



DOJ extends comment period for website accessibility rules

By Jacob Terrell
associate legislative director

The Department of Justice (DOJ) is extending the public comment period on its proposed website accessibility regulation for state and local governments to Oct. 7.

Under the new proposal, DOJ plans to revise Americans with Disabilities Act regulations to require state and local government websites to adhere to enhanced accessibility requirements such as coding websites to allow for the use of screen readers and providing captioning for video content.

NACo's analysis of the proposed rule identified several stumbling blocks, according to Deborah Cox, legislative affairs director and Jake Terrell, associate legislative director.

- DOJ has not obtained sufficient feedback from local governments to understand the fiscal impact of increased accessibility requirements on local government websites.

- DOJ is drafting a one-size-fits-all rule without taking into account the varying levels of resources available to counties of different sizes to implement new website requirements, and

- DOJ may draft a rule that could run counter to the rule's objectives by creating an undue burden for counties, especially smaller ones that provide information and services online.

"NACo's goal in this effort is to ensure that county feedback is at the forefront of DOJ's

See **WEBSITE** page 20

A FLOOD OF CONCERN



Rescues were still underway in Livingston Parish, La. on Aug. 15 as the National Guard assisted in getting people to safety. In 24 hours, 21 inches of rain fell in the parish. As of Aug. 16, 20 parishes were under a federal disaster declaration. Photo by Livingston Parish Sheriff's Office

New federal safety oversight arriving for local transit systems

By Kevan Stone
associate legislative director

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) finalized a rule outlining new powers to write and enforce national safety standards for local transit systems, a first step toward the agency's adopting a national safety program, with power to direct and withhold funding to local agencies. This could directly affect counties with transportation authorities.

The rule, authorized under the 2012 surface transporta-



tion law (MAP-21), goes into effect Sept. 12 and will allow the agency to withhold up to 25 percent of a local transit agency's funding under the Urbanized Area Formula, if it finds the local agency has developed a pattern of noncompliance. The Urbanized Area Formula is the mechanism used to deliver most federal funding to local authorities.

The final rule establishes a new national public transportation safety program that would define best practices, minimum performance levels

and state of good repair. Under the rule, the FTA would mandate local agencies to spend federal funds for safety projects before using it for anything else. The FTA could also issue non-binding advisories recommending corrective action to situations where safety is in question.

The rule would also require transit agencies take a Safety Management Systems (SMS) approach, a transit organizational philosophy that pro-

See **FTA** page 20

Computers will 'learn' county functions

By Charles Taylor
senior staff writer

Cognitive computing and technology partnerships with academia are among the innovative approaches to governing explored at NACo's latest Technology Summit.

The artificial intelligence (AI) of cognitive computing is a "paradigm shift," said Jeff Rogers, who heads IBM's government cognitive solutions team, which is "training" its Watson computer technology to be used in various government applications. Watson, you may recall, is the computer that won the *Jeopardy!* quiz show several years ago.

"Cognitive computing has the ability to learn," he said. "Algorithms help it absorb a lot of information and create connections among the data as they get smarter. It can understand natural language.

"It breaks down barriers between the citizen and the machine or computer program based on the data it's provided."

That's what Miami-Dade County, Fla. is hoping to do as it implements a Watson-based "engagement advisor" to answer residents' expected questions about the water and sewer departments after a change in billing frequency, according to Carmen Suarez of the county IT department's enterprise architecture services division.

"What we've done is we've ingested all the standard operating procedures for the water and sewer call center — they have scripts they already use — so we gave Watson all of that," she said, "and now we're 'training' the engage-



Carmen Suarez (r), Miami-Dade County, Fla., explains how her county is using IBM's Watson technology, as Michael Grass, executive editor of *Route Fifty* looks on.

ment advisor to be able to answer the questions that come from the general public when they call."

It's scheduled to be implemented in September.

The engagement advisor is part of the county's three-phase plan to make greater use of cognitive computing.

Suarez said a future project will "teach" Watson about planning, building and zoning.

The county's Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources is inputting information on south Florida building codes, municipal codes and building standards, including plan review comments from its back-office system.

Ultimately, the goal is to have Watson take a first pass at reviewing construction plans. "That's going to require telling Watson what different specific images look like," she added, such as what a window looks like and what a septic tank looks like on



Terence Farrell, Chester County, Pa., queries Tech Summit panelists. Seated (r) is Don Couch, Maui County, Hawaii. Photos by Leon Lawrence III

plans."

Responding during a Q&A, Suarez said the intent is not to replace humans but to augment their capabilities. "These tools are intended as reference tools, as guiding tools, as ways that the construction-permitting population can make their plans more accurate, better — to reduce the time it takes to get permits and build the building."

Another audience member asked about scalability: While large counties like Miami-Dade have the resources to expand into AI, what can smaller counties do?

Rogers said regardless of size, many jurisdictions have an "untapped resource" in local colleges and universities.

