

***MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD  
OF  
MEDICAL LICENSURE***



***ANNUAL REPORT***

*June 30, 2008*

# **MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL LICENSURE**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**JULY 1, 2007 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2008**

The Mississippi State Board of Medical Licensure is the state's legally constituted licensure board for medical doctors (M.D.s), osteopathic doctors (D.O.s), podiatrists (D.P.M.s), physician assistants (P.A.s), and radiologist assistants (R.A.s). The Board is responsible for setting policies and professional standards regarding the practice of medicine and podiatric medicine; considering applications for licensure; conducting licensure interviews; investigating legitimate drug traffic among medical practitioners under the state's Uniform Controlled Substances Act; conducting hearings on disciplinary matters involving violations of the state's Medical Practice Act; and keeping up-to-date records on all licensed physicians, podiatrists, physician assistants, and radiologist assistants in the state.

The Board is composed of nine physicians (7 M.D.s and 2 D.O.s) appointed by the Governor, and meets bi-monthly.

The administrative functions of the Board are performed under the direction of its Executive Director, H. Vann Craig, M.D. Twenty-three full-time staff members consist of: two bureau directors; one division director; one licensing investigator supervisor; one staff officer I; one nurse IV; one licensing investigator II; five licensing investigator IVs; four projects officer IIs; one projects officer IV; one senior programmer analyst; one programmer analyst I; one senior systems administrator; one administrative assistant I; one administrative assistant II; and one administrative assistant III. The office of the Board is located at 1867 Crane Ridge Drive, Suite 200B, Jackson, Mississippi 39216.

## LICENSURE DIVISION

Any physician, podiatrist, physician assistant, or radiologist assistant desiring to practice medicine in Mississippi must first obtain a license to do so by completing an application for licensure. A medical doctor, osteopathic physician or podiatrist may apply for a license by utilizing the Board's online application system. All of the physician's application information can be entered online and then submitted to the Board with their electronic payment. Currently, physician assistants and radiologist assistants must download a manual application from the Board's website and submit it along with a check or a money order. Board staff begins processing the application once it has been received. Based upon the information given by the practitioner, a determination is made as to their eligibility for licensure. Queries are made to the American Medical, Osteopathic, or Podiatric Medical Associations; other states in which the practitioner is or has been licensed; National Practitioners Data Bank; Federation of State Medical Boards; and hospitals where the practitioner holds or has held staff privileges. This process takes from four to six weeks depending upon the amount of information to be submitted regarding the applicant. Upon completion of required information, the applicant is scheduled for a personal interview and jurisprudence examination. The Board performs background checks on all new licensees, with the exception of radiologist assistants. The background check is initiated when the applicant appears for the jurisprudence examination. The applicant's fingerprints are scanned into a database and submitted to the Mississippi Criminal Investigatory Center (CIC) who then forwards the prints onto the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). A report is then returned to the Board, usually within 48 hours. If

the report is returned with no record of action, then the physician is issued their Mississippi license number; however, if the report reveals an arrest history, additional information is requested and the issuance of the license is delayed.

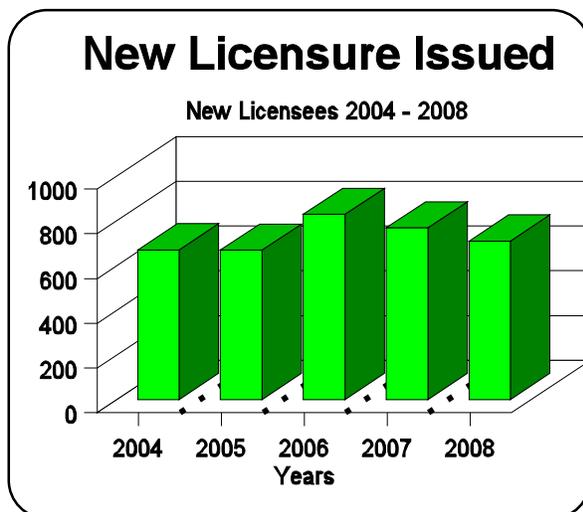


Figure 1.

