



Municipal Technical Advisory Service  
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE

# MUNICIPAL E-NEWS

MARCH 2024 | QUARTER 1 | ISSUE 111



## MTAS Diamond Jubilee Anniversary 2024

Please join us as we celebrate 75 years of service to the cities and towns of Tennessee.

[READ MORE](#)



[VIEW OUR CURRENT TRAINING CALENDAR](#)

## In This Issue

- 2 Milestones
- 3 MTAS Anniversary Receptions Across the State
- 4 Brief MTAS History
- 5 State-Shared Revenue Update
- 6 Is Your City Ready for AI?
- 7 Strengthen Your Leadership Skills
- 8 Training Web Information Improved
- 8 What is the Training Team Reading?
- 9 TREEDC Membership Drive
- 10 TREEDC Awards
- 11 MTAS Certified Public Manager Program Graduates
- 11 MTAS Looking for New Team Members



## Milestones

Milestones are a great tool to mark considerable progress along a continuum. In the U.S., many of us celebrate birthdays. For people in relationships, they may pick one or more dates of importance to celebrate like the first date, the first time the words “I love you” were used, or the wedding date.

MTAS is no different, and 2024 is a big milestone for us. It is our 75th anniversary! The Municipal Technical Advisory Service was signed into existence by passage of a state law on April 15, 1949. While none of our current employees were alive when this phenomenal event occurred, we all have fond memories of our times with the agency over our careers here. For instance, I can still remember where I was when former MTAS Executive Director Bob Schwartz called me to offer me an internship with the agency. That phone call was the start of my long and happy relationship with MTAS.

MTAS will be celebrating this milestone throughout 2024, and I hope that you will join us at one of our three planned celebrations. We have provided details later in this edition of the E-News.



**Margaret Norris**  
MTAS Executive Director

MTAS exists to support the municipalities in the state, and we have made great friends and developed successful partners for 75 years. The plan is to continue this relationship for another 75 years (at least) by ensuring that our services and products are of a quality that keep you coming back for more.

Happy Anniversary, MTAS!



## MTAS 75th Anniversary Receptions Across the State

MTAS was established in 1949 to provide assistance to the cities and towns of Tennessee. In 2024 MTAS will celebrate 75 years of successfully delivering on this mission and we would like for you to be a part of it!

A reception in each grand division will be hosted throughout the year. The details are listed below. We will also post new information on the [MTAS website](#) on this page so be sure to check it out.



### RECEPTIONS

**April 15, 2024 | Jackson, Tennessee**  
[Southwest Tennessee Development District](#)

**June 27, 2024 | Nashville, Tennessee**  
[UT IPS Training Center at Polk Avenue](#)

**October 3, 2024 | Knoxville, Tennessee**  
[Sunsphere](#)

All reception times are 1:30-3:30 PM local time.

RSVP @ 865-974-9852  
or to [Armintha.loveday@tennessee.edu](mailto:Armintha.loveday@tennessee.edu)

There will be a short program and light refreshments.

## Brief MTAS History

The Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) was established by the Tennessee General Assembly under the codified law T.C.A. § 67-6-103 in 1949 specifically to provide technical consulting services to cities and towns in Tennessee. Herb Bingham, executive director of the Tennessee Municipal League (TML), was responsible for introducing the legislation and getting it passed into law.

Originally, MTAS was established in the UT Division of University Extension with an advisory council that consisted of Bingham and professors in the subject areas of business management, sociology, law, engineering, political science. Today, MTAS resides in the UT Institute for Public Service and is staffed by experts in municipal government.

The original legislation best describes the MTAS purpose:

“It shall be used for studies and research in municipal government, publications, educational conferences and attendance thereat and in furnishing technical consultative and field services to municipalities in problems related to fiscal administration, accounting, tax assessment and collection, law enforcement, improvements in public works, and in any and all matters relating to municipal government.”



MTAS Nashville staff in early 2000's. In front: Margaret Norris, management consultant; Ralph Cross, finance consultant; Sharon Rollins, public works consultant; Gary Jaeckel, management consultant; Ray Crouch, fire consultant; and Richard Stokes, human resources consultant.

Over time, MTAS expanded its services beyond consultation with the establishment of an extensive municipal information library, fee-based codification services, and an extensive training program for municipal officials and employees in order to enhance their performance and improve local governance.

From a staff of five in the early days to a staff of over 50 individuals today, MTAS continues to fulfill its mission through a diverse range of consultative services, educational programs and information services aimed at equipping municipalities with the necessary tools and knowledge to improve the lives of those they serve.

