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MTAS

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FROM JIM THOMAS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Just as most of you in city and town halls across Tennessee are doing now, MTAS is well into its final development of its FY2014 budget and, also like you, there’s much we want to do, but we’ll move forward well within our means.  READ

CITIES MEET TO REVIEW BENCHMARKING DATA
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MTAS ASSISTS McMinnville WITH 2013 STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT
Newly elected Mayor Jimmy Haley, City Administrator David Rutherford and the McMinnville Board of Aldermen held a strategic planning retreat at city hall in January.  READ

HEALTH CARE CORNER – BLOG UPDATES
Be sure to check the latest entries on the MTAS Health Care blog maintained by MTAS Human Resource Consultant Bonnie Jones.  READ

TENNESSEE CITY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION APPOINTS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
The board of directors of the Tennessee City Management Association (TCMA) announced the appointment of Michael W. (Mike) Walker to serve as the association’s new executive director.  READ

SOLAR SUMMIT SCHEDULED FOR MAY
The U.S. Department of Energy's SunShot Initiative is a collaborative national project to make solar energy cost competitive with other forms of energy by the end of the decade.  READ
Just as most of you in city and town halls across Tennessee are doing now, MTAS is well into its final development of its FY2014 budget, and, also like you, there’s much we want to do, but we’ll move forward well within our means. Also, we’re looking ahead into the next couple months to schedule and register for the various municipal government-related association meetings and professional development opportunities. Seems like the spring and fall are the busy times for all these activities, and we hope to see many of you as we participate in these events across the state.

We’re continuing with good progress in filling some staff vacancies also. The training program manager position and two management consultant positions have all reached the final interview stage. We are working to have new staff in those three seats by April 1.

The Tennessee Municipal Benchmarking Program (TMBP) continues adding members, and the comments of those cities that have been part of the program for a while are beginning to point at the most significant reason why MTAS thinks TMBP is important. The participating cities are talking about how some things have changed for the better in their respective city governments because of their participation in the program and with the knowledge and “best practice” ideas they are picking up as participants. If TMBP is something you’ve been thinking about or want to know more about, give me a call.

After a “heavy lifting” effort to collect thousands of bits of data, we are actively engaged in analyzing all that data and what every city told us in MTAS’s “Building Better Cities” project. This project is very important to MTAS because understanding the responses we got from your city and all the others will help shape how we plan our service and training work for several years to come. I appreciate the time you spent with your MTAS management consultant on this, just as I appreciate the effort put into the project by all MTAS staff members involved.

MTAS is working to help someone in some city or town hall in Tennessee every minute of our working days. Just as partners in any productive and smooth running activity do, we want and expect your input in telling us how we can help you. You’re the customer, and with MTAS, the customer truly does come first. Thanks for what you do for your town or city. It is recognized and appreciated.

From
Jim Thomas,
Executive Director

Cities Meet to Review Benchmarking Data

Service area representatives from cities participating in the Tennessee Municipal Benchmarking Project recently held the largest data review meeting in the project’s 10-year history to compare initial results from this year’s data collection process.

Hosted by the city of Franklin, 68 participants from cities across the state met in individual service groups to compare data, discuss measurement techniques and to share experiences. MTAS consultants facilitated the group discussions on both performance and cost measures, and finance consultants Brad Harris and Al Major also gave a summary of the basis and application of the cost measures to the group. Following the meeting, individual contact information from all of the participants was shared with the attendees so that they could continue the sharing of lessons learned and best practices on an ongoing basis. A draft (continued on page 3)
Cities Meet to Review Benchmarking Data

(continued from page 2)

of this year’s project report will be sent to participants shortly for review, and the final report will be issued at the annual project closure meeting in mid-March.

The Tennessee Municipal Benchmarking Project is a collaborative effort among participating cities to embrace a performance measurement and management philosophy for the purpose of improving services to their citizens.

