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**BARBARA J. SCHOTT, C.P.A.**  
**HARRIS COUNTY AUDITOR**

November 1, 2013

Mr. Bruce High  
Chief Information Officer, ITC  
406 Caroline, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Houston, Texas 77002

RE: Information Technology Center (ITC) Integrated Financial and Administrative Solution (IFAS) August, 2013, Disaster Recovery Exercise Cancellation

In lieu of a formal auditor's report, we are providing you this correspondence concerning the August, 2013, Disaster Recovery Exercise cancellation.

Historically, the ITC performs a Disaster Recovery Exercise involving Harris County's Financial Accounting System, IFAS. This Disaster Recovery Exercise consists of preparing for and recovering the critical financial system in a disaster scenario, such as a hurricane. During the preparation for the Disaster Recovery Exercise, ITC and IFAS users identify the data to be recovered for the Disaster Recovery Exercise, and ITC creates backup tapes of system configurations and the data required. Additional tasks to be performed at this time include ITC updating the Disaster Recovery procedures and emergency contact information as needed. The users of the IFAS system review their documented procedures they use to perform a User Acceptance Test to verify that the recovered systems are operational and that the data is valid. The backup tapes are then sent to the recovery provider (in this case IBM), at their Data Center in Boulder, Colorado. The data planned to be recovered include a minor payroll for testing. Some of the more pervasive modules used countywide and planned to be tested in this Disaster Recovery Exercise include: Security, Workflow, Person Entity/PEID, Budget, Human Resources, Daily Time Entry, Payroll, Purchasing, Accounts Payable, Encumbrance, Accounts Receivable, Fixed Assets, General Ledger, and Bank Reconciliation.

On the day the Disaster Recovery Exercise begins, ITC works with IBM to recover the IFAS infrastructure, the IFAS application, and the IFAS data. ITC works to coordinate IFAS user

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testing after the IFAS application and data have been recovered, to demonstrate that the functionality and data have been appropriately recovered.

ITC management informed us Tuesday morning, August 27, that no IFAS user testing would occur for this Disaster Recovery Exercise, that the Disaster Recovery Exercise was cancelled, as it was not possible to recover the data in time for IFAS users to test. Also, as a result, ITC management informed us you were planning to perform an in-house Disaster Recovery Exercise, soon. The initial timing conveyed was that it would be completed by September 27, but that timeline has been extended. It is our understanding that depending upon when that can take place, ITC may or may not plan another Disaster Recovery Exercise with IBM this year. We were also informed by your management that an analysis addressing the cause for the cancellation has been performed.

During December, 2013, we will begin planning an engagement regarding a review of that analysis as to why the Disaster Recovery Exercise was cancelled, and perform a broader engagement in the area of Disaster Recovery.

Sincerely,



Barbara J. Schott  
County Auditor

cc: District Judges  
County Judge Ed Emmett  
Commissioners:  
R. Jack Cagle  
El Franco Lee  
Jack Morman  
Steve Radack  
Devon Anderson  
Vince Ryan  
William J. Jackson