LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

TO:    Governor David M. Beasley  
       Members of the General Assembly

The Office of the Comptroller General was established by the Constitution in 1890 as "Paymaster" for the purpose of supervising and accounting for the expenditure of all state funds. This office is also responsible for statewide financial reporting including audited statewide financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) for publication in the State's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). The CAFR is the primary document used by bond rating firms in determining the State's bond rating.

A pre-audit of all disbursements is conducted by the Comptroller General to ensure compliance with the Annual Appropriation Act as passed by the General Assembly. Payments include payrolls for approximately 55,500 employees in 79 state agencies and approximately 1,750,000 disbursement vouchers and interdepartmental transfers for 98 state agencies.

The Comptroller General has custody of all documents of record relating to financial transactions and maintains accounting controls on all state government funds. In this regard, he issues accounting policy directives to state agencies.

This office is also responsible for the supervision of the collection of all property taxes; to assist all county auditors, treasurers and tax collectors to reimburse counties for homestead exemption, merchants' inventory, the manufacturers' depreciation reimbursement and the property tax reimbursement programs.

In addition, the Comptroller General is one of five members of the Budget and Control Board.
Adhering to its commitment for fiscal accountability, the Comptroller General Office's, under the leadership of Earle E. Morris, Jr., has annually requested and received an evaluation of the agency's procedures by an outside independent accounting firm in accordance with standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountant.

Management and staff meet on a continuing basis to provide total quality management sessions for employees. These sessions provide ongoing training and promote a valuable exchange of ideas so that optimum service can be rendered.

The Office of the Comptroller General is dedicated to providing fiscal accountability and informational assistance to the Governor, members of the General Assembly, other state and local government officials and the general public. If additional information regarding this report is needed, please contact Nell Abston at 734-2526.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

EARLE E. MORRIS, JR.
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL

ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Fiscal Year 1997-98
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Comptroller General's Office provides for centralized accounting and the reporting of financial data in accordance with the statewide program budget structure mandated by the General Assembly and in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

Criteria used by this office for establishing program priority are based on the primary areas essential to complete our mission and its overall impact on state government. The Comptroller General's Office has four divisions to handle the major areas of responsibilities. These divisions, in priority order, are: (1) Central State Audit, (2) Central State Finance, (3) Administration/Local Government, and (4) Data Processing.

Central State Audit Division is responsible for ensuring that every dollar appropriated by the General Assembly and spent by South Carolina State Government complies with applicable state laws, rules and regulations. The Central State Audit Division is responsible for auditing and certifying the validity, authenticity, and legality of each disbursement. All obligations incurred in the operation of a state agency and the General Assembly, such as rent, travel expenses, utility bills, and contractual items, must be submitted to the Central State Audit Division for approval prior to payment. This division also processes the payrolls for approximately 55,500 state employees.

In addition to approving payments for salaries, the Central State Audit Division must control and remit all deductions from the employees' checks which are either mandated by law or authorized by employees. Reports to the Internal Revenue Service, the State Department of Revenue and Taxation, the Social Security Administration and the South Carolina Retirement System are required on a schedule established by law. Reports for deductions of insurance, credit unions, public charities and others are also prepared and sent to various entities each pay period.

Central State Finance Division provides for centralized accounting and reporting of financial data in accordance with the statewide program structure mandated by the General Assembly and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). By publishing an audited Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) within six months after the end of the fiscal year, the state complies with GAAP requirements and meets even the strictest financial reporting recommendations of bond rating agencies. This data enables the state's leaders to make more informed decisions concerning South Carolina's finances.

In addition, Central State Finance is responsible for establishing and communicating changes in regulations and policies to agency accounting and finance personnel which affect their operations. This division maintains the centralized records management program.
Administration/Local Government Division provides executive management, coordination and support for the Comptroller General and for all divisions of the Office. It renders services in the areas of finance, personnel, and employee benefits (for agency personnel as well as the county auditors and treasurers), and also oversees budget, procurement and public relations, and ensures compliance with all state and federal requirements for the agency. The division responds to requests for information, reports and assistance which are received on a daily basis.

Administration of the state's U.S. Savings Bond Program is another responsibility of this division. A statewide automated purchasing system of U. S. Savings Bonds was implemented in June 1988 and eliminated a great deal of work formerly imposed on individual state agencies' finance and personnel operations. This system requires maintaining a trust account, issuing vouchers for the purchase of bonds, maintaining individual computer files on each bond owner participating in the bond payroll deduction program and working closely with the Federal Reserve Bank to ensure an efficient and effective program.

This division also relates directly with South Carolina's counties and municipalities. It is responsible for the supervision of the collection of property taxes, and provides assistance to all county auditors, treasurers and tax collectors. Periodic county reports required by state statutes are audited and maintained by this division. The homestead exemption, merchants' inventory, property reimbursement and manufacturers' reimbursement programs are also organized and conducted by this division to keep local government officials informed of new laws, procedures, and requirements to carry out their duties.

Data Processing Division provides technological support to other divisions of the Comptroller General's Office using the Information Resource Management concept. This support encompasses all areas of information technology, including telephones, photocopiers, facsimile machines, personal computers, local area networks, access to and from the internet and mainframe computer systems.

Major automated systems developed and maintained by this division provide operational support for the statewide payroll and accounting functions of the office. This division is responsible for other systems, including support for office administration and local government tax reimbursement programs.

This division is also responsible for preparing and monitoring the annual Information Technology Plan and in recommending, installing and maintaining all computer hardware and software to meet the goals of the office.
MISSION STATEMENT

MISSION STATEMENT: The Office of Comptroller General supervises and accounts for all state expenditures, both payroll and operating. The Office provides for centralized payroll, accounting and reporting of financial data in accordance with the statewide program budget structure mandated by the General Assembly and Generally Accepted Accounting Principals (GAAP). The Office is also responsible for the supervision of collecting all property taxes, assisting county auditors, treasurers, and tax collectors, and reimbursing counties for homestead exemption, merchants' inventory, property tax and manufacturing reimbursement programs.
PRIORITY RANKING: 1

COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S OFFICE

PROGRAM: Central State Audit Division

PROGRAM COST: $1,208,792

PROGRAM GOAL: Conducts a pre-audit of all disbursements of South Carolina State Government to ensure that agencies comply with the annual Appropriation Act. Certifies the validity, authenticity, and legality of each payment. For FY 1998–99, this will include processing approximately 1,750,000 contingent vouchers and maintaining a payroll system for approximately 55,500 employees.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES: To process contingent vouchers as accurately as possible in a timely manner. To deal with agency errors in a firm and professional manner to clear the error status as soon as possible. To incorporate system changes as a result of changes in legislation and regulations and to inform agencies of those changes as they affect disbursements. To process payrolls in an accurate yet timely manner to ensure employees’ gross pay is charged accurately and all deductions are accounted for and disbursed accurately. To ensure accurate and timely reporting of information to the various retirement systems and income tax authorities. To plan for the ever-increasing, liberal voluntary deduction possibilities. To provide consultation on legislation concerning the payment of funds or the financial impact of proposed legislation.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:
Workload Indicators:
1,332,000 personal service payments each year
1,000,000 changes to the payroll file
1,750,000 contingent vouchers and IDT’s processed
90,000 W-2 and 1099 files maintained and forms issued.
COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S OFFICE

PROGRAM: Central State Finance Division

PROGRAM COST: $1,029,076

PROGRAM GOAL: Provides for the centralized accounting and reporting of the State’s financial activities. Produces a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and issues policy directives to State agencies as needed to accomplish this goal. Provides timely, accurate statewide financial data needed by state government and by external parties such as bond raters, potential bond purchasers, other State creditors, citizen groups, and agencies of the Federal government. Maintains a centralized Records Management Center that receives and safeguards input documents submitted by state agencies.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES: To create a Chart of Accounts for the fiscal year that includes all appropriated and supplemental appropriation accounts; estimated sources of revenue for general, earmarked, restricted and federal funds; and for agencies implementing a Capital Improvement Bond Program. To pre-audit all appropriation/cash transfers and journal vouchers from state agencies prior to input into STARS. To issue the State’s audited Comprehensive Annual Financial Report in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles for the fiscal year ended June 30 within six months of that date:

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Workload Indicators:
$66,071,254,658 of financial transactions monitored and accounted for in accordance with the Appropriation Act
1,713,022 input documents handled prior to being input into STARS
3,498 accounting reports provided to state agencies
1,565 responses for requests for original source documents
112 audit verifications provided to independent CPA firms used in auditing state political subdivisions
72 special reports prepared as requested by legislators, newspapers, or other authorized individuals

Efficiency Measures:
$ 3,146,250,222 of financial transactions accounted for per applicable FTE
$ 3,661,930,300 state assets properly reported in the State’s CAFR per applicable FTE
428,256 STARS input documents handled per applicable FTE
3,362,050 financial documents maintained and accounted for per applicable FTE
COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S OFFICE

PROGRAM NAME: Administration/Local Government Division

PROGRAM COST: $1,103,553 (E12 Funds)
$2,224,600 (X12 Funds-Aid to Subdivisions)

PROGRAM GOAL: Provides executive management, coordination and support for the Comptroller General's Office. Renders services in the areas of personnel, public relations, employee benefits, procurement and budget and finance to support all divisions and ensure compliance with all state and federal requirements. Personnel files are maintained for 90 employees and 92 county auditors and treasurers.

