

**CHEROKEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2002**

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STATE OF OKLAHOMA
OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR AND INSPECTOR

JEFF A. McMAHAN
State Auditor and Inspector

January 16, 2003

TO THE CITIZENS OF
CHEROKEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

Transmitted herewith is the audit of Cherokee County, Oklahoma, for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2002. A report of this type is critical in nature; however, we do not intend to imply that our audit failed to disclose commendable features in the present accounting and operating procedures of the County.

We wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the assistance and cooperation extended to our office during the course of our audit.

The Office of the State Auditor and Inspector is committed to serve the public interest by providing independent oversight and to issue reports that serve as a management tool to the state to ensure a government which is accountable to the people of the State of Oklahoma.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeff A. McMahan".

JEFF A. McMAHAN
State Auditor and Inspector

**CHEROKEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2002**

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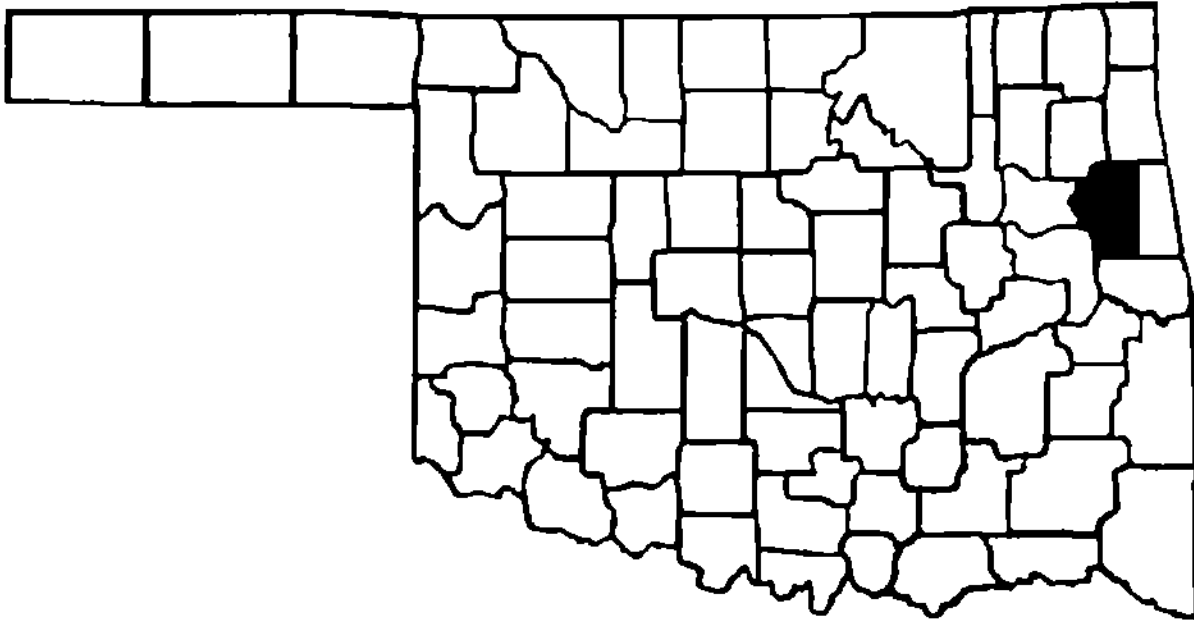
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REPORT TO THE CITIZENS
OF
CHEROKEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA



Cherokee County, created at statehood and named for the Cherokee Nation, is part of the area settled by the Cherokee Indians after the Trail of Tears.

Tahlequah, the county seat, was established as the capital of the Cherokee Nation in 1839. It is the site of the Cherokee Heritage Center, *Tsa-La-Gi* Ancient Cherokee Village, an authentic replica of a Cherokee community during the 1600s; and the Cherokee National Museum. The Cookson Hills, surrounding Tahlequah, were noted as hiding places for outlaws and bandits, including the James Brothers and Belle Starr, around the turn of the century. Lake Tenkiller and the Tenkiller Wildlife Management Area, as well as the Illinois River, provide additional recreational opportunities in Cherokee County.

Northeastern State University in Tahlequah provides a source of higher education in the area. The University's beginning dates back to 1846 when the Cherokee National Council authorized the creation of a National Male Seminary and a National Female Seminary. In 1909, the Oklahoma State Legislature authorized the purchase of the building, land, and equipment of the Cherokee Female Seminary to form the Northeastern State Normal School at Tahlequah.

For more information, call the county clerk's office at (918) 456-3171.

County Seat - Tahlequah

Area - 751.1 Square Miles

County Population - 39,506
(1999 est.)

Farms - 1,154

Land in Farms - 237,558 Acres

Source: Oklahoma Almanac 2001 - 2002

See independent auditor's report.

**COUNTY OFFICIALS
AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

COUNTY ASSESSOR

Judy Rousey
(D) Hulbert

The County Assessor has the responsibility to appraise and assess the real and personal property within the county for the purpose of ad valorem taxation. Also, the County Assessor is required to compute the ad valorem taxes due on all taxable property. The County Assessor appraises all the taxable real and personal property according to its fair cash value for which the property is actually being used as of January 1 of the taxable year at the percentages provided for in Article 10, § 8 of the Oklahoma Constitution.

