



Jason E. Mumpower, Comptroller of the Treasury

September 26, 2025

Former Fire Chief Indicted After Misusing More Than \$86,000 in Grant Funds

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office has resulted in the indictment of David Akers, the former fire chief of the Rickman Volunteer Fire Department (RVFD) in Overton County. The investigation began after RVFD officials reported questionable use of state grant funds.

Investigators determined that Akers misappropriated at least \$86,189.58 in grant funds that were awarded to RVFD to purchase protective equipment and gear. Instead, Akers used most of the money for his personal benefit. This included cash withdrawals, purchases of multiple personal vehicles, hunting equipment, vacation lodging, and college football tickets.

Akers also handled fundraiser proceeds for the fire department but failed to deposit at least \$1,072.91 into RVFD's account.



To close out the grant and avoid detection, Akers submitted false documentation to the State Fire Marshal's Office showing the equipment had been purchased using grant funds. On March 13, 2025, after being contacted by investigators, Akers received a loan from a family member and repaid \$86,189.58 to cover the misappropriated grant funds.

Based upon this investigation, on September 22, 2025, the Overton County Grand Jury indicted David Akers on one count of theft over \$60,000, one count of theft over \$1,000, and one count of violating the Tennessee Personal and Commercial Computer Act.

"This case illustrates the critical need for financial oversight and proper documentation within volunteer fire departments," said Comptroller Mumpower. "Grant funds are provided to enhance public safety – not to be used for personal gain. I'm pleased the department took appropriate steps to report these issues and is now working to correct deficiencies."

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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