Municipal E-News: Issue 28: July 2011

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City Spotlight: Winchester

Winchester is a leisure and recreational paradise located in the rolling hills of southern Middle Tennessee on Tims Ford Lake with 10,700 acres of water and 246 miles of shoreline. The county seat of Franklin, Winchester is located about 90 minutes southeast of Nashville, 60 minutes west of Chattanooga and 45 minutes northeast of Huntsville, Ala.

Date of Incorporation: 1821
Population: 7,329
County: Franklin
Grand Division: Middle Tennessee

Municipal Management Consultant
Ron Darden
ron.darden@tennessee.edu

Municipal Technical Advisory Service
600 Henley Street, Suite 120
Knoxville, TN 37996-4105
Phone: (865) 974-0411
Fax: (865) 974-0423
www.mtas.tennessee.edu

Continuous and Constant Improvement

Steve Thompson, MTAS Executive Director
Let me first briefly welcome you to the July newsletter and encourage you to become engaged and active in the current events happening at MTAS. We have a number of great initiatives moving forward at MTAS that will benefit all cities and towns in Tennessee, and this issue of the Municipal E-News highlights some of these initiatives.

One initiative that I am particularly excited about is the new LinkedIn site for MTAS. Bonnie Jones, MTAS human resource consultant, and Josh Jones, MTAS legal consultant, have developed the site. If you are unfamiliar with LinkedIn, it is the world’s largest online networking service. The MTAS site on LinkedIn allows us to post information, news, announcements and training schedules. If you would like to stay current on what we are posting to the site, this can be done easily by subscribing to the RSS feeds (Really Simple Syndication) provided on the site. The RSS feed will automatically let you know of changes, training opportunities and other news as soon as they are added to the site. If you, like me, struggle with these new technologies, then let our staff assist you in setting this up and making (continued on page 2)

Local Government Debt Policies

The state of Tennessee State Funding Board has approved regulations requiring that local governments adopt a debt management policy by Jan. 1, 2012, if they expect to issue debt in the future.

This requirement encourages municipalities to plan capital purchases and to consider a debt strategy in the larger context of what types of debt may be incurred, ways debt may be paid, how finance professionals in a debt issuance are selected and compensated, and under what circumstances debt is to be considered. In collaboration with the Tennessee Comptroller’s Office and the Tennessee Municipal League (TML), MTAS has developed a model debt policy that cities can use to meet these requirements.

The key decision required of most cities in the adoption of this policy will be to define how much debt is appropriate for that city, using a measure that the city or town selects.

The model policy is available at www.mtas.tennessee.edu. MTAS management and financial consultants are available to facilitate this discussion and help tailor the policy to the individual needs of your city.
Continuous and Constant Improvement
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the best use of the LinkedIn site. It’s not a stretch to say that this site and others like it are changing the way we do business.

We are also well underway with the Certified Municipal Finance Officers (CMFO) program with the third tier of participants. This program and all other MTAS training programs are being reviewed to better serve the municipalities of the state. In addition, we are implementing a new version of our online training system, Solution Point. The new software will provide a new look and feel as well as enhanced usability. We are confident these new features will improve your training experience. This new software program will assist with registration, logistics and reporting for training, and we hope to have major improvements in the ways we deliver and track training in the very near future.

As you have indicated in the fall and spring customer satisfaction surveys as well as in direct discussions, the members of the MTAS staff provide great service to the cities and towns of Tennessee. If you have thoughts, suggestions, or concerns that can assist us in our efforts to constantly improve, please let me know at steve.thompson@tennessee.edu or 615-974-0411.

STAFF HIGHLIGHT:
Sandy Selvage
Sandy Selvage is an administrative specialist for MTAS. She has been with the agency for 18 years. Prior to joining MTAS in 1993, Sandy worked for the UT College of Law for more than six years, totaling almost 25 years of service with the university.

Sandy is currently a junior at East Tennessee State University (ETSU) majoring in business and participating in the Certified Municipal Finance Officer (CMFO) program offered through MTAS.

