

BEYOND 'DUCK AND COVER':

Counties prepare for nuclear threats

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

After a state emergency employee in Hawaii accidentally sent out a false alert about a nuclear missile strike Jan. 13 — leaving residents and tourists scrambling for a panicky 38 minutes before an all-clear sign was broadcast — some county officials might be wondering: “Could it happen here?” And: “Should our county be preparing for a nuclear attack?”

Maui County Councilmember Riki Hokama said he received the alert. “I wondered why other emergency alert pro-

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(l-r) NACo Executive Director Matt Chase moderates a discussion Jan. 11 with Reps. John Carter (R-Texas) and C.A. “Dutch” Ruppberger (D-Md.) about cybersecurity vulnerabilities of energy infrastructure at the NCCAE Presidents and Executives meeting in Washington, D.C. Photo by Hugh Clarke

ANALYSIS

Congress 2018: What’s ahead for counties?

By Kevan Stone
associate legislative director

When Congress began its legislative agenda last year, it was presented with an environment Washington had not seen since 2009, one-party control in the legislative and executive branches. With a majority in both houses and President Donald Trump in the White House, the Republican Party set in motion an ambitious plan to fulfill promises made during a tough 2016 campaign.

Congress laid out priorities dealing with health care, tax reform and infrastructure, to name a few. Political battles saw some issues delayed,

others abandoned, but some accomplished as well. Comprehensive tax reform was signed into law in December and the Trump Administration, through both legislation and executive orders, scaled back a host of regulations with the goal of spurring economic growth and job creation.

As we look ahead to 2018 and the final year of the 114th Congress, America’s counties will face a legislative calendar that will affect local governments for years to come. Although the results in Washington are unpredictable at best, one thing is for certain, if 2017 was any indica-

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NACo talks water issues before Senate Committee

In testimony before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Jan. 10, NACo Associate Legislative Director Julie Ufner discussed the central role counties play in strengthening America’s water infrastructure and how the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) can help by fostering collaboration on water projects between local governments and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps).

Specifically, the testimony highlighted four key points:

- Water infrastructure is integral to counties’ ability to protect public safety and grow our economies.
- Throughout the West, counties face unique water challenges.
- WRDA helps local commu-

nities help themselves.

- To build upon past successes and address current challenges, there are a number of ways that Congress can improve and strengthen WRDA to help western counties.

Ufner shared several examples of how WRDA and the Army Corps can help support local economies. Juneau, Alaska, for one, relies heavily on its port to support the tourism, mining and fishing industries that drive the local economy and contribute \$2.6 billion each year to the GDP. Park County, Wyo. is currently working with the Army Corps to replace roads and bridges damaged by mountain flooding and ice jams in its local

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Hawaii's false missile alert: Could it happen in your county?

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protocols were not enacted such as emergency sirens and radio alerts," he said.

Hawaii's four counties' role in such an event is to work as first responders, as well as making county facilities available for use as emergency shelters, he said.

Hawaii's Legislature started discussions Jan. 19 with those responsible to make improvements in both notifications and preparation, as well as any response in the aftermath of an attack, Hokama said.

Some counties are thinking beyond "duck and cover," the old standby from the nuclear threat during the Cold War.

In Ventura County, Calif., Public Health Director Robert Levin has been prepping for a nuclear attack since 9/11. "This was a lot of years back, not too long after Sept. 11," Levin said.

"I was listening to the news like everyone else. When I heard Osama bin Laden's words — that they wanted to terrorize Americans, kill Americans and to hurt us financially, hurt our economy, I realized — because part of what a health officer does is they prepare for terrorism — we had been talking about terrorism with small pox and plague for many months but when this happened, the way you kill the most Americans, terrorize, hurt our economy the most is you knock out a major city with a nuclear device. With that, I decided our county needed to prepare for this."

'Get Inside. Stay Inside. Stay Tuned.'

With backing from county leaders, Levin was able to create an 18-page Nuclear Safety Guide, hold town hall meetings, create three public service announcement videos and an emergency plan for all the county's schools. He knows the plan is a success if residents remember the phrase: "Get Inside. Stay Inside. Stay Tuned." He's continued educating the public for more than a decade.

Fast forward to today. With the current political rhetoric between the United States and North Korea, "there is obviously a renewed interest in this, number one, and what we would be talking about here is no longer the size nuclear device that a terrorist might have," Levin said. "It's a state-sponsored program, and so their nuclear device would be bigger than that."

CDC prepping local government

Levin isn't the only one with nuclear threats on the brain.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was set to hold a presentation Jan. 16 on "Public Health Response to a Nuclear Detonation," but canceled it due to the nationwide flu outbreak. Presentations that had been scheduled included "Roadmap to Radiation Preparedness" and "Public Health: Preparing for the Unthinkable." The CDC also held a webinar in August on preparing for nuclear attacks and held an exercise simulating a nuclear blast, dubbed "Operation Gotham Shield," with FEMA in the New York-New Jersey area last April.

That's when Middlesex County, N.J. had the opportunity to demonstrate its preparedness efforts with local, county, state, federal, non-profit, volunteer and faith-based organizations. Middlesex County's objectives

for this functional exercise were to hold five training sessions over four days by setting up, operating and demobilizing a Community Reception Center. More than 300 participants from 70 agencies participated.

Since the exercise was conducted, the county's Office of Health Services has been providing "lessons learned" at preparedness meetings. Middlesex County officials will continue to enhance and update its emergency response plans and continue to meet with local, county, state and regional partners to discuss existing plans and how to apply lessons learned from exercises.

It is also important to educate first responders and the public to ensure that everyone is prepared to respond and recover from an emergency, according

to John Dowd, division head, Health Education and Emergency Preparedness, Office of Health Services. Dowd teaches a two-hour course on the basics of radiation and what to do during a radiation emergency. The course covers sheltering in place, self-decontamination and ways to stay informed during a radiation emergency. Responders learn the basic operation of radiation detectors, dosimeters, portal monitors, personal protective equipment selection and decontamination procedures.

Dowd also trains emergency responders to operate monitoring stations to perform population monitoring and contamination reduction measures after a radiological or nuclear incident. The CDC's Christine Kosmos, director, division of state and local readiness, has said that population monitoring is one of the most challenging responsibilities for local government in any nuclear or radiation incident.

Some areas of the country, especially the West Coast, feel more vulnerable to an attack. In September, the Washington Senate State Government Committee met at the King County Emergency Coordination Center to discuss disaster preparedness in the event of a nuclear attack. Emergency managers in the Evergreen State are currently prohibited from preparing for a nuclear attack, thanks to a 1984 law passed, in part, to mark the winding down of the Cold War. The law makes it against state policy for emergency managers to prepare for evacuation or relocation in case of a nuclear attack. A state law-

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SNAP/STATS

HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF FOREST COVER

State	%
Maine	89.0
New Hampshire	77.5
West Virginia	77.2
Vermont	75.7
Alabama	70.6

Source: USDA

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Supreme Court will hear case on internet sales tax collection

By Lisa Soronen
SLLC executive director

In November 2017, a Government Accountability Office report estimated that states and local governments could “gain from about \$8 billion to about \$13 billion in 2017 if states were given authority to require sales tax collection from all remote sellers.”

Two months later, in January, the Supreme Court agreed to decide *South Dakota v. Wayfair*. In this case South Dakota is asking the Supreme Court to rule that states and local governments may require retailers with no in-state physical presence to collect sales tax.

The decision is huge news for states and local governments. This article describes how we got here and why it is likely South Dakota will win.

In 1967 in *National Bellas Hess v. Department of Revenue of Illinois*, the Supreme Court held that per its Commerce Clause jurisprudence, states and local governments cannot require businesses to collect sales tax unless the business has a physical presence in the state.

Twenty-five years later in *Quill v. North Dakota* (1992), the Supreme Court reaffirmed the physical presence requirement but admitted that “contemporary Commerce Clause jurisprudence might not dictate the same result” as the court had reached in *Bellas Hess*.

Customers buying from remote sellers still owe sales tax but they rarely pay it when the remote seller does not collect it. Congress has the authority to overrule *Bellas Hess* and *Quill* but has thus far not done so.

To improve sales tax collection, Colorado began requiring remote (internet and catalogue) sellers in 2010 to inform Colorado purchasers annually of their purchases and send the same information to the Colorado Department of Revenue. The Direct Marketing Association sued Colorado in federal court,

claiming that the notice and reporting requirements were unconstitutional under *Quill*. The issue the Supreme Court decided in *Direct Marketing Association v. Brohl* (2014), was whether the Tax Injunction Act barred a federal court from deciding this case. The Supreme Court held that it did not.