Although hours apart, that statement could have been a seg-

ue into luncheon keynote speaker Martin O'Malley's remarks. The former mayor of Baltimore, governor of Maryland and recent Democratic presidential candidate discussed his role at MetroLab Network, where he is a senior fellow. MetroLab is a "city-university collaborative for urban innovation," supported by Carnegie Mellon University and the MacArthur Foundation.

MetroLab "has set out to bridge that gap, to forge this largely untapped connection between the critically urgent work of local government and the talent and the innovation that exists in our universities and colleges across the country," he said.

Among MetroLab Network's areas of focus, he said, are traffic management (more intelligent

and connected transportation solutions), predictive analytics, sustainability and urban sensor networks.

Regarding partnerships, O'Malley noted that the University of Notre Dame and South Bend, Ind. are preparing to activate a system of smart valve sensors in their combined storm water-sewage system that "flip back and forth in anticipation of the rainfall to make greater use of the capacity so they don't have to dig a whole redundant system."

"Mayors, county executives, commissioners — we like to be the best at doing something second, after having seen somebody else work out the R&D and the proof of concept," he said.

"This new form of technology transfer must respond to the needs of citizens who demand now, as we all know, that their government be at least as efficient as Amazon is, or their banks ... It's the world we live in."

Earlier in the day, attendees heard from Maury Blackman, president and CEO of Accela, which designs and markets cloud-based systems that increase civic engagement with local governments.

"The citizens are looking for everything to be dynamic and 24/7 and open and transparent, and they have no patience to wait," he said.

The proliferation of mobile devices has contributed to those expectations, he added, particularly with citizens or businesses

See TECH SUMMIT page 15

ON VACATION

Money Matters, SnapStats and Word Search will return in September.

Parish president saves California woman

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

Like any good executive, Parish President Guy Cormier has to delegate to get things done, day in and day out, in St. Martin's Parish, La.

Every now and then he has to roll up his sleeves and get to work himself, but recently, that involved taking his shirt completely off.

After his workshop programming ended while at NACo's Annual Conference this July in Los Angeles County, he and his wife decided to take a trip away from the hub of county activity around the Long Beach Convention Center and see a little more of the state.

"Darlene and I hadn't been to that part of California before, so we thought we'd look around a little," he said.

By his telling, within 10 minutes off showing up on a pier, the couple saw a group of roughly 50 people looking over the edge, 25 feet down into the water, where a woman in her late 20s, fully clothed, was splashing around.

"You could tell she was weak," Cormier said. "The waves flipped her over and she'd recover and try to right herself, then another wave would hit her."

It appeared that her friends were trying to pull her up to the pier in a life preserver, a plan foiled by the height required to lift her, a mismatch between her and the life preserver, and her friends' intoxication.

"I tried to explain it wasn't going to work, but one of them told me to mind my own business," he said. "I looked down but it didn't seem like she had the strength to get out on her own, or even dog paddle, and the hole in the life preserver was so big she was going to fall out."

After observing for another minute, Cormier gave his wife his wallet, phone, shoes and shirt and headed down a long ladder into the surf. Shortly after he started descending, the woman fell out of the life preserver and hit her chin on the ladder on

her way back down.

"After a few rungs, I just took my feet off and slid down as fast as I could," Cormier said. "I was down there in about half a second."

When he reached the waist-deep water, the woman resurfaced and he reached out to grab her arm. After 10 minutes of calming her down, talking to her (she said her name was Megan, it was her birthday and her friend had pushed her in as a joke), and reassuring her that she would be alright.

"I was a lifeguard when I was 16 and taught water rescue into my 20s, but I'm 50 now," Cormier said. "I didn't think I'd be doing this again."

They climbed the ladder to-



Cormier

gether, step by step, dried her off and went on their way.

"She was 27, and she seemed like a bright woman who had a lot to look forward to," Cormier said. "I don't know what would have happened otherwise, but Darlene keeps telling me there's a reason we were there that evening. It was just natural to try to help."

In addition to serving as the president of St. Martin Parish, Cormier is the president of the Police Jury Association of Louisiana and is a member of the NACo Board of Directors.

Though Cormier was reserved about the feat, his friend, St. James Parish President Timmy Roussel, was making sure people knew what had happened.

"It is truly a miracle that Guy happened to be in the right place at the right time," he wrote in an email. "I don't want to consider what could've happened to Megan had Guy not been there. His actions were truly remarkable and I commend him on a job well done." **CN**

CLI comes at just the right time for Ark. county assessor

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

For Kasey Summerville, the County Leadership Institute was a dream, but that's all it seemed to be.

Though it caught her interest when she got the email advertising the 3.5 day intensive program in Washington, D.C., the cost just seemed too high for Clark County, Ark., the 20,000-person community where Summerville serves as assessor.

So she applied for Next Generation NACo's first-ever fellowship to pay costs of the program, but didn't expect to get it, so her reaction was unbridled when she got the good news.

