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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

NATCHITOCHES PARISH ASSOCIATE
NATCHITOCHES, LOUISIANA
ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

DECEMBER 31, 1997

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.

Release Date JUN 01 1998

Natchitoches Parish Assessor
Natchitoches, Louisiana

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1997-1998 Audit Report

Natchitoches Parish Assessor 1997

File # 1997-0008

C. JOHNSON

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

D. Rick Burgis
Natchitoches Parish Assessor
P. O. Box 281
Natchitoches, LA 71418

We have audited the accompanying general purpose financial statements of the Natchitoches Parish Assessor, Natchitoches, Louisiana, a component unit of the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, as of December 31, 1997, and for the year then ended. These general purpose financial statements are the responsibility of the management of the Assessor's Office. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these general purpose financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, the standards for financial and compliance audits contained in *Governor's Auditing Standards*, issued by the U. S. General Accounting Office and the Louisiana Governmental Audit Guide. These standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit also includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the general purpose financial statements referred to in the first paragraph present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Natchitoches Parish Assessor, Natchitoches, Louisiana, as of December 31, 1997, and for the results of its operations for the year then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Our audit was made for the purpose of forming an opinion on the general purpose financial statements taken as a whole. The accompanying financial information listed as "Supplementary Information" and "Schedules" in the table of contents is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the financial statements of the Natchitoches Parish Assessor. Such information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the general purpose financial statements, and in our opinion, is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to such financial statements taken as a whole.

The financial information for the preceding year, which is included for comparative purposes, was taken from the financial report for that year in which we expressed an unqualified opinion on the general purpose financial statements of the Northwestern Parish Assessor.


James Thomas Cunningham, CPA

June 23, 1998
Natchitoches, Louisiana

**GENERAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
(COMBINED STATEMENTS - OVERVIEW)**

Natchitoches Parish Assessor
Natchitoches, Louisiana

Combined Balance Sheet
Fund Type and Account Group
December 31, 1997

	Governmental	Account	Totals	
	Fund Type General Fund	Group General Fund/Assets	(Miscellaneous Code) 12-31-97	12-31-96
ASSETS:				
Cash	\$254,812	\$ 0	\$254,812	\$184,249
Revenue Receivables	294,100	0	294,100	281,129
Equipment	0	248,618	248,618	279,129
Vehicles	_____0	28,334	28,334	28,334
Total Assets	\$548,912	\$276,952	\$825,864	\$772,841
LIABILITIES & FUND EQUITY:				
Liabilities-				
Accounts Payable	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 600
Fund Equity-				
Investment in General Fixed Assets	0	260,990	260,990	268,484
Fund Balance-				
Unreserved-Unassigned	528,912	_____0	528,912	465,773
Total Liabilities & Fund Equity	\$528,912	\$260,990	\$789,904	\$734,867

See notes to financial statements.

Natchitoches Parish Assessor
Natchitoches, Louisiana

Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance
Governmental Fund Type
Year Ended December 31, 1997

	Governmental Fund Type	
	General Fund 1997	General Fund 1996
REVENUES:		
Taxes	\$482,614	\$189,528
Charges for Services	4,518	1,629
Miscellaneous	<u>17,667</u>	<u>11,808</u>
Total Revenues	\$504,800	\$202,965
EXPENDITURES:		
Current:		
Personnel Services	\$296,009	\$262,107
Operating Services	11,516	12,963
Materials & Supplies	12,256	28,057
Travel & Other Charges	11,336	10,252
Capital Expenditures	<u>25,288</u>	<u>4,388</u>
Total Expenditures	\$366,405	\$317,807
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over Expenditures	\$ 138,395	\$ 85,158
Fund Balance-Beginning of Year	869,751	278,427
Fund Balance-End of Year	1,008,146	363,585

See notes to financial statements.

