1. Released: County Summary Budget Report

2. Pension: Fire Relief Association Survey

3. Update: Pension Training

4. Avoiding Pitfalls: Electronic Funds Transfers

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1. Released: County Summary Budget Report

The OSA has released the County Summary Budget Report. The report includes 2015 budget data together with 2014 revised budget data.

Budgets are simply plans for the coming year. The 2014 budgets were adopted by county boards in November and December of 2013. The 2015 budgets were adopted by county boards in November and December of 2014.

To view the complete report, go to:

http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=20150423.000.

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2. Pension: Fire Relief Association Survey

The Office of the State Auditor is conducting a brief, five-question survey to collect information that will be used by the Volunteer Fire Relief Association Working Group next fall. The survey seeks information on whether your fire department has members who solely provide volunteer emergency medical services. Because only those individuals who perform or supervise fire suppression or fire prevention duties may receive a relief association service pension, there is concern that people performing important public safety services are not currently eligible for pension coverage.

The survey can be completed at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PZG5LKL.

The survey does not ask for any personal information. If you have questions regarding the survey, please contact Rose Hennessy Allen at (651) 296-5985 or at Rose.Hennessy-Allen@osa.state.mn.us.

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3. Update: Pension Training

The Office of the State Auditor would like to thank all of the relief association officers, trustees and consultants that attended one of our training sessions this spring. Our Pension staff had the chance to connect face-to-face with nearly 175 training participants. We appreciated the opportunity to discuss your questions and concerns, and we encourage you to contact our office when any questions arise.

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4. Avoiding Pitfalls: Electronic Funds Transfers

To pay vendor claims, many local government entities may use electronic funds transfers instead of checks. Electronic funds transfers may also be used to purchase and sell investments.

While these transactions are convenient, they present unique opportunities for fraud. As a result, state law requires local units of government to adopt certain policies and procedures before electronic funds transfers are made. The law specifically requires school districts to have all of the following policy controls in place before using electronic funds transfers:

- On an annual basis, the school board must delegate to a designated business administrator the authority to make electronic funds transfers.
- The disbursing bank must keep on file a certified copy of the delegation of authority.
- The person initiating the electronic transfer must be identified.
- The person initiating the electronic transfer must document the request and obtain approval from the designated business administrator before initiating the transfer.
- Written confirmation of the transaction must be made within one business day after the transaction.
- A list with all transactions made by electronic funds transfer must be submitted to the school board at its next regular meeting.

While these requirements are mandatory for school districts, they provide guidance for other units of government when drafting their policies and procedures.

Statutes governing electronic funds transfers include Minn. Stat. §§ 385.071 (counties), 471.38 (school districts), and 471.381 (cities, towns, and counties).

If you are interested in signing up to receive an e-mail version of the E-Update regularly, click here.

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