2013 ANNUAL REPORT



THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE

MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICE

... in cooperation with the Tennessee Municipal League





On the cover:
Chattanooga, TN

From the Executive Director…

Jim Thomas,
Executive Director



DEAR TENNESSEE TOWN AND CITY FRIENDS,

LAST YEAR SEEMED to swiftly pass by and now here we are in the spring of 2014 as you read this annual report. Sometimes it's good to slow down a minute and reflect on the recent past. What were some of this year's highlights as well as lowlights? What accomplishments were achieved…and which ones are still being worked toward? It was busy at MTAS in 2013, as I'm sure it also was in your city hall. You'll read about many of the 2013 MTAS accomplishments in this report.

We said goodbye to our friend and coworker when Tess Davis passed away in June. We said, "Congratulations" and "Don't forget us" when long-time MTAS legal consultant Sid Hemsley graduated to retirement in September. But we also welcomed some new folks…folks whose talents and skills deepened the MTAS knowledge pool… the pool we pull from to provide services to you, our customers.

Macel Ely joined MTAS to direct its training program. Cyndy Edmonds brought her skills to help grow MTAS's online training program. Kelley Myers became part of the codes team as its coordinator. John Crawford joined us to provide marketing services for the training and benchmarking programs. Karen Blake joined the training team as a municipal court specialist. Honna Rogers and Jeff Broughton joined the MTAS municipal management consulting team. And while not a new MTAS employee, legal consultant Stephanie Allen was promoted as the legal consultant program manager. Some of these names are familiar to you and a few may not be. Regardless, you can count on these newcomers - and all of MTAS - to effectively meet your expectations.

In 2013, the MTAS training program experienced a "new day" in responding to comments you provided. More courses on more topics delivered in more locations and in more ways. You have told us what your training needs are and we're working to meet your expectations. I hope you'll go to the MTAS website and look at the 2014 catalog of all training courses, including traditional face-to-face classes and online courses.

While measured on a fiscal year basis, our municipal management, legal, financial and technical consultants ended calendar year 2013 on an activity pace greater than the past three years responding to the activities and projects in which you engaged us. In 2013, the top three topics you engaged MTAS in were 1.) Legal; 2.) Human Resources; and 3) Finance and Accounting.

Along with the other Institute for Public Service agencies, MTAS continued its activities in the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence evaluation program. In 2012, MTAS achieved the second of four levels in the program – the Commitment Award. During 2013, nine MTAS staff members collaborated with staff from the other IPS agencies to begin crafting the application for the next level in the program – the Achievement Award. It will be submitted in June 2014, and an onsite visit by an evaluation team will occur in September. The report of the team is expected in December.

Financially, MTAS is like many of its town and city customers. We continue to enjoy a slight strengthening of our revenue streams; however, we continue to closely monitor expenses and ended FY2013 (June 30, 2013) adding slightly to reserves. At the midpoint of FY2014 (December 31, 2013), MTAS was below budget on expenses and on budget for revenues.

While we do it in slightly different ways, MTAS joins our town and city customers in serving the citizens of Tennessee. Your citizens expect your very best and you work long and hard to meet those expectations. It's a privilege and a pleasure for us to serve with and alongside you. Use us as if we were sitting in your city hall. Tell us what you need…and don't be bashful about telling us when we've fallen short. That, too, helps us better serve you. Thank you for giving us that opportunity.

BEST REGARDS!



delivering solutions



Clarksville Parks and Rec – Good to Great

IN EARLY 2013, the city of Clarksville Parks and Recreation Department decided to embark on strategic planning in order to gain a better focus on the direction and scope of services that the department wanted to provide to the community. The process facilitated by MTAS set the goals and objectives of the department moving forward with programs, activities and facility development.

As part of the process, the department asked MTAS to facilitate a staff retreat. The retreat focused on how to move the department from "Good to Great" and helped staff develop a more directed approach in the community. As part of the city's strategic planning effort Gary Jaeckel, MTAS municipal management consultant, facilitated a two-day staff retreat with the entire department. Over the two days, the Clarksville parks employees and the management team discussed what it would take to move their organization from a good organization to a great parks and recreation department.



The work done at the retreat focused on identifying the core functions of the department and what programs furthered the improvement of those core functions. The result of the retreat included the identification of a number of programs, goals and objectives that the department would undertake in order to become recognized as a great parks and recreation department in Tennessee.





