

Progress Report

September 1998

Dear Citizen,

The Auditor's Office publishes a report every two years which summarizes the status of recommendations made in our audits. In addition, the report offers us the opportunity to describe the office, its methods, and some of ways that we track our accomplishments.

This year, I included some historical information about the Auditor's Office that, for me, put our work into a new context. Dave Warren, the County Budget Manager, kindly shared with me a 1913 study of Multnomah County which, combined with some old reports in our files, paints a picture of a very different Auditor's Office in the past. In 1913, Multnomah County also looked very different. Many of its responsibilities have changed in the past 85 years but most interesting, the workforce and management practices in 1913 were clearly inadequate for its tasks.

Multnomah County citizens are now getting much better services for their tax dollars. Yet I also know that auditors from other jurisdictions across the country are encountering the 1913 kinds of problems more frequently than we are. Multnomah County citizens are generally getting better services for their tax dollars than many citizens elsewhere in the country.

Even though Multnomah County services have improved over the years, and are better than elsewhere, that is still not good enough. Auditors must always challenge county employees and managers to do their best for citizens: we don't expect perfection but we always look for improvement. Our constant search for "a better way" helps ensure that citizens receive the best service at the least cost.

It has been an honor for me to be the auditor helping Multnomah County government live up to the expectations of its citizens. And it has been a great pleasure to work with the bright and dedicated professionals in this office.

Sincerely,



Multnomah County Auditor
Gary Blackmer

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