FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 16, 2011

CONTACT: Jim Philipps
202-942-4220, jphilipps@naco.org

President Obama proposes multi-year reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Counties (NACo) Executive Director Larry E. Naake today said NACo was pleased that President Obama’s budget proposal includes a multi-year reauthorization of the job-creating Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS).

The proposal, released Feb. 14, calls for a five-year reauthorization of the program and $328 million funding in the first year with annual payment “ramp downs” in subsequent years.

NACo and the Partnership for Rural America Campaign are advocating for a 10–year reauthorization of SRS at the FY 2008 funding level. The organizations said the president’s budget is a good starting point for further conversations that representatives of rural America must have with the administration and Congress about the future of rural, forested communities.

The Secure Rural Schools Act was passed in 1999 to replace lost revenues to counties and schools because of dramatically reduced timber harvests on federal lands. Since its passage, funding from Secure Rural Schools has allowed counties to continue to provide vitally important public services such as health care, search and rescue operations and maintenance of roads and bridges.

The impact of Secure Rural Schools goes beyond counties and schools. It helps protect vulnerable national forests through enhancement projects and wildfire protection efforts and provides thousands of jobs in the 41 states that receive funding under the legislation.

“The nation’s counties stand ready to work with the administration and Congress on a multi-year reauthorization and full funding of Secure Rural Schools,” said NACo Executive Director Larry E. Naake. “The president’s budget proposal is a welcome starting point.”

For more information contact Ryan Yates at 202.942.4207 or ryates@naco.org or visit www.naco.org. Information about the Partnership for Rural America Campaign is available at www.partnershipforruralamerica.org.

###

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.