



AUDIT DEPARTMENT

Audit Report

Public Administrator (PA)
Protection of Decedent Property

September 2012

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Angela M. Darragh, CPA, CFE, CISA, Director



September 12, 2012

Mr. Don Burnette
Clark County Manager
500 South Grand Central Parkway, 6th Floor
Las Vegas, Nevada 89106

Dear Mr. Burnette:

As provided by our annual audit plan, we have conducted an audit of the Public Administrator's Protection of Decedent's Property processes. Our procedures considered transactions for the period January 1, 2010, through June 30, 2011. We examined and tested transactions, controls, and compliance for these periods.

The objectives of the audit were to determine whether:

- Procedures are adequate to ensure the safeguarding of decedent property.
- Established procedures are in compliance with state statutes.
- Property is being disposed/distributed/donated in a timely and secure manner.

Our examination revealed that functions could be further segregated to improve internal controls. In addition, the Public Administrator depends heavily on an outside consultant to maintain and monitor its Mission database system. The Public Administrator does continue to make improvements to its recordkeeping function and is open to making positive changes to improve overall operations.

A draft report was provided to the Public Administrator. The management response from the Public Administrator's Office is attached along with the final report. The assistance and cooperation of the Public Administrator's staff is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

/s/ Angela M. Darragh

Angela M. Darragh, CPA, CFE, CISA
Audit Director

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BACKGROUND The Public Administrator (PA), who is elected to serve a four-year term, oversees administration of the estates of deceased persons who have no qualified person willing and able to do so. Per Nevada Revised Statute (NRS 253.0405), the public administrator may secure the property of a deceased person if the administrator finds:

- There are no relatives of the deceased who are able to protect the property; or
- Failure to do so could endanger the property.

Per NRS 253.0415, once appointed by the court, a PA's duties include investigating: a decedent's financial status, whether there are any person's qualified and willing to serve as administrator of an estate, and whether any beneficiaries can be identified. Other duties include petitioning the courts for letters of administration and serving as the administrator of an estate when applicable. In addition, NRS 253.050 states that an administrator is entitled to compensation from an estate or its beneficiaries for his duties of administering the estate. NRS 150.010 and 150.020 also discuss reimbursement of expenditures as well as compensation related to the administration and settlement of an estate. NOTE: PA fees charged (in administration of an estate when appointed) are subject to approval by the Probate Court. All other fees are set by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC).

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY The objectives of this audit were to determine whether:

- Procedures are adequate to ensure the safeguarding of decedent property.
- Established procedures are in compliance with state statutes.
- Property is being disposed/distributed/donated in a timely and secure manner.

To accomplish these objectives, we conducted a preliminary survey that included a review of NRS, Clark County Code (CCC), County Fiscal Directives, and the prior audit report. We also interviewed personnel and performed a walk-through observation. Finally, we examined transactions on a sample basis and performed analyses. The conclusions, findings, and recommendations of our audit are a result of the procedures performed to accomplish the objectives.

Our procedures considered the period January 1, 2010, through June 30, 2011, and the last day of fieldwork was January 13, 2012.

We conducted this audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our

audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

RESULTS IN BRIEF The overall environment at the PA is conducive to the adequate protection of decedent property. PA personnel are very responsive in providing information and knowledgeable in their functional responsibilities. The PA does have procedures in place to ensure the safeguarding of decedent property. However, some of these processes are not followed on a consistent basis. Fees charged for services that the PA provides appear to be in accordance with NRS guidelines, but system interfaces between the Information Technology (IT) systems used could be improved.

Based on the work performed to accomplish our audit objectives, we encountered several items worth noting. We found that functions (by one employee) could be further segregated to improve internal controls. We noted that an investment in video surveillance may assist in the protection of decedent property. We found that the PA depends heavily on an outside IT consultant to maintain and monitor its database system called Mission. We also noted that the PA continues to make improvements to its recordkeeping function and is open to making positive changes to improve overall operations in the department.

DETAILED RESULTS

Video Surveillance While conducting a tour of the PA's Office, we found that there was no video surveillance in place in the vault that houses jewelry and other valuables. There should be video surveillance in areas where decedent property is being stored.

Why is this important? Decedent property is more susceptible to theft and abuse without video surveillance in place.

