



Municipal Technical Advisory Service
INSTITUTE for PUBLIC SERVICE

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MTAS Offices will be Closed In Observance of Labor Day on Monday, September 7, 2020

NEW RESOURCES

Freedom to Protest: Guidance on Handling Demonstrations in Tennessee Towns and Cities (Video) | [View](#)

Summary of 2020 Public Acts | [Download](#)

Corrosion in Water Systems: A Guide for Tennessee Municipal Elected Officials | [Download](#)

Sample Ordinance for Accepting a Newly Constructed Street | [Download](#)

TCMA Member Forum Discussion on Fiscal Year 2021 Pay Increases | [Download](#)

Letting the Citizens Help Run the Store (Article) | [Request](#)

Clean Cab Concept SOP Template | [Download](#)

Mayor's Toolkit for Energy Efficiency (American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy) | [View](#)

New Knowledgebase materials can be found here: [View](#)

New MRLn (MTAS Research Library Online) materials can be found here: [View](#)

New MOrE (MTAS Online Resource) materials can be found here: [View](#)

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UPCOMING TRAINING CLASSES

<http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/training-calendar-0>



Message from MTAS Executive Director

Greetings MTAS Customers,

What a difference a day makes. We've all heard this saying before. I'm going to expand on that for just a moment; what a difference four months makes. I believe that our vocabulary will change once we get through the novel coronavirus pandemic to "BC" meaning "Before COVID-19" and "AC" for "After COVID-19." I've heard our current and future times referred to as "the new normal" and I have also heard the term "better normal." I prefer the second one.

Things have changed, for sure. I expect that some previous traditions and routines will return but many will be changed forever. Will we ever shake hands again? Will meetings continue to be virtual rather than in person? Will face coverings become fashion accessories? Will our definition of personal space become much larger?

So, things have changed. On March 23, the MTAS staff went to work from home to do our part to "flatten the curve" and to protect our employees and customers. We began a phased approach to return to the office in May and we are now mostly back in the office and have resumed traveling to visit you, our customers. You have changed your operations too in response to the pandemic.

However, some things don't change, and I take some comfort in knowing that fact. I know that when I call for emergency services, someone will be there to assist me. I know that my refuse will be collected; and that my property taxes go to support general fund operations.

Another thing that hasn't changed is that MTAS is here to assist you as you serve your constituents. We are here for you, we're open for business, and we'll continue to give you our best. Please let us know how we can assist you.

Sincerely



Margaret Norris
MTAS Executive Director



UT President Randy Boyd Visits City of Dunlap with MTAS

University of Tennessee President Randy Boyd recently visited the city of Dunlap to learn about the city government's progressive efforts with renewable energy.

President Boyd was greeted by Dunlap Mayor Dwain Land, and the owner of an electric backup generator company (Bronco Power Boost) Billy Whittaker. Also joining the president were MTAS Executive Director Margaret Norris and MTAS Management Consultant Warren Nevad. Nevad described how involvement with the Tennessee Renewable Energy Economic Development Council (TREEDC) has helped the city achieve accomplishments such as solar powered water and wastewater facilities, significantly reduced electric bills and the recruitment of environmentally conscious businesses to the industrial park.

Nevad has helped lead TREEDC since its inception in 2007. Mayor Land gave the visitors a tour of the city highlighting solar installments at city hall, on park facilities, at the industrial park and on businesses downtown.

If your municipality is interested in an energy audit to identify cost efficiencies, please contact Warren Nevad at warren.nevad@tennessee.edu or 865-974-0411.



UT System President Randy Boyd, Nevad, Land and Bronco Power Boost owner Billy Whittaker



Dunlap administrative staff welcome UT System President Randy Boyd



MTAS Executive Director Margaret Norris and UT System President Randy Boyd visit the city of Dunlap, TN

The State of the State-shared Revenues: Did COVID-19 Have an Impact?

Brad Harris, MTAS Finance and Accounting Consultant

Cities in Tennessee receive state shared revenues from several sources each year. When comparing numbers across years, often they do not change significantly as most are based on population. The following is a list of the state shared revenues showing the per capita original estimate, a published revised estimate, and actual numbers for both 2019-20 and 2018-19 fiscal years:



The 2019-20 fiscal year was particularly unpredictable due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty surrounding an economic downturn, decreased spending and less travel. When it became apparent that numbers may fall short of our original estimate MTAS revised and published new numbers based on what we were seeing at the time.

