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Clark says travel sparked her term

County News asks outgoing NACo presidents to reflect on their years in office. Here are the thoughts from El Paso County, Colo. Commissioner and NACo President Sallie Clark.

CN: How would you describe your year as NACo president?

As I look back on the last year, the common thread has been being engaged with elected officials across the nation on a variety of issues and the passion of public service.

It's clear that we all have similar challenges, although our local culture and constituencies may differ from state to state and county to county.

It's difficult to parcel out the presidency from my entire tenure as an officer, but I do

See CLARK page 12



Welcome to Long Beach!

The dazzling of L.A. County, the draw of top-notch speakers and the challenge of compelling programs marked NACo's 2016 Annual Conference and Exposition, which wrapped up today, July 25, with votes

on policy positions and new NACo leaders.

Some 2,000 county officials and guests came to Long Beach, home to the second busiest container port in the United States and home dis-

trict for five-term L.A. County Supervisor Don Knabe, who hosted the conference.

Attendees heard from Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, six-time NBA champion, author, filmmaker and columnist. His lat-

est book, *Writings on the Wall – Searching for a New Equality Beyond Black and White*, slated to be released August by Time Books, was available at the conference.

Sharing the stage with Abdul-Jabbar was Jack Dangermond, co-founder and president of Esri, the geographic information systems firm that is the fourth largest privately held software company in the world.

Another sports legend who took the spotlight during the conference was long-distance swimmer, journalist and author, Diana Nyad. In 2013, Nyad, then 64, became the first person to swim from Cuba to Miami without a shark cage. Her feat remains unmatched. The final keynote speaker, presidential historian and author Jon Meacham, offered the perfect perspective to end a presidential election year conference.

The wide scope of county responsibilities was mirrored in many educational sessions and special events at the conference. A luncheon discussion centered on the nation's opioid crisis and featured Sam Quinones, author of *Dream-*

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Congress passes major opioid bill, punts on funding

By Brian Bowden
associate legislative director

Congress has passed major legislation to combat the prescription opioid and heroin epidemic with overwhelming bipartisan support in both chambers. The passage on July 13 of the Comprehensive

Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) — which President Obama has said he will sign into law — follows months of intense negotiations between the House and Senate on a bill that was introduced partly in response to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show-

SPEEDREAD

Bill authorizes, but does not appropriate funding for the new programs

Permits nurse practitioners and physician assistants to provide medication-assisted treatments

ing that more people died from drug overdoses in 2014 than in any year on record.

The final bill contains a number of provisions that will help counties tackle the nation's prescription painkiller and heroin crisis. CARA

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No funding to implement CARA programs provided in legislation

From OPIOIDS page 1

authorizes federal grants from the Departments of Justice (DOJ) and Health and Human Services (HHS) to state and local governments to test new approaches to preventing and treating opioid addiction. For example, a new DOJ-administered Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Program is authorized at \$103 million each year through FY21. Under the program, state, local and tribal governments could apply for grants to be used for a number of opioid abuse reduction activities, including training and equipment for

first responders on the usage of opioid reversal drugs and treatment alternatives to incarceration programs. Counties would need to certify that federal funds would not supplant their own funds, but would be used to augment their local response.

CARA authorizes, but does not include funding for the total \$180 million per year for all of the programs and grants contained within the measure. In order for funding to flow, Congress must provide it by appropriation.

Democrats and the White House had pressed for funding to be included in CARA,

CARA TRAVELED COMPLICATED ROUTE

The final legislation was negotiated by a House-Senate conference committee convened to reconcile differences between the two chambers' versions of the bill. Initially, the Senate passed a version of CARA in March, while the House passed nearly 20 individual bills related to the opioid epidemic prior to lumping them into a single package in May. After the conference committee produced its final report, the House passed the report by a vote of 407–5, and the Senate did the same through a 92–2 vote on July 13. NACo's support for CARA was cited on both the House and Senate floors and in an op-ed by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.).

while Republicans insisted that funding should be provided through the regular appropriations process. The current fiscal year expires on Sept. 30, and it is unclear whether the funding needed to launch CARA's programs will be provided in FY17, either through appropriations bills or a continuing resolution.

Other measures in CARA create new programs at HHS and authorize funding for other administratively created programs.

New state demonstration grants are authorized at \$5 million per year through FY22 and provide grants to states to carry out comprehensive opioid abuse response strategies such as educating the public and health care professionals, and expanding the availability of medication-assisted treatment and behavioral health therapy.

In addition, \$1 million per year would be authorized through FY21 for nonprofit "community recovery organizations" to develop, expand and enhance recovery services and build connections between recovery networks, including the criminal justice system, physicians and em-

ployers.

Additionally, a grant program at the HHS Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) that supports the purchase and distribution of opioid overdose reversal drugs and training for first responders is formally authorized at \$12 million per year through FY21.

Another SAMHSA program that supports states in expanding access to addiction treatment services, including medication-assisted treatment, for individuals with an opioid use disorder is authorized at \$25 million per year through FY21. The program is targeted towards areas where there is a high rate or rapid increase in opioid and heroin use, including rural areas.

The final legislative package also modifies drug prescribing and provider practices to reduce the availability of opioids that could be abused while increasing the availability of overdose reversal drugs and treatment.

Under CARA, prescriptions for drugs under Schedule II of the Controlled Substance Act could be just partially filled, rather than fully filled. This is

meant to reduce the amount of unused prescription opioids that remain in people's medicine cabinets that would otherwise be accessible to those battling substance abuse disorders.

In addition, the bill reauthorizes and expands a grant program that encourages the development of state electronic prescription drug monitoring programs that help systems prevent "doctor shopping."

Also in the bill is a new HHS grant program established to bolster state systems under which pharmacists can dispense reversal drugs, such as naloxone, through "standing orders" that do not require a person-specific prescription.

Under another new grant program, qualified community health centers and opioid treatment programs would receive funds that could be used to expand access to opioid overdose treatment for at-risk patients. Still another provision would allow medical providers, including physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants, to expand medication-assisted treatments.

Other provisions of CARA require HHS to develop an awareness campaign, promote the development of abuse-deterrent formulations of prescription drugs and fund new programs at the Department of Veterans Affairs to assist veterans — a population overrepresented among those struggling with the opioid epidemic. **CN**

*Hadi Sedigh and Jack Peter-
son, associate legislative direc-
tors, also contributed to this
report.*



SNAP/STATS

FIVE LARGEST NONPROFIT HOSPITALS (BY BED COUNT 2014)

HOSPITAL	BEDS
New York-Presbyterian Hospital (New York City).....	2,478
Florida Hospital Orlando.....	2,242
Jackson Memorial Hospital (Miami)	1,732
University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Presbyterian	1,583
Yale-New Haven (Conn.) Hospital	1,552

Source: Becker's Hospital Review

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New King County, Wash. EMS protocol to treat allergic reactions saves money

By Charles Taylor
senior staff writer

Parents of kids with allergies know that "epi-pens" can save lives if a child is having a severe allergic reaction. But since 2004, the price of the devices has quintupled and now cost about \$600 for a two-pack.

"They cost too damn much," Dr. Peter Taillac, chairman of the medical director's council of the National Association of State EMS Officials, told *County News*. The price escalation stems from scant competition and one company's having a virtual lock on the market, experts say.

King County, Wash. Emergency Services (KCES) has come up with a cheaper solution.

In many states, medical emergency responders are required to carry injectable epinephrine. Until recently, epi-pens were the go-to solution; the devices automatically deliver a measured dose of epinephrine ("epi" for short) via a jab to the outer thigh.

But rising costs led KCES to develop a new protocol that takes an old-school approach: training EMTs to inject epi from vials of the drug using syringes. It's part of a program called "Check and Inject." During its first year, EMS providers in King County saved \$150,000, said Jim Duren, professional standards manager for KCES.

Instead of auto-injectors, EMTs now carry Epi Kits that cost less than \$20 per kit, according to Jim Duren, professional standards manager for KCES.

Each sealed plastic case holds two vials of epinephrine, syringes, alcohol wipes, a quality assurance card, security tape and a just-in-time training card, which reinforces EMTs' classroom instruction.

"The nice thing about it is our costs for resupplying the kits: We're buying adrenaline at \$4 a vial and a dollar or so for the



King County, Wash. Emergency Services developed Epi Kits, a cheaper way to treat someone having a severe allergic reaction than epi-pens, epinephrine auto-injectors, that can sell for as much as \$600 for a two-pack. Epi Kits cost less than \$20 apiece.

Photo courtesy of King County Emergency Services

needles," he said. "For under \$6, we were able to resupply versus the standard cost of the auto-injectors."

All 34 EMS agencies in King County — fire and ambulance — piloted the program in 2013; 4,000 EMTs have been trained since then. EMS agencies in several states have adopted or are testing the protocol, including Montana, Alaska and New York.

Dr. Taillac said that while epi-pen costs are a bigger problem for urban EMS — "because they have more ambulances to stock" — rural agencies are suffering disproportionately.

"They frequently have one ambulance and a very limited medication budget," he said, "and several agencies have reported the auto-injectors take up a third to half of their entire medication budget."

While rising costs were a big factor in King County's decision to train EMTs (paramedics were already able to give injections), a local parent's concerns also helped to drive the process — especially the training. KCES was approached by the mother of a daughter with severe peanut allergies, Duren explained.

That woman was Kelly Mor-

gan, president of the nonprofit advocacy group Washington Food Allergy, Eczema, Asthma Support Team, or FEAST. "What people were experiencing when they called 911 wasn't matching up with what they expected based on their care plans that they were getting from allergists," she said in an interview.