The State and Local Legal Center (SLLC) filed an *amicus* brief in *Direct Marketing Association v. Brohl* describing the devastating economic impact of *Quill* on states and local governments. Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote a concurring opinion stating that the “legal system should find an appropriate case for this court to reexamine *Quill*.” Justice Kennedy criticized *Quill* for many of the same reasons the SLLC stated in its *amicus* brief. Specifically, internet sales have risen astronomically since 1992 and states and local governments have been unable to collect most taxes due on sales from out-of-state vendors.

Following the Kennedy opinion, a number of state legislatures passed laws requiring remote vendors to collect sales tax, in clear violation of *Quill*. South Dakota’s law was the first ready for Supreme Court review.


In September 2017, South Dakota’s highest state court ruled that the South Dakota law was unconstitutional because it clearly violates *Quill* and it is up to the U.S. Supreme Court to overrule *Quill*. In October, South Dakota petitioned the Supreme Court to hear its case and overrule *Quill*. The SLLC filed an *amicus* brief supporting South Dakota’s petition. The Supreme Court ultimately agreed to decide the case.

It seems likely the Supreme Court will rule in favor of South Dakota and overturn *Quill* for a number of reasons. It is unlikely the Supreme Court accepted this case to congratulate the South Dakota Supreme Court on correctly ruling that South

Dakota’s law is unconstitutional. Said another way, if the Supreme Court wanted to leave the *Quill* rule in place it probably would have simply refused to hear *South Dakota v. Wayfair*.

It is easy to count at least three votes in favor of South Dakota in this case. First, Justice Kennedy of course. Second, Justice Clarence Thomas. While he voted against North Dakota in *Quill* he has since entirely rejected the concept of the dormant Commerce Clause, on which the *Quill* decision rests. Third, Justice Neil Gorsuch. The Tenth Circuit ultimately decided *Direct Marketing Association v. Brohl* ruling that Colorado’s notice and reporting law didn’t violate *Quill*. Then-Judge Gorsuch wrote a concurring opinion strongly implying that, given the opportunity, the Supreme Court should overrule *Quill*.

That said, the Supreme Court, and the Roberts court in particular, is generally reticent about overturning precedent, as the *Quill* decision illustrates. The Supreme Court looks at five factors in determining whether to overrule a case. One factor is whether a rule has proven “unworkable” and/or “outdated . . . after being ‘tested by experience.’” This factor weighs strongly in favor of overturning *Quill*. As Justice Kennedy pointed out in *Direct Marketing Association v. Brohl*: “When the Court decided *Quill*, mail order sales in the United States totaled \$180 billion. But in 1992, the Internet was in its infancy. By 2008, e-commerce sales alone totaled \$3.16 trillion per year in the United States.”

If the court hears the case this term, it will issue an opinion by the end of June. 

NACo is a founder, a funder and a board member of the State and Local Legal Center (SLLC), headquartered in Washington, D.C. The center extends NACo’s advocacy on behalf of counties to the highest court in the land.

WORD SEARCH

PEMISCOT COUNTY, MO.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS FEATURED COUNTY IN ‘BEHIND THE SEAL’

Created by: Mary Ann Barton

C A R U T H E R S V I L L E M W I Q M N
U I G W B P H A T H J G A U V L R S D U
Z D U D E A D O R T U R R T C K U H D K
R J Q U A C C J D T K P P S I X O T L N
O S X F S S Z D M A H K I E N P S S Y Q
K R T K I R L Z N Y L Q T W W M S T U U
A N O M L L F S W M M O U T Z B I O E W
W C E H C V A K Z A I K G A D G M K H Z
B P N F H S O I I D Y F K A K G H I Z X
L E E H T O O B D R O F L Z Y E B N B E
M K J U D F X L T I B Q I C Z O S G C B
O F N A M U R T J D F M G N J L S J J O
Y Z M I T R Y T H W N U H B C S Z O M A
L H G Z Z R W I M U Z O T C B X U T G D
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Y R N K F O Q W Z I M E E R P X L J F D
P P Q U I P I D J N S Q W G I T B F X W

ARKANSAS: The county’s southern border is adjacent to Mississippi County, Ark.

BOOTHEEL: Pemiscot County is located in the southeastern “boot heel” of Missouri.

CARUTHERSVILLE: Became the county seat in 1899 after the original location in Gayoso was eroding

CASINO: The Lady Luck Casino is located in Pemiscot County.

EARTHQUAKES: In 1811 and 1812, a series of earthquakes registering between 7 to 8 magnitudes emanated from New Madrid, Mo. and were felt as far away as Ohio and South Carolina. The soil beneath the Mississippi River rose, temporarily changing its course so that it flowed backward.

GAYOSO: Original county seat from 1851-1899. Named for Don Miguel Gayoso de Lemos, a Spanish Colonial politician.

HOSPITAL: Pemiscot County Hospital, built in 1951, avoided financial collapse in 2013. It’s the only public hospital in the county.

LIGHTHOUSE: The Lighthouse Water Tower is no longer being used to supply water but stands as a symbol of Caruthersville’s vision and history.

MADRID: Pemiscot County was organized Feb. 19, 1851 from New Madrid County.

MISSOURI: The county is located in the state of Missouri, the Show Me State.

MURPHY: The Murphy Mound Archeological Site is a prehistoric archaeological site occupied by peoples of the Late Mississippian period centuries before European colonization of the area.

PEMISCOT: The county’s name is a Native American word meaning “liquid mud.”

PORT: The Pemiscot County Port Authority’s harbor is located on the lower Mississippi River between St. Louis and Memphis.

TRUMAN: President Harry A Truman, a Missourian, visited the county to attend the American Legion Fair.

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IMPORTANT DATES:

- SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE:
**MARCH 26 AT
11:59 P.M. EDT**
- NOTIFICATIONS OF
ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS:
WEEK OF APRIL 23
- NACo ANNUAL CONFERENCE
AND EXPOSITION:
**JULY 13 – 16
NASHVILLE/DAVIDSON
COUNTY, TENN.**



PEMISCOT COUNTY, MICH.

Pemiscot County, in the southeast corner of Missouri, is named for the local bayou and waters that surround it — the Fox language word pem-eskaw, meaning “liquid mud.”



While the outer portion of the seal mirrors the state seal of Missouri, the inner circle is specific to Pemiscot County.

The clock face shows the time of eight minutes after 12:00. In order to become a county, a bill is filed before the state legislature in Missouri. Pemiscot County became a county in March 1854, with the bill being filed the previous year on December 8, 1853. The clock face then becomes a symbol of when that bill was filed.

The mud ripples below the clock face are indicative of the county name — “liquid mud” — and the county rising out of it.

Information gathered from Jim De Reign, county attorney

If you would like your county's seal featured in “Behind the Seal,” contact Charlie Ban, senior staff writer: 202.942.4210 or cban@naco.org.

Legislation addressing election security introduced in Senate

By Jacob Terrell
associate legislative director

Sens. James Lankford (R-Okla.), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Kamala Harris (D-Calif.), Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) have introduced bipartisan legislation aimed at improving the cybersecurity of the nation's electoral systems.

The new legislation, the Secure Elections Act (S. 2261), would put new information-sharing requirements in place between the federal government, and state and local government entities that administer elections.

These new requirements would direct the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to share any relevant infor-

mation it receives pertaining to an election cybersecurity incident, threat or vulnerability with election agencies throughout the country, including those run by state and local governments.

The new legislation would also require state and local governments administering elections to report any “election cybersecurity breach” to the federal government.

In addition to the information-sharing requirements included in the legislation, the measure would also direct DHS to provide security clearances to appropriate state officials so they can access and act quickly on classified cybersecurity information.

The legislation would also direct DHS to create a new nine-member advisory pan-

el of independent experts on election cybersecurity that would be responsible for developing a set of guidelines for election cybersecurity, including standards for procuring, maintaining, testing, auditing, operating and updating elections systems.

The legislation directs the advisory panel to include paper ballot requirements in all federal elections, including specific requirements for inspecting each ballot.

If the legislation is passed, NACo would be eligible to nominate at least one member of the advisory panel to represent the interest of county governments.

The proposed legislation would also provide grants for implementing the cybersecurity guidelines released by the ad-

visory panel. Remaining grant funds can be used to help election agencies replace outdated electronic voting machines.

“During the 2016 elections, Russia tried to interfere in our elections,” Lankford said.

“Although they didn’t change actual votes or alter the outcome, their efforts were an attack on our Democracy,” he said. “It is imperative that we strengthen our election systems and give the states the tools they need to protect themselves and the integrity of voters against the possibility of foreign interference.”

The legislation is pending in the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration where it is under consideration.

Companion legislation has yet to be introduced in the House of Representatives. **CN**

EPA seeking comment on ozone designations for 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standard

By Zachary George
legislative assistant

On Jan. 5, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a notice accepting public comments on its proposed attainment and nonattainment designations for the 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for Ozone. The proposed 2015 ozone rule would lower the NAAQS for ozone from 75 parts per billion (ppb) to 70 ppb. Comments are due Feb. 5.

