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## **MOST MEASURES CITED IN AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT ALREADY IN PLACE, SAYS DGS SECRETARY**

**HARRISBURG** – Department of General Services Secretary James P. Creedon today outlined changes that the commonwealth has made over the past six years to reduce the cost of maintaining the state’s vehicle fleet while improving operations.

Included among those improvements were steps to reorganize and centralize state vehicle operations among various state agencies that were put in place more than a year-and-a-half ago.

Many of these measures, said Creedon, are cited in a report issued today by Auditor General Jack Wagner.

Creedon said he was pleased that the auditor general’s findings reinforced his agency’s efforts and that the steps taken to date are already yielding positive results for the commonwealth’s taxpayers.

“We appreciate the auditor general’s report, but it outlines findings that we already knew had existed,” Secretary Creedon said. “We have and will continue to implement improvements to the way we manage the state’s vehicle fleet.”

From the very beginning of the Rendell administration, it was evident that changes were needed to resolve these problems—many of which have existed for decades—so DGS aggressively began to fix antiquated and decentralized operations, Creedon said.

In 2004, DGS began to reduce the size of the vehicle fleet and raised the turn-in point for fleet vehicles from 65,000 to 100,000 miles. There are nearly 13,400 passenger vehicles and trucks in the state fleet and another 3,200 off-road vehicles — fewer than the previous administration.

Eliminating vehicles and raising the turn-in point provided a one-time savings of more than \$33 million and has generated annual savings of nearly \$7 million.

In early 2007, Governor Rendell signed Executive Order 2007-3, the Commonwealth Automotive Fleet Efficiency Initiative, which charged DGS to establish policies and practices governing the entire operations of the state vehicle fleet.

Secretary Creedon then reorganized the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, starting in June 2007, by placing new leadership to oversee vehicle operations. This was followed by extensive planning meetings to chart the best course of action.

As part of a major energy conservation initiative Governor Rendell announced last summer, DGS is reducing the commonwealth's fuel consumption, downsizing state vehicles, decreasing the use of SUV's, while increasing the use of hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles.

The Governor also placed a moratorium on new vehicle purchases last year that will save taxpayers as much as \$43 million, since 1,500 to 2,000 vehicles in the state's fleet will not be replaced.

Other measures put in place by DGS as part of a complete top-to-bottom analysis of vehicle operations that have already resulted in immediate improvements to its fleet operations include:

- Transferring vehicle procurement responsibilities from each agency to DGS in the spring of 2007. While there is a freeze now on new vehicle purchases, this will allow DGS to monitor a new policy to purchase smaller vehicles with fewer options throughout the state fleet;

- State-of-the-art MAXIMUS fleet management software adopted in November 2008 will enable the department to track all aspects of vehicle information and analyze operational costs. The software can generate reports pertaining to vehicle maintenance, repair, fuel use, mileage, servicing needs, inspection and other data. This will help DGS to make cost-control efficiencies;
- Centralizing operations of the entire commonwealth vehicle fleet in December 2008 by establishing a customer service division. This move transferred automotive responsibilities and record-keeping from each agency and placed them under the purview of DGS. This will help DGS maintain up-to-date information on all types of vehicle records;
- Implementing a new driver safety and responsibility program planned to start this summer with all participating agencies;
- Continuing the review of high-mileage reimbursement to identify whether it is more economically feasible to assign a state vehicle;
- Improving communications with all agencies to ensure operators are acutely aware of and comply with state vehicle policies and driver responsibilities. This includes semi-annual planning meetings with all user agencies;
- Plans to rewrite this spring all vehicle-related management directives with the intent to develop a clear, uniform policy for all agencies.

“DGS recognizes the tremendous responsibility it has to assure the public that the fleet is well-run,” Secretary Creedon said. “To make this work, we will need the cooperation of all state agencies and others who use our fleet, including the offices of Auditor General, Attorney General, Treasury, the judiciary, and the General Assembly.”

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