



## State of Tennessee

Justin P. Wilson, State Comptroller

For Immediate Release: Feb. 27, 2013

### **Former Rockwood Employee Uses City Credit Card for Personal Expenses**

Investigators from the Comptroller's office have discovered that a former Rockwood city coordinator used a city credit card and a city store charge card to purchase at least \$32,725 in property and services for his personal benefit over a period of about three years.

These personal purchases included nearly \$12,000 in guns, ammunition and firearm accessories, more than \$7,000 in clothing, nearly \$6,000 for camera equipment, more than \$4,000 in online college tuition and nearly \$4,000 for other miscellaneous personal items.

An investigative audit released today details how the former coordinator, Tom Pierce, used the city credit card to purchase at least 11 guns, including a tactical shot gun, a .308 rifle, a .44 caliber revolver, and two 9 mm pistols. These guns were registered to Pierce personally, not on behalf of the city. He also used the city credit card to purchase holsters, rifle scopes, tactical sights and ammunition.

Additionally, Pierce used the city credit card to also purchase clothing for his personal benefit at a total cost of \$7,263. The clothing purchased includes polo shirts, cargo shorts, underwear, socks, women's jeans, suit separates and running shoes. Additionally, the report details how Pierce used the city credit card to purchase premium cameras and photography equipment costing at least \$5,697, including two Olympus cameras priced at more than \$1,200 each. Although the city owned various inexpensive digital cameras used by employees, both the current mayor and the former mayor told the Comptroller's investigators that they had no knowledge Pierce had purchased premium camera equipment at the city's expense.

According to the Comptroller's report, Pierce used the city credit card to charge business management courses totaling \$4,190 from an online college and also used the city credit card to purchase other personal items with a total value of \$3,675, which included protein powder, testosterone booster, digital music, books and movies.

Investigators determined that all of these charges were paid for with city funds. Both the current mayor and the former mayor told investigators that they had no knowledge Pierce had purchased

the personal items at the city's expense, either. They also indicated that they would not have given permission for the city to pay for such expenses.

“It is unacceptable for people in positions of public trust to abuse that trust at the expense of local taxpayers,” Comptroller Justin P. Wilson said. “I commend our investigators for helping to bring these issues to light. I also want to thank the district attorney and his staff for the work they have done on this case.”

This month, the Roane County Grand Jury returned a seven-count indictment against Pierce for theft, fraudulent use of a credit card and official misconduct.

To view the Comptroller's report online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/ia/>

To view photos of some of the personal items purchased with city funds, go to:  
<http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/repository/NR/20130227RockwoodReleasePictures.pdf>

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