- State sales tax ended FY 2020 ahead of FY 2019 based on very strong numbers through March.
- Gas and motor fuel taxes finished ahead of 2019, due primarily to the final year of increase from the State’s IMPROVE Act.
- TVA In-lieu-of tax also finished ahead of the prior year.

We will continue to monitor state numbers and update our estimates throughout the year. The publication can be accessed by going to the MTAS home page and typing 545 in the search box, or by using this link: <http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/reference/state-shared-taxes-and-appropriations-coming-fiscal-year>.

Per Capita:	Basis	2019-20	2019-20	2019-20	2018-19	2020-21
		Initial Estimate	Revised Estimate			
Sales Tax	Population	\$92.25	\$84.00	\$90.61	\$89.77	\$86.00
Gas and Motor Fuel Taxes	Population	38.25	33.00	35.71	35.63	35.00
Beer Tax	Population	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.48
TVA In-Lieu-of-Tax	Population	12.00	12.00	12.30	11.70	12.00

Pharmaceutical Waste Disposal Assistance and Rural Leadership Program Coming in 2021

MTAS, in collaboration with two fellow IPS agencies, will offer two new training and technical assistance programs in 2021 with help from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

MTAS received the Solid Waste Management grant and the Rural Community Development Initiative grant, offered through the USDA, to develop new training and technical assistance programs in 2021.

The USDA Solid Waste Management grant will allow MTAS, in conjunction with the County Technical Assistance Service (CTAS), to develop a program aimed at improving pharmaceutical waste disposal systems in low-income rural Tennessee communities.

When used properly, controlled substances can improve the quality of life for the intended patient. However, prescription drugs are falling into the wrong hands at alarming rates. Tennessee is near the epicenter in opioid misuse and addiction. Proper pharmaceutical disposal is part of a system that ensures that unused prescription medicines do not inadvertently or intentionally fall into the hands of others. By properly disposing of pharmaceuticals, a community reduces opportunity for theft and opportunity for accidental harm.

The Rural Community Development Initiative grant will allow MTAS, in conjunction with the Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership (NCEL), to develop a rural community leadership program that will provide a training academy and technical assistance program to low-income rural communities in the Appalachian region of Tennessee.

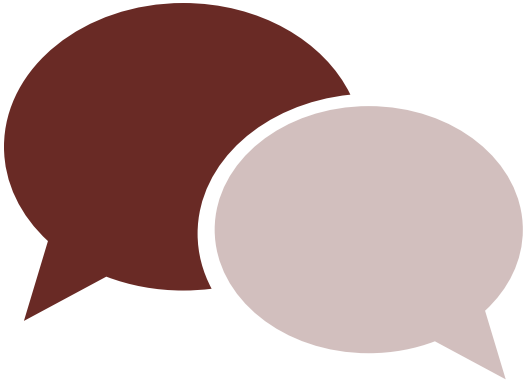
The primary goal of the program is to improve community facilities and promote economic and community development. This program will teach the importance of leadership, innovation, growth and resilience, but more importantly, how they are interconnected with community facility improvements, economic development and community development.

Stay tuned for more details as 2021 approaches.

If you have any questions about the programs please contact Chris Shults, MTAS Grants and Training Specialist, at chris.shults@tennessee.edu or by phone at 865-974-8964.



Looking to Improve Your Communication Skills? Three New Online Learning Curricula Available



Recently MTAS offered a free virtual course called “Quick Tips to Improve your Professional Writing Skills.” Remember, no emojis or acronyms when you send that report to the mayor!

Based on customer feedback from the course, we’ve located more online opportunities for you to up your communications IQ. Skills you learn in these courses can help in any correspondence project: email, letters, executive summaries of a project, or simply communicating with the citizens you serve.

Effective communication is key to any successful project- at work or home. Communication in the digital age is most often focused on technology, but compelling and timely writing is crucial to making the message heard. These new online courses can help you hone your skills.

We have three new courses, which focus on communications skills, available on K@TE. Each curriculum is a group of subject-related courses for a single price. And because the courses are all online, you can take them when it fits your schedule.