Allergists were recommending treatment at the first signs of an allergic reaction (or anaphylaxis) and not waiting until the symptoms — widespread hives, difficulty breathing and low blood pressure — became more serious, she added.

Previously, EMT's had been reluctant to use epi-pens if a patient's symptoms hadn't progressed to that level, Duren said. Moore said she didn't advocate for the change from epi-pens, but what she did was stress the need for "more training and awareness of anaphylaxis and modifying their protocols." Her input helped to liberalize King County EMS's protocol so that epi is given at the first signs of an allergic reaction.

EMS medical directors in King County, as well as EMTs themselves also had some initial concerns about the switch,

according to Duren, who said the idea was met with "mixed reviews."

The medical directors gave "20 or so reasons why we couldn't do it." Concerns ranged from fears that EMTs, who had never previously administered drugs by intramuscular injection, might give too high a dose. There were also worries about needle sticks.

"There was concern from the EMTs in the sense that they weren't comfortable doing something that they have never done before," said Jonathan Nolan, King County EMS's basic life support training officer. He developed the training program and oversees quality assurance (QA). Duren said a robust training regimen along with equipment safety precautions helped to allay any fears. The EMTs receive classroom and hands-on training.

"They did an amazing job of putting together the training program and they trained every single responder," Moore said.

The QA regimen includes inspecting returned epi vials and measuring the leftovers to insure that the proper dose was given, and reviewing a checklist that EMTs must complete after administering epinephrine.

"It's the kits, the protocol, the guidelines and the training, and the quality assurance," Duren said.

Dr. Taillac said auto-injectors are "arguably better" because they can be deployed faster, but market forces may dictate that EMS agencies consider cheaper options.

"There are a lot of drug shortages in addition to the market price hikes that have plagued EMS for the last seven, eight, nine years now that have required just-in-time training and substituting medications," he said.

"EMS is relatively flexible and able to switch if necessary from one drug or technique to another." **CN**

Film chronicles brain science advances

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land: *The True Tale of America's Opioid Epidemic*.

At another meeting, members of NACo's Large Urban County Caucus viewed and discussed — with its director James Redford — the film, *Resilience: The Biology of Stress & the Science of Hope*. The film chronicles the birth of a new movement among pediatricians, therapists, educators and communities, who are using cutting-edge brain science to disrupt cycles of violence, addiction and disease.

This year, NACo's community service project — sponsored by the Next Gen caucus — benefitted the Los Angeles-based Saving Innocence, a nonprofit working to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children. This dismal and dangerous exploitation of women and children received even more attention during the WON Leadership Network's reception, where former Congresswoman Linda Smith talked about the organization she founded, Shared Hope International, which aims to eradicate sex trafficking.

As any veteran conference attendee knows, there were plenty of choices when it comes workshops and this year was no exception. Workshops focused on topics ranging from reducing mental illness in jails, to preparing for active-shooter scenarios and strengthening relationships between county governments and Native American tribes.

On a less formal note: New at this year's conference was an opening all-conference reception and the County Talks Theater, in the exhibit hall that spotlighted new products and services to benefit counties.

A full report on the conference will be published in the Aug. 8 issue of *County News*. Meanwhile, be sure to visit NACo.org for more immediate conference coverage. **CN**

Forsyth County, N.C. launches first new Stepping Up program

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

The first county program inspired by the national Stepping Up Initiative is taking shape in Forsyth County, N.C.

Roughly 100 female inmates in the county jail will be part of a pilot project to match them with services to treat mental illness and behavioral health problems to make sure they are rehabilitated while they are incarcerated, or perhaps in lieu of jail time, if appropriate.

"A lot of them are mothers, and their mental health impacts the well-being of their children and families," said Commissioner Gloria Whisenhunt. "A little help can go a long way with this population."

Forsyth County wants to select a screening system, develop a discharge plan that hands off female offenders to appropriate services and form data sharing agreements with service providers.

The county has already committed \$50,000 to the project and is in the process of applying for a total of \$150,000 in local grants to fund two staff positions for the program.

Whisenhunt caught wind of Stepping Up during a NACo Healthy Counties Advisory Board meeting in 2015 and wanted to put it into practice at home.

"I was extremely interested," she said. "I wanted to see if it could make a difference."

The county needed something to help. At one point, 171 inmates out of 719 in the Forsyth County Jail, near Winston-Salem, had received positive mental health diagnoses, indicating a problem, and more and more were being prescribed psychotropic drugs.

"We had to do something," Whisenhunt said.

That mandate has gone a long way. Deputy County Administrator Ronda Tatum credited



Left to right: Lt. Brian Dobey of the Winston-Salem Police Department, Andy Hagler, executive director of the Forsyth County, N.C. Mental Health Association, and Forsyth County Chief Deputy Brad Stanley discuss the sequential intercept model for interacting with people with mental illness during a planning meeting for Forsyth County's Stepping Up program. Photo courtesy of Forsyth County, N.C.

Whisenhunt's fervor with making the county's participation a reality, particularly winning over her colleagues on the County Board.

"She was a big advocate, and unless we had someone on the Board fighting for this, this wouldn't have stood a chance," she said.

The county is already planning to make use of a 24-hour crisis center opening in January 2017, but that will be open to all nonviolent offenders, not just women.

Tatum took on the Stepping Up program's coordination from an organizational perspective, but wanted expert help from a psychologist, Doris Paez, who came on part time.

"Doris took over everything that was over my head in the clinical sense, and she brought our focus to what really mattered here," she said. "Throughout this process, we've wanted



Comm. Whisenhunt

to keep things manageable.

"At first we were going to go after the frequent flyers (in the jail), but then we figured out how big that group was and we realized it was going to be huge. We needed a smaller pilot population if we wanted to figure this out — be successful with them before we move on."

The settled on the women in the jail, a population that rarely tops 100.

And that smaller, more manageable approach was the rule outside of the jail, too. A four-person core team comprises the four perspectives needed to craft a Stepping Up program: mental health, data and research, budget and policy.

Though the core team was small, it did not exclude anyone from offering input. Their meetings focused on dreams for the program, the data the county had and the decision they group had to make about moving forward.

"We were wary about over-scheduling, having too many meetings," Paez said. "In fact, we set three big meetings and decided that was going to be it. We would come to decisions then and not keep kicking them down the road."

Sticking to the sequential intercept model, the framework of opportunities to come in contact with a person with mental illness, the core team settled on

intercepting participants while they are in the court system.

"There will be things we can address from the get-go, while they're in jail," Tatum said. "Things that might be as simple as adjust medication levels, because it's not uncommon to have someone in here on two or four psychotropic drugs, or addressing the consequences of being victimized."

Other fixes would need to be more precise and detailed. Luckily Paez, the consultant, was also a statistician.

Thanks to the jail's medical provider, she had access to inmate health records and spent hours sorting through data, looking for a way to establish a baseline.

"I feel like for what Forsyth County was trying to do, you needed someone with a data background," she said. "I have

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New NACo research identifies top county priorities for 2016

Natalie Ortiz
senior research analyst

Almost a decade after the start of the Great Recession, counties still feel its effects on their strained budgets. A new NACo survey found that 44 percent of county officials reported cuts to their county's programs or services because of budget constraints in the last fiscal year.

NACo's new research, *Priorities in America's Counties 2016: A Survey of County Officials*, examines the priorities and leading challenges in county governments ahead of November's general election. The survey examines key areas for counties such as infrastructure investments and the impact of state and federal policies.

The survey shows that many county officials (40 percent) are concerned that budget constraints will weaken the county safety net, putting struggling families and individuals at risk, especially in the long term. Counties often provide safety net services because of state mandates or the their role in administering federal programs.

Over one-third (36 percent) of respondents to the 2016 NACo survey indicated that providing hospital care for people without any health insurance or ability to pay is one of the most expensive unfunded mandates for

counties. Since counties need to raise the revenue to fund these mandates while also contending with state-set caps on their revenue sources, budget constraints can lead to cuts in staff or service levels across any number of programs and services.

Behavioral health-related issues, especially in the areas of substance abuse and mental health treatment, emerged as top challenges for counties. Survey respondents identified substance abuse as the top public health challenge.

They suggested that treatment options for substance abuse are limited because of a lack of treatment providers — 65 percent of county officials cited a shortage of mental health providers as one the greatest issues affecting access to quality health care in counties.

In addition to the public health challenges they pose, illegal drugs and prescription opioids are major public safety issues in counties. Substance abuse is the greatest threat to public safety according to nearly three quarters (72 percent) of survey respondents. County officials indicated that any additional funding to expand the capacity of behavioral health programs would support efforts to reduce substance abuse through treatment, while at the same time assist counties in

SPEEDREAD

40 percent concerned that safety-net services could be cut

Substance abuse tapped as greatest public safety threat

Almost half of those surveyed believed that federal government policies hindered innovation in their counties

tackling the impact of substance abuse on the community.

NACo's new analysis also shows that county officials would like to see more funding for families with children living in poverty. County officials identified their counties' involvement in early childhood development programs, nutrition assistance programs and local workforce development programs as providing pathways out of poverty.

Additional funding would help strengthen and expand the reach of these programs and services for the most vulnerable populations and support solutions that break the cycle of poverty.

The local workforce development system supports county economic development. County officials responding to the 2016 survey said that high housing costs are the largest challenge

to economic development. Unaffordable housing can push some residents to move away from the county, taking their skills with them and adding to the challenge of building a strong workforce that can attract new businesses and opportunities to counties.

County officials responding to the NACo survey indicated that a shortage of workers with skills sought by employers is another significant challenge to economic development.

The local workforce development system provides assistance to residents to find training and employment that will lead to more skills, better paying jobs, higher wages and greater economic opportunity for individuals, families, businesses and counties.

Further infrastructure investments would improve economic conditions. Specifically, additional funding for roads and bridges would have the greatest positive impact on county economic development, according to county officials responding to the survey.

County officials also identified more funding for broadband as a significant contributor to economic development in counties.

The local-state-federal partnership is critical to the ability of counties to address their top priorities and concerns effec-

tively. Counties receive funding from the states and the federal government to support local workforce development, nutrition programs that assist low-income families with children and surface transportation projects, among others.

Federal policies, however, received low marks from survey respondents. Nearly half reported they do not believe that the current direction of federal policies and programs contributes to innovation in county operations. A similar share of county officials does not believe that the direction of federal policies and programs are helping their county achieve its programs and services goals.

"Priorities in America's Counties 2016: A Survey of County Officials takes the pulse of counties in time for the November elections," said Emilia Istrate, NACo research director, "which will bring a new federal Administration, changes in state Legislatures and state governorships.

"The results will help NACo, NACo members and other county stakeholders educate new state and federal policy-makers on county challenges and priorities." CN

To read NACo's new research report on county issues and priorities, visit: www.naco.org/countypriorities.

House reauthorizes TANF for one year

By Jack Peterson
associate legislative director

The House has passed a one-year reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, a federal cash assistance program for low-income families with children. This extension carries the program through September 2017 and marks an end to discussions of program reform for the

year.

Although TANF benefits are county-administered in just 10 states, 51 percent of the total TANF population resides in those 10 states: California, Colorado, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Virginia and Wisconsin.

The TANF reauthorization was included in the Social Impact Partnerships to Pay for Results

Act (H.R. 5170). This bill allows the federal government to solicit requests from state and local governments for social impact partnerships that will produce clearly defined outcomes benefiting local communities.

The legislation creates a Federal Interagency Council (FIC) on Social Impact Partnerships to coordinate the efforts of these pay-for-success projects, and it establishes a Commission on So-

cial Impact Partnerships to assist the U.S. Treasury Department and the FIC in reviewing funding applications.

To fund new social impact partnership projects, H.R. 5170 draws \$100 million dollars from the TANF Contingency Fund, which was funded at \$608 million in FY 16. The TANF Contingency Fund is designed to make additional funding available to states facing unforeseen developments

or economic hardships. In FY15, \$356 million in TANF-contingency grants were awarded to county-administered states.

While the reauthorization of TANF is a positive step forward, NACo supports the TANF Contingency Fund and believes the amount of funding should both be increased and remain focused on current projects that can help

See TANF page 13

MONEYMATTERS

The Brexit: The Spirit of 1776?

By Joel Griffith
program manager, FSC

On June 23, 52 percent of voters in the four nations of the United Kingdom (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) approved a referendum in favor of splitting from the European Union. This marked a stunning rejection of an economic and political alliance first embrace by the U.K. more than 43 years ago.

Although withdrawal will not occur for up to two years following formal notification of the European Council, financial markets began to sharply react to the decision late on the evening of June 23, even before vote totals were completely tallied. By the end of the following day, the British pound had plunged more than 10 percent, to just 1.33 pounds per U.S. dollar from 1.50 pounds the day before. Over the next two weeks, the British pound con-

tinued to drift down to levels not seen in more than 30 years.

Likewise, global equities markets experienced turmoil from the unexpected results. The FTSE 250, an index of the 101st to 350th largest companies on the London Stock Exchange, plunged more than 13 percent in a matter of days. Shockwaves were felt across the globe in a rout not experienced since the financial crises of 2008. Yet in the next two weeks, global markets surged back. In fact, the S&P 500 reached a new all-time high on July 8.

Just how much will "Brexit" affect the economy? Prior to the vote, the U.K. Treasury chief George Osborne predicted a 6 percent hit to the British economy should the referendum be approved. Time will tell if this prediction is correct. In reality, structural reforms across the United Kingdom could do far more good than

EUROPEAN UNION GDP ANNUAL GROWTH RATE



SOURCE: WWW.TRADINGECONOMICS.COM | EUROSTAT

EUROPEAN UNION GDP PER CAPITA



SOURCE: WWW.TRADINGECONOMICS.COM | WORLD BANK

relinquishing more sovereignty to Brussels.

Thanks in large part to stifling business regulations and bloated governments across the EU, economic growth across the region has hovered at 2 percent or less for the past five years of this Great Recession recovery era. Consider the threats to certain Uber services in Germany, France and Spain or the bloated government of Greece, which consumes 60 cents of every dollar of GDP (7th highest in the world). Fortunately, the U.K. has enjoyed a gradual improvement in economic freedom the past several years — and now ranks as the 10th freest in the world.

This may be enough to allow the U.K. to outperform the remainder of the EU.

Here at home, the impact on the U.S. economy will likely be minimal. Although exports from the United States to the U.K. will likely fall thanks

to a falling pound, total exports to the U.K. of \$56 billion account for just 3 percent of total U.S. economic output to start with.

The free flow of goods and capital contributes greatly to economic growth. Private property rights and the rule of law are also important components. Membership in the European Union certainly keeps encumbrances on international trade and investment between members at a minimum. However, many citizens of the United Kingdom have tired of the fiscal burden related to EU membership, the subjugation of national sovereignty to a maze of continental bureaucratic structures, and an overly meddlesome regulatory system imposed by the EU.

In reality, agreements permitting the mobility requisite for growth can be reached without entering a supranational accord. For instance, al-

though the loss of unhindered access to the Common Market will prove a temporary challenge, the United Kingdom is already exploring the possibility of wide-ranging trade deals with the United States, Mexico, India, New Zealand, Australia and South Korea.

Perhaps the present-day citizens of the United Kingdom are embracing the spirit of another group of citizens from the same kingdom 240 years ago. The document authored by these brave colonists began with these words: "When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another..."

It's up to the current generation to write the next segment of their history. May it be an even more prosperous chapter. **CN**

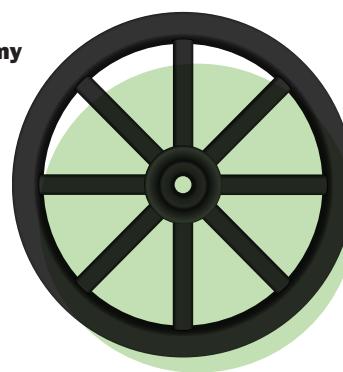
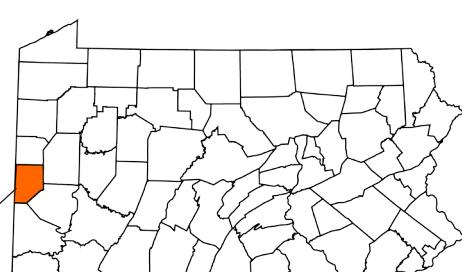
New NACo Member

GET TO KNOW...

Beaver County, Pa.

Welcome, Beaver County, Pa.

Carved out of two counties in 1800 and now bordering the states of Ohio and West Virginia, Beaver County **was home to Old Economy, a 19th century community founded by the German religious sect known as The Harmony Society**. It was the third and final settlement of the group, which believed in the imminent second coming of Christ. The Harmonist community's self-sufficiency and industry drew praise from the likes of Thomas Jefferson. **Today, Old Economy Village preserves the heritage of the early Utopian settlers, including the country's second oldest museum, the Harmonist's 1827 Natural History and Fine Arts Museum, and the oldest flatbed printing press in the country.**



Joel Griffith is a program manager with the NACo FSC.

BRIGHT IDEAS | DUNN COUNTY, Wis.

For Rural Recycling Program, It's in the Bag

PROBLEM: Plastic wrap and bags can gum up the works at recycling sorting and processing facilities.

SOLUTION: A rural, drop-off recycling program that diverts tons of recyclable flexible plastics.

By Charles Taylor
senior staff writer

Dunn County, Wis.'s landfill is a little less full since county residents began recycling plastic bags and flexible plastic wraps in 2013.

That's when the Dunn County Solid Waste Board volunteered to be a pilot community for Wisconsin WRAP (Wrap Recycling Action Program) to show what a rural county could do.

Since then, 4.5 tons of flexible polyethylene in the form dry-cleaners' bags, bubble wrap, newspaper bags, packaging for rolls of paper towels and napkins — and similar items — have been diverted from the county's waste stream.

You can give some of the credit to Recyclone, the county's recycling mascot, for helping to promote it. Donning a caped costume "that's blue and spandex-y," the superhero's alter ego, Amanda Hafele, is the county's recycling specialist.

She's been involved with WRAP since the beginning. In or out of costume, she speaks to community and school groups — anyone who'll listen — about recycling, including that of plastic film and bags. Sometimes, her audiences are surprised to find out that things like packing air pockets and bread bags can be recycled.

"I have samples of a lot



A recycling dropoff center attendant in Dunn County, Wis., wrangles a load of flexible plastics that are bound for an end user that turns them into decking boards. Photo courtesy of Dunn County, Wis.

of the common items such as napkins, paper towels and bathroom tissue — the wrap around that — and case wrap for bottled water. You bring this out and eyes are like, 'I don't have to throw this away anymore?'"

To be recycled, the plastic must be dry and free of food or other organic residue. No-nos include frozen food bags, biodegradable plastic bags and salad-mix bags.

Nationwide, at least 1.17 billion pounds of plastic bags and flexible film or packaging was

recycled in 2014, an increase of over 29 million pounds, or 3 percent, from the prior year and a 79 percent increase since 2005, according to the 2014 National Postconsumer Plastic Bag and Film Recycling Report.

Dunn County worked with the American Chemistry Council's Flexible Film Recycling Group, the state's Department of Natural Resources and a recycling company to design and launch the program. Hafele was able to secure a grant from the Community Foundation of

Dunn County to help advertise the program.

Key to WRAP's success is its partnership with Trex Co., which uses recycled plastics and sawdust to manufacture composite decking and railing. One of its standard 16-foot deck board contains approximately 2,250 recycled plastic bags.

Dunn County, population 44,000, is largely rural with a density of about 47 people per square mile. The bag drop-off points are at seven preexisting "full-service" Area Collection Stations, which also accept other recyclables. The WRAP program serves 20 of the county's 23 municipalities. The county's upfront costs were about \$11,000 to purchase hand balers for the collection points and electrical connections for a bulk baler at the transfer station.

"They buy the baler," Hafele of the company, "and then we pay for it through the material that we recycle to them. Right now, because markets are pretty low, they'll pay us 13 cents per pound. They take 10 cents off the top and we receive only 3 cents, and that 10 cents goes to pay off the baler."

For counties considering starting similar programs, Hafele said there's a network of professionals, including Dunn County Solid Waste, who can help. There's free information online at sites such as plasticfilmrecycling.org, run by the American Chemical Council's Flexible Film Recycling Group. There you can find instructions on how to set up a collection program and downloadable posters, pamphlets and handout cards to promote them. **CN**

Bright Ideas features noteworthy and award-winning county programs.

BEHIND THE SEAL

MERCER COUNTY, W.V.A.

Mercer County was formed in 1837 in what was then Virginia, taking parts from that commonwealth's Giles and Tazewell counties. In 1863, when West Virginia seceded, Mercer County went with it.

Hugh Mercer never lived in the area, which is on West Virginia's southern border, but the county seat, Princeton, was named after the battle in New Jersey during which Mercer died.



The seal features Gen. Hugh Mercer, a soldier and doctor who served in the British army before becoming a brigadier general in the Continental Army.

The background depicts many of the features prominent in southern West Virginia, including mountains, the New River, coal mining, timber, farming and the railroad.

LEADERSHIP EDGE

By Randy Johnson
Hennepin County, Minn.
commissioner

When my term ends in January, I will retire after 38 years as a Hennepin County, Minn./commissioner, a term that included a stint as president of NACo in 1997-1998.

As I clean out my 1,500 (yes, 1,500) boxes of files, I have been thinking about some of the most important and controversial issues that I championed for Hennepin County:

- Building the new Minnesota Twins ballpark
- Constructing the down-

38 years in elected office yields solid lessons for aspiring leaders

town waste-to-energy plant and extensive recycling program

- Consolidating the suburban and Minneapolis library systems
- Building the Twin Cities first light rail transit line and supporting additions
- Co-chairing the Governor's Bipartisan Welfare Reform Commission
- Relinquishing control of our large public teaching hospital and moving responsibility for its \$1 billion annual budget from the County Board to a new independent community board.

All of these issues were com-

plex, controversial and difficult. Some included raising taxes and fees.

But I want to focus on perhaps the most controversial of all — our 2008 Clean Air Ordinance that prohibits smoking in every bar and restaurant in the county. We enacted it after more than a year of discussion and multiple hearings where hundreds of people testified, often heatedly, on each side. These are some lessons I learned about leadership as a result of experience.

1 Decide whether or not to take it on in the first place

The basic question I ask about almost everything in life is: "What are we really trying to accomplish here?" (My wife and our county staff joke that this phrase needs to be on my tombstone.) On this issue, it was clear: I wanted to improve public health and enjoyment for the vast majority of people in places that serve the public.

Next, ask, is this an issue that is really important enough for you to devote your time, energy and resources? Military strategists phrase this as, "is this a hill worthy of dying for?" Clearly, for me the Clean Air Ordinance was important and I was willing to make the commitment.

2 Go beyond the talking points

Commit to immerse yourself in understanding the issue. We commissioners at Hennepin County are full time and are fortunate to rely on an extraordinarily competent staff. I used our public health staff relentlessly, to prepare and quiz me on the science and research on this issue.

Part of this is "shock and awe" — not in the sense of military power at all, but making it clear that you are serious and know as much as or more than anybody in the room on the issue. You have to make it clear



Johnson

this is not a "drive-by" issue for you.

This takes hard work. In order to persuade others, you have to convince them that you fully understand the issue.

3 Understand your opponents' arguments

One of the best lessons in my life was when my high school debate coach (a very liberal Democrat) and I (then a conservative Republican) were about to debate a very contentious Minnesota ballot tax issue before a class. With 10 minutes' notice, he told me that for "teaching purposes" we would take opposite sides in the debate. That was one of the most important teaching moments of my life.

On the Clean Air Ordinance, I made it clear that I would review all the written information that opponents would send to me. One opponent took this very seriously and regularly dropped off at my office copious supplies of documents to support her contention that tobacco smoke did not smell. I did review the documents, but even the paper was permeated with tobacco smoke smell!

4 Build coalitions

Our County Board is non-partisan by Minnesota law. That works well for us. The co-author of our Clean Air Ordinance was the most liberal Democrat on our board.

Together, we reached out to our respective constituencies. That included unions (which tended to be divided on this issue), public health advocates, our unique Clear Way Foundation that was the result of Minnesota's separate settlement in the national tobacco settlement 20 years ago, and others.

5 Never burn bridges

Always remember, whatever the issue, opponents on one particular issue may need to become allies on another upcoming issue. Avoid personal attacks on others and try to ignore the attacks on you.

6 Leadership means different things

I know very well from my long experience with NACo that counties operate very differently in various states and even in the same state. My experience has been as a full-time elected commissioner in a very large urban-suburban county, but I hope some of what I have learned can be helpful to elected county officials elsewhere who decide to take strong positions on important and controversial issues.

7 Be flexible and remember rule #1 above

After a lot of parliamentary maneuvering, the ordinance passed, but with a delayed start date and a sunset provision. This was disappointing, but it was enough to convince our state Legislature to pass a state-wide ban the following year. **CN**

Hennepin County is Minnesota's largest county and Minneapolis is its county seat. Randy Johnson was elected as a commissioner in 1978 and will retire at the end of his term in January 2017. He is the county's longest-serving commissioner, having been elected to 11 straight terms. He is now a political independent.

MERCER COUNTY, W.VA.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS FEATURED COUNTY IN 'BEHIND THE SEAL'

Created by: Charles Taylor

WORD SEARCH



APPALACHIA (Mountainous region)

BITUMINOUS COAL (Fossil fuel mined in region)

BOB DENVER (Gilligan's Island actor once lived here)

CAMP CREEK (State park known for its waterfalls)

CHUCK MATHERNA CENTER (Local performing arts venue)

DAILY TELEGRAPH (Region's daily newspaper)

GILES (One of two Virginia counties from which Mercer was formed)

HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Bluefield State College)

HUGH MERCER (Revolutionary War hero, county's namesake)

MCDOWELL (County to the northwest)

MCNUTT HOUSE (19th century home on the National Register of Historic Places)

POCAHONTAS COALFIELD (Coal seam partially located in county)

PRINCETON (County seat)

RAYS (Minor League baseball team)

WGAG (FM Radio station)

Senate moves brownfields bill; path remains unclear in House

By Julie Ufner
associate legislative director

The Senate has approved a bipartisan Brownfields Utilization, Investment, and Local Development Act of 2015 (BUILD Act, S. 1479) by unanimous consent. The measure passed on June 27 reauthorizes a popular EPA program that helps communities revitalize underused and contaminated land. The measure would authorize EPA's Brownfields program through 2018.

Originally passed in 2002 as a provision the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act (P.L. 107-118), EPA's brownfields program provides technical assistance and grants for communities to reclaim previously owned industrial sites that have fallen into disuse.

Through the program, there have been over 24,000 brownfields assessments and 1,200 brownfields cleanups nationally, which supporters said sparked economic development opportunities and creat-

ed over 113,000 jobs. While the program's authorization expired in 2006, Congress continued to fund it, and the program received \$189 million in FY16.

Key provisions in the BUILD Act

- Expanding the universe of eligible brownfields grant entities to include nonprofit organizations, limited liability corporations, limited partnerships or qualified community development entities. While this provision potentially broadens the types of entities that would qualify for funding, brownfields redevelopment projects are expensive and the grants only cover a small portion of the costs. As a result, local governments often partner with outside groups for brownfields redevelopment.

- Creating a multipurpose brownfields grant program that would allow eligible entities to undertake multiple brownfield projects under the same grant.

- Allowing certain government entities, who are

non-owners, to be eligible to receive grants, as long as the government entity did not cause or contribute to the pollution to the site. Under current law, if a local government does not own the brownfields site, they cannot apply for grant funding.

- Increasing funding for brownfields cleanup grants from \$200,000 to \$500,000 per site and authorizing additional funding for multipurpose grants up to \$950,000. These increases will provide greater certainty for long-term project financing.

- Allowing additional administrative costs to be charged back to the grant. Grant recipients can use up to 8 percent of their brownfields grant for administrative costs.

- Giving small community technical assistance grants to eligible entities in communities with populations under 15,000 and/or in disadvantaged areas where the annual median household income is less than 80 percent of the state-wide annual medium income.

- Providing grants to waterfront brownfield sites that are located next to a body of water or federally designated floodplains.

- Offering grants for renewable energy projects on brownfield sites. This includes facilities that generate wind, solar or geothermal energy or any energy efficiency improvement projects on brownfields.

The measure now heads to the House for consideration where a similar bill, the Brownfields Reauthorization Act of 2016 (H.R. 4463), awaits committee action. However, both the House Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Energy and Commerce committees have indicated they are working on a separate free-standing, yet-to-be-introduced brownfields bill.

NACo supports continued funding for redevelopment of abandoned or under-utilized brownfield sites and believes the federal government should provide incentives for counties to identify and remediate contaminated properties. **CN**

Dedicated staffing a must

From STEPPING UP page 4

one, and even so, I spent a lot of time just looking at data, and I'm glad I had the freedom to do that. They let me sit and stare until I knew what I was looking for."

She never found a single "silver bullet" baseline from which to measure progress once the Stepping Up program is in place, and she cautioned against holding out too much hope for one, but the familiarity with patterns she found in inmate's evaluations was helpful in shaping the program's concept and how it was communicated with people outside of the core team.

"We have to be consistent and clear when explaining to people what we want to accomplish," she said.

In addition to sorting through medical information, Paez also exhaustively researched with other programs had been given grants in mental and behavioral health.

"And I knew we had to come in with a detailed plan," she said. "A lot of people think you need money to start off, but you need to be able to convince funders you know exactly where that money will go."

For Forsyth County, it will go to hire a coordinator and a peer-support specialist for the inmates.

"Ronda Tatum can't be doing this," she said. "You need a dedicated staff person to expect to spend at least part of their time focusing on this program, not adding it to someone's already-full plate."

If Forsyth County is able to fund the coordinator and peer support positions, the next year will be spent deciding on screening systems and fleshing out the programming, including developing a warm-handoff discharge approach.

"Some people just need help navigating the system," Tatum said. "We'll be there to help them with that." **CN**



DOJ posts new rules notice for county websites

By Jacob Terrell
associate legislative director

The Department of Justice (DOJ) has released a Supplemental Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (SAN-PRM) soliciting comments on the "potential application of technical requirements" to make state and local government websites accessible as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Website accessibility determines how individuals with varying disabilities interact with information found on web pages.

People with disabilities may need assistive technology to enable them to navigate websites or access information contained on those sites.

Currently, some counties voluntarily follow Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) published by the

World Wide Web Consortium. These guidelines cover a wide range of recommendations for making web content more accessible for individuals with disabilities such as blindness and limited vision, deafness and hearing loss, learning disabilities, cognitive limitations, limited movement, speech disabilities and sensitivity to light.

Responses to the SANPRM issued by the DOJ will help the federal government identify

factors that should be considered in developing new requirements for state and local government websites.

NACo strongly encourages local governments to work with their website administrators and submit comments to the SANPRM to ensure that federal rule makers have a comprehensive list of factors to consider before moving forward in publishing new rules.

Comments are current-

ly open to the general public through Aug. 8, and can be submitted to the Disability Rights Section, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice, P.O. Box 2885, Fairfax, VA 22031-0885, or online at www.regulations.gov. Written comments must be postmarked and electronic comments must be submitted on or before the deadline. In your response please reference Docket ID No. 128, or RIN 1190-AA65. **CN**

PROFILES IN SERVICE

JOHN H. EAVES
Vice Chair
Justice and Public Safety Committee
Chairman, Fulton County, Ga., Board of Commissioners



Number of years active in NACo:
10 years

Years in public service: 10

Occupation:
Executive consultant, TalentQuest;
CEO, Global Youth.

Education: B.A. Morehouse College; M.A. Yale University; Ph.D., University of South Carolina

The hardest thing I've ever done: Run for public office.

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.; Muhammad Ali and Malcolm X.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Have traveled to 47 states and 50 countries.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: Write and publish two books.

My favorite way to relax is: Power walk and workout

Every morning I read: My emails.

My favorite meal is:
Grits and eggs for breakfast.
My pet peeve is:
People who fail to say "Thank you!"
My motto is: Live by the "Golden Rule."

The last book I read was:
Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools by Jonathan Kozol.

My favorite movie is: *Shawshank Redemption*.

My favorite music is: R&B.

My favorite president is:
Barack Obama.

My county is a NACo member because: It wants to be the leading county in the Southeast!

Rural re-lending program raises concerns for NACo

By Arthur Scott
associate legislative director

The Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Housing Service formally announced the creation of a new community facilities relending program called "Uplift America," July 6.

The program was created through an interim rule for FY16 that amended the Community Facility Direct Loan program to enable the agency to provide loans to qualified re-lenders serving persistent- or high-poverty counties.

While NACo supports the overall goal of the program, its implementation as outlined in the interim rule raises some concerns for the association.

Uplift America is designed to increase access to capital in hard to reach places. Through the program, USDA hopes to move investments deeper into rural America by allowing local re-lenders to leverage federal resources, bank financing and private grants in targeted low-wealth areas.

Specifically, the program requires re-lenders to have at least 30 percent of their portfolio — or at least three years of experience — serving persistent- or high-pov-

erty counties. By targeting such counties, the program will focus much of its attention in southern Appalachia, the Texas-Mexico border and the rural South.

Uplift America will provide low-interest loans to community lenders with experience financing infrastructure investments in rural communities to help counties fund projects such as health clinics, libraries, schools, municipal buildings and food banks.

The program is expected to breathe new life into the Community Facility Direct Loan (CFDL) program. Since 2013, the CFDL program has been authorized at \$2.2 billion — a major appropriations victory for rural counties. However, almost \$500 million remains in the CFDL program for FY16. USDA Rural Housing administrators must move fast to invest the money in rural communities or face potential funding cuts to the program.

While NACo is a staunch advocate for rural development funding and the CFDL program, there are major concerns over the program's re-lending qualifications. Currently, the program requires re-lenders to be a private or non-governmental agency. Tribal entities are the only exception to this requirement.

The interim rule prohibits local government entities such as economic development authorities or regional planning and development organizations from serving as re-lenders despite a long history of successful financing operations.

Additionally, while interest rates between USDA and re-lenders are capped at 2.75 percent, the contracted rate between re-lenders and end users — often county governments — are not limited by the ruling. Without specific caps on interest rates to end-users, significant administrative and user fees could be passed along on financing critical infrastructure in rural counties.

NACo continues to work with the Department of Agriculture to promote the CFDL program while seeking a path forward that allows counties to play a role in strengthening the critical funding provided by the program. **CN**

For additional questions on the Community Facilities Direct Loan Program or Uplift America, please contact Arthur Scott, associate legislative director at ascott@naco.org or 202.942.4230. More information on the Uplift America program can be found at www.UpliftAmerica.org.



A dream I have is to:

Travel to all seven continents, 50 states, and over 100 countries.

Reviving Pontiac

By Charles Taylor
senior staff writer

The old adage, one person's trash can be someone else's treasure, is being put to the test in Oakland County, Mich. — with a little help from Treasurer Andy Meisner's office.

A new architectural salvage training program in Pontiac, the county seat, is teaching 10 jobless or underemployed men the art and science of building deconstruction (there are no women in the current class, but they are eligible). And they're earning while they learn.

The program, Revive Pontiac, owes a debt of thanks to Meisner's office, which is making tax-foreclosed properties available at "little or no cost" to be salvaged before they're demolished.

"It took five years to get it going," said Chris Rutherford, executive director of Architectural Salvage Warehouse of Detroit (ASWD), which provides the training at no cost. "But it's fantastic because the major difference between what we do in Detroit and what we're doing now in Pontiac is that we've got the full support of the (county) treasurer's office, the mayor's office, and not just lip service."

Trainees earn \$14 per hour during the program, and in addition to building deconstruction skills, they can obtain other certifications to make themselves more "marketable," such as CPR and first-aid.

"They also learn asbestos awareness and lead-safe work practices," Rutherford added. "As this program progresses, we'll likely send some of the top-tier candidates to asbestos supervisor training." To date, they've reclaimed materials from a vacant apartment building and some single-family homes.

Pontiac, a former General Motors company town, is a city that could use some reviving. Unemployment in the city hov-



Revive Pontiac deconstruction trainees in Oakland County, Mich. get hands-on experience in how to reclaim reusable building elements that can be sold as architectural salvage. Such sales will help sustain the program. Photo courtesy of Oakland County, Mich.

ers around 25 percent, while it's 4 percent in the rest of Oakland County, according to Ron Borngesser, CEO of the Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency (OLHSA), which runs the program.

Rutherford explained, "It's putting these guys to work, removing the blight in their communities, creating jobs, expanding the tax base, preserving the balance of the neighborhoods that aren't blighted."

The idea for such a program had been tossed around for at least five years before Revive Pontiac was launched in April, Meisner said, but there was a hitch.

"There was a worker-training component to it that was really attractive, and that there was a community development component to it," Meisner said. "But the piece we didn't have five years ago was, 'How the heck do we pay for this thing?'"

He and OLHSA found inspiration 30 miles south, where ASWD is doing a thriving business in selling reclaimed materials in their homes, and they'll pay a substantial amount of money to do that," he added.

Trainees earn \$14 per hour during the program, and in addition to building deconstruction skills, they can obtain other certifications to make themselves more "marketable," such as CPR and first-aid.

to floorboards, you name it.

"It was really OLHSA who most clearly recognized the benefits of the deconstruction effort and who offered to put themselves on the line by not only serving as the fiduciary for the program," Meisner said, "but also taking a leadership role to try to attract funds to support the program and get it started, which they did through some funding from the state."