Fourteen cities currently participate in the project, and several additional cities have committed to joining for the 2013 project cycle. Additional information on the project may be found at http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/public/web.nsf/Web/Benchmark, or you may contact one of the benchmarking project staff:

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John Crawford (615) 812-4360 jcrawford81@hotmail.com

MTAS Assists McMinnville with 2013 Strategic Planning Retreat

Newly elected Mayor Jimmy Haley, City Administrator David Rutherford and the McMinnville Board of Aldermen held a strategic planning retreat at city hall in January. The purpose of this retreat was to learn about municipal governmental resources and to develop four goals for 2013. Topics covered included:

• Types of charters;
• The McMinnville General Law Mayor Aldermanic Charter;
• Legislative Actions/Board/Staff Responsibilities;
• Services offered by the University of Tennessee’s Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS); and
• Building Better Cities Initiative.

The second and final part of the planning retreat involved the participants in a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) Assessment for the city facilitated by MTAS Municipal Management Consultant Warren Nevad. The findings in this external scan provided much ammunition to create a wide-ranging list of goal statements for 2013. The top four goal statements were discussed and voted on by the mayor and the board of aldermen.

Each goal and accompanying objectives were given a specific timetable and assignment of a responsible party. The four goals for 2013 are:

• Finalize Capital Improvement Plan.
• Develop City branding/tourism development plan.
• Organize a community-wide long term 2035 visioning project with MTAS.
• Pursue various grant opportunities to improve the community.

The city plans to adopt a resolution approving the four goals. McMinnville will be a proud host of the MTAS Elected Officials Academy Level 1 on March 1-2, 2013.
The board of directors of the Tennessee City Management Association (TCMA) announced the appointment of Michael W. (Mike) Walker to serve as the association’s new executive director. Walker has 35 years of professional local government experience in Tennessee cities and recently retired after 22-plus years of successful service as the city manager of Brentwood.

Walker served as president of TCMA in the late 1990’s and was chosen “Tennessee City Manager of the Year” by his peers in 2005. He also served on the executive board of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) from 2007-2010 representing his peers from the southeastern United States.

“Mike Walker brings to this position a wealth of knowledge, experience, and commitment to the city management profession that we believe will increase the proficiency of our members in delivering responsive, quality services to the citizens in their communities,” said TCMA President Angie Carrier from Johnson City.

“I believe strongly in the benefits of professionalism in local government management and the role that TCMA serves in fostering professional development for our members,” said Walker. “I look forward to working with the board and our members to meet their educational and training needs in the future.”

The U.S. Department of Energy’s SunShot Initiative is a collaborative national project to make solar energy cost competitive with other forms of energy by the end of the decade.

Reducing the installed cost of solar energy systems by about 75 percent will drive widespread, large-scale adoption of this renewable energy technology, and restore U.S. leadership in the global clean energy race. As part of the SunShot Initiative, the University of Tennessee Knoxville is working to make it easier for Americans to go solar. By streamlining permit processes, updating planning and zoning codes, improving standards for connecting solar power to the electric grid, and increasing access to financing, the UT team hopes to clear a path for rapid expansion of solar energy across four metropolitan jurisdictions in Tennessee, which may serve as a model for other communities across the nation.

The SunShot team is hosting a state-wide Solar Summit in Chattanooga on April 10–11, 2013. For more information and registration, please visit the summit’s site at https://sites.google.com/site/sunshottn/tn-solar-summit-2013.
MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATOR PROGRAM
March and April 2013 Classes

PREPARING FOR YEAR-END CLOSING AND THE ANNUAL AUDIT
This course will cover a study of common asset, liability, fund balance, revenue and expenditure accounts at year’s end. Participants will become familiar with analyses of balances and adjustments with emphasis on closing the books for the fiscal year. Included is a discussion of facilitating the external audit and working with auditors. [Will qualify for four hours of CMFO continuing education hours (financial)]

March 13 • Morristown
March 20 • Jackson
March 14 • Collegedale
March 21 • Franklin

WHAT IS AN MD&A AND HOW DO I GET ONE?
Participants will become familiar with the GASB Statement No. 34 sections related to Management’s Discussion and Analysis (MD&A). They will learn the components of an MD&A and prepare the framework to create one for their city. Participants are encouraged to bring a set of year-end financial statements from their city to use in the preparation of the MD&A. Information will be provided by the instructor for those who do not wish to bring financial statements with them. [Will qualify for four hours of CMFO continuing education hours (financial)]

April 3 • Franklin
April 11 • Collegedale
April 10 • Morristown
April 25 • Jackson

For details on times and locations and to register, CLICK HERE.

MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT ACADEMY
March – June 2013 Open Enrollment

PLANNING AND ORGANIZING (MMA03)
March 12 • Spring Hill

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND POSITIVE DISCIPLINE (MMA04)
April 9 • Spring Hill

HUMAN RESOURCE OVERVIEW (MMA05)
May 14 • Spring Hill

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT AND WORKPLACE VIOLENCE (MMA06)
June 11 • Spring Hill

RISK MANAGEMENT AND SAFE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT (MMA07)
July 9 • Spring Hill

MOTIVATING YOUR WORKFORCE (MMA08)
Aug. 13 • Spring Hill

For details and how to register, CLICK HERE.
Mark Your Calendar!

2013 LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM ALUMNI EVENT
“A Nation in Debt: How Can We Pay the Bills in Government?”
March 20-21, 2013 • Murfreesboro (Embassy Suites)
CLICK HERE for information.

OSHA 10-HOUR GENERAL INDUSTRY COURSE
(UT CENTER FOR INDUSTRIAL SERVICES)
April 9-10 • Jackson • West Tennessee Research and Education Center
April 16-17 • Knoxville • UT Conference Center Bldg., 4th Floor
This course provides instruction on a variety of general industry safety and health standards. It’s particularly useful for those who are just entering the safety field and would like a better understanding of what is required and where to start. Course subject matter includes an introduction to OSHA; OSH Act/General Duty Clause; inspections, citations and penalties; walking and working surfaces; means of egress and fire protection; and electrical. This is a great course for fire service personnel as it covers many areas that the TOSHA inspector will cover during a site visit.
CLICK HERE for information or to register.

MUNICIPAL COURT CLERKS (with general sessions jurisdiction)
March 6-7, 2013

TML LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE
March 4-5, 2013 • Nashville Double Tree Downtown
CLICK HERE for information

TAMCAR SPRING MEETING
April 17-19, 2013 • Murfreesboro Embassy Suites
CLICK HERE for information

TENNESSEE PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION
April 9-12, 2013 • Memphis
CLICK HERE for information

ALLIANCE FOR INNOVATION “TRANSFORMING LOCAL GOVERNMENT” ANNUAL CONFERENCE
April 10-12, 2013 • Atlanta, GA
CLICK HERE for information

TENNESSEE CITY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION SPRING CONFERENCE
April 24-26, 2013 • Nashville Hampton Inn
CLICK HERE for information

www.mtas.tennessee.edu
FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT: REvised AND UPDATED (2012)
Richard Stokes, MTAS Human Resource Consultant

This document details the specifics of the act: what the act requires, who is covered and who is not covered, hours worked and compensation, overtime pay, record keeping and penalties. READ

ENERGY EFFICIENCY CONSERVATION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM IN TENNESSEE

This publication examines the elements, goals and project outcomes of the State of Tennessee Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program (EECBG), as well as the environmental and economic benefits associated with local governmental implementation of this program. READ

SALES TAX REVENUE: HOW TO GET YOUR FAIR SHARE (2013)
Al Major, MTAS Finance and Accounting Consultant

The best way to maximize your city's local sales tax is to review the state's record of business locations (situs report) and correct any errors. READ

FAIR CREDIT REPORTING ACT (2012)
Richard Stokes, MTAS Human Resource Consultant

The FCRA requires employers who use outside agencies to perform credit or other background checks (including criminal, reference or driving record checks) to comply with comprehensive notice, consent, and disclosure obligations both prior to doing the checks and after the results are reported. READ

PROPANE FOR TENNESSEE FLEETS: A PRIMER FOR MUNICIPAL/COUNTY OFFICIALS

This technical bulletin examines the basics of propane as a viable alternative transportation fuel for local government fleets in Tennessee. READ

MTAS Customer Satisfaction Surveys to Be E-Mailed Soon

Be watching the e-mail inbox in the next couple of weeks for the biennial customer satisfaction survey from the UT Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS).