Obama signs SCHIP extension, expansion

**By Paul Beddoe**

**Associate Legislative Director**

President Barack Obama signed into law a four-and-a-half year extension of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), calling it “the first step” to achieving universal health coverage in the U.S.

The new law, signed Feb. 4, would cover 11 million children — 4 million more than would be covered under the existing program, moving another step closer to achieving one of NACo’s top health priorities for the year.

The bill, H.R. 2, passed the Senate in late January by a 66–32 vote and the House by a 290–135 margin. Its $32.8 billion cost will be offset by a 62 cents-per-pack increase in the federal cigarette tax.

Unlike bills vetoed by President Bush, the new version removes the five-year waiting period for legal immigrant children — a provision long supported by NACo — and relaxes some of burdensome documentation requirements for eligibility.

“County governments are grateful for this action on SCHIP,” said Linda Langston, chair, NACo’s Health Steering Committee. “Local governments are the on-the-ground service delivery people. We see up close and personal when there are gaps, and this will address filling some of those gaps,” added Langston, a Linn County, Iowa supervisor.

**QuickTakes**

**Metropolitan Statistical Areas with Largest Population Growth 2000-2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Las Vegas-Paradise, Nev.</td>
<td>33.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raleigh-Cary, N.C.</td>
<td>31.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, Ariz.</td>
<td>28.5 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Austin-Round Rock, Texas</td>
<td>27.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside-San Bernardino-</td>
<td>25.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario, Calif.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States 2009

**ADA changes withdrawn from OMB budget review**

The U.S. Department of Justice has withdrawn from the Office of Management and Budget review process its final draft of rules to amend the regulations implementing changes to the Americans with Disabilities Act’s Title II and Title III.

An entire section of the proposed rule concerns state and local governments: Part II of the act, subparts A, B, D and E, which specifically prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in state and local government services, and Part III of the act, which specifically prohibits discrimination by public accommodations and commercial facilities.

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County officials tapped for Obama appointments

Two NACo-affiliated county officials have been tapped for positions in the Obama administration.

King County, Wash. Executive Ron Sims has been chosen for the No. 2 post in the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, and former NACo President Colleen Landkamer, commissioner, Blue Earth County, Minn. has been tapped for a top position in Minnesota at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

If approved by the Senate, Sims would oversee the day-to-day operations of an agency with 8,500 employees and a $39 billion yearly budget.

“I cannot imagine anyone more fortunate than I to have spent 23 years of my public career working as a county elected leader on issues that impact people’s lives everyday. I am deeply grateful and proud of the trust and confidence that President Obama placed in me,” Sims said.

“County governments are gratefully surprised and proud of this action on SCHIP,” said Linda Langston, chair, NACo’s Health Steering Committee. “Local governments are the on-the-ground service delivery people. We see up close and personal when there are gaps, and this will address filling some of those gaps,” added Langston, a Linn County, Iowa supervisor.

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Medicare/Medicaid legislation in to state,” she said. “Passage of county to county and from state assistance they received varied from “safety net” for people who could 
solutions dedicated to preserving and providers and other key organiza-
ationwide effort by safety net 
reform this year. 
NACo is an active member of the Partnership for Medicaid. The partnership is a nonpartisan, nationwide effort by safety net providers and other key organiza-
tions dedicated to preserving and improving the federal Medicaid and SCHIP programs—which together provide essential health care services to more than 63 million people.

Wilde told the Capitol Hill staff-
ers assembled in the Rayburn House Office Building that counties are unique in their responsibility to both finance and deliver health services. She said counties provide direct care services through local health departments, hospitals and other healthcare facilities, and in most states are required to pay a portion of the non-federal share of Medicaid costs for their residents.

Wilde explained that, traditionally, the nation’s counties were the “safety net” for people who could not pay for medical care.

“Who was served and what assistance they received varied from county to county and from state to state,” she said. “Passage of Medicare/Medicaid legislation in the mid-1960s brought significant federal money to the table, and established baseline service, but in most states that did not eliminate counties’ role.

“In 12 of the larger states, including California, New York and my home state of Minnesota, county staffs continue to enroll clients and administer most public programs,” she added. “In several states counties pay a portion of the non-federal share of Medicaid. In many states, including Minnesota, counties carry responsibility for those who lack mental health coverage.”

“Counties also provide direct service,” Wilde continued. “County public health departments provide immunizations, child and teen checkups, home visiting and case management. Counties across the nation, particularly in inner cities and rural areas, own hospitals and nursing homes, and operate community clinics.”

Wilde said that in California and Minnesota, a few dozen counties own and operate their own managed care plans.

“Now is not the time to implement the seven new Medicaid rules which would reduce eligibility, cut benefits and reduce compensation to county workers who are handling a growing enrollment and higher Medicaid caseloads,” said Wilde, referring to still-pending rules proposed by the Bush administration.

“Increasing worker caseloads and decreasing wellness benefits by implementing the new rules will only further damage an already fragile infrastructure.”

Others participating in the Jan. 27 briefing were Rep. Diana DeGette (D-Colo.); Arthur A. Giannelli, president and CEO, Nassau Health Care Corporation, New York; Bernadette Hicks, a Medicaid enroller from Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island, and Dr. Colleen Kraft, immediate past president, Virginia chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics.

Wilde briefs Capitol Hill on county role in health care

Green enterprises can lead to greener economy

To confront rising unemployment, budget constraints and a dismal economy, counties nationwide are going green.

They are looking at green economic initiatives to attract local investments, create sustainable jobs and ultimately revitalize local economies. Through green economic enterprise, each county has the ability to develop plans specific to the needs of the local community in order to reach the same goal of revitalization.

Baltimore County, Md.

Civic Works, Baltimore County’s urban service corps, offers a prime example of green job creation. In 2001, Baltimore initiated B’More Green, a six-week job-training program designed to prepare unemployed or underemployed residents for careers in environmental technology and brownfields development. The program is funded by a brownfields remediation grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Since the program’s inception, B’More Green has trained more than 136 new workers, including graduates like Jimmy, 49, who spent 16 years in prison for second-degree homicide and had few employment options before enrolling in the B’More Green program. Within a week of completing the program Jimmy was hired as an abatement worker earning $15 an hour. The program not only offers a pathway to employment for the unemployed and underemployed, but it also addresses a local need for hazardous materials abatement workers and environmental technicians.

“B’More Green graduates are addressing the industrial contamination of past generations. They are the foot-soldiers in the environmental movement,” said John Mello, B’More Green’s project director.

Catawba County, N.C.

