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Office of the Governor
Office of State Inspector General

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BATON ROUGE -- Today, the State Inspector General issued a report concerning its investigation of the Louisiana Recreational and Used Motor Vehicle Commission (the Commission), conducted with the assistance of the Louisiana State Police.

The Inspector General received credible information that investigators employed by the Commission were submitting timesheets to support compensation for work that was not performed. It was also alleged that Commission supervisors responsible for overseeing the investigators' activities neglected their duties, which enabled the investigators to be paid for services not rendered.

Surveillance conducted to observe the investigators' activities revealed that they performed less Commission related work than was reported on their timesheets. During the days of surveillance, six investigators submitted timesheets for 225 hours of work. Some investigators never left home on those days; others worked at a garage sale, performed yard work, shopped, waited for school buses, had personal vehicles inspected, and drove children to and from school. A comparison of surveillance results with timesheets indicates that the investigators performed 111.5 hours of work, less than 50% of the 225 hours claimed.

Commission employees responsible for managing the investigators failed to properly supervise their subordinates or review their work product to ensure that the compensation

received was commensurate with the services provided. Investigators submit weekly reports which detail the work they perform to justify payment for an eight hour day. In some cases, the only entries during the day were a few phone calls made from the investigators' homes. Their immediate supervisor only reviews these reports every four to five months. Jack Torrance, the Executive Director of the Commission, has been previously cited by the Office of Inspector General and the Louisiana Board of Ethics for failing to properly supervise a subordinate to ensure that the subordinate worked the hours for which he was paid.

Commission investigators are issued state vehicles to assist in the performance of their work duties. Our investigation revealed that the vehicles contain no markings, emblems, or public license plates to identify them as state vehicles. A representative of the Governor's office advised the Commission that state law requires the vehicles to be properly marked as state vehicles. Mr. Torrance was made aware of the requirement but took no action to comply with the law. His failure to act may incur a penalty of up to \$50 per day per violation.

Our investigation also revealed that investigators regularly tend to personal errands in their state issued vehicles, an apparent violation of Commission policy prohibiting the personal use of state vehicles.

An additional finding involved the enforcement of curb stoning violations. Curb stoning is the practice by which licensed car dealers display vehicles for sale in unapproved locations. Some Commission investigators incorrectly apply the enforcement of curb stoning laws to private citizens who display vehicles for sale on private property. The investigators threaten private citizens with enforcement action if they do not remove their vehicles from sites where they are legally allowed to be. They do so to protect licensed dealers from the competition created by private citizens selling privately owned vehicles.

Finally, Commission investigators carry badges similar to those used by the Louisiana State Police, which are made in the shape of the State of Louisiana. Louisiana Revised

Statute 40:1376 provides for the use of such badges by only a few, specifically enumerated agencies. The Commission is not one of those agencies.

Inspector General Stephen Street made a total of eleven recommendations that, if implemented, would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission.

To obtain the full report, follow this link:

<http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/oig/pdf%20reports/2009/1080021.pdf>