M E D I A  A D V I S O R Y

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County leaders to set national policies, explore innovations during NACo annual conference

Sec. Sebelius highlights NACo annual conference, July 19-22, in Tarrant County, Texas

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Featuring guest speaker Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, county leaders from across the country will meet July 19-22 in Tarrant County, Texas at the 2013 NACo Annual Conference: County Solutions and Idea Marketplace to establish national policies affecting counties and work collaboratively to find innovative solutions to challenges facing American communities.

More than 2,000 elected and appointed county officials, exhibitors, presenters and guests are expected to participate in the conference at the Fort Worth Convention Center. Implementation of the Affordable Care Act and protection of the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds are key issues to be discussed during the four-day conference.

NACo President Chris Rodgers, commissioner, Douglas County, Neb., said NACo’s annual conference is the most important gathering of county officials of the year.

“The County Solutions and Idea Marketplace offers the best opportunity for leaders in county government to determine our federal legislative priorities and set a course of action to meet the challenges facing the communities we serve,” Rodgers said. “We are pleased that Secretary Sebelius will join us at this critical time as the nation prepares for historic changes in our health care system.”

Sebelius will open the Monday, July 22 General Session with remarks about implementation of the Affordable Care Act, followed by a panel discussion entitled “Where is Healthcare Going? The Public Sector Impact.” This panel will be comprised of former Health and Human Services Secretary, Gov. Michael Leavitt; Chief Medical Office for UnitedHealth Group, Dr. Richard Migliori; Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe, and Dr. Timothy McBride, professor, Brown School,

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Washington University in St. Louis.

Rodgers said NACo’s efforts to protect the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds will be a major issue of discussion. NACo released important new research last month on the impact of changes to the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds on counties and their residents. The paper explores the unique characteristics of municipal bonds, such as the locally-driven nature of municipal financing and its focus on infrastructure. Featuring profiles of 45 counties, the study provides estimates of the impact of proposed changes to the tax-exempt status of municipal bond interest on counties.

Another priority issue will be cyber security, an issue Rodgers made a NACo priority this year. Cyber security workshops will discuss tools and best practices that county officials can implement to protect counties against cyber attacks.

Other highlights of NACo’s Annual Conference include:

- **Technology-Innovation Summit**
  8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.,
  Friday, July 19
  Room: Ballroom A
  Topics: How state and local governments have used technology to help shift criminal justice responsibilities from the state prisons to local county officials; managing threats in the digital age; and how county governments have implemented “big data” strategies to improve decision-making, reduce costs and improve service delivery. See page 70 of the committee meetings document to review the agenda and guest speakers.

- **Opening General Session**
  3:15 p.m. – 5 p.m.
  Saturday, July 20
  Room: Exhibit Hall A
  Panel Discussion: Government Innovation – Governing in Times of Transition. Moderator: Erin Waters, Governing magazine. Panelists: Commissioner Lenny Eliason, Athens County, Ohio; County Executive Michael Hein, Ulster County, N.Y.; and Board of Commissioners President Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County, Ill.
  Featured Speaker: Matthew K. Rose, chairman and CEO, BNSF Railway Company.

- **Closing General Session**
  Monday, July 22
  2:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
  Room: Exhibit Hall A
  Featured Speakers: J.R. Martinez, army veteran, actor, author, and motivational speaker; and U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius.

Click here for more information about General Session guest speakers.
Educational Sessions
Conference participants will attend a variety of educational workshop sessions to gain greater understanding of issues affecting county government. Examples include: Smart Partnerships for Providing Cost Effective Indigent Defense; Community Health Needs Assessment and Strategies to Improve County Health; Meeting the Dual Challenges of Emergency Response and Patient Security; Maximize Environmental Benefits with Existing Spending; How Community Development Programs Impact Local Public/Private Sectors and Will Immigration Reform Break the Political Divide?

County officials unable to attend the conference will be able to participate virtually during an interactive educational session: Solutions for Shale Impacted Counties Forum. The forum will discuss hydraulic fracturing, a process used by the natural gas industry to extract natural gas, and explore innovative county policies and partnerships that maximize opportunities while minimizing impacts.

New at this conference is “Leadership Saturday,” a series of leadership development workshops for county officials which will cover topics such as organizational trust, effective governance, personal safety and leading the way in health plan modernization.

Click here for the complete listing, schedule and descriptions of the workshop sessions.

County Innovations
Despite years of local revenue and budget challenges, counties remain on the cutting edge of implementing innovative and cost-effective solutions for the American public. NACo partners with federal agencies, private foundations, corporate supporters and other organizations to deliver these programs and services to counties. NACo’s programs – covering the practice areas of health and human services, justice and public safety, community and economic resilience, and technology and innovation – will be on display throughout the annual conference, which was re-branded this year as the 2013 County Solutions and Idea Marketplace.

NACo’s American County Platform
On Friday, July 19 and Saturday, July 20, NACo’s 11 steering committees will meet to discuss and adopt official resolutions addressing issues such as budgets and revenues; rural and urban development, environmental protection and energy efficiency, transportation; public safety; emergency preparedness and response; housing and community development and more. Resolutions adopted by conference delegates will serve as official NACo national policy positions – The American County Platform – for the next 12 months. It will be available at www.naco.org by early August. Click here to review the meeting agendas and guest speakers.

NACo Idea Marketplace
More than 140 exhibitors will be on hand to showcase the latest goods and services available to help local governments better serve their communities. The NACo Idea Marketplace will be open Saturday, July 20, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m., and Sunday, July 21, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. in Exhibit Hall B-D.
On Monday, July 22, delegates will vote on the final policy resolutions, elect NACo’s 2013-2014 officers, and the new NACo president will appoint NACo committee leadership (10:30 a.m. – noon, Exhibit Hall A).

Click [here](#) to view the entire conference schedule of meetings and events.

**Note to media:**
NACo-issued press credentials are required for members of the news media to attend conference events. Press credentials will be issued from the conference press office at the convention center (room 103). The press room phone number is 817-698-4404 (July 19-22). Contact Jim Philipps at 202.942.4220 or [jphilipps@naco.org](mailto:jphilipps@naco.org) for more information.

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**About NACo**
The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation’s 3,069 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public’s understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. For more information about NACo, visit [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org).

**About Counties**
The nation’s 3,069 counties are the service arm of government services and provide the building blocks for healthy, resilient and fiscally sound communities. Counties, where most Americans live, matter because 2,914 counties own a jail or participate in a regional jail and admitted nearly 12 million people each year. Counties provide public health services, including flu shots and restaurant inspections through 1,947 health departments. Counties own and maintain 44 percent of America’s roadways and 228,026 bridges and almost one third of the nation’s transit systems and airports. Counties respond to all disasters and in most cases without assistance from other levels of governments. Counties run the nation’s polling places to keep our democracy strong. Counties own 964 hospitals and spend $68 billion on health care services annually. View [Why Counties Matter](#) video.