Natchitoches Parish Assessor
Natchitoches, Louisiana

Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance-
Budget (GAAP Basis) and Actual
General Fund Type
December 31, 1997

	General Fund		Variance- Favorable (Unfavorable)
	Budget	Actual	
REVENUES:			
Taxes	\$194,298	\$482,614	\$ 2,316
Charges for Services	3,415	4,238	800
Miscellaneous	<u>30,608</u>	<u>17,657</u>	<u>1,652</u>
Total Revenues	\$487,521	\$424,839	\$16,682
EXPENDITURES:			
Current-			
Personal Services	\$265,740	176,169	\$10,237
Operating Services	12,990	11,118	498
Materials & Supplies	26,158	12,236	13,922
Travel & Other Charges	9,080	11,236	(2,156)
Capital Expenditures	<u>28,092</u>	<u>29,898</u>	<u>492</u>
Total Expenditures	\$321,598	\$261,099	\$22,892
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over Expenditures	\$ 14,029	\$ 16,740	\$29,711
Fund Balance-Beginning of Year	464,772	464,772	—\$
Fund Balance-End of Year	\$428,584	\$428,512	\$29,711

See notes to financial statements.

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Natchitoches Parish Assessor
Natchitoches, Louisiana
Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 1997

INTRODUCTION

As provided by Article VII, Section 24 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974, the assessor is elected by the voters of the parish and serves a four-year term. The assessor assesses all real and movable property in the parish, subject to ad valorem taxation. The assessor is authorized to appoint as many deputies as may be necessary for the efficient operation of the office and provides assistance to the taxpayers of the parish. The deputies are authorized to perform all functions of the office, but the assessor is officially and pecuniarily responsible for the actions of the deputies.

The assessor's office is located in the Natchitoches Parish Courthouse in Natchitoches, Louisiana. In accordance with Louisiana law, the assessor bases real and movable property assessments on conditions existing on January 1 of the tax year. The assessor completes an assessment listing by May 1 of the tax year and submits the list to the parish governing authority and the Louisiana Tax Commission as prescribed by law. Once the assessment listing is approved, the assessor submits the assessment roll to the parish tax collector who is responsible for collecting and distributing taxes to the various taxing bodies.

1. Summary Of Significant Accounting Policies:

The accompanying general purpose financial statements of the Natchitoches Parish Assessor 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.

A. Reporting Entity-

As the governing authority of the parish, for reporting purposes, the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury is the financial reporting entity for Natchitoches Parish. The financial reporting entity consists of (a) the primary government (police jury), (b) organizations for which the primary government is financially accountable, and (c) 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 Natchitoches Parish Police Jury for financial reporting purposes. The basic criterion for including a potential component unit within the reporting entity is financial accountability. The GASB has set forth criteria to be considered in determining financial accountability. This criteria includes:

1. Appointing a voting majority of an organization's governing body, and
 - a. The ability of the police jury to impose its will on that organization and/or

Natchitoches Parish Assessor
Natchitoches, Louisiana
Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 1997

- b. The potential for the organization to provide specific financial benefits to or impose specific financial burdens on the police jury.
2. Organizations for which the police jury does not appoint a voting majority but are fiscally dependent on the police jury.
3. Organizations for which the reporting entity financial statements would be misleading if data on the organization is not included because of the nature or significance of the relationship.

Because of item number 2 above, the assessor was determined to be a component unit of the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, the financial reporting entity. The accompanying financial statements present information only on the funds maintained by the assessor and do not present information on the police jury, the general government services provided by that governmental unit, or the other governmental units that comprise the financial reporting entity.

B. Fund Accounting

The assessor uses a fund and an account group to report 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 governmental 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.

The fund of the assessor is classified as a governmental fund. Governmental funds account for the assessor's general activities, including the collection and disbursement of specific or legally restricted monies and the acquisition of general fixed assets. The Governmental fund of the assessor includes:

1. **General Fund/for General Fund**, as provided by Louisiana Revised Statute 47:1966, is the principal fund of the assessor and accounts for the operation of the assessor's office. All revenues are accounted for in this fund. General operating expenditures are paid from this fund.