The County Assessor is required to build and maintain permanent records of the taxable real property and tax exempt real property within the county. Information entered on each record includes the property's legal description, owner's name and address, and the homestead exemption status of the owner.

COUNTY CLERK

Marshel Bennett
(D) Tahlequah

The County Clerk serves as the register of deeds and custodian of records for the county. The County Clerk also serves as the secretary to several boards, including the Board of County Commissioners, the County Excise Board, the County Board of Equalization, and the Board of Tax Roll Corrections.

The County Clerk reviews all the claims for payment of goods and services purchased or contracted by the county, and prepares the proper warrants for payment of those goods and services and the county payroll. The County Clerk, or his or her designated deputy, serves as the purchasing agent for the county. This system is a means to ensure the public that tax dollars are being spent appropriately.

Various records within the different county offices are classified as "open records." As such, they can be reviewed and mechanically copied by the public.

See independent auditor's report.

**COUNTY OFFICIALS
AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

DISTRICT #1
Maxie Thompson
(D) Rose

DISTRICT #2
Bobby Botts
(D) Hulbert

DISTRICT #3
Jim Gower
(D) Park Hill

The Board of County Commissioners is the chief administrative body for the county. County Commissioners are also responsible for maintaining and constructing the county roads and bridges.

The Commissioners must act as a Board when entering into contracts or other agreements affecting the county's welfare. Thus, actions taken by the Board are voted on and approved by a majority of the Commissioners. The Board of County Commissioners' business meetings are open to the public.

As the county's chief administrative body, the three County Commissioners must make major financial decisions and transactions. The Board has the official duty to ensure the fiscal responsibility of the other county officers who handle county funds. The review and approval procedures empowered to the Board of County Commissioners are a means to provide the public with a fiscally efficient system of county government.

See independent auditor's report.

**COUNTY OFFICIALS
AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

COUNTY SHERIFF
Delena Goss
(D) Tahlequah

The County Sheriff is responsible for preserving the peace and protecting life and property within the county's jurisdiction. As the county's chief law enforcement officer, the sheriff has the power and authority to suppress all unlawful disturbances, to apprehend and secure persons charged with felony or breach of peace, and to operate the county jail.

The County Sheriff has the responsibility of serving warrants and processing papers ordered by the District Court.

COUNTY TREASURER
Inez Peace
(D) Tahlequah

All revenues received by county government from ad valorem taxes and other sources are deposited with the County Treasurer. The County Treasurer collects ad valorem taxes for the county and its political subdivisions. The County Treasurer is authorized to issue delinquent personal property tax warrants and to impose tax liens on real property for delinquent taxes.

To account for county revenues and expenditures, the County Treasurer is required to maintain an accurate record of all the monies received and disbursed. The State Auditor and Inspector's Office prescribes all the forms used by the County Treasurer, and at least twice a year inspects the County Treasurer's accounts.

See independent auditor's report.

**COUNTY OFFICIALS
AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

COURT CLERK
Margaret Robbins
(D) Tablequah

The Court Clerk has the primary responsibility to record, file, and maintain as permanent records the proceedings of the District Court.

Court proceedings are recorded in the appropriate journal or record docket. All the court proceedings are public information except those related to juvenile, guardianship, adoption, and mental health cases.

The Court Clerk issues marriage licenses, passports, notary certificates, beer and pool hall licenses, and private process server licenses.

Monies from the court fund are identified for distribution by the Court Clerk to the appropriate units of county and state government. Court Clerks use forms and follow procedures prescribed by the Court Administrator's Office, the Oklahoma Supreme Court, and the State Auditor and Inspector.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY
Dianne Barker Harrold
(D) Ft. Gibson

As the chief attorney for county government, the District Attorney acts as the legal advisor to the county officers on matters related to their duties. The District Attorney represents the county in civil litigation. County officials may call upon the District Attorney to clarify a law or request an official interpretation from the Attorney General.

See independent auditor's report.

**COUNTY OFFICIALS
AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

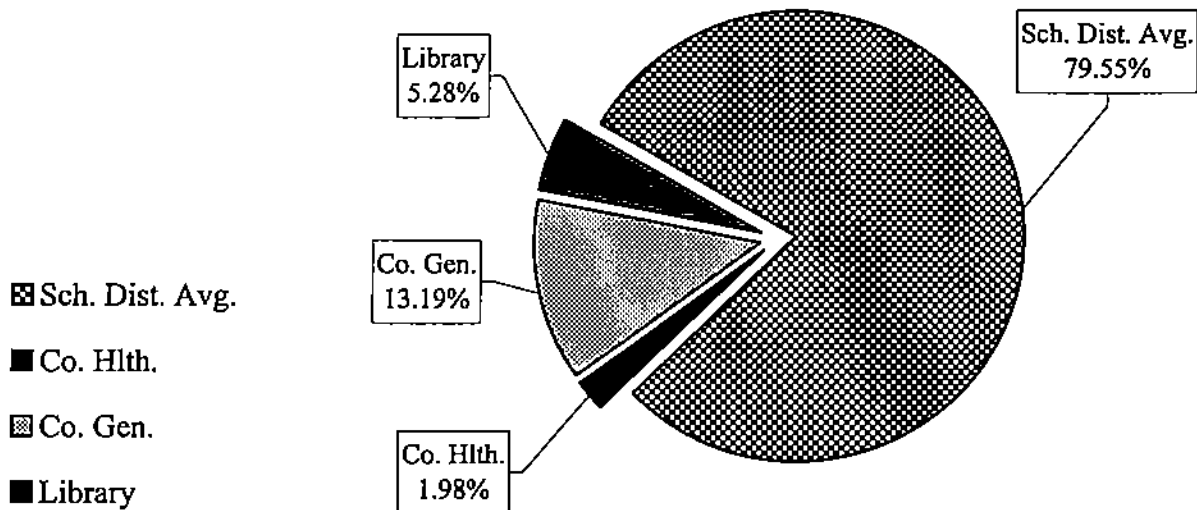
ELECTION BOARD SECRETARY
Connie Parnell
(D) Tahlequah

