



Telecom companies get pass on 5G buildout

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

As anticipated, the Federal Communications Commission voted March 22 to exempt telecom companies from federal historical and environmental reviews and accompanying fees in the name of streamlining the review process for the “small cell” 5-G network.

“Specifically, we clarify today that small cells are inherently different from large towers,” FCC Chairman Ajit Pai said. “So they shouldn’t face identical regulatory review under the National Historic Preservation

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Rural Allen County, Kan., fought trends and became a new model of revitalization, earning a top prize. Find out how they did it on page 7. Photo courtesy of Allen County

Celebrate the role of counties during National County Government Month

By Lindsey Maggard
public affairs coordinator

National County Government Month (NCGM) is an annual celebration of county government held each April. Since 1991, NACo has encouraged counties to raise public awareness of the robust role counties play in our communities.

This year, the theme is consistent with NACo President Roy Charles Brooks’ initiative, “Serving the Underserved.” The theme encourages counties, parishes and boroughs to feature programs and services that are making a difference in families’ lives and helping to break multigenerational cycles of poverty.



In NACo’s NCGM toolkit, county officials will find multiple ideas to share these efforts

with the public. Media outreach tips are in the toolkit, where you can also find a sample proclamation and news release. Suggestions include holding an open house at county departments to showcase the services they provide, offering tours to show how county facilities operate and holding a job fair to highlight workforce development efforts. Access the toolkit at www.naco.org/NCGM.

National County Government Month is also a great way to help students learn about county government. NACo and our partner, iCivics, are excited to release our newest civic education

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County priorities fare well in spending measure bill

By Legislative Staff

After months of debate and nearly a half-dozen extensions, Congress passed, and President Trump signed a final \$1.3 trillion spending bill for FY 2018. The appropriations in the omnibus bill — a combination of \$692 billion in defense funding and \$591 in non-defense funding — represents the highest level of funding for the federal government since FY 2011.

Although this increase in federal spending will benefit counties on several fronts, it will likely push the federal deficit past \$1 trillion by next year, hitting that dubious milestone for the first time since 2012.

The FY 2018 omnibus spending package features several significant victories for county governments. Long-standing NACo advocacy priorities received substantial — and in some cases unprecedented — funding increases. The legislation included historic levels of funding for public lands counties, augmented efforts to revitalize America’s infrastructure, boosted support for public health and the fight against the opioid epidemic, strengthened counties’ ability to prepare for and respond to disasters and increased investments in elec-

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FCC claims eliminating reviews would save \$1.6 billion

From FCC page 1

Act and National Environmental Policy Act.”

“Aside from deterring deployment, upfront fees contradict Advisory Council on Historic Preservation guidance,” Pai said. “Because these fees are inconsistent with both law and consumer welfare, we will not coerce private entities into paying them going forward.”

The FCC claims doing away with the reviews will save \$1.6 billion in “regulatory red tape,” will free up capital for 55,000 new cell sites and create 17,000 new jobs.

The vote by the five FCC commissioners split along party lines, with Republican members Pai and Commissioners Michael O’Rielly and Brendan Carr approving and Democrat Commissioners Mignon Clyburn and Jessica Rosenworcel

dissenting.

The FCC’s Intergovernmental Advisory Committee weighed in, saying the decision’s preemption or other limits of local control fundamentally runs afoul of the careful balance struck by Congress between federal and local authority.

“The current process for siting wireless infrastructure is not fundamentally broken,” the group said.

The IAC includes Baltimore Mayor Catherine Pugh, Montgomery County, Md. Councilmember Hans Riemer and Kenneth Fellman, county attorney for Yuma County, Colo.

“While I support the deployment of next-generation wireless infrastructure, I am concerned that the actions taken by the FCC undermine the protections for local communities, particularly tribal governments, in the National Historic Pres-

ervation Act (NHPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA),” Riemer said. “Regrettably, this order is another example of this FCC putting the interests of large corporations over those of state, local and tribal governments, and the people they represent.”

Attorney Fellman said that “if the FCC is going to give the industry a pass on any kind of regulations whether it’s historic preservation or environmental or local right of way control, there ought to be a quid pro quo.

“There ought to be some kind of requirement that says, ‘If you can demonstrate you’re investing 25 percent more in capital dollars in building these networks in rural America this year than you were last year, then you can take advantage of these rules that limit the kind of regulations you have to deal with. If you can’t demonstrate that, you don’t get that. There needs to be some kind of guarantee other than the industry saying, ‘Oh, if we get these breaks, we’ll deploy more.’ There has to be some kind of mandate for that. And we don’t see that from this

commission.”

In advance of Thursday’s vote, Reps. Frank Pallone (D-N.J.), Anna Eshoo (D-Calif.) and Raul Ruiz (D-Calif.) wrote in a letter to Carr, who was spearheading the effort: “The proposed order claims these small wireless facilities are the size of a pizza box, but the wireless industry notes that hundreds of thousands of these sites will need to be deployed to meet consumer demand for new 5G networks.

If the FCC were to carve out small wireless facilities from NHPA, the commission could be subjecting culturally significant sites to death by hundreds of thousands of small-cell cuts.”

The members also said in their letter that the FCC, under Pai, acts “always at the behest of industry again and again at the expense of consumers, localities, and otherwise marginalized and disenfranchised communities who are in the most need of their government to look out for them.”

The FCC says its order focuses on ensuring that the commission’s rules “properly address the differences between

large and small wireless facilities” and clarifies the treatment of small cell deployments.

Specifically, the order:

- Excludes small wireless facilities deployed on non-tribal lands from National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review, concluding that these facilities are not “undertakings” or “major federal actions.”
- Small wireless facilities deployments continue to be subject to currently applicable state and local government approval requirements.
- Clarifies and makes improvements to the process for tribal participation in Section 106 historic preservation reviews for large wireless facilities where NHPA/NEPA review is still required.
- Removes the requirement that applicants file environmental assessments solely due to the location of a proposed facility in a floodplain, as long as certain conditions are met.
- Establishes timeframes for the commission to act on environmental assessments. **CN**

SNAP/STATS



FIVE FASTEST GROWING COUNTIES 2016–2017

County	Percent Change
Comal County, Texas.....	5.1
Wasatch County, Utah	5.0
Hays County, Texas.....	5.0
Kendall County, Texas.....	4.9
Walton County, Fla.	4.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau information released March 22, 2018

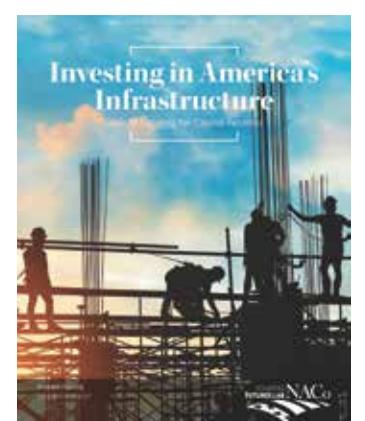
NACo Lab publishes infrastructure guide

The NACo Counties Futures Lab recently released a report titled, *Investing in America’s Infrastructure County Funding for Capital Facilities*. The report details how population and economic growth, the costs of state and federal permitting, and issues in funding and financing infrastructure present challenges for counties in building facilities. The report also presents three case studies: Montgomery County, Md., Dallas County, Texas and

San Juan County, N.M. have all found alternative funding solutions and strategies for infrastructure projects.

Investing in America’s Infrastructure County Funding for Capital Facilities features three takeaways to help counties in their capital needs:

- Leverage existing county assets
- No debt does not mean no capital projects, and
- Be willing to consider funding structures not tried before.



For more information, please visit www.naco.org/FundingInfrastructure.

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USDA kicks off rural opioid discussions

By Hadi Sedigh
and

Arthur Scott
associate legislative directors

The U.S. Department of Agriculture convened the first of a series of monthly local roundtables March 14 to promote awareness and better understanding of the support rural communities need to address addiction and opioid misuse.

The inaugural roundtable was convened in Pennsylvania by Anne Hazlett, the USDA's assistant to the secretary for Rural Development and also brought to the table several local officials from rural counties in the state, including a first responder from Adams County, a commissioner from Bradford County, a judge from Lackawanna County and a coroner from York County.

These county leaders were joined at the event by representatives from USDA, Pennsylvania state government, area universities, faith-based



Bradford County, Pa. Commissioner Ed Bustin, (lower left with microphone), a member of the Rural Action Caucus, speaks March 14 at a roundtable on the opioid epidemic; the event was convened by the USDA. Photo courtesy of NACo

organizations, hospitals, recovery centers and law enforcement agencies.

'Someone else's problem'

After opening remarks from Hazlett, attendees heard from Kerry Benninghoff, Majority Policy chairman of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and a former county

coroner in Center County, Pa. Benninghoff has convened 10 hearings on the opioid epidemic in localities throughout the state, and shared key takeaways at the roundtable.

"It's amazing how many people in our communities think this is someone else's problem," he said, highlighting the need for a change in mindset when it comes to the opioid

epidemic. Benninghoff also suggested that stakeholders consider a careful distinction between need for addiction treatments and demand for those treatments.

The terms are at times used interchangeably, he said, but a major impediment to effective response to the opioid epidemic lies in the difference between these terms - those who

need treatment are typically not demanding them, creating additional challenges for local governments.

'Landscapes of despair'

To provide further context for the roundtable discussion, Shannon Monnat, associate

See *OPIOIDS* page 6

White House unveils strategy to fight opioid abuse

By Hadi Sedigh
and

Valerie Brankovic
Legislative Affairs staff

The White House's follow-up salvo in the fight against opioid misuse, dubbed the "Initiative to Stop Opioid Abuse and Reduce Drug Supply and Demand," features a three-pronged strategy to address the nation's opioid epidemic. The initiative focuses on reducing demand and over-prescription of opioids; cutting off supply of illicit drugs; and expanding treatment options for those struggling with addiction. In the White House's new initiative, which incorporates many of the recommendations put forth by President Trump's opioid commission in November 2017, specific steps are listed for each of the initiative's three overarching goals.

Reducing demand and over-prescription: To educate Americans about the dangers of opioids and other drug use and to curb over-prescription of addictive painkillers, the president's initiative calls for the launch of a nationwide media campaign to raise public awareness about the dangers of prescription and illicit opioid use, as well as other drug use. The initiative also calls for the implementation of a "Safer Prescribing Plan" that would cut nationwide opioid prescription refills by one-third within three years, and would also support a nationally interoperable Prescription Drug Monitoring Program network.

Cutting off the supply of illicit drugs: The initiative calls for a crackdown on international and domestic illicit drug supply chains, in part by securing land borders, ports

of entry and international mail shipments against illegal smuggling. The initiative also calls for increased enforcement by the Department of Justice against corrupt or criminally negligent doctors, pharmacies and distributors, and calls for use of the death penalty against drug traffickers, where appropriate under current law.