In November 2017, EPA preliminarily designated 2,646 counties as meeting the 2015 standards for ground-level ozone or as unclassifiable. Affected states with the remaining nonattainment areas — approximately 420 counties — were notified by EPA in December 2017 about its intended designations. The states

were given 120 days to provide additional information for EPA to consider before making final decisions by April 30.

In the notice, the EPA is soliciting feedback on its proposed attainment and nonattainment ozone designations. Specifically, the agency would like to hear why an area should (or should not) be listed as either “in attainment” (meeting the 70-ppb standard), or “non-attainment” (not meeting the standard). EPA asks that any comment include assumptions or technical data; provide specific examples to illustrate concerns, and suggest alternatives; and explain views as clearly as possible to support arguments.

Under the Clean Air Act, the EPA administrator is required to make all attainment designations within two years after a final rule revising the NAAQS is published. However, the

deadline for EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to issue designations for the 2015 NAAQS for ozone passed on Oct. 1, 2017. As a result, numerous groups have already notified EPA of their intent to sue, setting the stage for litigation in the coming weeks absent further action from EPA.

Ozone is one of the six air pollutants regulated by the Clean Air Act (CAA) NAAQS program. Under NAAQS, EPA is required to reassess air quality standards every five years. Primarily known as a summertime pollutant, ozone forms when sunlight reacts with pollutants such as volatile organic compounds emitted from chemical plants, gasoline pumps, oil-based paints, and auto body and print shops. Sources of nitrogen oxides (NOx) include power plants, industrial facilities and motor

vehicles.

Ozone designations can have a significant impact on county governments. Under the Clean Air Act, states and counties serve as co-regulators with the federal government and are ultimately responsible for the implementation of new and existing air quality standards. In all, 227 counties are currently regulated under ozone air quality standards.

NACo has called on EPA to delay implementation of the 2015 ozone standards until the 75-ppb standard set in 2008 can be fully analyzed for impact and will continue to work closely with Congress and the Trump Administration to craft clear, concise and workable rules that take into account the role of counties as key regulatory partners with the federal government. **CN**

ANALYSIS

Legislative calendar in 2018 could impact counties for years to come

From CONGRESS page 1

tion, 2018 will certainly have its share of surprises.

President Trump has made no secret of his intent to shake up the way Washington works. This has not only included what he refers to as “draining the swamp,” but also — through his budget and blueprint documents — a systematic change in governing philosophy across the federal government that touches counties and the programs they administer, directly.

In addition to appropriations, issues such as health reform, infrastructure development, Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT), Secure Rural Schools (SRS), and major reauthorization bills such as the Farm Bill, all figure to attract attention this year. With 10 months before the midterm elections and a jam-packed legislative calendar, 2018 promises a whirlwind of legislative activity.

Appropriations

While the FY2018 budget year began on Oct. 1, 2017, there have already been two continuing resolutions, or CRs, to temporarily fund the federal government. Important programs for counties such as the Children’s Health Insurance Program, Community Development Block Grant program, Social Services Block Grant, Community Services Block Grant, and the One-Time Assistance to Needy Families programs find themselves dependent upon an always contentious budget process.

Like previous budget deliberations, last year’s discussions brought neither clarity nor conclusion to Capitol Hill’s ongoing budget battles. Issues such as a border wall, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and other politically contentious subjects complicated the difficult balancing act of keeping the government funded while addressing the hot-button issues.



Infrastructure

In the coming weeks, the White House plans to further detail its vision for a comprehensive infrastructure package. This plan, which could include both traditional transportation infrastructure and non-traditional infrastructure such as energy, broadband and veterans’ health facilities, intends to address an infrastructure network in dire need of repair in order to keep pace with a growing 21st century economy.

As reports stand today, the White House will propose a package spanning 10 years with \$1 trillion in total investment. The federal government’s share would weigh in at \$200 billion new funds in addition to an unspecified amount dedicated to rural infrastructure. While both sides of the aisle agree that infrastructure investment is necessary, there are stark divisions on how to provide the funding.

Some in Congress have argued any new spending must be offset with cuts elsewhere in the budget. Others believe the rumored \$200 billion federal investment is not nearly enough. The information the administration has released thus far

seems to indicate an appetite to invite private investment for infrastructure development as an integral part of their plan.

While NACo supports public-private partnerships (P3s), they are not viable solutions in all parts of the country. Grants intended for rural infrastructure programs, including broadband deployment, will be a central part of any plan as P3 investment may not be available in these areas. President Trump has acknowledged as much, with public statements downplaying the level of P3 dependence on an infrastructure package.

Regardless of the details for any plan, there has been one constant from the administration thus far. Originating with the *Infrastructure Initiative* document within the president’s FY2018 budget, and continuing with stakeholder discussions, the administration does seem to expect local governments to increase their financial commitment to new projects in order to be eligible for any new funds. This presents multiple concerns for counties. Forty-five states impose some level of restriction both on how much revenue can be raised and what it can be

spent on. Furthermore, if counties were to alter existing budgets to bring more infrastructure funds to the table, than other vital services would see reductions in their budgets.

The administration’s plan is not expected to arrive in the form of legislative text. The administration calls its recommendations “legislative principles.” Subsequently, it will be up to the House and Senate to craft eventual legislation.

Health Care Reform

While legislation formally repealing the Affordable Care Act did not pass in the Senate in 2017, it doesn’t mean that issues pertaining to health services provided by counties are immune from further congressional action. Programs such as Medicaid will continue to be a major issue in 2018. NACo supports protecting the federal-state-local partnership structure for financing and delivering Medicaid services while maximizing flexibility to support local systems of care.

Counties are concerned about measures that would further shift Medicaid costs to counties, including proposals to institute

block grants or per capita caps. These proposals would increase the amount of uncompensated care provided by counties and reduce counties’ ability to provide for the health of our residents. NACo also supports targeted efforts to enhance flexibility in the program to support local systems of care, including easing Medicaid’s Institute of Mental Diseases and inmate exclusions.

Additionally, the Children’s Health Insurance Program, which has been temporarily funded through recent CRs, must be addressed through full funding and long-term reauthorization. This program, like many other issues important to counties, face long-term funding uncertainty, rendering counties unable to budget and project their communities’ needs.

Tax Reform

While tax reform may have passed Congress and become law, there is still work to be done as it pertains to implementing a sweeping overhaul of the federal tax code. Over the coming months, Congress will vote on technical fixes to the bill, some of which could affect counties. NACo will continue to stress the importance of financing tools such as municipal bonds, and the ability to refinance municipal bonds, which was eliminated in the comprehensive tax reform bill.

Entitlement Reform

With tax reform signed into law, there is still a notion within both chambers that the deficit hole it created must be filled. Medicaid funding could be in the crosshairs of this potential reform, as being a large “pay-for” towards the tax reform created deficit hole. As of now, House Speaker Paul Ryan has stated his desire to tackle entitlement reform while Trump has been lukewarm to the idea. Senate Majority Leader Mitch Mc-

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Training key to preventing false alerts

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maker may reintroduce legislation to change that; it failed last year.

Could a false alert incite panic in your county?

In Hawaii, residents and visitors on Jan. 13 panicked after getting this message: *"Emergency Alert: Ballistic missile threat inbound to Hawaii. Seek immediate shelter. This is not a drill."*

"My heart instantly went out to the person who sent that message, I knew there was some kind of miscommunication," said Matt Ansorge, emergency management director for Leelanau County, Mich. "In the same breath, there was mass hysteria."

Could a false alarm happen in your county? Gregg Bird, emergency management coordinator, Grand Traverse County, Mich., said that in his coun-

ty, "without proper training, yes it could."

Bird advises all counties to have proper training and continued regular training on their systems. "If you're using pre-staged messages, try to have them easily distinguished between 'real' and 'tests,'" he said.

If the worst happens, and your county sends out an alert in error, what should you do? "Immediately issue a corrected message," Bird said.

Ansorge echoed those sentiments. "If we did have some sort of false alarm, we would have to immediately communicate through several mediums and multiple emergency managers. The last thing we want is for the general public not to trust the messages that come out next time." **CN**

Read Ventura County's 18-page Nuclear Safety Education Guide here: <http://bit.ly/2B5ljaL>

Counties face water challenges

From WATER page 1

waterways. These roads and bridges provide access to federal public lands and are crucial for the county's economic stability.

Ufner also underscored the many challenges counties face in protecting the safety and reliability of the country's aging water infrastructure. Their resources are constrained by increased project costs, federal regulatory barriers and, especially in Western counties, high elevations, arid landscapes and strong population growth that puts further stress on an already limited supply of water.

Ufner made a strong pitch for Congress to provide a framework for meaningful consultation between the Army Corps and its state and local governments on pending rules and policies that directly impact them.

"We believe this will solve many of the conflicts that exist now between the Army Corps

and its intergovernmental partners."