"I was jumping up and down," she said about getting the news. "I was excited because I had this opportunity I otherwise wouldn't have had."

As a member of the NACo's Finance and Pension Steering Committee, she has attended several conferences, but all primarily in service to the organization or her county directly. Now, she had a chance to focus on her skills as a leader to do her job better.

And she got that.

"It was like dying and being reborn," she said. "It changed my life. What we did in those three-and-a-half days was more than anything I was expecting, but I came out of it a new leader."

She hasn't made it nearly 14 years without strong leadership. While working in the Clerk of Courts' office, she saw the assessor's office and had plans for it. She wanted to take its operations into the 21st century, and even waiting another two years after an unsuccessful campaign for the position, didn't dampen her enthusiasm.

"The office was still doing most things by hand," she said. "I wanted to digitize everything, get all of our records online so people could access them whenever they wanted."

Though it has been a long process, she's two years from finishing the job, which she sees as



Summerville

getting her part of the county government to an ideal point. And that means more than just saving money on postage because they can email assessments.

"It will be complete transparency," she said. "Not only will you be able to see your own records, you'll be able to see any property in the county, so you can see we treat everyone fairly and equitably. That transparency is important to me as a leader."

But those goals and that process were in place long before County Leadership Institute met in June. How did it change her?

"I called my staff in when I got back and said, 'You may see me handle some things different based on the training I've gone through,'" she said. "I didn't want them to be alarmed, or ask if something was wrong, but I just felt like everything I did was going to be a little different after that."

First off, she almost immediately addressed a personnel issue that had been festering for a while.

"We need to have courageous conversations," she said. "We took a look at our weaknesses as leaders and I knew mine was procrastination, especially if I had to deal with an uncomfortable situation. I am also too nice, when I need to be more professional."

The attendees, 22 in all, did role playing exercises to work on dealing with those tendencies, and for Summerville, it worked.

"I needed CLI at that very moment," she said. "It was at just the right time. I've always had a pretty stable staff, but we lost two of our five, and we were going through a little transition. This was the best

time to take a step back and look at what I'm doing as a leader."

It felt like every second, though, she was running forward. From the webinar to prepare for CLI, to the homework assignments before and overnight during her stay in D.C., it felt like there wasn't a second wasted.

"My husband wanted to come along, but I told him this wasn't going to be that kind of trip," she said. "He was going to have to be doing sightseeing on his own."

For Summerville, the overall CLI theme of "seeing from balcony" was as prescient as the approach suggests. Too often, she said, leaders can get too bogged down to remember the big picture, look at all perspectives and angles before they make their final decisions, something she admits she can be guilty of.

"Right now, everybody in the office is using their downtime to scan 75,000 property records," she said. "There's always something we have to do, but the question will be what comes next."

"When we finish these records in two years, we'll have the entire assessor's office digitized. Then what?"

As the only assessor in attendance (and the second overall since CLI began in 2004) and the only attendee from the middle-South, Summerville relished the diversity that she values in her office, but got to see it in a different way.

"I got to work with so many different individuals from so many parts of the United States," she said. "To have that opportunity in a time where we are all focusing on being better leaders was important."

She left D.C. knowing the boot camp was well worth it.

"There are a lot of leadership programs out there, but one that was focused the way this one was made it valuable," she said. "It's important for county governments to keep up, and it felt we all found ways we could improve and be better leaders and empower the people we work with." **CN**

A Picture Perfect Time!



NACo President Sallie Clark (l) and Matt Chase, NACo executive director (r), recognize retiring former NACo presidents at the Board of Directors meeting: (l-r) Betty Lou Ward, Wake County, N.C.; Karen Miller, Boone County, Mo.; and Randy Johnson, Hennepin County, Minn. Clark will retire at the end of 2016. Photo by Leon Lawrence III



Dr. Laree Kiely of the Kiely Group answers a question from Rufus Taylor during with Measuring the Impact and Value of Your Program.



Rufus Tyler, Sussex County, Va., engages in discussion with Dr. Laree Kiely.



Harrison Moody, Dinwiddie County, Va., picks up registration materials from NACo staff member Chanele Fuller. Photo by Leon Lawrence III

ANNUAL CONFERENCE SHOWCASED THE BEST OF WHAT NACo, L.A. COUNTY HAD TO OFFER



Rep. Tony Cardenas (c) listens to Dave Roberts (r) and Greg Cox of San Diego County after addressing a meeting of NACo's health policy subcommittees. Health Steering Committee Chair Mary Ann Borgeson is barely visible on Cox's left.

Photo by Leon Lawrence III



**Conference
in Photos**



California Water Resources Control Board Chairwoman Felicia Marcus speaks about drought to the Energy, Environment and Land Use Steering Committee. Photo by Leon Lawrence III



Salt Lake County Mayor Ben McAdams speaks during the Immigration Reform Task Force meeting as White House Director of Intergovernmental Affairs Jerry Abramson looks on.



