New online game lets students ‘run their own county’

*Students, educators urged to play game to foster understanding of county government*

(August 4, 2011) – Students in schools across the country will now be able to learn about county government through an online game and curriculum created by iCivics, Inc. and the National Association of Counties (NACo).

The game, “Counties Work,” educates students, grades 6 through 12, about the important role and functions of county government by letting them run their own county. A curriculum and webquest has also been developed to assist teachers with preparing lessons on county government.

While playing the game, a student will be a county official responsible for providing services, dealing with citizen requests, setting and raising revenues, and working within a budget. Along the way, students will learn about the various services provided by county departments – such as road maintenance, law enforcement, courtroom and jail services, parks and recreation and library services – while having to make tough spending and tax levy decisions and face re-election.

“This is a great opportunity for students to better understand the programs and services that counties provide,” said Tarrant County, Texas Judge Glen Whitley, who led development of the game under his “County Government Works” NACo presidential initiative.

iCivics is a web-based education project designed to teach students civics and inspire them to be active participants in our democracy. iCivics is the vision of Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, who was concerned that students are not getting the information and tools they need for civic participation and that civics teachers need better materials and support.

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iCivics co-founder, Jeff Curley, said this of the initiative, "We are thrilled to partner with NACo to make the first video game about counties and teach students about the intricacies of local government."

The county game is the only game on the iCivics website focused on local government. Other games cover the U.S. Constitution, the courts and the federal government – the President, Congress and the Supreme Court. iCivics has representatives in every state to promote the games and curricula to teachers and educators.

Play the game at www.naco.org/CountiesWork.

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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 3,068 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.

**About iCivics**

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