The agency won a \$150,000 grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corp. that served as seed money and pays the trainees' wages. It also covers the costs of work clothes, boots and tools, Borngesser said.

"Our goal is to be harvesting enough material to keep the program sustainable. There's a big market out there of people who want to use reclaimed materials in their homes, and they'll pay a substantial amount of money to do that," he added.

"If we're good business peo-

ple, we'll be able to make it self-sustaining by just selling the product just as a regular business would be doing."

According to the Construction & Demolition Recycling Association, the reclamation, recycling or reuse of building materials is a \$7.4 billion industry. The American Institute of Architects estimates that 25 percent to 40 percent of the nation's solid waste is building-related waste, and only 20 percent of construction waste or demolition debris is recycled.

Items reclaimed in the Revive Pontiac program will be sold at a storefront in downtown Pontiac that OLHSA is leasing, which will create additional jobs for salespeople. "That's why the treasurer's office is so excited about it," Rutherford said, "they see that this is all a potential windfall for Pontiac and for the greater metro region because of all those aspects that can then multiply."

Rutherford said he's been im-

pressed with the quality of work the trainees are performing.

"I've trained a lot of cohorts in a lot of different things, and this is the best group we've ever had; we're really excited about this group," he said. "They're extremely productive. In fact, we just did a full deconstruction of a small house, about 1,000 square feet, in three days. That's a job that usually takes eight to 10 days, and this is all with trainees."

"They're a great group and they're both hard-working, and they're grasping all of the book side of it very well."

Maurice Bell, 25, is one of those trainees; he hopes to parlay his new skills into doing renovation work. He'd been unemployed for about five months before he started. "We're the first ones out the gate," he said. "They're teaching me everything, I'm learning how a house is made, how to take it down, how to put it up, just everything. I'm learning every day." **CN**

Clark celebrates scope and character of America's counties

From CLARK page 1

remember most the welcoming hospitality of state associations, counties, parishes and boroughs and their interest in furthering the understanding of county government among citizens, and state and federal representatives.

The ability to travel throughout the country, the opportunity to experience local cultures and events (duck racing in Luna County, N.M. comes to mind), history, foods, to learn about specific issues, hear about innovative programs while visiting everything from a solid waste plant to an alternative fuel facility in Louisiana, a working dairy farm in Washington state, to a home and school built by Milton Hershey for orphans (now for underprivileged children), a vertical garden in Wyoming, port tours in California, a rail trip in Montana, a center for Veterans in Utah and so much more.

It's clear that counties are truly the innovators, no matter where we live, work or play.

What was the most challenging part of your role as president?

The most challenging part of being president of NACo is definitely the travel schedule. While it is exciting and rewarding, it sometimes entails two to three weeks a month away from home and it definitely takes an understanding spouse (thank you, Welling!) and supportive County Board (thank you, Dennis, Amy, Peggy and Darryl!) to do this job properly. It could be compared to *Planes, Trains and Automobiles* with the occasional unexpected adventures in flight schedules, home schedules, meetings, conferences and obligations.

During my time as an officer, I've been able to visit almost every NACo member state (check out my map in the NACo D.C. office), sometimes traveling to as many as four different places without a stop at home (i.e. Washington, D.C.; Kentucky; Mississippi and Oregon).

Despite all the travel, I've very much enjoyed the outstanding opportunities to meet with elected officials across the United States and gain important insights into issues facing counties.

What did you find most interesting or exciting?

What I've found most interesting (and sometimes exciting), is the opportunity to see so many different communities, whether large or small, meet commissioners, supervisors, police jurors, councilmembers, county mayors, executives, chairman on their home turf. As an officer, I've travelled to Mackinac Island in Mackinac County, Mich.; Skamania County, Wash.; Pendleton in Umatilla County, Ore.; Perdido Beach, Baldwin County, Ala.; Hilton Head, Beaufort County, S.C.; Biloxi, Harrison County, Miss.; Alameda County, Calif.; Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kan.; Hot Springs, Bath County, Va. to New York City/County, N.Y. and so many more!

Thank you to ALL the states to which I have been invited and visited over the last few years, and I look forward to more stops this year as your NACo past president to try and finish out my NACo map visits.

What are you proudest of?

I'm most proud of the contributions and relationships that have been built to promote a stronger voice for counties and the cause that counties matter. To look back and realize that you are one of only a small number of elected officials that have been elected to represent 3,069 counties nationwide over NACo's 80-plus years is an incredible honor and a privilege that I take very seriously.

It's been an incredible journey to learn about every facet of county government, to talk to elected officials throughout the nation on their concerns, their frustrations and their accomplishments. In the political world that we all live in, serving our constituents and making tough decisions is a challenge on a dai-

ly basis and one that we face in the election process. Regardless of what issues we face at a particular point, I have never observed harder working individuals who truly want to do what's best for our citizens, to help people, to be mindful of taxpayer dollars and to be accountable.

What advice would you give your successor?

Continue to focus your attention on your home county issues, maintain your personal health, wellbeing and family relationships, appreciate and make use of the abilities of our amazing NACo staff and our Executive Director Matt Chase, who provides the needed assistance to keep the president informed, organized and prepared.

Be open with your community and the media about your role as president and emphasize what it brings to your own county to serve in this position. Use your presidency as an opportunity to inform your local civic groups and citizens about how what happens at the state and federal levels of government impacts their daily lives and talk about the importance of county government.

Most of all, enjoy the year to its fullest; it goes by in a flash.

What's next for Sallie Clark?

As I rotate off as president into the past president role, I am still considering options. My position at the local commissioner level will also end in January of 2017 since I am term-limited next year, so there are new opportunities for me to contribute in many ways. I have been appointed to a local nonprofit board, Court Care, which offers free childcare to those needing a place to leave their children during court proceedings. And, there are potential positions in elected office I am considering for the future.

Welling and I will continue to operate our bed and breakfast inn, Holden House, in Colorado Springs, and I will shift more time on inn improvements,

tourism and marketing efforts. The experience I've gained as a city councilmember, county commissioner and president of a national organization like NACo has fostered my ability to advocate on policy issues at both the state and national level.

My work and passion for community resilience, disaster recovery and emergency management will continue, and I will seek out more opportunities in which to offer a local perspective based on personal experiences. I would certainly welcome NACo members to contact me anytime to discuss opportunities that may arise and greatly appreciate having had the honor to represent NACo as president.

Final thoughts?

When I was elected as second VP in 2013 in Tarrant County, Texas, the transition into my role as president was made much smoother by the leadership and mentorship from then NACo Past President Chris Rogers, President Linda Langston and First Vice President Riki Hokama, as well as so many past presidents who offered their advice and guidance including people like Glen Whitley, Lenny Eliason, Valerie Brown, Don Stapley, John Horsley, Kay Braaten, Colleen Landkamer, Karen Miller and Michael Hightower, just to name a few.

The opportunity to learn from experience for the first two years was invaluable to me in working toward the presidency when sworn-in as NACo's first vice president in New Orleans Parish, La. and president in Mecklenburg County, N.C.

I also want to thank the NACo membership for trusting and having the confidence in me to represent the association and our issues in this important role. I hope that I have successfully provided a strong voice for county government on issues and contributed to the voices of all our NACo members, many who have testified on the Hill as well.

My great appreciation to every single NACo member and to our NACo leadership members;

steering committee members, chairs and vice chairs, each of whom work each day to make your counties, parishes and boroughs a better community.

Thank you also for your support of the Safe and Secure presidential initiative this year and to those of you who attended our conference in El Paso County, Colo.

As I have said at many of your meetings and conferences, "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu." Let's continue to advocate for counties not only having a seat at the table, but one that is meaningful, so important a goal as we look to next year and a new president of the United States.

New White House leadership will also bring new opportunities for us to advocate for local government, because stronger counties make a stronger America.

Thank you for the honor of serving you and NACo. **CN**

ON THE MOVE

NACo OFFICERS, COUNTY OFFICIALS

- **Ray Valdes**, Seminole County, Fla. tax collector and member of the Finance, Pensions and Intergovernmental Affairs Steering Committee, addressed the Republican National Convention during its opening session on Monday July 18.

- President **Sallie Clarke** was among the panelists discussing transportation issues and innovations at the Republican National Convention, Tuesday, July 19.

NACo ACTION

NACo co-hosted a Congressional briefing, Saving Lives and Money: Chronic Disease Investments at Work, July 12. The briefing highlighted how investments made possible by the Prevention and Public Health Fund help states and localities make healthier choices easier choices for families.

House Passes FY17 Interior-EPA spending bill

**By Chris Marklund
and Julie Ufner
associate legislative directors**

On July 14, the House passed its version of the FY17 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations bill, often referred to as the Interior Bill. The bill passed the House on a largely party-line vote of 231-196. The FY17 Interior bill is one of the 12 annual spending bills that must be passed each year by Congress to fund federal government operations. The bill provides funds to federal land managers under the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and the U.S. Forest Service, as well as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and many other agencies.

This was the first time since

2009 that an Interior Appropriations bill passed in the House. In previous years, the bill was bogged down due to controversial amendments.

The overall funding level for the bill is approximately \$32 billion, a \$64 million decrease below FY16 enacted levels. Of note to many counties, the bill included legislative language to prohibit implementation of the "waters of the U.S." (WOTUS), delay implementation of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) Planning 2.0 Rule and fully fund the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program at a level of \$480 million. During floor consideration, NACo actively fought floor amendments that would have reduced funding for the PILT program.

