

**STATEMENT OF SHERIFF JOHN WHETSEL
REGARDING OKLAHOMA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FINANCIAL AUDIT
OCTOBER 21, 2016**

The Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector's Office recently released an audit concerning the finances of the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office.

First and foremost, the public trust placed in me by the citizens of Oklahoma County is absolutely most important to me. This trust encompasses keeping the public safe performing a myriad of tasks while being a good steward of taxpayers' money.

The entire Sheriff's Office and I cooperated fully with the audit and worked closely with the Office of the Oklahoma State Auditor and Inspector during the seven month audit. We provided all information that was requested and more. We did this because we had nothing to hide.

Public safety is my utmost concern, and I made every decision in question while keeping in mind the fulfillment of the mission of this agency.

I encourage citizens to read the full report and, while doing so, keep three fundamental things in mind.

- there is no allegation or finding that I or anyone else misappropriated money or benefitted in any way,
- every decision made by me or the leadership of the Sheriff's Office was made in an effort to best serve our County, and,
- I take full responsibility for the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office and pledge that we will work tirelessly to seek continued improvement in every area of our operation.

The 2014-2015 Oklahoma County budget cycle presented significant challenges to all of Oklahoma County government, including the Sheriff's Office. Due to an historic budget shortfall, difficult decisions had to be made. We followed established County-wide practices in making the decisions that were made, practices that have evolved in the years since. Many of the findings in the audit

report have already been addressed and we are working to address and correct every single issue that was identified.

To the extent any of the findings constituted errors on my part or on the part of my staff, they were just that, errors, and for that I apologize to our citizens.

It has always been my desire and intent to comply with the law and develop compliant processes and procedures. We take the findings of the State Auditor very seriously and will correct policies and procedures where necessary.

I am very proud of the work of the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office and of all of our employees.

Finally, I want you to be assured that even in these difficult budgetary environments, we did not and will not take our eyes off our ultimate mission which is working with all of our law enforcement partners to keep our citizens and our communities' safe.

It has and always will be my deepest honor to serve the citizens of Oklahoma County. Thank you.

John Whetsel, Sheriff