1. **Writing Expert** which includes the following courses: Writing Articles, Writing Case Studies, Writing Customer Service Emails, Writing in Plain English, Writing with Impact, Writing Speeches, Tips for Writing Business Emails and Organizing an Outline. \$150
2. **Communications Fundamentals** which includes the following courses: Communication Tips, Communicating with Confidence, Creating and Giving Business Presentations, Time Management Tips: Communication, Communicating about Culturally Sensitive Issues, Communicating Across Cultures, Crisis Communication, Communicating with Charisma and Communicating with Transparency. \$100
3. **Public Relations: Communicating with the Public** which includes the following courses: Delivery Tips for Speaking in Public, Overcoming Your Fear of Public Speaking, Public Relations Foundations: Media Training, Public Relations Foundations, Writing a Press Release, Impromptu Speaking, Performing under Pressure, Managing Your Anxiety While Presenting and Creating and Giving Business Presentations. \$75.

Each course in the three groups is also available to take individually. To find an individual course in K@TE, search for the title from the first login welcome page and it will allow you to register.

To sign up for a new curriculum or any online course login to your K@TE account at:

<https://kate.tennessee.edu/mtas>.



Tips for Zoom Meetings

Yolanda Dillard, MTAS Training & Development Consultant

These Zoom meeting tips are designed to assist municipal staff with using Zoom during the remote work environment prompted by COVID-19. The information is not meant to be all-inclusive. Zoom has great support articles including short video tutorials in their Help Center.

Additionally, feel free to contact Yolanda Dillard, MTAS Training & Development Consultant with questions at yolanda.dillard@tennesse.edu



- **Testing? Testing? Is This Thing On?**

Testing proper functionality prior to Zoom meetings is highly recommended. Use the Test Speaker and Microphone option to ensure proper functionality and connectivity.

- **Can You Hear Me Now?**

You should join meetings with Computer Audio OR Phone – not both. If using computer audio, be sure you have the correct settings enabled for both input (i.e., microphone) and output (i.e., headset or laptop speakers).

- **Make Eye Contact**

Be sure your camera is positioned at eye level and you look at directly at the camera. It's tempting and natural to look at the screen but making eye contact with participants will make the meeting feel more personable.

- **Downloading. Please Wait...**

When scheduling Zoom meetings, be sure to enable the 'Join from browser' setting just in case clients are not able to download the Zoom client to their desktop. There is also a Zoom mobile app available for download for both iOS and Android devices.

- **What is THAT Noise??**

We highly recommend muting lines when not speaking. When using a desktop or laptop, you can press and hold the space bar to temporarily unmute to speak. When unmuted, limit distractions such as silencing your mobile/home phone ringer, shuffling papers, typing on keyboard, clicking pens, talking to others outside the meeting, etc.

- **Where in the World Is...?**

Add some fun by exploring Virtual Backgrounds. It works best with a solid color wall in the background and uniform lighting. Otherwise, you may get interesting results!

- **Now Recording**

If you decide to record meetings, be sure to inform all participants in advance. A release may be necessary and Zoom now includes a notification when participants join the meeting.

- **Be Timely**

The Meeting Host should begin the meeting at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start time. Participants should plan to join at least 5 minutes early.

TREEDC News

Post Pandemic Economic Recovery in Tennessee: TREEDC 2020 Annual Conference



The Tennessee Renewable Energy & Economic Development Council (TREEDC) will hold its seventh annual conference at Tennessee Tech University December 10-11. The theme of the conference will be Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery for our cities, counties, businesses and colleges and universities. The conference will have panel presentations and discussions relating to economic recovery resources available to members, COVID-19 assistance programs from business members, and lessons learned from mayors during the pandemic.

The conference will also include annual awards presentations, exhibitors and networking opportunities. Guest will also meet start-up companies that are part of the TREEDC network.

Members who are interested in giving a presentation can contact TREEDC President/Dunlap Mayor Dwain Land at 423-718-3435.

Tennessee Startup Company Produces Eco-Friendly, Battery Operated Back Up Power Boost

Recently, the Tennessee Renewable Energy & Economic Development Council (TREEDC) partnered with Bronco Power Boost, a new Tennessee Clean Energy Startup Company based in Nashville. One of TREEDC's planning objectives since 2008 is to create more awareness regarding the vast potential of Tennessee startup green companies who are creating jobs and environmental benefits. Bronco Power Boost provides local governmental offices, businesses and private residences with a supplemental electric power source that takes over automatically when power goes out due to storms and other uncontrollable factors.



This eco-friendly back up power source is unique in that it can be installed indoors, is noise free and will power up to six essential circuits automatically for 20-plus hours. Unlike a traditional gas-powered generator, the Bronco Power Boost does not run on gasoline, does not emit dangerous carbon monoxide emissions and does not require cumbersome and unsightly extension cords.