The Interior Bill provides a

slight increase over FY16 for the National Park Service, proposing \$2.9 billion in FY17. For the BLM, the House proposed a \$10 million funding decrease to \$1.2 billion. The House also proposed modest cuts to the FY17 budget of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) setting the final spending limit for FWS at approximately \$1.5 billion. The U.S. Forest Service, which is under the U.S. Department of Agriculture, would receive \$5.3 billion in the House bill. The bill also fully funds the 10-year average for wildfire suppression costs and includes targeted funding for wildfire fuel reduction.

Under the House bill, funding for the EPA would be slashed. The House Interior bill would allot EPA \$7.98 billion, which is \$64 million less

than FY16 levels and \$291 million less than the Administration requested.

The fate of the appropriations process remains uncertain as both chambers recess for the party political conventions and annual summer district work period. While leaders of both chambers have expressed a desire to pass and conference together their respective Interior Bills, the president has already threatened to veto the House bill.

Key provisions of interest to counties within the bill include:

- PILT: The House Interior bill fully funds the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program in FY17 at a level of \$480 million. The PILT program was created in 1976 to offset costs incurred by counties for services provided

to federal employees and families, the public and to the users of public lands.

- Wildland Fire: The bill includes full funding for wildland fire suppression costs at 100 percent of the 10-year average and targeted funds to support proactive hazardous fuels reduction across the federal forest system.

- Sage Grouse: The bill includes provisions to extend a one-year delay of Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing decisions for the Greater Sage Grouse and a \$12 million increase for the BLM to support Sage Grouse conservation activities while avoiding broad sweeping land use restrictions.

- Planning 2.0: The measure would also withhold funding

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Senate bill pending

From TANF page 5

families with the greatest need. Social impact partnerships have the potential to greatly benefit local communities. However, states and localities may already enter into social impact partnerships on their own, and these projects should not be pursued by withdrawing critical federal support for needy families around the country.

Across the Capitol, the Senate Finance Committee is also reviewing S. 1089, the Social Impact Partnership Act. As currently written, this bill authorizes \$300 million for social impact partnerships, but does not reauthorize TANF or draw from the TANF Contingency Fund. NACo urges the committee to reauthorize the TANF program, but preserve and increase the amount available in the TANF Contingency Fund. **CN**

Two very different counties, one similar HIV/AIDS problem

**By Steward Beckham
NOBCO intern**

While people with HIV/AIDS are now living longer, healthier lives, the disease continues to have a disproportionate effect on the African-American communities.

Overall, African Americans make up 12 percent of the U.S. population, but account for 44 percent of HIV cases.

This was the call to action for members of the National Organization of Black County Officials (NOBCO) at the recent announcement of Phase II of Fulton County, Ga.'s prevention initiative: Objectives and Actions on "The Strategy to End AIDS in Fulton County."

Commissioner Joan Garner was joined by Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.) for an update from the Fulton County Task Force on HIV/AIDS in Atlanta on June 27. The task force was formed in December 2014 in response to reports that the Atlanta re-

gion's HIV numbers were approaching third-world levels.

Garner aims to move swiftly in addressing this major health issue.

More than 100 community members and health care professionals attended the event.

Speakers included, Fulton County Board Chairman John H. Eaves, county health director Kathleen Toomey, and Dr. Wendy Armstrong and Daniel Driffin, co-chairs to the task force.

The event was held in conjunction with National HIV Testing Day, which was started in 1995 by the National Association of People with AIDS.

HIV prevention advocates nationwide used the day to promote testing. In Fulton County, 3,000 people are HIV positive but don't know their status, according to the Task Force.

Currently, African Americans account for 60 percent of cases among women, 40 per-

cent of cases among adolescents, and 69 percent of cases among children.

Like Fulton County, Alameda County, Calif. has been facing a similar dilemma, according to county Supervisor Keith Carson.

In 1998, Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), whose district includes Alameda County stated that the region was facing a local health crisis. The incidence of HIV/AIDS was five times higher among African-American populations than Hispanic or white populations. A county-based state of emergency was declared and was considered to be the first of its kind in the nation.

In light of the growing numbers, Carson's office has been working closely with national prevention and awareness organizations strategizing to stop the spread of the disease. The county's Office of AIDS Administration has been a key partner in these efforts, working with

community-based providers for testing diverse populations and providing better connections to Linkage-to-Care and Retention-In-Care support programs.

The Affordable Care Act has also been a big factor for Alameda County's support system. Now that more people have access to basic health care, the Office of AIDS and other local health providers and support agencies can help more people who would have otherwise never entered the front door.

However, there is more work to be done as Carson and the numerous organizations and people seek new platforms and methods for sharing information.

They have looked into social networking, testing, improved data collection to help organizations and further partnerships with researchers particularly interested in HIV's effect on African American health. **CN**

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

CALIFORNIA

Twenty "tiny houses" — modified utility sheds — will provide temporary shelter for up to 40 homeless people in YUBA COUNTY. The 8-by-14-foot, one-room structures were placed on vacant land owned by the county. They come with two beds, no running water or electricity, though LED lamps are provided.

The community is designed to provide housing for up to 30 days, while social services and community agencies work to move the residents in to permanent residences.

Donations from charities and corporations keep the county's cost to less than \$100,000, KCRA TV News reported.

"We can talk about the issue of homelessness all day long and we can talk about what we want to do," County Administrator Robert Bendorf told a reporter, "but we felt it was important to act."

FLORIDA

DUVAL and ORANGE counties are testing a program to help incarcerated heroin users to kick the habit. They'll receive addiction counseling, therapy and treatment after their release, which includes a monthly shot of Vivitrol, a non-addictive drug that blocks the euphoric effects of heroin, the *Orlando Sentinel* reported.

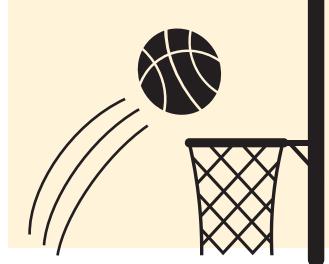
"If you try to shoot up, you won't feel anything," said Christopher Hunter, the county's director of health services. Orange County is paying for the pilot with state funding; 144 jail inmates have volunteered for the program.

Heroin-related arrests have spiked the past five years — from fewer than 100 in 2010 to more than 800 in 2015.

GEORGIA

- Thanks to a \$48,000 gift from the Atlanta Hawks Foundation, DEKALB COUNTY has broken ground on a new outdoor basketball court at the county's Gresham Park.

The park is across the street from a school named for a notable basketball fan: The Barack Obama Technology Elementary School is the first school in Georgia to be named after the president.



A similar program in Massachusetts reduced re-arrests by about 9 percent. Nationwide, the recidivism rate for drug offenders is 77 percent within five years of release, according to federal data.

- An anti-government group decided to take the law into its own hands at a recent CLAYTON COUNTY Board of Commissioners meeting, according to the *Clayton Daily News*.

"I'm here to invoke my absolute and guaranteed rights to ... effect a citizen's arrest," said Carl Swensson, the group's leader. He declared that three commissioners and the district attorney were "under arrest" and "commanded" law enforcement officers who were present to "take possession."

Police took no action and the group eventually left, and the meeting continued. County Police Chief Michael Register said they would be arrested if

they came back into the commission chambers and would be charged with assault if they attempted to make the arrests themselves.

KENTUCKY

No, KENTON COUNTY isn't getting into the beer business, but its government offices will be moving to an old brewery. The county purchased the Bavarian Brewing Co. building — once destined for a date with a wrecking ball — for \$4.5 million, WLWT TV News reported.

The building housed a brewery from 1866 to 1966. More recently, it was a restaurant and nightclub.

"It's extremely exciting," said Kenton County Judge Executive Kris Knochelmann. "It's going to be a daunting task.

We're going to have a lot of work to do over the next year and a half."

MARYLAND

- WASHINGTON COUNTY is planning to transform a mostly deserted former Army base into a vibrant mixed-use community with commercial, residential and recreational uses.

County commissioners voted unanimously to take ownership of Fort Ritchie. The county will facilitate the buildout of the Cascade Town Centre at Fort Ritchie.

County Administrator Gregory Murray said that the project could attract about 3,000 people to the area and an estimated 1,000 jobs.

The Army closed the base in 1998. The county will assume

ownership of the property on Sept. 15, according to the *Herald Mail*.

- High school graduates in WICOMICO COUNTY who qualify can now receive full scholarships to attend community college under a new program.

After the County Council approved the plan in June, two business leaders pledged \$15,000 each over the next five years to back the program. County officials turned over \$265,000 to the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, which will manage and distribute the funds.

To qualify, students must have lived in the county for two years, enroll in a degree or certificate program at Wor-Wic Community College and register for 12 or more credit hours in the fall immediately after high school graduation, among other requirements. The students are required to maintain at least a 2.0 grade point average.

MONTANA

- Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney (D) has declared a "drought alert" for GLACIER, TETON, PONDERA counties and part of LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY.

In a letter to county commissioners, he noted the determination was based on water

NEVADA

- WASHOE COUNTY and the Second Judicial District Court will display "recovery" doors throughout the downtown courthouses, the Washoe County District Attorney's Office and the Washoe County Administration Complex.

The Art for Recovery Community Project features renowned local and emerging artists' work, depicting their interpretation of the theme of "Sober Is . . ." This project was created to raise awareness and to end the stigma associated with the disease of addiction.



supply and soil moisture data from state and federal agencies and other indicators. The region has experienced two consecutive years of low snowpack, early runoff and minimal subsoil moisture. Additional counties may be added to the list, Cooney added.