Mono County, Calif's Tim Fesko listens to a discussion about the SolSmart program in the Removing Barriers to Solar Energy Development workshop.



The Exhibit Hall offered vendors and attendees a chance to mix.



In the driver's seat: Four-year-old Eli Smith takes a turn at steering one of the L.A. County Sheriff's Department's mobile command centers. Photo by Leon Lawrence III



NACo 2016 Conference in Photos

All images
by David Hathcox
unless noted



Henry Roybal, Santa Fe County, N.M., listens to Ethical Leadership: Lessons Learned to Keep You Out of Prison.



Charlie Kenner, Boone County, Ky., has a question at Public Health Preparedness and Response: Zika as a Case Study.



Jaime De La Cruz, San Benito County, Calif., finds his county on the U.S. map, which was sprinkled with colored pins indicating attendees' counties.



Debbie Wise, Randolph County, Ark., pins her hometown county on the conference map. Photo by Leon Lawrence III



Dr. Tanya Stewart, senior medical director for UnitedHealthCare, talks about the consequences of health care choices in County Talk — Hindsight as a Prescription for a Better Tomorrow.



Gary Moore, Boone County, Ky., author Sam Quinones, Esri's Richard Leadbeater and Adapt Pharma's Matt Ruth at the Opioid Luncheon.
Photo by Leon Lawrence III



Greg Robinson, Doddridge County W.Va., listens intently to learn about Innovations in Water Infrastructure Financing.



Mobile workshops included a tour of the Port of Long Beach. Photo by Jonathan Harris

NACo 2016

Conference in Photos



Jennifer Brown, Nationwide Retirement Solutions, writes a note of encouragement to the future recipient of a Project Innocence backpack. Photo by Leon Lawrence III



Susan Muranishi (I) and Kitty Barnes, Financial Services Center Advisory Committee members, weigh in at the committee's meeting.



Mary Wells, Nash County, N.C., assembles backpacks for Project Innocence through the Next Generation NACo Network service project.



A bird's eye view of a pet licensing software vendor in the Exhibit Hall.



Greg Cox, San Diego County, answers a question during the NACo 2nd Vice President's Forum as moderator, Karen Miller, Boone County, Mo., and opponent, Robert Steele, Cook County, Ill., listen. Photo by Leon Lawrence III



Gary Lee, Erie County, Pa., questions panelists at the User-Friendly Tools for Improving Criminal Justice workshop.



Chris Coudriet, New Hanover County, N.C., addresses the Healthy Counties Breakfast Roundtable: Creating Connected Behavioral Health Systems.



Kelvin Cunningham, Talladega County, Ala., and Stan Ponstein, Kent County, Mich., retire a U.S. flag in a flag disposal box. Boxes like this will soon be available on a limited basis to NACo member counties.



Next question please: Karol Welch, Hopkins County, Ky., is interested in Identifying and Preventing Human Trafficking in Your County.



Ken Klein, Snohomish County, Wash., has his interest piqued by Are You Prepared for a Media Storm?

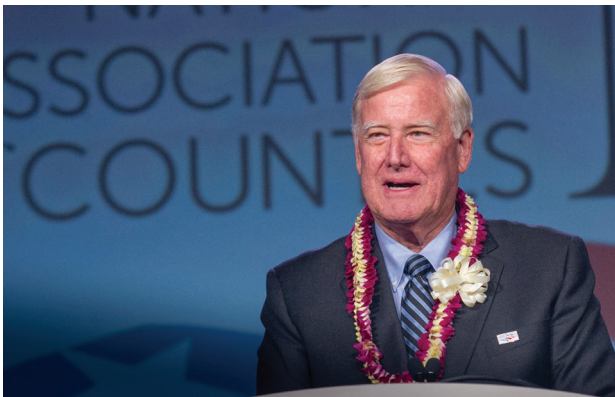
NACo
2016
Conference
in Photos



Sallie Clark closes the book on her year as NACo president.



Managing the Relationship Between County Administrators and County Attorneys drew quite a crowd.



NACo Second Vice President Greg Cox.



Robert Steele seconds Cox's nomination as second vice president.



The North Carolina delegation gathers to discuss a proposed change to NACo's bylaws. In the front (l-r): Guilford County's Kay Cashion, state association Executive Director Kevin Leonard and Surry County's Larry Phillips.



Party host Don Knabe welcomes guests to the Conference-wide Celebration Event.



Ron Walter, Chelan County, Wash., tries his hand, or feet, at surfing at the closing celebration.



Legendary distance swimmer, Diana Nyad, a featured general session speaker, poses during her book signing with Bill Pappas, Hillsborough County, N.H.



Sand sculptor Alex Lebon with Archisand Sand Sculptors takes on the NACo logo.