TREEDC applauds business owner Billy Whittaker for his vision and fortitude to invent a product that is environmentally safe, energy independent, scalable and sustainable. Whittaker's work will revolutionize how backup power is provided during a power outage and will provide protection of valuable data for local governments and businesses worldwide.

For more information please click <https://www.broncopowerboost.com/green-energy>

2020 MTAS Award Winners

MTAS is proud of our staff who have been recognized by MTAS leadership and peers for an exceptionally well-done job in 2020. Congratulations to all!



Hobday Award – Pat Hardy, MTAS Municipal Management Consultant

Pat has had significant impact to the agency with his contributions to the leadership team and as the program manager for the management and finance consultants for over 10 years. He has made significant contributions over the years including recently the revision of the Elected Officials Academy and developing new training materials such as the “Culture of Heroes.”



Trailblazer – Emily Godwin, Municipal Finance Training Consultant

Emily’s work with the CMFO program this year makes her a true Trailblazer. She has coordinated with customers, MTAS, and the Tennessee Office of the Comptroller in order to provide a stable program during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her leadership has allowed our customers to complete their certification online, on time, and all while maintaining the integrity of the program.



Trailblazer – David Moore, Police Management Consultant

David is a relatively new hire to MTAS yet he has taken to work on assessment centers like an old pro. This last year, he initiated holding district meetings with chiefs of police; and he serves on the newly created intra-agency committee on public safety representing MTAS. David is not afraid to take on a new challenge or project and when he does tackle a new endeavor, he does it with enthusiasm and professionalism.



Customer Service – Sarah Curtis, Training Consultant

Customers and staff alike enjoy working with Sarah. During her tenure at MTAS she has served as both training coordinator and most recently training consultant for the middle Tennessee region. Sarah’s customers know that they can depend on her to deliver the training they need, when they need it. Even though she has moved on to consulting, she still will not hesitate to take a customer call for help accessing her transcript or registering for a class. Sarah sets the bar for customer service, both internally and with our customers.



Customer Service – Armintha Loveday, Administrative Specialist II

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and the University of Tennessee decided to send employees to work from home, Armintha volunteered to remain at her post in the office so that administrative business could continue as usual. She covered the phones, managed the mail and assisted other agencies in the building so that everyone working remotely could continue to serve their customers from a distance. In addition, when staff returned to the office, she quietly disinfected common touch points at the end of the day to keep everyone healthy.

2020 MTAS Award Winners



Tess Davis, This Bud’s for You – Johanna Owenby, Training Consultant

Her value as a Training team member this year has been exceptional. She was instrumental in transitioning MTAS to a virtual training model for those cities that wanted to continue their Municipal Management Academy (MMA) during the coronavirus outbreak. She was also instrumental in working with other team members to revise MMA programming and working with other teams in updating the Elected Officials Academy. She has been described as “instrumental” and a “hub” for getting things done. She does this all while being friendly and helpful and offering assistance to everyone.

Additionally, the following MTAS staff were recognized by the UT Institute for Public Service as going above and beyond in 2020:



IPS Five Franklins Award

Chris Shults, Grants and Training Specialist



IPS Five Franklins Award

Brad Harris, Finance & Accounting Consultant



2020 Robert S. Hutchinson Outstanding Public Service Professional

Dennis Wolf, Fire Management Consultant



2020 Project of the Year – Barry Brady Act (MTAS)

Melissa Ashburn, Steve Cross, Elisha Hodge, Richard Stokes, Dennis Wolf

2020 MTAS Award Winners

Significant milestones of service to the university are also recognized each year and this year those being recognized are:



10 Years of Service

Dana Deem, Municipal Management Consultant
Stephanie O'Hara, Legal Consultant



20 Years of Service

Frances Adams-O'Brien, Librarian
Gary Jaeckel, Municipal Management Consultant

UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND CLASSES



Online Course: Managing the Drug Fund and Sensitive Property

[Click here to register in K@te](#)

Unite: A Digital Event (ICMA Annual Conference 2020)

September 23-26, 2020 | [Details](#)

Tennessee Government Finance Officers Association 2020 Fall Conference

October 7-8, 2020 | Virtual | [Details](#)

Tennessee City Management Association 2020 Fall Conference

November 3-5, 2020 | Franklin, TN | [Details](#)

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