With the development of a regional EcoComplex and Resource Recovery Center, Catawba County, N.C. is a trailblazer for green economic development. The EcoComplex is a group of private and public partners operating collectively in a defined area near the Blackburn Landfill. The partners will use each other’s waste products either as a source of energy (electricity, steam or heat) or as raw materials for the production of their own products (pallets, lumber, compost, brick shapes/art).

One partner, Gregory Wood Products manufactures lumber, while Pallet One, Inc. converts wood waste from Gregory into wooden pallets. The two companies provide jobs for 154 employees. Other EcoComplex partners include an Appalachian State University center for greenhouse technology; a bio-energy facility; a biosolids processing facility; a composting/soils amendment company; and a greenhouse.

“The EcoComplex is designed to promote economic development.

In Case You Missed It...

News to Use from Past County News

Apply now for NACo Coastal Counties Restoration Initiative grant

NACo is now accepting applications for Coastal Counties Restoration Initiative (CCRI) grants. The initiative provides financial assistance on a competitive basis to innovative, high-quality county-led or supported ecosystem restoration projects. Now in its third year, CCRI will provide $500,000 in new grants and $500,000 to improve stream, river, estuarine and other important marine habitats.

Grant applications that are community-based in nature and focused on working in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will be given special consideration. NOAA’s Community-based Restoration Program is providing major financial support for this partnership. This year’s grants will range from $50,000 – $100,000, based upon the project’s demonstrated need.

The deadline for applications is Monday, April 6. For more information and to access the full RFP and application instructions, visit www.naco.org/ccri or call Carrie Clingen at 202/542-4246 or e-mail cclingen@naco.org.
In My View ...

Tough Times, Tight Money and Systems Development

Systems are infrastructure too. Many critical computer systems that support federal, state and local services delivery for education, property assessments and tax collection, health services, transportation, homeland security and many others, are more than 20 years old.

In too many jurisdictions tight budgets are signaling an end to some important systems projects. It is clear that we need to add to our public discussions the urgency to find others ways to achieve system re-engineering goals and some new development projects.

Can we afford not to?

Computer-driven information technology systems help to provide the tracking and reporting so obviously missing in the housing and financial crisis that is currently gripping the nation.

Productivity — what we are able to do with what we have — is suffering. The quality and lack of clear information to support government discussions, missteps, starts and stops will continue to add to the public’s mistrust. We are spending too much human capital on blame and not on solutions.

Important considerations to add to the discussion are: What about more shared systems? Improving the proposal process to discuss core system functionality? And more than a passing look at the issues going into the “make or buy” discussion — build it new or buy a base system and build on it?

You often hear the critical thinkers in the systems development and project management business repeat over and over, “There are no cookie-cutter systems.” One solution does not solve every problem, and work processing can have critical variables.

Clearly this is true, and clearly we have to find ways to deliver systems infrastructure during times of significant challenge. Our systems can make doing more with less a practical possibility. To stop developing is an option, but in many cases it is a higher possibility. To stop developing is an option, but in many cases it is a higher possibility.

Our systems can also be the largest contributor to “greening government services.” Look at the projects all around the country related to electronic documents handling and storage, e-systems for inquiring, e-education products and support, tax collection and e-payments, e-permits, and basic customer services — all using a lot less paper and improving productivity.

This discussion and the opportunities to make systems development a part of our infrastructure planning, locally and nationally, is critical to this moment in time. We must focus on building information-handling bridges, and roads and highways right now. These jobs also provide long-lasting benefits and will continue to do so well into the future.

How to start and how to get this done? You may want to get involved by attending the National Association of Counties (NACo) Information Technology Summit on Saturday, March 7 in Washington, D.C. For more information on the summit, contact Bert Jareau, bjareaua@naco.org or 202/942-4248.

Webster J. Guillory
Orange County, Calif. assessor

Middle-class, working families living standards focus of new task force

NACo representatives were on hand for the announcement of a new federal task force focused on middle-class working families. The task force, unveiled by President Barack Obama Jan. 30, is charged with raising the living standards of middle-class, working families in America.

It is composed of top-level administration policy makers and will work with a wide array of federal agencies that have responsibility for key issues facing the middle class. It is expected to expedite administrative reforms, propose executive orders, and develop legislative and policy proposals that can be of special importance to working families.

Vice President Joe Biden will chair the task force. Other members include the secretaries of labor, health and human services, education, and commerce, as well as the directors of the National Economic Council, the Office of Management and Budget, the Domestic Policy Council, and the chair of the Council of Economic Advisors.

The task force will focus on answering concerns such as: What can be done to make retirement more secure? How can child and elderly care be made more affordable? How can workplace safety be improved? How can the cost of college remain within reach? What are the jobs of the future that can be created?

The task force, according to the administration, is designed to operate in a transparent fashion, in an open, two-way dialogue directly with the American people. Any materials from meetings or reports produced will be made available to the public. Anyone may share their ideas for how to get the middle class going again and how this affects county government operations by visiting the task force’s Web site at www.AStrongMiddleClass.gov.

Obama administration appoints Sims, Landkamer

TAPPED from page 1

Obama and Secretary Donovan have placed in me, Sims said.

“I am ready to take on the challenge of retooling HUD and our nation’s housing and urban policy to integrate quality of life issues into community development including open space and parks, walkable and transit-oriented development, sustainable design and other strategies that have helped to make King County a national model.

“I look forward to restoring our federal partnership with NACo and the 3,068 counties across this country, big and small, urban and rural, who are on the front lines serving Americans every day.

“The three-term King County executive was active in NACo’s Large Urban County Caucus and the National Democratic County Officials Organization.

“Ron’s track record as an innovative leader with an exciting vision for the future of our nation’s communities makes him the perfect deputy-secretary candidate as we tackle the nation’s housing crisis amidst the biggest economic downturn in decades,” said HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan.

“It’s an honor to serve the American people. Any materials from meetings or reports produced will be made available to the public. Anyone may share their ideas for how to get the middle class going again and how this affects county government operations by visiting the task force’s Web site at www.AStrongMiddleClass.gov.

Middle-Class Task Force Goals

• Expanding education and lifelong training opportunities
• Improving work and family balance
• Restoring labor standards, including workplace safety
• Helping to protect middle-class and working-family incomes
• Protecting retirement security

USDA appointment for Landkamer

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) recommended former NACOs President Colleen Landkamer as Minnesota’s State Director of Rural Development.

The Office of Rural Development promotes economic development in rural areas, supports public facilities and services like health clinics, water and sewer systems and electric service, and provides technical assistance to rural communities.