Historically, WRDA bills authorize water resource projects and policies for navigation, flood control, hydropower, recreation, water supply and emergency management for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The legislation is often passed on a biennial basis and tends to address county interests related to ports and harbors, inland waterways, levees, dams, beach replenishment, ecosystem restoration and other water projects.

Only three WRDA bills — WRDA 2007, the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA) and the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act of 2016 (WIIN) — have been enacted in the past decade. **CN**

Julie Ufner, associate legislative director, and Austin Igleheart, legislative associate, contributed to this report.

State associations cool to proposed property tax cap workarounds

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

State associations in New York, New Jersey and California are giving a cool reception to their states' efforts to circumvent the \$10,000 cap on state and local property tax deductions. Maryland may also float a similar plan.

Execs, and their county members, are concerned about the long-term effects of the federal tax overhaul, which they fear could disrupt real estate bases and populations, as residents could move to states with more lenient tax climates.

And help seems to be on the way. In California, it's the Senate President Pro Tem's proposal. A U.S. Representative from New Jersey ran with a suggestion by outgoing Gov. Chris Christie (R), which has been picked up by his successor, Phil Murphy (D). And New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) highlighted a proposal in his Jan. 16 budget address.

Each plan would create charitable funds to which homeowners would make contributions equal to their state and local property taxes, for which they would receive federal tax deductions and state tax credits. Cuomo added a proposal to switch to a payroll tax to avoid income tax hikes, though acknowledged it wouldn't necessarily be a dollar-for-dollar tradeoff.

Steve Acquario, executive director of the New York State Association of Counties is looking forward, with some fundamental reservations, testifying on the plan Feb. 5 and seeing what the final budget becomes by April 1.

"We haven't seen anything yet, but I don't think it's the right way to run a government. Government operations should be funded through taxation," he said. "(The charitable entity plan) further blurs the lines and confuses the public,

"All of that work might be for nothing," he said. "I have a hard time buying that the IRS would just let this happen."

—John Donnadio

but we don't fault the man for trying and looking into what options are out there."

Dorothy Johnson, a legislative representative with the California State Association of Counties who handles taxation issues, saw similar pitfalls in a state Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de Leon's (D) bill to establish the California Excellence Fund to the same end as Cuomo acknowledged.

"Charitable deductions are not usually given on a quid pro quo, a dollar-for-dollar match. There's that expectation," she said. "Last time I checked, California is not a nonprofit, so I'm not sure how we'd qualify under our own statutes to get this exemption or deduction qualified."

John Donnadio, executive director of the New Jersey Association of Counties, said whatever maneuvering states do to avoid the property tax deduction cap could be headed off federally by policy changes at the Internal Revenue Service.

"All of that work might be for nothing," he said. "I have a hard time buying that the IRS would just let this happen."

Bergen County-based Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-N.J.) said the IRS has respected programs in 22 states that are similar to the charitable deduction plan, citing many conservation easements and tuition scholarships. Like in New York and California, he proposes setting up funds to support different services, including education, infrastructure and law enforcement. Roughly half of Bergen County's homeowners paid

more than \$10,000 in property taxes in 2015.

Murphy, who took office Jan. 16, is open to a suggestion floated by Christie to allow homeowners to write-off their entire property tax bill, *Politico* reported.

Acquario pointed out that Cuomo's proposal to switch to a payroll tax from an income tax would not work for government workers, including county employees.

In the meantime, counties are trying to divine how the federal tax policy change will affect them.

"We have people paying \$15,000, \$20,000 a year in property taxes, and this policy is really going to impact the real estate market and our ratable bases, and that's really concerning," Donnadio said.

It may be enough, execs theorize, that people may leave.

"The circumstances are quite dire and everything is on the table," Acquario said. "Our counties, especially downstate (near New York City) have a grave concern over economic migration of our population with higher income range to states where the tax climates are more favorable to them."

Median tax rates in Nassau, Rockland and Westchester counties all topped \$10,000 in 2015, meaning half of these high-population counties are losing out in the new tax plan.

"About 20 million people are very nervous about how this is all going to turn out," Acquario said. "We won't know the true impact until 2023, maybe longer. We don't want to sit around and wait, and the state is trying to protect itself."

In mid-January, The *Fredrick News-Post* reported that Maryland democratic leaders and Republican Gov. Larry Hogan planned to introduce legislation aimed at brunting the tax overhaul's impact, including a bill adding new charitable deductions. **CN**

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2018 NACo

LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE:

Schedule subject to change. For the full conference schedule go to www.naco.org/leg

FRIDAY, MARCH 2

- 8:00 a.m. CIO Forum
- 12:00 p.m. Tech Town Hall Pt. 1
- 5:30 p.m. Tech Town Hall Reception

SATURDAY, MARCH 3

- 8:00 a.m. First Timers Orientation
- 9:00 a.m. Policy Steering Committee & Business Meetings
(open to all conference attendees)
- 12:00 p.m. Tech Town Hall Pt. 2

SUNDAY, MARCH 4

- 8:00 a.m. Standing, Ad Hoc, Advisory & Task Force Meetings
(open to all conference attendees)
- 10:00 a.m. Large Urban County Caucus (LUCC) & Rural Action Caucus
(RAC) Meetings
- 1:00 p.m. Western Interstate Region (WIR) Board Meeting
- 1:30 p.m. Educational Workshop: Managing a Multi-Generational Workforce
(separate registration & fee required)

MONDAY, MARCH 5

- 7:30 a.m. Regional Caucus Meetings
- 9:00 a.m. **General Session**
- 10:45 a.m. Educational Workshops
- 12:00 p.m. **Attendee Luncheon & General Session**
- 1:45 p.m. Educational Workshops
- 1:45 p.m. Crisis Communications (separate registration & fee required)
- 3:15 p.m. Educational Workshops

TUESDAY, MARCH 6

- 8:00 a.m. Educational Workshops
- 9:30 a.m. **General Session**
- 12:00 p.m. Hill Visits
- 1:00 p.m. Educational Workshops
- 7:00 p.m. NACo President's Reception

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7

- 8:00 a.m. Hill Visits
- 8:15 a.m. NACo Open House

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Join fellow county officials to shape NACo's policy agenda, share best practices, network and advance counties' federal policy priorities.

GENERAL SESSION SPEAKERS:



Hon. David Shulkin
Secretary of Veterans Affairs



Hon. William B. "Brock" Long
Administrator of the Federal
Emergency Management Agency



Retired Gen. Stan McChrystal
Former Commander of U.S. and
International Forces in Afghanistan



Economic reforms play a part in rationale to cut regulations

From CONGRESS page 6

Connell has stated he does not intend to address entitlement reform this year. Entitlement programs are not restricted to Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security, however, and could include other programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) along with other services provided to residents and used by counties.

PILT and SRS

The PILT program remains at the top of NACo's priorities for 2018. Also vitally important is the funding and authorization of the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program.

NACo supports restoring full mandatory funding for PILT, which compensates counties for non-taxable federal land within their boundaries. NACo also supports extending SRS as a transitional funding mechanism until the federal government fully implements a sustainable long-term forest management program with adequate revenue-sharing for forest counties and schools.

Furthermore, if Congress fails to reauthorize SRS, county forest payments will revert to the permanently authorized 25 percent revenue-sharing payments under the National Forest Revenue Act of 1908, severely impacting county government revenue.

While members on both sides of the aisle support PILT, there has not been a firm commitment to permanently address this issue.

Farm Bill

With the Agricultural Act of 2014 set to expire this budget year, Congress will look toward passing another Farm Bill in 2018. NACo supports a long-term reauthorization of the Farm Bill to help counties provide critical investments in some of the nation's most underserved communities. In addition to a long-term reauthorization, NACo also supports full funding for all Farm Bill titles, which help

strengthen the nation's rural infrastructure, protect the nation's food supply, increase access to healthy food for low-income populations through SNAP, and promote environmental stewardship and conservation.

A full bill text from both chambers is expected to be released before March.

Some in Congress will look to reform the nutrition sections of the bill, especially those with an appetite for entitlement reform, while others will prefer to concentrate on the bill's agricultural titles.

Regulatory

Whether it comes as legislation or executive orders, the administration's regulatory reform agenda will continue to take shape in 2018. Following President Trump's edict of eliminating two regulations for every new one introduced, bureaucratic red-tape reduction aims to expedite growth and speed up various project deliveries.

From infrastructure to water resources management, public lands and emergency relief, President Trump has declared a more business-friendly, less regulatory environment will expedite implementation, spur business growth and hasten economic development and job growth.

Aside from high-profile issues that could see comprehensive legislation, Congress will also consider equally important measures, minus the fanfare, that affect counties.

The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) has returned to a two-year cycle, with a vote expected in the latter part of 2018. WRDA is vital to NACo members since it addresses Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) water infrastructure projects associated with flood prevention, beach replenishment and environmental restoration, as well as authorizes and manages the Harbor Maintenance Trust fund, which helps counties embark on large scale projects such as port expansion

and harbor dredging, and Corps policy issues.

