

Golden Goose Egg Award Recipients



February 12, 2003

Henry Hungerbeeler – Director, MO Department of Transportation

JT Yarnell – Former Chief Engineer, MO Department of Transportation

Received the award for their January 14, 2002 trip to Washington, DC for a National Security Meeting. They flew on the Governor's plane costing the state \$6486 dollars. Two-round trip tickets in coach would cost on a commercial airline approximately \$1100 dollar. Planning ahead and flying on a commercial air carrier could have saved the state nearly \$5500 dollars. *(Source: MoDOT Flight Log Report for the Year 2002)*

February 19, 2003

Ollie Gates, Chairman of the State Highway Commission

Received the award for excessive travel on state owned planes in 2002. Chairman Gates utilized the state plane flying to and from Highway Commission meetings and other meetings concerning highway business. Often times Chairman Gates was the only person on the plane. His travel on state planes cost the state \$37,131.86 dollars. *(Source: MoDOT Flight Log Report for the Year 2002)*

February 26, 2003

Department of Conservation

Receive the award for their lax oversight and poor judgment granting more than \$800,000 in cash and land to establish a nature center that is overseen by former department managers, which is nowhere near completion, may never be completed and ceased operation because there is less than \$8000 dollars left over in funding. A foundation headed up by a former conservation department director and several former employees hatched plans for a “Missouri Forest Heritage Educational Center” in 1989. In 1995, the department granted the foundation 455 acres of Shannon County land and \$192,000 in cash. A year later, the department funneled another \$300,000 to the foundation. Almost 14 years later there is no nothing to show for Missouri’s investment in this project except for a nature trail created by volunteers. *(Source: MO State Auditor, Department of Conservation Audit October 3, 2002 – <http://www.auditor.state.mo.us/press/2002-108.htm>)*

March 6, 2003

Office of Administration

Received the award for the agency’s lax, if non-existent, oversight of a credit card-based purchasing program. Launched in 1998 under the auspices of “streamlining” the procurement process, the program now involves over 2,600 state employees, who each have credit cards with spending limits of up to \$3,000 per month for an annual potential of almost \$200 million in liability. The program requires no approval for credit card purchases of up to \$1,000. The audit also details purchases made by a MoDOT employee who used the card to buy wristwatches, knives, travel cases – even “six-pack” beverage coolers – all collectively costing the state more than \$10,000. MoDOT, long in the fight for attaining accountability and credibility, defends the purchases, saying the items are for the department’s “employee catalogue store” The purpose of the catalog itself raising another host of questions. *(Source: MO State Auditor, Office of Administration Audit August 29, 2002 - <http://www.auditor.state.mo.us/press/2002-60.htm>)*

March 14, 2003

Office of Administration

Receive the award for the agency's dogged, if not incomprehensible pursuit of an incredibly over-costly renovation of State Capitol restrooms at a time of budgetary constraints not seen since the last world war. Renovating Statehouse restrooms stems from a Capitol-wide, multi-year restorations plan addressing several aspects of the 85-year-old seat of state government. Some \$3 million was allocated out of a total rehab appropriation of \$8 million to upgrade less than 20 serviceable, if not somewhat outdated, restrooms. While ADA accessibility concerns were a part of the restroom plan, the bulk of the expense has gone directly to lavish materials, fixtures and furnishings more in line – according to an exhaustive OA report replete with Latin quotations – with what the original builders had envisioned. With several restrooms on the House side of the Capitol now in new resplendent glory to the tune of nearly \$2 million, OA has moved to the Senate side of the Rotunda. (*Sources: "Repairs to Public Areas" Project No. 00009-01, prepared by Tom Sater, Project Manager/Lead Designer September 8, 1999 and Report from Office of Administration Division of Design and Construction for Project No. 00009-02*)

March 19, 2003

Department of Conservation

Received the award for spending \$25,000 on exercise Equipment in fiscal year 2001. This equipment is located in a building on the grounds of the Central Office in Jefferson City. Department of Conservation officials indicated that the purchase was made as a part of the department's Wellness Program for employees. Additionally, they indicated that the equipment is used for the department's training academy for protection agents. The expenditure appears to benefit only a limited number of employees and is clearly not necessary to support the mission statement of the department. (*Source: MO State Auditor, Department of Conservation Audit February 20, 2003 – <http://www.auditor.state.mo.us/press/2003-17.htm>*)

April 2, 2003

Department of Public Safety

Received the award for sponsoring overly expensive and woefully attended conferences intended to strengthen communities and lower crime. For 2000, 2001, and 2002, the “Community Mobilization and Partnership” conferences averaged less than 300 people per meeting. In 2001, fewer than 350 people attended the conference at a cost to taxpayers in fliers, snacks and beverages of well over \$200.00 per person. The Department also paid \$9850 for 1000 “padfolios” essentially a fancy writing tablet – for the 2001 conference. The question arises as to where the other 650 “padfolios” disappeared to if they were intended as handouts. (*Source: MO State Auditor, Department of Public Safety Office of the Director Audit August 12, 2002 - www.auditor.state.mo.us/press/2002-55.htm*)

