



**State of Louisiana**  
Office of the Governor  
Office of State Inspector General

January 20, 2010

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

BATON ROUGE -- Today, the State Inspector General issued a report concerning its investigation of the Grand Isle Port Commission and its Harbor Police Department.

The report details the investigation findings, which are listed below:

- 1) The Grand Isle Port Commission (the Commission) may have created and operated its Harbor Police Department without proper legislative authority. The information indicated that the Commission designated its Executive Director, Mr. Wayne Keller, as police chief. Mr. Keller issued badges to numerous individuals, many of them untrained as police, and proclaimed them reserve harbor police officers. These individuals were observed in public openly carrying firearms and displaying "harbor police" badges.
- 2) It was alleged that these individuals were conducting maritime law enforcement operations under the color of law, including boarding private recreational vessels while using a Grand Isle Fire Department (Fire Department) boat. The investigation determined that this vessel was a surplus Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) enforcement boat, still bearing the green vertical stripe of LDWF enforcement vessels and LDWF hull numbers. The boat was not properly registered after its purchase as surplus property from the State of Louisiana in 2007.

- 3) In addition to carrying firearms and badges, individuals acting on behalf of the Commission may have violated Louisiana law by operating a police car equipped with emergency lights, siren, and external markings of the "Grand Isle Harbor Police".
- 4) The Commission is duplicating services and maritime enforcement activities that are currently being provided by the Louisiana State Police, LDWF, the United States Coast Guard, the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office and the Grand Isle Police Department.
- 5) The Commission did not obtain general liability insurance to cover enforcement activities of the persons commissioned as officers and to protect the State of Louisiana, the Commission, and the taxpayers of Ward 11 from liability that may result from their actions.
- 6) None of the normally required procedures for screening and hiring of officers were used, resulting in the hiring of at least two individuals with prior criminal histories.
- 7) The Commission may be operating the marked police car and a marked patrol boat without proper registration and/or insurance. The general liability policy for the boat only covers Fire Department personnel who are performing Fire Department duties. While in the boat and police car, persons acting on behalf of the Commission may be conducting enforcement, rescue, and recovery operations without proper training and insurance policies in place.
- 8) Finally, the Commission issued badges to the persons it designated as officers. The badges are similar to those used by the Louisiana State Police, which are made in the shape of the State of Louisiana. Louisiana Revised Statute 40:1376 provides for the use of such badges by only a few, specifically enumerated agencies. The Commission is not one of those agencies.

Inspector General Stephen Street made a total of eight recommendations that, if implemented, would ensure compliance with existing Louisiana law and protect the State of Louisiana from significant liability.

To obtain the full report, follow this link:

<http://oig.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/reports/2010/CID-09-002.pdf>