

City Spotlight: Covington



Tipton County is located north of Memphis and Shelby County, approximated 18 miles from its most southern border to Memphis. Covington is the county seat and the largest of eight incorporated communities: Atoka, Brighton, Munford, Burlison, Garland, Mason and Gilt Edge. The county is one of the fastest growing counties in the state of Tennessee and the Mid-South region. The county offers all the advantages of small-town living with the nearby amenities of a major city.

Date of Incorporation:
1826

Population:
9,038

County:
Tipton

Grand Division:
West Tennessee

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From the Director

Steve Thompson, MTAS Executive Director

We continue to have great efforts underway in support of cities large and small, and I will try to highlight just a few of these in this newsletter. Statewide, we will shortly have the 2011 Annual Report complete and will be able to summarize the work of a year in just a few pages.



Steve Thompson

Certainly one of the more critical and timely efforts upcoming in MTAS is the update to the agency's strategic plan, developed in lockstep with the updates to the plans of both the Institute for Public Service and the University of Tennessee. In the next few weeks, we will be circulating a draft, but to help set the tone, some of the objectives under development will touch on our present and future services. While your comment is not yet necessary, the draft will touch on at least the following:

- We expect to continue to offer the services that cities need, and through a process of review, plan and develop, we will refine the services that we offer to deliver solutions that address current and emerging issues.
- In keeping with changing needs and regulations facing cities and towns, we will develop and deploy new tools to help you to take advantage of opportunities that seem to be developing.
- We will strengthen our partnerships with TML and the professional associations serving municipal employees and will expand our work with state and federal agencies to broaden our support for cities and towns as well.
- The increasing urbanization of the state clearly is bringing new and unmet challenges for the larger cities, and we will develop a strategy to strengthen services to meet these needs.
- And we will continue to build the skills and organization to reach a vision of MTAS as the resource for cities, towns and state agencies on municipal services and issues in Tennessee, combining the talents of a passionate, experienced and well-trained staff with the resources of a major university to support excellence in municipal government.

Good municipal government requires technical service competence, transparent and effective internal and external communication, and competence in the soft skills of governance and community leadership. As we update our strategic plan, these three statements will help us better understand the needs that we will be prepared to address in the coming years.

I do look forward to working with you as we work to enhance the meaningful services of MTAS.

Johnson City Commission Approves Defined Contribution Retirement Program

M. Denis Peterson, City Manager, Johnson City, Tennessee

Based on continuing increases in the city's retirement program costs, in 2008 the city of Johnson City decided to undertake an actuary study of the defined benefit retirement program. The study included a comparison of defined benefit and defined contribution programs, current and estimated future plan costs, and transition projections.

The city has 860 full-time employees and a \$32.3 million payroll. Salary and benefits represent 64 percent of the city's general fund budget.

The city has participated in a defined benefit program since the early 1950's. Over the past 20 years the contribution rate has increased from 7 percent to 19.23 percent. While part of the increase is attributable to adopting benefit enhancements, a significant part is due to recovering investment losses over the past eight years. The city is averaging an actuarial accrued liability funded ratio of approximately 98.4 percent. With the city's current defined benefit program, there is marginal control of the contribution rate, and the city is the sole bearer of the investment risk. The defined benefit program investment rate of return is unpredictable, which makes it difficult to manage. As a result, the city's contribution rate is greatly affected as evidenced by the historical rates and the funded ratio.

Based on this information and a desire by the city commission to have a more predictable retirement budget in the future, the commission voted to approve a new defined contribution retirement program for new employees hired after on or after July 1, 2010. This decision was based on the unsustainable cost of the defined benefit retirement program; ability to better forecast and budget retirement costs; and the desire to share the investment risk with the employee.

Germantown Opens New Fire Station: Fire House 4

On Monday, December 19, 2011, Germantown Fire Chief John Selberg hosted the grand opening for Germantown's newest fire station, Fire House Number 4. The new station replaces a 50-plus year old fire station that was no longer meeting the needs of the community. The new station is two-stories and is a multi-functional building.

For the fire station function on the ground floor, the building has three drive-through bays, a full kitchen with separate food pantries and refrigerators for each shift, a dayroom for the firefighters, a watch desk for receiving alarms and completing paperwork, and a public restroom.

