Written by Staff Report
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SANTA FE – State Auditor Tim Keller publicly released the report of a special examination of financial issues in the McKinley County Sheriff's Office July 7.

The report is the result of an investigation that the Office of the State Auditor announced earlier this year. The examination focused on the potential misuse of DWI prevention program funds by the MCSO from 2010 to 2014 under former Sheriff Felix Begaye.

"New Mexicans deserve to have their public safety funds accounted for and spent on the important programs for which they were designated, such as DWI prevention," Keller said. "The auditor's office has made recommendations to the Sheriff's office to strengthen its internal controls and we will monitor progress on an annual basis. We hope this report and changes made by management will bring transparency and accountability to allow for continued funding going forward."

The report outlines the following issues that speak to the general mismanagement of DWI funds that were not tracked or accounted for appropriately based on Federal and state financial guidelines:

In fiscal year 2015, McKinley County transferred $425,000 from the Sheriff's fund to the General Fund to reimburse overtime costs incurred prior to June 30, 2013, but the supporting documentation was not maintained;

Sheriff Deputies claimed overtime for DWI Task Force federal reimbursement, when they were working elsewhere such as at local high school athletic games and a high school prom;

Sheriff Deputies frequently did not log any activity during a shift regardless of whether the time was reimbursable; and,

The OSA report follows a report from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Region 6 (NHTSA) that examined federal program funds awarded to McKinley County through the New Mexico Department of Transportation Traffic Safety Division. The report from NHTSA determined that $173,432 of the expenditures claimed by MCSO were unallowable.

"Over the past months, the current county administration, commission and sheriff have worked productively with the Auditor's Office to find solutions to these issues. We appreciate current officials in the McKinley County Sheriff's Office for fully cooperating with our investigation," Keller said.

The full report can be found on the State Auditor's website: http://osanm.org/audit_reports/detail/9433