NEW YORK

Students at SUNY-New Paltz and SUNY-Ulster will have access to a **sexual assault crisis counselor** thanks to **ULSTER COUNTY**, which received a \$140,000 state grant.

The counselor is a certified rape crisis counselor, liaison to law enforcement agencies and educator who will provide training to both students and administrators at orientation and throughout the year, WAMC News reported.

VIRGINIA

The **FAIRFAX COUNTY** Board of Supervisors has passed a resolution emphasizing **racial and social equity** in decision making.

The *Washington Post* reports that policy will allocate funding to lower-income areas and affect police, school and land-use issues. It will consider the importance of diversity in hiring and other decisions.

WASHINGTON

After years of the **SNOMOISH COUNTY** Health District and Sheriff's office **collecting unused medicine**, the district board passed an ordinance putting the responsibility of destroying drugs safely onto the pharmaceutical companies that produce the drugs.

The ordinance requires one box for every town or city, and an additional box for every

TEXAS

NUECES COUNTY commissioners have authorized 91 polling locations to allow any county resident to vote, **eliminating precinct-based voting requirements**. The secretary of state must approve the plan.

State officials are expected to approve similar plans in six Texas counties with at least 100,000 residents in November, according to *The Caller Times*.



WYOMING

A **pet rescue trailer**, donated by the Central Wyoming Kennel Club and other organizations, will help **NATRONA COUNTY** manage pets displaced by a natural disaster.

It is stocked with 65 kennels, bags of cat litter, collars, leashes, dishes for food and water, ID-micro-chipping equipment, including a scanner, computer and printer.

"Red Cross shelters won't take companion animals unless they're service animals," Stewart Anderson, Natrona County Emergency Management coordinator told the *Casper Journal*. "That puts people and pets at risk – people will not evacuate if they can't take their pets."

It's the only such unit in Wyoming, but Anderson said it can be dispatched to other Wyoming counties facing emergencies.



30,000 residents. Homebound patients can also get pre-paid mailers to dispose of their medicine. Companies must submit their stewardship plans to the health district by December, with an eye toward implementing the plans in early 2017.

Snohomish will be the eighth county in the nation with a medicine stewardship program, *The Herald* reported. **ALAMEDA COUNTY** in California was the first in 2012.

WEST VIRGINIA

FAYETTE COUNTY's plan to **ban fracking waste** is unconstitutional, according to a federal judge. Judge John Copenhaver invalidated the county's unanimous approval of an ordinance banning the waste, passed in January 2016, saying state and federal law trump county ordinances, West Virginia Public Radio reported.

In his ruling, Copenhaver cited a 1999 decision in *City*

of Huntington v. the State Water Commission, stating that "Public health is a matter of statewide rather than local or municipal interest or concern and in the regulation of public health the power of the state is supreme."

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin's voter ID law looms large over people without a permanent address, but the **DANE COUNTY** Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to help homeless residents obtain the necessary **documentation to vote**.

The resolution allows the homeless to list county buildings as their permanent address. This could extend voting rights to the more than 3,500 people who experience homelessness in Madison each year. Before the voter ID laws, homeless people without proof of residence like a utility bill or bank statement could register to vote by obtaining a proof of residence letter from a social service organization, such as a homeless shelter, the *Cap Times* reported. **CN**

News From the Across the Nation is compiled by Charles Taylor and Charlie Ban, senior staff writers. If you have an item for *News From*, please email ctaylor@naco.org or cban@naco.org.

Spending bill stymies WOTUS

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to implement the BLM's Planning 2.0 rule until BLM has reopened the public comment period for an additional 90 days and has held in-person public meetings on the rule in each of 12 impacted western states, Texas and Oklahoma.

NACo and many county governments continue to express concerns over the limited amount of time county governments were given to provide meaningful input on the BLM's proposed rule.

- Land/Water Conservation Fund: The House bill provides \$322 million for LWCF programs, a reduction of \$128 million below the FY16 level and \$153 million below the president's request. Within LWCF funds proposed by the House, state and local recreation and battlefield preservation programs are prioritized, with State Conservation Grants receiving \$71.8 million in FY17 and \$10 million for battlefield protection.

- Water Infrastructure Funding: Under the House bill, Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) programs would receive a combined sum of \$2.07 billion, of which \$1 billion would be allotted to the CWSRF, and DWSRF would receive \$1.07 billion. NACo supports funding for both CWSRF and DWSRF programs.

The CWSRF program funds municipal wastewater infrastructure construction or upgrade projects and the DWSRF program supports Safe Drinking Water Act infrastructure projects.

- Leaking Underground Storage Tank Program: The Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) Program provides grants to the EPA and states to undertake cleanup responsibilities around abandoned gasoline and petroleum storage sites.

The House version of the Interior Bill provides \$68 million for the LUST program. NACo

supports full funding for the LUST program if those funds are used for their intended purpose of remediating and preventing further contamination caused from underground storage tanks.

- "Waters of the U.S." (WOTUS): The House bill contains a provision to prohibit the EPA from acting on its WOTUS rule.

The provisions would prevent the EPA from moving forward to "implement, administer, or enforce" the rule even if the federal court system were to lift its stay on the rule. The House Energy and Water Appropriations bill, which funds U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and Department of Energy programs, has a similar provision preventing the Corps from enforcing the WOTUS rule.

- Additionally, the House measure includes \$50 million for the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA), which was enacted in 2014 but never funded. WIFIA is a five-year financing program that allows EPA to provide direct loans and loan guarantees for the construction of large water infrastructure projects.

NACo support funding WIFIA because it has the potential to significantly lower water infrastructure costs for large projects.

Additionally, during floor consideration, the House considered 131 amendments to the Interior Bill covering a variety of topics.

Of particular importance to counties:

- An amendment by Rep. Donald Norcross (D-N.J.) that would have reduced funding for the PILT program by \$13,060,000 and transferred those funds to the EPA's Superfund program was defeated by a vote of 143–282.

NACo has expressed strong opposition to any amendment that would reduce funding for the PILT program, which funds critical county services in nearly 1,900 counties across 49 states. **CN**



Breakfast — Shelter Before the Storm

Time for my favorite meal of the day — breakfast. Time to hop into my very cute yellow Jeep and drive a few miles to a diner that I frequent. When I walk into Darrell's Doggone Good Diner, staff members like AJ, Susan and Katie invite me to sit anywhere. They greet me by saying, "Hi Phil" and automatically start my IV drip of coffee. They ask how my beautiful wife Charlotte is if she isn't already sitting with me and ask if I will have my "usual." The place has photos of customer canines all over the walls, including of course, photos of my two handsome K9s.

Darrell's is a place to feel comfortable and safe while enjoying a good meal most efficiently served. After paying the bill, sometimes without even waiting for the check, I'm ready to start the rest of a busy, productive and enjoyable day. I do not, of course, ever forget a generous tip. It is very unlikely that my friends at Darrell's have a defined benefit pension plan, a wide array of paid time off benefits, automatic step increases and a package of insurance benefits — things which a great many public employees too often take for granted.

Darrell's offers a form of a respite from what, for many, can be a daily grind

of meetings, deadline pressures, decisions that will not please everyone — or for that matter sometimes anyone — and perhaps having to give difficult news to stakeholders like fellow employees and citizens. In human resources especially there may be thousands of job applicants each year if not tens of thousands. Only several score or even hundreds in a large organization, however, may actually be hired. That means that the huge majority of applicants think you're dumb and make bad decisions.

Unfortunately, sometimes those who are actually hired reach similar conclusions if they start work only to find that their hopes and expectations have not been met, perhaps at the hands of "Godzilla, the Supervisor." They may find that they've just entered a labyrinth of bureaucratic restrictions which prevents them from innovating and makes them feel like crash test dummies — strapped in and ready to bang into some wall only to be strapped in again as the process repeats.

It is essential for the best and the smartest employees to enjoy the work environment and, strange as it may seem, to actually look forward to going to work and doing things they love to do. The very best

employees want to make a difference. They want their decisions to be understood and appreciated. They want their team members to grow and develop on the job and they want to have a role in helping them grow. It is the critical role of the manager and an executive to create and encourage that kind of environment — one that is a form of safe haven for innovation and inspiration.

The HR Doctor has long studied the role of the "sanctuary" in making our lives complete. A prior HR Doctor article focused on that subject, noting that for the very fortunate, the sanctuary may be a beautiful physical property such as Camp David or Winston Churchill's Chequers. For many others the sanctuary may be as simple as their own room at home or their own apartment. The Beach

Boys were helpful in noting this phenomenon when they wrote and played *In My Room* decades ago — a song I remember listening to in my own room in a six-story tenement apartment building in Brooklyn. I often think of that environment when I look out my expanse of windows onto the beautiful pastures, trees and observatory of my home in Central Florida.

Some, like Elie Wiesel, Nelson Mandela or Steven Hawking may have spent years in a concentration camp, in prison or confined to a wheelchair. Nonetheless, they too found the amazing beauty of a sanctuary in their own mind. Theirs is a sanctuary of spirit and imagination.

We all need a sanctuary,

perhaps more than one. Our homes, our relationships with those whom we love, and a work environment can all be sanctuaries we enjoy in our lives. The wise manager, elected official and appointed director will seek out such sanctuary-opportunities and create more of them for others. Tough decisions are better made when balanced by the knowledge that we have found havens to re-energize our bodies, minds and spirits.

Take time to think about the concept of sanctuary in your life. Take time to develop one at work as well as at home. Take time to find one in seemingly unexpected places — like a diner. CN