Recommendation We recommend that the PA invest in and install video surveillance equipment in the areas where decedent property is stored. This may also require the periodic monitoring/review of surveillance footage.

Segregation of Duties While conducting interviews of PA staff, we noted that the same employee collects decedent property left overnight by PA Investigators, verifies property that had been collected, has access to the physical property stored in the vault and warehouse, and could make changes to inventory sheets and information recorded on the PA's databases. This employee is also tasked as the case manager on various smaller cases and prepares check requests for monthly revenue recordation.

As with any operation, there should be segregation of duties surrounding the physical control, recording, distributing, and disposing of assets. This should be the case with accessing, monitoring, recording, and securing of decedent property at the PA's office.

Why is this important? If any one employee has the accessibility to take items from a decedent's estate and eliminate evidence that the items were taken, property becomes less secure.

Recommendation We recommend that the Deputy PA review the current operations surrounding the protection of decedent's property to ensure that adequate segregation of duties are in place.

Separately Identifying Jewelry In performing observations of the vault, as well as the retrieval of property from a decedent's residence, we noted that jewelry collected on behalf of a decedent is periodically inventoried as one line item on the Inventory of Personal Effects Form. In addition, it is customary for all jewelry to be stored in one bag for that decedent. This procedure was implemented in an effort to improve efficiency in the inventorying of decedent property. Additionally, any jewelry or cash collected during a property evaluation and removal (PEAR) of a decedent's residence is not recorded on an Inventory Form. Rather, it is taken back to the vault where it is inventoried by the Executive Assistant.

This process was put in place due to the large amount of costume jewelry of little value. However, as it is difficult to determine the true value of jewelry being collected (without the services of an appraiser), it may be appropriate to capture each individual piece for reference or monitoring purposes. In addition, staff should capture and verify jewelry and cash on its inventory form (found during a PEAR) prior to delivering it to the vault.

Why is this important? Under the current process, it is possible for valuable jewelry to be lost or stolen without staff ever having record that the item was in inventory.

Recommendation We recommend that the Deputy PA review current decedent inventory processes as it relates to the recording and monitoring of jewelry. Additionally, we recommend that staff itemize each jewelry piece. This can be recorded on the Inventory of Personnel Effects Form. Alternatively, staff can digitally record this inventory count by taking pictures (or video) of each piece before it is placed in a bag. Pictures can then be printed out and placed in a decedent's hard file or a digital copy can be saved in a decedent's electronic case folder. In addition, the line item on the inventory form can reflect the number of pieces that were obtained. Whatever process is selected should be performed by at least

two individuals. In addition, staff should include jewelry and cash retrieved on its inventory sheet prior to transporting this property to the PA vault.

Call Out Issues We noted in 10 of 27 cases (37%) where a witness signature was not obtained by a staff member. Per the PA's Policies and Procedures manual section 9.1.5, a witness should always sign inventory sheets when inventory is secured. When no inventory is secured, a witness should sign the inventory sheet indicating that no property was secured. In addition, per 9.2 (1 and 2) of the manual, an investigator should always have a witness present when entering a residence. Otherwise, the investigator is not permitted to enter the premises.

We also found a case file where property was released to a relative and not secured by the PA investigator. In this particular case, an inventory sheet was never prepared, and a signature from the relative accepting responsibility for the property was not obtained.

We noted a third case where pictures were taken of a decedent's premises but no property was gathered or inventoried during an initial call out. A follow up visit revealed that some of the property was missing.

Why is this important? When no witness is obtained, family members could claim that items were taken but not inventoried. In addition, by not following departmental procedures, the PA Investigator is not properly securing decedent assets in accordance with departmental objectives.

Recommendation We recommend that the PA ensure that departmental policies covering the retrieval of decedent property and of obtaining a second witness be followed. This may require closer scrutiny of employee performance and monitoring to assure that periodic and adequate training is being provided.

Information Technology (IT) Vendor Dependency The PA's Office is dependent on one person to support their case management software. The PA's Office must call this California-based vendor or wait for his next scheduled visit (two days every other week) for any technical support, as there are no County IT Department personnel with skills to provide the necessary system support of the Mission database. In addition, the software is almost 20 years old, and the consultant the County uses may be nearing retirement.

