

# Brighter Tennessee



A Publication of the UT Institute for Public Service

## Building a Skilled Workforce In Tennessee

### Inside:

NCEL Addresses Gap in  
Leadership Training for UT  
Administrative Employees









Cover Story | Skilled Workforce

Brighter Tennessee is a publication of  
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UT President Visits IPS Customers in East Tennessee .....6

Skilled Workforce .....8

Naifeh Center Launches Leadership Development Program.....12

Naifeh Center Assists TDCI With Strategic Planning.....16

MTAS’ Tennessee Retail Alliance .....18

CPM Program is Approved For Veteran Benefits.....20

CPM Graduate Tim Ellis Recieves 2019 TCMA Award.....22

Former IPS Intern Lands Town Administrator Job .....23

Tickle College Of Engineering Senior Design Showcase 2019 .....24

SBIR Event Highlights Grant Opportunities.....26



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## Vice President's Message

## A Word from Dr. Byrd

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A previous University of Tennessee marketing campaign featured various words that included the letters UT. You might remember seeing ads and billboards with the words SleUTH, FUTure, OUTreach, SolUTIONs and others. That campaign might be long gone, but one of the things we still focus on and take pride in is OUTreach and finding SolUTIONs for our customers.

Our consultants and trainers across the state are dedicated to working closely with customers to help them identify solUTIONs for issues facing them. Our customers know they can count on IPS consultants to help them find the answers.

Just as researchers are thrilled with new discoveries, our consultants and trainers get excitement from helping customers find solUTIONs to their issues. Instead of laboratories, our employees do their work in city halls, courthouses, state office buildings, on manufacturing floors, at outdoor forensic training centers and in classrooms leading language courses.

You'll find several examples in this issue of Connect.

When the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance (TDCI) started to undertake a strategic planning process, they reached out to our Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership (NCEL) to lead them. TDCI Deputy Commissioner Lorrie Brouse was familiar with NCEL and asked if they would guide the planning process.

"The Naifeh Center facilitation ensured we had meaningful and quality engagement while we successfully completed our work," Brouse said. You can read the full story about the project later in this issue.

The NCEL also found a solUTION for city and state employees who are not always able to attend their training on-site. Earlier this year, the center launched online certificate training programs. Participants have said they like the flexibility offered by the online training.

You can also read more about the Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) housed in our Center for Industrial Services. PTAC consultants work with business owners to coach them through the government contracting process. The PTAC consultants find solUTIONs for these business owners to grow their companies by helping them sell their products to government departments.

Whether it's a city with 275 residents, a small, veteran-owned business or a refugee community in Nashville, our consultants and trainers are the experts in finding solUTIONs to the issues at hand.

We're grateful you're our partner in our IPS mission to improve the lives of Tennesseans.



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Dr. Byrd and UT Interim President Randy Boyd tour Jost Plant  
in Greeneville, TN with Plant manager Michael Crichlow

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## UT President Visits IPS Customers in East Tennessee

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UT Institute for Public Service agencies recently showcased two of their projects for Interim UT President Randy Boyd, who made stops in Upper East Tennessee.

The first stop was at Jost International in Greeneville where the UT Center for Industrial Services (CIS) worked with the company on Lean Manufacturing, Value Stream Mapping and Toyota Kata. Jost, which manufactures landing gear, fifth wheels, kingpins, hitches and steering solutions, contacted CIS to help streamline production in order to expand its business.

CIS also connected the manufacturer with the UT Knoxville industrial engineering department. Students Sagar Padghan and Kaustubh Vibhandik worked on the design of the single piece flow assembly line for Jost.

Boyd's second visit took place in Jonesborough and highlighted the work the UT County Technical Assistance Service (CTAS) and the UT Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) completed for Washington County. The director of the Washington County Development Office asked MTAS Consultant Pat Hardy if he could facilitate a retreat similar to retreats she used to attend when she previously worked for the city of Johnson City. Hardy reached

out to his CTAS counterpart, Rick Hall, and together they facilitated a retreat for the group.

Following the success of that retreat, the county asked Hardy and Hall to facilitate strategic planning for the Washington County commission, as well as the county's elected officials and department heads. Hardy, Hall and IPS HR Manager Tomi Rogers led that session that also included a leadership component.

As a result of these three inter-related efforts Washington County has a comprehensive strategic plan with the combined contributions and buy-in from the full county commission, the county elected officials and department heads, and the staff of the county development office.