Landkamer just began her 21st year as a Blue Earth County Board member. During her long career in public office she served as NACO president (2006-2007) and president of the Association of Minnesota Counties.

She was instrumental in creating NACO’s Rural Action Caucus and chaired the national Campaign for a Renewed Rural Development, a group of 28 national organizations that promoted investment in infrastructure, health care, housing, alternative energy and economic development in rural areas.

In Minnesota, she served for several years on the Rural Policy Center Board, the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund Board of Directors and the Executive Board at the Center for Transportation Studies at the University of Minnesota.

Colleen Landkamer
Blue Earth County, Minn.
NACo joins U.S. Treasury’s direct deposit campaign

Millions of senior citizens, people with disabilities and veterans depend on getting their federal benefit checks each month. There are probably hundreds or thousands of such people in your county. Yet too many are still receiving their Social Security and other benefit checks by paper U.S. Treasury and other checks.

Checks can be vulnerable to mail delays and financial crimes. In fact, in 2008, nearly 70,000 Treasury-issued checks — totaling an estimated $64 million — were stolen or fraudulently endorsed.

That’s why NACo is joining the Treasury’s campaign — along with hundreds of other organizations nationwide — to encourage county officials to get the word out about the ease and safety of electronic payments for federal benefits during Go Direct/Direct Express Month in February.

Safer and easier than paper checks, electronic payments can give people who get federal benefits the peace of mind that comes from knowing their money is secure and on time, every time. Electronic payments eliminate the risk of lost or stolen checks and help curb identity theft. Money is accessible on payment day every month, so people don’t have to wait for the mail or take a trip to the bank to deposit or cash their checks. Electronic deposits are simply the best way to get federal benefit payments.

As part of Go Direct/Direct Express Month, NACo asks county officials to encourage their residents to take control of their financial safety by switching to electronic payments. Sign-up is free and only takes a few minutes.

Two options are available:

Direct deposit — Go Direct gives people who have checking or savings accounts a fast, free way to sign up for direct deposit. To sign up, people can call the toll-free helpline at 800/333-1795, go online to www.GoDirect.org, or visit their local bank or credit union.

Direct Express Debit MasterCard — A prepaid debit card designed to give people without bank accounts a safe, easy alternative to paper checks. There are no sign-up fees, monthly fees or overdraft charges, and the card can be used to make purchases, get cash and pay bills. To sign-up, call toll-free 877/212-9991, go online to www.USDirectExpress.com, or visit a local Social Security office.

How county officials can help

Your county can play a vital role in spreading the message about this important issue. It’s easy to get involved:

• Distribute Go Direct and Direct Express card materials in your county health and human resources department. Free materials can be ordered at www.GoDirect.org.

• Encourage your County Board to pass a Go Direct/Direct Express Month proclamation in February (see sidebar).

• Include a newsletter article about Go Direct/Direct Express Month in your county publication during February. You can find sample articles at www.GoDirect.org.

• Incorporate Go Direct and Direct Express card materials in your county’s financial literacy efforts. NACo encourages county officials to visit the “Partners” section of the Go Direct Web site: www.GoDirect.org (English) or www.DirectoAsuCuenta.org (Spanish), or call a campaign representative at 952/346-6055.

Go Direct/Direct Express Month Sample Proclamation/Resolution

Designating February 2009 as “Go Direct/Direct Express Month.”

Whereas, the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the Federal Reserve Banks have launched a national campaign to encourage people to use direct deposit or the Direct Express prepaid debit card for the receipt of Social Security and other federal benefits; and

Whereas, electronic payments are safer, easier and more convenient than paper checks and save taxpayers money; and

Whereas, Treasury issued 70,000 checks in 2008 that fell prey to endorsement forgeries, totaling more than $64 million; and

Whereas, when there’s a problem with a Social Security payment, people with disabilities and veterans and their families need to contact the Social Security office.

Whereas, electronic payments are safer, easier and more convenient than paper checks because they:

(1) provide citizens of [COUNTY] with more control over their money; and

(2) provide citizens of [COUNTY] with more control over their money; and

(3) provide citizens of [COUNTY] with more control over their money; and

Whereas, by working with local governments and community-based organizations, the sponsors of Go Direct/Direct Express are educating the people of [COUNTY] about the advantages of electronic payments and assisting people during the enrollment process;

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that I, [NAME/TITLE], support the goals and ideals of Go Direct and the Direct Express card and hereby proclaim February 2009 as “Go Direct/Direct Express Month” in [COUNTY].

County official balances military, civilian careers

By ELIZABETH PERRY
STAFF WRITER

A rural Virginia county official has added a new title to his resume, but does it mean his Board of Supervisors now has to salute him?

Mark Belton, Page County administrator, was recently promoted to rear admiral in the Navy Reserve.

“We’re very proud of him,” said supervisors Chairman Tommy LaFrance. And, “no, it doesn’t mean they salute him, he deadpanned. The supervisors still pull rank.”

Belton manages the county that is home to Virginia’s famous Luray Caverns while also raising six children with his wife, Mary. So he knows a thing or two about time management and life balance.

He sees a lot of similarity in his roles as a logistics expert with the Reserves and as county administrator. LaFrance said Belton’s “organizations skills” are his biggest asset and that he has anything but a stereotypical authoritarian military style.

“What I learned in one career is applicable to the other,” Belton said. “Lately, I’ve been doing a lot of emergency management for the county to make sure our capability in that area is where it needs to be.

In the Reserves, Belton works as assistant director of supply programs and policy, and was promoted to rear admiral in October. His responsibilities include naval logistics integration with the Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Army and Air Force.

He said his work as an admiral involves two to three months of travel out of the year. His longest tour was in 2001 after the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington. He did not go to Iraq, but spent six months with the NATO Force in Kosovo.

“There is always the real possibility of getting called up to active duty for an extended period of time, depending on what the Navy needs,” he said.

His experience in local government began in 1994 when he was elected to a two-year term as a member of the Queen Anne County Board of Commissioners. In 1999, he was elected to a four-year term as that county’s administrator. After his term ended in 2003, he was appointed assistant secretary of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, a position he held until he was appointed Page County administrator in 2005. His original contract with the county would have ended Jan. 18, but he was reappointed for another term, which will end in January 2013.

Having worked in both state and county government, Belton said he prefers working at the local level because the results are more immediate and direct.

“When I worked in state government I was more of a policy-maker,” he said. “The things you do don’t directly affect the citizens of the state on a day-to-day basis, whereas in local government everything you do affects the citizens on a daily basis.”