The PA should have a comprehensive continuity plan in place to prevent disruption to its business activity from known and potential risks to its operations. This dependency may cause delays due to the vendor being unavailable for technical support and the potential loss of critical

information from the risk of software or system failure. If the system becomes unavailable, PA services may be affected in a negative way.

Why is this important? Loss of system functionality and operational effectiveness may prevent the department from performing its key functions.

Recommendation The County IT Liaison in coordination with the Deputy PA should perform a feasibility study to determine the risks and vulnerabilities of the PA's existing system software program and technical support needs. In addition, the IT Department should review the option of further developing an in-house technical support unit to reduce the PA's Office's vendor dependency. It should also have a complete business continuity plan in place should the case management systems become unavailable. Alternatively, the PA may consider investing in newer software to which local consultants (and/or in-house personnel) could be utilized for system support.

Case Processing and Recordkeeping The PA's Office uses an Access database to record decedent personal property within its physical control. Information is available by location (warehouse or vault) or status (pending, released, destroyed, etc.).

The PA uses the Mission database to record and report on information that is used in court and as supporting documentation on the value of a decedent's estate. In contrast to Access, this database only captures items of more significant value (bank accounts, retirement accounts, real estate, investments, etc.). Although items may appear in both Mission and Access, the majority (18 of 27 selections tested, or 66.7%) of property is in either one database or the other. This makes reconciling the two, as well as determining an overall estate value, difficult. In addition, only cases with property value over \$100,000 is detailed in Mission.

Per review of the Access inventory sheet, we found an instance where inventory was logged out and returned to the vault, but never recorded as returned. We also found a case where property was not locatable to confirm its existence. Additionally, we noted delays in the processing of decedent cases which may result in additional expenditures to the decedent's estate.

Why is this important? The current process of recording inventory is inconsistent and may not secure decedent assets in accordance with departmental policy.

Recommendation The Deputy PA should analyze the existing inventory recordkeeping process. Specifically, she should review the two databases used to record inventory (Access and Mission) and ensure that information is recorded consistently between them. Alternatively, she may consider

consolidating inventory information onto one system, incorporating an interface between the two, or perhaps explore the feasibility of new software solutions. Additionally, we recommend that the Deputy PA review existing departmental policies and procedures relating to the storage and removal of decedent property from the warehouse. Also, we recommend the Deputy PA ensure that estate coordinators are processing and monitoring cases in a timely manner (at least on a quarterly basis).

**Preparing and Reconciling
Inventory Sheets to
Auction Records**

When a PEAR of decedent property is performed, staff will clear out a residence of any saleable belongings. However, we reviewed 2 out of 10 cases where another inventory sheet was prepared months after the PEAR was completed. We also found three instances where the initial inventory sheet was not prepared for several months after information was input onto a subsidiary ledger (on Access).

While observing the retrieval of decedent property by staff, we noted that the Inventory of Personal Effects sheet did not agree with the inventory listing per the auction form for the contractor hired to retrieve and/or sell decedent property. In this specific instance, a drawer chest and five bags of clothes were noted on the inventory form, but absent on the Auction form. While testing transactions, we noted in 8 of the 10 (80%) cases reviewed where the internal inventory sheet did not agree with the inventory sheet prepared by the auction company. In addition, we noted one case where the auction form was not found in the case file. These two separate documents should always be prepared and reconciled.

Why is this important? A delay in processing decedent property may affect estate balances reported on Mission which may affect the type of case presented to the court. Also, monitoring property may be more difficult when the inventory is not all captured in Mission and or Access. In addition, incorrect or missing inventory forms could indicate (or result in) theft or loss of decedent property.

Recommendation We recommend that warehouse staff process information in a timely manner relating to decedent property retrieved from a person's home. In addition, we recommend that existing departmental policies and procedures relating to the retrieval of decedent property be changed to require that the Inventory of Personal Effects form be reconciled to the auction form. Any differences or discrepancies should be researched, resolved, and documented. This will help ensure that accurate inventory counts are being performed. It may also help mitigate potential theft and abuse of decedent property.

Vault Property Log Issues According to the PA's Vault Procedures, a witness should always be obtained when logging valuable inventory (such as jewelry and money) into the vault. However, while testing detailed transactions, we found 2 out of 27 (or 7.4%) cases where a witness was not obtained when valuable inventory was logged into the vault.