The Election Board Secretary is appointed by the State Election Board and is the chief administrative officer of the County Election Board. The County Election Board has direct responsibility for all the ballots used in all elections within the county. The Board also conducts all elections held within the county.

To finance the operating expenses of the County Election Board, the County Excise Board must appropriate sufficient funds annually. The state and counties split the election costs, but counties must pay for any county elections not held concurrently with state elections.

**AD VALOREM TAX DISTRIBUTION
CHEROKEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
SHARE OF THE AVERAGE MILLAGE**

Property taxes are calculated by applying a millage rate to the assessed valuation of property. Millage rates are established by the Oklahoma Constitution. One mill equals one-thousandth of a dollar. For example, if the assessed value of property is \$1,000.00 and the millage rate is 1.00, then the tax on that property is \$1.00. This chart shows the different entities of the County and their share of the various millages as authorized by the Constitution.



County-Wide Millages:

Co. General Fund	10.00
Co. Health	1.50
Library	4.00

School District Millages:

	Gen.	Bldg.	Skg.	Vo-Tech	Common	Total
6 - Keys	35.00	5.00	14.81	10.00	4.00	68.81
10 - Lowrey	35.00	5.00	9.55	10.00	4.00	63.55
14 - Norwood	35.00	5.00		10.00	4.00	54.00
16 - Hulbert	35.00	5.00		10.00	4.00	54.00
17 - Lost City	35.00	5.00	0.73	10.00	4.00	54.73
21 - Woodall	35.00	5.00		10.00	4.00	54.00
26 - Shady Grove	35.00	5.00		10.00	4.00	54.00
31 - Peggs	35.00	5.00		10.00	4.00	54.00
34 - Grandview	35.00	5.00	17.38	10.00	4.00	71.38
44 - Briggs	35.00	5.00	4.27	10.00	4.00	58.27
66 - Tenkiller	35.00	5.00		10.00	4.00	54.00
I-35 - Tahlequah	35.00	5.00	17.65	10.00	4.00	71.65
I-3 - Kansas	35.00	5.00	9.22	10.00	4.00	63.22
I-5 - Oaks	35.00	5.00		10.00	4.00	54.00
I-17 - Ft. Gibson	35.00	5.00	14.75	10.00	4.00	68.75
1 - Skelly	35.00	5.00		10.00	4.00	54.00
I-17 - Locust Grove	35.00	5.00	18.53	10.00	4.00	72.53

See independent auditor's report.



STATE OF OKLAHOMA
OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR AND INSPECTOR

JEFF A. McMAHAN
State Auditor and Inspector

Independent Auditor's Report

TO THE OFFICERS OF
CHEROKEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

We have audited the accompanying general-purpose financial statements of Cherokee County, Oklahoma, as of and for the year ended June 30, 2002, as listed in the table of contents. These general-purpose financial statements are the responsibility of Cherokee County's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these general-purpose financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those 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 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.

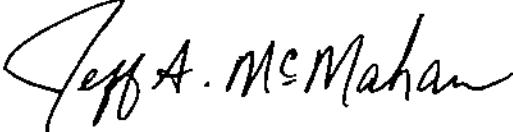
As explained in Note I(H), the general-purpose financial statements referred to above do not include the general fixed assets account group, which should be included in order to conform with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. The amount that should be recorded in the general fixed assets account group is not known.

In our opinion, except for the effect on the general-purpose financial statements of the omission described in the preceding paragraph, the general-purpose financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Cherokee County, Oklahoma, as of June 30, 2002, and the results of its operations for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated October 16, 2002, on our consideration of Cherokee County's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, and contracts. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* and should be read in conjunction with this report in considering the results of our audit.

Our audit was performed for the purpose of forming an opinion on the general-purpose financial statements of Cherokee County, Oklahoma, taken as a whole. The other information listed in the table of contents under *Introductory Section* has not been audited by us and accordingly, we express no opinion on such data.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff A. McMahan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

JEFF A. McMAHAN
State Auditor and Inspector

October 16, 2002

General-Purpose Financial Statements

CHEROKEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
COMBINED BALANCE SHEET – ALL FUND TYPES AND ACCOUNT GROUP
JUNE 30, 2002

