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State Auditor Rebecca Otto announces leadership team

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ST. PAUL (2/12/2007) – Minnesota State Auditor Rebecca Otto today announced her office's leadership team: Deputy Auditor and General Counsel Celeste Grant, Deputy Auditor of the Audit Practice Division Greg Hierlinger, Communications Director Jeff Falk and Executive Assistant Joe Ceronsky.

"We are excited to have recruited a group of experienced and talented professionals to help lead the state auditor's office," Otto said. "Celeste, Greg, Jeff and Joe bring a wealth of knowledge in their respective areas – law, accounting, state and local government relations and communications – to the team."

Grant, of Minneapolis, will oversee the Legal/Special Investigations, Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Investment and Finance and Pension divisions. She previously worked for the Minneapolis law firm of Robins, Kaplan, Miller and Ciresi for 13 years and was a judicial law clerk for the Minnesota Supreme Court from 1991 to 1992. Grant holds a juris doctorate from the William Mitchell College of Law.

Hierlinger, of Blaine, will continue to oversee the Audit Practice and Government Information divisions. He has served in the state auditor's office for the past 30 years. "Greg has served various state auditors, earning their respect and admiration," Otto said. "I am happy he has accepted my appointment and that he will continue to help lead our team with his invaluable expertise and insight."

Falk, of St. Paul, will lead the state auditor's office communications and media relations efforts at the state Capitol and across the state. He previously worked as broadcast media relations manager in the University of Minnesota's Office of University Relations. He also brings experience in Minnesota state government, having worked in two governors' communications offices. Falk earned his bachelor's degree from Macalester College in 2002.

Ceronsky, of St. Paul, will serve as the executive assistant to State Auditor Otto and manage special projects. He graduated magna cum laude from St. John's University, Collegeville, in 2004.

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Otto, of May Township, was elected state auditor in 2006. She represented the Stillwater area in the Minnesota House from 2003 to 2004.

The state auditor's office is a constitutional office that oversees Minnesota's more than 3,300 local government units to ensure financial integrity and accountability in local government financial activities. The office performs audits of financial statements, documents and reports submitted to the office, making comments on financial accuracy and legal compliance.

"Moving forward, my team and I will work closely with local governments and provide them with the tools and resources necessary to be successful stewards of public funds," Otto said. "I am a firm believer in improving government by being more proactive and preventative and getting ahead of the problems before they occur in spending."

For more information, go to the state auditor's office Web site at www.auditor.state.mn.us.

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