Helping those struggling with addiction: To help individuals with substance use disorders, the initiative calls for increased supply of naloxone to first responders, expanded access to treatment (including medication-assisted treatment), on-demand access to treatment for veterans and funding opportunities to states and counties to improve nationwide overdose tracking systems that will help facilitate rapid deployment of resources

to hard-hit areas.

Notably, the initiative also calls for legislative changes to the law prohibiting federal Medicaid reimbursement for residential treatment at certain facilities with more than 16 beds, and states that the administration will continue to approve state Medicaid waivers on this issue.

Finally, the initiative calls for increased support for offenders struggling with addiction, by giving them access to treatments as an alternative to, or in conjunction with incarceration, or as a condition of supervised release.

The administration's proposals closely parallel recommendations published in NACo and the National League of Cities' joint task force report, *A Prescription for Action: Local Leadership in Ending the Opioid Crisis*, issued in November

2016. The report offers recommendations to help local, state and federal jurisdictions reduce rates of opioid misuse, overdose and fatality, and highlights changes to the Medicaid program, establishment of drug courts and strengthening of Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs as important steps needed in the nation's fight against the opioid epidemic.

The White House announcement on March 18 follows a November 2017 report of policy recommendations issued by the White House's opioid commission, which featured multiple proposals aimed at addiction prevention, addiction treatment and drug interdiction. The commission was established by President Trump shortly after his inauguration and was led by former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie. 

New set of rankings released for healthiest communities

The Aetna Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Aetna, and *U.S. News & World Report*, well-known for its college rankings, announced March 26 the inaugural Healthiest Communities rankings. The new report evaluated nearly 3,000 communities nationwide across 10 categories, from education and population health to infrastructure and economy.

In addition to assessing which communities offer their citizens the greatest opportunity to live a productive, healthy life, the rankings offer insight into the best approaches for improving public health that can be shared and implemented across the country.

In addition to an overall ranking of the top 500 communities, four peer groupings were developed based on counties' urban-rural status as tied to population density and the robustness of their economies.

The peer groups assure fair comparisons between communities and are categorized by: urban high-performing, urban up-and-coming, rural high-performing and rural up-and-coming. An Honor Roll was also developed that highlights

36 top-performing communities in each peer group from the nine US Census regions.

"Research has shown that in the United States, your ZIP code is a greater predictor of your life expectancy than your genetic code. In other words,

where you live has a significant impact on your overall health," said Mark T. Bertolini, Aetna chairman. "Our work with *U.S. News* will provide communities with data that can help them better understand opportunities for improve-

ment, as well as inspire ideas for change by showcasing the best practices of communities across the country."

Key findings in the 2018 Healthiest Communities

See **HEALTH** page 17

AETNA FOUNDATION WORKS TOWARD CREATING THE HEALTHIEST COMMUNITIES

U.S. News & World Report's Healthiest Communities index showcases communities in the United States that are doing the best job of improving residents' health through partnerships, expanded public health assessments and various education programs.

Of the 500 ranked communities, 17 received Aetna Foundation support in the past two years through a Cultivating Healthy Community grant or as part of the Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge.

The programs

The Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge launched in 2016 is a partnership between

the Aetna Foundation, the American Public Health Association and the National Association of Counties and is administered by CEOs for Cities. The Challenge will award \$1.5 million in prizes to cities and counties that show measurable improvements in health outcomes over the course of several years through cross-sector partnerships.

"Through our collaborative work with the Aetna Foundation on the Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge, we have helped communities across the country develop local solutions to their local problems," said NACo President Roy Charles Brooks. "The Healthiest Communities rankings will help enhance that effort.

Beyond just identifying the counties that are improving the health of their residents, the Healthiest Communities rankings will also encourage the continued sharing of best practices that can help community partners across the country to solve serious, complex public health issues."

The Cultivating Healthy Communities program began in 2016. Since then, the Aetna Foundation has awarded more than \$4 million in grants. These grants support organizations working to address social determinants of health, such as improving green spaces and access to healthy food, as well as decreasing the exposure to air and water contaminants.

'Wall of sound' helps corral 47,000 Asian carp; invasive species overran Missouri county lake

By **Mary Ann Barton**
senior staff writer

Rounding up 47,000 fish in a 320-acre lake in a Missouri county took some ingenuity, using a method that has been used in Asia but not often in the United States.

The Missouri Department of Conservation, which manages Creve Coeur Lake, approached St. Louis County late last summer about helping it rid the lake of some 119 tons of invasive Asian carp.

"You have all this recreational use of the lake and then you get these fish that jump out of the water and they can injure people," said Tom Ott, assistant director of the St. Louis County, Mo. Department of Parks and Recreation.

The Asian silver carp is especially skittish and easily startled and can jump as high as 10 feet out of the water.

A YouTube video, "Creve Coeur Lake Asian carp" taken by a Washington University student, shows "kids that were in their rowing boats as they were coming back from the dock and these fish start jumping out of the water, hundreds of them," Ott said. "And this was probably about four years ago."

Ott said he, too, has seen Asian carp jumping out of the water while on the Mississippi River.

In addition to possibly slapping boaters in the head, the fish is considered a nuisance because it consumes all the plankton and other organisms that native crappie normally eat. Asian carp eat 5 percent to 20 percent of their body weight each day and can grow to be more than 7 feet long and weigh more than 100 pounds.

The invasive species, (primarily bighead carp and silver



Asian carp, like the ones in Creve Coeur Lake, leap from the Fox River in Illinois. Photo courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

carp), were imported into the United States from Southeast Asia as a way to clean fish farms and wastewater treatment facilities.

But flooding allowed them to escape to the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, and experts have been stymied ever since, trying to get rid of them, mainly in waterways in Missouri and Illinois. They got into St. Louis County as early

as 2009 from several floods, Ott said.

Getting rid of them isn't easy. Asian carp hate the sound of motorboat motors, so conservationists isolated the sound and broadcast it underwater in St. Louis County, using the noise to herd the fish to one end of Creve Coeur Park Lake, where they were removed. Wintertime was the best time because the fish don't jump

around as much in colder temperatures. In addition to broadcasting the sound of motorboat motors, they also used nets, ultrasound and electric shocks to herd the fish.

"This is still a new type method of removing these carp from the lakes, it's called the Unified Method," Ott said.

The fish were carted away to a landfill. Wildlife code doesn't currently permit them to use the fish for other purposes, Ott noted.

The county Parks and Recreation Department helped the state department of conservation, the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Unified Method got rid of about 85 percent to 90 percent of the fish in the lake.

"Getting these fish out of the lake," Ott said, "will allow the crappie and other native species to bounce back." **CN**

Cashion leads off Capitol Hill's Arts Advocacy Day

By Jenna Moran
program manager

Guilford County, N.C. Commissioner Kay Cashion, chair of NACo's Arts and Culture Commission, joined more than 650 arts advocates from all 50 states for National Arts Advocacy Day, March 13.

Speaking at the breakfast kickoff in the Kennedy Caucus Room in the Russell Senate Office Building, Cashion emphasized that NACo stands firmly with its partner, Americans for the Arts, in calling for increased funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the arts education program within the Department of Education.

She noted the critical importance of these programs in providing counties with the resources they need to develop and expand cultural resources

SPEEDREAD

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, the arts and culture industry in America accounts for 4.2 percent of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (\$763 Billion), which is more than either the construction (3.9 percent) or transportation (2.9 percent) sector. The arts employ nearly 5 million Americans.

within their communities and further remarked that the arts and cultural capital are integral to a community's well-being—from its social fabric to its economic strength.

She pointed to NACo's longstanding tradition of recognizing the importance of the arts and reminded the group that the NACo Arts and Culture Commission is celebrating its 20th Anniversary.

The commission was estab-

lished in 1998 by then-NACo President Betty Lou Ward, who was also the first recipient of Americans for the Arts' Public Leadership in the Arts Award for County Arts Leadership that same year.

In partnership with Americans for the Arts, NACo recently received an NEA "Our Town" award for the Creative Counties Placemaking Initiative.

County officials and local arts professionals build creative placemaking knowledge and capacity within local government-led teams. Seven teams were selected to participate in the program.

Each represents a county with a population of 250,000 or fewer, and includes at least one county-elected official, one county or local arts agency leader and a local business leader.

The seven selected teams recently attended a workshop in Polk County, Iowa, designed to provide them with the baseline knowledge of how to use the arts as a way to address local challenges.

You can find information on the workshop and all its presentations in NACo's new Creative Placemaking Toolkit for Counties.

The toolkit comprises a suite of online creative placemaking resources curated for county governments and can be found online at www.naco.org/creativecounties. **CN**



NEA Chairman Jane Chu (l), Guilford County, N.C. Commissioner Kay Cashion advocate for the arts. Photo by Jay Dick, Americans for the Arts

Municipal bonds get boost in Senate financial services bill

By Jack Peterson
associate legislative director

Legislation passed by the Senate March 14 would make municipal debt more attractive to investors and banks, keeping the demand for municipal bonds high and interest costs of issuance low for counties and other municipal issuers.

The Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act, S. 2155, which passed by a 67 to 31 vote, includes many financial services provisions; Section 403 in particular is beneficial to counties, as it would reclassify municipal debt as a High-Quality Liquid Asset (HQLA).

Tax-exempt municipal bonds are used to finance construction of or repairs to a variety of infrastructure projects important to counties, including roads and bridges; public transportation; seaports and airports; water and wastewater facilities; acute care hospitals; and electric power and natural gas facilities. Classifying investment grade municipal securities as HQLA will help ensure low-cost infrastructure financing remains available as municipal issuers continue building the local infrastructure on which our communities and the national

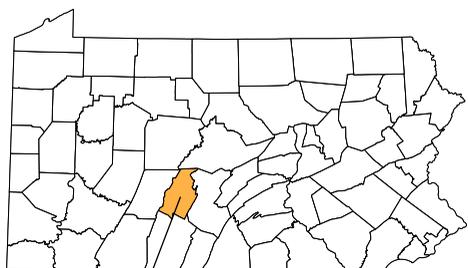
economy rely.

Under Dodd-Frank, banks must meet a Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) to ensure each bank has enough liquid assets should there be a time of financial stress. Part of this LCR includes HQLAs, which comprise two levels of assets, 2A and 2B. Level 2B assets must account for at least 15 percent of a bank's total stock. By classifying municipal securities as a Level 2B asset, banks will be further incentivized to invest in these financing tools.

