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Municipal E-News

Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS)

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Municipal E-News: Issue 52: October 2013

MTAS

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MTAS Municipal E-News

OCTOBER 2013 • ISSUE 52

CITY SPOTLIGHT:

SPARTA

White County

Middle Tennessee

2012 Population: 4,925

Municipal Management Consultant

Warren Nevad

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CLASS LISTINGS AND INTERACTIVE TRAINING CALENDAR

Mark your calendar! MTAS training events and conferences are listed here along with information and how to register for upcoming training events on your Solution Point account. [READ](#)

RESEARCH/INFORMATION CENTER NEW MATERIALS

MTAS' Research and Information Center is always adding new materials to its collection. See what's new for this month. [READ](#)

PAST ISSUES OF THE MUNICIPAL E-NEWSLETTER

[READ](#)

WITH AN EYE TOWARD THE ELECTED OFFICIAL...

While the bulk of services MTAS provides to city governments don't distinguish between the elected official and the professional municipal practitioner, one training program is focused on and dedicated strictly to the elected official. [READ](#)

COMING SOON! A PREVIEW OF TWO MTAS PUBLICATIONS IN THE WORKS

We will provide more extensive analysis on these two topics in the near future but we wanted to alert you to keep an eye out for these publications in your inbox.

[READ](#)

MTAS CONDUCTS STATEWIDE SESSIONS ON WATER AND SEWER RATES, FEES

During the month of September, the UT Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) conducted an informative class on how the water and sewer rates and fees must sustain the financial obligations of the utility. [READ](#)

TENNESSEE MUNICIPAL BENCHMARKING PROJECT: "MANAGING GROWTH"

The UT Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) has launched the 2013 Tennessee Municipal Benchmarking Project (TMBP) – its 11th annual project cycle.

[READ](#)

MTAS PREPARES FIRE DEPARTMENTS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND CURRENT FIRE SUPPRESSION RATING SCHEDULE

MTAS Fire Management Consultant Dennis Wolf conducted a pilot workshop in September for West Tennessee fire departments on recent changes to the Insurance Services Office (ISO) Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS). [READ](#)

RESOURCE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST CITIES IN DEVELOPING AND INCREASING COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

Community resiliency is the ability of a community to use available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations, in other words, community sustainability. [READ](#)

GOVNEWS: INNOVATION STORIES FROM THE ALLIANCE FOR INNOVATION

Each month the MTAS Municipal E-News will highlight one or two GovNews stories from the Alliance for Innovation. [READ](#)

MTAS IS NOW ON TWITTER

In addition to our Facebook and LinkedIn accounts, MTAS now has a Twitter feed where we will be posting updates and notifications about what's going on within the agency. [READ](#)

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With an Eye Toward the Elected Official...

Jim Thomas, Executive Director
jim.thomas@tennessee.edu

WHILE THE BULK of services MTAS provides to city governments don't distinguish between the elected official and the professional municipal practitioner, one training program is focused on and dedicated strictly to the elected official. That training service is known as the Elected Officials Academy.



Jim Thomas

Tennessee towns and cities are fortunate to have some of their citizens make themselves available for election to a city council. Not everybody wants to do that and only a few are willing to do so. Regrettably, sort of like parenting, there's no great textbook written to tell you everything you need to know upon taking office. What are my responsibilities? What is my authority? What do I need to know about the budget? What is my city's charter and what do I need to know about it? The list of questions goes on and on...and as a newly elected official, you need to learn as much as you can as fast as you can. Your fellow council members, the city's employees and your constituents expect it of you.

Enrolling in MTAS's Elected Officials Academy (EOA) is a great early step to help you be the effective leader you were elected to be. Will enrolling in it and completing it tell you everything you'll face and how to react to it? No. Does EOA provide you with answers to everything even before you're asked the question? No. Elected Officials Academy will expose you to the basics of municipal government. If nothing else, it will teach you where to get the answers if you don't already know them. As an elected official, you take on certain responsibilities that, if not upheld, could expose the city and, you personally, to significant consequences. EOA helps you understand those responsibilities.