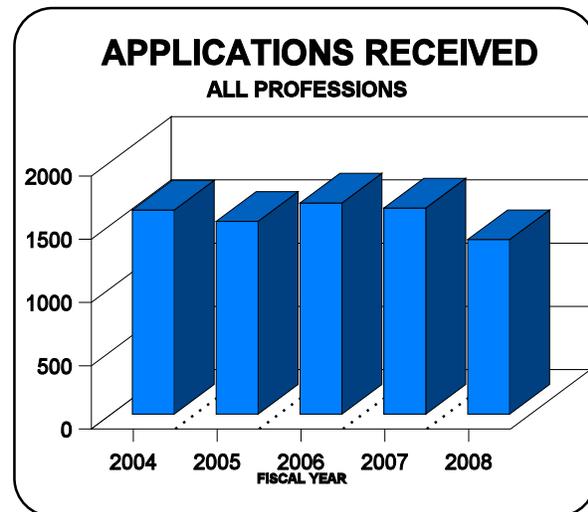


Figure 2.

During the year ending June 30, 2008, 1,380 applications for licensure were received by the Board. This number includes applications for medical licenses, physician assistant licenses and radiologic technologists permits. Of the 1,380 applications received, the Board issued 708 licenses and permits. As can be seen in Figures 1 and 2, there has been a slight decrease in licensure issued and a rather substantial decrease in applications received since fiscal year 2006. It is difficult to determine why the drastic decrease in these numbers. It appears that physicians are not applying for licensure in Mississippi; however, as will be seen later in the report, the number of physicians licensed in Mississippi has steadily increased over the last five years.

Physicians applying for hospital staff memberships or licensure in another state or jurisdiction request certifications/verifications to be sent to the designated entity. During

the year ending June 30, 2008, 1,114 certifications were submitted to other states and regulatory boards and 2,608 verifications were submitted to hospitals for credentialing purposes. As can be seen in Figure 4, there has been a slight decrease in certifications forwarded to other state entities since 2006. Hopefully, this represents the decrease in physicians relocating to another state. However, there has been a drastic increase in verifications requested by credentialing entities. This increase could be the result of teleradiology and telepathology. The Board has seen an infiltration of physicians requesting licensure in order to practice radiology and pathology from one central location. These physicians obtain licenses from every state; therefore, verifications are requested from entities all over the United States.

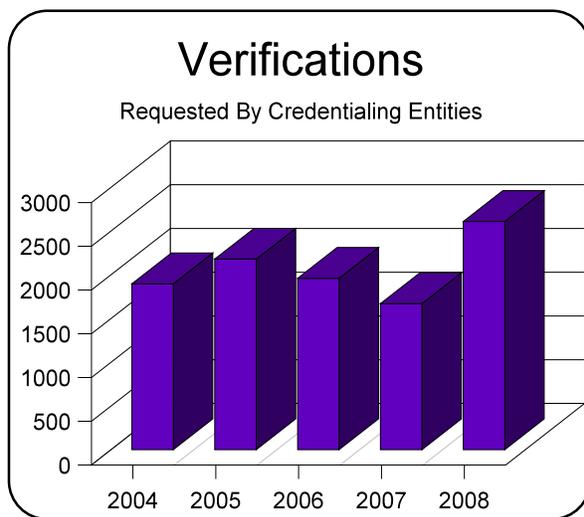


Figure 4.

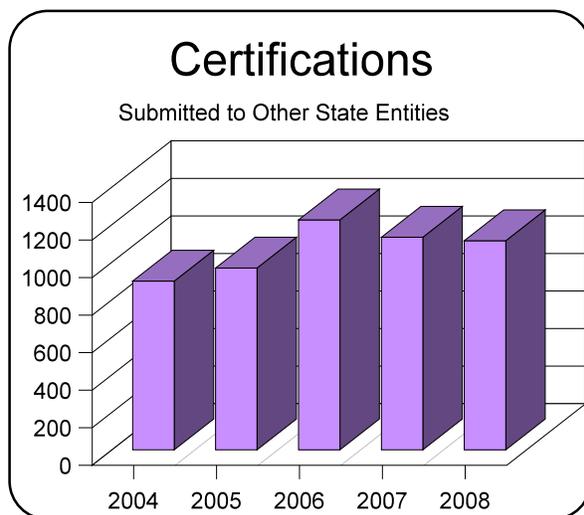


Figure 3.