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**Pictured Right (top): Washington County Mayor Joe Grandy talks about Strategic Planning**

**Pictured Right (bottom): Jost Plant manager Michael Crichlow explains changes made on the plant floor.**

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2550

SKILLED WORKFORCE	SUITE 200
AMERICAN NATIONAL INSURANCE	SUITE 200
ARDENT LEARNING	SUITE 350
CAPITALSOURCE FINANCE LLC	SUITE 250
COMMUNITY HEALTH SYSTEMS	SUITE 300
DIMENSION DATA	SUITE 200
EPICENTRIC CONSULTING LLC	SUITE 200
HOMELAND	SUITE 180
KELLI HAAS & ASSOCIATES	SUITE 200
PRIME LENDING	SUITE 200
PRIME CAPITAL INVESTMENT ADVISORS	SUITE 250
RARE DISEASE THERAPEUTICS, INC.	SUITE 150
JOHNSON BRAUND, INC.	SUITE 270
REGUS	SUITE 200
TALESTRY	SUITE 200
TFT GLOBAL, INC.	SUITE 200
WELLS FARGO HOME MORTGAGE	SUITE 190
WORLD WIDE TECHNOLOGY	SUITE 200
ZEITLIN & COMPANY, REALTORS	SUITE 100
MIDTOWN TITLE, LLC.	SUITE 200
LHC GROUP	SUITE 300



“Over the next decade nearly three and a half million manufacturing jobs likely need to be filled. The skills gap is expected to result in **two million** of those **jobs going unfilled.**”

- The Manufacturing Institute's report:  
The Skills Gap in U.S. Manufacturing.

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Pictured Left: Abe Mbow, co-founder of Skilled Workforce and Navy veteran

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By Kellie May, IPS communications intern

In Tennessee, where manufacturing is a key component to the state's economy, the shortage of skilled workers is a crucial challenge. Abe Mbow, co-founder of Skilled Workforce, is working to address this challenge by matching skilled laborers with job opportunities in the construction, manufacturing and warehousing industries.

Mbow approached Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) Counselor Debbie Barber for guidance on connecting his firm Skilled Workforce with Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) procurement opportunities. Tennessee PTAC is operated by the UT Center for Industrial Services.

"Abe is a go-getter and wants to do everything the right way," Barber said. "When he is given an assignment or a task, he puts all his efforts into it."

Mbow is a U.S. Navy veteran with over 10 years of honorable service. Before starting Skilled Workforce with his business partner Jarrod Thomas, he worked for Coca-Cola in various management roles across logistics and sales. Their business is finding success by providing turnkey recruiting, staffing, payroll and insurance solutions that enable contractors to go to work right away. It has now been operating for almost two years in Nashville, providing construction, manufacturing and warehousing businesses with skilled workers whom they find, hire, vet and pay weekly. Their value proposition allows their clients to focus on their core activities, control their labor output, reduce their insurances exposure and maximize productivity.



With the help of Barber, *Skilled Workforce* became accredited as a SDVOSB and registered with SAM, which allows the company to capitalize on set aside procurement incentives from the federal and state government. Skilled Workforce is also a certified Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) entity registered with Metro Nashville and Nashville Metropolitan Airport Authority (NMAA). These certifications have enabled Skilled Workforce to become established in the industry, and opened opportunities to partner with prime contractors for government contracting and other commercial construction projects.

An important component of creating a new business and hiring strong workers is making sure to have the appropriate tools and resources to train employees on different aspects of the business and the job.

“Part of building a solid company culture is to center it on strong values,” Mbow said. “At Skilled Workforce, we believe everything starts with safety.”

Skilled Workforce encourages new hires to take Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10- and 30-hour courses in order to ensure their safety on-site. These programs equip participants with a strong understanding of recognition, avoidance, abatement and prevention, and as health hazards in the workplace. The resulting certifications help prevent accidents, and employees can take this knowledge with them far past their first contracting job. Skilled Workforce employees can easily access courses through its website and complete safety modules online before being assigned on the job.

Mbow is dedicated to hiring transitioning military service members into the civilian sector to work in skilled labor jobs.

“Hiring veterans is not only the right thing to do, most come out of the military with skills easily transferable to civilian jobs, allowing them to start successful post-military careers right away,” he said. To build its talent pipeline, Skilled Workforce partners with trade schools and military bases’ transitions programs to hire transitioning military service members.

In addition to his counseling with Barber, Mbow attended PTAC trainings to receive advice directly from government personnel on steps for selling products and services to their agencies. PTAC is funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Defense and the Defense Logistics Agency, allowing it to offer these trainings at no cost to small businesses like Skilled Workforce.