Jon Meacham signs his book, *Destiny and Power*, for Mick Berry, Catawba County, N.C.



NACo President Bryan Desloge delivers his acceptance speech.



Desloge is sworn into office by his daughter, Liz.



An honored NACo tradition: Executive Committee members trade their ribbons and they switch offices.



2016 Awards Winners



The Public Leadership in the Arts Award goes to King County, Wash. (l-r) Jay Dick, Americans for the Arts; Eric Johnson, Washington State Association of Counties; Kathy Lambert, King County; Sallie Clark; John Wilson, King County.



Los Angeles County's "Improving Care for Incarcerated Patients" earned Best in Category for Health at the 2016 Achievement Awards. (l-r) L.A. County Sheriff Jim McDonnell; Clark; Kevin Kuykendall, L.A. County; Darren Schulman, AETNA; Dr. Erick Eiting, medical director, Inmate Health Services; Sachi Hamai, CEO, and Don Knabe, L.A. County.



Richard Malm, Jefferson County, Kan. (l), receives the Membership Recruiter of the Year Award from Tim McCormick, Membership Committee chair. Malm recruited seven new member counties in Kansas over the last year. Photo by Leon Lawrence III



2016 Awards Winners



Bill Jasien, FSC executive chairman, and President Sallie Clark pose with Davenport Foundation Presidential Scholarship winner Sean Jones of El Paso County, Colo.



NACo's FSC awarded surfboards to state association executives who significantly supported FSC partners. Pictured here with FSC partner Multi-Bank Securities, Inc. representatives Peter Torvick (l) and John Coban (r) is Association of County Commissioners of Georgia Executive Director Ross King.



Bill Jasien (l) and David Thompson (r) hang 10 with Doug Hill, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania.



CH2M HILL Scholarship winner Evan Torres (c) with CH2M's Scott Ingvaldstad and Clark.

PROFILES IN SERVICE

LEW GAITER III

Chair
Information Technology
Standing Committee
Commissioner
Larimer County, Colo.

Number of years active in NACo: 6 years

Years in public service: 7 years

Occupation: Computer software and networking research and development, and commissioner of District 1 of Larimer County, Colo.

Education: Some college

The hardest thing I've ever done: Raise a large family

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: King David, Apostle Paul and President George W. Bush

A dream I have is to: Ride cross country on a Goldwing motorcycle with my wife or drive in a BMW Z-4.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Delivered eight of my nine children at home.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: Followed a 16-year-old skiing off of a cliff.

I'm most proud of: My wife and kids.

Every morning I read: My Bible more often than anything else.

My favorite meal is:

Smothered, beef and cheese stuffed, chile rellenos.

My pet peeve is:

People who think they know what I believe — without asking me first.

My motto is: "Learn all sides of an issue before you make up your mind."

The last book I read was: I'm working on *21 Laws of Leadership* by John Maxwell.

My favorite movie is: *Knight and Day* with Tom Cruise and Cameron Diaz.

My favorite music is: Smooth jazz.

My favorite U.S. president is: Abraham Lincoln.

My county is a NACo member because: We value the advocacy for counties and appreciate the educational opportunities.

My favorite way to relax is: Skiing.



Ransomware poses threat to counties

From *TECH SUMMIT* page 2

that interact with counties.

"The fact that what we can do today is basically put the county government in their pocket through mobile tech, through smartphones," Blackman added. "I think that has the capability to kind of transform and supercharge this relationship between county governments and the local businesses."

The summit, which was streamed live, also included a two-part Cyber Town Hall, whose panelists included industry experts, county IT professionals and a U.S. Department of Homeland Security representative, among others.

Panelists warned of evolving threats from ransomware, malware that can hold an organization's data "hostage." From Tim Hastings, director of state, local government and education ser-

vices for Mandiant, came this sobering message: "There's two types of organizations out there, in my opinion, those that have been breached and those that just don't know they have been breached."

Counties should be concerned about ransomware because "there's so much of it and little of it is directed, but mostly it's spray and pray," said Kevin Haley, director of security response for Symantec.

"Information security in the government space has been lacking for quite some time," according to Ricardo Lafosse, chief information security officer for Cook County, Ill. He was hired about three years ago to stand up the county's defenses and said he encountered "lots of resistance."

"It's a huge cultural change from the typical government processes to have security bolted

onto many of the typical HR, finance, health processes instead of baking them in."

His team took a people-process-technology approach that began with hiring the right personnel — a challenge when counties have to compete with the private sector. What he does is hire more junior information security staff and develop their skills.

Dave Stern from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's state and local cybersecurity engagement program, touted the resources his agency makes available to local governments, such as ransomware fact sheets. He encouraged counties who are not involved with MS-ISAC to engage with the organization. "If you're not a member... you're still entitled to receive incident-response services," he said. "There's no reason not to be a member; it's free."

