NEWS RELEASE

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Transportation, economic recovery tops agenda for the nation’s counties

More than 1,500 county leaders to participate in NACo’s 2014 Legislative Conference

WASHINGTON, D.C. – More than 1,500 county officials will stress the importance of long-term funding for the nation’s federal surface transportation program and the important role transportation infrastructure can play in America’s economic competitiveness during the National Association of Counties’ (NACo) 2014 Legislative Conference, March 1-5, at the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Special guest speakers include Rep. Bill Shuster (R-Pa.), chair of the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee; Sec. Shaun Donovan, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; Sec. Sally Jewell, U.S. Department of Interior and Sec. Anthony Foxx, U.S. Department of Transportation.


Joined by members of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives, county officials from across the country will hold a Rally on Capitol Hill to urge Congress to pass a multi-year surface transportation bill that provides long-term funding certainty for transportation infrastructure. The rally will take place on Tuesday, March 4 at 3:30 p.m. in the Capitol Visitor Center (SVC 203-2). Seven members of Congress are confirmed: Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), Rep. Lou Barletta (R-Pa.), Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.), Rep. John Delaney (D-Md.), Rep. Bill Foster (D-Ill.), Rep. Richard Hanna (R-N.Y.) and Rep. Tom Petri (R-Wisc.).

Transportation is a core county function. Counties invest $106.3 billion in public facilities and infrastructure each year, own more than 230,000 bridges and own and maintain 45 percent of America’s roads. To illustrate the importance of transportation, NACo will release The Road Ahead: County Transportation Funding and Financing, a comprehensive analysis of county transportation funding sources, challenges and solutions across the 48 states with county governments. The report will be available on Feb. 24.
Highlighting the county role in transportation is part of NACo's continuing Why Counties Matter campaign, launched last year with a video, brochure and online infographic showing the role counties play in serving the American people.

“Counties play a critical role in the nation’s surface transportation system,” said NACo President Linda Langston, supervisor, Linn County, Iowa. “We need the federal government to continue to work with us and the states to help rebuild our roads, bridges and transit systems. This will ensure that we can compete globally and save money and time for businesses and residents. At the same time, it can help reduce congestion and improve the quality of life for all Americans.”

Counties will also urge quick Congressional action on a number “unfinished business” matters important to counties, including House passage of the Marketplace Fairness Act and retention of the tax-exempt status municipal bonds.

NACo Policy Committee Meetings and Speakers
NACo policy committee guest speakers from the White House, Capitol Hill and federal agencies will brief county leaders on March 1 and 2 on issues such as cyber security, internet sales tax, broadband, agriculture and rural development, health and human services (including Medicaid), community and economic development, justice and public safety and immigration reform.

Confirmed speakers include Rep. Adrian Smith (R-Neb.); Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-Calif); Tricia A. Schmitt, senior budget examiner, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President; Lynn Overmann, senior advisor to the U.S. Chief Technology Officer, Office of Science and Technology Policy, The White House; Victor Mendez, acting deputy secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation and other representatives from federal agencies. Click here for a complete list of speakers, including full meeting agendas.

During the five-day conference, county officials will hear from national leaders on issues important to counties and communities:

Opening/Monday General Session
1:30–3:30 p.m., Monday, March 3
- Sec. Shaun Donovan, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (approx. 1:30-1:45 p.m.)
- Former Gov. Jon Huntsman (R-Utah) and former Sen. and Gov. Evan Bayh (D-Ind.), No Labels (approx. 1:46-2:30 p.m.). No Labels is a citizens’ movement of Democrats, Republicans and Independents dedicated to promoting a new politics of problem solving.
- Mike Allen, chief White House correspondent, Politico (approx. 2:31-3:10 p.m.)
- Rep. Bill Shuster (R-Pa.), chair, U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (approx. 3:10-3:20 p.m.)
- Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), chair, U.S. House Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation, U.S. House Natural Resources Committee (approx. 3:20-3:30 p.m.)

Tuesday/Closing General Session
10:00 –11:30 a.m., Tuesday, March 4
- Sec. Anthony Foxx, U.S. Department of Transportation (approx. 10:05-10:25 a.m.)
• **Sec. Sally Jewell**, U.S. Department of the Interior (Approx. 10:25-10:45 p.m.)
• **Brad Fitch**, president and CEO, Congressional Management Foundation (approx. 10:55-11:20 a.m.)

On **Saturday, March 1, from 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.**, the NACo Technology-Innovations Summit will take place in the International Ballroom West (Concourse Level). The summit will explore innovative ways how technology can reduce costs and improve constituent services via a county-to-county knowledge exchange.

**Educational Opportunities**
In addition to carrying the county government message to Capitol Hill, county officials will participate in a variety of [educational workshops](#). Workshops include: Innovative Transportation and Infrastructure Financing; County Interests in Transportation and MAP-21 Reauthorization; Advancing Economic Resilience through Workforce Preparedness Efforts; Update on the Affordable Care Act; Managing Costs and Improving Public Safety; Cybersecurity Workforce Development for Counties; What are the Chances for Comprehensive Immigration Reform?, and Flood Mapping and Biggert-Waters: Why Data Matters.

Click [here](#) for the “Program-at-a-glance” conference schedule.

**Note to Media**
*Members of the working news media wishing to cover conference events must present their credentials at the conference press room, located in the Cardozo Room (Terrace Level), to obtain a NACo press badge. The press room will be open 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Saturday, March 1 and Sunday, March 2, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday, March 3 and Tuesday, March 4. (Press Room phone number: 202.797.4814). Contact: Jim Philipps at 202.942.4220 or jphilipps@naco.org.*

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*The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo assists America’s 3,069 counties in pursuing excellence in public service to produce healthy, vibrant, safe and resilient counties. NACo promotes sound public policies, fosters county solutions and innovation, promotes intergovernmental and public-private collaboration and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. More information at: [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org).*