During the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, the Board processed 8,656 annual renewals for Mississippi licenses and permits and 362 licenses were reinstated. The renewal process consists of Board staff mailing a notice of renewal to each currently licensed physician. Physicians are offered two ways in which to renew their medical

license. They may renew online or print a renewal form from the Board's website. If the physician submits a paper renewal form, Board staff opens and processes each renewal individually. The online renewal system allows physicians to access their renewal information via the Internet and lets them update and pay for their renewal without submitting any paperwork to the Board. At the end of July 2008, 89% of the Board's renewals had been processed online. The online renewal has greatly reduced the time staff has to process renewals and eliminated the Board's need to hire contract workers to assist in the process.

There are 8,784 currently licensed physicians in Mississippi. Of the 8,784 licensed physicians, 5,524 indicate that they are practicing medicine in Mississippi. Figure 5 shows that the overall number of physicians licensed in Mississippi has gradually increased over the last five years. Figure 6 shows a very slight increase of physicians practicing medicine in Mississippi since 2006.

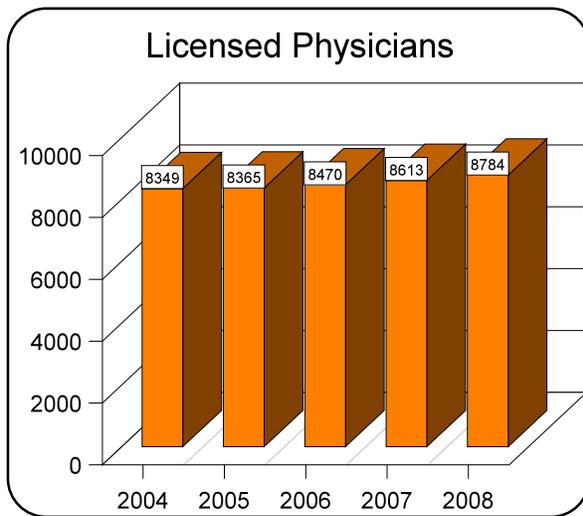


Figure 5.

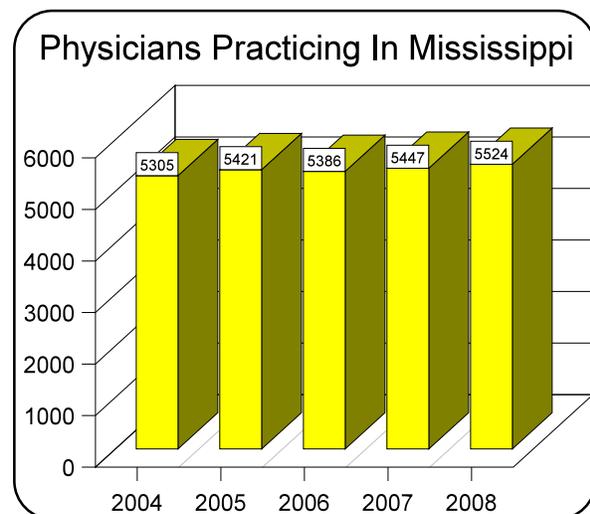


Figure 6.

In compliance with Mississippi Code (1972) Annotated, Section 41-58-1 through Section 41-58-5, the Licensure Division continued tracking continuing education requirements for radiologic technologists and others employed in a physician's office who perform x-rays under the specific direction of a physician. Radiologic technologist permits have been issued to those individuals whose certificate of completion of required courses has been forwarded to the Board of Medical Licensure. This requirement is an on-going process of the Licensure Division. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, the Board issued 109 radiologic technologist permits and renewed 179 permits.

Pursuant to Mississippi Code (1972) Annotated, Section 93-11-153, the Board of Medical Licensure has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Mississippi Department of Human Services to track and report to them the names of licensees licensed by this Board in order to assist in tracking professional licensees who are delinquent in child support. An updated report is presented to the Department of Health and Human Services on a monthly basis, or more often if requested to do so.

The Licensure Division responds to thousands of telephone calls each year from the public as well as other licensing/regulatory agencies regarding the status of a physician's license. The Licensure Division submits certified documentation of physician licensure information to other state boards upon request of the physician, and responds to requests for laws, rules and regulations pertaining to physicians in this state. The Licensure Division is responsible for filing all rules and regulations of the Board with the office of the Secretary of State in compliance with the Administrative Procedures Act, and issues a printed copy of the laws, rules and regulations governing the practice of physicians to all new licensees at the time of their interview for licensure. Physicians are also able to download licensure

requirements, laws, rules and regulations, application packets, past newsletters and statistical information from the Board's web site at [www.msbml.state.ms.us](http://www.msbml.state.ms.us). Figures 7 through 10 represent some of the statistical data available via the Board's website.