Why is this important? A witness is necessary to properly secure valuable items.

Recommendation We recommend the Deputy PA ensure that departmental policies and procedures are being followed and that information is being captured appropriately within the Vault Log. This may require closer scrutiny of employee performance and/or monitoring that employees are receiving periodic and adequate training for the processes they perform.



Clark County Public Administrator
John J. Cahill

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August 8, 2012

Angela Darragh, Director
Clark County Audit Department
500 S. Grand Central Parkway, 5th Floor
Las Vegas, NV 89155

Re: July 2012 Public Administrator Protection of Decedent Property Audit

Dear Ms. Darragh,

Please accept the thanks of my office for your work in this audit. Working with you and with Ken Diaz has been informative for me and for my staff.

In the time period covered by the audit my six permanent employees, with small team of part-time staff, opened and closed nearly one thousand cases. It was impressive there were only a handful of findings and suggestions where changes might improve our operations to better ensure the security of decedent personal property. Thank you for reporting those findings and for recommendations toward improvement.

Operations, policies, and procedures to correct each finding have been made or are in process. With some allowance for limitations in resources, I expect every improvement will be accomplished promptly.

The skill of your audit staff and their objective review of our performance is appreciated and special thanks to your very professional team in their on-going efforts to assure the very highest quality of County government services to families in our community.

Sincerely,

John J. Cahill
Clark County Public Administrator



Findings, Recommendations, and Corrective Actions Status

Summary Audit Findings & Recommendations			Summary Management Disposition		
Ref	Finding	Recommendation(s)	Concurrence	Management Response & Action Plan	Mgmt Action Due Date
1	Video Surveillance				
	There is no video surveillance in place in the vault that houses jewelry and other valuables. There should be video surveillance in areas where decedent property is being stored.	We recommend that the PA invest in and install video surveillance equipment in the areas where decedent property is stored. This may also require the periodic monitoring/review of surveillance footage.	Y	PA completely agrees and supports this recommendation and, in fact, initiated a request for quotes for cameras in the Vault in April 2009. PG simultaneously submitted a request for quotes for repairs to existing non-operational cameras and equipment and additional cameras in the Warehouse. Since that time, General Fund departments have not been provided the opportunity to submit requests for Capital funding. Discussions were held with County I.T. in an effort to request I.T. Capital Funding for the project, but funding was not available. A Space Improvement Request (SIR) was submitted to Real Property Management in October 2009 requesting installation of Cameras be included in the Capital Requests, but funding was not approved. PA will initiate a request for cameras in the Vault and Warehouse with proper monitoring and recording software at the first opportunity to submit Capital requests. PG will need to provide resources to coordinate the installation of cameras and related equipment in the Warehouse or authorize PA staff to oversee the project. Card Readers will also be requested for the Warehouse in strategic locations once departments are invited to submit requests for capital funding.	Awaiting Capital Funding
2	Segregation of Duties				
	The same employee collects decedent property left overnight by PA Investigators, verifies property that had been collected, has access to the physical property stored in the PA/PG vault and warehouse, and could make changes to inventory sheets and information recorded on the Public Administrator's databases. This employee is also tasked as the case manager on various smaller cases and prepares check requests for monthly revenue recordation.	We recommend that the Deputy Public Administrator review the current operations surrounding the protection of decedent's property to ensure that adequate segregation of duties are in place.	Y	PA operations were reviewed and changes made that corrected this finding, within the limits of staff resources. As of February 2012, the PA employee with access to the physical property stored in the PA/PG vault no longer has access to the entire warehouse, only access to the PA new case receiving area (NCRA) at the warehouse. As of April 2012, two PA employees retrieve the property from the NCRA, and two PA employees remain with the property until verification is completed. An internal review of the process was completed and a procedure implemented for documentation of inventory form differences when a change is required to clarify an item description or number. Clarifications are now initiated by two PA staff. Current staffing limitations prohibit an absolute separation of all data entry and vault access, so data base updates will continue to be entered by one of the PA staff participating in the verification. Original hard-copy inventory forms are held in the PA case files, adding security to the inventory records. In the finding and concern of the one PA staff acting as vault custodian also acting as Case Manager, that circumstance as reported by audit was largely staff training with the oversight of the Sr. Estate Coordinator. PA will assure supervised oversight during all training. Cases with property deemed to have no monetary value to the estate are now assigned to estate coordinators to maintain the recommended separation. It must be recognized that small departments have an essential and practical need for every worker being capable of performing multiple functions, within job descriptions, to best serve the public. On preparing checks, there is a well defined separation of authority. Appropriate check requests may be made by individual PA staff but every request must be approved by a PA supervisor. No employee can request, approve, and have issued a check without the verification and approval of an authorized PA supervisor. Check writing and accounting are performed outside the PA department by PG accounting staff.	Operations Reviewed, Action Steps Implemented