C. Fixed Assets and Long-Term Liabilities

The accounting and reporting treatment applied to the fixed assets associated with a fund are determined by its management focus. All governmental fund type operations are accounted for on a spending or "financial flow" measurement focus and only current assets and current liabilities are generally included on their balance sheets.

Natchitoches Parish Assessor
Natchitoches, Louisiana
Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 1997

Fixed assets used in the governmental fund type operations (general fixed assets) are accounted for in the General Fixed Assets Account Group, rather than in the General Fund. General Fixed assets provided by the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury are not recorded within the General Fixed Assets account group of the Assessor. Fixed assets are valued at historical cost. No depreciation has been provided on general fixed assets.

The Natchitoches Parish Assessor has no outstanding long-term obligations.

The General Fixed Assets 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 relates to the timing of the measurement made, regardless of the measurement focus applied. The Assessor's records are maintained on the modified accrual basis of accounting utilizing the following practices:

Revenues-Revenues from tax levies are recorded in the year the taxes are levied. Other income items are recorded when earned. Interest income is recorded when the income is available.

Expenditures-Expenditures are generally recognized under the modified accrual basis of accounting when the related fund liability is incurred. Salaries are recognized when they occur. Office supplies are recognized when they are purchased. Capital expenditures are recognized when the liability is incurred.

E. Budgetary Practices-

Prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, the Natchitoches Parish Assessor adopts a budget for the General Fund for the next fiscal year. The budget is open for public inspection. All budgetary appropriations lapse at the end of the fiscal year.

F. Investments-

All monies of the Natchitoches Parish Assessor are held in interest-bearing accounts. These cash accounts should be secured by federal deposit insurance, or by bank-owned securities.

Natchitoches Parish Assessor
Natchitoches, Louisiana
Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 1997

G. Total Columns on General Purpose Financial Statements-

Total columns on the general purpose financial statements (combined statements-overview) are captioned "Memorandum Only" to indicate that they are presented only to facilitate financial analysis. Data in these columns do not present financial position, results of operations, or changes in financial position in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. Further, such data comparable to a consolidation. Interfund eliminations have not been made in the aggregation of this data.

H. Vacation and Sick Leave-

Employees of the Natchitoches Parish Assessor do not accrue or "carry forward" vacation or sick leave pay from year to year. As such, there are no accounts made in either the General Fund or in a general long-term debt account group for these payments.

I. Comparative Data

Comparative total data for the prior year have been presented in the accompanying financial statements in order to provide an understanding of changes in the Assessor's financial position and operations. However, comparative (i.e., presentation of prior year totals by fund type) data have not been presented in each of the statements since their inclusion would make the statements overly complex and difficult to read.

2. Ad Valorem Taxes

The assessor levies taxes on real and business personal property located within the boundaries of Natchitoches Parish. Property taxes are levied by the Parish on property values assessed by the Natchitoches Parish Tax Assessor and approved by the State of Louisiana Tax Commission.

The Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's office bills and collects property taxes for the Assessor. Collections are remitted to the Assessor monthly. The Assessor recognizes property tax revenues when levied.

Property Tax Calendar

Assessment date	January 1, 1997
Levy date	June 30, 1997
Tax bills mailed	October 15, 1997
Total taxes are due	December 31, 1997
Penalties and interest added	January 31, 1998
Last date	January 3, 1998
Tax sale	June 25, 1998

Natchitoches Parish Assessor
Natchitoches, Louisiana
Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 1997

The Assessor is permitted to levy taxes up to 10% of the assessed property valuation for each specified purpose, or, in the aggregate for all purposes 10% of the assessed valuation for the payment of principal and interest on long-term debt after the approval by the voters of the Assessor. Property taxes are recorded as receivables and revenues in the year assessed.

Assessed values are established by the Natchitoches Parish Tax Assessor each year on a uniform basis at the following ratios to fair market value:

10% land	10% machinery
10% residential improvements	10% commercial improvements
10% industrial improvements	20% public service properties, excluding land

A revaluation of all property is required to be completed no less than every four years. The last revaluation was completed for the roll of January 1, 1995. Total assessed value was \$128,658,808 in 1997. Louisiana state law exempts the first \$7,500 of assessed value of a taxpayer's primary residence from parish property taxes. This homestead exemption was a total of \$34,707,000 of the assessed value in 1997. For the year ended December 31, 1997, taxes of 3.79 mills were levied on the property. Taxes collected totaled \$312,515.

The following are the principal taxpayers for the parish:

Taxpayer	Assessed Valuation	Percentage of Total Assessed Valuation
Western Kraft Paper	\$ 9,196,810	7%
Tennessee Gas Pipeline	5,332,750	4%
BellSouth	3,623,910	3%
Central LA Electric	2,322,100	2%
Trans Joint Macmillan	1,981,070	1%
Koch Gateway Pipelines	2,243,230	2%
Western Gas Resources	1,876,410	1%
Total	\$26,436,230	21%

Natchitoches Parish Assessor
Natchitoches, Louisiana
Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 1987

3. Changes in General Fixed Assets:

A summary of changes in General Fixed Assets follows:

	Balance 1-1-87	Additions	Deletions	Balance 12-31-87
General Fixed Assets:				
Land & Buildings	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$0	\$ 0
Equipment-				
Vehicles	29,374	0	0	29,374
Other	289,158	29,208	0	318,366
Total General Fixed Assets	\$289,158	\$29,208	\$0	\$318,366

4. Leases:

The Natchitoches Parish Assessor is not a party to any capital or operating leases.

5. Litigation:

The Natchitoches Parish Assessor is not a party to any litigation seeking damages at December 31, 1987.

6. Expenses Paid by the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury:

Certain expenses of the Assessor's office are paid by the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury. In addition to furnishing the building where the Assessor's office is located, the Police Jury pays all utility bills, most insurance, and furnishes some of the equipment in the Assessor's office.

7. Related Party Transactions:

The Assessor's office had no related party transactions for the year ended December 31, 1987.

8. Cash and Investments:

For reporting purposes, cash and cash equivalents include cash, demand deposits, time deposits, and certificates of deposit. At December 31, 1987, the Assessor had cash and cash equivalents totaling \$214,612. Cash and cash-equivalents are stated at cost, which approximates market.

Natchitoches Parish Assessor
Natchitoches, Louisiana
Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 1997

Under Louisiana law, these deposits must be secured by federal deposit insurance or the pledge of securities owned by the bank. The market value of the pledged securities plus the federal deposit insurance must at all times equal the amount on deposit with the bank. These pledged securities are held in the name of the pledging bank in a holding or custodial bank in the form of safekeeping receipts held by the Assessor. The deposits at December 31, 1997, were secured as follows:

	Bank Balances	FDIC Insurance	Additional Securities Pledged	Balance Unsecured
Cash	\$234,412	\$188,800	\$488,800	\$0

All of the Assessor's deposits are held in the Assessor's name.

8. Employee Retirement System

Plan Description. Substantially all employees of the Natchitoches Parish Assessor's office are members of the Louisiana Assessors' Retirement System (System), a non-sharing, multiple-employer defined benefit pension plan administered by a separate board of trustees.

All full-time employees who are under the age of 60 at the time of original employment and are not drawing retirement benefits from any other public retirement system in Louisiana are required to participate in the System. Employees who retire at or after age 55 with at least 12 years of credited service or at or after age 58 with at least 30 years of credited service are entitled to a retirement benefit, payable monthly for life, equal to 3 percent of the final-average salary for each year of credited service, not to exceed 180 percent of their final-average salary. Final-average salary is the employee's average salary over the 36 consecutive or joined 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 or amended by state statute.

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 Assessors' Retirement System, Post Office Box 1786, Shreveport, Louisiana 71166-1786, or by calling (318) 421-4444.