In her free time, Sandy spends as much time as possible with her four grandchildren, Nathaniel (13), Cameron (11), Alyssandra (6) and Brianna (2).
Check MTAS Publication on New Fund Balance Standard

Kay Stegall, CPAS, CGFM, Finance and Accounting Consultant
The June 30, 2011, fiscal year has just ended, and municipalities must comply with a new GASB accounting requirement. The new fund balance accounting and reporting standard is effective for the fiscal year that just ended. This Hot Topic summarizes the requirements of the new GASB statement.

The statement changes the classification of fund balance into five components. The components are:

• Non-spendable
• Restricted
• Committed
• Assigned
• Unassigned

The categories better describe the level of availability of fund balance for future spending based on both external and internal constraints. The standard also redefines governmental funds. The most significant impact affects special revenue funds and may result in some special revenue funds being combined into the general fund.

Contact your MTAS finance consultant for further guidance regarding the new fund balance requirements.

NEW MTAS PUBLICATIONS:

Bonnie Jones, Human Resources Consultant
The ADAAA ensures protections for people with disabilities whose conditions have been denied as ADA eligible through years of Supreme Court ADA interpretation. For more information, please read the full publication.

Tennessee Reservists Leave of Absence (2011)
Bonnie Jones, Human Resources Consultant
Effective July 1, 2007, Public Chapter No. 360 (H.B. 2243/S.B. 2187) amended T.C.A. § 8-33-109 by increasing from 15 to 20 the number of paid days for public employee military reservists. During this 20-day period, the employee continues to earn regular pay, service credit, and applicable annual and sick leave accruals. All other rights and benefits to which the employee is otherwise entitled continue. For more information, please read the full publication.

Surveying Citizens: A Handbook for Municipal Officials Who Want to Know What Their Citizens Think
David H. Folz, Ph.D., Associate Professor, UT Department of Political Science
Citizen surveys have proven to be an accurate and affordable way to determine what a large group of people think.

Tennessee’s Non-Smoker Protection Act
Bonnie Jones, Human Resources Consultant
Smoking in public places (notably municipal workplaces) is now recognized by the Tennessee Legislature as a public health issue and is, therefore, banned.

All current MTAS publications are available in the Publication Catalog on the MTAS Web site at http://www.mtas.utk.edu/public/web.nsf/Web/Read+Pubs.
MTAS Training Events and Conferences

MUNICIPAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE
This course will provide a summary of legislation of municipal impact passed during the 2011 session of the Tennessee General Assembly. The legislative summaries will cover a myriad of city concerns including personnel, law enforcement, tort liability, code enforcement, utilities, land use and many others.

This course will be conducted by MTAS legal consultants and will offer participants the opportunity to ask questions about any new legislation. http://mtas.tennessee.edu/Training/MAP_2011/AugustFlyer.pdf

August 10 Knoxville
August 16 Jackson
August 30 Franklin

ACCOUNTING BASICS
This course will cover the basic accounting functions and concepts of debits, credits, trial balances and more. You will have several examples and exercises to help you better understand and use your accounting system. MTAS recommends this optional course for anyone new to the Certified Municipal Finance Officer (CMFO) program. http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/training/map_2011/augustabasics.pdf

August 24 Knoxville
August 24 Jackson
August 31 Franklin

For more information on these classes, contact Elaine Morrisey at elaine.morrisey@tennessee.edu.

Other Events

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
July 10-12 Tennessee Fire Chief’s Association Annual Meeting (Nashville)
July 12 Work Zone Traffic Control/Flagging Course (Knoxville)
July 15 Tennessee Transportation Assistance Program
August 8-11 Tennessee Public Works Institute; Public Works Supervision Course (Murfreesboro)
August 9-10 Tennessee Valley Solar Solutions Conference (Nashville)

MTAS MIDDLE TENNESSEE CITY MANAGER’S MEETING
ROSS CREEK LANDING GOLF COURSE
Clifton, Tennessee
JULY 12 • 11 A.M.
RSVP to Dana Deem,
MTAS Municipal Management Consultant,
by July 6, at (615) 532-2588 or dana.deem@tennessee.edu