The second floor has individual bedrooms for each firefighter. Each bedroom contains three

individual lockers (one for each of the three shifts), and two bedrooms share a common bathroom with lockable doors. The arrangement meets the state's gender friendly fire station design criteria (T.C.A. § 4-24-302). The weight room is also on the second floor. Because the firefighters sleep on the second floor, the station has a fire pole leading from the second floor to the apparatus bay. Firefighters have the option of sliding the pole or using the stairs.

The first floor contains the fire department's training classroom, which complements the department's burning building and training props located behind the station. The training officer's office connects with the fire station and the training rooms. The large training room can be

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The aerial truck was named for Wolf in recognition of his career contributions to the community. Left to right: Sharon Goldsworthy, Mayor of Germantown; Dennis Wolf; and Patrick Lawton, City Administrator.

Germantown Opens New Fire Station: Fire House 4

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divided into two separate rooms to allow multiple training sessions to be held at one time. Each room has state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment, power connections at each table for computers, and wireless Internet access. The training room has been designated as the city's backup emergency operations center (EOC) if the primary EOC at city hall cannot be used.

Also on the first floor is a satellite office for the police department. The office was designed to allow a patrolman on duty in the eastern part of Germantown to have a place to go to complete paperwork, use a computer, make secure phone calls, etc.

The first floor contains a backup server room to allow the city's servers at city hall to have online backup. In the event of a power failure or other problem at city hall, the backup servers would have current data and the city could switch quickly over to the backup servers for business as usual.

The final function in the building is a backup 911/communications center. The backup center will provide a place for the city to receive and dispatch emergency resources if the communications center at city hall becomes unusable in the event of a tornado or other disaster. The communications center has a backup UPS capable of running the office for one-hour without normal or generator power.

As a critical city facility, the entire building is on an automatic start emergency generator. In the event of a disaster the building can be used continuously regardless of the weather. Because this area of Tennessee is in the New Madrid earthquake zone, the building was designed to be immediately occupiable following an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.7. The building contains many green building features, including energy efficient heating and cooling equipment, lighting, and other features, and Germantown hopes to achieve Silver LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification in the spring.

At the dedication, former Fire Chief Dennis Wolf was honored by the men and women of the fire department, who named the city's aerial truck company for him. Wolf, who retired recently after a 34-plus year career with Germantown and joined the Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) as the fire management consultant, was the fire chief when the new fire station was designed, and construction started on his watch. Chief Selberg said that the aerial truck was named for Wolf in recognition of his career contributions to the community, which included starting the fire department's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) advanced life support program, improving the countywide ambulance service, and establishing the dedicated truck company in 2003. Besides Memphis, Germantown is the only city in Shelby County with a dedicated truck company. While engine companies carry hose and put water on the fire, truck companies perform search and rescue, provide ventilation, control the utilities, and perform other functions to support the work of the engine companies.



MTAS Fire Management Consultant Dennis Wolfe as former Fire Chief of the Germantown Fire Department.



*Dennis Wolf at age 4,
steering a fire patrol pedal car
while wearing his uncle's firefighter hat*



TREEDC Members Receive Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants

The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD) announced on December 12, 2011, that 12 additional Tennessee cities and counties were awarded approximately \$1.1 million in Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (EECBG).

TREEDC communities receiving grants include: Huntsville, Roane County, Sequatchie County and Somerville. These communities join 134 other Tennessee cities and counties that were awarded \$13 million in EECBG grants in 2010. The grants will enable communities to implement cost-effective strategies that reduce total energy expenses and save taxpayer money through improved energy efficiency in buildings and transportation systems.

“The benefits of the EECBG grants are important to Tennessee and the communities receiving the grants,” Molly Cripps, director, Energy Division, ECD, said. “It is a boost to our state’s energy efficiency efforts, allows communities to reduce energy consumption and cut costs, and creates jobs for Tennesseans.”

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Local Government Construction Project Funding Opportunities Discussed



The Clean Tennessee Energy Grant Program provides \$26.4 million over five years for energy efficient construction projects.

The program includes provisions for projects on local government facilities, and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) will accept applications until March 30, 2012. Details and forms are now available at <http://www.tn.gov/environment/energygrants/>.

