

COUNTY OFFICIALS E-NEWS

Promoting better county government through direct assistance to county officials and their associations.

Budget Time Approaches: Let's Get Prepared

Although the weather is still frigid, we all know that spring is just around the corner. This means the budget season is upon us. Below are a few tips to help guide you through preparing for the budget season.

In developing budgets, the operating department heads, the legislative body, and other elected officials should determine the information needed to make a reasonable decision in approving an operating budget. Some ideas that could be implemented during the planning time are:

1. Reviewing current problems relating to services with the department heads and "brain-storming" possible solutions.
2. Attempting to solve these problems within the present budget appropriations.
3. Reviewing the present economic conditions of the county or community.
4. Determining the status of revenue estimates for the current budget by asking the following questions: (1) Are the local sales tax collections running as expected? (2) What about the property tax and other local taxes?
5. Reviewing the status of expenditure estimates. Are the estimates sufficient to provide the services planned for the current fiscal year?
6. Identifying steps the county can take to improve the prior year's process by asking (1) what information is needed? (2) how can the information be presented to help the decision-making process? (3) do the members of the legislative body and department heads have ideas for improving the budgeting process?



A budgeting calendar should be prepared so that department heads can develop information needed to meet budgeting deadlines.

CTAS is offering several Operating Budget classes across the state in March. The schedule is located on page 2 of this issue. Please contact your County Government Consultant with any questions about the budgeting process. You may register for the Operating Budget classes by visiting the CTAS Training website at <http://www.ctas.tennessee.edu/public/web/ctas.nsf/Training?readform>.

Ask e-Li!

It's budget time!
Have questions?
Check e-Li for answers.

[Operating Budgets](#)
[Capital Budgets](#)
[Debt Management](#)



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County Spotlight

Houston County



County Seat: Erin

Population: 8,426

County Government Consultant:

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Houston County is home to a meteor crash site, known as Wells Creek Basin. The crash site is 8 miles across and created the notable valley. Scientists believe the meteor penetrated the Earth about 2,000 feet before exploding. Geologists still visit Houston County to study the meteor site.

The county seat, Erin, was named by Irish immigrants because the county's fields and woods reminded them of the countryside of their homeland in Ireland. "Erin" is a nickname for Ireland, derived from the Irish Gaelic word, "Éirinn."

For more information, visit
<http://www.tnhistoryforkids.org>



Don't forget to register for County Government Day!

The registration form and additional information can be found online here: <http://tcsa.xmim meetings.com/>

Want to try social media? Check out this guide to getting set up!



[Social Media in Your County](#)



Upcoming Training Opportunities

Operating Budget Workshop

8:30am-12:30pm local time

Instructor(s): CTAS Field Staff

March 3 - Cookeville, Leslie Towne Center

March 4 - Franklin, Embassy Suites

March 5 - Jackson, TN Dept of Transportation (multi-level building)

March 17 - Johnson City, Carnegie Hotel

March 18 - Knoxville, UT Conference Center

March 19 - Dunlap, Citizens Tri County Bank Training Center

March 24 - Manchester, Coffee County Conference Center

March 10 & 11, 2015 - COAT/TCSA County Government Day

[CTAS Training](#) | [Events Calendar](#)

TNECD Adventure Tourism - Applications due April 15

Calling all Tennessee communities who want to highlight their outdoor assets! The Tennessee Adventure Tourism and Rural Development Act of 2011 allows communities to apply to be certified as an adventure tourism district. Certification as a district allows certain businesses to qualify for a jobs tax credit specific to the Adventure Tourism Act.



Applications are due to the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD) by Wednesday, April 15, 2015. The application is available on the TNECD website at <http://www.tn.gov/ecd/AdventureTourism.shtml>. Guidance for local governments is also available here: <http://www.tn.gov/ecd/pdf/AdventureTourismGuidance.pdf>. TNECD will then review all completed applications and approved communities will receive certification for a period of three years.

Any questions regarding TNECD's role in the Adventure Tourism and Rural Development Act or the application process, should be directed toward Ramay Winchester at 615-975-4237 or at ramay.w.winchester@tn.gov.

FEMA Grants Close March 6 at 5:00pm ET

FEMA announced the opening of the [Fiscal Year 2014 \(FY14\) Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response \(SAFER\) application](#), which will close on March 6, 2015 at 5 p.m. ET. The SAFER grant program has two categories: hiring firefighters; and recruiting and retaining volunteer firefighters.

To receive a SAFER grant award, applicants must be registered and have up-to-date information in the online [System for Award Management](#). Registration is required of all Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program applicants and awardees.



Reminder:

Please take a moment to review and confirm your listing in the CTAS County Officials Directory. You can view your listing via the CTAS website at <http://www.ctas.tennessee.edu/public/web/ctas.nsf/Directory?readform>.

We appreciate your helping us keep the Directory up to date! Please contact Liz Gossett (liz.gossett@tennessee.edu) with any questions.



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County Officials E-News is published every month to bring important information to county officials. For any questions or comments about the newsletter, please send Liz Gossett, CTAS E-Media & Information Specialist, an email at liz.gossett@tennessee.edu.