Tech Summit video is online at www.naco.org/techsummit. **CN**



Community coaching available for Rural Impact County Challenge

As part of the Rural Impact County Challenge (RICC), NACo and the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program are offering community coaching for up to 10 RICC counties.

Community Coaches from the Roadmaps to Health Action Center support local leaders' efforts to improve their communities. They work with local, multi-sector teams to address the broad factors that influence the health of communities.

The Roadmaps to Health Action Center is an online platform, which provides practical help for local leaders working collectively to improve their communities. It provides guidance and tools to understand the rankings data and strategies that communities can use to take action, bring expertise from a variety of disciplines — from public health to law to social

work to urban planning to hospital community benefits — to support leaders in using Action Center tools and guidance to advance their goals.

How Can Community Coaching Help Your County?

Coaches provide guidance to teams that are working to improve their communities. Drawing upon tools and resources in the Action Center, Coaches provide support in a variety of ways including, but not limited to:

- equipping new partnerships with tools and guidance as they get going
- providing guidance to partnerships looking to strengthen or revamp their approach
- propelling a community from data assessment to action
- assisting with issue campaigns or policy advocacy
- supporting teams in implementing new policies or programs

- suggesting frameworks, tools, and consultants, for evaluation efforts, and

- connecting communities to national leaders and expertise and other communities doing similar work.

Rural Action Caucus (RAC) Fall Symposium

As part of the Rural Impact County Challenge, those selected to receive Community Coaching will be invited to attend the annual Rural Action Caucus Symposium. The symposium will include programming for RICC teams and opportunities to engage with your Community Coach, team members and peer teams. It will be held in Leon County, Fla., Dec. 7-9.

Community Coaching is part of the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program, a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. **CN**

LEADERSHIP EDGE

Integrity: A Matter of Skill, Not Will

By Stuart Brody

Do you have integrity? Of course you do. Everyone has integrity. Have you ever met anyone who doesn't believe he or she "has integrity?"

So, here's the question? If everyone possesses integrity, why do we see all around us evidence of integrity breaches: in business, sports, academia, even in the clergy and certainly in our world of government?

This question is hardly an academic one for hard-working county officials. You make tough decisions affecting the lives of many. So, even if you

are sure that you "have integrity," wouldn't it be worthwhile to question whether there might be ways to improve the practice of it?

You might wonder what I mean by "practicing integrity." Most people don't view integrity as a practice, the way some-one practices law or medicine. In fact, most people believe that integrity is something you have or you don't. It can't be learned. If that were the case, the outlook would be pretty dismal for our institutions and our nation because there would be no way to teach people how to make decisions with

integrity.

The belief that integrity can't be taught is just one of many common beliefs about integrity that simply aren't accurate. Here are some others:

- Integrity is the bold assertion of conviction.
- Integrity is about right and wrong.
- Integrity is built on a strong belief system.
- The right thing is obvious and something you just do.
- Integrity is a matter of instinct and will, not practice and habit.
- Breaches of integrity are usually the product of corrupt

intent.

● Integrity is synonymous with ethics.

Integrity is not a state of being or a permanent achievement of character. Decision-making is not based on innate and unerring judgment but developed as a "practice" by working on it over and over again until habit displaces instinct. We assume that intuition flows from some deep-seated moral capability.

In fact, we are operating out of undetected biases that grossly deflect decision-making. That's why 98 percent of people polled believe they are above average judges of character; corporate presidents believe they are the source of all positive developments yet blame all bad ones on the economy; and political parties really believe they are the exclusive guardians of virtue.