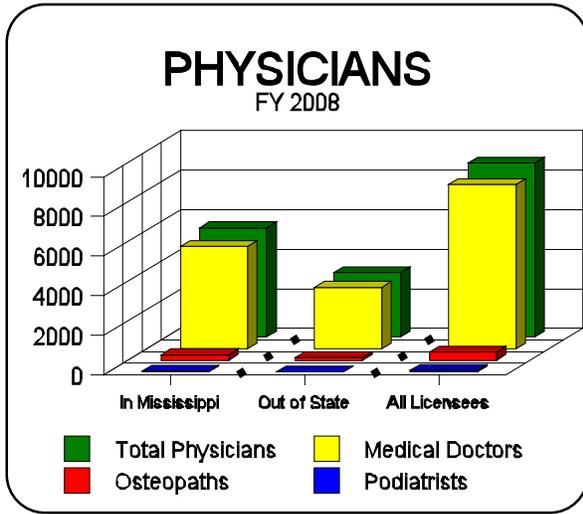


Figure 7.

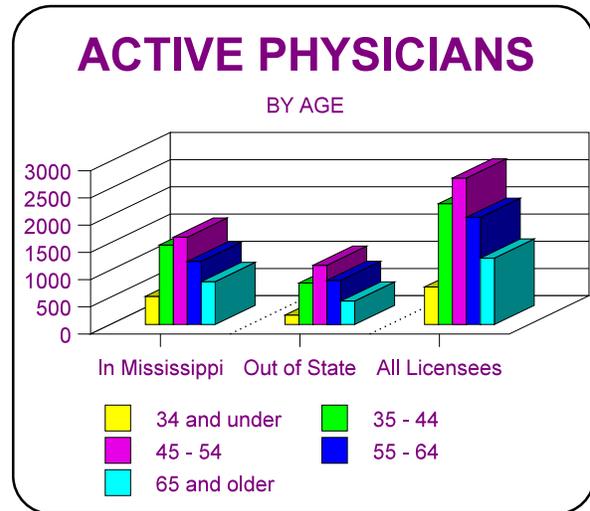


Figure 8.

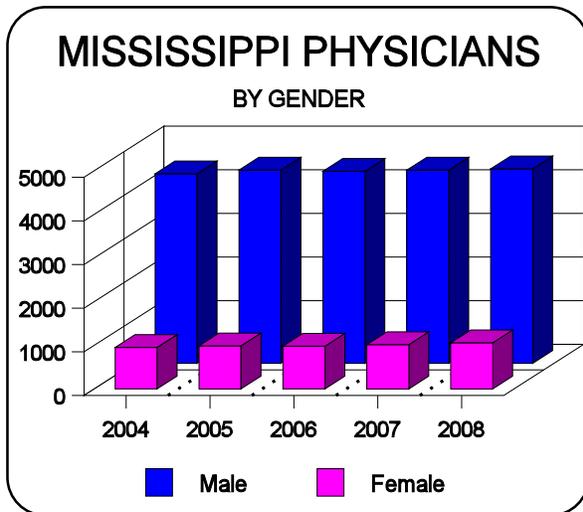


Figure 9.

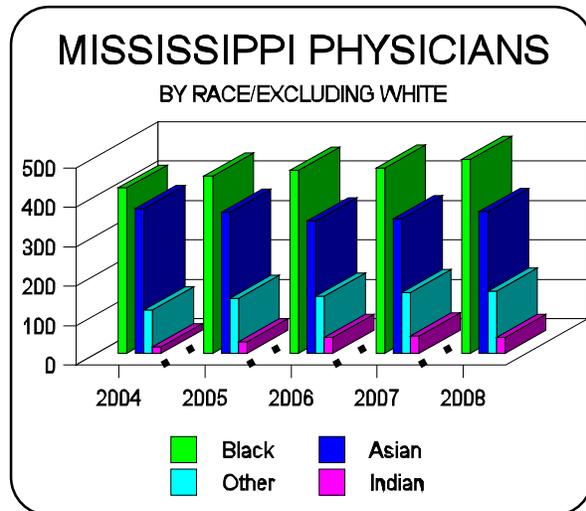


Figure 10.

## INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION

Under the direction of the Executive Director, the Investigative Division of the Board carries out the responsibilities of investigating violations of the Medical Practice Act and the Mississippi Uniform Controlled Substances Act as it applies to physicians, podiatrists and physician assistants.