When not at work with the Navy or the county, Belton goes home to Luray, Va., where his wife homeschools their children and runs the household. Their children range in age from 7 to 22. He said his wife is the secret to being able to juggle his military and civilian lives. “She’s very supportive of my work in the Navy and local government.”

Belton is also grateful for the Page County Board of Supervisors’ support of his military duties.

“They understand we couldn’t do the things our military does today without the Guard and Reserves,” he said. “They are very proud of my participation. All across the country, there are a lot of people who are county government workers who are in the Guard and Reserves.”
County office building doubles as ‘warming center’

By Charles Taylor
Senior Staff Writer

Camden County, N.J., like many urban counties, has a homeless problem. But unlike other localities, the county has taken a novel approach to housing the hardcore homeless on the coldest nights of the year.

Three years ago, county Freeholder Carmen Rodriguez got the idea to open a county office building on “code blue” nights as a warming center for those with no place else to go.

“It was particularly concerned about the homeless, in particular the ones that kind of chose to be homeless,” she said. “Because we do have shelters throughout (the county) and doors are open, but there are people who are afraid to go to shelters.”

Rodriguez convened a meeting of homeless advocates, Board of Social Services members and others to address the issue in February 2006. “I started to hear a lot of little stories, like how sometimes the homeless would break a car window so that they can get arrested, so I thought, ‘That’s not good.’”

The group decided that the Aletha Wright Administration Building, which houses many of the county’s social services programs, would be an ideal location — since many of the homeless frequented it already to obtain services.

For many of the homeless who receive welfare checks, the Wright Building is “home,” or at least their home address, Rodriguez explained. “Because if they don’t have a home address, what they do is list the address for the Board of Social Services.” Within four hours of the meeting, the warming center was open.

On nights when the temperature dips below 20 degrees, or is 32 degrees with precipitation, the Wright Building opens its lobby from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. The accommodations are bare bones, and there’s no “lights out.” The county provides two security guards to keep things safe, a place to come in from the cold and access to bathrooms — but no services or meals. Paper cups are left out near the water fountain.

The homeless sleep on floors or benches with blankets, sleeping bags or huddled in their coats. Rodriguez said there’ve been very few problems because the shelter users “police themselves.” “Just as quickly as this came, this can go away. So we don’t have the behavioral problems that could potentially arise.”

Robert Smith, the county’s health officer, makes the call as to when the warming center and other emergency shelters in this county of 517,000 residents should be opened. This year, that’s been “almost every day in January” and several in February.

“It would be a very risky situation for those people if they didn’t have a place to go and get warm,” he said.

The cost to the county varies with the frequency of the building’s usage — costing more during colder winters. In some years, costs have approached $10,000, which pays for the security guards and utilities.

For anyone concerned about the county’s spending, Rodriguez said “we’re actually saving money.” She said without the warming site, the county might have to house some of these people in jails — those who commit petty crimes just to get off the streets — or bear the cost of putting out fires the homeless might start to keep warm in abandoned buildings.

“So I think in the end we save more money than we could ever spend.”

Rodriguez said the facility doesn’t take the elderly or frail, for whom the county has other assistance, nor families, who are given priority at shelters. The county hasn’t widely publicized the location, to discourage use by those who don’t really need it. But word-of-mouth has brought in up to 70 individuals on some nights.

“We have always tried to keep it low key,” Rodriguez added. “We want to make sure the program continues as long as necessary until we find a solution to homelessness, which I hope happens in my lifetime.”

“This is for those people, who for whatever reason, can’t get a space in a shelter” — or don’t want one. She said some chronically homeless don’t want to sign up for services, as some shelters require, or provide their Social Security numbers.

So the county’s overnight warming center is a non-judgmental temporary haven.

“Homelessness is one problem. Not having shelter when the environment is completely hostile, that’s something else,” Rodriguez said.

“These people that are here, they’ve been written off by society, most of them. But this is somebody’s brother. This is somebody’s son — or father.”

Profiles in Service

» Warren D. Ward
President
National Association of County Surveyors
Grand County, Colo.
NACo Board of Directors

Number of years active in NACo: 3
Years in public service: 19
Occupation: County Surveyor
Education: Metro State College of Denver, Survey Mapping; University of Northern Colorado, Music; Fort Lewis College, Engineering.
Three people (living or dead) I’d invite to dinner: Morgan Freeman, Will Rogers and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
A dream I have is to: retire at the age of 90, with a sound mind.
You’d be surprised to learn that I: play three instruments.
The most adventurous thing I’ve ever done is: visit Vietnam, where I met my current wife.
My favorite way to relax is: Alpine or Nordic skiing.
I’m most proud of: choosing to live in Colorado.
My favorite meal is: pancakes.
My Pet Peeve is: overbearing people.
My motto is: enjoy the right now.
The last book I read was: The Source by James A. Michener.
My favorite movie is: Pulp Fiction.
My favorite music is: jazz.
My favorite president is: Teddy Roosevelt.
Fans of the HBO series *Six Feet Under* will remember the episode. The character, Nate Fisher, has a “green” funeral: no embalming or casket, just burial — simply wrapped in a shroud — in a plot of land protected by a nature preserve.

The amount of metal buried in the ground annually, as caskets, is enough to rebuild the Golden Gate Bridge. The concrete in burial vaults could pave a two-lane highway from Detroit to New York.

It might have been many people’s introduction to the green burial concept. Currently, it’s an issue of concern in Bibb and Twiggs counties in Georgia. Responding to public opposition, Bibb passed and Twiggs is considering an ordinance that would effectively ban green cemeteries.

The move came as a blow to Beth Collins, who wants to develop a 10-acre green cemetery on a hilltop in Collins, who wants to develop a 10-acre green cemetery on a hilltop in Collins, which would be adjacent to Twiggs and its county line.

Bibb County commissioners are considering an ordinance similar to Bibb County’s, which reads, in part, that “All human remains shall be buried in a leak-proof casket or vault to protect against contamination of ground water, wells, and aquifers.”

Collins’ proposed Summerland Natural Cemetery would be entirely in Bibb but close to the Twiggs County line.

Ray Bennett, chairman of Twiggs County’s Board of Commissioners, said, “Our constituents are concerned about the establishment of the cemetery and the location that they’ve proposed because it’s adjacent to Twiggs and their properties.”

It’s an issue that more counties may find on their plates, as green burials — like so many environmental trends — increase in popularity. According to a 2007 AARP survey, 21 percent of Americans over the age of 50 have an interest in eco-friendly death care.