Also expected to be addressed this year is the Waters of the United States (WOTUS), with the Supreme Court expected to rule on court jurisdictional issues with WOTUS-related cases.

Additionally, EPA will be hard at work rewriting the WOTUS rule, as well as revising their current policy on the replacement of lead and copper service lines in drinking water systems.

Finally, EPA is expected to release its final list of county ozone designations under the 2015 rule by April 30.

Regulatory frameworks were not restricted to land, environment and infrastructure sectors in 2017, but economic reforms

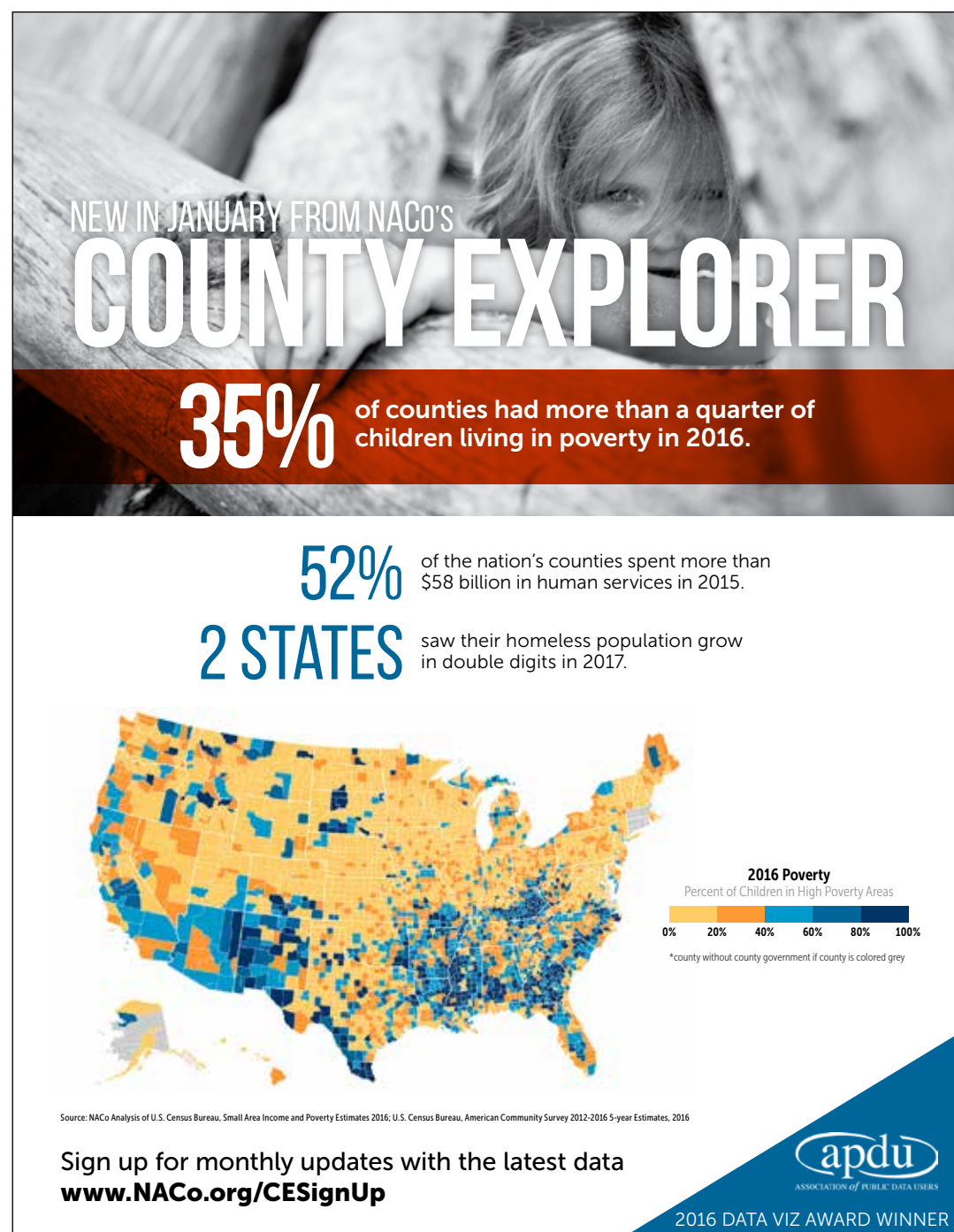
also played a part as well, notably the Department of Labor's decision not to defend the Obama Administration's rulemaking on overtime pay. NACo had expressed its concerns over the increased administrative and financial burden the rule would impose on the nation's counties, which employ more than 3.6 million people and provide services to over 305 million county residents.

It's also expected that Congress will address cybersecurity reform and engage in new debates centered on the funding of the 2020 United States Census. Congress also, throughout all federal agencies, will be looking at new regulations which could lead to federal preemption of

local authority in issues such as unmanned aerial systems and wireless facility siting and 5G wireless network deployment. Preemption is something that will be on all local governments' radar, as a debate over federalism continues.

With approximately 10 months before the midterm elections, Congress has no shortage of issues to undertake.

Fights will be waged and consensus will prove daunting. One thing is for certain, counties must be ready to educate and advocate for a continued strong federal-state-local partnership to ensure the strength and stability of our residents and communities in 2018 and beyond. **CN**





SERVING THE UNDERSERVED

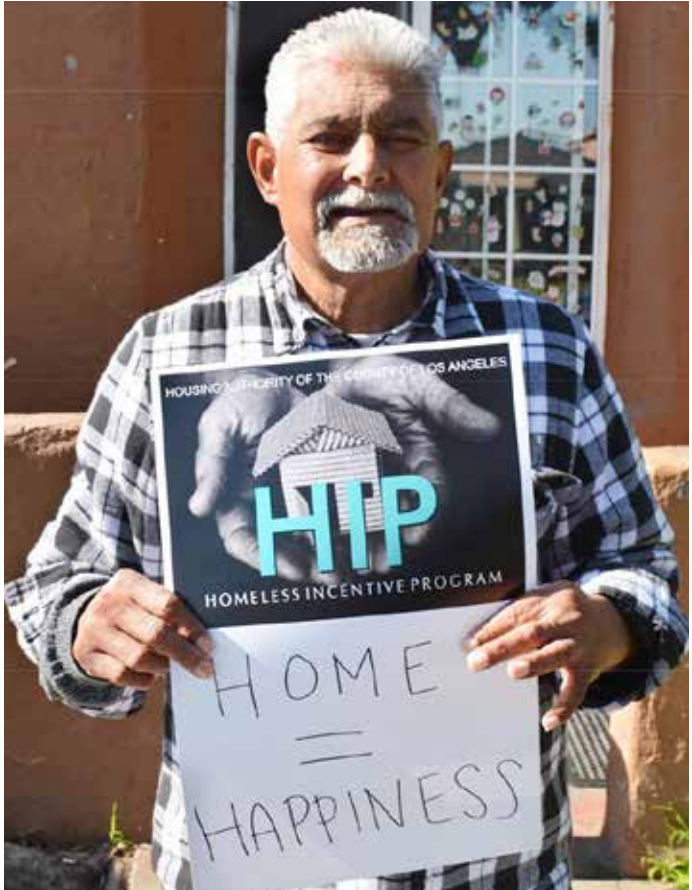


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Maricopa County hosts first Stepping Up peer exchange

By Nastassia Walsh
program manager

Last month, 25 officials from counties across the country met in Maricopa County, Ariz. to participate in the first Stepping Up Peer Exchange. Stepping Up is a national initiative to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails. More than 400 counties have passed a resolution to join the initiative since it launched in May 2015.

Hosted by NACo and Maricopa County, the purpose of the peer exchange was to highlight the work happening in Maricopa County to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in its jails.

Maricopa County passed a resolution to join the Stepping Up initiative in 2015 to help align and enhance the county's multiple justice-related initiatives.

The peer exchange was organized around the four key measures of the Stepping Up initiative:

- The number of people with mental illnesses booked into jails
- Connections to treatment,
- Their length of stay, and
- Recidivism.

The premise of these measures is that if counties can impact one or more of these points they can start to have an impact on their jail population.

With these measures as a lens, participants at the Peer Exchange heard from representatives from all sectors of the Maricopa County health, human services, justice and administrative systems.



County officials gather in Maricopa County, Ariz. for a Stepping Up Peer Exchange official photo. At the peer exchange, they discussed strategies to reduce the number of inmates with mental illness. Photo by Nastassia Walsh

To reduce the number of people with mental illnesses booked into jails, Maricopa County has made substantial investments in its law enforcement training and crisis services.

The Sheriff's Office and municipal police departments are providing increasing numbers of their officers with Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), a 40-hour program that teaches officers how to safely de-escalate situations involving individuals experiencing a mental health crisis and connect people to appropriate care rather than taking them to jail.

