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# Report Highlights

## Department of Veterans Affairs Joint Investigation



Audit Control #40150018  
Louisiana Legislative Auditor/Office of State Inspector General • January 2016

STEPHEN B.  
STREET, JR., CIG

### Why We Conducted This Audit

This audit was initiated after the Louisiana Legislative Auditor (LLA) and the State Office of Inspector General (OIG) received separate allegations involving actions occurring under the direction of now former Secretary David LaCerte at the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs (LDVA). LLA and OIG conducted a joint investigation as there were some areas of overlap in the allegations.

### What We Found

The preliminary results of our investigation identified the following issues, some of which remain under investigation by the OIG:

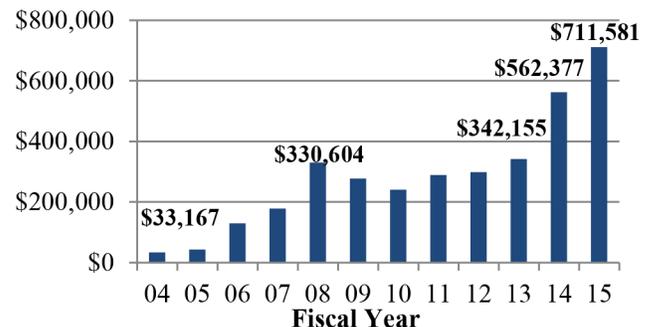
- LDVA paid \$44,128 to a company for improperly documented work without having a contract, as required by law.
- LDVA used \$27,560 in federal funds designated specifically for the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Cemetery in Slidell to purchase a Ford Expedition for use exclusively by headquarters' staff.
- LDVA employees failed to disclose information of potential crimes involving veteran residents at multiple War Veteran Homes.
- LDVA employees had \$19,414 in improperly authorized, advanced, and/or reimbursed travel expenses.
- LDVA did not properly budget for Veteran Service Office (VSO) operations, resulting in some parishes paying too much for services and others not paying enough.
- Former Secretary LaCerte engaged in questionable organizational, hiring, and pay practices that appear to have contributed to an environment with little accountability.
- The service record of former Secretary LaCerte does not support the military service cited in his biography posted on the LDVA website.

#### Travel Violations June 2013 through August 2015

Policy Violation	Amount	Violations
Travel not authorized	\$12,724	6
Travel advances given to ineligible employees	3,769	4
Lack of proper documentation	2,317	3
Reimbursed over allowable amounts	604	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$19,414</b>	<b>21</b>

**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor staff using information from different versions of PPM-49, which is the state's travel policies and procedures, and LDVA travel records.

#### Total Amounts Overcharged to Parishes for VSO Operations, Fiscal Years 2004-2015



**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using information from LDVA.

View the full report, including management's response, at [www.la.gov](http://www.la.gov).