## State-Shared Revenue Estimates for Fiscal Year 2024-25

Cities throughout Tennessee receive revenues from the state each month in the form of state-shared revenues. Various state laws prescribe how these shared revenues are calculated and disbursed. Gas and Motor Fuel tax is divided into dollars that fund the 1) State Street Aid Fund and the 2) General Fund as a Special Petroleum tax.



**Brad Harris**  
**MTAS Finance and Accounting Consultant**

As the 2024-25 budget season approaches it is important to know an estimate of state-shared revenues to prepare the most accurate budget possible. The estimates below can be used for budget preparation and will be updated monthly as actual amounts of state-shared revenue are disbursed to cities and towns are made available. At the time of this publication six months of actual disbursement data is known. There is a two-month gap between when dollars are collected from consumers and when they are actually sent to cities.

Revenues are disbursed on a per capita basis. To calculate a current estimate by type, simply multiply the certified population by the per capita amount shown below:

	<b>% of Total State Shared Revenue</b>	<b>Estimate Using 6 Months of Collections</b>
<b>State-Shared Sales Tax</b>	70%	121
<b>Gas and Motor Fuel Taxes</b>	22%	37.83
<b>TVA In-Lieu-of Tax</b>	7%	12.26
<b>State Beer Tax</b>	0.5%	.46
<b>Sports Betting Revenue</b>	0.5%	1.45
	100%	173

Cities should be aware that economic conditions and other factors can affect revenue collections, therefore these numbers should be viewed as estimates and as additional monthly actual collections are known they will be updated.

## Is Your City Ready for AI?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) may seem like a recent development given its frequent coverage in the news. However, local governments around the country are already leveraging AI to enhance their operations in numerous ways. For instance, machine learning algorithms for traffic management can predict and control traffic flow, reducing congestion and improving road safety. Natural Language Processing (NLP) can automate customer service functions, ensuring constituents receive prompt responses to their queries at any time of day. Predictive analytics can be used to forecast civic issues such as infrastructure requirements or potential public health crises before they escalate. Facial recognition software can assist law enforcement agencies in criminal investigations. The potential uses for AI certainly seem endless!

While AI is exciting, it's crucial to exercise caution with such applications due to potential privacy issues and the risk of bias embedded in AI systems<sup>1</sup>. Potential uses of AI and actual implementation will also vary among cities depending on resource availability, specific needs and policy considerations.

One way to demystify AI is through training. We offer a range of free online courses on AI in K@TE, our learning management system.



Cyndy Edmonds  
MTAS Online  
Training Specialist

Once you're logged into your account, you can search for AI-related course titles, including:

- Introduction to Artificial Intelligence
- Artificial Intelligence Foundations: Neural Networks
- What is Generative AI?
- Ethics in the Age of Generative AI
- Tech on the Go: Ethics in AI
- Get Ready for Generative AI
- AI Trends

For your convenience, we have curated a list of AI-related content including the above topics. Once logged into your K@TE account, type "Getting to Know Artificial Intelligence" in the search field to begin your AI journey. Also, our December IMPACT Series topic will be on AI.

Source: [builtin.com/artificial-intelligence](https://builtin.com/artificial-intelligence)

## Strengthen Your Leadership Skills

Imagine being able to communicate effectively, confidently influence people and drive performance within your team. Our Municipal Leadership Program is specifically designed to prepare leaders at all levels with the knowledge and skills to excel in their roles.

Our updated program format will be announced in late summer/early fall. Join a growing network of municipal leaders who are successfully transforming their leadership capabilities and are working to make a significant impact on their organizations. [Sign up for program updates](#) including enrollment and registration information or [visit us online](#).



**Yolanda Dillard**  
MTAS Training Consultant



### THINK TRAINING IS NOT IMPORTANT?

Think again. A new survey by TalentLMS and Vyond found that “41% of U.S. employees will look for another job in 2024 if their company doesn’t provide training opportunities.”

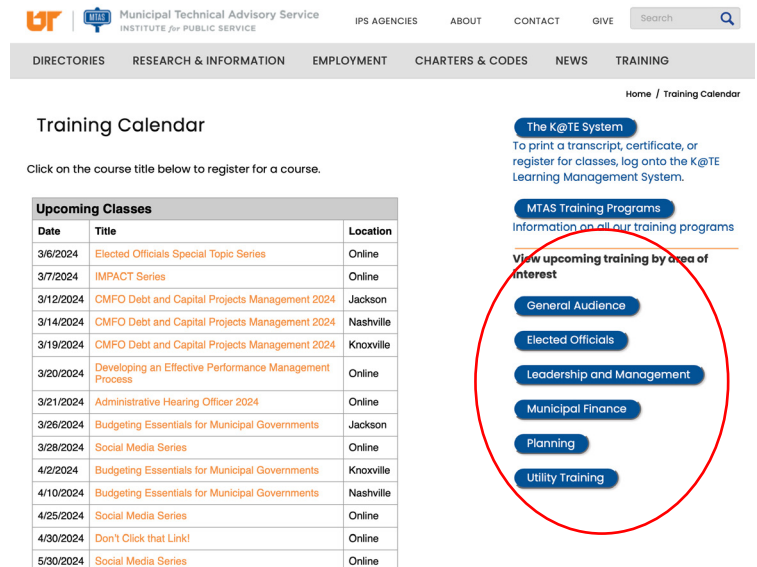
[READ MORE](#)