Following passage in the Senate, Congress has at least two options for sending a final bill to the president's desk. First, the House could simply vote on and pass the language approved by the Senate. However, House Financial Services Committee Chairman Jeb Hensarling (R-Texas) has already indicated he and other House members plan to make changes to the Senate's version. It is still unclear whether the changes made by the House will impact Section 403, more specifically the reclassification of municipal debt as HQLA.

If the House does pass an amended version, the bill would be sent back to the Senate, putting the ball back in the upper chamber's court. **CN**

New NACo Member
GET TO KNOW...



Blair County, Pa.

Welcome, Blair County, Pa.

Blair County was created on Feb. 26, 1846 and is home to the Penn State Altoona campus. The school's AA baseball team, The Altoona Curve, is the **only team to claim an official roller coaster—the Skyliner** is located behind right-field at their home field. The Curve team is named for Horseshoe Curve, a stretch of railroad cutting through the Allegheny Mountains nearby. It was constructed in 1854 to lessen the grade to the summit of the mountains and became a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark in 2004.



NACo, iCivics release ‘My County Works’ student activity book

From NCGM page 1

resource — *My County Works*, an activity book for elementary school students. In conjunction with the Counties Work online educational game, where students simulate the role of county leaders, and the County Solutions classroom curriculum, our civic education resources now cover students of all ages. You

can access these resources at www.naco.org/iCivics.

On April 3, we encourage you to participate in the Mayor and County Recognition Day for National Service, recognizing the impact of national service. The Corporation for National and Community Service has partnered with NACo, the National League of Cities and Cities of Service to encourage leaders to

host events, issue proclamations and participate in service projects.

Use the hashtag #NationalServiceWorks on social media to highlight your communities’ volunteerism and thank AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members for their contributions.

On April 18, County Health Day will highlight how counties build healthier communities —

including health care delivery, public health and behavioral health services. Join NACo on Twitter (@NACoTweets) from 2-3 p.m. ET for a Twitter chat to discuss strategies for building a culture of health.

NACo wants to know about the activities you have planned so we can share this information with other counties. Please email your activities to Fred

Wong at fwong@naco.org. Send us your media coverage, proclamations, photos and videos of your county’s celebrations.

If your county is on social media, please share your activities on NACo’s Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/NACoDC and include us on Twitter at @NACoTweets. Join the conversation by using the hashtag #NCGM. 

Rural areas see highest OD fatality rates from opioids

From OPIOIDS page 3

professor of Sociology at Syracuse University, provided an academic’s overview of opioid misuse in rural America. Monnat titled her presentation “Landscapes of Despair,” a reference to large-scale economic and social distress throughout the country that she cited as a driver of hopelessness and despair.

In an analogy she shared with the group, Monnat referred to these economic and social distresses as the kindling for the fire that is the opioid epidemic, with over-prescription of painkillers and an abundant supply of potent illicit opiate alternatives like heroin and fentanyl serving as the fire’s “spark.”

To overcome this epidemic, she continued, we must focus not only on supply reduction and treatments for individuals, but on the large-scale underlying factors — or “upstream” drivers — of this societal challenge.

Monnat also shared data to demonstrate that the “rural opioid epidemic is not monolithic,” and that rural communities across the country have both the highest and lowest overdose and fatality rates resulting from opioid misuse.

According to her research, one predictor of how acutely a rural county is impacted by the opioid epidemic is the jurisdiction’s economic dependency type: counties in which mining is a major economic driver, for example, have sig-

Those who need treatment are typically not demanding them, creating additional challenges for local governments.

nificantly higher drug-related rates per 100,000 residents than farming communities.

Epidemic differs in rural communities

Throughout the roundtable discussion, first-hand accounts of the opioid epidemic in rural communities were brought to the table.

Some of these accounts — like a local official’s statement that her agency hesitates to issue public warnings about lethal batches of illicit opioids for fear that individuals will proactively seek out the supplier of that batch in their search for the most potent high — likely also reflect the grim reality in urban and suburban communities.

Other impacts, on the other hand, are likely more acutely felt in rural communities: a first responder shared that his agency was not equipped to handle multiple overdoses stemming from a single batch of drugs due to the fact that the agency has only six ambulances to address these and other urgent community health needs.

Another speaker acknowledged the critical role of local task forces and coalitions to formulating effective responses to addiction, but noted it is often difficult for rural communities to find funding streams that support these collaborative groups.

Attendees also shared accounts of resourcefulness and innovation that is helping to address issues more relevant in rural communities.

Judge Michael Barrasse from Lackawanna County stated that in rural areas in Pennsylvania, local governments are teaming up to create regional drug courts in place of often resource-prohibitive single-county courts.

A representative of a faith-based organization funded by Lancaster County highlighted the pivotal role of churches — often among the only settings where rural communities congregate — in formulating an effective response to addiction in rural areas.

Technological solutions were also discussed for helping individuals in recovery access some treatments through mobile apps in areas where transportation to brick-and-mortar treatment centers is time- or cost-prohibitive given the geographic breadth of many rural areas.

A rural Pennsylvania county commissioner’s perspective

Commissioner Ed Bustin, a member of NACo’s Rural Ac-

tion Caucus and Justice and Public Safety Committee attended the roundtable on behalf of NACo and the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania.

In his opening remarks, Bustin shared an unfortunate moniker given to Bradford County by *Newsweek* in an article published in 2005: Meth Valley.

Response must focus on addiction

In sharing this account, Bustin echoed a sentiment that has driven NACo’s work on the opioid epidemic in recent years — that the response to this epidemic must ultimately focus on addiction, rather than any specific substance, because if addiction is not addressed, another drug will replace opioids as the driver of the next epidemic.

In continuing his remarks, Bustin acknowledged the daunting challenge that lies ahead of the country, noting: “It’s scary to think about the level of work that needs to be done to fix those social impacts in our communities, to try and knit together communities again so they have the strength to prevent addiction from taking hold from the start.”

To achieve this daunting challenge, he said, “We need to change the way we look at our education systems, the way we look at community and recreation, the way we look at our interaction with our faith-based communities;

all that needs to change.”

Bustin continued by highlighting the pivotal importance of federal support and funding for local programs that can help to bring about these changes, stating that “local government organizations and community organizations turn this money into results.”

He continued to say that, “What we ask is that we be free to be creative, to think outside the box. Oftentimes, we’re delivered money and told this is what the money should be used for, and the structure it should be used within.”

“Now that might not always work for me, as it might in Susquehanna County, or in Dauphin County, and so in the end, what we need is more of this interaction so we can hear directly from the folks in the communities being hit with the folks that are the policymakers and the decision-makers,” Bustin said.

In wrapping up his remarks, he struck an optimistic tone, saying: “I’m confident, and I’m comforted in knowing that rural America has always had the ability to stand up and stick together.” 

USDA’s remaining local roundtables on the rural opioid epidemic are scheduled for April 11 in Utah, May 9 in Kentucky, June 6 in Oklahoma and July 11 in Maine. NACo is partnering with Assistant to the Secretary Hazlett to ensure continued local representation at these roundtables.

Rural Kansas county scores health win

By Blaire Bryant
program manager

In the face of a century of declining population and a spot near the bottom of the County Health Rankings, Allen County, Kan. fought trends and became a new model in rural revitalization, earning the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Prize in the process.

The prize accompanied a seven-spot climb in the County Health Rankings in 2018, to 84th in the state of Kansas for composite ranking of total health indicators.

Allen County was one of eight recipients of the \$25,000 Culture of Health cash prizes in 2017.

Central to this progress, the nonprofit Thrive Allen County has built strong partnerships both with and within the community, listened to residents' concerns and united them under the shared vision for health. The county has spent the last decade advancing efforts that include building and sustaining a robust healthcare safety net, creating a built environment that supports healthy lifestyles and physical activity, and implementing policy changes that address a myriad of issues from drug use to workplace wellness.

"It's a county that is still working to ensure that its best days are ahead of it," said David Toland, Thrive's CEO.

Shared goal, shared vision, shared identity

Allen County's success was rooted in a widely adopted and accepted mission to become the healthiest rural county in Kansas. County leaders understood that winning community commitment to a shared vision requires a deep understanding of what matters most to the individuals and businesses driving the change. It also required residents to band together under the county's newly established set of values and priorities.

"It's the idea that a rising tide lifts all boats. I really think that Allen County lives by that," said Lisse Reghr, Thrive's deputy director of outreach and advocacy.

The organization functions as convener, building strong partnerships both with and within the community, listening to their concerns, and uniting them under the shared vision for health. Toland said that building the foundation for trust and understanding amongst community members was a key factor in some of the county's most notable wins. For example, in 2010, Thrive Allen County successfully promoted the first successful sales tax increase in 40 years, a quarter-cent increase to fund construction of a new hospital. Today, the 25-bed, state of the art hospital serves as a critical access facility, providing comprehensive healthcare and 24-hour emergency care services.

Working across sectors

Commissioner Thomas Williams credits Thrive with building bridges within the county and bringing sectors together.

"Having a culture of health in a community almost by definition means it's not just about the healthcare sector," Toland said. "It's about the community, which includes business, which includes the public works department, which includes social services."

Thrive also worked across city lines and helped break down municipal siloes. Williams acknowledged the challenge.

"The city of Iola wouldn't talk to the county, [the city of] Moran wouldn't talk to [the city of] Humboldt," he said. "We weren't getting along."

The organization petitioned businesses and city and county governments to get onboard by explaining the benefits of a collective impact approach and how it can profit all parts of a community.

Allen County became a champion for community change by supporting public initiatives in unprecedented ways. In 2015, commissioners allowed Iola Industries to purchase a portion of the old hospital site and begin one of the largest redevelopment projects undertaken in the county in decades. The project involved the construction of a mixed-used development facility that included apartment units, townhomes, and the addition of a new supermarket initiated with the help of community petitions. The supermarket opened in January 2018 in what was once designated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a

food desert, adding 50 jobs.

Toland points to Williams as a difference-maker. Williams joined the Allen County Board of Commissioners in 2013, after serving as sheriff since 2005. As both commissioner and sheriff, Williams has promoted a culture of health. After 38 years in law enforcement seeing offenders struggle with drug addiction, he started Allen County's first drug court, which integrated treatment into the adjudication of drug cases.

He views the support of community-based collaborative initiatives like the drug court as a part of his role as an elected official.

"That's our whole job," he

said. "Almost everything that we do affects each one of our citizens in one way or another. It's walking that fine line trying to figure out how you can make everybody's lives in your community better."

Shifting momentum post-win

Winning the Culture of Health Prize last fall validated the nearly decade's worth of work, on top of the improved health outcomes for residents. An evolution has taken place in the community, not only in the approach to health initiatives, but how people view their indi-

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plete your review, support using the Geographic Update Partnership Software or any other questions related to LUCA.

Additional information about LUCA can be found here: <https://bitly.com/#.>

PILT gets full funding, SRS restored in \$1.3 trillion Omnibus bill

From SPENDING page 1

tions security.

NACo released a comprehensive analysis of the FY 2018 appropriations package, which can be found on NACo's resources page at www.naco.org/advocacy. Highlights include:

Public lands programs reauthorized and funded

The Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program was fully funded at \$530 million, \$65 million above FY 2017. Counties cannot collect property taxes on federal land, but must still provide essential services for residents and those who visit public lands each year. PILT helps offset the cost of these services, which include road and bridge maintenance, law enforcement, search and rescue, emergency medical and fire protection, solid waste disposal and environmental compliance. Full-funding of PILT is a long-standing NACo priority.

In addition to PILT funding, counties scored a major victory with the reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program for FY 2017 and 2018, particularly after the program expired in 2015. Those payments benefit 720 federal forest counties and 9 million school children by making up for lost timber revenues. SRS payments keep teachers in the classroom, police officers on the beat and road crews working to construct and help maintain county infrastructure.

Infrastructure gets a big boost

Speaking of infrastructure, the FY 2018 bill laid out \$10 billion in new infrastructure investments, a funding boost agreed to by lawmakers during budget discussions earlier this year. The bulk of this money is directed to the Department of Transportation (DOT) through the Capital Investment Grants program (\$2.6 billion), discretionary highway funding (\$2.5 billion), TIGER grants (\$1 billion) and the Highway Trust Fund (\$1 billion).

However, appropriators also used this funding to supplement several programs outside DOT, including the Community Development Block Grant, water and wastewater grants and loans, a new rural broadband program and the Environmental Protection Agency's clean water and drinking water revolving funds.

Disaster relief efforts get major lift

Under the FY 2018 omnibus, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Disaster Relief Fund received \$8 billion in new funds, of which \$7.3 billion is designated for relief from major disasters. The Disaster Relief Fund is the primary funding source for federal disaster response and recovery.

This new funding follows more than \$100 billion additional funds which were appropriated over the last several months following the major hurricanes and wildfires of 2017. Unlike most other

federal programs that support states and localities, the Disaster Relief Fund is a "no-year" account, meaning that unused funds left over from previous years are carried over to the next fiscal year.

FEMA's National Pre-Disaster Mitigation Fund also received \$249 million in FY 2018, a major increase of \$149 million over FY 2017. This fund helps to mitigate risks, reduce damage from future disasters and lower flood insurance premiums for homes and businesses.

Funding for opioid epidemic included

The FY 2018 funding bill approved \$2 billion in new funding to stem the tide of the opioid epidemic. This included \$350 million for the Center for Disease Control to advance the understanding of the opioid overdose epidemic and scale up states' prevention activities. It also included \$1 billion for Opioid State Target Response Grants. Although a percentage of these funds are allocated to states with the highest mortality rates due to opioid use disorders, no state will receive less than \$4 million.

Also of importance to counties, a new Rural Communities Opioid Response program is funded at \$130 million with the explicit aim of reaching hard-hit rural communities across America.

Election security upgrades a priority

Finally, the FY 2018 omnibus included \$380 million in grant funding to states for "election

security improvements," including enhancing election technology and increasing election cybersecurity.

This funding comes from remaining Help America Vote Act funds, and the bill grants authority to distribute these funds to the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) — an independent, bipartisan commission charged with developing guidance to help jurisdictions meet requirements established under the Help America Vote Act of 1992. The EAC has until the week of May 7, 2018 to distribute these funds.

Numerous other county programs were funded in the FY 2018 omnibus bill. As the

2018 election cycle approaches, Congress will be less likely to pass other major pieces of legislation, and many anticipate this will be the final large bill passed before November. However, a few outstanding issues remain, including government appropriations for FY 2019 (which begins on Oct. 1, 2018) and reauthorizations of the National Flood Insurance Program and the Federal Aviation Administration, which expire on July 31, 2018 and Sept. 30, 2018, respectively.

NACo will continue working with Congress and the administration to ensure county priorities are protected in future appropriations processes.

THE OMNIBUS PROVIDES \$10 BILLION IN INFRASTRUCTURE SPENDING ACROSS SEVERAL FEDERAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS, INCLUDING:

Infrastructure programs in FY18 omnibus	Increase
DOT Federal Transit Administration's Capital Investment Grants	\$2.6 billion
DOT discretionary highway funding.....	\$2.5 billion
DOT TIGER grants	\$1 billion
DOT Highway Trust Fund.....	\$1 billion
USDA Rural Broadband Pilot Program (new)	\$600 million
USDA water and waste grants and loans	\$500 million
HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).....	\$300 million
HUD home investment partnerships program	\$412 million
EAC election infrastructure	\$380 million
EPA Clean Water Revolving Fund	\$300 million
EPA Drinking Water Revolving Fund	\$300 million

Roundtable explores building disaster resilience

By Sanah Baig
program director

County leaders, federal officials and corporate partners met March 2 at NACo to discuss county-driven mitigation efforts that have made communities resilient to disasters.

“The issue of resilience is ready for prime time, and the Resilient Counties Initiative is working to build the momentum around this movement as we identify our path forward,” said James Gore, Resilient Counties Advisory Board chair and Sonoma County, Calif., supervisor.

The purpose of the roundtable discussion was to gain a better understanding of:

- programs and policies counties created to make it easier, cheaper and quicker to bounce back after a disaster
- how counties can better streamline procedures and uti-

lize available resources, and

- how the Resilient Counties Initiative can support their efforts.

It is critical for counties to set themselves up for sustainable recovery before a disaster by establishing key partnerships and pre-disaster contracts, Gore said. In line with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator William “Brock” Long’s top priority, attendees discussed creating a “culture of preparedness” in which communication prior to a disaster leads to community well-being.

To prepare for disasters, county officials need to establish relationships at all levels of government and with all manners of partners, including the public, volunteer organizations, faith-based organizations, local businesses.

As Commissioner Darryl Stacy from Cleveland Coun-



(L-r): Roundtable participants Ryan Streeter (FEMA), Leonard Jordan (USDA/NRCS), Kurt Readus (USDA/NRCS) and Stan Gimont (HUD) discuss disaster resilience March 2 at NACo.

Photo by Leon Lawrence III

ty, Okla., pointed out: “You have to have relationships in place before an event so that you know who to reach out to for expertise when disaster strikes.” The federal partners in

the room agreed. Leonard Jordan, associate chief for Conservation at the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service, said, “USDA takes

pride in collaborating, coordinating and capitalizing on the power one gets from collaborating. It’s about putting

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SOLUTIONS SPOTLIGHT

Rosalynn Carter Institute helps caregivers across the country

An estimated 44 million Americans provide care to family or friends who need help with their daily activities. They spend an average of three work days taking on a range of tasks, from cooking meals, to scheduling appointments, to bathing or changing wound dressing. Many don't consider themselves "caregivers" at all; they are parents, children, extended family or friends who do this work out of love. But they bear a heavy burden; caregivers are more likely to suffer from exhaustion, stress, and poor health.

Housed on the campus of Georgia Southwestern State University, the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving (RCI) was founded 30 years ago by former First Lady Ro-

sallynn Carter to support caregivers through research, advocacy and programs, such as RCI REACH (Resources for Enhancing Alzheimer's Caregiver Health) and Operation Family Caregiver (OFC). These programs educate and train caregivers providing care for people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, and physically or psychologically injured soldiers and veterans.

Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are a growing challenge as the population ages. More than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease today, and the Alzheimer's Association estimates that 16 million people could be living with the disease by 2050. RCI REACH is

Johnson & Johnson

an in-home, tailored program for caregivers of people with Alzheimer's and other dementias. There are an estimated 15.7 million of these caregivers, and they can struggle to remain positive, to be patient, and to respond productively to difficult patient behaviors. RCI REACH helps caregivers develop the skills they need and to reduce their own stress. The program is currently offered by 23 organizations, mostly community organizations or Area Agencies on Aging.

OFC is aimed at caregivers of another growing population: injured service members and veterans. A 2014 RAND corporate report said there

are 5.5 million military caregivers in the United States, with 1.1 million caring for veterans who served since Sept. 11, 2001. More than 50,000 veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan were physically wounded, and many more have come home with traumatic brain injury, posttraumatic stress disorder or another mental health condition.

When these servicemen and women come home, their transition is often difficult. Whether their injuries are physical or psychological, service members must learn to rely on loved ones for help. And their caregivers face an uphill battle as well. OFC has helped more than 700 families as they face a "new normal."

The program can be delivered in person at 11 locations around the country or to caregivers anywhere in the United States by video chat.

Both of these programs were launched with catalytic funding from Johnson & Johnson, which continues to support OFC as part of its deep commitment to families. You may not know it, but someone in your circle likely is a caregiver. Perhaps it is a friend or a neighbor; the adult child of your parents' friends or the parents of your children's friends. Or maybe it's you who could use a new support system. If so, don't be afraid to reach out and begin to help yourself.

For more information visit rosalynncarter.org. 

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COMMENTARY

America's counties build infrastructure

The following op-ed appeared in *The Washington Times* March 21.

By **Matthew Chase**
executive director



CHASE

A few weeks ago, we were honored to host U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao at the National Association of Counties (NACo) Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. She discussed President Donald Trump's infrastructure plan with an audience of nearly 2,000 elected and appointed county officials. The room reflected the nation's diversity — with attendees from Valley County, Idaho (population 10,000) to attendees from Los Angeles County (population 10 million). Across this diverse landscape, counties are eager for a continued conversation about how we build for the future.

Infrastructure has played a vital role in moving the people and goods that keep our country growing — from canals to railroads to our pioneering interstate system. Yet, when we started building the federal interstate system in the 1950s, the U.S. population was only 158 million. We've doubled in population to 325 million today, with projections to add another 75 million people by 2050. This population growth, combined with global commerce and trade, has experts predicting an increase in freight movements by more than 40 percent by the year 2040.

To support all this, counties invest more than \$122 billion annually in building infrastructure and maintaining and operating public works. We own more than 38 percent of America's bridges and build and maintain 46 percent of public roads. We are also involved in a third of the nation's airports and support 78 percent of all public transportation systems. Recognizing our vast role in building the foundations for our economy, we welcome a renewed focus on

upgrading our nation's infrastructure.

Building and maintaining reliable infrastructure necessitates dedicated investments and reliable partnerships. In recent decades, projects have been challenged by federal and state budget uncertainty and ever-growing state and federal mandates on local governments. States also limit the amount of revenue counties can generate. At the same time, construction costs continue to rise above inflation.

In the face of these challenges, county leaders use every tool at our disposal to fund and finance infrastructure projects for our residents. To help move the dialogue forward, NACo recently released a report, "Investing in America's Infrastructure," that showcases how counties have implemented novel strategies and financial solutions to deliver much-needed infrastructure. See the report and other examples of counties' infrastructure leadership at www.NACo.org/COUNTIESBUILD.

