



**Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller**

October 3, 2016

## **Former Wayne County Chief Deputy Stole Gas and Cash**

A special investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office in conjunction with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation has resulted in theft and forgery charges against former Wayne County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) Chief Deputy Gerald Baer. The investigation revealed that Baer used two schemes to steal at least \$7,700 dollars from the sheriff's office.

Mr. Baer stole at least \$3,440 by taking cash from WCSO's confidential drug funds. Mr. Baer used white-out, added signatures, and copied thumbprints on documents to conceal his theft. More than 100 documents were fabricated by Mr. Baer.

Additionally, investigators determined that Gerald Baer used a WCSO fuel card to make unauthorized purchases totaling at least \$4,283. Some of this gas was purchased in Florida during a trip to Walt Disney World. Furthermore, Mr. Baer, who also served as a City of Waynesboro alderman, made fuel purchases with the sheriff's office card while traveling on city business. Mr. Baer was then reimbursed by the city for the related mileage.

Mr. Baer admitted that he used the fuel card for his personal benefit and took money from the confidential drug funds. He stated he was financially stressed and used the money to pay his everyday living expenses.

Gerald Baer resigned after speaking with Comptroller investigators on May 18, 2016.

On September 29, 2016, Gerald Baer was indicted by the Wayne County Grand Jury on two counts of theft over \$1,000, 111 counts of forgery, and one count of official misconduct.

"Problems like these can be avoided with improved oversight and documentation," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "For example, one person should not be left alone to oversee the full administration of confidential drug funds. The risk of fraud is great. I am pleased to see the Sheriff indicate that he is correcting these problems."

To view the special investigation online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/ia/>

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