“Primarily, our concern is not only for the safety of the neighbors but our water supply and things of this nature.” Bennett said. “That’s what our constituents have shared with us.” Many homes in the area rely on wells for their drinking water. When Bibb passed its ordinance Nov. 4, Bibb Commissioner Lonzy Edwards said, “This ordinance deals with one of the most important charges of the commissioners: the health, welfare and safety of the people living here,” according to the Macon Telegraph.

Collins argues that the proposed cemetery poses no threat to public health or groundwater quality. She has had soil studies done that show her hilltop land’s “clayey” soil would filter potential toxins, and said, moreover, that the area’s aquifer is recharged from low-lying wetlands.

Joe Sehee, founder and director of the Green Burial Council, said, “Burial vaults … do not protect anything from getting into the ground. They crack; they break open.” His Santa Fe, N.M.-based organization developed standards for and certifies sustainable cemeteries, and also certifies green funeral homes and products.

Sehee also said there is no such thing as a leak-proof casket and that the Federal Trade Commission doesn’t allow any casket maker to assert that claim. On a larger scale, he said, the issue is sustainability. The amount of metal buried in the ground annually, as caskets, is enough to rebuild the Golden Gate Bridge, he said. The concrete in burial vaults could pave a two-lane highway from Detroit to New York.

Further, Sehee said green burial practices meet a growing demand. “This isn’t some crunchy, fringe market. According to two national surveys, this is moving into the mainstream rather rapidly,” he said. A recent survey by Kates Boylston, publisher of American Funeral and American Funeral Director magazines, “suggests that 43 percent of Americans want a green burial,” Sehee added. He estimates that some 200 natural cemeteries will open nationwide within the next five years.

**Green Cemeteries as a Conservation Tool**

The green burial movement in the United States got its start in 1998, when Billy Campbell, M.D., opened Ramsey Creek Preserve, the nation’s first “conservation burial ground” in Westminster, S.C. According to its Web site, “The preserve was formed to harness the funeral industry for land protection and restoration, to fund non-profits, education, the arts and scientific research, and to provide a less expensive and more meaningful burial option.”

Collins said, “When I learned about green burial I realized that this would be a good way to conserve land. I’m not able to buy land and just hold it for conservation or donate it to an organization. But if I could get some income off of it, I can protect it in a natural state.

“The core pillars of our mission are land conservation” — which Collins says benefits the county — “and providing an alternative to conventional burial.”

She remains hopeful that the Bibb County Commission will “see the light and change this regulation.” She has attended almost every one of their meetings since the ordinance passed and continues to press the commission to repeal the law.

But, as a recent Macon Telegraph article noted, residents who favor the Bibb County ordinance also continue to attend meetings in force, to show their ongoing support for the restrictions.

In Twiggs County, commission Chairman Bennett said the county hopes to incorporate cemetery regulations into its existing land use ordinance. “I hope that we can bring that to some review and discussion in the next six weeks or so,” he said.
Counties consider ‘green’ development options

GREEN from page 2

and create new jobs in the green energy, green business, agricultural and environmental sectors,” said Barry B. Edwards, the county’s director of utilities and engineering. Within the complex, the Blackburn Landfill burns the methane created by waste to generate electricity, which is sold to Duke Energy to power 1,000 homes, netting the county $78,000 a year. The complex is funded through user fees at the landfill, from electricity generated and sold to Duke Energy, and supported by the product companies located there. No tax dollars are spent on the EcoComplex.

Camden County, N.C.

In Camden County, N.C. plans are underway to build a green industrial park. The long-term project is expected to create revenue and jobs in the rural county. Randall Woodruff, a spokesperson for the project, stated that the county plans to construct new buildings to the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification standards and provide tax-incentives to environmentally focused local businesses moving into the industrial park.

With the proposed park located directly across from the Great Dismal Swamp Park encompassing 111,000 acres of protected wetland, Woodruff also sees the potential for the development of an eco-tourism center providing outreach education within the industrial park site. The county has received a $2 million grant that will be used to extend the county’s wastewater system to the park.

Clinton County, Ohio

Clinton County, Ohio lost nearly 10,000 jobs and $257 million of payroll tax base with the closing of DHL US Express airpark at the end of January. Faced with the impending closing, however, the county made ambitious plans to turn the former DHL facility into a Green Enterprise Zone.

County officials have submitted a request for information to several development firms and are currently reviewing 12 proposals. The proposals include plans to build recycling plants, an algae bio-fuel center, renewable energy research centers, and to provide tax incentives to environmentally conscious businesses. All proposals emphasize the development of cutting-edge green businesses that will create new jobs for former DHL employees.

Middlesex County, N.J.

In Middlesex County, N.J., where unemployment rose from 3.9 percent to 5.5 percent last year, the county has created an advisory board to study the feasibility of creating Green Economic Development Zones. The county anticipates these zones would bring in new businesses that manufacture, sell or assemble green products or technologies. Businesses would receive tax breaks, discounted sales tax and other incentives. The county says this could bring jobs to the area and help fill some of the 27 million square feet of vacant warehouse space.

Middlesex County is working with Rutgers University, Middlesex County College and the county’s vocational-technical high schools to develop green curricula in order to prepare area workers for employment in the burgeoning green economy.

“The county has been focused on the implementation of green technology and sustainability since 2001,” said Middlesex County Freeholder H. James Polos. “This initiative builds upon our success in those areas and will assist us in developing quality employment opportunities for our residents while furthering our green capabilities and sustainability.”

(For more information on green jobs and green economy please visit www.naco.org/greencounties or contact Suzanne Andrews at suzanne.andrews@naco.org or 202/942-4243.)

Proposed changes to ADA Titles II, III put on hold

ADA from page 1

predicted that full compliance with the new regulations could cost up to $23 billion. (See County News, Aug. 4, 2008)

This action was taken in response to a memorandum from President Obama’s chief of staff directing the Executive Branch agencies to defer publication of any new regulations until the rules are reviewed and approved by officials appointed by Obama.

The department will take no final action with respect to these rules until the incoming officials have had the opportunity to review the rulemaking record. Incoming officials will have the full range of rulemaking options available to them under the Administrative Procedure Act.

Due to this change, and the amount of time it usually takes for the officials to take their places in the new administration, it is unlikely that a final rule will come out until late 2009 or possibly 2010.

Withdrawal of the draft final rules does not affect existing ADA regulations. Title II and Title III entities must continue to follow the department’s existing ADA regulations, including the ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

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February 9, 2009 | 1
Weigh to Give’ effort benefits care-giving charities

BY CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Every New Year, millions across the country vow to improve their lives by making resolutions. Whether it is following a strict diet, becoming more active or getting involved with a local charity, setting goals for the upcoming year is a great way to improve self esteem. But what if you could improve both body and spirit at the same time?

