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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

State Auditor Otto Releases Criminal Forfeitures Report

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ST. PAUL (7/19/2010) – State Auditor Rebecca Otto today released the Criminal Forfeitures Report, which provides information on the amount of cash and property seized subject to forfeiture by Minnesota law enforcement agencies in 2009. The report lists and summarizes these forfeiture incidents to help provide transparency to the forfeiture process, and to keep policymakers and the public informed on the nature and frequency of property seized subject to forfeiture.

“The Metro Gang Strike Force issues in 2009 raised the legislature’s and the public’s level of awareness of criminal forfeitures in the State of Minnesota. As a result, the legislature made many changes to the criminal forfeiture laws, and to the reporting requirements for criminal forfeitures. The more extensive reporting requirements go into effect August 1st of this year and will be reflected in the 2010 report,” said Auditor Otto. **“One example of a new reporting requirement is that law enforcement agencies will have to report DUI forfeitures to the Office of the State Auditor.”**

Highlights from the report include:

- In 2009, 218 Minnesota law enforcement agencies (7 fewer agencies than in 2008) reported a total of 4,895 incidents of property seized subject to forfeiture. While 7 fewer law enforcement agencies reported forfeiture incidents in 2009, the total number of incidents increased by 1,072 forfeiture incidents, or 28.0 percent, more than the number reported in 2008.
- Gross sales of forfeited property or seized cash totaled \$4,778,457 in 2009, up 25.0 percent from the \$3,823,463 reported in 2008. Administrative expenses and lien holder’s obligations decreased 2.4 percent between 2008 and 2009, falling from \$356,362 in 2008 to \$347,745 in 2009. Net proceeds totaled \$4,449,152 in 2009, which was 27.1 percent more than the \$3,500,434 reported in 2008.

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- Cash accounted for 54 percent (55 percent in 2008) of property seized, followed by firearms at 26 percent (18 percent in 2008), vehicles at 19 percent (26 percent in 2008), and other property at 1 percent (1 percent in 2008).
- Of the 4,895 forfeiture incidents reported, 3,579 involved seized cash, property that was sold, or an agreement that required monetary compensation to the agency. The total value of net proceeds from these forfeitures was \$4,449,152. Net proceeds derived from forfeitures ranged from \$0 to \$95,102. Net proceeds per forfeiture incident averaged \$1,243 in 2009, compared to \$1,073 in 2008.
- Criminal activity involving a controlled substance accounted for 3,773 (77 percent) of the 4,895 forfeiture incidents reported in 2009.
- The agencies with 100 or more forfeiture incidents completed in 2009 were: the Minneapolis Police Department (1,207), the Saint Paul Police Department (806), the Minnesota State Patrol (257), the Dakota County Drug Task Force (194), the Southeast Minnesota Drug Task Force (182), the Northwest Metro Drug Task Force (112), and the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office (100).
- In addition to the 218 law enforcement agencies that completed forfeitures in 2009, 241 agencies reported that they had no forfeitures, and 34 did not file reports with the Office of the State Auditor.

The complete report, which includes an executive summary, tables and graphs, can be accessed at:

<http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=20100716.000>.

(Two pdfs of charts from the report are attached below.)

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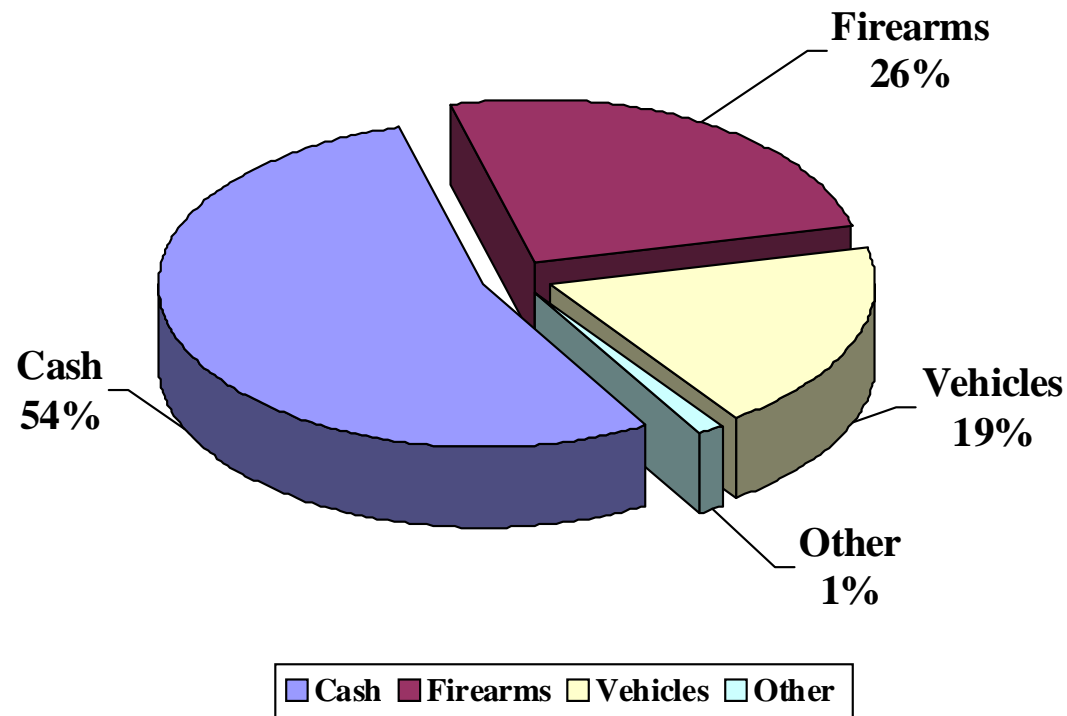
The Office of the State Auditor is a constitutional office that is charged with overseeing more than \$20 billion spent annually by local governments in Minnesota. The Office of the State Auditor does this by performing audits of local government financial statements, and by reviewing documents, data, reports, and complaints reported to the Office. The financial information collected from local governments is analyzed and is the basis of statutory reports issued by the Office of the State Auditor.