You can view the details of EOA clicking [here](#) and reading the brochure. The testimonials about the training speak for themselves. The classes are scheduled throughout the year, across the state. If you still have questions about the program, give me a call at (615) 972-9219.

Attend EOA. Your job will be easier and those who elected you will be impressed that you take your job seriously enough to participate in the training. Lastly, know that you as an elected official are appreciated by all of us at MTAS. We stand ready to help you serve.

COMING SOON! A Preview of Two MTAS Publications in the Works

WE WILL PROVIDE more extensive analysis on these two topics in the near future but we wanted to alert you to keep an eye out for these publications in your inbox.

Changes in Water Loss Reporting Methodology

MTAS is developing a publication on the new state requirement to use the American Water Works Association (AWWA) Water Loss Methodology. AWWA software is required to be used by all water systems in order to report their annual water loss in any audited financial statements received by the Comptroller of the Treasury on or after January 1, 2013. The entire Excel file must be sent to the state along with the audit. The current software is titled "Free Water Audit Software v4.2" and is available from the AWWA at its website: www.AWWA.org.

This changes the method previously required by the state, which was the Schedule of Unaccounted For Water, and the AWWA method required is considerably more complex. This new method will require collaboration between the finance and water departments. Because this is a water loss methodology, only water expenses should be included. Failure to include the AWWA schedule in audited financial statements received by the Comptroller of the Treasury on or after January 1, 2013, will result in the city being turned over to the WWFB.

(cont)

MTAS Conducts Statewide Sessions on Water and Sewer Rates, Fees

Business Tax Law Changes

Another publication will deal with Public Chapter 313 that makes changes to the business tax laws located in TCA title 67, Chapter 4, Part 7. This act is known as the Uniformity and Small Business Relief Act of 2013. These changes are effective January 1, 2014.

The act is an extensive rewrite of Part 7 although it consists mostly of administrative housekeeping that converts this privilege tax from a county/city tax to a state tax. It also clarifies the application of business tax to out-of-state vendors.

Cities will now receive a minimum business license from each business location in the city. Businesses with annual sales between \$3,000 and \$10,000 will pay a minimum annual business tax only, per location. Compensation of more than \$50,000 from contracts performed in one city shall be sourced to that city. Compensation of \$50,000 or less from contracts performed in one city shall be sourced to the city where the business has a physical location. The business tax rates stay the same but the distribution is changed.

During the month of September, the UT Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) conducted an informative class on how the water and sewer rates and fees must sustain the financial obligations of the utility.

Participants gained a basic understanding of the legal requirements for a financially viable water/wastewater utility, and reviewed the items that should be considered when setting rates and fees. Classes took place in Jackson, Bartlett, Collegedale, Morristown, and Franklin.

MTAS Water and Wastewater Consultant Steve Wyatt facilitated the classes. He developed this class as a result of participant requests for more in-depth knowledge of water and sewer rates and fees and how to evaluate current rate structure.

"This class broadens the perspective of individuals who have to develop or change a water customer's rate schedule." Wyatt said.

For more information on this course and others please visit the MTAS web site www.mtas.tennessee.edu.



“Managing Growth” for the TMBP

By Joy West
TMBP Student Assistant

Joy West joined the TMBP August 2013 and will work with us through this project cycle to assist Sarah Young, the TMBP Project Coordinator. Joy is currently in her second year of the Master of Public Policy and Administration at UT Knoxville.

The UT Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) has launched the 2013 Tennessee Municipal Benchmarking Project (TMBP) – its 11th annual project cycle. Representatives from participating cities gathered in four locations across the state for a videoconference meeting to kick-off this year’s project cycle.

On point with the meeting theme of “Managing the Growth,” MTAS welcomed six new cities (Martin, Murfreesboro, Paris, Springfield, Spring Hill, and Tullahoma) and launched two new service areas (parks and recreation and the pilot for information technology). MTAS also welcomed Sevierville, who after attending the kick-off meeting decided to join for this year’s project. As the 2013 project cycle begins, MTAS has 21 participating cities from across the state and 11 service areas for performance and cost measurement.