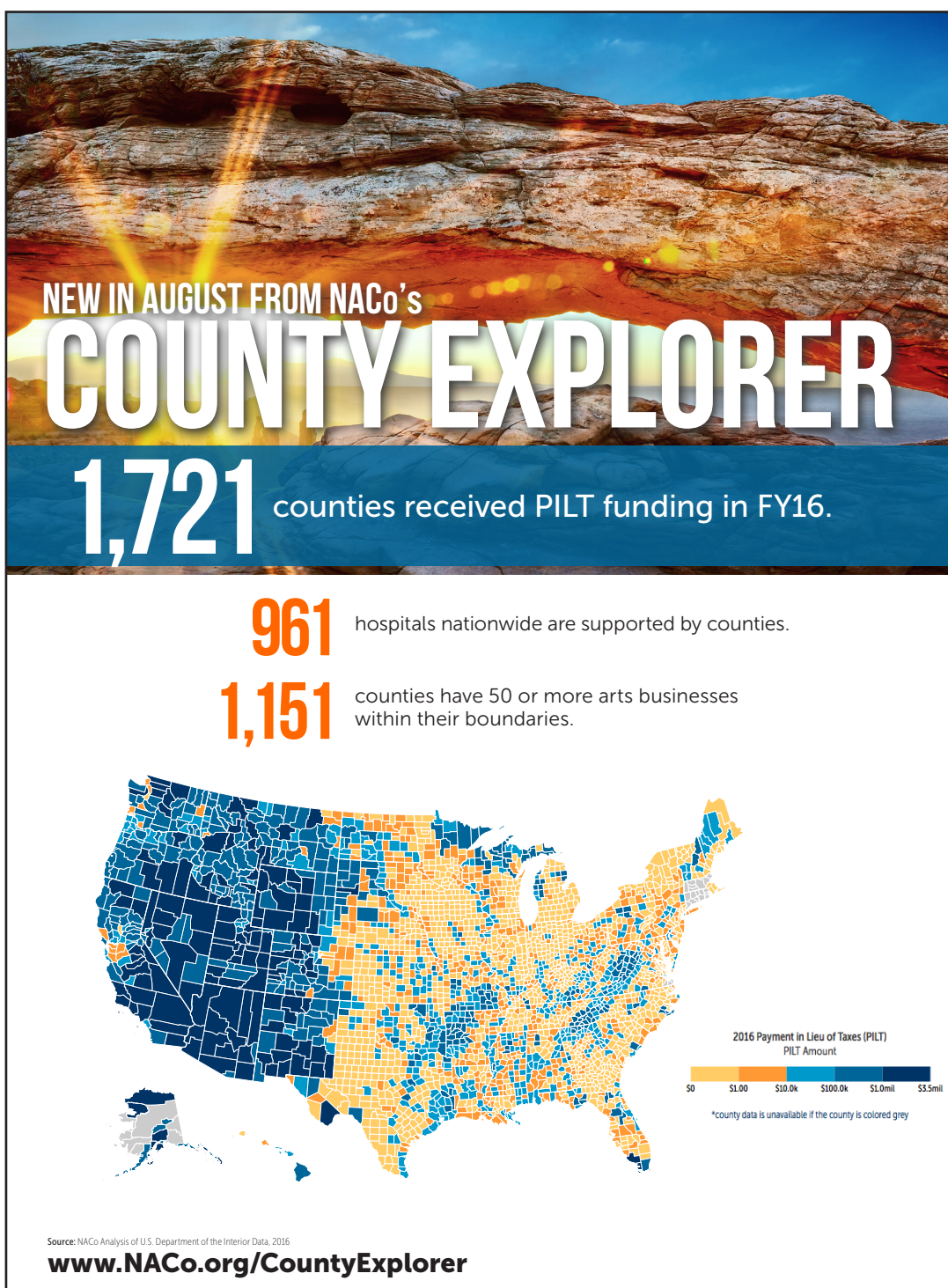
We think that integrity is something we "have" and the "right thing" is something we "just do" like a Nike commercial. We don't need to practice. Naturally, we are good people so we're naturally good at integrity. The fact of the matter is that we are not good at it. We

often make decisions automatically and unconsciously, without intention or effort.

As individuals we believe we "have integrity" even though we tell white lies, fail to get back to people in a timely fashion, accept dinners on our friends' company expense accounts, breach copyright protections, gossip, shade the truth on taxes, own stock in corporations committing illegal acts and buy hot goods on big city street corners, to name just a few.

Our task as public officials is to start looking at integrity as a body of skills, the same way we manage our finances with a budget or navigate using a GPS, so we can maximize the effectiveness of our decision-making and truly serve our constituents. **CN**

Brody speaks nationwide on the subject of integrity and decision-making. In a NACo-sponsored webinar series starting Aug. 24, he will challenge common assumptions about integrity that limit a leader's effectiveness as public decision-makers. To learn more or register, go to: <http://bit.ly/2bn0qPj>



New NACo
Member

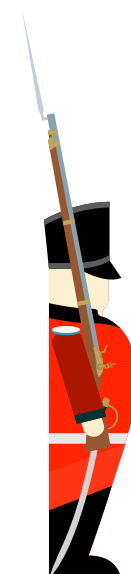
**GET TO
KNOW...**

**St. Bernard's
Parish, La.**

Welcome, St. Bernard's Parish, La.

If you're old enough, you may remember Johnny Horton's 1959 Grammy-winning song, *The Battle of New Orleans*. It celebrates **the defeat of the British in the last battle of the War of 1812 and was fought in St. Bernard Parish, at the site of the Chalmette National Historical Park, or Chalmette Battlefield.**

St. Bernard Parish, with a population of approximately 36,000, sits to the southeast of New Orleans. **It was founded in 1807 and is home to a large Spanish community, descended from Canary Islanders, whose members are known informally as the Spanish Cajuns.**



BRIGHT IDEAS | DAKOTA COUNTY, Minn.

Electronic Crimes Unit Targets Domestic Violence

PROBLEM: Dakota County, Minn. and its cities had inadequate resources to solve a growing number of crimes involving digital devices.

SOLUTION: A county-led electronic crimes task force whose synergies multiplied available staff and expertise.