Rebecca Otto is Minnesota's 18th State Auditor. A high-resolution official photo is available for download at http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/images/otto_hires.jpg. To learn more about State Auditor Otto, see <http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=bio>.



2009 Criminal Forfeitures In Minnesota

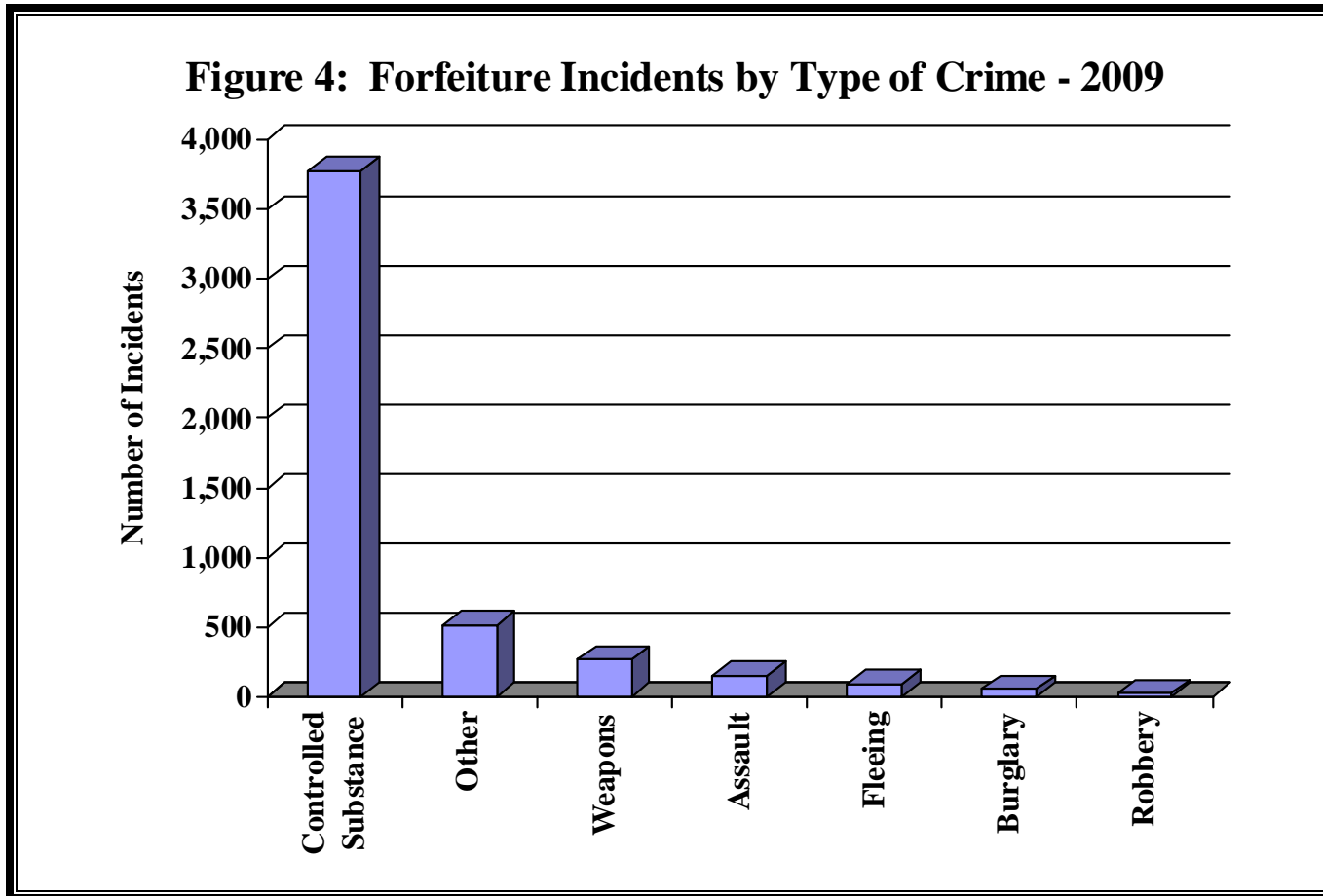
Figure 2: Types of Property Seized - 2009



Source: Office of the Minnesota State Auditor



2009 Criminal Forfeitures In Minnesota



Source: Office of the Minnesota State Auditor