



LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
DARYL G. PURPERA, CPA, CFE

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TOWN OF SIMMESPORT

BATON ROUGE – The Avoyelles Parish Town of Simmesport has engaged in “excessive spending” in its general fund and is facing an almost \$113,000 deficit, according to an audit of the municipality released Monday.

The report said that despite its financial problems, the town has acquired a debit card to buy items over the Internet and telephone, although there is “no policy in place for the use of the card at the present time.”

The independent audit covered the fiscal year ending last June 30 but was filed late with the Legislative Auditor’s office because of delays in getting data from the town to complete it, auditors said.

While struggling financially, the town paid for a \$1,500 Christmas party in December 2011 which drew “fewer than 30 attendees,” including city employees, elected officials and their guests, according to the report.

“In addition, the cost of the event was represented by a check payable to the employee who organized the event for which no documentation was available when requested,” the audit said.

The report also said that the town had a decrease in cash of \$88,401 and was delinquent in paying payroll tax deposits for the third and fourth quarters of 2012 of approximately \$30,000. As a result of the late payments of payroll taxes, the town had to pay approximately \$12,000 in penalties.

The town also hosted the annual Simmesport Atchafalaya River Festival which cost public funds \$5,000 more than the revenue it generated. The audit also said that despite a resolution by the town council to cut all overtime pay, town employees still received more than \$20,000 in overtime.

Simmesport officials said they will watch spending more closely, eliminate the town-paid Christmas party and discontinue hosting the annual festival.

As of January of this year, the town had laid off two full-time employees, reduced office staff to a 32-hour work week, stopped overtime, cut employee benefits paid by the town, ordered limits on spending and approved the sale of commercial property and police units that are no longer



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needed, and named a committee to look into increasing occupational license fees and other revenues.

“The mayor and council members have taken a more active role in the overall administration of the town and overseeing the daily operations in an attempt to overcome this uncertain financial situation,” the audit said.

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