



COMPTROLLER'S INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Claiborne County Sheriff's Department

March 14, 2023

Jason E. Mumpower
Comptroller of the Treasury



DIVISION OF INVESTIGATIONS



JASON E. MUMPOWER
Comptroller

March 14, 2023

Claiborne County Sheriff
415 Straight Creek Road
New Tazewell, TN 37879

Claiborne County Sheriff:

The Office of the Comptroller of the Treasury conducted an investigation of selected records of the Claiborne County Sheriff's Department, and the results are presented herein.

Copies of this report are being forwarded to Governor Bill Lee, the State Attorney General, the District Attorney General of the 6th Judicial District, certain state legislators, and various other interested parties. A copy of the report is available for public inspection in our Office and may be viewed at <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/ia/>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason E. Mumpower", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Jason E. Mumpower
Comptroller of the Treasury

JEM/MLC

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Claiborne County Sheriff's Department

The Office of the Comptroller of the Treasury investigated allegations of malfeasance related to the Claiborne County Sheriff's Department. The investigation was limited to selected records for the period July 1, 2021, through October 31, 2022. The results of the investigation were communicated with the Office of the District Attorney General of the 6th Judicial District who was appointed as District Attorney General *Pro Tem* in this matter.

BACKGROUND



The Claiborne County Sheriff's Department (department) is based in Tazewell, Tennessee, and is overseen by the elected sheriff who serves a four-year term. Claiborne County is governed by an elected 21-member county commission that acts as its legislative body. The department has divisions such as: Patrol, Transport, Corrections, Detectives, and Narcotics. The department also has a maintenance garage for servicing department vehicles.

RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION

- **DEPARTMENT FUNDS WERE USED TO IMPROPERLY PROVIDE FOOD FOR SOME DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES**

Department management improperly funded the purchase of food for some employees contrary to department policy. The department had a policy allowing, at the convenience of the county jail, to have all or some of the jail facility employees consume meals while on duty. However, department policy did not allow for providing meals to non-jail facility staff. Furthermore, department policy prohibits removal of food or meals from the jail facility unless for assignments requiring the consumption of prepared meals. Finally, for safety considerations, department policy requires that inmates handling food, or delivering food must undergo health inspections, and be free from communicable or infectious diseases.

Department employees told investigators that food was purchased through the jail and periodically sent to the department's maintenance garage. A garage employee told investigators he requested and received food from the jail, and he prepared and ate meals at the garage about three to four times a week at no cost to himself. He also stated that, in some instances, inmates prepared food at the garage. Furthermore, the garage employee advised he primarily requested hamburger meat, hotdogs, eggs, sausage, bacon, and biscuits. He noted the food was also used to feed: inmates that

worked at the garage, department litter and mowing crews that frequently visited the garage, and periodically for other department staff. Other department employees, including department management, told investigators they recalled having eaten meals at the garage. Due to the lack of records and lack of controls over food inventory at the jail and at the garage, investigators were unable to determine how often inmates and department personnel ate meals at the garage, or if the food sent to the garage was used exclusively at the garage or taken for personal use. Around January 2022, at the direction of the sheriff, food purchased for the jail was no longer delivered to the garage.

INTERNAL CONTROL DEFICIENCY

Our investigation revealed the following deficiency in internal controls:

Deficiency: Garage personnel did not maintain adequate controls over consumable assets

Garage personnel did not maintain inventory records or account for consumable assets such as tires, oil, or other supplies purchased for use at the garage (**Refer to Exhibit 1**). A lack of accountability over consumable assets increases the risk of inventory loss. Management should maintain a current inventory of consumable assets purchased for the garage.

Exhibit 1



Tires located at the Sheriff's Department garage.

Department officials indicated that they have corrected or intend to correct this deficiency.