	<u>Governmental Fund Types</u>		<u>Fiduciary</u>	<u>Account</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(Memorandum</u> <u>Only)</u>
	<u>General</u>	<u>Special</u> <u>Revenue</u>	<u>Fund Types</u> <u>Trust</u> <u>and</u> <u>Agency</u>	<u>Group</u> <u>General</u> <u>Long-Term</u> <u>Debt</u>	
ASSETS					
Cash	\$ 199,392	\$ 3,388,899	\$ 1,448,855	\$	\$ 5,037,146
Ad valorem taxes receivable	22,566	29,603	156,636		208,805
Sales tax receivable	53,536	294,751			348,287
Due from other governments	9,579	216,364	81,993		307,936
Amount to be provided for capitalized lease agreements				967,347	967,347
Total assets	\$ 285,073	\$ 3,929,617	\$ 1,687,484	\$ 967,347	\$ 6,869,521
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES					
Liabilities:					
Warrants payable	\$ 78,947	\$ 301,756	\$	\$	\$ 380,703
Accounts payable	54,155	455,726			509,881
Due to other taxing units			394,611		394,611
Due to others			1,292,873		1,292,873
Capitalized lease obligations payable				967,347	967,347
Total liabilities	133,102	757,482	1,687,484	967,347	3,545,415
Fund balances:					
Unreserved:					
Undesignated	151,971	3,172,135			3,324,106
Total fund balances	151,971	3,172,135	-	-	3,324,106
Total liabilities and fund balances	\$ 285,073	\$ 3,929,617	\$ 1,687,484	\$ 967,347	\$ 6,869,521

The notes to the financial statements are an integral part of this statement.

CHEROKEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
COMBINED STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN
FUND BALANCES – ALL GOVERNMENTAL FUND TYPES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2002

	<u>Governmental Fund Types</u>		<u>Total (Memorandum Only)</u>
	<u>General</u>	<u>Special Revenue</u>	
Revenues:			
Ad valorem taxes	\$ 970,919	\$ 314,795	\$ 1,285,714
Sales tax	681,167	2,634,952	3,316,119
Charges for services	196,749	139,786	336,535
Intergovernmental revenues	457,046	3,335,013	3,792,059
Miscellaneous revenues	135,908	49,148	185,056
Total revenues	<u>2,441,789</u>	<u>6,473,694</u>	<u>8,915,483</u>
Expenditures:			
Current operating:			
General government	1,649,122	2,340,456	3,989,578
Public safety	438,011	1,034,216	1,472,227
Education	66,938		66,938
Health and welfare	23,457	207,676	231,133
Culture and recreation	15,367	5,055	20,422
Roads and highways	241,145	2,846,514	3,087,659
Charity		47,377	47,377
Sanitation	98,185		98,185
Total expenditures	<u>2,532,225</u>	<u>6,481,294</u>	<u>9,013,519</u>
Excess of revenues over (under) expenditures	<u>(90,436)</u>	<u>(7,600)</u>	<u>(98,036)</u>
Other financing sources (uses):			
Capitalized lease-purchase agreements		67,994	67,994
Total other financing sources (uses)	<u>-</u>	<u>67,994</u>	<u>67,994</u>
Excess of revenues and other sources over (under) expenditures and other uses	<u>(90,436)</u>	<u>60,394</u>	<u>(30,042)</u>
Beginning fund balances	<u>242,407</u>	<u>3,111,741</u>	<u>3,354,148</u>
Ending fund balances	<u>\$ 151,971</u>	<u>\$ 3,172,135</u>	<u>\$ 3,324,106</u>

The notes to the financial statements are an integral part of this statement.

CHEROKEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES
BUDGET AND ACTUAL - GENERAL AND SPECIAL REVENUE
(COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT ONLY) FUNDS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2002

	General			Special Revenue Funds		
	Budget	Actual	Variance	County Health Department		
	Budget	Actual	Variance	Budget	Actual	Variance
Beginning fund balances, budgetary basis	\$ 153,529	\$ 153,230	\$ (299)	\$ 236,364	\$ 236,594	\$ 230
Revenues:						
Ad valorem taxes	970,335	970,575	240	133,031	146,783	13,752
Sales tax	567,255	678,063	110,808			
Charges for services	200,691	196,749	(3,942)	21,305	22,592	1,287
Intergovernmental revenues	454,417	461,833	7,416		748	748
Miscellaneous revenues	218,995	135,908	(83,087)			
Total revenues, budgetary basis	<u>2,411,693</u>	<u>2,443,128</u>	<u>31,435</u>	<u>154,336</u>	<u>170,123</u>	<u>15,787</u>
Expenditures:						
Current operating:						
General government	1,649,957	1,646,733	3,224			
Public safety	457,720	438,329	19,391			
Education	76,450	66,846	9,604			
Health and welfare	24,000	23,457	543	390,700	208,028	182,672
Culture and recreation	15,500	15,367	133			
Roads and highways	241,595	241,151	444			
Sanitation	100,000	98,185	1,815			
Total expenditures, budgetary basis	<u>2,565,222</u>	<u>2,530,068</u>	<u>35,154</u>	<u>390,700</u>	<u>208,028</u>	<u>182,672</u>
Excess of revenues and beginning fund balances over (under) expenditures, budgetary basis	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>66,290</u>	<u>\$ 66,290</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>198,689</u>	<u>\$ 198,689</u>
Reconciliation to Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances						
Add: Ad valorem taxes receivable		22,566			3,304	
Sales tax receivable		53,536				
Due from other governments		9,579			1,437	
Ending fund balances		<u>\$ 151,971</u>			<u>\$ 203,430</u>	

The notes to the financial statements are an integral part of this statement.