Summary Audit Findings & Recommendations			Summary Management Disposition		
Ref	Finding	Recommendation(s)	Concurrence	Management Response & Action Plan	Mgmt Action Due Date
3	Separately Identifying Jewelry				
	Jewelry collected on behalf of a decedent is periodically inventoried as one line item on the Inventory of Personal Effects Form. It is customary for all jewelry to be stored in one bag for each decedent. This procedure was implemented in an effort to improve efficiency in the inventorying of decedent property. Additionally, any jewelry or cash collected during a follow-up visit is not placed on the Inventory Form. Rather, it is taken back to the PA vault where it is inventoried by the Executive Assistant.	We recommend that the Deputy PA review its current decedent inventory process as it relates to the recording and monitoring of jewelry. Additionally, it is recommended that the PA itemize each jewelry piece on the inventory form. Alternatively, the PA can digitally record this inventory by taking pictures (or video) of each piece before being placed in a bag. Pictures can then be printed out and placed in a decedent's hard file or a digital copy can be saved in a decedent's electronic case folder. In addition, staff should include jewelry and cash retrieved on its inventory sheet prior to transporting this property to the PA vault.	Y	PG Warehouse staff perform final property removal from decedent residences on behalf of PA. PA requests that items of possible value to the estate, including fine jewelry, cash, coins, Wills, Trusts, Certificates of Deposit, Stock Certificates, be itemized on an Inventory Form by PG Warehouse staff at the scene as property is removed from decedent residences and storage units. PA has requested that item pictures be taken by PG Warehouse Staff at the time of the property removal. In 2011, PG advised that, due to budget and staff reductions, Warehouse workload leaves PG staff unable to provide itemized inventories as requested by PA. As a result, this type of property removed from decedent residences by PG Warehouse staff is then accepted at Vault by PA only when two PA staffs are available to take receipt from PG Warehouse staff of property inventoried as bulk items and immediately prepare a new and separate itemized and witnessed inventory form. PA policy for PA Investigators is that items appearing as possible fine jewelry be secured individually in the field by recording each item on a serialized inventory form with a third-party witness, as conditions allow. When conditions do not permit itemization of items due to biohazard, environmental hazard, lack of light/electricity, limited availability of a third-party independent witness, all jewelry may be collected in bulk and itemized during verification in the vault. Costume jewelry may be itemized as a bulk item: "one large bag costume jewelry". PA staffs manage the PA/PG Vault and the majority of processes for handling Vault property; however some PG Vault inventory procedures are established by PG directly. PG property is controlled in the Vault based on those procedures and policies with which PG agrees or provides. PA agrees with the recommendation that certain items might be photographed as a part of the Vault inventory process. As of June 2012, the PA has a digital camera available with close-up program mode that could digitally record inventory items that appear to be fine jewelry, bullion, coins, and other potential collectible items after these are received at the Vault. However with no full time position assigned to the Vault, no change adding item photography has been implemented.	Operations Reviewed, Action Steps Implemented as staffing resources and conditions permit.

