



State Auditor
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OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR

E-Update

*The official online news
publication of the Office
of the State Auditor*

January 24, 2014

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1. Reminder: CTAS Training

Only a few spots remain for the CTAS training session on Thursday, January 30. The training session will be held at the Office of the State Auditor's St. Paul Office from 9:00 a.m. until approximately 1:00 p.m.

The session is designed for those users who have limited or no experience using CTAS. A training workbook will be provided.

To register for the session, please contact Mr. Mark Albarado at (651) 282-6114 or at Mark.Albarado@osa.state.mn.us.

2. Update: Volunteer Fire Relief Association Working Group

The Volunteer Fire Relief Association Working Group met on January 22. The Working Group conducted a final review of its legislative proposals and adopted them with a few minor modifications.

The Group's legislative proposals include numerous technical changes that eliminate out-of-date statutory references and provide for better statutory construction. The Working Group's proposals also clarify a reporting exception for certain municipalities, and update the definition of a municipality for relief association purposes to include certain joint powers entities and fire districts.

Working Group meeting materials are available at:

<http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=reliefworkinggroup>.

3. Available: TIF Educational Videos

The OSA has produced the first in a series of educational and instructional videos on Tax Increment Financing. The first two videos in the series, “Introduction to Tax Increment Financing” and “The History of TIF and Why It Matters” can be found on the OSA website at:

[www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=trainingopportunities#TaxIncrementFinancing\(TIF\)Division](http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=trainingopportunities#TaxIncrementFinancing(TIF)Division).

4. Avoiding Pitfalls: Important Information on Filing OSA Reporting Forms

On April 8, 2014, Microsoft will no longer support the Windows XP operating system or any of the programs in its Office 2003 software suite, which includes Word 2003 and Excel 2003.

After April 8, 2014 the State Auditor’s Form Entry System (SAFES) will no longer accept documents saved in the default file format created by Office 97 through Office 2003, which includes Excel files with the extension “.xls.”

Currently, 2013 Reporting Forms available for download in SAFES are posted in the Excel 2007 through 2013 default file format of “.xlsx”. Prior to April 8, 2014, “.xls” versions of the 2013 Reporting Forms will be available upon request, and both the “.xlsx” and “.xls” formats can be submitted through SAFES. After April 8, 2014, SAFES will no longer accept Excel forms with the “.xls” extension.

As an alternative to purchasing an updated version of Excel or the entire Office software suite, an entity may choose to complete its reporting forms using Apache OpenOffice. OpenOffice is an open-source software suite that can be downloaded and used free of charge. The OSA has found this to be a secure, reliable alternative. Updates to the 2013 Reporting Forms have been made in an effort to ensure that they may be completed using OpenOffice.

If you are interested in using OpenOffice to upload your completed forms to SAFES, please contact the OSA to obtain copies of your forms in a format that will work best with this program. If you have used OpenOffice in the past, it is also important to upgrade to the latest version. Information about OpenOffice and links to download the program are available at:

<http://www.openoffice.org/>.

If you are interested in signing up to receive an e-mail version of the E-Update regularly, [click here](#).

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