## Training Web Information Improved

With new training opportunities being added regularly, it is important to keep up to date by visiting our [Training Calendar](#).

Be sure to visit our new feature that breaks out upcoming training by areas of interest. From the Training Calendar webpage, click one of the options on the right side of the page to view training sessions for that area.

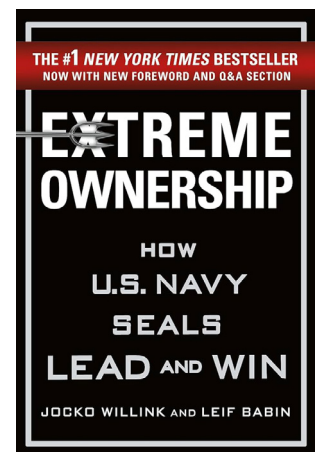
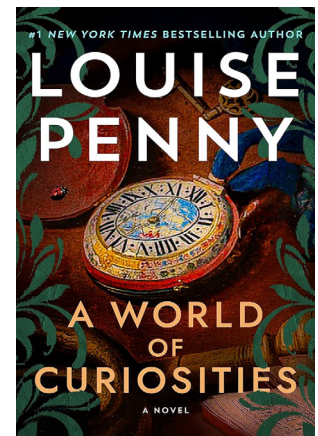
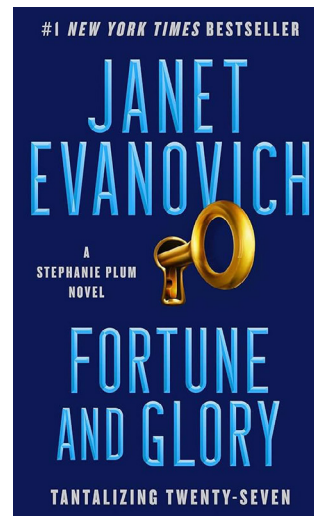


## What the MTAS Training Team is Reading

Janet Evanovich's *Fortune and Glory: Tantalizing Twenty-Seven*. It is funny, lighthearted and reminds me of where I grew up in New Jersey.  
 ~ Cyndy Edmonds, Online Training Specialist

I recently finished *A World of Curiosities*, the 18th book in Louise Penny's Three Pines series. I've been a fan of this series for years and recommend it to anyone who enjoys well written crime fiction with philosophical undertones! Next on my list is *I, Human: AI, Automation, and the Quest to Reclaim What Makes Us Unique*.  
 ~Johanna Owenby, Training and Development Program Manager

*Extreme Ownership* by U.S. Navy SEALs, Jocko Willink and Leif Babin combines combat stories with valuable leadership lessons learned along the way and includes practical application for leaders at any level of any organization.  
 ~Yolanda Dillard, Training and Development Consultant





## TREEDC Membership Drive

### TENNESSEE RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (TREEDC) LAUNCHES 2024 MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

Chairman/University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture Senior Vice Chancellor Keith Carver and TREEDC President/Dunlap Mayor Dwain Land have officially launched the 2024 membership campaign.

The TREEDC board kept 2024 membership dues levels unchanged from prior years. Membership dues help pay for expenses related to TREEDC's outreach, educational and project facilitation for our member local governments. Being a TREEDC member, affords networking and developmental opportunities, sponsorships of various events and participation in our international exchange program.

In 2023, TREEDC embarked on a new strategic partnership with Protect Tennessee to facilitate more resilience planning and mitigation resulting from natural disasters and promoted Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) as a financing mechanism used by local governments to advance renewable energy.



Warren Nevad  
Municipal Management  
Consultant

And in 2023 TREEDC celebrated its 15th anniversary of carrying out its mission to connect economic development with clean energy across Tennessee.

In 2024, TREEDC is poised to assist members with the implementation of funding opportunities generated from the recent passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure and Inflation Reduction Acts and recent favorable legislative renewable energy initiatives enacted by the Philippines.