“PTAC is a wonderful organization for someone like me, transitioning out of a corporate role and starting a new venture,” Mbow said. “Debbie expertly provided me a blue-print I followed...from helping me to tailor my capability statement to assisting me with the bidding process. Thank you Debbie and PTAC!”

If you would like to learn more about how Tennessee PTAC counselors can help guide your organization through the federal procurement process visit [www.ptac.tennessee.edu](http://www.ptac.tennessee.edu) today.

To learn more about Skilled Workforce and its services visit [www.skilledworkforce.com](http://www.skilledworkforce.com) today.

## Naifeh Center Launches Leadership Development Program

By Patrick Mills and Will Porter, NCEL

Until recently, administrative staff within IPS have had limited opportunities for formal leadership training. Recognizing the need to provide leadership development opportunities for all staff, IPS began the inaugural Administrative Professionals Academy (APA). The Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership (NCEL) worked with IPS Administration to develop and implement this leadership training program.



“The APA was developed in response to this internal need. It offers an exciting opportunity for administrative staff to learn more about themselves, develop strong professional networks and to enhance their leadership skills”, said Will Porter, training specialist at NCEL.

The APA is a two-year program allowing participants to grow their leadership abilities and professional networks through cross-agency collaboration, group

learning activities, and exposure to senior leaders across IPS and The University of Tennessee. The inaugural APA cohort is comprised of administrative staff from four IPS agencies as well as staff from the UT President’s Office. It offers an opportunity that has not previously existed for administrative staff.

“The APA has been a great program so far because it’s given me the opportunity to meet and network with people I may not have had the chance to meet with before now. I look forward to the gradual completion of the program and getting to know my classmates better,” said Alison Ross, assistant to UT President Randy Boyd.

APA participants meet quarterly for a full day of learning and interaction, and complete over 20 hours of online instruction and project-based learning throughout the program. Each APA participant participates in self-reflection activities, completes a personal development assessment to learn about their individual strengths and priorities, and creates and delivers an individual leadership presentation.

“The APA has provided me an opportunity to focus on self-awareness, identify my strengths and growth opportunities, discover what I value and expect from leadership, and realize how effective implementing those same values from my position can be, all while networking with my peers. I believe that what I am learning will be both professionally and personally



beneficial and am excited to see how the academy progresses” said Kelley Myers, municipal codes coordinator at MTAS.

IPS HR and Operations Manager Tomi Rogers said “When I learned the Institute for Public Service was creating a professional development academy for our administrative professionals, I felt excited about this new opportunity. This initiative will provide our already talented staff with professional and personal development aimed toward their goals and skills set.

I am proud to serve with an institute that lends its time and resources toward the support of our staff.”

The APA program is one of many new initiatives in development for administrative staff. A separate professional development for administrative staff will launch soon through UT Human Resources. These two complementary programs will offer multiple opportunities for administrative staff in IPS and the university to grow, develop and enhance their leadership capabilities.

Grants & Awards

UT CIS Wins Competitive Harwood Grant

After Hurricane Florence hit the Carolinas last summer, leaving many towns flooded for weeks, the UT Center for Industrial Services (CIS) answered a call from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to provide training to workers involved in the clean-up efforts.

OSHA awarded UT CIS with a Susan Harwood Training Grant to provide training and education programs for employers and workers on recognition, avoidance, and prevention of safety and health hazards in their workplaces.

“We are confident that we helped workers stay safe with our good existing training programs,” says Health and Safety program manager Walter Idol.

“When these workers are called upon to clean up hazardous materials from big weather events like hurricanes and tornadoes, it is important that they

stay safe. We have also provided a valuable service to the agencies responsible for managing these disasters.”

This year, Idol, Chuck Gluck, and Bryan Lane, UT CIS’ safety trainers, have trained 1,050 workers in Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.

OSHA awards grants on a competitive basis through its Harwood Training Grant Program. Harwood helped develop OSHA standards to protect workers while working in the agency in the early, important years from 1980-1997.

OSHA began awarding training grants in 1978. Since that time, approximately \$205 million dollars has been awarded to approximately 1,000 organizations to provide training on a variety of safety and health topics.





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MTAS Executive Director Margaret Norris, Management Consultant Warren Nevad and Fire Consultant Steve Cross on their way to the ICMA Closing Session in Nashville, TN.