April 9, 2003

Office of State Treasurer

Received the award for entering into two disastrous software purchase agreements that ran months behind their implementation schedules and far over budget. In 1999, the Treasurers office contracted with a computer programming firm to replace database and reporting systems that were thought not to be up to the changing of the year code brought on by the new millennium (“Y2K”). That fear appears to be unfounded, as the software was not put into use until August 2001. Not only was it 30 months before the software was operational; it also came at a cost of more than \$190,000 over the original \$60,000. A year after the previous software contract, the Treasurer’s office followed up with a similar contract of epic proportions and unspectacular results when they purchased a bank reconciliation/deposit verification package in 2000. Apparently, due to the improper entry of a raft of data, the first trial run failed, necessitating the deletion of all entered data and its subsequent re-entry at a cost of \$121,000 to date. (*Source: MO State Auditor, State Treasurer’s Office Audit May 13, 2002 - <http://www.auditor.state.mo.us/press/2002-36.htm>*)

April 17, 2003

Department of Mental Health

Received the award for displaying a consistent inability to reconcile records within a traffic safety program it oversees, resulting in thousands of dollars owed to the state by traffic offenders left unpaid for now, and perhaps forever. A sample polling of the program, known as “SATOP” (substance abuse traffic offenders program), showed that some 3,867 offenders had potentially not paid fees requisite with being in SATOP to get their drivers license back. Reviewing 60 cases in more detail revealed 26 instances – *over 40 percent* – where the required fees had not been paid to the state. According to division personnel, one SATOP office had not remitted over \$40,000 in fees between July of 1999 and July of 2001. The spectacular failure to track, collect and forward fees from SATOP enrollees is perhaps one of the more noteworthy, but hardly the only, area of deficiency found in the program’s (mis)management plan.

(Source: MO State Auditor, Department of Mental Health Audit October 1, 2002 - <http://www.auditor.state.mo.us/press/2002-105.htm>)

April 23, 2003

Governor’s Office

Received the award for allowing various state agencies to help fund Governor Holden’s frequent trips in state airplanes. Holden jetted across the state several times a week on trips that often returned him and his entourage to the same city twice in one day and others that would have been much quicker and far less expensive had he taken to Missouri’s often talked about but predominantly under-maintained roads. The governor took 113 flights in 2001, costing taxpayers \$117,692. Ninety-five percent of flight costs were picked up by the Office of the Governor in the first half of the year. However, the second half of year saw his office picking up only 59 percent of the flight tab, thus shuffling the other 41 percent to 12 other state agencies.

(Source: MO State Auditor, Office of Governor Audit June 30, 2002 – <http://www.auditor.state.mo.us/press/2003-34.pdf>)

January 15, 2004

D. Kent King --- Commissioner, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Received the award for sending out more than 350 holiday cards last December to fellow and past commissioners and state lawmakers at taxpayers' expense. At nearly \$3.42 a card this good-natured but poorly executed card campaign cost taxpayers more than twelve hundred dollars. (Source: *Office of Commissioner Kent King*)

January 22, 2004

Governor Bob Holden

Received the award for recklessly circumventing the General Assembly's budget mandates in a petulant move to keep a "legislative liaison" office open in Washington D.C. Missouri's Washington office cost Missouri taxpayer's more than \$175,000 last year alone. Though both U.S. Senators have their own offices three blocks from the governor's house the Governor has laid the groundwork for the D.C. office to remain open for another four years. The D.C. office is not alone as Missouri also has office space in Illinois, Texas, and New York...all funded by Missouri tax dollars. (Source: *Senate Appropriations Staff and Office of Administration Division of Facilities Management*)

January 29, 2004

Governor Bob Holden

Received the award for again billing taxpayers for overpriced and underutilized state office space. The department of corrections leases some 32,000 square feet of office space at 3101 Chouteau in St. Louis. The problem is that nearly 10,000 square feet of that office space is left totally unused! An even bigger problem is that the state leases this space for roughly \$20 a square foot, multiply 20 by the 10,000 unused square feet and you get \$200,000 in wasted taxpayer dollars. This \$200,000 approaches \$3 million when the 14 remaining years of the lease are considered, money that could be used for schools, healthcare, or roads, but instead is simply going up in smoke.

(Source: *Senate Appropriations Staff and Office of Administration Division of Facilities Management*)

February 24, 2004

Missouri Department of Insurance (MDI)

Received for sending nearly 30 agency employees on a three-day Arizona land cruise last July at taxpayer expense. The true cost of this rendezvous in the desert may never be known but Sen. Cauthorn estimates that at least \$24,800 was spent. Missouri's delegation was by far the largest, comprising nearly 7 percent of all attendees. Only two other state's sent more than eight people, with host state Arizona sending a full dozen less than the 29 lucky all-expense paid Missouri travelers.

(Source: Senate Appropriations Staff)