

## State audit: Your highway tax dollars at work—not so fast

Written by Wauneta Breeze  
Thursday, 19 June 2014 00:00 -

---

**By Joe Jordan**

### Nebraska Watchdog

According to county records, he just might be the hardest working man in the state.

According to State Auditor Mike Foley, not so fast.

Foley says tips from “concerned citizens” led him to sparsely populated—just some 2,000 residents—Dundy County in Nebraska’s far southwest corner where the man in charge of the county’s roads has piled up “large amounts of overtime,” hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars that can’t be verified.

Foley’s three year examination found Dundy County Highway Superintendent Michael Edwards:

- Working holiday after holiday—Thanksgiving and Christmas included.
- Never calling in sick.
- Never taking a vacation.
- Working every day, except for one Sunday in March, for 7 straight months in 2013— that’s 208

## State audit: Your highway tax dollars at work—not so fast

Written by Wauneta Breeze  
Thursday, 19 June 2014 00:00 -

---

of 209 days without a break.

All that leaving Edwards picking up nearly as much in overtime as in regular pay. Here's that breakdown.

2012:

Pay for regular hours: \$34,156

Pay for OT hours: \$23,660

2013:

Pay for regular hours: \$36,660

Pay for OT hours: \$25,660

Total 2012-2013:

Pay for regular hours: \$70,816

## State audit: Your highway tax dollars at work—not so fast

Written by Wauneta Breeze  
Thursday, 19 June 2014 00:00 -

---

Pay for OT hours:      \$49,304

Between July 1, 2012, and February 28, 2014, ten of Edwards' employees earned 72 hours of OT. During that same stretch Edwards claimed 1,763 OT hours—24 times more than the highway department's other workers.

All these issues should be easily cleared up by the county's electronic time clock, after all Foley's audit says clocking in and out is "required under the employee handbook"—the only problem is that Edwards didn't, says Foley.

Why not? According to Foley, when he asked, Edwards told him a County Board member said he didn't have to clock in or out.

But Foley quickly adds, "There was no documentation to support this authorization from the Board."

The bottom line, according to Foley, "There was no way to determine or verify what hours were or were not worked by the Superintendent."

However, Foley's investigation does include some evidence—seemingly self-inflicted—that Edwards has played fast and loose with his sick-time and vacation hours.

From June, 2011 through March, 2014 Edwards never recorded using any sick or vacation days. But Facebook says otherwise.

## State audit: Your highway tax dollars at work—not so fast

Written by Wauneta Breeze

Thursday, 19 June 2014 00:00 -

---

In his report Foley notes a May 7, 2013, picture, posted by “the Superintendent’s spouse.” It’s apparently the couple walking hand-in-hand during a trip to Lake Dillon, Colo.

According to Foley, Edwards said he didn’t keep track of vacation or sick hours because he’d maxed out. Foley notes the hours matter because once a county worker quits, all the vacation days and a portion of the sick time, have to be paid out.

While Foley believes Dundy County needs to, at the very least, shore up its record keeping it’s not clear what’s next.

Foley says, “The Dundy County Board of Commissioners declined to respond.”

Nebraska Watchdog has been unable to reach Edwards for comment.