The NACo report examines the challenges counties face in changing demographics, relationships with state and federal governments, and funding projects. And just as President Trump's infrastructure plan calls for innovative financing and community partnerships, the NACo report showcases some best practices for how counties are pursuing these approaches.

For example, Montgomery

County, Maryland, partnered with a private developer to replace a community facility that serves the county's low-income and homeless population — at no cost to taxpayers. The facility, called Progress Place, provides a variety of services, including food, medical services and shelter.

In 2011, Montgomery County issued a call to private developers interested in building a new Progress Place on nearby county-owned property at little-to-no cost to the county. The location of the new building was an underutilized surface parking

lot behind a county-owned fire station, which meant new land did not have to be procured. In exchange, the developer would receive the title to the plot where the previous building was located and the opportunity to develop the former site.

The county and private developer collaborated in the design and construction of the new facility, and this partnership resulted in delivering it in record time.

Not all projects proceed so smoothly. Designing, approving and constructing infrastructure can occur along staggering

timelines. Five road projects in one Midwest county were delayed for more than two years due to the federal permitting process. And time is money. The county conservatively estimated that the delay costs amounted to half a million dollars.

Stories like this abound when you speak with infrastructure experts, especially those on the ground at the county level. That is why we are particularly pleased to see President Trump's interest in streamlining the permitting process and

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County officials talk pre-disaster strategy

From **RESILIENCY** page 9

systems in place so we are not reactive."

Discussion also centered on managing risk and knowing what resources — federal, corporate and non-profit — are out there. County governments fill the gaps between what federal government and industries provide post-disaster, so it is critical to understand the boundaries.

Attendees spent the majority of the roundtable discussing pre-disaster strategies, including: adopting new and updating old plans (hazard mitigation plans, continuity of operations plans), adopting new administrative land use and building code policies; undertaking hazard mitigation projects; putting assistance contracts and agreements in place pre-disaster and educating residents on basic preparedness principles, all major hazards and expectations for each.

Financially, Linda Langston, NACo director of Strategic Relations and former Linn County, Iowa supervisor, recommended that counties are prepared with adequate reserves and policies that allow for expedited financial decisions. Counties

also need to understand duplication of benefits — multiple federal funds cannot be used on the same project — this is an area where some local governments get tripped up and must then pay the government back. Participants raised the issue of how to pay for pre-disaster mitigation projects. While FEMA has the Pre-Disaster Mitigation grant program, those resources are not enough. Counties often grapple with finding ways to pay for mitigation projects — especially counties with large amounts of federal lands on which federal dollars cannot be spent.

Commissioner Larry Schoen of Blaine County, Idaho, discussed preventative zoning and building codes his county has put in place, such as overlay districts and limiting development in high-risk areas. He recommends counties explore similar policy changes and plans and asked federal partners to continue to encourage and work with local governments to pursue pre-disaster mitigation measures.

Ryan Streeter, Intergovernmental Affairs specialist for FEMA, provided advice to counties looking to strength-

en their partnership. First, he encouraged counties to understand the value of mitigation; per the recent National Institute of Building Sciences report (<https://www.nibs.org/page/mitigationsaves>), every \$1 invested in hazard mitigation can save \$6 in future costs. Second, he urged counties to consider the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant Program (<https://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-assistance>), in particular the Pre-Disaster Mitigation grant program. Third, establish strong relationships with state departments of emergency management as local governments must work through the state to engage with FEMA; Fourth, FEMA is developing a National Mitigation Investment Strategy to increase the effectiveness of investments in reducing disaster losses and increasing resilience.

Beyond FEMA, Jordan mentioned USDA has resources to help prevent or deal with the aftermath of disasters. NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program provides financial assistance to repair and

See **RESILIENCY** page 15



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the HR DOCTOR

With Phil Rosenberg

Phil Rosenberg

Management Hero Emerges from the Disaster in Parkland

About six weeks ago there was a day which began in a routine and peaceful way. There was the enjoyable beauty of a quiet morning complete with dark roast Italian coffee and two newspapers demanding to be read. Later, however, word came, followed by a phone call, that changed all of that. Something horrific had happened. It was an overwhelming challenge — beyond what anyone usually experiences in an entire career.

This was the incredible tragedy of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. Parkland is located in Broward County just below the border with Palm Beach County. I know it well, having spent about 12 years as its director of human resources. Parkland is a small community in Broward with beautiful properties.

That day, I spoke with a good friend — an amazing colleague who retired after more than 30 years of leadership in another city in Broward County.

After a relatively short period of retirement, my friend Robert Payton was recruited to become the city manager of, you guessed it, Parkland, Fla. Parkland wanted a seasoned, ethical and innovative city manager for a quiet city with not a huge amount going on. That was an attractive prospect for an experienced city manager who also happened to live in Parkland.

No matter how experienced a person might be in critical incident management every one of us needs help and friends to talk with when facing this kind of challenge. I wanted to offer any help I could to my friend Bobby.

By this time, Parkland was flooded with media trucks and



reporters. There were law enforcement agencies from many jurisdictions all over the area. Residents, parents and people around the world were in shock about this latest violent outburst in what should be a safe haven.

The first thoughts in the management of critical incidents like this is to understand the magnitude and essence of the event. Was the shooter in custody? Were the victims receiving the extraordinary care they deserved? What about counseling for students? What about communication with anxious residents?

The desire to cooperate fully with the media, telling the truth and repeating it frequently, would also need to be weighed against the risks that some of the information could be distorted and add to the harm instead of to the healing.

These are extremely difficult situations. They are well beyond the capability of any one jurisdiction to effectively manage.

Having sat in the emergency operations centers of both city and county governments during events like major hurricanes and, in fact, sitting in some of these activities with Bob Payton, I knew that this

situation called for a firm hand, experienced leadership, and a very caring heart to keep the events in perspective.

We talked about all of these things and an array of suggestions were shared. Some of them were likely to be implemented quickly but others likely not as disaster events change faster than administrative actions and policies can be established.

Some of the major ideas were that this was a time for truth and a time to never let thoughts of the victims be diminished in the actions to follow.

An array of memorials to the victims were discussed. There were ideas shared about enhancing the physical security of not only schools and hospitals in the area but perhaps also day care centers and assisted living facilities and other vulnerable facilities.

This could include city recommendations for security measures, which had to be considered even by private developers. Those who chose not to implement the recommendations, could, as a condition of receiving final certificates of occupancy, have to submit an explanation to the city commission about why the devel-

oper chose not to follow the suggestions made.

There was talk of endowed college scholarships and internships in honor of each of the victims.

We spoke of enhanced procedural security of schools and other facilities, including better access controls for persons entering and leaving, not unlike practices followed in Israeli schools. Perhaps some of the available funds could be used for the conduct of physical security assessments at each facility, not to mention improvements in alarm protocols and the training of the first law enforcement officers and school administrators to arrive on the scene.

Often in cases of workplace violence or sexual or race-based harassment and threats, behavioral symptoms by perpetrators appear earlier than the time that an actual incident might take place.

Most employers and schools are not trained or equipped for forensic psychological assessment. When such symptoms appear, most supervisors, managers or teachers simply don't know what to do.

If an effective system for rapid referral for an assessment by a licensed forensic psy-

chologist existed, perhaps on a regional basis, with referrals made quickly by better trained staff, the evil intent of this particular shooter might have been interrupted. Perhaps not. However, the fact that it might have been makes it worth considering. Certainly, a community-wide highly skilled employee assistance program and student assistance program could provide a resource that smaller jurisdictions could not afford on their own. This could be a most valuable asset indeed.

Swift action to focus the attention of the media, the public, students and perhaps most importantly, elected officials could be an effective response to this day of horror.

Elected officials are better at reacting to short-term needs and expediences than to strategic long-term needs. This is a mistake which, for the sake of America's future, should not persist.

I can think of few if any colleagues better able to lead this kind of effort in association with local elected officials than my friend and my colleague Bob Payton.

I can think of no issue more likely to tear down jurisdictional boundaries and inter-agency territoriality than what happened in Parkland.

My discussion with Bob began by noting how incredibly fortunate the small city of Parkland was to have him there when they needed such a person most.

I hope they appreciate that and I hope they provide the support needed for a truly humane and effective role model city manager to excel. Be strong, Bobby, as you provide the firm and humane leadership everyone craves when things are at their worst. **EN**

BRIGHT IDEAS | RUTHERFORD COUNTY, N.C.

North Carolina county goes extra mile to transport residents to food pantries

PROBLEM:

Residents who need to get to a food pantry, but don't have transportation.

SOLUTION:

Rutherford County, N.C. provides transportation to local food pantries for those who can't get there on their own.

By **Mary Ann Barton**
senior staff writer

If there are food banks or food pantries for low-income residents in your county, but residents have no way of getting to them, what's the solution?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines "food insecurity" as the lack of access, at times, to enough food for all household members. In 2016, 12.3 percent of U.S. households were food insecure. One of the barriers to getting food is transportation.

Five years ago, a rural North Carolina county began helping its residents get to food pantries with a new transportation program that is still going strong today.

"We knew there was a need and transportation can often-times be a barrier," said Kerry Giles, Rutherford County, N.C. Transportation Services director.

Churches and other organizations have provided food to local residents there for many years but had not considered that those with the greatest need may not have transportation to get to those resources.

The county's free transportation service, available to all, was started after drivers for



Rutherford County, N.C. residents load groceries into county vans, made available for those who need help getting to and from local food pantries. Photo courtesy of Rutherford County, N.C. Transportation Services

the county's paratransit system discovered the need among their passengers. Giles stopped in at a local pantry to talk to the manager about setting up scheduled stops.

It wasn't long before the department kicked off new routes with their vans, offering door-to-door service to get residents to the pantry.

One problem they had to overcome were long lines. "The pantry worked with us to kind of streamline it because the lines could get really long," Giles said. "They had special loading and unloading zones."

The county was able to work with the pantry to get the riders in and out quickly, so van drivers didn't have to wait too long. "We pulled up, they helped us load up and we were able to leave pretty quick and leave

with groceries for our residents," she said.

By listening to their residents, the county went outside the scope of traditional public transportation and created a service that meets their customers' needs.

Today, the transportation services department is also offering free rides to grocery stores and is also working on free rides to farmers markets.

The department offers grocery bags to residents and large tubs inside their vans to hold the food. Vans accommodate four passengers and four tubs, allowing the county to provide the food shuttle service to 20 families per week.

To get the word out, the county developed a rack card and flyers and placed them inside all transit vehicles and posted

information on social media, Giles said.