Weigh To Give, a fundraiser of Foundation for Caregivers, is the first national weight-loss-a-thon that helps provide funding for charitable causes associated with care giving. The 2009 goal is for 2 million participants to lose 10 million pounds
while generating $50 million for community charities. Weigh To Give is both a health initiative and a fundraiser.

“We specifically selected weight-loss for its connection to care giving,” said Jim Griswold, executive director and founder of Foundation for Caregivers. “Weight-loss offers the potential to disrupt the disease cycle, deferring and possibly avoiding the onset of weight-associated illnesses.”

One of the best and easiest things about this program is that it is entirely Internet-based. Anyone can participate from any location worldwide, which makes it that much easier for counties and organizations to participate without the pressures of having to reach a certain concrete monetary goal.

“Instead of running a marathon and having to raise a set amount of money, you can get a group and pay $15 per person to lose weight and make a difference in yourself and charities,” added Griswold.

According to its founder, Weigh To Give can help even the smallest counties or organizations to raise money for a given cause. “It is a ‘shared resource,’ a complete turnkey fundraising system that the foundation makes available for anyone to generate funds for any IRS-approved charity. There is no fee to use the system; participants pay their registration fee and chose the charity they want to support. The donations generated are then divided, with 75 percent going to the participant’s charity and 25 percent going to the Foundation of Caregivers. The foundation will use the funds generated by Weigh To Give, as follows: to establish and expand operations to Australia, Canada and the U.K.; research to fund programs designed to understand and solve family caregiver issues; grants to fund support for nonprofit. developing caregiver solutions and endowments for funds to be set aside for future projects.

For more information on how your county or individuals can join this cause, visit www.weightogive.org.

Cold Case cards warm up leads

BY CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

San Bernardino County, Calif. inmates aren’t just passing the time by playing a game of solitary or gin; they might just be helping to solve a cold case.

County jails and state prisons across California are starting to distribute cold case playing cards — a deck of 52 cards that contain information on unsolved murders, missing persons or crimes.

The idea for the cold case cards came from the military’s “Iraq’s Most Wanted” card decks distributed to the U.S. troops in 2003. “There are over 600 cold cases in San Bernardino alone,” said Sgt. Frank Montanez, San Bernardino Homicide Cold Case Division.

“Putting a face with these crimes will hopefully get these inmates to talk if they do indeed know information.”

Inmates tend to be more connected than law enforcement agencies and may have vital information or contacts that could crack a cold case. These cards serve to promote a new level of dialogue and, as many inmates and corrections officers readily admit, prisoners are more than happy to talk, just so long as it’s not about their own crimes.

The oldest unsolved murder in the new deck of cold case cards involves Sylvia Elaine Mango, who is pictured on the eight of spades. Someone kidnapped the 8-year-old girl on March 27, 1988. Her body was found eight days later. Other counties have seen results with their programs. In Nov. 2007, Manatee County, Fla. sheriff’s deputies arrested Bryan Curry for the alleged murder of Ingrid Lugo. Curry’s arrest was the direct result of the statewide cold case playing cards initiative.

Effective Playing Cards, located in Plant City, Fla., has been helping out jails and prisons nationwide with their cold case card programs since the early 2000’s. Inmates can request a deck from the guard for a fee. The 5,000 decks are available to nearly 6,000 inmates in California county jails in Rancho Cucamonga, San Bernardino, Devore and Adelanto for $4.95 per deck. The general public can also purchase the cards per deck or in bulk. All the proceeds go to help the San Bernardino cold case card program.

For more information on the program, visit www. effectiveplayingo cards.com.

Rutland County

May 3-9, 2009

The theme for the 2009 celebration of National County Government Week is “Greening Our Future.” All counties are encouraged to participate, especially those that are pursuing green government initiatives. They should tell their residents about what they are doing to conserve energy, protect the environment and save taxpayers’ dollars. A comprehensive booklet of ideas on ways to celebrate NCGW, including draft proclamations and news releases, will be available in early February. Promotional kits will also be made available for download.

Visit NACo’s Web site at www.naco.org.org for more information or contact Tom Goodman at 202/942-4222 or tgoodman@naco.org.
Rather than on the cynical and the possible and on the accountable, who are willing to focus on the that the remaining work can be of America — a spirit that much ignited a renewed spirit in much over 100 years ago.

The new president's campaign At the turn of the 20th century. The answers will not come from thinking born of inertia, or looking at our history and making an incorrect assumption that taking no action will somehow inherently solve the dilemmas we face today.

The new president's campaign ignited a renewed spirit in much of America — a spirit that much has already been overcome and that the remaining work can be done by people of all backgrounds who are willing to focus on the possible and on the accountable, rather than on the cynical and the negative. The 12-year-old Ford Taurus with 90,000 miles on it sold for $3,585 — 35 percent more than a comparable car that was sold at the public auction the year before.

Above is a screenshot of Gwinnett County's surplus vehicle store on eBay. Business has been so successful, the county has also branched out into offering office furniture and other equipment on the Web site.

The HR Doctor Is In

The Land of Hope and Glory

“Land of Hope and Glory, Mother of the Free, How shall we extoll thee, who are born of thee? Wider still and wider shall thy bounds be set; God, who made thee mighty, make thee mightier yet.”

At the turn of the 20th century this song became symbolic of Brit ain’s worldwide power and its view that there was nothing that the nation could not accomplish. Watching the inauguration of President Barack Obama and seeing the expressions of hope, pride and new beginnings, the HR Doctor was carried back in time to the sense of the spirit of the possible that was present among our British cousins over 100 years ago.

The new president’s campaign ignited a renewed spirit in much of America — a spirit that much has already been overcome and that the remaining work can be done by people of all backgrounds who are willing to focus on the possible and on the accountable, rather than on the cynical and the negative. The 12-year-old Ford Taurus with 90,000 miles on it sold for $3,585 — 35 percent more than a comparable car that was sold at the public auction the year before.

Above is a screenshot of Gwinnett County’s surplus vehicle store on eBay. Business has been so successful, the county has also branched out into offering office furniture and other equipment on the Web site. The 12-year-old Ford Taurus with 90,000 miles on it sold for $3,585 — 35 percent more than a comparable car that was sold at the public auction the year before.

All leaders need to practice the “thinking of the possible” rather than concentrating on what was or what currently is. The 12-year-old Ford Taurus with 90,000 miles on it sold for $3,585 — 35 percent more than a comparable car that was sold at the public auction the year before.