Agendas for upcoming Tennessee Renewable Energy & Economic Development Council (TREEDC) events in Madisonville (February 24)) and Columbia (March 9) will include information sessions about the application process. TREEDC forums are free. To view the agenda and reserve a seat for Madisonville, [click here](#). To view the agenda and reserve a seat for Columbia, [click here](#).

State Presents TCRS Proposals for Local Government

On January 23, the state Treasurer met with the Legislative Council on Pensions and Insurance to present proposals that would expand retirement program options for local governments if approved and adopted.

Full reports and a video of the presentation are available at the Tennessee State Treasurer’s website. <http://treasury.tn.gov/tcrs/>.

At this website, you will also find a schedule of information seminars offered throughout the state for local governments to learn more about the current and future status of the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System.

MTAS Training Events and Conferences

STORMWATER ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS

How do you defend and collect penalties? How do you avoid problems if a decision is appealed? These classes provide municipal/county attorneys, public officials and municipal staff an understanding of administrative law and the fundamental components of administrative hearings, as well as how to better present evidence to boards. Instructors will discuss procedures of particular hearings such as: stormwater, water and wastewater and property maintenance.

During this highly interactive class, participants will view a video of administrative hearing procedures and witness a mock session that will illustrate the dos and don'ts of administrative hearings. You are not limited to "\$50 a day for the bad guys." With the administrative penalty process, you can assess much higher penalties – in the case of stormwater, for example, \$5,000 per day per violation. This important class is recommended for elected officials, appointed officials, city attorneys, city recorders, codes enforcement officials and utility and public works directors and managers.

February 15 Goodlettsville
February 22 Bartlett

ELECTED OFFICIALS ACADEMY LEVEL II

In cooperation with the town of Jonesborough, MTAS will host an Elected Officials Academy Level II class at the International Storytelling Center at 100 West Main Street in Jonesborough. The Level II Academy will start at 1 p.m. on Friday, February 24. We will finish that day no later than 8 p.m.; the class will resume Saturday morning February 25 at 8:30 and conclude no later than 12:30. The schedule includes training sessions on the topics of human resources, risk management, public works, police review, and water and wastewater operations. You can register and pay online at the MTAS website (www.MTAS.tennessee.edu). The cost is \$200, and registration includes meals and snacks both days. As always, if you need any assistance with registration, please call our office at 865-974-0411.

February 24-25 Jonesborough

Other Events

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

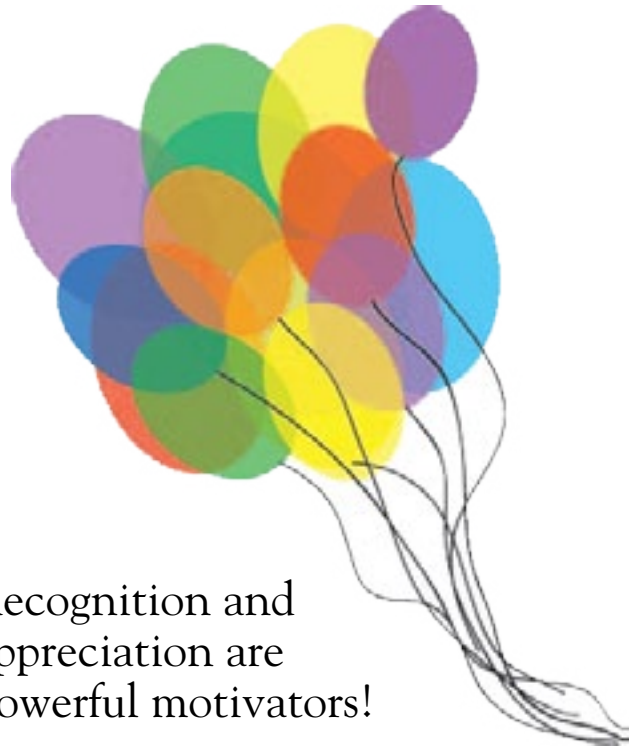
February 15-17 Tennessee Fire Chief's Association Winter Quarterly Meeting, Jackson

February 24 TREEDC East Tennessee Meeting, Madisonville

March 5-6 TML Legislative Conference, Nashville

MARCH 2 IS EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION DAY

Take time to let employees know how much they are appreciated.



Recognition and appreciation are powerful motivators!

