

USM Athletics Being Audited by IHL

Recent Accusations of Financial Mismanagement Prove Too Much for IHL to Ignore

The *Hattiesburg American's* higher education reporter Ed Kemp [explained on](#) 4-May-2012 that the USM athletics department is now facing an audit of its finances as a result of interim athletics director Jeff Hammond's [recent revelation](#) that the auxiliary is more than \$1 million in the hole. As IHL commissioner Hank Bounds noted, "[w]e are looking at the financial status of the [USM] athletic department," a review that Bounds explained was prompted by recent reports of [a large deficit](#). According to Bounds, "[w]hen that happens, you don't have any choice but to make sure that every dollar is accounted for."



Sources tell USMNEWS.net that commentary on Kemp's report from Jay Stevens, which is inserted above, is remarkably astute when it comes to describing events in and around USM's athletics department these days. According to Stevens, who is an accountant, "[i]n retrospect, that trip to Hawaii [for the [2011 Sheraton](#) Hawaii Bowl [against](#) Nevada] looks like the DUMBEST mistake that the USM PRESIDENT had to [have] given the ok to . . . they shouldn't have agreed to allow [former USM football coach Larry] Fedora to take the football PROGRAM to Hawaii." Here, Stevens suggests that the \$1 million deficit can be directly linked to USM's decision to go to Hawaii instead of a closer-to-Hattiesburg bowl game, like the one in Texas against historic college football power Penn State that USM turned down. Sources tell USMNEWS.net that Stevens is probably on point, and they also add that the Southeastern Conference's stipulation that the C-USA football champion cede its spot in the Liberty Bowl (in Memphis) under certain situations, one of which occurred in 2011, likely resulted in a \$500,000 difference in USM's 2011 bowl revenue. This, according to sources, coupled with the added distance between Memphis and Honolulu, likely caused the \$1 million overall shortfall.