MTAS Assisting with Critical New Hires Through Assessment Centers

A panel of experts in the Spring Hill assessment center try to find the right candidate to serve as the new fire chief.

ONE OF THE SERVICES that MTAS offers to cities in Tennessee is a recruitment and selection tool known as an Assessment Center. At an Assessment Center, candidates for a management-level position perform a series of exercises designed to evaluate the candidate's skills and abilities to perform that job for the particular city. As a part of the process candidates participate in structured interviews with a panel of local government managers and supervisors from various communities. The structured interviews and other aspects of the Assessment Center provide cities with a very detailed process to evaluate the skills and abilities of individual candidates. This past year MTAS trained more of our consultants in the methods of conducting an Assessment Center.

The results of that training paid off during 2013, as we facilitated three separate Assessment Centers for three different communities. The city of McKenzie, in West Tennessee, asked for assistance in finding its next police chief. The city of Signal Mountain agreed to utilize the process to assist in identifying its next city manager. Finally, the city of Goodlettsville requested MTAS conduct an Assessment Center, for the third time, to assist the city in identifying qualified individuals for the fire department's newly created position of assistant fire chief.

With each Assessment Center, a team of MTAS consultants worked to identify each community's needs and position requirements. With that knowledge, MTAS was able to build an Assessment Center that was tailored to the needs of that community. Utilizing a panel of local government experts, who had been trained on how to conduct the MTAS Assessment Center, MTAS was able to successfully identify qualified candidates as each city moved forward

Knoxville Looks to Improve Parking in Central Business District



IN FEBRUARY OF 2013, MTAS consultants Sharon Rollins and Margaret Norris embarked on a parking study for the city of Knoxville. The two were joined by political science graduate student Ellen LoCurto-Martinez. They hit the streets in the central business district downtown (a 65-block area) and counted the number of parking spaces. They looked at the number of free parking spaces, handicap spaces, passenger loading zones, metered spaces and their costs, the number of loading zones and their time limitations, and the number of spaces reserved for the police department.

In addition to the count, the trio was asked to study best practices and provide research on the pros and cons of different parking and collection systems, appropriate levels of parking inventory and availability, appropriate time allotment for loading zones, and options on parking enforcement.

In the team's 89-page report, it provided a synopsis of the benchmarking research, a summary of the count, and a map of each of the 65 blocks. This map included photos of signage within that block and a detailed count of the metered, free, commercial loading, passenger loading, and police parking spaces. In addition, each map described signage for each quarter of the block, including times and fines for specified parking such as one two-hour handicap space with a $100 fine violation and four commercial loading spaces from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Monday through Friday. Knoxville's central business district is experiencing a renaissance, and the need of the city to understand the parking availability in the district reflect that growth and change.



MTAS Helps Develop Two New Fire Stations

THE CITY OF LAVERGNE was considering options on providing fire protection for the community, and MTAS provided technical assistance to assist the city in making the decision to purchase the LaVergne Fire Department, Inc. for $4 million in December 2013. Previously, the city contracted for fire services with LaVergne Fire Department, Inc. The city received three fire stations, vacant land on Old Nashville Highway for a future station, an engine, two ladder trucks, a tower ladder truck, a pump truck, and a rescue vehicle. The city's goal is to improve the level of fire protection in the community to better serve current residents, and attract commercial development through a lower (better) ISO rating, which translates to lower premiums for property insurance.

In December 2011, the city of Mt. Juliet enlisted MTAS for assistance in studying the feasibility of starting a municipal fire department and assuming responsibility from Wilson County for fire and related services in Mt. Juliet. Wilson County provided these services since 1986, when Mt. Juliet ceased operating its own fire department. MTAS completed a comprehensive study and provided assistance with organization overview, fire department management, planning for fire protection and EMS services, personnel management, staffing, fire suppression/EMS delivery systems, training programs, facilities, apparatus and equipment, proposed budgets, and a plan of implementation. MTAS facilitated the interview process for fire chief, and in March 2013 the city hired its first fire chief in 25 years. The city hired firefighters, purchased fire apparatus, built a second fire station, and began providing fire and EMS response in July 2013.

