Cash's coin	131,731	83,893	--	--	131,731	83,893
Settlements to litigants	7,411	18,208	80,495	93,846	87,846	122,252
Judges supplemental fund	6,887	7,708	--	--	6,887	7,708
Judicial expense fund	4,470	6,179	--	--	4,470	6,179
Statute fees	6,387	4,275	--	--	6,387	4,275
Other	6,842	4,881	--	--	6,842	4,881
Total Reductions	159,528	125,782	80,495	93,846	216,903	218,529
Unsettled Deposits at End of Year	\$176,159	\$173,488	\$242,594	\$277,961	\$418,712	\$451,389

SUMMARY SCHEDULE OF PRIOR AUDIT FINDINGS
For the Two Years Ended June 30, 1997

Fiscal Year Finding Initially Occurred	Description of Finding	Corrective Action Taken	Planned Corrective Action/Partial Corrective Action Taken	Additional Explanation
Prior to March, 1985	Certain individual Advance Deposit Funds were not reconciled, approximately \$14,508, from a prior administrator.	Partially	These amounts have been isolated from other Advance Funds. All attempts to reconcile these old balances have been futile.	Plan to seek legal remedy of "old" unreconcilable balances. Hope to be transferred to General Fund by law.
6/30/96	Limited staff and lack of proper segregation of duties.	No	Additional staff not cost-effective.	
6/30/95	Computer generated statements for Advance Deposit Funds do not reconcile with actual data.	Yes	Computer consultants advised MMF is reviewing two months of receipt transactions not posted into the general ledges.	
6/30/95	Payroll taxes not withheld or paid on part-time employees.	Yes	Part-time employees are now properly hired and reported to the IRS beginning January 1, 1996.	

**CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN FOR
CURRENT YEAR AUDIT FINDINGS
For the Year Ended June 30, 1997**

Description of Finding	Corrective Action Planned	Name of Contact Person	Anticipated Completion Date
Certain individual Advance Deposit Funds were not reconciled, approximately \$50,000, from a prior administration.	Plan to seek legal remedy of "out" unreconcilable balances. Hope to be transferred to General Fund by law.	Herman Newell	June 30, 1999
Limited staff and lack of proper segregation of duties.	No action planned. Additional staff not cost- effective.	Herman Newell	

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

ON INTERNAL CONTROL STRUCTURE BASED ON AN
AUDIT OF GENERAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS PERFORMED
IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS

Honorable Herman Newell
Clerk of Court
St. Helena Parish
P.O. Box 308
Greensburg, Louisiana 70441

I have audited the general purpose financial statements of the St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court, Greensburg, Louisiana, a component unit of St. Helena Parish Police Jury, as of and for the two years ended June 30, 1997, and have issued my report thereon dated October 10, 1997.

I have conducted my audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. These standards require that I plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the general purpose financial statements are free of material misstatement.

The management of St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court is responsible for establishing and maintaining an internal control structure. In fulfilling this responsibility, estimates and judgments by management are required to assess the expected benefits and related costs of internal control structure policies and procedures. The objectives of an internal control structure are to provide management with reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that assets are safeguarded against loss from unauthorized use or disposition, and that transactions are executed in accordance with management's authorization and recorded properly to permit the preparation of general purpose financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Because of inherent limitations in any internal control structure, errors or irregularities may nonetheless occur and not be detected. Also, projection of any evaluation of the structure to future periods is subject to the risk that procedures may become inadequate because of changes in conditions or that the effectiveness of the design and operation of policies and procedures may deteriorate.

In planning and performing my audit of the general purpose financial statements of St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court, for the two years ended June 30, 1997, I obtained an understanding of the internal control structure. With respect to the internal control structure, I obtained an understanding of the design of relevant policies and procedures and whether they have been placed in operation, and I assessed control risk in order to determine my auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing my opinion on the general purpose financial statements and not to provide an opinion on the internal control structure. Accordingly, I do not express such an opinion.

I noted certain matters involving the internal control structure and its operation that I consider to be reportable conditions under standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Reportable conditions involve matters coming to my attention relating to significant deficiencies in the design or operation of the internal control structure that, in my judgment, could adversely affect the entity's ability to record, process, summarize, and report financial data consistent with the assertions of management in the general purpose financial statements.

The Clerk has been unable to reconcile individual docket balances of the Advance Deposit Fund, for certain balances prior to March 1, 1988, an amount of approximately \$50,000. The Advance Deposit Fund is an agency fund used to account for advance deposits on suits filed by litigants. The advances are refundable to the litigant after all costs have been paid. The funds are held in the Advance Deposit Fund until there is some court or other action making it appropriate for the Clerk to disburse the funds. These unreconciled docket balances are from a prior administration, and have been virtually unreconcilable for many years. All litigant deposits since March 1, 1988, are being maintained by a computer system and are reconcilable. The old accounts (not reconciled) are maintained on a manual basis, and are segregated in a separate bank account. The effect on the financial statements cannot be reasonably determined.

A material weakness is a reportable condition in which the design or operation of one or more of the internal control structure elements does not reduce to a relatively low level the risk that errors or irregularities in amounts that would be material in relation to the general purpose financial statements being audited may occur and not be detected within a timely period by employees in the normal course of performing their assigned functions.

My consideration of the internal control structure would not necessarily disclose all matters in the internal control structure that might be reportable conditions and, accordingly, would not necessarily disclose all reportable conditions that are also considered to be material weaknesses as defined above. However, I noted the following matters involving the internal control structure and its operation that I consider to be material weaknesses as defined above. These conditions were considered in determining the nature, timing, and extent of the procedures to be performed in my audit of the financial statements of St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court for the two years ended June 30, 1997.

In my consideration of the internal control structure, I noted the following reportable condition that I believe to be a material weakness.

The St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court does not have sufficient staff to allow for proper segregation of duties. Due to the limited number of personnel, the Clerk's office cannot separate physical control over assets, including, cash, from access to the books and records.

This report is intended for the information of the St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court and the Louisiana Legislative Auditor. However, this report is a matter of public record, and its distribution is not limited.



Raymond, Louisiana
October 18, 1997

Jessie Travis-Gill

Certified Public Accountant

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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON COMPLIANCE
BASED ON AN AUDIT OF GENERAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
PERFORMED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING STANDARDS

Honorable Herman Newell
Clerk of Court, St. Helena Parish
P.O. Box 308
Greenburg, Louisiana 70441

I have audited the general purpose financial statements of St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court, Greenburg, Louisiana, a component unit of St. Helena Parish Police Jury, as of and for the two years ended June 30, 1997, and have issued my report thereon dated October 10, 1997.

I conducted my audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. These standards require that I plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

Compliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grants applicable to St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court, is the responsibility of the St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court's management. As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement, I performed tests of the St. Helena Parish Clerk of Court's compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, and contracts. However, the objective of my audit of the general purpose financial statements was not to provide an opinion on overall compliance with such provisions. Accordingly, I do not express such an opinion.

The results of my tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance that are required to be reported under Government Auditing Standards.

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Bastrop, Louisiana
October 10, 1997