

Federal audit rips Nev.'s Hardest Hit Fund contractor

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Millions of dollars meant to help distressed Nevada homeowners stay in their homes at the height of the recession were squandered by a state contractor on excessive rent, holiday parties, employee gift cards and other lavishness, according to a scathing federal audit released Friday.

The 60-page audit by the Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program said Nevada should reimburse the U.S. Treasury \$8.2 million for inappropriate expenses paid out of the state's Hardest Hit Fund.

"We did not find isolated incidents, or that waste was under certain leadership," Special Inspector General Goldsmith Romero said in a statement. "We found a pervasive culture of waste and abuse, coupled with a lack of performance."

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