TREEDC EXTENDS ITS MISSION AT HOME AND ABROAD



TREEDC embarked on its International Exchange Program, which was designed to link Tennessee cities and schools with their counterparts in other countries to help connect Tennessee to the rest of the world.

LAST YEAR WAS a very a productive and exciting one for the Tennessee Renewable Energy & Economic Development Council (TREEDC). Due to its strong worldwide network of 96 city and county mayors, 30 colleges/ universities and key partners, TREEDC was able to continue to build upon its mission of promoting and connecting renewable energy with economic development for all communities and schools. TREEDC was instrumental in facilitating new innovative waste to energy projects for the city of Covington and Wamplers' Sausage in Lenoir City. The TREEDC mayors also were involved in the facilitation of many solar projects, installation of compressed natural gas stations and energy efficiency for member cities. Former University of Tennessee President Emeritus Dr. Joe Johnson continues to serve as chairman of TREEDC and Ducktown Mayor James Talley serves as president.





TREEDC started several new initiatives in 2013. The mayors implemented a statewide elementary school energy education program and partnered with the University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service (IPS), Pathway Lending and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) to conduct a series of educational forums across the state. TREEDC also partnered with the Tennessee Energy Industry Construction Consortium (TEICC) to help advance awareness for careers in renewable energy for high school students across the state. The TREEDC mayors continued to assist the Tennessee Valley Authority with its integrated resources plan and outreach efforts. The TREEDC mayors also reached out to renewable energy stakeholders in Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Minnesota, Mississippi and Minnesota to provide technical guidance in replicating a similar public-private partnership in renewable energy.

TREEDC embarked on its international exchange program, which was designed to link Tennessee cities and schools with their counterparts in other countries to help connect Tennessee to the rest of the world. Several TREEDC business members were afforded the opportunity to showcase their technologies in the Philippines. Six Philippine municipalities and 10 universities became members of TREEDC and were matched with sister cities and colleges in Tennessee. TREEDC also worked with Vis Solis of Franklin to provide relief aid to Yolanda typhoon victims. All in all, it was quite an eventful 2013 for TREEDC.

building partnerships



Shawn Lindsey, city of Athens public works director, presents the refuse and recycling service area report-back at the FY2013 Data Cleansing meeting.

TMBP Scores Big Gains in Growth

The MTAS Tennessee Municipal Benchmarking Project has experienced another year of spectacular growth and renewed energy, as participation in our performance management consortium continues to attract Tennessee cities. Success stories include:

- Participation has grown with seven new cities joining the project in 2013. The new cities cover the state from east to west, both small and large. In the past year, we gained Paris and Martin in West Tennessee; Springfield, Spring Hill, and Tullahoma in Middle Tennessee, and Sevierville in East Tennessee. We also picked up another urban jurisdiction with Murfreesboro's re-entry into the project. In 2013, project memberships stood at 21 cities, meeting the target goal set last year, and doubling the size of the project from just two years ago.
- Our new cities added an enormous amount of energy to the project and are excited about the prospects for collaboration with other cities as a result of participation. TMBP brought out 140 city participants to its largest ever data cleaning meeting in December of 2013. Murfreesboro hosted the meeting at its Patterson Community Center location, and service area committees engaged more actively in performance measurement discussions than ever before.
- Data collection and reporting activities continued to expand. The annual report doubled in size last year, nearing 300 pages of displayed data. We added two new service areas for data collection in 2013. Parks and recreation and information technology now have lively working groups and have completed their first year of data collection. And pursuing the goal of increasing discussions of best practices, TMBP staff published research this year regarding best practices in codes enforcement and other areas.
- The performance measurement software acquisition process moved forward significantly. MTAS leadership approved funds for the 2014 fiscal year to purchase a new data management platform. Project staff worked with the university purchasing department to draft a request for proposal to acquire this much-needed resource. The TMBP steering committee and other key city participants are fully on board with this enhancement.

Spring Hill Finance Director Jim Smith best articulated the value of the project for cities saying: "The city of Spring Hill is excited to join the other benchmarking cities this year. We see this as an integral part of analyzing trends in various departments and comparing our results with our sister cities to glean new ways to become a high-performing city." TMBP prioritizes building partnerships and dialog among our cities to showcase their excellent work.



