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April 27, 2018

Nye County removed from fiscal watch by state *Northern Hospital District also taken off watch*

TONOPA, Nev. - Nye County and the Northern Nye County Hospital District were both released from fiscal watch Wednesday by the Nevada Director of Taxation following a recommendation from the Committee on Local Government Finance.

“It is gratifying to see the county rebound financially,” said Savannah Rucker, Nye County comptroller. “The release is not just due to the growth in the finances of the county but also largely due to the county commissioners making good financial decisions and making sure our long-term financial goals are met.”

Rucker said the county is projecting a strong ending fund balance for the fiscal year 2018, which ends June 30.

“This strong ending fund balance will allow for small and sustainable expenditure budget growth in 2019 to meet individual department needs while maintain a healthy fund balance,” she said.

In a letter dated April 25 recommending Nye County’s release from the fiscal watch, CLGF Chairman Marvin Leavitt stated the county had a willingness to work with the state that "resulted in sound local government.”

“(The) county has exhibited the willingness to improve their financial and statutory position, to move forward in pursuit of a solvent, viable county by following the Nevada Statutes and reporting regularly and on a timely basis, all required statutory reporting.”

The state issued a notice placing the county on fiscal watch status in February 2016. In the notice, the Nevada Department of Taxation said that in consultation with the Committee on Local Government Finance, identified several financial conditions that existed in Nye County and stated that these conditions are “serious enough” to warrant a fiscal watch status. A fiscal watch is low-level monitoring of the county's finances. The status creates greater cooperation and exchange information with the state including periodic appearances before the Committee on Local Government Finance.

The goal of a fiscal watch is to provide financial accountability and financial oversight and guidance in partnership with state, which Rucker said have helped the county.

“The experience has given us the ability to reestablish a healthy partnership with the state while building new relationships with state employees and committee members,” Rucker said. “Individual departments helped by closely evaluating their budgets and pinching pennies where available to help support our financial stability moving forward.”

Despite the close partnership with the state, the county was not under state control. “At no point in this process was the county at risk of the state coming in and taking over,” Rucker said. “We just needed some guidance.”

The Northern Nye County Hospital District, which was established in 2015, was put on fiscal watch to ensure that the District’s Board of Trustees spent the property tax dollars in accordance with state law.

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