The Investigative Bureau Director has supervisory responsibility for seven field investigators (three of whom work in decentralized offices in the northern and southern areas of the state), one nurse inspector (nurse IV), one special projects officer, and one administrative assistant. The field investigators conduct pharmacy profiles and monitor the “legitimate” or pharmaceutical drug traffic among physicians, podiatrists, and physician assistants. Such pharmacy profiles serve to help determine if a licensee of the Board is prescribing suspicious quantities of controlled substances and to help identify possible unlawful diversions of drugs by “doctor shopping” patients and other suspicious circumstances, such as when a licensee prescribes controlled substances for themselves or family members.

In addition to prescribing profiles, investigators are responsible for making inquiries concerning all valid complaints of violations of the Medical Practice Act or Rules and Regulations of the Board. These complaints may involve prescribing issues, professional boundary violations, competency questions, practicing medicine and/or assisting an unlicensed person to practice medicine, or compliance violations of existing board orders. Upon determination of need to pursue disciplinary action, Board investigators assist the

Board's complaint counsel in case preparation. Further, investigators often assist other state and federal regulatory or law enforcement agencies in investigations involving licensees of the Board.

During the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, the Investigative Division received and processed 333 complaints (Figure 11). On average, it took ninety calendar days to close or refer complaints that did not proceed to adjudication. Regarding these complaints, the Board rendered twenty-four actions (Figure 13), of which twenty resulted in formal disciplinary action and four were non-disciplinary in nature.

The investigative staff made 668 field/office visits to various entities, including visits to hospitals, physicians' offices, law enforcement offices, pharmacies, homes of patients, witnesses, etc., when conducting investigations. In addition to the aforementioned field/office visits for investigative purposes, there were twenty-two visits made to physicians to monitor compliance with board orders, Board Rules and Regulations, prescribing laws, etc.

Part of the investigative process entails written correspondence between the physician, the complainant and the Board. The investigative staff, with the oversight of the Executive Director, formulated and mailed 129 letters to complainants and 283 letters to physicians advising of the status of the complaint and/or the resolution of the matter, when appropriate.

During crucial parts of some investigations, there were six Administrative and Inspection Search Warrants served upon physicians in order to compel the production of patient medical records.

The Board entered into fifteen non-disciplinary recovery contract agreements with licensees participating in the Mississippi Professionals Health Program (MPHP). The investigative staff collected 195 random urine specimens from these participants as part of their monitoring process with the Board. Although most licensees enter the recovery program on a voluntary basis, the Investigative Division was responsible for referring seven licensees to this program. Some licensees are monitored when there are competency questions regarding their clinical skills, or a mental or physical disability which would impede or prohibit their ability to safely practice. When such questions arise, the Board refers these individuals to an examining committee of the Mississippi State Medical Association for evaluation purposes. The Board made ten such referrals.

The Investigative Division's Special Projects Officer received and processed ninety-five requests for license verifications and certifications; fifty-nine public record requests; composed and mailed fifteen letters in regards to licensees' compliance with the MPHP; and drafted eight consent orders for consideration by licensees in violation of previous board orders, Board rules and regulations, the Medical Practice Act, etc.

During FY 2008, the nurse inspector began the review of all collaborative practice files of physicians and nurse practitioners operating free standing clinics (clinics more than fifteen miles away from the primary offices of the supervising physicians) in the state of Mississippi. The nurse inspector reviewed 131 free standing clinics files. Twelve free standing clinics files were deleted due to the physicians retiring or failure to renew their medical licenses. Fifty-five free standing clinics were confirmed to be in operation in Mississippi. These figures do not include the clinics that are under the Mississippi Department of Health and the Department of Mental Health. There were five new

applications processed and approved for collaborative practices in free standing clinics. The nurse inspector made eleven site visits to clinics to review the collaborative agreements between physicians and nurse practitioners per Board regulation Chapter 09 Collaboration/Consultation with Nurse Practitioners.