Notes to the Financial Statements

CHEROKEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2002

1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

The financial statements of the County are required to be presented in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America as applied to government units. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) is the accepted standard-setting body for establishing governmental accounting and financial reporting principles. The more significant accounting policies and practices are described below.

A. Financial Reporting Entity

Counties were created by the Constitution of Oklahoma. One county officer is appointed; however, most county officers are locally elected by their constituents. All county powers are delegated by the state.

In accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, the financial statements of the reporting entity include those of Cherokee County (the primary government). The County has no component units.

Related Organizations Excluded from the Reporting Entity

The County's officials are responsible for appointing the members of the boards of other organizations, but the County's accountability for these organizations does not extend beyond making the appointments. These organizations are not included in the financial statements.

Cherokee County Solid Waste Trust Authority
Cherokee County Economic Development Authority
Cherokee County Airport Authority
Cherokee County 911 Trust Authority

B. Fund Accounting

The government uses funds and account groups to report on 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 related to certain government functions or activities.

A fund is a separate accounting entity with a self-balancing set of accounts. 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.

Funds are classified into two major categories: governmental and fiduciary.

Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

Governmental Funds

Governmental funds are used to account for all or most of a government's general activities, including the collection and disbursement of earmarked monies (special revenue funds). The general fund is used to account for the activities of the general government not accounted for in some other fund.

Fiduciary Funds

Fiduciary funds are used to account for assets held on behalf of outside parties, including other governments, or on behalf of other funds within the government. Agency funds are generally used to account for assets that the government holds on behalf of others as their agent.

Account Groups

General Fixed Assets Account Group (GFAAG) - Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the fixed assets of a government be reported in a general fixed assets account group (GFAAG). This account group is not a fund. It does not have a balance sheet as such, nor does it report operations. Instead, the GFAAG serves as a list of the government's fixed assets and is designed to ensure accountability.

General Long-Term Debt Account Group (GLTDAG) - The general long-term debt account group (GLTDAG) is used to account for a government's unmatured long-term indebtedness that has not been identified as a specific fund liability of a trust fund. In addition to general obligation debt instruments (e.g., bonds, notes), the GLTDAG is also used to report revenue bonds that will be repaid from general government resources, special assessment debt when the government is "obligated in some manner," special revenue bonds, and certain liabilities that are normally not expected to be liquidated with expendable available financial resources (e.g., capitalized lease-purchase obligations).

C. Measurement Focus and Basis of Accounting

The accounting and financial reporting treatment applied to a fund is determined by its measurement focus and basis of accounting. All governmental fund types are accounted for using a current financial resources measurement focus. With this measurement focus, only current assets and current liabilities are generally included on the balance sheet. Operating statements of these fund types present increases (i.e., revenues and other financing sources) and decreases (i.e., expenditures and other financing uses) in net current assets.

Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

The modified accrual basis of accounting is used by all governmental fund types and agency funds. Under the modified accrual basis of accounting, revenues are recognized when susceptible to accrual (i.e., when they become both measurable and available). "Measurable" means the amount of the transaction can be quantified, and "available" means collectible within the current period or soon enough thereafter to be used to pay liabilities of the current period. The government considers property taxes as available if collected within 60 days after year-end. Expenditures are recorded when incurred and the related fund liability is expected to be paid from available spendable resources. Principal and interest on general long-term debt are recorded as fund expenditures when paid or when amounts for principal and interest have been accumulated in the debt service fund for payments to be made early in the following year.

Those revenues susceptible to accrual are property taxes, sales tax, interest revenue, and other taxes collected and held by the Oklahoma Tax Commission at year-end on behalf of the government. Charges for services are not susceptible to accrual because generally they are not measurable until received in cash.

D. Budgetary Policies and Procedures

Under current Oklahoma statutes, the general fund and the County Health Department fund are the only funds required to adopt a formal budget. The budget presented for the general and special revenue (County Health Department only) funds includes the originally approved budgeted appropriations for expenditures as adjusted for supplemental appropriations and approved transfers between budget categories. Appropriations for the highway funds and other cash funds are made on a monthly basis, according to the funds then available.

Encumbrance accounting, under which purchase orders, contracts, and other commitments for the expenditure of monies are recorded in order to reserve that portion of the applicable appropriation, is employed as an extension of formal budgetary integration in the general and special revenue funds.

Any encumbrances outstanding at year-end are reported as reservations of fund balances since they do not constitute expenditures or liabilities. At the end of the year, unencumbered appropriations are lapsed.

The Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances - Budget and Actual - General and Special Revenue (County Health Department only) Funds presents comparisons of the legally adopted budget with actual data. The "actual" data, as presented in the comparison of budget and actual, will differ from the data as presented in the Combined Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances - All Governmental Fund Types because of adopting certain aspects of the modified accrual basis of accounting and the adjusting of encumbrances to their related budget year.

CHEROKEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2002

Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

E. Cash

The County pools cash resources of its various funds to facilitate the management of cash. Cash applicable to a particular fund is readily identifiable. The balance in the pooled cash accounts is available to meet current operating requirements. All funds were deposited in interest-bearing demand accounts at June 30, 2002.

F. Receivables

All receivables are reported at their gross value.

G. Interest Revenue

Interest on deposits is recorded as revenue in the year the interest is earned and is available to pay liabilities of the current period.