The group discussed how to effectively continue to grow the Benchmarking Project and ensure that each city gains meaningful results. It explored how to go beyond the data to develop solutions, improvements, and best practices for service provision. It also discussed possibilities for enhancing the value of the project to participants by integrating the benchmarking process into the budgeting process, performance management, and strategic planning in each city.

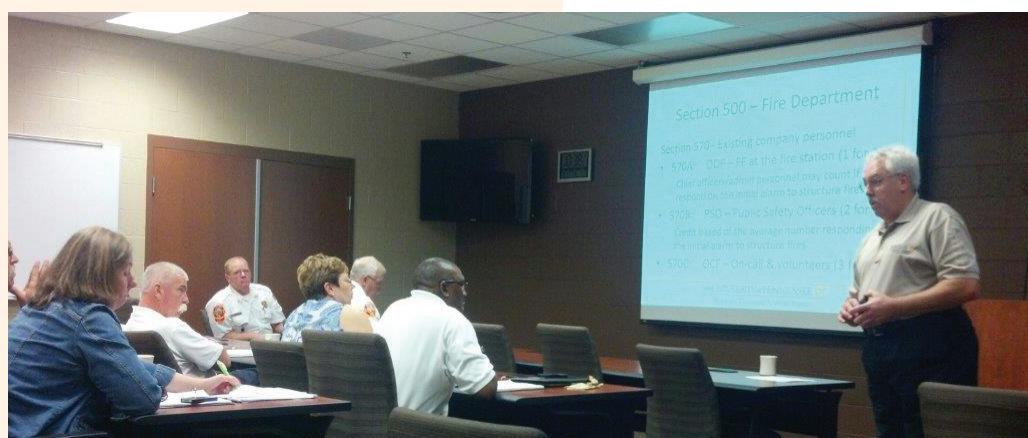
Next year the Benchmarking Project will acquire new software to streamline the data collection and reporting processes. ClearPoint Strategy, a vendor that provides performance measurement/scorecarding software, led the group through a customized demonstration. The cities were able to see how the data collection and reporting process would function from their perspective. ClearPoint Strategy also demonstrated features that integrate the data into project planning, generating additional reports, and public publishing options for greater government transparency.

MTAS Prepares Fire Departments To Better Understand Current Fire Suppression Rating Schedule

MTAS FIRE MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT Dennis Wolf conducted a pilot workshop in September for West Tennessee fire departments on recent changes to the Insurance Services Office (ISO) Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS). The training session occurred in the city of Germantown and was attended by several local fire departments.

The interactive session provided an overview of changes to the ISO rating schedule and assisted local fire department representatives with practical “hands on” methods by which to improve their current department’s practices and abilities to meet the newly revised rating schedule. Fire departments represented at the workshop session included the cities of Arlington, Bolivar, Collierville, Germantown and Parsons. County fire departments attending consisted of both Fayette County and Hardin County as well.

Various sections of the FSRS discussed in detail included emergency communications, water supplies, community risk reduction and operations considerations. According to Wolf, “ISO assigns a Public Protection Classification, more commonly called the ISO Rating, to every community in the country. Insurance companies use this rating as one of the factors considered when developing property insurance premiums. A lower ISO Rating means lower insurance premiums for property owners, so it is important that fire department officials and community leaders understand the various components that ISO evaluates when assigning the ISO Rating to the community.”



Wolf, served as chief of the Germantown Fire Department for 15 years prior to coming to MTAS to serve in his current capacity as a fire management consultant. Wolf’s professional career in fire management spans over 39 years of service to the State of Tennessee. Additional workshops will continue across the state in hopes of assisting local fire departments in Tennessee to improve their awareness and ability to respond to these recent ISO rating changes.

Resource Available to Assist Cities in Developing and Increasing Community Resiliency

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY is the ability of a community to use available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations, in other words, community sustainability.

Many communities do a good job prompting individuals and families to make a disaster kit and to be prepared for a disaster, but the gap with these programs is that they focus on the first 72-hours with an assumption that outside help will arrive by then to assist recovery. While this is possible, it is also possible that a major disaster could strike a community, and that recovery could take from months to years. Without proper preparation, the actual disaster could be compounded if businesses never reopen, and if residents move away.