Well along on a journey to something much better than we left behind. The inverse is, unfortunately, true as well. If we sink into a morass of inertia, depression and whining, or search for scapegoats when something doesn’t go our way, we are setting the stage for longer periods of trauma and a bleaker future. Perhaps this is also a lesson for the media which has an apparent lust to sell its product by a rather constant emphasis of the terrible over the wonderful. In the face of all that is occurring in the changing world, it is time to extoll the land of hope and glory which for many generations has been America, and to set its boundaries “wider still and wider” than ever before.

The boundaries are not those of the physical or the geographic. They are not those of empire in the traditional sense. They are the bounds of imagination, the freedom to dream, the imperative to do better and to explore. Finally, they are the bounds that are expanded only with a compelling sense of urgency to get on with improving the lives of other people. One of the last verses of the Edward Elgar and Arthur Benson collaboration on the 1902 Land of Hope and Glory is compelling. It speaks of the success of a nation that looks to the future and “smiles at fate.” That is the hope of the new administration. Along with it, that should be the future emphasis of public service.

Phil Rosenberg
The HR Doctor • www.hrdr.net

- Model Programs FROM THE NATION’S COUNTIES

County’s Surplus Sells on E-Bay

By Elizabeth Perry

After watching several surplus vehicles owned by Gwinnett County, Ga. sell for well under market value at public auction in 2005, Fleet management director Michael Lindsey decided to sell the next batch of cars on ebay. “They were way undervalued,” said Lindsey. “In our case, the auctioneer didn’t care what he was selling them for. If you were the only one bidding on a car and you bid $50, you got it. All he cared about was that it got sold and was out the door. He got his 8 percent off the top.”

In little more than two years, the county’s online store has turned into a thriving business listed as a “power seller,” defined by eBay as a store with a 98 percent approval rating and consistent sales numbers. But in the beginning, the idea of selling cars online made Lindsey feel a bit nervous. After all, he was someone who had never even bought anything on eBay before he sold his first county government vehicle in April 2006.

The idea came from watching the city of Marietta’s fleet management department try it and succeed in selling a much smaller number of cars. Lindsey worked up a business plan and presented it to the Board of Commissioners, who thought it was an innovative idea.

The cost to set up and maintain the online store is approximately $90 per transaction, including a $45 commission for eBay from each sale.

“Comparatively speaking, it’s still a small amount considering that before I had to pay an auction company 8 percent for a vehicle I sold for $3,000 or $4,000,” he said. “It’s a flat fee. If I sell a vehicle for $100 or $29,000 it will still only cost me $90.”

Lindsey advised county officials interested in setting up a store on eBay to take the time to learn about the process in order to get everything right.

“Be honest and upfront about every vehicle you sell,” he said. “Don’t try to hide anything. If it has even the most minute scratch on it, tell people about it. If you do that, people will continue to come back and buy.”

For more information about Gwinnett County’s eBay store, call Lindsey or Whiting at 678/985-6641. The Web site address for the store is http://stores.shop.ebay.com/ GwinnettCountyboc. (Model Programs from the Nation’s Counties highlights Achievement Award-winning programs. For more information on this and other NACo Achievement Award winners, visit NACO’s Web site, www.naco.org.)
SCOTT JOHNSON, Columbia County deputy administrator, said his county does not contribute to state agencies that duplicate county services. “We supplement state agencies that provide additional services.”

• They are good for conservation, but rebates for low-flow toilets flush revenue, according to Jim Scarborough, GWINNETT COUNTY’s assistant to the director of Water Resources. The county recently approved a measure to rebate its offer of $300,000 in rebates if residents upgrade to low-flow toilets. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported that last year the county issued $122,000 in rebates to residents who replaced 1,500 toilets with the new toilets. They were estimated to save 9 million gallons of water in 2008.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY — adjacent to Washington, D.C. — promised to preserve 70,000 acres of farmland by 2010. Last month the county reached its goal one year ahead of schedule when it acquired an agricultural easement for a 75-acre farm in the county.

Montgomery County Executive Isaiah Leggett said, “In reaching the goal of 70,000 acres of preserved farmland set back in 1989, Montgomery County becomes home to the nation’s highest percentage of preserved agricultural land.” County leaders created the reserve in 1980 and began to implement a public policy for farmland preservation. As part of the agricultural reserve, the county established an agricultural zoning density of one dwelling per 25 acres, as well as programs for the purchase of agricultural easements to further protect farmland beyond the restrictions of the zone.

MINNESOTA

ST. LOUIS COUNTY is trying to block efforts by the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa to buy back 113 acres of private land on its reservation. The Associated Press reported officials with Fond du Lac Band made two requests through the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs to place the area in federal trust, which would make it tax exempt.

Dennis Fink, County Board chair, said the requests pose a threat to the county tax base and said 63 percent of county land is tax-exempt, including parks, forests and school trust land. He said the Fond du Lac and Bois Forte bands have purchased 2,022 acres of land in the past decade, including 711 acres that are held in trust.

NEW MEXICO

Citing budget concerns, the DONA ANA COUNTY Board of Commissioners has unanimously rejected a property tax rebate for low-income residents.

Commission Chairwoman Leticia Duarte-Benavidez said in the current unstable economy, granting tax rebates could jeopardize county services. County Assessor Gary Perez said the rebates could cost the county $1.8 million to $5.4 million annually in property tax revenue.

NEW YORK

The ONONDAGA COUNTY Legislature is considering creating a tuition reimbursement program to increase the number of nurses at county-run health care facilities, The Post-Standard reported.

To be eligible, county residents would have to complete a nursing degree at Onondaga Community College — and also agree to work for several years at certain county facilities. Passage of an enabling bill is likely, as 18 of 19 legislators are cosponsors.

OHIO

HAMPTON COUNTY is considering creating a court for veterans charged with nonviolent crimes. About 5 percent of inmates in the county jail are veterans, the Enquirer reported — many of whom are coping with mental health or substance abuse issues.

Local officials said such a court could help free up space for more dangerous offenders.

MADISON COUNTY, Ill. already has such a court, and CLARK COUNTY, Nev. is also exploring the option.

Pennsylvania

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY recently won a $1.9 million judgment against the company that sold it $2.1 million worth of faulty voting machines. Unfortunately, the county is unlikely to recoup the money from their maker, Advanced Voting Systems of Frisco, Texas.

“We can’t find them,” Christopher Spadoni, assistant county solicitor, told The Morning Call. “They don’t answer mail; they don’t answer phones and they haven’t responded to our suit.”