QUICK STATS

5,201
# of Municipal Participants in 2013 MTAS Training

23,775
# of Training Hours Successfully Completed in 2013

304
# of Training Courses Offered in 2013

MTAS Training Thrives In 2013: New Faces And New Programs



The MTAS Training program experienced great growth during 2013. During its first quarter alone, MTAS added a new training program manager with the hiring of Dr. Macel Ely. The department later welcomed its first-ever online training specialist, Cyndy Edmonds, and a municipal court clerk specialist Karen Blake to its team.

Among the many accomplishments for the year was a more than 32 percent increase in training programs offered to municipalities from the previous calendar year. Participation rates also increased dramatically in several training programs including: the Elected Officials Academy (EOA), the Municipal Administration Program (MAP), and the Municipal Management Academy (MMA). The Certified Municipal Financial Officer (CMFO) Program continued to thrive in 2013 with an additional 63 municipal employees successfully graduating from CMFO, now boosting/increasing the program's number of graduates to over 400 across the state.

The MTAS training program introduced a first of its kind online training certificate program for municipal government employees specializing in the areas of administrative professionalism, managerial essentials and human resources.

The year concluded with the introduction of a fully detailed training course catalog for 2014 offering municipal employees the opportunity to choose from a wide variety of professional development opportunities for the upcoming year. The catalog included course topics with dates and locations, as well as course descriptions and the types of professional credits offered for each course. (Note: the course catalog can be found on the MTAS Home Page.) http://mtas.tennessee.edu/Training/Catalog/2014-MTAS-TrainingCatalog.pdf

developing the organization



Strategic Development of the MTAS Workforce

AS PART OF DEVELOPING the MTAS workforce, professional development is critical to being able to serve cities to our fullest capacity. MTAS, as well as the University of Tennessee, fully supports employees in obtaining professional development. In fact, the university strongly encourages all employees to complete a minimum 32 hours of continuing education each year. As an agency of the university, MTAS is committed to 100 percent of its employees completing the 32 hours and in 2013, 100 percent of employees met this goal.

How we recruit and retain new employees has received attention in the form of a more streamlined hiring process and an overhaul of the new employee onboarding process.

MTAS Assistant Director Rick Whitehead led a staff committee in the task of updating the annual performance review process for all MTAS employees. In the review, staff looked at how performance reviews align with the MTAS strategic plan, the UT Scorecard as well as ways to simplify the process.

As one example of the ongoing interest in improving our ability to deliver services to cities, the staff of the Research and Information Center participated in a one-day Myers-Briggs Type Inventory class. Team members gained an understanding of each other's work styles to be able to work together even more efficiently as they provide a great diversity of assistance to customers.

strategic plan

2012-2017

MISSION *As an agency of the University of Tennessee and in collaboration with the Tennessee Municipal League, we leverage the resources of the university to improve the lives of the people of Tennessee with technical consulting, research and training for municipal governments.*

VISION MTAS is the resource for cities, towns and state agencies on municipal services and issues in Tennessee. We provide unsurpassed technical expertise on municipal government in the state and in the nation with the quality and cost savings of a centralized source of service. We assist cities and towns with the training and information necessary to support informed decisions, and we develop valuable solutions to the issues and concerns facing these communities. We combine the talents of a passionate, experienced and well-trained staff with the resources of a major university to support excellence in municipal government.

Goal 1: Deliver solutions that address current and emerging issues facing Tennessee municipalities.

Goal 2: Support and strengthen partnerships with TML, state and federal agencies university-based agencies and other entities that support local governments.

Goal 3: Identify and work to meet the unique needs of Tennessee cities.

Goal 4: Develop an organization capable of delivering the vision.

VALUES **Integrity**: Our actions and relationships are guided by an internal sense of honesty and integrity. We believe that these values are often defined by our respect, trust, inclusiveness and compassion for each other and for those we serve.

Commitment to Customers: We are experts with the broadest expertise on municipal government in Tennessee, and our passion is for good and effective local government and local government employees in this state.

Professionalism: We are problem solvers. We understand municipal issues and we promote the spirit of discovery on our staff and in our cities.

