

APPENDIX 14

CENTER FOR GOVERNMENTAL TRAINING & TECHNOLOGY

P. C. (Mac) McLaurin, Jr.

WHO WE ARE

The Center for Governmental Training & Technology (CGT), created in 1973, is a unit within the Enterprise and Community Resource Development program area of the Mississippi State University Extension Service. For over a quarter-century, the CGT has been a leader in the provision of educational programs, specialized publications, and technical assistance to local government officials in Mississippi.

WHAT WE DO

Through its programs, publications, and technical assistance, the CGT aids local government officials, local units of government, and associations of local government officials in their efforts to improve governance at the grassroots and delivery of services to the citizens of Mississippi. The CGT does not take an advocacy role in the business, legislative, or political affairs of the local governments or local government associations with which it works.

Local Government Education

Every four years, some 800-2,500 local elected officials are given responsibility by the electorate for the formulation, adoption, and implementation of public policy in Mississippi's 82 counties and 297 municipalities. Typically, from one-third to one-half of these officials will be newly-elected, having never held public office. In addition, some 2,000 major appointed county and municipal officials assist these elected officials in governing and providing services.

These elected and appointed local government officials need orientation with respect to their duties and responsibilities when they are new to office. They also need continuing education throughout their term of office to help them stay current in the face of constant change. Local government law and practice changes with each session of the Legislature.

The better educated a local official, the better job he will do in meeting the needs of the citizens within the requirements and restrictions of state law. Through a variety of workshops, seminars, and training programs, ranging in length from two hours to two weeks, the CGT helps fulfill the educational needs of local officials.

The CGT currently serves the educational needs of the following associations of local government officials: Mississippi Association of Supervisors, Mississippi Municipal League, Mississippi Association of County Board Attorneys, Mississippi Municipal Clerks and Tax Collectors

Association, Mississippi Chancery Clerks Association, Mississippi Association of County Administrators/Comptrollers, Building Officials Association of Mississippi, Mississippi Assessors and Collectors Association, Mississippi Chapter of the International Association of Assessing Officers, Mississippi E-911 Coordinators Association, and the Mississippi Association of County Engineers. The CGT works with these associations to plan and implement a variety of educational programs and publications.

New and rapidly expanding areas of educational activity are emergency management and homeland security. The CGT, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, and the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security are teaming to present a wide variety of educational programs and training to emergency managers and elected and appointed officials at the local level and the general public.

In the design and implementation of educational programs, the CGT collaborates with individuals, organizations, and firms in the private sector and with most of the state-wide elected officials and agencies within the three branches of state government. In particular, on the state level, the CGT coordinates major educational programming with the Office of the State Auditor, the Office of the Attorney General, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, the Office of the Secretary of State, and the Mississippi State Tax Commission.

Certification Programs

In cooperation with the Office of the State Auditor, the CGT oversees legislatively-mandated certification programs for county purchase clerks, receiving clerks, and inventory control clerks and manages the professional education programs for county supervisors and county administrators required by the County Government Reorganization Act of 1988. With the Mississippi State Tax Commission, the CGT provides legislatively-mandated certification training for tax assessors and appraisal personnel. The CGT's three-year Certification Program for Municipal Clerks and Tax Collectors and the Mississippi Education and Certification Program for assessors and appraisers are nationally recognized.

Leadership Development

The CGT also works in the area of leadership development to provide leadership training programs for citizens and local government officials. Several hundred individuals have received intensive training in principles of leadership, communications, community development, and state and local government.

Programs for Youth

In cooperation with the 4-H Youth Development program area of the Mississippi State University Extension Service, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, and the Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the CGT coordinates an annual Legislative Page Program for young people participating in 4-H clubs throughout the state. In addition, the CGT supports the efforts of the Mississippi Association of Supervisors (MAS) in the MAS's county government education program in the elementary schools in the state.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance, on a “time-available” basis, is provided by the CGT to counties and municipalities in such areas as general management, financial administration, personnel administration, leadership development, economic development, community facilities and services, and solid waste management. In addition, technical assistance in the areas of information technology and web site development and maintenance is provided to local units of government and associations of local government officials.

MAJOR PUBLICATIONS

- County Government in Mississippi, 3rd Edition* (2004).
Mississippi Municipal Audit & Accounting Guide (2003; with Office of the State Auditor).
Mississippi County Financial Accounting Manual (2002; with Office of the State Auditor).
County Government Legal Digest (2002; with Office of the State Auditor).
Municipal Government in Mississippi (2001).
A Handbook for County Board Attorneys by Benjamin E. Griffith (2000).
Mississippi Association of County Board Attorneys Membership Manual and Directory (2000).
Mississippi Appraisal Manual (1998; with Mississippi State Tax Commission).
Municipal Election Officials’ Handbook (1996, 1997, 1998; with Office of the Secretary of State).
County Election Officials’ Handbook (1999; with Office of the Secretary of State).

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