



Jason E. Mumpower, Comptroller of the Treasury

October 9, 2024

Investigation Details Numerous Issues within Rhea County Sheriff's Department

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office, working in conjunction with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, includes several findings and deficiencies that led to improper or questionable activities within the Rhea County Sheriff's Department.

The report covers actions that took place between January 2017 and May 2024. The results of the investigation were communicated to the Office of the District Attorney General of the 6th Judicial District, which was appointed as *Pro Tem* in this matter.

Some of the findings include:

- The sheriff and jail staff improperly released inmates from jail without court officer approval.
- Two department employees performed work for the sheriff and his son while being paid by the department.
- Three department employees misappropriated at least \$20,678.58 by receiving compensation for time not worked.
- The sheriff authorized the animal shelter administrator to perform questionable duties and assigned her a weapon. The administrator was not P.O.S.T. certified.
- The Rhea County Angel Tree Toy Drive, which is operated by the sheriff's department, made questionable expenditures totaling at least \$12,124.22.



Comptroller investigators also identified several operational deficiencies, some of which contributed to the investigative findings. For example, the department failed to maintain timesheets for all employees and did not always document compensatory time earned by staff.

"The Rhea County Sheriff must hold employees accountable for the pervasive issues in his department's operations," said Comptroller Mumpower. "Not only did employees violate the department's policies and procedures, but some of these violations also benefited the sheriff and others at the expense of the department. The sheriff should ensure all actions within the department align with the code of ethics and policies."

To view the investigative report, go to tncot.cc/doireports. To view a map depicting Comptroller investigations, go to tncot.cc/mappinginvestigations

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