The county also has a robust

crisis system that includes a crisis phone line and mobile crisis teams. In addition, the county is home to the ConnectionsAZ Urgent Psychiatric Care (UPC) Center, which specializes in 24-hour emergency psychiatric services.

Peer exchange participants toured the UPC, which is staffed with psychiatrists, social workers, case managers, certified peer support specialists and medical staff to provide a continuum of care for those in need. Law enforcement officers provided more than 16,000 drop-offs to the UPC in 2016.

"We are looking to identify

solutions, and solutions aren't always incarceration," said Maricopa County Sheriff Paul Penzone.

To reduce how long an individual with mental illness stays in the jail, the jail has implemented a robust screening and assessment system that is used to inform early diversion decisions.

Approximately 100,000 people are booked into the jail each year and every one of these individuals is screened for potential serious mental illness (SMI) and substance use disorders. Corrections staff also screen for veteran status, homelessness and pre-

trial risk (i.e. risk of a person committing a new crime or not appearing in court). This pre-trial risk assessment provides a framework to guide release recommendations and supervision, and helps to divert individuals at their initial court appearance.

For individuals with SMI, Correctional Health Services (CHS) makes referrals to the community behavioral health system to coordinate "warm handoffs" when people are released from jail, and the Sheriff's Office ensures that people with SMI are only released

See STEPPING UP page 13

GET TO
KNOW...

Adams
County,
Ohio



Welcome, Adams County, Ohio

Adams County was **named for the second president of the United States, John Adams**. Home to many state parks and national forests, the county's most famous feature is the Great Serpent Mound. Designated a National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Department of Interior, **the Serpent Mound is a prehistoric effigy mound thought to have been a site for ceremonies dedicated to a powerful serpent spirit.**



PROFILES IN SERVICE

JOHN BECKER

Board Member
Chairman
Board of Supervisors
Madison County, N.Y.

Number of years involved in NACo: 10

Years in public service: 15

Occupation: Public servant, farmer.

The hardest thing I've ever done is: Work as a dairy farmer for 20 years.

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Benjamin Franklin, Ronald Reagan, Mikhail Gorbachev

A dream I have is: To live a full and happy life.

You'd be surprised to learn that: I'm a moderate.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: Ha! I'm not advertising that one!

My favorite way to relax is to: Be outdoors.

I'm most proud of: My family.

Every morning I read: My emails.

My favorite meal is: Lobster mac 'n cheese and steak.

My motto is: "Don't tell me how we can't do things, tell me how we can."



Becker

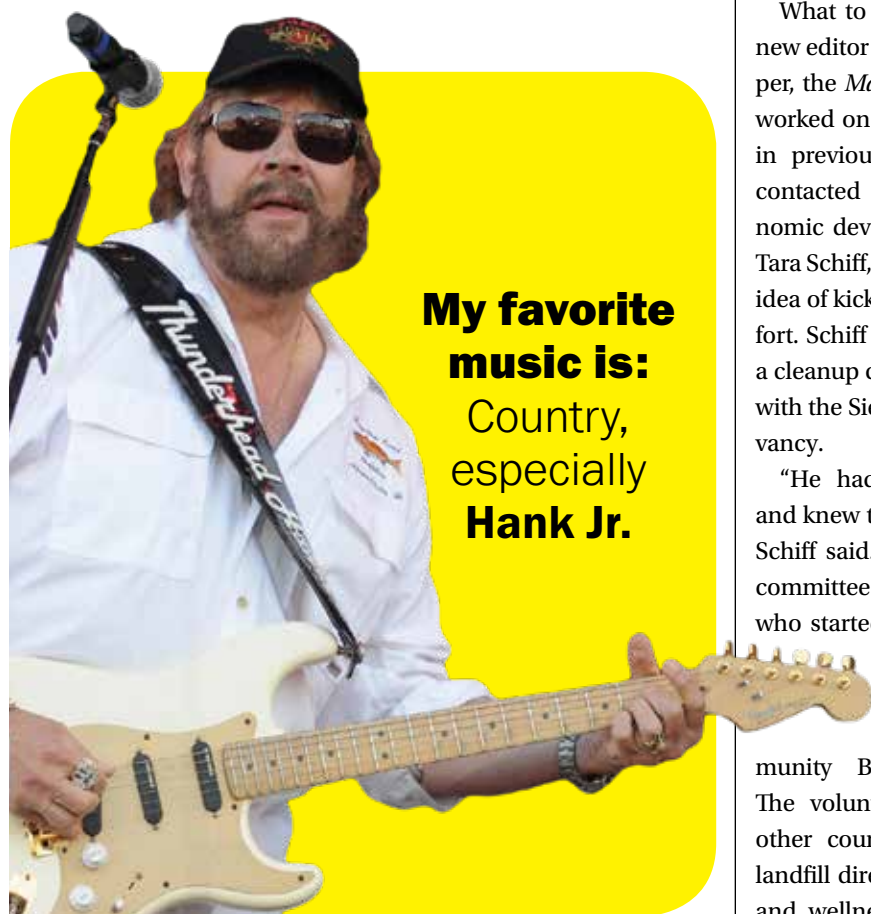
The last book I read was: *Great Camps of the Adirondacks*

My favorite movie is: *Charlie Wilson's War*.

My favorite U.S. president is: Ronald Reagan or Theodore Roosevelt.

My county is a NACo member: Because of the great resources that NACo brings to my county at the national level, whether it's for public safety or advocating for agriculture and infrastructure. NACo has the mojo my county needs to keep it moving forward.

My favorite music is:
Country,
especially
Hank Jr.



BRIGHT IDEAS | MARIPOSA COUNTY, Calif.

County, media, volunteers team up to clean up

PROBLEM:

A town that serves as a tourism gateway into a national park was often littered with trash and cigarette butts, with no one taking responsibility for cleanup.

SOLUTION:

A coalition led by a newspaper editor and a county economic development specialist planned a "clean sweep" cleanup event with prizes as incentive for volunteers to join the effort.

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

As the gateway into Yosemite National Park, the town of Mariposa in Mariposa County, Calif. often found itself the center of attention from the 1 million tourists visiting each year. The only problem? No one was taking responsibility for cleaning up trash and cigarette butts left in the downtown corridor.

What to do? Greg Little, the new editor of the local newspaper, the *Mariposa Gazette*, had worked on cleanup campaigns in previous communities; he contacted the county's economic development specialist, Tara Schiff, in late 2016 with the idea of kicking off a cleanup effort. Schiff had also worked on a cleanup campaign previously with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

"He had done this before and knew the business model," Schiff said. The two created a committee of five volunteers who started to plan the county's first "Mariposa Clean Sweep: Making Our Community Beautiful" program. The volunteers included two other county employees (the landfill director and the health and wellness director), and a



A young volunteer is pretty disgusted at the trash he's collected during the Mariposa Clean Sweep. Photo courtesy of Mariposa County, Calif.

representative from a local telephone company.

The group got the word out about the cleanup in the newspaper and online, on Facebook and on the county website. In order to boost interest in the cleanup effort, the committee decided to provide prizes as incentives and posted information about them on the Facebook page to keep residents interested.

The biggest prize was a riding lawnmower donated by the local phone company, an excellent incentive since most people's yards in the county are about 5 acres, Schaffer estimated. Other raffle prizes, about 50 in all, were also donated by local businesses.

The cleanup effort idea took off and members of the volunteer committee heard from many residents and business owners who said they had wanted to hold such an event for years. Volunteers were able to sign up online or call Schiff to pre-register; volunteers also signed waivers.

The county did not have to

spend any money to hold the cleanup; the volunteer committee received \$1,000 from the tourism bureau and the Mariposa Community Foundation. Some of the money was used to buy T-shirts for the first 50 volunteers to register. The T-shirts, designed by the newspaper's graphic artist, were made by students from a local youth group that teaches kids how to run a business.

Cleanup tools — including gloves, "trash pickers" and safety vests — were all donated by a local public waste company. Lunches were donated by a local church.

Public service announcements about the cleanup were designed by the newspaper and published for free, as were stories written by the newspaper staff. Any money raised was donated through the Mariposa Community Foundation, a local 501c3.

More than 100 volunteers showed up to clean the community and the effort also

See CLEANUP page 13

MONEYMATTERS%

U.S. Communities receives NIGP accreditation

By Tiffany A. McCasland

The NIGP, The Institute for Public Procurement, established the NIGP Accredited Cooperative program in 2015.

This first-of-its-kind accreditation for cooperative purchasing programs preserves the integrity of cooperative practice as a long-term, viable procurement option and identifies programs that demonstrate the highest standard of practice in the cooperative marketplace and In June 2017, the U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance became the first cooperative program to earn the NIGP Accredited Cooperative (NAC) accreditation, "recognizing U.S. Communities' commitment to truly professional cooperative pur-

"U.S. Communities strives to be a leader in cooperative purchasing and provide value to the public agencies we serve."

chasing practices, further distinguishing itself as the leader in cooperative purchasing."