Summary Audit Findings & Recommendations			Summary Management Disposition		
Ref	Finding	Recommendation(s)	Concurrence	Management Response & Action Plan	Mgmt Action Due Date
4	Initial Call Out Issues				
	Out of 25 cases reviewed, we found one case where the Public Administrator Investigator (PAI) did not obtain a witness on the Inventory of Personal Effects Form during the initial or follow-up visits to retrieve property from a decedent's residence. We found a second case where property was released to a relative but no documentation showing the relative accepted responsibility for such property. We noted a third case where pictures were taken of the premises but no property was gathered or inventoried during an initial call out. A follow up visit revealed that some of the property was missing.	We recommend that the Deputy PA ensure that departmental policies of obtaining a second witness be followed. This may require closer scrutiny of employee performance and/or monitoring that employees are receiving periodic and adequate training for the processes they perform.	Y	PA policy requires a witness when property is secured at an initial visit to a decedent residence. Any exception is an error. PA's written procedures were revised in 2011 requiring PA investigators to have a witness present when entering a decedent's residence on follow-up calls when personal property remains in the residence. Preferably a witness is an independent third-party (neighbor, landlord, security officer, or other available person). The witness is asked to observe the search, sign the Inventory Form and receive a copy. If no third-party is available or willing, a second PA Investigator is authorized to act as witness. PA policy is that personal property of possible value and manageable size is inventoried at the scene at each initial call, witnessed, and secured by a PA Investigator to protect from theft, also internal and external photos are taken, and residences sealed and secured with metal lock-outs. (If lock-out is compatible with door hardware). In the finding of missing property from a residence where only photographs were taken, the residence was burglarized after the initial visit. No property was removed at that initial call as it was understood by the PA Investigator that family would arrive the following day. The family arrived after about a week finding the residence burgled. Remedial training was given the Investigator that PA policy requires property be secured regardless of family's estimated arrival, unless family instructs no property be removed. During 2010 procedures allowed the PA Investigators to document releases in the field in their report, including the identity of the parties receiving and their relationship. Since 2011 PA written procedures provides that the release of personal property to family or authorized representative, or release of a residence with personal property, include an Inventory Form listing known personal property, or a statement on the form that the residence and all personal property contained within or about the residence is being released. The form requires the name, relationship (including executor of the Will, trustee of the Trust, or another person given authority), address, phone number and signature of the family member or authorized party affirming the relationship. If it is later determined that PA will seek Court appointment, furnishings and appliances may be removed by PG Warehouse staff on behalf of PA. PA will provide scrutiny of investigator performance and compliance with procedures, however, after a 49.5% reduction in 2012 in Investigator hours and the resulting discontinuation of non-mandated services, the FY 2013 Investigator budget was reduced another 45.5%, with no further reduction in services identified. The result may eliminate essential operations and risk the dual coverage necessary for PA Investigators to act as witnesses when third-party witnesses are unavailable. No FY13 funding is	Operations Reviewed, Action Steps Implemented as staffing resources and conditions permit.

Summary Audit Findings & Recommendations			Summary Management Disposition		
Ref	Finding	Recommendation(s)	Concurrence	Management Response & Action Plan	Mgmt Action Due Date
5	IT Vendor Dependency				
	The PA's Office is dependent on its program software vendor "Mission Software, Inc." for technical support. It must call this California-based vendor or wait for his next scheduled visit (two days every other week) for any technical support, as there are no County Information Technology Department personnel with enough technical knowledge or expertise to provide the necessary system support of the Mission database.	The County Information Technology (IT) Liaison in coordination with the Deputy Public Administrator should perform a feasibility study to determine the risks and vulnerabilities of the PA's existing system software program and technical support needs. In addition, the IT Department should review the option of further developing an in-house technical support unit to reduce the PA's Office's vendor dependency. It should also have a complete business continuity plan in place should the case management systems become unavailable. Alternatively, the PA may consider investing in newer software to which local consultants (and/or in-house personnel) could be utilized for system support.	Y	The feasibility study recommended in item #4 was completed in 2005. Available technical support is in place, as best permitted by IT budget. For more than a decade it has been recognized that the MISSION Case Management System is antiquated, inadequate, unstable, written in an obscure code dialect (Ryan McFarland COBOL) and is a program at high risk for failure in the management of PA and PG services to families, vendors, and our community. Replacing MISSION has been at or near the top of the IT list of needed County software upgrading since 2007. The PA and PG have worked together with the County IT Liaison since 2005 and with an outside consultant for many of those years to prepare a business case outlining the risks and vulnerabilities of the PA/PG's existing MISSION software, including functional and technical requirements, budgets, and development and implementation plans. In the event of a complete breakdown of the CMS for PA the back up is that all tasks will be recorded manually. In that event, Case Management time may double. For the PG client health could be placed at risk. To mitigate the high risk from dependence on the Mission Vendor, County IT in 2009 hired and funded a part-time (34 hours/month) Tier 1 Programmer/Analyst to work with the Mission Vendor as a "MISSION system back-up". The current Tier I consultant has worked with the Mission Vendor since April 2010 and has considerable MISSION knowledge. In addition, a County IT Programmer Analyst II is assigned to work with the Mission Vendor, the Tier 1 Vendor, and PA/PG to assist with day-to-day issues and facilitate knowledge transfer from the Mission Vendor. Now limited by budget, CC IT is doing everything possible to prevent a PA/PG software disaster. In 2010, with the help of County IT, PA and PG applied for grant funding to assist in the replacement project, but PA/PG were redirected by County Management to work with the County's ERP Team to evaluate the SAP product as a viable solution. After months of review and evaluation, the ERP Executive Steering Committee authorized ERP to move forward with a PG/PA CMS/SAP gap-fit-analysis and possibly a software replacement project. This alternative would require significant vendor development and departmental commitment of staff expertise and many hours per week of staff time. The evaluation continues as the ERP team assesses the PA/PG requirements, specifically the complex financials. If SAP is judged a viable solution, PA will require additional resources to support a successful project. In the alternative, PA will request County IT Capital funding and authorization to seek grant funding.	Operations Reviewed, Action Steps Implemented as staffing and funding resources permit.