The RAND Corporation has released Building Resilient Communities: An Online Training resource to assist communities. The program targets a wide portion of the community, yet it is specific enough for a community or a company to conduct a capabilities assessment, risk assessment, needs assessment, gap analysis, and then formulate a plan for resiliency and recovery. This RAND training program addresses the gap in planning for long-term recovery and provides a resource to help increase the ability of a community to prepare for, withstand, and bounce back from a major disaster.

This is a free resource.

http://www.rand.org/pubs/tools/TL109.html?utm_source=policycurrents&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=policycurrents20130815

GovNews: Innovation Stories from the Alliance for Innovation

Each month the MTAS Municipal E-News will highlight one or two GovNews stories from the Alliance for Innovation. If you know of an innovative solution in a Tennessee city or town, please send it to Frances Adams-O'Brien, at frances.adams-obrien@tennessee.edu.



Oak Ridge Public Library Introduces Reference by Appointment

Oak Ridge Public Library recently introduced a new service, Reference by Appointment. With this new offering, individuals can obtain one-on-one, in-depth assistance with research, résumés, or online job applications with a trained professional at no cost.

Anyone may schedule an appointment to meet with a librarian for assistance in the use of the library's many resources. A librarian can help with formatting résumés, searching census records in Heritage Quest, assist with database searches in Tennessee Electronic Library, advise research material for a school or work project, and help with basic computer skills. No library card is needed in order to take part in this service.

Appointments last from 15 minutes to an hour, depending on the individual needs. Reference staff will accommodate appointments within the weekday hours of 10 a.m.- 5 p.m. Staff cannot do research or write one's résumé, but they can advise on research materials, on formatting documents or give general assistance with online applications. For more information please call the Oak Ridge Public Library at (865) 425-3455.

Read more stories at <http://transformgov.org/en/news/govnews>

IN ADDITION TO our Facebook and LinkedIn accounts, MTAS now has a Twitter feed where we will be posting updates and notifications about what's going on within the agency, as well as news of general interest to Tennessee local governments. You can follow us at https://twitter.com/UT_MTAS.

You do not need a Twitter account to read the feed but if you want to Tweet (post) or Retweet (share) something you see on our Twitter feed, you will need to set up an account.

Also check out our Facebook site at:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Municipal-Technical-Advisory-Service/150226108390892>

Follow Us On Twitter!



MTAS Training Opportunities October - December 2013

Municipal Administrator Program

Administrative Hearings Officer 2013

12/5/2013	8:30 AM	Nashville	TML Conference Room
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GASB Update Course Viewing

11/7/2013	1:00 PM	Knoxville	Univ of Tenn - MTAS Conference Room
12/5/2013	1:00 PM	Knoxville	Univ of Tenn - MTAS Conference Room

Internal Control: Identifying & Minimizing Risks for Governmental Entities

10/9/2013	8:30 AM	Morristown	Tusculum College Morristown
10/10/2013	8:30 AM	Collegedale	Collegedale City Hall
10/15/2013	8:30 AM	Bartlett	Bartlett Station Municipal Center
10/16/2013	8:30 AM	Jackson	West Tenn Research & Education Center
10/21/2013	8:30 AM	Franklin	Williamson County Ag Expo Park

Legal Issues in Human Resources

9/10/2013	8:30 AM	Johnson City	Carnegie Hotel
9/11/2013	8:30 AM	Knoxville	UT Conference Center
9/24/2013	8:30 AM	Jackson, TN	UT West Tenn Research & Education Center
9/25/2013	8:30 AM	Franklin	Marriott - Franklin/Cool Springs

Planning & Zoning's Impact on Municipal Economic Development

11/6/2013	8:30 AM	Knoxville	UT Conference Center
11/7/2013	8:30 AM	Collegedale	Collegedale City Hall
11/13/2013	8:30 AM	Bartlett	Bartlett Station Municipal Center
11/14/2013	8:30 AM	Jackson	West Tenn Research & Education Center
11/15/2013	8:30 AM	Kingsport	Kingsport Center for Higher Education
11/22/2013	8:30 AM	Nashville	TBI Headquarters

