



The Office of the
**Minnesota
State Auditor**

For immediate Release
April 16, 2019

Contact: Donald McFarland
Phone: 651-236-0494

The Office of the State Auditor is turning a corner

State Auditor Julie Blaha's First 100 Days

St. Paul, MN – Today marks 100 days since State Auditor Julie Blaha took office. The Office of the State Auditor is turning a corner and Auditor Blaha is proud of early accomplishments.

“The Office of the State Auditor has been through a difficult period of challenges and changes,” said Auditor Blaha. “Minnesotans are ready to move on from those old fights and are looking to reconnect with the office and, more importantly, the local work we support.”

Minnesotans count on the Office of the State Auditor to provide oversight of over \$20 billion in local government spending through audits, investigations, reporting, technical assistance, and education.

In the first 100 days, the Office of the State Auditor has increased engagement and action at the legislature by providing leadership and technical support on a number of bipartisan issues. “For instance, I’m proud to say that we testified in favor of the legislation to reimburse Becker, Wright and Ramsey counties for the legal expenses they incurred as a result of the lawsuit regarding counties using private audit services,” said Blaha.

The auditor’s office is increasing the support it provides to local law enforcement, as seen by the recent investigations into the theft of funds by the former director of the Marshall Convention and Visitor’s Bureau.

Increasing outreach and communication has been another top priority for the new auditor. Auditor Blaha has held over 200 one-on-one meetings with stakeholders, staff, and leaders. Blaha continued, “We have also launched the office’s first social media channel to better communicate with the public (@MNStateAuditor on Twitter) and are in the process of overhauling our website so that it is easier to navigate and more responsive to our stakeholders.”

Blaha added, “We are having productive conversations with local officials, legislators from both parties and associations that assist local government. We are prioritizing our meetings where we have strained relationships and with those who are closest to our day-to-day work. As we look to restructure in response to a new set of rules and opportunities, we want everyone at the table right from the start.”

“All of this is happening while the essential work of the office never skips a beat. From helping improve laws governing local volunteer firefighter pensions, to supporting municipalities to better manage their finances, to providing the data leaders need to make fact-based decisions, our experienced and dedicated staff continued to be here for local government.”

“When I ran for auditor, it was with the sincere belief that people who are elected to local government bodies - like a township board or city council - are good people with good intentions. I also ran with the sincere belief that government can be, and frankly already is, a force for good in our lives. These past 100 days have reaffirmed those beliefs and made me even more optimistic.”

XXX

The Office of the State Auditor is the constitutional office that oversees more than \$20 billion in local government finances for Minnesota taxpayers. The Office of the State Auditor helps to ensure financial integrity and accountability in local government financial activities. Julie Blaha is Minnesota’s 19th State Auditor. Follow us on Twitter @MNStateAuditor.