The new shuttle service even spawned another service — helping get citizens to the laundromat. Transit now provides free transportation to residents to one of four laundromats.

The service is funded through the state Department of Transportation, contract services (Medicaid transportation, mainly) and non-profit grants, Giles said.

Her advice to other counties considering adding transportation services to food banks and pantries?

"I would say look at where the needs are and to make it most cost effective for you, look at the logistics of it," she said. "We did it based on zones. You don't want to run a van going back and forth across the county all

day long or your costs are going to go through the roof. If you can, cut it to north and south or east and west. Look for other non-profit grants out there. There are grant opportunities out there to fund operational costs." She shows grantors how their money is being spent by tracking costs per mile so it's very quantitative, she said.

Feedback from residents and others is also a good idea. "We run surveys pretty regularly," she said.

In addition to being practical, the service is revered by the community, Giles noted.

"I've worked in county government for 16 years now in a variety of different agencies within county government. The pantry service has had the biggest impact."

"I can't tell you the number of citizens who have come up to me, who don't ride transit, but they have heard what we're doing and say 'We're so pleased with what you're doing. What a great use of government services, getting people to pantries.' They ask if they can volunteer, if there's anything they can do to support it," she said.

"It's a very visible service," she noted. "There's always disagreement on how government dollars should be spent but the pantry...not only does it serve an immediate need, but it has an immediate positive response from the community at large, which is really great to see, because you don't always get that." **CN**

For more information about the program, contact Giles at kerry.giles@rutherfordcountync.gov or call 828.288.4505. Rutherford County Transit was recognized as a 2015 Harvard Ash Center Bright Idea in Government.

Counties offer clean slates for second chances

By **Nastassia Walsh**
program manager

An estimated 70 million adults in the United States — one in three — have some sort of criminal record.

A criminal record affects the individual, his or her family and the larger community:

- 87 percent of employers conduct criminal background checks on some or all applicants, which can make it difficult for individuals with a record to obtain jobs. A criminal record reduces the likelihood of receiving a job offer by nearly 50 percent.
- Because of a criminal record, 180,000 women are subject to a lifetime ban on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefits.
- The U.S. economy loses about \$82 billion in annual GDP when people with records are under-employed.
- Criminal records have greater impacts on people and communities of color.

To modify the impact a criminal conviction can bring, 48 states and the District of Columbia have some type of record clearance policy for felony and misdemeanor convictions. A number of counties are setting up clinics, summits or other events to support community members who are facing collateral consequences such as lack of access to jobs, schools and public assistance as a result of prior convictions.

The Hamilton County, Ohio, Fresh Start Clinic

The Hamilton County Fresh Start Expungement Clinic (Fresh Start) operates out of the county's Public Defender Office. Fresh Start began in October 2013 to provide county residents with assistance in sealing or expunging their criminal or juvenile records.

Fresh Start is publicized at local events, through flyers and posters in the courthouse, and with specialized business cards available from public de-

fender staff.

"Before I became head of the Hamilton County Public Defender's Office in 2012, nobody in the office was filing expungement applications," said Hamilton County Public Defender Raymond A. Faller. "This wasn't right. We started the Fresh Start Expungement Clinic in 2013 to provide this service to our clients. Many wonder why we bother but many more understand and are supportive. Our clinic helps people move on with their lives, get jobs, pay taxes and become productive citizens again."

Since the inception of Fresh Start, Hamilton County Public Defender employees have helped nearly 4,000 members of their community to clear their criminal records.

Approximately 1,900 individuals who came to the clinic between October 2013 and February 2018 were eligible to have their records cleared and more than 5,800 cases were sealed, including dismissed charges. This number does not include additional Juvenile Court records that have been sealed or expunged for clients.

The Champaign County, Ill., Expungement and Record Sealing Summits

The Champaign County Circuit Clerk's Office hosts an annual Expungement and Record Sealing Summit in partnership with the Sheriff's Office, county IT department, churches, local transit, the courts and state and local policymakers.

The one-day summit is held on a Saturday in the fall and is designed to provide free legal assistance to those who wish to clear their criminal records. Participants meet with volunteer attorneys who review their criminal history, advise them on what remedies they may apply for and help prepare petitions. Qualified petitions can be filed on site at no cost to the client.

The summit is promoted

to community members over social media and radio ads. The first summit was held in October 2016 and was staffed by 75 volunteer attorneys and students from the local law school who were trained to file petitions. More than 500 people showed up to file petitions to have their records expunged.

Many of these individuals were seeking expungement of more than one criminal record. Of the 624 petitions filed for sealing or expungement at that summit, nearly three-quarters (451) were granted.

About half of those that were denied were due to outstanding court fines and fees. Acknowledging this barrier, the clerk of the court held a one-

time Amnesty Week in October 2017 for people with outstanding criminal or traffic fines and fees. During Amnesty Week, all collection and late fees were waived if a person paid off their entire case. In some cases, this saved individuals up to 30 percent of what they owed to the courts.

In the first two years of the summit, more than 1,400 petitions were filed. Summit participants reported that their greatest reason for seeking to clear their criminal record was to find employment.

"The Expungement and Record Sealing Summit is an opportunity for county government to go beyond services we are required to provide and to

look for ways we can be proactive: demystifying the very complicated legal process of record clearance and the removal of any financial barriers to participation," said Katie M. Blakeman, clerk of the Circuit Court. "This event is the most rewarding work I get to do all year, in that it is one of the few opportunities we have to directly impact the lives of Champaign County residents."

"The collaboration and enthusiastic support of so many local government organizations and social service agencies is truly unique, and Champaign County should be proud of coming together to help our neighbors find a second chance." 

Talk disaster mitigation online April 11

From *RESILIENCY* page 11

prevent soil erosion from rainfall and flooding. The agency's Emergency Watershed Protection Program can assist local government sponsors with the cost of implementing recovery efforts like debris removal and streambank stabilization.

Stan Gimont, deputy assistant secretary for Grant Programs at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, emphasized the importance of the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery grants to fund recovery activities. Gimont reinforced Sharpe's point about the importance of where to put displaced residents as well as how to rebuild housing.

Participants discussed strategies for pre-disaster contracts, including: ensuring an inclusive competitive bidding process; educating local contractors on how to participate; and the value of adding clauses to the request for proposals and to the final contracts. To encourage local businesses, counties can include a clause asking people to explain their history and knowledge of the community. To ensure that the contractor does not move your county to the bottom of the list after a disaster — when it can sign on new local governments at a higher rate — include language that states your county will be prioritized. Streeter also recommends getting in touch

with surrounding jurisdictions to prevent bidding wars.

More public dialogue around hazard mitigation plans is key, Gore said, while Schoen emphasized the importance of making the public aware of their responsibilities during a disaster.

NACo will continue this conversation as part of its Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness Social Media Day, sharing examples of accomplishments and resources. Join NACo Wednesday, April 11 at 2 p.m. ET on Twitter to showcase how your county has made investments in mitigation projects and has forged partnerships that have allowed you to recover from a recent disaster. 

Counties seek federal partner for infrastructure

From *BUILD* page 11

reducing unnecessary regulatory hurdles.

Much is at stake in the national conversation on infrastructure. As leaders at the county level, we want strong local economies for our residents and healthy business environments that can compete. We

know how to make it happen. It's what county leaders have done for decades, in the face of growing constraints. But we recognize that more needs to be done.

To build upon our efforts and to seize this unique opportunity, we need a reliable federal partner to invest in our communities and streamline processes

that inhibit our progress. Transformational improvements to America's infrastructure have always been the result of strong federal-state-local partnerships. We stand ready to work with the administration and Congress — along with other public, private and nonprofit sector allies — to reinvest in our communities. 

LEADERSHIP EDGE

Lessons Learned from Pipeline Protest

By Commissioner Cody Schulz
Morton County, N.D.

On Aug. 9, 2016, if I would have told the residents of Morton County and the greater Mandan-Bismarck area of North Dakota that their lives and the community were about to change forever, I don't think many people would have believed me. But that is exactly what happened as a result of nearly eight months of historic, many times violent, protests surrounding the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL).

The DAPL Protest brought thousands of people from around the country to stand in solidarity with Standing Rock, a tribal community with important cultural and territorial distinctions. But what began as a peaceful protest, touching on important environmental, legal and cultural issues, would soon become a violent movement, fueled by multi-million-dollar crowdfunding sites and propaganda.

Fear crept into farmsteads, local businesses, schools and the homes of law enforcement families. But fear also permeated the camps, as agitators pushed their agendas and many became victims of abuse and neglect.

How can counties prepare?

As I reflect on the past year and a half and Morton County's response to the protest, I urge other counties across the country that could find themselves in a similar situation to prepare now, using the lessons we learned amid the longest running protest in modern American history.

First, don't underestimate the potential of a protest event. Don't expect activity to be organized and non-violent. In other words, prepare for the worst and hope for the best.

Have in place the manpower or mutual aid agreements, including logistics and communication, to respond immediately to any rapid escalation. At the start of the DAPL protest, law enforcement and county leaders never expected the activity to shift so quickly — and to remain for so long.

Some key considerations for elected leaders, emergency management officials and law enforcement:

- The three most important things in emergency management and crisis response are: communication, communication and communication. This includes communicating with leaders of adjoining jurisdictions, internal and external stakeholders and the media. Formalize your communication structure and demand accountability. A breakdown in communication can become very detrimental to operations and morale. Be explicit and precise in how a message moves through the chain of command. This proved challenging for us since we had staff scattered across three physical locations 40 miles apart.
- Set up a Unified Command as soon as possible. Depending on state laws, legal responsibilities may differ but a unified command allows for "one message, one voice" as you move through an incident.
- Gather your Public Information Officers. Based on the agencies involved, bring these people together early. You may need to engage member organizations to assist such as the state-national association of counties, sheriff's association or emergency management association. These groups proved invaluable to us.
- Develop your social media accounts with appropriate guidelines now. Become comfortable with social media



In December 2017, Morton County, N.D. Commissioner Schulz was invited to participate in the Nobel Peace Prize Forum in Oslo, Norway. The forum, "Across Dividing Lines," focused on indigenous peoples' rights in the context of social justice and environmental protection.

Photo courtesy of Cody Schulz

and build your support base so when you need it to share your message, you are well-positioned.

- Invest in audio-video assets. The money spent here will be well worth it. In order to combat the misinformation that can go viral on social media, obtain your own video to tell the whole story. Also, the mere presence of cameras can de-escalate a situation since people don't want to be captured on camera performing illegal activity.
- Formalize training and orientation. When mutual aid arrives, there is a lot of event-specific knowledge that is critical to the operation. Create a written or video orientation and take time to discuss the reporting requirements for each person new to the scene.
- Don't get caught in the "emergency of the day." Look beyond the response and consider reports, evidence processing, intelligence updates and databases. We didn't have the manpower dedicated to processing and data-basing incoming video, and it hindered

our information efforts. Invest in customizable software applications to help.