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## Naifeh Center assists TDCI with Strategic Planning Process



By NCEL Staff

At IPS, we build relationships with our customers. Part of relationship building is letting customers know they can call on us whenever they need assistance. One such phone call came recently from the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance (TDCI). Lorrie Brouse, deputy commissioner asked the Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership (NCEL) for assistance in this process. The process and time constraints seemed a bit daunting; building an effective strategic plan can be time-consuming and very challenging. However, NCEL was already involved with the department through several leadership development programs, and TDCI trusted NCEL to guide them through the process.

“The Naifeh Center facilitation ensured we had meaningful and quality engagement while we successfully completed our work,” Brouse said.

Over the course of several months, NCEL staff assisted TDCI in gathering data related to its perceived Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). NCEL held several strategic planning sessions with senior TDCI leaders to identify and discuss key drivers of the agency’s activities. The senior team developed a framework to formulate their own mission, vision, values and strategic goals.

Deputy Commissioner Brouse commented on these sessions saying, “We powered through and completed the mission and vision statements, came up with our core values and made good progress on developing the strategic goals. We wasted no time, and the Naifeh Center staff listened to all of us while keeping us on task as well. It was a mighty hill to climb, but they led us all the way up the mountain!”

Pictured Left to Right - Martha Kelley (CIS), TDCI Commissioner Carter Lawrence, former TDCI Commissioner Julie Mix McPeak, Dr. Macel Ely (NCEL), and TDCI Deputy Commissioner, Lorrie Brouse

By Angie Carrier, MTAS Municipal Management Consultant

Tennessee cities are the economic engine of our state. For many communities, sales tax is the predominant revenue stream to provide services to the citizens of Tennessee. MTAS's new Tennessee Retail Alliance will provide a vehicle to assist communities in promoting economic development through retail recruitment, to increase jobs and increase their sales tax revenue.

Because MTAS strives to improve the lives of Tennesseans by providing the best customer service to our cities, we have identified a need for additional support for cities and towns as they work on retail recruitment efforts. The Tennessee Retail Alliance will address this need.

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### **The Tennessee Retail Alliance will take a three-tiered approach in supporting municipal retail recruitment:**

- Education, including assistance with the Tennessee Retail Academy benchmarks,
  - Assistance with identifying and marketing properties with the Site Strategies technology, and
  - Provide marketing at relevant regional and national events
- 

These events include the International Council Shopping Center events including the Tennessee Retail Academy in conjunction with the TN/KY Idea Exchange in Nashville, the ICSC Southeast Regional Conference in Atlanta and RECon in Las Vegas, which has the largest show floor in the industry for retail deal making.



Angie Carrier, MTAS Municipal Management Consultant presents the concept of the Tennessee Retail Alliance at the Tennessee Retail Academy sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development this summer in Nashville.

Prior to finalizing the structure to the Tennessee Retail Alliance, MTAS would love your input on your needs in retail recruitment, your willingness to participate, and how to determine membership dues.

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey below:  
<https://utk.questionpro.com/t/AOjrVZe4Jq>







## Certified Public Manager® Program Approved for Veteran Training

By Trent Clagg, NCEL

The Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership has received approval from the Veterans Administration through the Tennessee Higher Education Commission for the training of veterans and their eligible dependents in the Certified Public Manager® (CPM®) program.

This is a great opportunity for those seeking more development in their careers, to take advantage of the available benefit for their advancement.

The CPM® curriculum is for those that would like to be challenged in their careers and be exposed to new ideas. Many participants are seizing the chance to make a difference in their agency and to join a lifelong network of other professionals. With the recent approval for veteran training, participants will be enriched with the invaluable experience from those who have served in military roles.

The CPM® program is a year-long program that meets once a month. As the program progresses, participants complete a Capstone Project by choosing a problem that needs to be fixed in their agency. By understanding all seven competencies in the curriculum and combining program experiences, participants can propose and implement a solution to the problem. Issues and problems are being corrected all over the state due to the diligent work of the CPM® participants. In 2020, the CPM® program

is expanding to West Tennessee with classes held in Jackson in addition to the classes in Nashville and Knoxville. More information can be found at [www.leadership.tennessee.edu/cpm](http://www.leadership.tennessee.edu/cpm).

“I found out about the TN CPM program from a good friend of mine and I thought that the program would be a great opportunity for me because I have a passion for leadership and management training based upon my prior military career,” said Michael Parson, a current student of the CPM® program and veteran.

“Initially, I was unsure about getting into the program based on affordability, but when I learned that the TN CPM was approved through the VA, I jumped on the opportunity because I had just enough VA educational benefits to cover me through the program.”