H. Fixed Assets

The County presently maintains some individual records of personal property; however, the County does not keep similar records for land, buildings, and improvements. Because the County does not maintain detailed records of its land, buildings, and improvements, a statement of general fixed assets, required by accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, is not presented on the Combined Balance Sheet - All Fund Types and Account Group.

I. Risk Management

The County is exposed to various risks of loss as follows:

<u>Types of Loss</u>	<u>Method Managed</u>	<u>Risk of Loss Retained</u>
General Liability - Torts - Errors and Omissions - Law Enforcement Officers Liability - Vehicle	The County participates in a public entity risk pool – Association of County Commissioners of Oklahoma – Self-Insured Group. (See ACCO-SIG.)	If claims exceed pool assets, the County would have to pay its share of the pool deficit.
Physical Plant - Theft - Damage to Assets - Natural Disasters	The County participates in a public entity risk pool. (See ACCO-SIG.)	If claims exceed pool assets, the County would have to pay its share of the pool deficit.

CHEROKEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2002

Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

<u>Types of Loss</u>	<u>Method Managed</u>	<u>Risk of Loss Retained</u>
Worker's Compensation - Employees' Injuries	The County participates in a public entity risk pool. (See ACCO Self-Insured Fund ACCO-SIF.)	If claims exceed pool assets, the County would have to pay its share of the pool deficit.
Health and Life - Medical - Disability - Dental - Life	The County carries commercial insurance for these types of risk.	None

ACCO-SIG - The pool operates as a common risk management and insurance program and is to be self-sustaining through member premiums. Each participating county will pay a deductible amount (\$1,000 to \$10,000; the County has a \$2,500 deductible) for each insured event as stated in the County's "Certificate of Participation." The risk pool will pay legitimate claims in excess of the deductible amounts up to and including \$50,000 per insured event. The pool has acquired commercial reinsurance to cover claims in excess of \$50,000 up to \$1,000,000 limit per insured event. The pool, established in 1986, has never had to assess additional premiums to be paid by its members.

ACCO-SIF - The pool operates as a common risk management and insurance program and is to be self-sustaining through member premiums. ACCO-SIF was set up in 1984 and will pay legitimate worker's compensation claims up to \$500,000 per incident. A reinsurance policy, with no limit, pays claims that exceed \$500,000 for a particular incident. The pool has not assessed additional premiums to be paid by its members in the past three years.

The County continues to carry commercial insurance for employees' health and accident insurance. Management believes such coverage is sufficient to preclude any significant uninsured losses to the County. Settled claims have not exceeded insurance coverage in any of the past three fiscal years. There have been no significant reductions in insurance coverage during the 2002 fiscal year.

J. Compensated Absences

The County does not accrue any liability for future vacation benefits. Vacation benefits are earned by the employee during the year and may be accumulated. Such an amount, if recorded, would not be material to the financial statements.

The County does not record any liability for sick leave. An employee earns up to 10 days per year and may accumulate up to 60 days. When more than 60 days are accumulated, the amount over 60 days is put into a sick leave bank and will be used by the employee for retirement purposes only. There is no history of sick leave usage from which to project future usage; hence, no liability for such has been recorded. Such an amount, if recorded, would not be material to the financial statements.

Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

K. Long-Term Obligations

The County reports long-term debt of governmental funds at face value in the general long-term debt account group. Certain other governmental fund obligations not expected to be financed with current available financial resources are also reported in the general long-term debt account group.

L. Memorandum Only - Total Columns

Total columns on the financial statements are captioned "memorandum only" to indicate that they are presented only to facilitate financial analysis. Data in these columns do not present financial position or results of operations in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Interfund transactions have not been eliminated from the total column of each financial statement.

2. Stewardship, Compliance, and Accountability

Budgetary Compliance

On or before the first Monday in July of each year, each officer or department head submits an estimate of needs to the governing body. The budget is approved by fund, office or department, and object. The County Board of Commissioners may approve changes of appropriations within the fund by office or department and object. To increase or decrease the budget by fund requires approval by the County Excise Board.

3. Detailed Notes on Account Balances

A. Deposits

At year-end, the carrying amount of the County's deposits was \$5,037,146 and the bank balance was \$5,139,083. Of the bank balance, all funds were covered by federal depository insurance or by collateral held by the County's agent in the County's name. Funds are deposited in various state and national banks.

B. Receivables

The County's property tax is levied each October 1 on the assessed value listed as of January 1 of the same year for all real and personal property located in the County, except certain exempt property. Assessed values are established by the County Assessor within the prescribed guidelines established by the Oklahoma Tax Commission and the State Equalization Board. Title 68 O.S. § 2820.A. states, ". . . Each assessor shall thereafter maintain an active and systematic program of visual inspection on a continuous basis and shall establish an inspection schedule which will result in the individual visual inspection of all taxable property within the County at least once every four (4) years."

The net assessed property value as of January 1, 2001, was \$96,562,989.

CHEROKEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2002

Detailed Notes on Account Balances (continued)

The County levied 10.0 mills for general fund operations, 1.5 mills for the County Health Department, and 4.0 mills for the library. In addition, the County also collects the ad valorem taxes assessed by cities and towns and school districts and apportions the ad valorem taxes collected to the appropriate taxing units.

