

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
**Office of the State Auditor**



Ralph Campbell, Jr.  
State Auditor

2 S. Salisbury Street, Raleigh, NC  
Mailing Address: 20601 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-0601  
Telephone: (919) 807-7500  
Fax: (919) 807-7647  
Internet <http://www.ncauditor.net>

---

**PRESS RELEASE**

---

For Immediate Release:

March 24, 2004

For additional information contact:

Ralph Campbell, Jr., State Auditor  
(919) 807-7500  
[rcampbel@ncauditor.net](mailto:rcampbel@ncauditor.net)

## Ports Authority incorrectly paid for CEO's trip to Gator Bowl, Auditor Campbell says in report

RALEIGH \_ The State Ports Authority incorrectly paid the expenses for its Chief Executive Officer to travel to the 2003 Gator Bowl in Jacksonville, FL, over the New Year's holiday, State Auditor Ralph Campbell said in an investigative audit released Wednesday.

Auditors also questioned the Chief Executive Officer's use of a state car while he was being paid \$500 per month as a car allowance to use his private vehicle, and personal purchases made by Ports Authority employees using Authority credit cards. The investigative audit was sparked by calls to the State Auditor's Hotline.

The Chief Executive Officer told auditors he made the Gator Bowl trip at the invitation of a railroad corporation official, and believed it would give him the chance to meet with shippers who potentially might use North Carolina's ports. The railroad corporation provided the Gator Bowl tickets, but the Ports Authority CEO and his two sons made the trip to Florida in a state car and charged their hotel room and other expenses to the Authority's credit card.

The CEO admitted the trip was "primarily pleasure" and a "freebie." In the wake of the audit, the Ports Authority said in its response, the CEO has repaid the expenses associated with the trip, which Authority officials had previously approved.

Auditors said the CEO should not be using a state vehicle while collecting a \$500 allowance for the use of his private car. Both the CEO and Authority officials said the car allowance was considered part of the CEO's salary, and had been included on tax statements. It will now be consolidated with his salary, the Authority said.

In addition, the Authority said use of its credit cards for personal purchases was forbidden under verbal rules, but would be put into a formal, written policy.



“Public institutions must always be careful that their expenses serve a public, not a personal, purpose to avoid even the appearance of misusing those funds,” Campbell said in releasing the report. “They should not be taking ‘pleasure trips’ or using agency credit cards for personal expenses. There should not be even the appearance that those things are happening.”

The report is available on-line at <http://www.ncauditor.net/EPSEWEB/EDSreportdetail.asp?RepNum=INV-2004-0266>.

Copies of the report may be obtained at the office’s web site at [www.ncauditor.net](http://www.ncauditor.net). Printed copies of the report can be obtained by filing a request under the Audits section of the web site or by calling the Office of the State Auditor at 919-807-7500.