(L - R): Michael Parson Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, Rick Scarbrough UT LEIC, and Joseph Waldrum Tennessee Highway Safety Office work on an exercise.

## Naifeh Center Launches Online Training Certificates

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By Patrick Mills, NCEL

Starting early in 2019, the Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership (NCEL) noticed that their customer base continuously asked for online leadership training. Director Macel Ely and Training Coordinator Patrick Mills started putting together curriculum that would provide relevant training for anyone involved in state and local government anytime, anywhere they had access to a computer.

“The NCEL Online Training was created because our external client base expressed the need, so Dr. Ely and I came up with 10 certificates that would be great professional development opportunities,” Mills said.

In February, NCEL had a soft release of two certificates, Foundations to Leadership Levels 1-3 and Fundamentals in Management Levels 1-3, both of these certificates require over 75 hours to complete. The NCEL staff marketed the training statewide and had a great initial turnout.

Becky Peels of Monroe County Circuit Court enrolled in Fundamentals in Management Levels 1-3 and was the first person to compete the certificate.

“The Fundamentals in Management Courses have been beneficial to me by helping me recognize situations that I had not seen before in the workplace,” she said. “The program has helped

me to solve situations by using different methods of problem solving. It has also shown me ways to motivate myself and coworkers to be more efficient. The courses are so informative pertaining to productivity, individuality and helping the people we serve.”

Rhonda Ronnow of the Tennessee Housing Development Agency also enrolled in the Fundamental in Management certificate.

“The Fundamentals in Management Certificate program is a great opportunity to enhance your leadership skills,” Ronnow said. “It provides real-life scenarios to help navigate different situations that arise when managing a team. The course provides flexibility to meet any busy schedule to boost your skills.”

At the start of July, NCEL released eight more online training certificates, these certificates cover a wide range of topics from HR Fundamentals, Foundations of Marketing and Communication and Diversity and Inclusion. Customer feedback since the release has been overwhelmingly positive and show that the online training that NCEL is providing is hitting every needed mark.

For questions about NCEL Online Training, please contact Patrick Mills at [patrick.mills@tennessee.edu](mailto:patrick.mills@tennessee.edu) or 865-974-6624, or go to [www.leadership.tennessee.edu/ncel-online-training](http://www.leadership.tennessee.edu/ncel-online-training)





## Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership INSTITUTE for PUBLIC SERVICE

The Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership Online Training provides relevant and quality training for everyone involved in state and local government anytime, anywhere. Regardless of your location, regardless of the time of day, if you have access to a computer and the Internet, you have access to Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership Online Training.

For questions about NCEL Online Training please contact Patrick Mills at [patrick.mills@tennessee.edu](mailto:patrick.mills@tennessee.edu) or 865-974-6624.

[Click Here for Online Training Flyer](#)

[Click Here to Register for Online Training](#)

### CERTIFICATES:

Foundations to Leadership Lv 1-3

\$150 for each level or \$350 for entire 3-level suite (75 Hours)

This certificate will give you proven techniques that will enhance your skills to make better decisions, resolve conflicts, improve employee performance and lead change throughout your organization.

Fundamentals in Management Lv 1-3



## **CPM Graduate and Goodlettsville City Manager Tim Ellis Receives 2019 TCMA Award of Excellence in Municipal Government**

By Patrick Mills, NCEL

Goodlettsville City Manager Tim Ellis, a Certified Public Manager (CPM) graduate received the Tennessee City Managers Association Award of Excellence in Municipal Government at the group's annual conference.

The CPM program is facilitated by the Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership (NCEL). To graduate from CPM, participants must attend monthly classes, complete an online portion of the program, and develop and present a capstone project that could potentially fix a need or issue in their organization. Ellis decided to tackle improving customer service delivery, create a more efficient approach to government and enhance city services and the roles of city employees.

The city analyzed each of its nine departments to determine how each handled customer service and what improvements could be made. The goal of the project was to ensure that citizens were responded to in a quick, efficient manner that left them with a positive impression. As a result of this review, the city created a Centralized Customer Service Center allowing those who conduct business with the city to be able to communicate their needs with informed professionals in the most efficient way

possible. The customer service center improved work request processes in each department. They eliminated unnecessary steps, and allowed work requests to be mainstreamed so they could be completed in the most efficient manner possible. An existing city employee was given the title of customer service manager to oversee all customer service functions. Members of the public works and recreation departments, with known customer service and interpersonal skills, were selected to be part of the customer service center, along with administrative staff. The customer service center is at city hall and all workstations are equipped with the most recent customer request management (CRM) software. The city upgraded phone systems trained employees in the new process. The changes resulted in a 38 percent increase in the efficiency of answering customer calls and a 46 percent decrease in the amount of time it took to respond to service requests. The program also generated an estimated annual savings in excess of \$52,000.