Taxes are due on November 1 following the levy date, although, they may be paid in two equal installments. If the first half is paid prior to January 1, the second half is not delinquent until April 1. Unpaid real property taxes become a lien upon said property on October 1 of each year. Unpaid delinquent personal property taxes are published usually in May. If the taxes are not paid within 30 days from publication, they shall be placed on the personal tax lien docket.

Current year tax collections for the year ended June 30, 2002, were approximately 94.46 percent of the tax levy.

C. Pension Plan

Plan Description. The County contributes to the Oklahoma Public Employees Retirement Plan (the Plan), a cost-sharing, multiple-employer defined benefit pension plan administered by the Oklahoma Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS). Benefit provisions are established and amended by the Oklahoma Legislature. The Plan provides retirement, disability, and death benefits to Plan members and beneficiaries. Title 74, Sections 901 through 943, as amended, establishes the provisions of the Plan. OPERS issues a publicly available financial report that includes financial statements and supplementary information. That report may be obtained by writing OPERS, P.O. Box 53007, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105 or by calling 1-800-733-9008.

Funding Policy. The contribution rates for each member category are established by the Oklahoma Legislature and are based on an actuarial calculation which is performed to determine the adequacy of contribution rates. County employees are required to contribute between 3.5% and 8.5% of earned compensation. The County contributes between 5.0% and 10.0% of earned compensation. Elected officials could contribute between 4.5% and 10% of their entire compensation. The County contributes 10.0% of earned compensation for elected officials. The County's contributions to the Plan for the years ending June 30, 2000, 2001, and 2002, were \$299,135, \$333,422, and \$374,669, respectively, equal to the required contributions for each year.

CHEROKEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
 NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
 JUNE 30, 2002

Detailed Notes on Account Balances (continued)

D. Capital Leases

The County acquires road machinery and equipment through lease-purchase agreements financed by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation and/or the equipment vendors or their assignees pursuant to the provisions of 69 O.S. 1991, § 636.1 through § 636.7. Lease agreements entered into with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) are interest free. However, starting in January 1997, ODOT began charging a one-time fee of 3% on all subsequent pieces of machinery acquired. The one-time fee will be reported as interest. Oklahoma statutes prohibit the County from entering into contracts of this nature longer than one year. For this reason, these lease-purchase agreements do not qualify for capitalization until the year the lease-purchase agreements are completed and title to the equipment is transferred to the County. However, it is the County's intent to exercise its right to purchase this property; accordingly, the lease-purchase agreements have been capitalized to conform with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. The unpaid portions of these agreements have been reflected as capitalized lease obligations within the general long-term debt account group.

Providing all capital leases are renewed each year by resolution of the Board of Commissioners, minimum lease commitments under capitalized lease-purchase agreements as of June 30, 2002, are as follows:

Year Ending June 30,	Principal	Interest	Total
2003	\$ 597,809	\$ 23,421	\$ 621,230
2004	223,831	10,061	233,892
2005	71,583	4,759	76,342
2006	47,003	2,622	49,625
2007	27,121	694	27,815
Total	\$ 967,347	\$ 41,557	\$ 1,008,904

During the year, the County capitalized leases totaling \$67,994, returned \$120,077 of equipment to the vendor, and paid \$256,794 on the outstanding balances of lease-purchase agreements.

CHEROKEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2002

Detailed Notes on Account Balances (continued)

E. Long-Term Debt

Changes in Long-Term Liabilities

During the year ended June 30, 2002, the following changes occurred in liabilities reported in the general long-term debt account group:

	<u>Balance July 1, 2001</u>	<u>Additions</u>	<u>Equipment Returned to Vendor</u>	<u>Reductions</u>	<u>Balance June 30, 2002</u>
Capital leases	\$ 1,276,224	\$ 67,994	\$ 120,077	\$ 256,794	\$ 967,347
Total	<u>\$ 1,276,224</u>	<u>\$ 67,994</u>	<u>\$ 120,077</u>	<u>\$ 256,794</u>	<u>\$ 967,347</u>

F. Sales Tax

In 1984, Cherokee County voters approved a sales tax of one percent to be effective for a period of five years. In 1989, 1994, and 1999, this tax was approved for additional five-year periods. The sales tax revenues received are designated for the following uses:

50%	County roads
15%	Law enforcement
25%	General county operations
10%	Grant matching

County voters have also approved a sales tax of .25 percent (permanent) for fire protection.

G. Fuel Taxes

The County receives major funding for roads and highways from a state imposed fuel tax. Taxes are collected by the Oklahoma Tax Commission. Taxes are imposed on all gasoline, diesel, and special fuel sales statewide. The County's share is determined on formulas based on county population, road miles, and land area and is remitted to the County monthly. These funds are earmarked for roads and highways only and are accounted for in the County highway fund. The County highway fund is reported herein as "special revenue," and the fuel tax revenue is presented as "intergovernmental."

4. Contingent Liabilities

The government is a defendant in various lawsuits. Although the outcome of these lawsuits is not presently determinable, in the opinion of the government attorney, the resolution of these matters will not have a material adverse effect on the financial condition of the government.

CHEROKEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2002

5. Subsequent Events

Pursuant to the request from the District Attorney of District 27, the State Auditor and Inspector's Office has conducted a special investigative audit concerning the County's purchasing procedures. The results of this investigation are not expected to have a material effect on the financial statements for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2002.