Rick Grimm, NIGP CEO, applauded U.S. Communities for its "tremendous achievement that further distinguishes the program in the cooperative marketplace and reflects its commitment to supporting the values and principles of professional practice in public procurement."

NAC accreditation is awarded for a three-year period and requires cooperative programs to undergo a rigorous assessment process conducted by the NIGP Consulting program. The assessment involves reviewing NAC standard's 141 criteria over three domains of cooperative procurement practice: cooperative program management, contracting agency management and contracting processes. Every contract and contracting agency assessed must earn a minimum score of 90 percent to qualify for NAC accreditation, which proves to be difficult given the sheer volume of contracts independent agencies establish.

"U.S. Communities strives to be a leader in cooperative purchasing and provide value

to the public agencies we serve. Being the first cooperative program to meet the rigorous process and requirements of the NAC accreditation further supports our efforts," said Kevin Juhring, executive director of U.S. Communities. "We applaud NIGP for creating an accreditation program that sets a standard for excellence. The NAC will help the procurement profession benchmark and distinguish cooperative options through specific criteria and standard best practices." **CN**

A comprehensive NIGP Accreditation Guide providing all accreditation requirements and NIGP Accredited Cooperative criteria are available for download at <http://www.nigp.org/cooperativeaccreditation>.

Next cleanup already on tap

From CLEANUP page 12

kicked off an "Adopt a Highway" program. Schiff and Little are already at work for the second annual event, and plan to expand it to clean up two communities in the county.

Schiff said that any counties looking to create a similar program should be sure to team up with a media partner that can spread the word at no cost; you should also utilize all your local businesses and service organizations and focus on donations if you don't have a budget.

The program was recognized with a Merit Award last fall by the California State Association of Counties. **CN**

If you have more questions about the program, contact Schiff at 209.742.1214 or email tschiff@mariposacounty.org.

County boosts treatment options

From STEPPING UP page 11

during daytime hours when they are better able to access services. With these processes in place, 36 percent of people with SMI were released within 14 days in 2016, compared to only 15 percent in 2015.

To increase connections to treatment, the Sheriff's Office and CHS works with Arizona's Medicaid program, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, and community providers to offer pre-release care coordination in the jail.

Individuals identified with complex health needs connect to community providers through video visits, in-person meetings and communication with probation and parole officers to establish appointments in the community. Recent funding supports integrated, co-located clinics in or near probation and parole offices to provide behavioral health services, peer supports and social services such as employment, hous-

ing and medication-assisted treatment.

Individuals in the jail can also now submit online Medicaid applications to enroll in health insurance prior to their release.

Maricopa County also has certified opioid treatment programs in four of its six jails and recently started distributing naloxone to individuals with opioid addictions leaving the jail.

To reduce recidivism, the probation department started a program to provide a comprehensive supervision approach for people with SMI. Probation officers collaborate with the regional behavioral health authority, case managers, clinical teams and CHS on discharge planning, reentry and supervision strategies for people with SMI, many of whom have trouble complying with typical probation conditions. About 70 percent of people in this program successfully complete probation.

Recognizing the impact of

housing on an individual's recovery, Maricopa County has also implemented programs to specifically address the needs of individuals with SMI who are homeless and frequently use social services. The county's Human Services Department provides rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, employment services and shelter services.

Peer exchange participants toured the Human Services Campus in downtown Phoenix, which provides services such as dental health care and employment services and includes co-located probation offices to serve those involved in the justice system.

"Reducing recidivism is important because it saves money, it's important because it reduces pressure in the jail system, but it's mostly important because it's right for the individuals that we serve and for the families in our community," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Denny Barney of the county's efforts. **CN**

ON THE MOVE

NACo OFFICERS, COUNTY OFFICIALS

- NACo President **Roy Charles Brooks** addressed the Texas Urban Counties Conference in Live Oak County (Corpus Christi) held Jan. 11-12.

NACo STAFF

- **Kiemesha Corpening** has joined NACo as a program manager in the health division of the County Solutions and Innovations Department. Previously, Corpening served as senior science and policy fellow at the Department of Health and Human

Services. Prior to that, she served as an information analyst with Emory University and a health communication specialist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- **Matt Chase**, executive director, represented NACo at the New Mexico Association of Counties Legislative Conference Jan. 15-18 in Santa Fe County.

- **Jack Peterson**, associate legislative director, presented at the International Association of Government Officials winter board meeting in San Diego County on Jan. 9.



Corpening



Peterson

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

ARIZONA

Flu cases in PIMA COUNTY — nearly 1,000 cases reported through Dec. 30 — are 10 times higher than last year, according to *The Arizona Daily Star*. The numbers appear alarming because last year's flu season arrived late and this year's is unusually early, Aaron Pacheco, spokesman for the Pima County Health Department, told the newspaper. Arizona is one of 26 states reporting a high number of outpatient visits due to the flu. There have been 20 pediatric deaths from the flu, including one in **MARICOPA COUNTY**, according to an Arizona Department of Health Services report.

CALIFORNIA

- The City and County of **SAN FRANCISCO** has given the green light to an 18-month pilot program that will feature 250 **electric bicycles** for rent.



The e-Bikes will be part of the Ford Go-Bike program, which started in June 2017 with more than 2,600 bicycles available at 262 stations across the region. The e-Bike, with a maximum speed of 18 mph, is powered by a 345Wh Li-ion battery, features a user interface panel, lets riders know their speed and battery charge level and does not need to be returned to a dock.

- Two years ago, the **CALAVERAS COUNTY** Board of Supervisors saw **marijuana farming** as a way to lift their Sierra foothills community out of the economic despair that had deepened because of a massive

wildfire. Now, a new Board has voted to ban commercial cannabis cultivation. Supervisors have said they are responding to concerns about pollution and crime, claims the growers dispute.

Calaveras County joins **PLACER, EL DORADO** and a number of other Sierra foothill counties with bans on commercial cultivation, leaving **SACRAMENTO** and **YOLO** counties as some of the few jurisdictions allowing it, according to a report by *The Sacramento Bee*.

DELAWARE

Facing the possibility of costly court challenges from labor unions, **SUSSEX COUNTY** Council members voted Jan. 9 by 4-1 against a **right-to-work ordinance**. Councilman Rob Arlett had proposed the ordinance, saying it would be a way to attract new industries to the county. Dozens of union members packed the council chambers and stood outside during county meetings to protest the proposal. Councilman Irwin Burton said it was a tough decision but "if we adopt this

ordinance, we will be in expensive, time-consuming litigation."

In all, 28 states have passed right-to-work laws. Supporters of right-to-work laws say the measures help grow the economy, but opponents say such laws are passed to break up organized labor, hurt blue-collar workers and limit revenues from union members.

ILLINOIS

UNION COUNTY recently **celebrated its bicentennial**. The county was officially formed in the Illinois Territory on Jan. 2, 1818, before Illinois became a state, *The Southern* newspaper reported. The Union County Historical and Genealogy Society hosted a celebration at the county courthouse where local residents portrayed historic characters. One resident portrayed the then-state attorney who read the legislative act that created Union County.

INDIANA

BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY commissioners recently approved a 4 percent increase in county funding for Centerstone, a non-profit that provides **mental health services**. But with the commitment to pay more than \$600,000 a year, the county officials are also asking for more accountability for how the money is being spent, *The Republic* recently reported. Centerstone provides services in 17 Indiana counties, including a 24-hour hotline.

MARYLAND

State legislators are considering a bill that would allow counties to **increase fees to developers** who want to build in congested areas that are "closed" to construction because of crowded schools, *The Baltimore Sun* reported. As proposed, the bill would double developers' fees in areas where schools are between 110 percent and 115 percent at their capacity. Fees would increase by 200 percent in areas where schools are between 115 percent to 120 percent capacity.

MICHIGAN

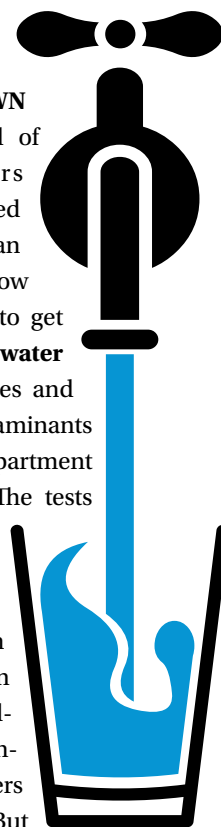
OAKLAND COUNTY is reviewing bids from businesses looking to develop an **autonomous vehicle pilot program**. The county sent out an RFP in November. Contracts will be awarded Jan. 30. A county Connected Vehicle Task Force was formed in 2014, releasing a report in August on recommendations on how to deploy the world's first countywide connected mobility system. The county wants a local business to develop, deploy and maintain the autonomous vehicle pilot program.