Summary Audit Findings & Recommendations			Summary Management Disposition		
Ref	Finding	Recommendation(s)	Concurrence	Management Response & Action Plan	Mgmt Action Due Date
6	Case Processing and Recordkeeping				
	The PA uses its Mission database to record and report on information that is used in court and as supporting documentation on the value of a decedent's estate. In contrast to Access, this database only captures items of more significant value (bank accounts, retirement accounts, real estate, investments, etc.). Although items may appear in both Mission and Access, the majority (18 of 27 selections tested, or 66.7%) of property is in either one database or the other. This makes reconciling the two, as well as determining an overall estate value, difficult. In addition, only cases with property value over \$100,000 is detailed in Mission. We also found an instance where inventory was logged out of the vault per the Access inventory sheet, and returned to the vault, but never recorded as returned. With another case selection, the property could not be located to confirm its existence. Additionally, we noted delays in the processing of cases which may result in additional expenditures to the decedent's estate.	The Deputy Public Administrator should analyze the existing case processing and recordkeeping procedures. Specifically, she should review the two databases used to record inventory (Access and Mission) and ensure that information is recorded consistently between them. Alternatively, she may consider consolidating inventory information onto one system or incorporating an interface between the two. Furthermore, cases should be monitored for efficient processing and to help ensure that existing procedures are being followed consistently.	Y	MISSION is a Case Management System (CMS). Mission is not an inventory management system. MISSION's design includes recording assets in the "Inventory of the Estate" format required by the Probate Court. Personal property of significant value may also be recorded in MISSION in this format. The Court does not require or desire an itemization of generic personal property, furniture, and household goods. The ACCESS Data Base was designed by the PA in 2008 with the assistance of IT to improve and enhance the inventory record of generic personal property. The two systems are not compatible; they intentionally duplicate some items, but together these assist the overall effort to secure, protect, inventory, and track decedent property. The MISSION CMS by design provides recording of estates of all types and values, but only estates valued at \$100,000 or above require certain reporting be submitted to the Court. In those cases, related data fields are updated and maintained in Mission. For cases under \$100,000 where Court reporting format is not required, the court-specific Mission data fields are not applicable, so the Access Inventory data base provides needed inventory control. Creation of a new CMS with a detailed Inventory capability in conjunction with flexible reporting functionality is a goal defined in the design specifications. Regarding the finding of an item logged out, returned, but not recorded as returned, that is an error. The separate finding of an item recorded in inventory, but not located in the warehouse, resulted in an investigation and a conclusion that the unaccounted decedent property was a container of personal documents and miscellaneous papers that had been sorted, important documents transferred to the case file, unnecessary papers shredded, but the listed item of miscellaneous personal property was not deleted from the inventory record. That too is an error. Although it was never found that property was lost, PA implemented a new procedure in the fall of 2011 for documentation of the sorting, discarding, and transferring of documents. With regard to delays encountered in some cases, fees are not charged if delays are outside the estate's control or found by PA Administration to be unreasonable given the services provided.	Operations Reviewed, Action Steps Implemented as staffing and funding resources have permitted; consolidated data base is dependent upon new CMS, and ideal vault coverage is dependent upon vault custodian position being reinstated.
7	Preparing and Reconciling Inventory Sheets to Auction Records				
	We reviewed 2 out of 10 (20%) cases where another inventory sheet was prepared months after the clean out was completed. We also found three instances where the initial inventory sheet was not prepared for several months after information was input onto a subsidiary ledger (on Access). We noted in 8 of the 10 (80%) cases reviewed that the inventory sheet did not agree with the inventory sheet prepared by the auction company. In addition, we noted one case where the auction form was not found in the case file. These two separate documents should always be prepared and reconciled.	We recommend the Public Administrator ensure that the warehouse staff is processing information in a timely manner relating to decedent property retrieved from a person's home. In addition, we recommend the Public Administrator amend its existing departmental policies and procedures relating to the retrieval of decedent property. Specifically, it should require that the Inventory of Personal Effects form be reconciled to the auction form. Any differences or discrepancies should be researched, resolved, and documented.	Y	Since the time the PA/PG were split around 1999, the PA/PG share some staff and support functions between Departments as a matter of economy in operations. PA/PG staffs work cooperatively to benefit clients. PA/PG Vault personnel are PA employees. PA/PG Warehouse personnel are PG employees and perform under the supervision and direction of the PG Dept, including final property removal at residence of PA decedents. PA does not direct, but may request, procedures for Warehouse staff in the inventory of PA decedent property. Consistent with this finding and recommendation, PA has restated a request for itemized inventories completed at the residence and returned in a timely manner with every removal of personal property from a PA decedent residence. However, PG has advised the PA requested procedures are not possible due to Warehouse workload as a result of reductions in staffing. Regarding the Warehouse/Auction inventory reconciliation finding, PA is informed that in 2012 PG Warehouse and the Auction consolidated the inventory process for items identified as "sellable" into a single inventory form, therefore eliminating discrepancies and eliminating any need for additional research, resolution, or documentation.	Operations Reviewed, Action Steps Implemented as staffing and funding resources have permitted, and as PG is able to support with staffing and resources.