Natchitoches Parish Assessor
Natchitoches, Louisiana
Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 1997

Funding Policy. Plan members are required by state statute to contribute 3.0 percent of their annual covered salary and the Natchitoches Parish Assessor is required to contribute at an actuarially determined rate. The current rate is 5.75 percent of annual covered payroll. Contributions to the System also include one-fourth of one percent (one percent for Orleans Parish) of the taxes shown to be collectible by the tax rolls of each parish, plus revenue sharing funds appropriated by the legislature. The contribution requirements of plan members and the Natchitoches Parish Assessor are established and may be amended by state statute. As provided by Louisiana Revised Statute 11:185, 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 Natchitoches Parish Assessor's contributions to the System for the year ending December 31, 1997, 1996, and 1995 were \$27,810, \$25,343, and \$25,200, respectively, equal to the required contributions for each year.

10. Accounting:

The Natchitoches Parish Assessor does not employ the use of "encompassed" accounting methods.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL FUND
AND THE ACCOUNT GROUP

GENERAL FUND

To account for the resources traditionally associated with governmental units which are not required to be accounted for in another fund.

Natchitoches Parish Assessor
Natchitoches, Louisiana

General Fund
Balance Sheet
December 31, 1997 and 1996

	1997	1996
ASSETS:		
Cash	\$214,412	\$154,349
Revenue Receivables	259,183	281,129
Total Assets	<u>\$473,595</u>	<u>\$435,478</u>
LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCE:		
Liabilities-		
Accounts Payable	\$ 0	\$ 603
Fund Balance-		
Unreserved-Unassigned	473,595	434,875
Total Liabilities & Fund Balance	<u>\$473,595</u>	<u>\$435,478</u>

See notes to financial statements.

Neighborhood Parish Assessor
Neighborhood, Louisiana

General Fund
Statement of Revenues-Budget (GAAP Basis) and Actual
Year Ended December 31, 1997

With Comparative Actual Amounts From Year Ended December 31, 1996

	1997		Variance- Favorable (Unfavorable)	1996 Actual
	Budget	Actual		
REVENUES:				
Taxes:				
Ad Valorem	\$394,298	\$402,634	\$ 8,336	\$389,538
Charges for Services-				
Preparation of Tax Roll	3,625	4,538	913	3,629
Miscellaneous:				
Interest	6,080	12,077	6,077	6,879
Miscellaneous	<u>4,080</u>	<u>5,180</u>	<u>1,100</u>	<u>4,121</u>
Total Revenues	\$407,923	\$424,829	\$16,906	\$408,157

See notes to financial statements.

Westwood Parish Assessor
Metairie, Louisiana

General Fund
Statement of Expenditures—Budget (GAAP Basis) and Actual
Year Ended December 31, 1997

With Comparative Actual Amounts From Year Ended December 31, 1996

EXPENDITURES	1997		Variance- Favorable (Unfavorable)	1996 Actual
	Budget	Actual		
Current:				
Personal Services-				
Assessor's Salary	\$ 69,530	\$ 69,530	\$ 0	\$ 69,214
Assessor's Expense	6,933	6,933	0	4,925
Depository Salaries	163,280	154,682	8,598	153,223
Insurance	34,443	32,163	2,280	43,971
Retirement	12,298	11,969	329	9,511
Payroll Taxes	0	1,184	(1,184)	1,221
Total Personal Services	326,584	326,397	\$187	\$282,865
Operating Services-				
Telephone	\$ 2,508	\$ 2,308	\$ 1,994	\$ 2,436
Equipment Maintenance	3,600	2,709	(799)	6,627
Audit	2,900	2,900	0	2,900
Total Operating Services	9,008	8,117	\$ 891	\$12,963
Materials & Supplies-				
Office Expense	\$ 26,000	\$ 22,208	\$ 3,792	\$ 26,000
Travel & Other Charges-				
Travel Expense	\$ 4,000	\$ 2,466	\$ 1,534	\$ 4,576
Auto Expense	2,000	2,878	(878)	2,696
Total Travel & Other Charges	6,000	5,344	\$ 656	\$ 7,272
Capital Outlay-				
Capital Expenditures	\$ 26,000	\$ 26,000	\$ 0	\$ 26,000
Total Expenditures	\$467,968	\$468,059	\$12,865	\$447,840

See notes to financial statements.