Procrastination: Defeating the Thief of Productivity and Time

12/5/2013	8:30 AM	Jackson	West Tenn Research & Education Center
12/6/2013	8:30 AM	Franklin	Embassy Suites - Cool Springs
12/18/2013	8:30 AM	Johnson City	Carnegie Hotel
12/19/2013	8:30 AM	Knoxville	UT Conference Center

Municipal Court Clerk Class 2013

10/9/2013	8:30 AM	Bartlett	Bartlett Station Municipal Center
10/10/2013	8:30 AM	Jackson	West Tenn Research & Education Center
10/16/2013	8:30 AM	Smyrna	Smyrna Town Centre
10/17/2013	8:30 AM	Cookeville	Leslie Town Center
10/29/2013	8:30 AM	Johnson City	Carnegie Hotel
11/13/2013	8:30 AM	Collegedale	Collegedale City Hall
11/14/2013	8:30 AM	Knoxville	UT Conference Center

Certified Municipal Finance Officer Program

Debt Management

10/2/2013	8:30 AM	Columbia	Local Government Corporation (LGC)
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Payroll

10/30/2013	8:30 AM	Knoxville	Tusculum College Knoxville
10/30/2013	8:30 AM	Jackson	West Tenn Research & Education Center
10/30/2013	8:30 AM	Columbia	Local Government Corporation (LGC)

Purchasing

12/4/2013	8:30 AM	Knoxville	Tusculum College Knoxville
12/4/2013	8:30 AM	Jackson	West Tenn Research & Education Center
12/11/2013	8:30 AM	Columbia	Local Government Corporation (LGC)

MTAS Training Opportunities October - December 2013

Elected Officials Academy in West Tennessee

Finance for Elected Officials EOA03

Foundations and Structures of Tennessee Municipal Government EOA01

10/11/2013 Somerville, TN Somerville City Hall

Charter, Codes and Open Records EOA02

Council at Work EOA04

Ethics and Open Meetings EOA05

10/12/2013 Somerville, TN Somerville City Hall

Session descriptions and registration information for Somerville:

<http://mtas.tennessee.edu/Training/EOA/JacksonIFlyerNov.pdf>

Finance for Elected Officials EOA03

Foundations and Structures of Tennessee Municipal Government EOA01

11/1/2013 Jackson, TN University of Tenn
West Tenn Research & Education Center

Charter, Codes and Open Records EOA02

Council at Work EOA04

Ethics and Open Meetings EOA05

11/2/2013 Jackson, TN University of Tenn
West Tenn Research & Education Center

Session descriptions and registration information for Jackson:

<http://mtas.tennessee.edu/Training/EOA/JacksonIFlyerNov.pdf>

Conferences

Tennessee Chapter of the American Public Works Association Annual Conference

10/8 - 10/10/2013 Kingsport

<http://tennessee.apwa.net/>

Tennessee City Management Association Fall Conference

10/23 - 10/25/2013 Chattanooga

http://www.tncma.org/upcoming_events/index.htm

Tennessee Government Finance Officers Association Fall Conference

10/24 - 10/25/2013 Murfreesboro

<http://www.tngfoa.org/>

PRIMA Institute

11/4 - 11/8/2013 Milwaukee, WI

<http://www.primacentral.org/content.cfm?sectionid=23>

Tennessee Storm Water Association Annual Conference

11/12 - 11/14/2013 Henry Horton State Park, TN

<http://tnstormwater.org/blog/conference/>

National League of Cities Congress of Cities

11/13 - 11/16/13 Seattle, WA

<http://www.nlc.org/build-skills-and-networks/education-and-training/event-calendar/congress-of-cities-and-exposition>

Tennessee Parks and Recreation Association Annual Conference

11/17- 11/21/13 Chattanooga

<http://www.trpa.net/?page=Conference>

Tennessee Public Risk Management Association Annual Conference

11/20 - 11/22/13 Nashville

<http://www.tnprima.org/>