MINNESOTA

- **ANOKA COUNTY** is cracking down on the number of people who misrepresent "therapy" pets as **service animals**. The county has a formal written policy that welcomes service animals but prohibits ordinary pets in county buildings. And the county isn't the only one. Across the metro area, other counties are joining in, including **HENNEPIN, DAKOTA, RAMSEY** and **WASHINGTON** counties.

- The **BROWN COUNTY** Board of Commissioners recently declined to adopt a plan that would allow some residents to get their **drinking water tested** for nitrates and other farm contaminants by the state Department of Agriculture. The tests are part of a statewide project to assess water quality in private wells in some areas vulnerable to leaching from fertilizers and pesticides. But



CALIFORNIA

A **mudslide** wreaks havoc on U.S. Highway 101 Jan. 9, after a severe winter storm smacked **SANTA BARBARA COUNTY**, killing at least 20. Some 7,000 people were evacuated and hundreds were stranded in their homes. "It looked like a World War I battlefield," Santa Barbara County Sheriff Bill Brown said. Photo courtesy of Santa Barbara County Fire Department



PENNSYLVANIA

Children who have to go to the **WESTMORELAND COUNTY** Courthouse will now have access to a **kids' comfort room**. The room creates a comfortable space for children awaiting court appearances or decisions on matters such as child custody, protection from abuse, delinquency and probation. The *Tribune-Review* reports that funding for the project came from the Community Foundation of Westmoreland County, which provided a \$4,000 grant. Pictured here are the art students from Westmoreland County Community College who designed and installed the wall murals in the waiting area and in a master's hearing room. Photo courtesy of Westmoreland County, Pa.

in the farm-dominant county, the commissioners said they were worried that the Agriculture Department would use the information to regulate the use of fertilizer.

MONTANA

No room at the **detention center?** **LAKE COUNTY** Sheriff Don Bell is taking to social media to post the names of those who were cited rather than jailed because the center was full, the *Missoulian* recently reported. "I want to be transparent," he told the newspaper. "I want people to know what I'm up against.... It's not uncommon here for someone to receive a felony ticket, be booked and then released. If we're at 46 and an officer wants to bring somebody in, they have to contact me to get approval. They will call me and say 'This is what I have.' In most cases, for me to go over that maximum number, it has to be some kind of violent offense." County commissioners are aware of the problem but say that it's a particular challenge on several fronts.

NEBRASKA

The **SAUNDERS COUNTY** public defender position will

cease to be an elected office at the end of 2018. The Board of Supervisors will contract the job starting in 2019 because state statutes only require elected public defenders for counties with more than 100,000 residents. The incumbent public defender and the position will be removed from the 2018 primary ballots, the *Ashland Gazette* reported.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

A bill in the Legislature would reduce the **allowable hours a retiree may work** for a member of the state retirement system. That would complicate part-time work by retired employees who continue to work for counties, often filling in as law enforcement and public safety personnel, according to the *Concord Monitor*.

NEW JERSEY

The federal government will reimburse **SOMERSET COUNTY** \$579,088 to cover the costs of **providing protection** to President Donald Trump when he visits his golf course in Bedminster. The Presidential Residence Protection Assistance Grant Program will also issue nearly \$300,000 to the New Jersey Department of Law & Pub-

lic Safety and a combined total of nearly \$85,000 to the townships of Morristown and Bedminster for their costs. Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster is now considered a "residence of the president" and thus is eligible to apply to receive federal grants exclusively for providing reimbursement of law-enforcement personnel costs for protection activities, *My Central Jersey* reported.

NEW YORK

Driving kids around **ERIE COUNTY?** Light up and you could be fined.

The County Legislature is considering **banning smokers** from lighting up in a car occupied by anyone under 16.

Laws restricting the ability for smokers to light up in their vehicles have become more common in the last five years, *The Buffalo News* reported. **ROCKLAND COUNTY**, along with seven other states and dozens of cities, have laws against smoking in cars with children.

NORTH CAROLINA

A partnership between the state insurance department and the North Carolina Air National Guard will make the

STANLY COUNTY Airport home to a major **emergency training center**, just the second in the United States. The area's rugged terrain, including lakes, rivers, mountains and forests makes it attractive for trainees from around the world, *WUNC Radio* reported.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Revelers don't have to go home, but they can't stay in **GREENVILLE COUNTY** bars past 2 a.m. That's thanks to a new ordinance, passed by the County Council, that requires bars and restaurants that serve alcohol to **close at 2 a.m.**

Amendments to allow businesses to remain open after 2 a.m. but refrain from further alcohol sales were struck down, *Fox Carolina* reported.

TEXAS

TRAVIS COUNTY is going local in its efforts to combat coyotes. Since 2005, the county has contracted with Texas Wildlife Services to deal with nuisance birds, feral hogs and coyotes. The Commissioners Court has switched to the city of Austin Animal Services Office, which has a higher threshold to respond with lethal force, the *Austin American*

Statesman reported. The state considers lethal methods as soon as coyotes are observed during daylight hours chasing or taking pets from residential streets or yards.

UTAH

BEAVER and **SALT LAKE counties** have passed a resolution urging state lawmakers to pass **stricter hate crime laws**.

Prosecutors have said the current law is unenforceable because it lacks a list of specific groups and the Salt Lake resolution enumerates the groups who have reported being targeted, including Jews, Mormons, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Jehovah's Witnesses, Orthodox Christians and others.

The Statewide Association of Prosecutors and Utah Sheriff's Association have also called for stronger tools to address crimes against specific groups, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported.

News from Across the Nation is compiled by Charlie Ban and Mary Ann Barton, senior staff writers. If you have an item for News From, please email cban@naco.org or mbarton@naco.org.

the HR DOCTOR

With Phil Rosenberg

Phil Rosenberg

This is a story about icons in our lives. It follows a trip to the UK recently for the wonderful Charlotte and me to visit a couple of places and exhibits of great personal interest. For Charlotte, the watercolor-painting lady, a collection of the works of painter John Singer Sargent was not to be missed. It was held at one of London's oldest galleries, the Dulwich Picture Gallery. For me, the astronomy guy, the goal was to loiter around the Royal Greenwich Observatory.

In any culture and for any individual there are events, places, ideas or tangible things which are immediately associated with particular moments of time, hopes or dreams.

You might use the word "Smithsonian" and there is no doubt that we're talking about America's most famous museum. The Eiffel Tower and France, Red Square means Russia — the list goes on.

The more passionate you might be about a particular field of study or hobby, the more excited you can get about the chance to visit an iconic person or place — one whose very name or identity means a very great deal to you personally.

The Royal Greenwich Observatory — a physical icon of the world of astronomy and home to the prime meridian — was such a physical location for me.

This observatory was commissioned in 1675. It predates the instruments of mass observation that are found in modern observatories.

Its main function was to create an accurate timekeeping system, consistent across oceans, for superpower England's worldwide trading ac-

Icons in Our Lives



Royal Greenwich Observatory, London By Jen/flickr

tivities. Later England's largest telescope would be housed there and still is.

I got to stand under the main dome and look up at the 1893 instrument which helped make the science I am passionate about come to life. How ironic, I thought looking up at this huge instrument, that what I have in my far smaller personal observatory, allows me to see clearer and better than the best equipment of that past time.

Passionate service in public administration also includes iconic figures — people who serve as mentors or career development heroes.

In my 40-year career as a director of human resources in two counties and two cities as well as a leadership consultant and coach, I certainly came upon such heroes.

They helped shape my ca-

In any culture and for any individual there are events, places, idea or tangible things which are immediately associated with particular moments of time, hopes or dreams.

reer, perhaps without me even being conscious of their impacts.

One such iconic figure was William "Bill" Danielson who served as director of human resources for California's Alameda County and the cities of Berkeley, Sacramento, and Oakland.

He also served as president

of the California County Personnel Administrators Association and worked for the Ford Foundation helping the Kingdom of Nepal create its HR system.

His iconic status derived not just from the offices he held, but also from his extraordinary willingness to reach out to others and help inspire the next generation of HR directors.

So, it was when brand-new county HR Director Phil attended his first meeting of the California group for which I later, following in Bill's footsteps, had the honor to serve as president.

I knew who Bill Danielson was though we had never met. He came up to me, welcomed me, asked me to sit with him during the meeting.

He offered me more than my fair share of his time, wis-

dom and humor as key elements in career success. It became clear that I had a new and most wonderful friend.

I decided at that point that someday perhaps I might be able to play a role like that as a coach or a mentor, or just a friend to public administrators at the beginning of their careers.

Whether I have succeeded in that hope is for others to judge.

However, the form of "passing the torch" which Bill so profoundly demonstrated is a real mark of a career and a life well lived.

That willingness to be a positive and caring influence also makes for success as a spouse, parent, neighbor and member of our species.

Not a bad thing for any of us in government to think about and act on regularly. **CN**