GENERAL FIXED ASSETS ACCOUNT GROUP

To account for fixed assets purchased by the Assessor's office and used in the General Fund operations.

Northwest Parish Assessor
Mandeville, Louisiana

General Fixed Assets Account Group
Statement of General Fixed Assets
December 31, 1997 and 1996

	December 31, 1997	December 31, 1996
GENERAL FIXED ASSETS:		
Land & Buildings	\$ 0	\$ 0
Equipment		
Vehicles	29,314	29,314
Other	188,618	189,119
Total General Fixed Assets	\$217,932	\$218,433
Investment in General Fixed Assets	\$207,982	\$198,483

See notes to financial statements.

Natchitoches Parish Assessor
Natchitoches, Louisiana

General Fixed Assets Account Group
Statement of Changes in General Fixed Assets
Year Ended December 31, 1997

	Balance 12-31-96	Additions	Deletions	Balance 12-31-97
GENERAL, FIXED ASSETS:				
Land & Buildings	\$ 0	\$ 0	0	\$ 0
Equipment-				
Vehicles	29,134	0	0	29,134
Other	288,158	29,598	8	288,658
Total General Fixed Assets	\$288,484	\$29,598	8	\$317,972
Investment in General Fixed Assets	\$288,484	\$29,598	8	\$317,972

See notes to financial statements.

INTERNAL CONTROL AND COMPLIANCE

State of Louisiana - OFFICE OF POLITICAL REFORM (successor)

301 North Third

Box 1, Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Telephone: (504) 388-7000

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**REPORT ON COMPLIANCE AND ON INTERNAL
CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING BASED ON AN ASSESSMENT
OF THE GENERAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
PERFORMED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS**

D. Rick Haggis
Natchitoches Parish Assessor
P. O. Box 204
Natchitoches, LA 71457

We have audited the general purpose financial statements of the Natchitoches Parish Assessor, a component unit of the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury, as of and for the year ended December 31, 1991. We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

Compliance

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Natchitoches Parish Assessor's general purpose financial statements are free of material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grants, non-compliance 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 non-compliance that are required to be reported under Government Auditing Standards.

Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit, we considered the Natchitoches Parish Assessor's internal control over financial reporting in order to determine our auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements and not to provide assurance on the internal control over financial reporting. However, we noted certain matters involving the internal control over financial reporting and its operations that we consider to be reportable conditions. Reportable conditions involve matters coming to our attention relating to significant deficiencies in the design or operation of the internal control over financial reporting that, in our judgment, could adversely affect the Natchitoches Parish Assessor's ability to record, process, summarize, and report financial data consistent with the assertions of management in the financial statements. Reportable conditions are described in the accompanying schedule of findings and questioned costs as Item A-1.

A material weakness is a condition of which the design or operation of one or more of the internal control components does not reduce to a relatively low level the risk that misstatements in amounts that would be material in relation to the 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. Our consideration of the internal control over financial reporting would not necessarily disclose all matters in the internal control that might be reportable conditions and, accordingly, would not necessarily disclose all reportable conditions that are also considered to be material weaknesses. However, of the reportable conditions described above, we consider A-1 to be a material weakness.

This report is intended for the information of the management of the Natchitoches Parish Assessor, the Legislative Auditor, and interested state and federal agencies. However, this report is a matter of public record and its distribution is not limited.


Thomas, Thomas & Cunningham, CPA's

June 23, 1998
Natchitoches, Louisiana

Natchitoches Parish Assessor
Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs
December 31, 1997

A-1 SEGREGATION OF DUTIES

Due to the size of the Natchitoches Parish Assessor's administrative and accounting staff, there is an insufficient segregation of duties to have an effective internal control.

Since the cost of an internal control system should not outweigh the benefits derived from it, we can only recommend that the Assessor's office consider and analyze the cost versus the benefits associated with hiring additional administrative/accounting personnel.

Management of the Assessor's office concurs with the finding. Due to the budget and staff limitations, no action will be taken at this time.