Summary Audit Findings & Recommendations			Summary Management Disposition		
Ref	Finding	Recommendation(s)	Concurrence	Management Response & Action Plan	Mgmt Action Due Date
8	Vault Property Log Issues				
	Per page 2 of the Public Administrator's Vault Procedures, a witness should always be obtained when logging valuable inventory (such as jewelry and money) into the vault. However, while testing detailed transactions, we found two instances where a witness was not obtained when valuable inventory was logged into the vault.	We recommend that the Deputy Public Administrator ensure that departmental policies and procedures are being followed and that information is being captured appropriately within the Vault Log. This may require closer scrutiny of employee performance and/or monitoring that employees are receiving periodic and adequate training for the processes they perform.	Y	Following a February 2000 audit of the PA/PG Vault, County Management assigned to the PA office a full-time Schedule 30 PA/PG Vault Custodian. When that employee retired in 2008 the position was removed from the PA's office. In response, vault duties were assigned to qualified part-time staff with supervision, direction, and assistance from appropriate PA permanent staff. Deeper reductions in 2010 lost those PTH positions and resulted in the re-assignment of primary vault work to the PA Executive Assistant as additional duties. This has ensured consistent, detailed coverage in this crucial area, but is less than an ideal solution. The PA EA has equally important duties and an otherwise full-time job as the only support staff for the Department. Vault coverage is also supported by the Assistant PA, the PA, and the Senior Estate Coordinator as needed. Some inconsistencies are inevitable, are addressed, procedures are reinforced, but the proper and needed solution, as found in the Y2K audit, is a permanent, full-time, Vault Custodian to minimize shared access and provide a level of expert coverage and continuity to secure, manage, and control decedent property. In the meantime PA will do its best, as all County Departments must while working short staffed.	Operations Reviewed, Action Steps Implemented as staffing resources and conditions permit.