- Track your resources as they arrive. With the multitude of mutual aid personnel, it is essential to account for all personnel and their time, equipment, etc.
- Know your technology. A communication plan needs to be in place for radios, phones and encryption concerns — especially as personnel from other agencies come to assist.

Without question, the priority of everyone involved in the DAPL protest response was maintaining public safety and protecting the constitutional rights of everyone involved. The numerous men and women who served Morton County did so with great restraint and the utmost professionalism.

Seeking peaceful, respectful dialogue

Perhaps the greatest lesson learned from 234 days of protest response is breaking down the barrier of fear — bridging the gap through open communication and a willingness to understand each other.

This was an important reason I chose to accept an invitation to the Nobel Peace Prize Forum in Oslo, Norway in December 2017 titled "Across Dividing Lines" focusing on indigenous peoples' rights in the context of social justice and environmental protection. The subject matter is very important, and our recent experience was particularly relevant to the broader conversation.

I was able to share my experiences with forum sponsors, staff from the Nobel Institute of Norway, the president of the Sami (Indigenous Peoples of northern Norway) Parliament, and the Secretary General of the Norwegian Mineral Industry with the hope that my experience could help others.

My goal was twofold — to learn and to teach. I wanted to make sure that all of the facts of the DAPL protest were properly understood and the perspective of local landowners, law enforcement and emergency responders were represented, because I believe the media, especially at the national and international level, did a very poor job reporting that side of the story. Just as Standing Rock felt they weren't being heard during the pipeline approval process, our residents felt their rights were trampled upon by mostly out-of-state protesters claiming to represent Standing Rock.

The purpose of the forum was to move the focus from single-issue solution efforts that may only consider effects, to well-designed, coordinated, multi-sector solutions that focus on all levels of the problem: values, causes, and effects. The first step to agreement is understanding, and the forum provided an excellent platform to move toward that goal.

As we move forward, Morton County will be eternally grateful to law enforcement and emergency management professionals that came to our aid — from counties and cities across the country. We proudly stand side-by-side with those who agree that open and honest communication is key to resolving differences between neighbors and returning to a peaceful environment.

Where do we go from here?

We absolutely believe that we must use this as an opportunity to build even stronger relationships both individual to individual and government to government. This will take time and effort, but it is an investment that we are eager to make. 

Allen County continues to advance health improvements

From ALLEN COUNTY page 7

vidual roles in advancing these initiatives. For Thrive Allen County, it meant interpreting the data in a different way.

“We use the County Health Rankings differently now than we did when we started,” Toland said. When the first County Rankings were released in 2009, the county was ranked 94th out of 105 counties in Kan-

sas in the composite ranking of total health indicators. The county set a goal of achieving a ranking of 85th or better by 2015. Despite having reached this goal five years later, the county slipped back down to 86th the following year.

That’s when Toland says they recognized the need for a shift in perspective. Now the county tries to remain focused on the “bigger picture of what’s

happening from year to year” and concentrate on metrics on which they can make an immediate impact. Metrics, such as the county uninsured rate, which was cut to 10 percent from 21 percent over four years.

For the residents, it’s about maintaining the momentum. The success of previous efforts has provoked a spirit of volunteerism and engagement in the

community.

“I think people really want to see action,” Toland said. “They want to see things that are big, and if you can inspire them with these big ideas, then they will join that movement and support it.”

Thrive plans to continue to engage various county sectors and community partners to develop a strategic plan to address emerging health issues and

community concerns. He mentions, “We don’t know [what we are going to do] yet, we just know we’re going to do it. And we’re going to do it together.” **CN**

Learn more about Allen County’s prize-winning initiatives April 12 by joining NACo for the Building Healthy Places webinar. For more information about other prize winners visit www.rwjf.org/Prize.

Va., Colo. dominate Top 10

From HEALTH page 4

rankings:

- The top five Healthiest Communities all score above the national average in at least nine of the 10 categories evaluated. Falls Church, Va., is No. 1, ranking in the top three communities nationally for education, economy and public safety.
- Douglas County and Broomfield County, Colo., follow at No. 2 and No. 3, respectively. Los Alamos County, N.M., places fourth, while Dukes County, Mass., rounds out the top five.
- Virginia and Colorado communities dominate the top 10. Among the top 10: in Virginia, the cities of Falls Church (1) and Fairfax (6), and Loudoun County (10); in Colorado, Douglas (2), Broomfield (3), Routt (8) and Ouray (9) counties. Together, communities in the two states boast an average of 62 primary care doctors for every 100 people and an average life expectancy that is more than a year longer than the national average.
- Peer Groups: The top 100 communities in each peer group range from Keweenaw County, Mich. — a county with a total population of just over 2,000 — to Middlesex County, Mass., which is home to more than 1.5 million people. Rural counties stand out in the community vitality category that includes measures such as voter participation and homeownership rates, while up-and-coming economies perform strongly in the food and nutrition category,

which includes access to large supermarkets and fewer cases of obesity and diabetes.

- Across all four peer groups, top counties rank well in the population health category, which looks at access to care, mental health, health behaviors such as preventative care visits and tobacco use, prevalence of health conditions such as cancer and heart disease among Medicare beneficiaries and health outcomes including life expectancy and teen birth rates.
- Honor Roll: When organized by region, a number of communities that may not be at the top on a national stage stand out among their regional peers. Communities that are highlighted on the 2018 Healthiest Communities Honor Roll that did not rank in the top 500 include Lexington city, Va.; Orleans County, Vt.; and Pickett County, Tenn.

To compile the rankings, *U.S. News* worked with the University of Missouri Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems, a research institution skilled in community health assessment, and consulted with members of the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics. The rankings are based on 80 metrics drawn from sources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, the U.S. Census Bureau, the Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. **CN**

PROFILES IN SERVICE

JANET CARLSON
Board Member

Commissioner
Marion County, Ore.



Carlson

Number of years involved in NACo: 15

Years in public service: 17 years as an elected official, plus 21 as a public school teacher and state/county government staff

Occupation: County commissioner

Education: B.A., Willamette University, political science; M.A., Brigham Young University, political science; PhD, University of Oregon, special education and community resources

The hardest thing I’ve ever done is: Run for an open seat in a targeted state legislative race, walking 12,875 doors and winning by just 180 votes.

I dream I have is to: Have the time to work out every day.

You’d be surprised to learn that I: Produced more than 100 episodes of “How Are the Children?” on local cable access.

The most adventurous thing I’ve ever done is: Transition from WordPerfect to Word. (I still miss WordPerfect...)

I’m most proud of: My family — husband, three grown children and five grandchildren.

Every morning I read: Facebook, emails and the local newspaper.

My favorite meal is: Salmon and a baked potato.

My pet peeve is: Seeing inappropriate capitalization and misplaced commas in county documents.

My favorite way to relax is to: Sing in the car with my karaoke tapes (yes, tapes).



NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

ALABAMA

As tornado season nears, the **LEE COUNTY** Emergency Management Agency is exploring options for a possible **storm shelter**, OANow.com reports. The agency director presented county commissioners with a list of proposed sites. The county could qualify for a grant if it meets certain FEMA guidelines. A public shelter that can accommodate 90 people generally costs about \$120,000. If and when a shelter is constructed, it would be the county's first public tornado shelter. Currently, the county posts information about safer places to shelter such as churches or other public buildings for people who live in mobile homes who need a place to go before a storm hits.

COLORADO

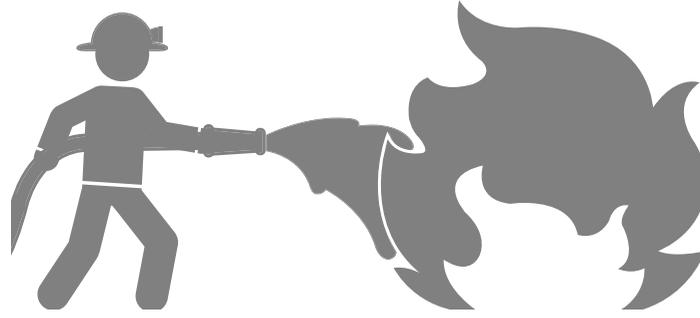
The **JEFFERSON COUNTY** Library is holding its seventh annual **Prom Swap** to help teens trade and find new items to wear to their prom for free. The library collects clean, formal attire (dresses, tuxedos, suits, shoes and accessories) for the swap; anyone who donates an item gets to select an item in return.

If some-

one doesn't have an item to donate, they can "purchase" tickets with canned goods. Five canned items will "buy" you a dress, tuxedo or suit; two cans will buy you shoes or an accessory. The library promotes the dates and times of the "Prom Swap" for anyone interested in shopping.

FLORIDA

PALM BEACH COUNTY has **fewer homeless**, but of those, more are veterans or families without places to live, according to the county's 2018 recent "point in time" count. In all, 200 volunteers fanned out over a 24-hour period to count the homeless. They counted 1,308; fewer than the 1,607 counted last year. However, the count showed a 73 percent increase in homeless veterans. The count, mandated by the Department of Housing Urban Development, is used to direct assistance to those in need. The VA Medical Center in Riviera Beach attributed the increase to better tracking of homeless veterans and the census takers making clearer distinctions between veterans and civilians.



GEORGIA

Thanks to a \$3.7 million federal grant, **HENRY COUNTY** is **hiring 27 new firefighters**, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported. County commissioners recently voted to approve a resolution paving the way for the Staffing for an Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant from FEMA.

There is a requirement of matching funds from the county — 25 percent in the current fiscal year and the same percentage for FY2019. The total increases to 65 percent in FY2020 with the county taking on all of the costs the following year. The funding will increase the firefighter staff from 310 to 337.