“It was a phenomenal honor for the city of Goodlettsville to receive the Excellence in Municipal Government Award this year at the Tennessee Municipal League. It truly exemplifies my two greatest professional foundations – those being:

One, to always be a student of the game that you are in; and two, always surround yourself with great people,” Ellis said.

“Even though a big part of the award was based on my CPM Capstone project, it would not have been possible without the lessons learned in the CPM program and the great employees of the city of Goodlettsville.”



(L - R): President Eric Stuckey, Goodlettsville City Manager Tim Ellis, Mayor Jeff Duncan, Assistant City Manager Julie High, Assistant to the City Manager Allison Baker and Customer Service Manager Tracie Matthews received the excellence award during the TML Annual Conference.

## Internship Experiences

## Former Public Service Intern Lands Town Administrator Job



Alli Gantte, who served as an IPS Public Service intern last spring in the town of Mount Carmel, recently was named as town administrator in Pacolet, S.C.

Gantte received her master's in public administration from East Tennessee State University and her bachelor's in business administration from UT Knoxville. She is a native of Dandridge.



## **Tickle College of Engineering Senior Design Showcase 2019**

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By Kenny Smith, Northeast Tennessee Solutions Consultant

The Tickle College of Engineering at UT Knoxville hosted the inaugural Senior Design Showcase recently. The projects, several of which involved the UT Center for Industrial Services, featured work from exemplary students in a variety of programs including engineering and business.

More than 125 teams of engineering students from all eight departments of the college were present to explain how they took real world challenges from their clients and came up with creative, innovative and practical solutions as a team. Senior design—also known as capstone design—is the final educational element that ties together all the engineering, science and humanities learnings as the students transition to the next phase of their lives.

A few of the capstone projects are highlighted to the right. If you are interested in collaborating with UT faculty to address your challenges, find your local UT CIS Solutions Consultant by emailing [cis@tennessee.edu](mailto:cis@tennessee.edu) or visiting [www.cis.tennessee.edu](http://www.cis.tennessee.edu).

### **Fitness Analyzer**

The Electrical Engineering and Computer Science department sponsored a project that created a working connected/smart device that analyzes an athlete's breathing during exercise and shows the results on an iPhone and Android device.

### **Inventory Management System**

UT Industrial Engineering department students and staff established a new inventory replenishment system for T&T, a local biomedical startup company.

### **Industrial Robotics**

UT CIS supported two student teams to develop robotic systems to improve safety and throughput at Accu-Router, a custom CNC machine fabricator.

### **Large Scale Additive Manufacturing**

Mechanical Aerospace and Biomedical Engineering (MABE) students tackled a cutting- edge additive manufacturing problem presented by researchers at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. The students successfully conceptualized, designed, built and programmed an “out of plane” printer to significantly reduce post process time and cost for tooling applications.







Did you know the Small Business Innovation Research Program provides over \$3.5 billion per year to small U.S.-owned companies in order to develop new products and services?

“Small businesses are often unaware of the resources available to them through Research & Development grants and contracts,” said Tennessee Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) Counselor Russell Toone. The Tennessee PTAC is housed in the UT Center for Industrial Services.

The Tennessee PTAC team hosted the SBIR/STTR Technology & Commercialization Forum in Nashville recently to help small businesses understand how to take advantage of these R&D contract/grant opportunities. PTAC was proud to partner with Launch Tennessee and Nashville Business Incubation Center in presenting this event in which over 20 small businesses participated.

“This type of training is not available anywhere else in Tennessee,” notes Toone. “This is a unique opportunity to explore funding opportunities with the Department of Defense, and other federal agencies. Topics range from computer software and hardware applications, advanced/additive manufacturing innovations, physical science, human factors engineering and more.”

Topics at this event included:

- Overview of the SBIR/STTR program
- State of Tennessee grants & matching funds
- Technology commercialization strategies
- How to pitch technology concepts
- Small business SBIR success stories
- Protecting your intellectual property
- Contract accounting requirements
- DOD SBIR Proposal Tips

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Presenter Eric Eurich (pictured right) encouraged participants to consider the following statement when putting in a government contracting bid: **“What do they need to hear versus what do we want to say?”**

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