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Fighting cuts and sharing innovative ideas, county officials to meet in Portland for NACo’s 76th Annual Conference

More than 2,000 county officials to set national policies and share ideas on how revenue-challenged counties can better serve communities

WASHINGTON, D.C. – County officials from across the country will meet July 15-19 at the National Association of Counties’ (NACo) 76th Annual Conference and Exposition in Multnomah County (Portland), Ore. to set national policies affecting counties and share ideas on leading in tough times.

More than 2,000 elected and appointed county officials, exhibitors, presenters and guests are expected to participate in the conference at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland.

NACo President Glen Whitley, county judge, Tarrant County, Texas, said NACo’s Annual Conference is the most important gathering of county officials of the year and offers the best opportunity for leaders in county government to discuss pragmatic solutions to common challenges facing counties and communities.

“Many counties are facing their most difficult budget and revenue challenges in decades,” Whitley said. “Not only are our own revenues streams stressed while our costs and demands for services continue to increase, Congress is considering massive budget cuts to federal programs critical to local governments.”

Counties in most states are responsible for providing essential services to communities, including maintaining roads and bridges, operating airports and other transit systems, delivering critical health care services, providing law enforcement, courtroom and jail services, funding schools, and numerous human services for seniors, children and families. Counties are the first line of defense for natural disaster emergencies and pandemic preparedness and response.

Despite these responsibilities, Congress is considering significant budget cuts to a variety of federal programs which directly affect counties and communities. Areas slated for budget cuts include justice and public safety, homeland security, transportation and infrastructure, housing and community development, Medicaid and several human service net programs.

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Despite the revenue and budget challenges, counties remain on the cutting edge of implementing innovative and cost-effective solutions to the challenges they face. Many of these initiatives – from green government efforts and information technology advances to criminal justice system reforms – will be explored in detail during the Annual Conference.

Highlights of the five-day conference include:

- **NACo Technology Summit**: “County Survival Strategies in Tough Economic Times”
  8:30 a.m.–5 p.m., Friday, July 15 (Room: B110-112, Level 1)

- **Opening General Session**: Bob Woodruff, ABC News Correspondent and Founder of the Bob Woodruff Family Foundation for Traumatic Brain Injury
  9:30–11:30 a.m., Sunday, July 17 (Portland Ballroom, Level 2)

- **NACo Mobile Workshop**: “Multnomah County Juvenile Courts–Preventing Youth Delinquency and Reducing the Number of Incarcerated Youth”
  9 a.m.-noon, Monday, July 18

- **NACo Mobile Workshop**: “Multnomah County Local Food Tour: Food Policy in Action”
  9 a.m.-noon, Monday, July 18

- **General Session**: Aron Ralston, mountain climber and inspiration for the film, “127 Hours.”
  2:15–4 p.m., Monday, July 18 (Portland Ballroom, Level 2)

Conference participants will attend a variety of educational workshop sessions to gain greater understanding of issues affecting county government. For example, growing green economies and innovative energy efficiency efforts will be explored in detail during workshops entitled, “Smart Communities and Smart Buildings: How they Improve the Economy, Environment and Experience” and “Going Green Without Going Red.”

Other workshops will address funding infrastructure and economic development efforts, sharing services across jurisdictional lines, and jail diversion programs.

On **Friday, July 15** and **Saturday, July 16**, NACo’s 11 steering committees will meet to discuss and adopt official resolutions addressing issues such as budgets and revenues; rural and urban development, green government; transportation; public safety; emergency preparedness and response; housing 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](http://www.naco.org) in late July.

On **Sunday, July 17**, NACo’s Rural Action Caucus (RAC) and Large Urban County Caucus (LUCC) steering committees will meet to get updates on caucus priorities and initiatives and hear from guest speakers.

More than **150 exhibitors** will be on hand to showcase the latest goods and services available to help
local governments better serve their communities. Exhibit Hall will be open Sunday, July 17, 11:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m., and Monday, July 18, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. (Exhibit Hall C, Level 1)

On Tuesday, July 19, delegates will vote on the final policy resolutions, elect NACo's 2011-2012 officers, and the new NACo president will appoint NACo committee leadership. (10 a.m.–noon, Portland Ballroom, Level 2)

Click here to view the entire conference schedule of meetings and events.

**Note to media:**
NACo-issued press credentials are required of members of the media to attend conference events. Press credentials will be issued from the Conference Press Room (Room: C124, Level 1) at the Oregon Convention Center. Contact Jim Philipps at 202.942.4220 or jphilipps@naco.org for more information.

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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 provides essential services to the nation’s 3,068 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.