INDIANA

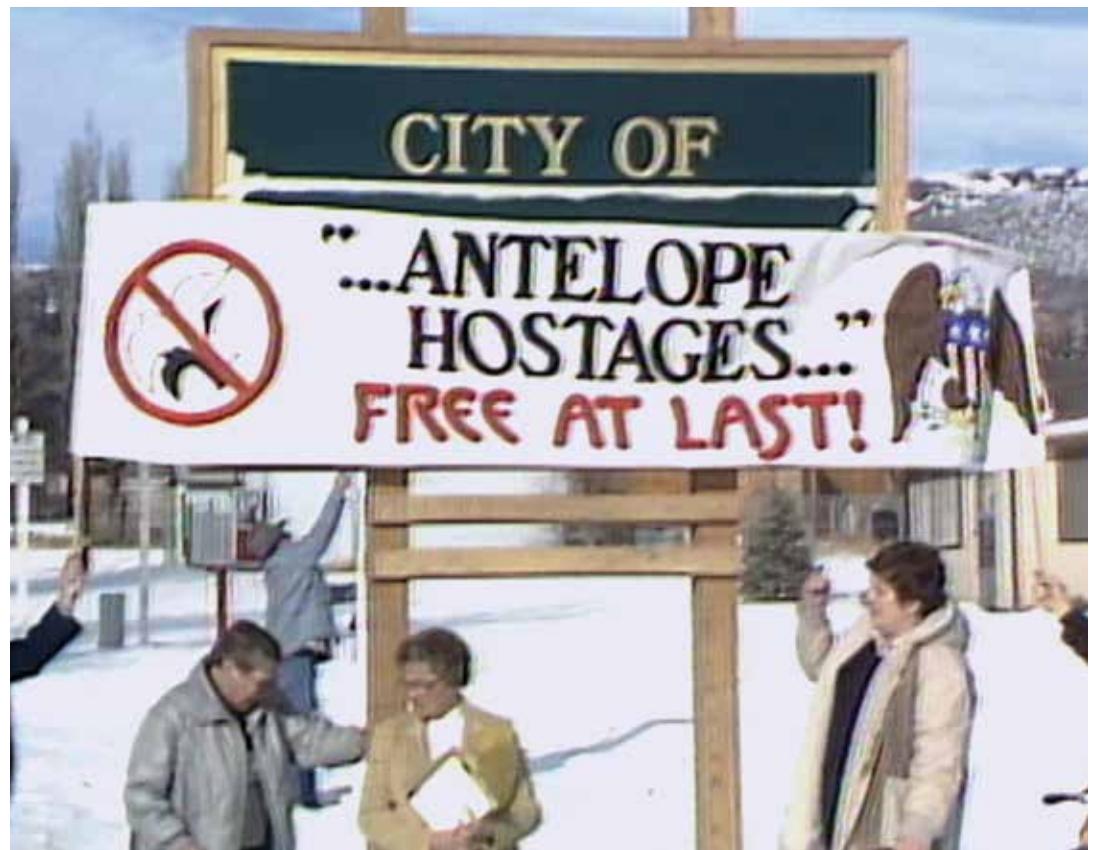
Hundreds of local residents packed into hearings recently to voice their opposition to a **wind farm project in MIAMI COUNTY**, the *Kokomo Tribune* reported. Those who oppose the proposed 75 wind turbines wore shirts and held up signs that read "Just Say No." The proposed project would also extend into **CASS** and **FULTON** counties. Meanwhile, the county is considering new restrictions that could hinder the proposed wind farm. The Planning and Building Commission is looking at new rules that would prohibit a wind turbine from being located within 2,000 feet of property lines, roads, public lands

and city limits. The current ordinance requires a 1,000-foot setback from residential dwellings and a 350-foot setback from roads, railroads and public easements.

A couple living in the area of the proposed wind farm has filed a lawsuit against the Miami County Board of Commissioners, claiming the county's current wind ordinance violates U.S. and state constitutions by restricting property rights, the newspaper reported.

MARYLAND

• **BALTIMORE COUNTY** recently announced the start of a program that offers **free college tuition** for high school graduates, according to *The Baltimore Sun*. Called "College Promise," the program will make up the difference between financial aid and tuition. Low-income students who graduate from a public or private school and who have



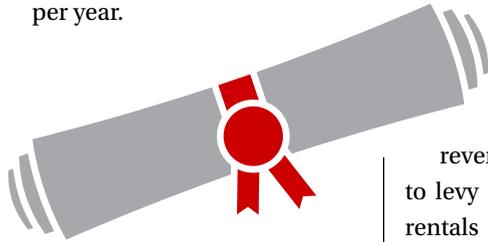
Archival footage shows Antelope, Ore. residents celebrating the restoration of their town name in 1985, a year after a cult fueled an effort to change its name to Rajneesh. Photo courtesy of Netflix

OREGON

The story of Rajneeshpuram, a cult that settled and tried to seize power in **WASCO COUNTY** in the 1980s, has been featured in the Netflix **documentary series** "Wild Wild Country." The cult organized a massive voter fraud effort to elect members to county office, and failing that, spread salmonella in a local salad bar. That sickened several community members, including the county judge and a commissioner.



a 2.5 grade point average are eligible for the program. Officials estimate the cost of the program at about \$1 million per year.



- **MONTGOMERY COUNTY** is considering adding a **director of Climate Policy**. A public hearing about the new position is set for April 10. The person would advise the county executive, council, Department of Environmental Protection and other county agencies that deal with environmental policy on the best ways to meet climate goals including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and using renewable energy, according to *Bethesda Magazine*.

NEW YORK

- Any worker in **ALBANY COUNTY** who has worked 80 or more hours in a given year may be offered **paid sick leave** under a proposal being considered by the county Legislature.

The plan allows employees to accrue at least one hour of sick time per 30 hours worked. Employers with more than 10 workers will have to grant at least up to 72 hours of earned sick time per year. Employers with fewer than 10 but more than five employees must grant at least 40 hours of paid sick time per year, according to *Spotlight News*.

- A Utah-based firm will scour internet listings for **short-term rentals** in **ULSTER COUNTY** and ensure their compliance with county standards for lodgings. A \$25,000 contract with Bear Cloud Software will furnish the search, the automation of the county's enforcement administration and the creation of an online registration portal for operators.

The Daily Freeman reports that the information is also expected to enable the county

to ensure the establishments are paying sales tax and the county's hotel-motel tax on the rentals.

Deputy Comptroller Evan Gallo said the county lost out on roughly \$300,000 in revenue in 2017 by failing to levy the bed tax on Airbnb rentals and others like them. Legislator James Maloney has introduced a resolution calling for the county to enter into a voluntary agreement with Airbnb to collect the tax from users of its site.

PENNSYLVANIA

A state appellate court reversed a **FAYETTE COUNTY** judge's recent decision to deny a proposed **methadone clinic**. The judge had upheld a 2016 decision by the county zoning board to deny the clinic's request for a special zoning exception. The county decided the clinic would create on-site parking problems and traffic backups, the *Tribune Review* reported.

SOUTH CAROLINA

To match the proliferation of high-powered firearms, **YORK COUNTY** sheriff's deputies are being equipped with 100 sets of **high-density body armor**. Each set of armor includes five pieces. The cost is \$40,000.

In January, four officers were shot after responding to a domestic violence call just outside of York, with one detective dying a day later. The new body armor would add more weight, and won't be worn at all times. Officers will continue wearing their current protection while on duty, putting on the extra armor as needed.



UTAH

The **SALT LAKE COUNTY** Council will ask Gov. Gary Herbert (R) to veto a bill establishing an **inland port** that would have ultimate land use control over one-third of Salt Lake City and give it first dibs on all area tax revenue.

The Salt Lake Tribune reported that Herbert said he planned to approve the legislation. Opposition to the bill focuses on the loss of local control and the port's unelected board's lack of accountability.

The measure gives the newly-created authority power to draw unlimited tax revenue from existing taxing entities within its jurisdiction — not only from the city where it would be based, but also from area schools and the county as well.

VIRGINIA

The Legislature has ordered **ARLINGTON COUNTY** to change the way it assesses **property taxes on its two golf courses**, according to *The Washington Post*.

The county currently assesses the property as if it were as densely developed as the rest of the county, the smallest by area in the nation. The state legislation requires Arlington to lower the \$870,000 tax bill of the Washington Golf and Country Club and the \$1.5 million bill of the Army Navy Country Club by assessing the private property as "open space" rather than "highest and best use" — which in densely populated Arlington would be residential or commercial.

LOUDOUN COUNTY was also included in the bill, but it already assesses golf courses as open space.

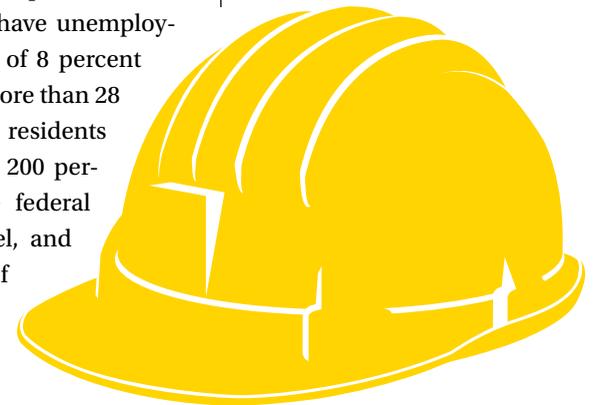
WASHINGTON

The **KING COUNTY** Council established a **low-income priority hiring program** to provide family-wage construction jobs in economically distressed areas. The program will prioritize the county's economically disadvantaged local workers for inclusion on county capital construction projects through state-recognized apprenticeship programs.

The neighborhoods from which participants will be pulled will have unemployment levels of 8 percent or higher, more than 28 percent of residents at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, and 70 percent of residents at least 25 years old

with no college degree. Contractors who enter into agreements on county capital construction projects costing at least \$15 million will consent to making a percentage of the residents living in these ZIP codes, who have the requisite skills, a priority when hiring for the project.

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.



ON THE MOVE

NACo STAFF

- **Lamont Artis** joined NACo as senior network engineer on the IT team, March 26. He will be responsible for the network environment including VPN administration, CISCO switching/routing, wireless and ASA firewalls and servers. Prior to joining NACo, Lamont served as senior network engineer for Time Warner Cable, Ericsson EUS, Sprint and AT&T Wireless.



Artis

- **Brian Bowden** and **Linda Langston** represented NACo at a March 20 think tank meeting at AcademyHealth in Washington, D.C. to discuss creating National Health Security Preparedness Index measures for local jurisdictions. The meeting was organized by the Index Program Office, based at the University of Kentucky and sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



Bowden

- **Arthur Scott** spoke at the 2018 NADO-DDAA Washington Conference March 21 on "Shifting Priorities: Federal Investments and Regional Economic Development."



Scott

In celebration of National County Government Month, NACo and iCivics are pleased to launch "My County Works," an activity book for elementary students. Download your copy at www.naco.org/icivics



My County Works

★ The County Seat ★

Just like you have a home, so does your county's government. Your county government's home is the **county seat**. This city or town is where you'll usually find the county courthouse. Many of the people and departments you'll learn about in this book have offices inside your county's courthouse. Let's take a look at who's inside!

My county is _____ . **My county seat is** _____ .

What county do you live in?
Is it big or small? Is it filled with people everywhere you turn, or is there a lot of space to move about? Your county is a unique place. No two counties are exactly the same. Some aren't even called counties. We call them parishes or boroughs instead. Counties across our nation look, feel, and can even work a little differently.

color me!