The good news is that the county is out only $200,000. That was its contribution on top of a $1.9 million state grant used to buy the machines. But that’s little consolation to Spadoni. “The taxpayer — whether it’s state, federal or county — has been taken to the cleaners on this one.”

South Carolina

Elections Commissioners in the state county have rejected it three times, but some YORK COUNTY Council members want to double the length of their two-year terms, The Herald reported. York is one of only two of the state’s 44 counties — Edgefield is the other — whose elected leaders don’t serve six-year terms.

See NEWS FROM page 11
Wisconsin counties sign regional cooperation pact

NEWS FROM from page 10
serve four-year terms. "By the time you've actually got a grasp on how things work and run, you've got to turn around and run a campaign again," said Paul Lindemann, a York councilman. His colleague, Councilman Joe Cox disagrees. He said longer terms give voters more time to forget what a lawmaker has done.

Stimulus bill versions have major differences

STIMULUS from page 1
reconciled through a conference committee. Congressional leaders continue to strive to finish full consideration of the bill by the President's Day recess – Feb. 16 and have it on the president's desk for signature.

Much of what is in the Senate legislation of interest to counties was also included in the House-passed measure. However, there are some major differences between the two bills such as roads and bridge funding (more in the Senate, less in the House), rural economic development, Community Development Block Grant (no CDGB funding in Senate bill), Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program, the 3 percent withholding (House would repeal provision. Senate only defer for one year), municipal bonds, the Byrne Justice Assistance Grants, health information technology and the moratorium on Medicaid regulations.

According to data collected by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, at least 750 people, including 107 children under the age of 16, died in all-terrain vehicle (ATV) accidents in 2007. As the number of injuries continued to increase, the federal government, state governments and county governments started passing ordinances and laws that would help make the use of these vehicles safer for everyone.

Most recently signed into law was the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008. New regulations are being proposed as part of its implementation. The proposed regulations require companies that import or sell all-terrain vehicles ensure that ATVs comply with the new safety standards, which were previously voluntary.

They will take effect 150 days after the standards are published in the Federal Register in April 2009. The improved safety standards include specific speed and performance regulations based on the type of vehicle and drivers.

For example, if the vehicle is used by teens 12 to 16 years old, the proposed speed range is limited to no more than 30 mph.

The regulations also propose clear safety warnings and age requirements for operating or riding on the vehicles. They also propose that all vehicles designed for use by children under 16 have automatic transmissions to avoid the added danger of needing to change gears, and recommend a standard placement of brakes and engine stop switches to prevent confusion among models.

While the Consumer Product Safety Commission seeks to improve the safety of ATVs, it acknowledges that states and localities are critical to creating a safe riding environment and enforcing local safety regulations. Many counties have ordinances regulating the use of these vehicles.

In Morgan County, W. Va., the use of ATVs is prohibited on public roads and highways throughout the county, with the exception of crossing the roadway at designated intersections if the driver has a valid driver's license.

... states and localities are critical to creating a safe riding environment and enforcing local safety regulations.

In addition, all children under the age of 18 must wear a helmet while riding on the vehicle or parents can be fined up to $100 for the first offense. The statute also allows all homeowners' associations to regulate or prohibit ATVs by petitioning the County Commission.

The ordinance in Raleigh County, W. Va. expands on this ordinance to include additional safety regulations for children. Any operator with a passenger under the age of 18 must have a valid driver's license and the children must be wearing helmets. The ordinance also stipulates that rental dealers must provide helmets to all children under the age of 18.

Recent state legislation in Idaho allowed all county roads to be open to ATVs effective Jan. 1, unless restricted by local ordinances. Owyhee County, Idaho passed an ordinance in December that prohibits the use of ATVs on certain public roads and portions of roads. Drivers who operate the vehicles on public roads, however, must have a license and the vehicle must be registered according to Idaho state statutes. On the roads that are open to these vehicles, they cannot exceed 25 mph.

In September 2008, Cherokee County, Ga. banned ATVs from public lands except for posted trails. Although the use of these vehicles was already forbidden in many of the areas, such as land owned by the Army Corps of Engineers, the new ordinance allows for more efficient enforcement and communication between Army Corps officials and sheriff’s deputies. The ordinance also provides up to a $1,000 fine for violations.

(RowNews was written by Kathryn Murphy, research associate.)

NACo Achievements Awards

Receive the recognition you and your county deserve!

Submit your Achievement Awards Application Form by Feb. 13, 2009 to NACo for an innovative program and receive national recognition at NACo's 2009 Annual Conference and in Nashville/Davidson County, Tenn.

For complete details on NACo's Achievement Awards Program visit www.naco.org/achievementawards or contact Kathryn Murphy at kmurphy@naco.org.
This spring, four high school seniors will each earn $2,000 for college from the NACo-Nationwide Scholarship.

Winning applicants will have written a short essay describing the most important actions in 2009 that a public sector employee can take to help them get ready for retirement or that the new president and Congress can take in 2009 concerning America’s retirement savings.

This is the fourth year in a row that Nationwide and NACo have teamed up to encourage high school seniors to think about retirement.

Why spur students who haven’t even started full-time work to think about retirement? Three reasons:

• By applying for the scholarship the student
  • must consider the financial impact of their decisions about college and their career, and realize it is never too soon to start thinking about saving for retirement
  • begin to recognize the difficult decisions that may be required in turbulent financial times, and
  • identify specific actions that help prepare for a financially successful future.

To be eligible, applicants must be graduating high school seniors who are legal U.S. residents, their parent or grandparent must be enrolled in and contributing to the NACo 457 deferred compensation plan, and the student must enroll in a full-time undergraduate course of study no later than the fall term of the 2009-2010 school year at an accredited two- or four-year college. Applications and entries must be submitted online by Sunday, March 15.

The NACo-Nationwide Scholarship is just one of the services arising out of the nearly 30-year partnership between Nationwide and NACo. As provider of the NACo deferred compensation program, Nationwide regularly reports to the NACo Deferred Compensation Advisory Committee on industry trends, updates statistics on the program and provides ongoing education on retirement issues.

NACo receives from Nationwide Retirement Solutions payments for NACo’s endorsement and license of its name and logo for use by Nationwide in connection with the NACo Deferred Compensation Plan and related products and services. These funds are used by NACo to enhance programs and services for the benefit of its members.

Information about eligibility, the judging criteria and notification process are on the NACo and Nationwide Web sites. For more information, go to www.naco.org/retirementscholarship and click the “Scholarship” link.

(NACo’s 2009 Legislative Conference)

Register online and save $25 at www.naco.org.