**Report on Compliance and on Internal Control Over Financial
Reporting Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance With
*Government Auditing Standards***



STATE OF OKLAHOMA
OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR AND INSPECTOR

JEFF A. McMAHAN
State Auditor and Inspector

**Report on Compliance and on Internal Control Over Financial
Reporting Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance With
*Government Auditing Standards***

TO THE OFFICERS OF
CHEROKEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

We have audited the financial statements of Cherokee County, Oklahoma, as of and for the year ended June 30, 2002, and have issued our report thereon dated October 16, 2002. We qualified our opinion because the general fixed assets account group was not included in the financial statements. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America 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 Cherokee County's financial statements are free of material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, and contracts, noncompliance 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 noncompliance that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit, we considered Cherokee County'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 operation 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 County's ability to record, process, summarize, and report financial data consistent with the assertions of management in the financial statements. The reportable conditions are described below.

Finding 98-1 – General Fixed Assets

Criteria: Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America for a governmental entity using governmental fund types require the presentation of the general fixed assets account group (GFAAG) in the financial statements.

Condition: Information is not available for reporting general fixed assets in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America for a government entity. The general fixed assets control account is not accurate.

Effect: This component of internal control is not effective. Accordingly, there is a greater risk that a fixed asset may not be properly accounted for and safeguarded against loss.

Recommendation: We recommend records include acquisition cost, a complete description, purchase date, location of such asset, and that a control total of the cost of these assets be maintained and reconciled annually.

Finding 00-1 - Fuel Records

District 1, District 3, and the County Sheriff keep fuel on site for county equipment and automobiles. District 2 does not keep fuel on hand. Fuel is “logged in” when received and “logged out” when used. The actual amount on hand is never compared to the recorded amount on hand. This lack of control has resulted in the following shortage variances between the records and the actual amount on hand:

		Variance in Gallons
District 1	February 22, 2000 through December 12, 2001 (approximately 21 months or 217 gal/month)	<u>4554</u>
District 3	July 1, 1999 through September 2, 2002 (approximately 38 months or 138 gal/month)	<u>5244</u>
Sheriff	April 5, 2001 through December 21, 2001 (earliest available records)	860
	December 21, 2001 through March 17, 2002 (no records available)	-
	March 18, 2002 through June 8, 2002 (approximately 14 months or 128 gal/month)	<u>926</u>
	Total sheriff	<u>1786</u>

Fuel logs should be compared to actual amount on hand at least weekly (preferably daily). Any discrepancies should be identified and corrected at that time.

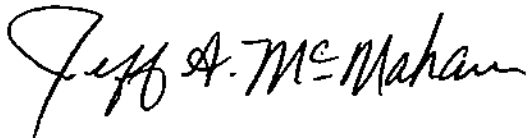
A material weakness is a condition in which the design or operation of one or more of the internal control components does not reduce to a relatively low level the risk that misstatements in amounts that would be material in relation to the financial statements being audited may occur and not be detected 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 98-1 to be a material weakness.

The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants' Statement on Auditing Standards No. 87 requires the inclusion of the following paragraph in this report:

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the management of the County and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

However, the Oklahoma Open Records Act states that all records of public bodies and public officials shall be open to any person, except as specifically exempted. The purpose of this Act is to ensure and facilitate the public's right of access to and review of government records so they may efficiently and intelligently exercise their inherent political power. Therefore, this report is a matter of public record and its distribution is in no way limited or restricted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff A. McMaham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

JEFF A. McMAHAN
State Auditor and Inspector

October 16, 2002

Management Response

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
CHEROKEE COUNTY
213 W. DELAWARE, ROOM 202
TAHLEQUAH, OK 74464
918-456-4121

MAXIE THOMPSON
DISTRICT 1

BOBBY BOTT'S
DISTRICT 2

JIM GOWER
DISTRICT 3

Office of the State Auditor and Inspector
Attention: Clifton H. Scott
State Capitol Building – Room 100
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

SUBJECT: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

General Fixed Assets – Finding 97-1

We agree that cost values and control totals are required by Accounting Principles Generally Accepted in the United States of America; however, we do not think the statutes require such information. We may not have the time to accumulate the information needed during the next year.

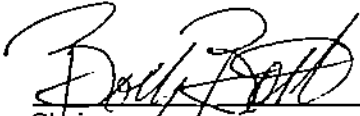
During the current fiscal year, we will try to update the inventory records required by 19 O. S. 2001, § 178.1 which include an inventory card for each item with a complete description of the item, the serial number, and location.

Fuel Records – Finding 00-1

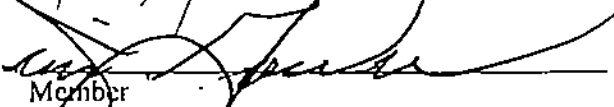
We agree that records of consumable items are required by state statutes.

During the current fiscal year, we will try to implement control procedures for inventories of fuel required by 19 O.S. 2001, § 1502.B.2.b which include consumable item cards detailing consumption and balances.

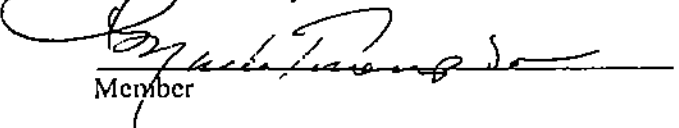
Cherokee County
Board of Commissioners



Chairman



Member



Member