



LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR  
DARYL G. PURPERA, CPA, CFE

July 29, 2013

## TERREBONNE PARISH SHERIFF

Former Terrebonne Parish Sheriff Vernon Bourgeois may have violated state law by receiving \$17,225 more than his established state salary due to an unused leave payment and uniform allowances, and by charging \$1,950 for personal fuel expenses on office credit cards that included travel to sporting events in the South, according to an audit released Monday by Legislative Auditor Daryl Purpera. The investigative audit covers the period from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2012, the four years that Bourgeois was sheriff.

Of the \$1,950 in fuel charges, about \$304 was charged on his trips to see the New Orleans Saints play in Dallas and Atlanta; \$387 was charged for four LSU football games, including the 2011 Cotton Bowl; and \$868 was charged to fuel a camper to attend a race in Talladega, Alabama.

The audit also stated that the former sheriff may have violated the state Constitution and/or state law by not seizing or selling the property of Baby Oil Co. to pay \$394,627 in delinquent property taxes for 2009 through 2012; providing security details for Nicholls State University road football games that cost the sheriff's office \$21,392 between 2009 and 2011; donating approximately \$350,000 of inmate labor to renovate a public building to be used by a private contractor to house an inmate work-release program for the sheriff's office; and improperly paying \$988 to 12 deputies for 53 hours of work, the same hours they were being paid by a television production company for work on the television series "Cajun Justice."

The audit also said former Sheriff Bourgeois arranged for a private jet owned by a Houma businessman to fly him, his wife and two other deputies free of charge to and from a police convention in Sparks, Nevada, in 2010, a possible violation of state ethics laws. During this trip, Bourgeois paid \$488 in expenses with the sheriff's credit card for three nights' lodging and meals for the pilot of the private jet.

The audit recommended that Terrebonne Parish officials recover \$19,175 from Bourgeois for the improper salary payments and personal fuel purchases. In his response to the audit, Bourgeois said he would reimburse the \$19,175 "under protest."

Copies of the audit were turned over to the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana, the District Attorney for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District, and the state Board of Ethics.

**For more information, contact:**

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