Maintains direct contact with the county auditors, treasurers and tax collectors and supervises the property tax collection process. Audits requests and disburses funds to the counties in accordance with the Appropriation Act for reimbursements programs for Property Tax Relief and the Manufacturers' Depreciation and audits requests and reimburses to the counties and municipalities for the Homestead Tax Exemption Program. Disburses funds as required by law to counties for revenues lost due to the Merchants' Inventory Exemption. Compiles data for dissemination to various other governmental entities and prepares the Comptroller General's Disbursement Report to the General Assembly from data collected during the tax year.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES: Assists the Comptroller General in his duties, provides Office employees with an efficient and user friendly payroll and employee benefits system; coordinates staff development and training; provides applicants referral assistance in their employment search; provides an internal financial, property management, and procurement system; provides all state employees participating in the State's United States Savings Bond program with a rapid response to their questions and a timely purchase of their bonds; coordinates special projects as assigned by the Comptroller; and to respond to inquiries from the general public, the news media and the General Assembly. The variety of office management and administrative support services performed by this division contributes to optimum efficiency throughout the Office and assists the Comptroller General in his statutory duties and leadership role. Workshops and seminars are conducted to advise and update auditors, treasurers and tax collectors on reimbursement and reporting procedures, and any legislative changes which occur. Staff monitors and keeps agency management apprised of legislation with potential impact on office and local government operations.

Process requests for reimbursements under the Homestead Tax Exemption Program, Property Tax Relief Program, Manufacturers' Depreciation Reimbursement Program and the Merchants' Inventory Exemption. Disburse other supplemental funds to counties as required by the Appropriation Act. Supervise the Annual County Auditors, Treasurers, and Tax Collectors Academy conducted by the University of South Carolina's Institute of Public Affairs.
PERFORMANCE MEASURES:
Workload Indicators:
2,593 payroll and personnel transactions for employees, the Office of Human Resources and the Human Affairs Commission
2,139 employee transactions for FMLA, personnel leave, training and meeting reports and information on the employee’s personnel benefits and actions
1,796 transactions involving U. S. Savings Bonds, processing purchases, reconciling financial records, telephone calls and correspondence with state employees and the Federal Reserve Bank
329 transactions involving inventory of the state’s property
670 requisitions and purchase orders to ensure the Office obtains goods and services economically and complies with various state regulations
103 actions involving reports, sales tax reports, minority vendor reports, materials management reports and involvement in annual audit
1,196 internal financial transactions

$ 49,571,991 disbursed to 253,083 Homestead Exemption accounts
$ 40,560,085 disbursed to 51,414 Merchants’ Inventory accounts
$ 10,659,329 disbursed to 2,842 Manufacturers’ Depreciation accounts
$ 240,974 disbursed as salary supplements to county officials
$ 139,468 disbursed to counties for tax forms and supplies
$ 227,400,846 disbursed to 1,068,216 Property Tax Relief accounts

Outcomes: Many of the activities cannot be measured with workload indicators. One measure of the effectiveness of the Office’s activities are the annual audits. For the last several years this Office has received a clean management letter and financial audit by private C.P.A. firms, the State’s procurement audit staff and audits by the Division of Insurance Services.
COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S OFFICE

PROGRAM: Data Processing Division

PROGRAM COST: $678,029

STATE

PROGRAM GOAL: To provide information technology support to all of the programs administered by the Comptroller General’s Office.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES: Maintains and enhances the statewide accounting and reporting system (STARS); the statewide payroll system (PAYROLL); maintains and enhances the following statewide support systems: court ordered child support payments, tax garnishments, U. S. Savings Bond program, 1099 Federal tax reporting, Local Government tax reimbursement programs (Merchants' Inventory, Homestead Exemption, Manufacturers’ Tax, Property Tax Relief), and other related systems. Maintains and enhances the following internal support systems: Agency Accounting, Supply Inventory, Property Management, Employee Benefits and Leave, and other related systems.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Workload Indicators:
4,700,000 STARS transactions processed
650,000 STARS control/management records maintained
1,000,000 GAAP reporting records maintained
700,000 PAYROLL transactions processed
225,000 PAYROLL records maintained
350,000 other systems transactions processed and records maintained
36,000 jobs submitted, monitored and successful completion insured
23,000 external input and output tapes and diskettes processed
53,000 internal tapes processed (creation and retention management)
3,200 computer programs maintained in library
7,350 non-program modules (Maps, JCL, Data Descriptions) maintained
316 Data Processing Service Requests completed
1,630 new and/or modified modules
600 special adhoc report requests completed