



News Release

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GOOD DECISIONS REQUIRE GOOD INFORMATION

(TORONTO) In his fifth Annual Report tabled today in the Legislative Assembly, Auditor General Jim McCarter stressed to the provincial government and its broader-public-sector partners the importance of having good information and using it to make decisions.

“On every value-for-money audit we conducted this year, we found areas where better information was needed to enhance and support decision-making and oversight,” McCarter said. “Not having good information increases the risk that the decisions made will not be the best ones. We also found examples where good information was available, but not used.”

The following are some examples where either better information was needed to support good decision-making, or good information was available but not used:

- The Ministry of Transportation did not use its driver database to identify and follow up on the reasons why new drivers who have a driver education certificate are more likely to be involved in a collision than those who don't.
- The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care needs better information from its community health-care partners to have assurance that the province is adequately prepared to respond if an infectious disease outbreak occurs.
- Limitations in the completeness of information received on the release of offenders from federal and provincial institutions has resulted in offenders not being recorded in Ontario's Sex Offender Registry.
- The Ministry of the Environment's information systems were not adequately identifying potential violations relating to the shipment and treatment of hazardous waste.
- About 75 fish, wildlife, and plant species are either facing imminent extinction or may no longer be found in Ontario, yet the Ministry of Natural Resources does not have adequate information on which critical habitats it needs to focus its efforts on.
- GO Transit needed to better utilize information on growth in ridership by rail corridors in order to more effectively address increasing delays and overcrowding.

- The timeliness of surgery can vary significantly depending on which hospital or where in Ontario the surgery is performed.
- Universities would be in a better position to identify potential savings if they had better information on space utilization and the costs of operating their facilities.

Other value-for-money audits included: the Archives of Ontario, the Centre of Forensic Sciences, the Community Accommodation Program, medication management in long-term-care homes, prescription drug programs, and retail sales tax.

“While experience and good judgment are important ingredients for good decision-making,” McCarter added, “having the right information at the right time is also crucial.”

The *2007 Annual Report* also includes a chapter detailing government advertising submitted to the Auditor General’s Office for review, including expenditure information, as well as chapters on the Public Accounts and follow-up reviews of audits done two years ago.

The Office of the Auditor General of Ontario is independent of government and its administration. This independence is an essential safeguard that enables it to fulfill its auditing and reporting responsibilities objectively. The Office provides information and advice that assists the Legislative Assembly in holding the government accountable for its stewardship of public funds.

For more information, please contact:

Jim McCarter
Auditor General
(416) 327-1326

Christine Peditas
Corporate Communications
(416) 327-2336

For more information and to view the full *2007 Annual Report*, please visit www.auditor.on.ca.