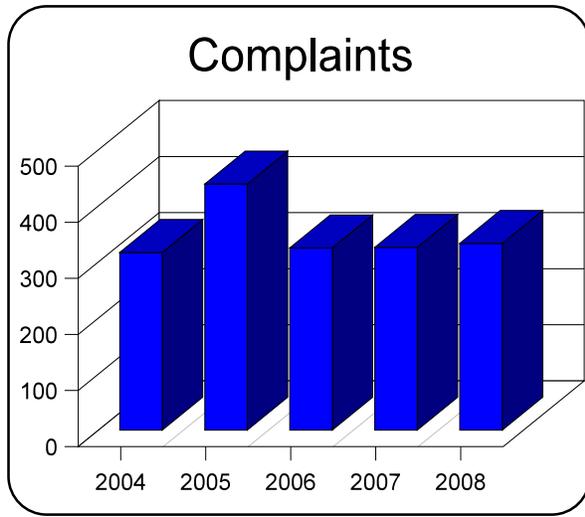


Figure 11.

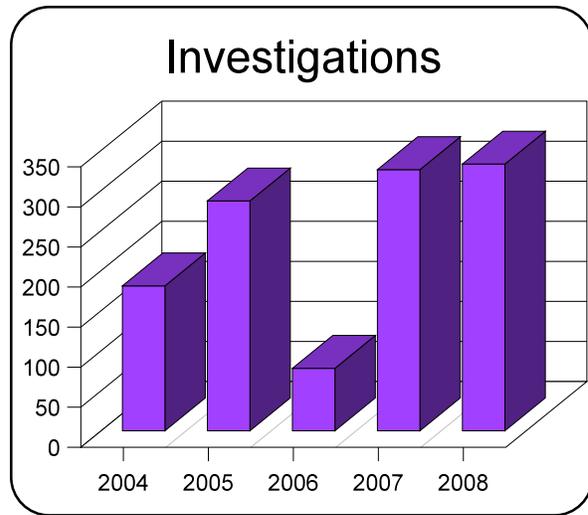


Figure 12.

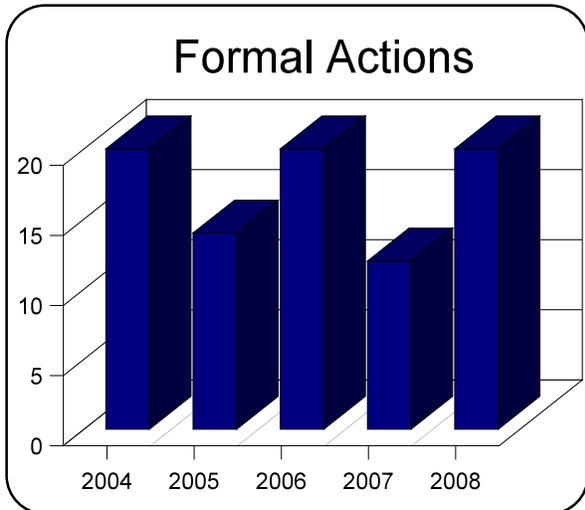


Figure 13.

## **INCOME AND EXPENSES**

All income for the Board is derived from fees collected for the annual renewal of licenses, applications for licensure, USMLE Step 3 licensure examinations, radiological technology permits, certifications of license to other states, investigative recovery costs, copy costs and various small fees relating to licensure. Expenses are shown for major object codes as reflected on budget request for fiscal year ending June 30, 2008. Attached is a report of the FY 2008 income and expenses for the Board of Medical Licensure.

**Mississippi State Board of Medical Licensure**  
**Fiscal Year 2008 Income and Expenses**  
As of August 31, 2008

<u>Category</u>	<u>Budget Allotment</u>	<u>Current Y-T-D Total</u>	<u>Encumbered</u>	<u>Unoblig Allotment Balance</u>	<u>Percent Unused</u>
Personal Services					
Salaries	1,318,508.00	1,157,435.00		161,073.00	12.22%
Travel	28,000.00	20,807.00		7,193.00	25.69%
Contractual Services	679,474.00	556,767.00	0.00	122,707.00	18.06%
Commodities	70,600.00	39,892.00	0.00	30,708.00	43.50%
Equipment	40,795.00	32,556.00	0.00	8,239.00	20.20%
Subsidies, Loans and Grants	<u>200,000.00</u>	<u>197,975.00</u>		<u>2,025.00</u>	<u>1.01%</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,337,377.00</b>	<b><u>2,005,432.00</u></b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b><u>331,945.00</u></b>	<b>14.20%</b>

Revenue Collected in 2008:	2,155,222.00
- Y - T - D Expenditures:	<u>2,005,432.00</u>
2008 Balance	<u><u>149,790.00</u></u>

