

# **AUDITOR'S REPORT**

## **JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURTS' ODYSSEY CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM INTERFACE WITH THE COUNTY'S INTEGRATED FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SOLUTION SYSTEM**



**November 11, 2016**

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November 11, 2016

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Office of Court Management  
1201 Franklin, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
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RE: Justice of the Peace Courts' Odyssey Case Management System ("Odyssey") Interface with Harris County's Integrated Financial and Administrative Solution (IFAS) system

The Harris County Auditor's Office (Auditor's Office) - Audit Services Department (Audit Services) performed procedures relative to the Odyssey System interface with IFAS. The objective of the engagement was to determine whether the departmental testing supports that the Odyssey interface to IFAS is in compliance with Harris County (County) Accounting Procedures "O.15 – New System Interfaces to IFAS", and "O.15-1 – Internal Financial Systems".

The engagement process included providing you with an engagement and scope letter and conducting an entrance and exit conference with your personnel. The purpose of the letter and conferences were to explain the process, identify areas of concern, describe the procedures to be performed, discuss issues identified during the engagement, and solicit suggestions for resolving the issues. A draft report was provided to you and your personnel for review.

The work performed required our staff to exercise professional judgment in completing the scope objectives. As the procedures were not a detailed inspection of all transactions, there is a risk that error or fraud was not detected during this engagement. Therefore, the official retains the responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of their financial records and ensuring sufficient controls are in place to detect and prevent fraud.

The enclosed Auditor's Report presents the significant issues identified during our procedures, recommendations developed in conjunction with your staff, and any actions you have taken to implement the recommendations.

Mr. Mike Post  
Chief Assistant County Auditor

Mr. Ed Wells  
Court Manager

We appreciate the time and attention provided by you and your staff during this engagement.

Sincerely,



Barbara J. Schott  
County Auditor

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

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## OVERVIEW

The Office of Court Management (OCM) provides administrative and legal support and technical assistance to the JP courts within the County. There are 2 JP courts in each of the 8 County precincts, for a total of 16 JP courts. Each JP court collects court costs, fines, and fees with various amounts on court cases (e.g. traffic, criminal, eviction, civil, etc.) and also on occupational licenses and weddings. The fees collected are uploaded to IFAS through an automated interface.

All 16 JP courts have been using the Justice Court Information System (JCIS) application for approximately 20 years to record the various court fees and transmit the revenue information to IFAS through the automated interface. Based on information provided by the OCM, due to lack of continued support for this system, the County has entered into an agreement with Tyler Technologies, Inc. to license its Odyssey application to replace JCIS. The Odyssey system was implemented on 4 of the 16 JP courts (JP 3-1, JP 5-1, JP 7-1, and JP 8-1) in June 2016. The OCM plans to have the Odyssey system in production for the rest of the JP courts in December 2016.

Pursuant to County Accounting Procedures “*O.15 – New System Interfaces to IFAS*” and “*O.15 – 1 – Internal Financial Systems*”, the user department, OCM, and the appropriate division of the Auditor’s Office - Revenue Accounting Department (Revenue Accounting) are required to test the interface. The Audit Services Department is required to review the interface testing results to obtain assurance that the OCM and Revenue Accounting tested the interface and to notify the County Auditor that the testing has been reviewed and that the system appears to be functioning as intended.

## RESULTS

The Audit Services Department performed procedures to confirm the Odyssey-IFAS interface was in compliance with the County's Accounting Procedures "*O.15 – New System Interfaces to IFAS*", and "*O.15-1 – Internal Financial Systems*". The interface was tested by the OCM and Revenue Accounting for user acceptance purposes, test results were adequately supported by the corresponding user acceptance testing documentation, and the interface appeared to work during the testing procedures. After the Odyssey-IFAS interface was placed in production in June 2016, detailed-level revenue information was being transmitted from Odyssey to IFAS as opposed to summary-level information, as needed by Revenue Accounting. This issue is explained in more detail within the "Issues and Recommendations" matrix.

## ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Subject	Background	Issue	Recommendation	Management Response
Odyssey-IFAS Post-Implementation	<p>The JP courts have been using the current JCIS application for approximately 20 years to capture the various court fees and transmit these fees to IFAS. Based on information provided by the OCM, due to lack of continued support, JCIS is being replaced by the Odyssey system, along with the corresponding interface to IFAS. JCIS was disabled on the four JP pilot courts after month-end close in May 2016 prior to Odyssey being placed in production in June 2016. OCM informed us that there was a back-out plan available.</p>	<p>After the Odyssey-IFAS interface was placed in production in June 2016, detailed-level revenue information was being transmitted from Odyssey to IFAS as opposed to summary-level information, as needed by Revenue Accounting. As a result, the revenue being transmitted was not posted to the General Ledger on the 4 JP pilot courts (3-1, 5-1, 7-1, and 8-1).</p> <p>OCM informed us that the back-out plan would not work because the interface issue was discovered 2 weeks after the interface was migrated to the production environment and it was not feasible to implement the back-out plan. It is our understanding that OCM is working with Tyler Technologies, Inc. to</p>	<p>OCM, in collaboration with Revenue Accounting, should continue working with Tyler Technologies, Inc. to resolve this issue so the Odyssey-IFAS interface can be efficiently utilized and all revenue captured in the Odyssey application can be timely and accurately posted to IFAS.</p> <p>Once a solution is achieved, Audit Services needs to be notified to perform user acceptance testing to confirm compliance with County procedures “<i>O.15 – New System Interfaces to IFAS</i>”, and “<i>O.15-1 – Internal Financial Systems</i>”.</p>	<p><u>Revenue Accounting</u> Revenue Accounting will continue to work with the OCM to ensure that all issues are properly resolved. Revenue Accounting will also continue to provide status updates to Audit Services.</p> <p><u>Office of Court Management</u> The Office of Court Management (OCM) agrees that at the time the audit referred to in this report was performed, the Odyssey-IFAS interface was not operating to the satisfaction of the Auditor’s Office. The Odyssey-IFAS interface that was placed in production in June 2016 operated in accordance with the original specifications. Specifically, the Odyssey-IFAS interface transmitted accurate detailed-level revenue information from Odyssey to IFAS as opposed to</p>

## ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Subject	Background	Issue	Recommendation	Management Response
(continued) Odyssey-IFAS Post- Implementation		resolve this issue.  Not being able to interface the revenue generated in the various JP courts into IFAS in the needed format increases the risk of this revenue not being recorded in the General Ledger or not being recorded in a timely fashion, which could impact the County's financial records.		summary-level information. OCM is working with CTS and the vendor, Tyler Technologies, Inc., to address the requirement so the various court fees from the effected JP courts can be efficiently and accurately interfaced to IFAS. The revised interface is in User Acceptance Testing now. Revenue Accounting made a decision to not post the revenue being transmitted to the General Ledger on the 4 JP pilot courts (3-1, 5-1, 7-1, and 8-1) until the revised interface is completed. Further delays to posting revenue from the 4 JP Pilot Courts to IFAS are a continuing concern. 09/02/2016