TREEDC is a 501c(3) charitable organization. For more information regarding 2024 membership opportunities visit [treedc.us](https://treedc.us).



From left to right: Former Cookeville Mayor Ricky Shelton, TREEDC President Dwain Land, University of Tennessee MTAS Executive Director Margaret Norris and TREEDC Chairman/University of Tennessee Martin Chancellor Dr. Keith Carver at the 2022 TREEDC Annual Conference at Tennessee Tech University.

## TREEDC Awards

### TREEDC RECOGNIZES CONTRIBUTIONS OF JOHNSON, DEEM AND NORRIS

At its 2023 annual conference and award reception, Tennessee Renewable Energy and Economic Development Council (TREEDC) President Dwain Land recognized and honored the achievements of former UT President/TREEDC Chairman Joe Johnson and announced the establishment of the annual Dr. Joe Johnson Legacy Award which honors a TREEDC member that embodies the same giving and caring spirit that Johnson demonstrated to the University of Tennessee community during the past 60 years. Johnson passed away in September 2023.

This year's inaugural winner was University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) Executive Director Margaret Norris. Land lauded Norris' "steadfast support for TREEDC" and told the attendees that "Margaret embodied the same caring and giving spirit that Dr. Joe gave to the University of Tennessee community during the past 60 years."

President Dwain Land also presented MTAS Municipal Management Consultant Dana Deem with the 2023 TREEDC Championship Award for "assistance with the city of McKenzie's lighting/broadband project and his tireless efforts in supporting efforts in supporting the TREEDC mission" across the state.



From left to right: Warren Nevad, TREEDC Director/MTAS Municipal Management Consultant, Dwain Land, TREEDC President, and Margaret Norris, MTAS Executive Director



From left to right: Dwain Land, TREEDC President, Dana Deem, MTAS Municipal Management Consultant, and Warren Nevad, TREEDC Director/MTAS Municipal Management Consultant

## MTAS Certified Public Manager Program Graduates

MTAS staff members John Chlarson, public works consultant and Frances Adams-O'Brien, librarian completed the Certified Public Manager program in 2023 and graduated in January. The year-long national certification course is offered by the Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership and includes 300 hours of in-person and online class work, and a capstone project.

Congratulations to John, Frances and all 63 members of the class of 2023!

For more information on the Certified Public Manager course, visit the [Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership](#) website.



John Chlarson, public works consultant, Abb Oglesby, legal and codes program manager, and Frances Adams-O'Brien, librarian.

## MTAS Looking for New Team Members

*We're*  
**HIRING!**

JOIN OUR DYNAMIC  
TEAM AT MTAS!

**UT** | **MTAS**  
INSTITUTE for PUBLIC SERVICE

MTAS is looking for new team members to fill the following roles:

- MTAS Municipal Finance Training Specialist
- MTAS Utility Management Consultant
- MTAS Legal Consultant
- MTAS Communications and Marketing Consultant
- MTAS Municipal Management Consultant

Visit our [website](#) to find out more about these positions and to apply online.

**APPLY NOW**

# CONFERENCES AND CLASSES FOR MUNICIPAL STAFF AND OFFICIALS

**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES CONGRESSIONAL CITY CONFERENCE**

*March 17-20, 2024 | Washington, D.C.*

**TENNESSEE ASSOCIATION OF CITY CLERKS AND RECORDERS**

*April 17-19, 2024 | Murfreesboro*

**TENNESSEE CITY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION**

*April 17-19, 2024 | Franklin*

**TENNESSEE PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION**

*April 30-May 3, 2024 | Paris Landing State Park*

**TENNESSEE FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION SPRING CONFERENCE**

*May 15-17, 2024 | Gatlinburg*

**TENNESSEE MUNICIPAL LEAGUE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

*July 20-23, 2024 | Knoxville*

## SELECTED MTAS TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES | SPRING 2024

**IMPACT SERIES**

*Performance Measurement for Municipalities | March 7, 2024*

*Retire Ready | June 13, 2024*

**DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS**

*3-Part Series | March 20, June 5 and November 13*

**ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING OFFICER 2024**

*March 21, 2024 and October 17, 2024*

**SOCIAL MEDIA SERIES**

*What You Need to Know | March 28*

*Social Media Tools | April 25*

*Analytics and What Your Social Media Numbers Mean | May 30*

Municipal Technical Advisory Service  
UT Institute for Public Service

1610 University Ave.  
Knoxville, TN 37921  
Phone: 865-974-0411 | Fax: 865-974-0423  
[mtas.tennessee.edu](https://mtas.tennessee.edu)



Municipal Technical  
Advisory Service

INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE

