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Nitro's bookkeeping improves by leaps and bounds

By **Rusty Marks**, Staff writer, The Charleston Gazette

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- State auditors told Nitro city officials Thursday that they've come a long way in correcting problems with the city's finances and bookkeeping.

"They told me I got an F last time and a B-plus this time," said city Treasurer John Young.

Young, a local accountant, took over as Nitro's treasurer in November 2007. He inherited a legacy of scathing state audits that criticized the city's financial practices and recordkeeping. The official state audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2007 listed 19 problems with the city's books.

Auditors met with city officials on Thursday to talk about their latest audit findings before presenting the audit to the state. The audit covers the fiscal years ending June 30, 2008 and June 30, 2009.

Donna Skaggs, a field supervisor for the state auditor's office, told city officials that when auditors came to Nitro in 2007, they couldn't find enough documentation to properly do their jobs. Since Young took over, recordkeeping has gotten much better and the city's finances are well on their way to being in order, she said.

"It's a significant improvement to the way Nitro has been in the past," Skaggs said. "We have seen quite a bit of improvement for the city of Nitro."

Nitro Mayor Rusty Casto and other city officials give Young credit for straightening out the city's finances. Though auditors still found problems in six areas in the current audits, most of the problems were minor and almost all have been corrected.

Even the most recent audit includes financial activity and records from the time before Young took over the city's books. Young said he believes all of the problems will be worked out by the time state auditors are back in town.

Auditors look at a city's books every two years.

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