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AUDITOR GENERAL

STATE OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF THE
AUDITOR GENERAL

WILLIAM THOMSON
DEPUTY AUDITOR GENERAL

June 28, 2002

The Honorable Roberta L. Voss, Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

The Honorable Ken Bennett, Vice Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Dear Representative Voss and Senator Bennett:

Our Office has recently completed a 24-month followup of the Arizona Department of Public Safety—Aviation Section, regarding the implementation status of the ten audit recommendations (including sub-parts of the recommendations) presented in the performance audit report released in June 2000 (Auditor General Report No. 00-07). As the attached grid indicates:

- 6 of the 10 recommendations have been implemented; and
- 4 of the 10 recommendations are in the process of being implemented.

Unless otherwise directed by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, we recommend further followup in 6 months on the status of the remaining 4 recommendations. These recommendations address the rates that DPS charges other state agencies when providing air transport services, an area the Legislature expressed substantial interest in last winter when trying to identify cost savings to deal with the State's revenue shortfall.

Sincerely,

Debbie Davenport
Auditor General

Attachment

cc: Colonel Dennis Garrett, Director
Department of Public Safety

Senate Judiciary Members

Ms. Sheryl Rabin
Senate Committee Analyst

Ms. Nadine Sapien
Senate Research Analyst

JLAC Members

House Retirement and Government
Operations Members

Ms. Tami Stowe
House Committee Analyst

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
Aviation Section
24-Month Follow-Up Report to
Auditor General Report No. 00-7

FINDING I: DPSA Should Serve As Backup Air Ambulance Provider To the Private Sector

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
1. DPSA should rewrite its mission statement to change its role in air ambulance services to that of a backup provider unless the private sector is unavailable or unable to respond in a timely manner.	Implemented at 6 months¹	
2. DPSA should work to eliminate dispatching practices that favor DPSA. Specifically, DPS should establish a written policy to be used by EMSCOM that states that private providers are to be contacted first and that DPSA is to be contacted only if private providers are unavailable or unable to provide timely service. Requesting agencies (fire departments, ground ambulances, and sheriff's office, etc.) should be provided a copy of this new policy.	Implemented at 18 months	

¹ Although DPS did not change its mission statement, it has implemented new policies and procedures that essentially meet the intent of this recommendation. Specifically, its policies direct that the private sector will be contacted first, unless they are not appropriate for the request (i.e., a request for law enforcement) or cannot respond in a timely manner.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
Aviation Section
24-Month Follow-Up Report to
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FINDING I: DPSA Should Serve As Backup Air Ambulance Provider To the Private Sector (Concl'd)

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
3. DPSA should seek to ensure that the practice of “launching off the scanner” does not occur. Specifically, DPSA should establish a written policy stating that this practice is not appropriate and that staff should not initiate a flight without first verifying the need for an emergency helicopter. All air units should be provided a copy of this policy.	Implemented at 6 months	
4. After implementing the other recommendations, DPSA should assess whether its services are used enough to warrant the present level of resources, and if not, how to reduce unwarranted expenditures.	Implemented at 18 months	

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FINDING II: DPSA Needs More Powerful Helicopters To Conduct Some Missions

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
1. DPSA should seek an increase in its General Fund appropriation to help cover the costs of replacing any of its three remaining Bell 206 helicopters.	Implemented at 18 months	
2. DPSA should also continue to research the feasibility of using other funding sources such as RICO to help offset the costs of replacing helicopters.	Implemented at 18 months	

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
Aviation Section
24-Month Follow-Up Report to
Auditor General Report No. 00-7

FINDING III: DPSA Not Charging Enough To Support Air Transport Activities

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
1. DPSA should expand its existing cost-recovery model to include all elements suggested by OMB's full cost-recovery model.	Implementation in Process	
2. DPSA should establish an accounting mechanism to capture all costs included in the OMB model for each of its airplanes.	Implementation in Process	
3. DPSA should review these costs and use this information as the basis for establishing new rates for its intergovernmental service agreements with the agencies that utilize its air transport services when the agreements expire.	Implementation in Process	
4. If demand is reduced as a result of increasing rates, DPSA should dispose of any aircraft that are not used to fulfill its mandate and that are not self-supporting.	Implementation in Process	