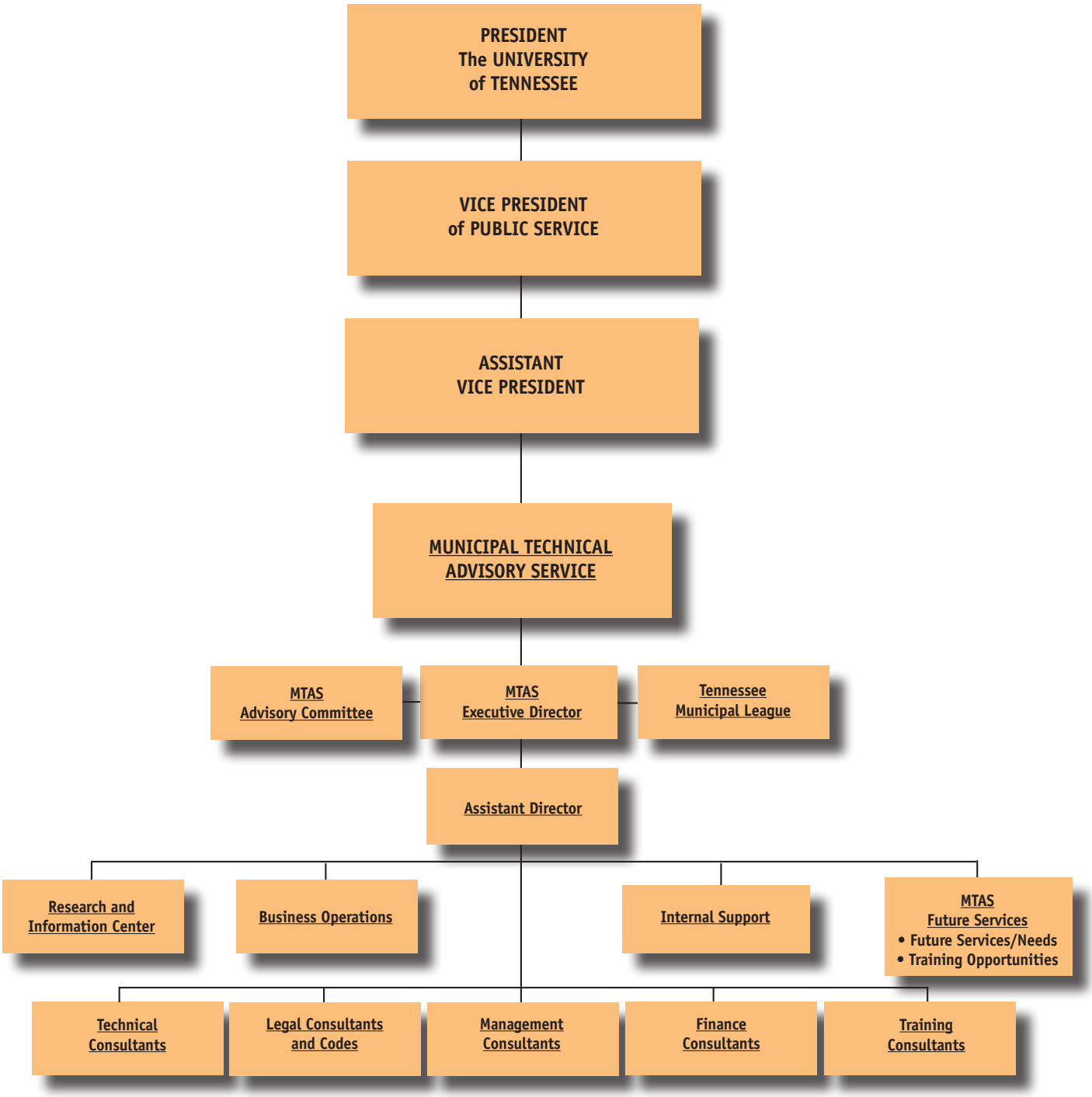
SCORECARD 2013 for MTAS

Economic Impact	$10,400,000
Activities and Projects Completed for Cities	7,652
Customers Participating in MTAS Training	4,359
Total Hours of Training Delivered	23,108
Training Courses Offered	304

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ORGANIZATIONAL CHART







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MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICE

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The Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) is a statewide agency of the University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service. MTAS operates in cooperation with the Tennessee Municipal League to provide technical assistance services to officials of Tennessee's incorporated municipalities. Assistance is offered in areas such as accounting, administration, finance, public works, ordinance codification, and water and wastewater management.