By Charles Taylor
senior staff writer

About two years before the Dakota County, Minn. Sheriff's Office created an electronic crimes task force, a lo-

cal homicide helped make the case for more staff and equipment to fight cybercrimes.

"We had one situation where a guy pushed his pregnant wife down the stairs," Sheriff Tim Leslie recalled.

"The day before, he's at his phone Googling 'can you die from falling down the stairs,'" authorities discovered after the fact by sifting through data from his cellphone and computer.

The husband had also tried to create an alibi by texting himself a message from his dead wife's phone — posing as her asking him to pick up some carryout food while he was "out." He was subsequently found guilty of murdering

his wife and unborn child.

It all happened in Apple Valley, one of nine cities within the county that have partnered with the Dakota County Sheriff's Office to form an Electronic Crimes Task Force.

The idea began to take shape in 2013, when Leslie was preparing a \$35,000 budget for new equipment for what was, at the time, a computer crimes unit staffed by 1.5 full-time equivalents.

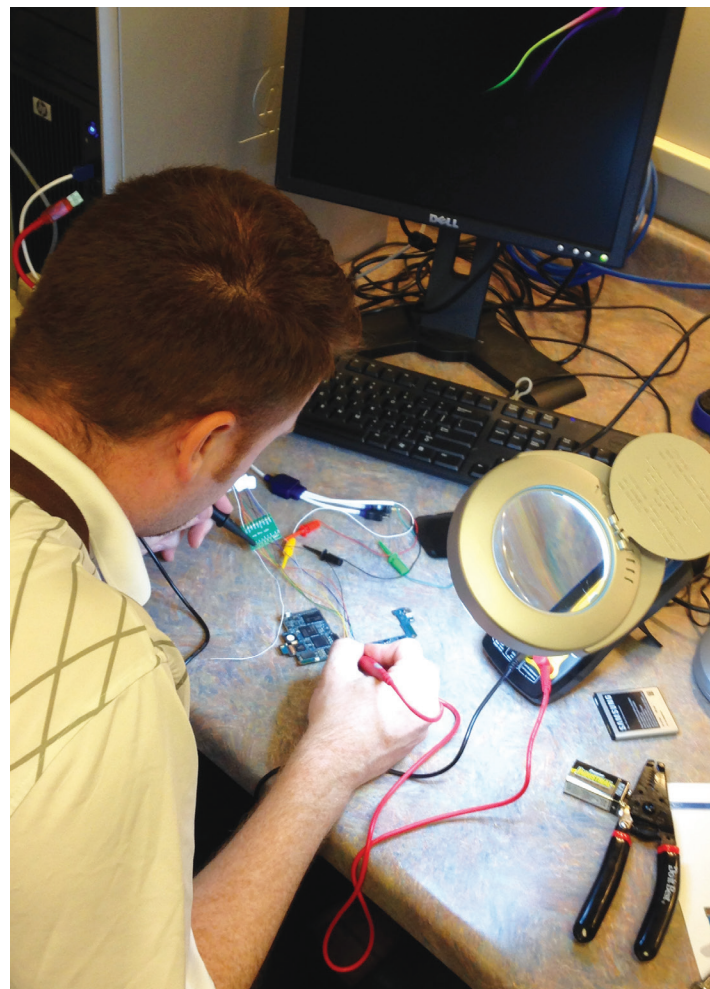
"They were falling terribly behind, so we hired a civilian part-time, one-day-a-week forensic analyst," said Leslie, who was chief deputy at the time.

He wondered whether the cities that had their own, small electronic crime units were facing the same kinds of costs. Sheriff's officials and city police chiefs had a meeting on the topic in November of that year.

They found they had similar challenges: aging computer systems needing frequent upgrades, varying levels of expertise among staff, work backlogs when personnel are on vacation or at training, keeping up with new technologies, personnel burnout and lack of specialization among staff assigned.

That's when they decided to pool resources. The task force was formed through a joint powers agreement in 2014 and began its work in January 2015. In its first year, the unit handled 214 cases and analyzed 616 devices including 296 phones. The task force was recognized for innovation last year by the University of Minnesota's Hubert Humphrey School of Public Affairs.

City law enforcement agencies contribute either funding or personnel to the effort, whose budget is about \$666,000 for a three-year pilot. The task force is funded by



Det. Ryan Olson, Dakota County, Minn. Sheriff's Office, extracts data from an electronic device. Photo courtesy of Dakota County, Minn.

the county, the cities of Apple Valley and Burnsville, and a \$200,000 federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) grant. The staff comprises four sworn officers and two civilian forensics specialists.

"Part of what we do in our electronic crimes unit is we attack orders for protection, orders for harassment violations," Leslie explained. The VAWA grant funds a staff person who focuses on domestic and dating assault, sexual assault and stalking cases.

Domestic violence victims are one of two groups that are overrepresented among electronic crime targets; the other is the elderly. Since the task force's creation, he added, it's been able to ferret out data on domestic abusers that's been used to elevate stalking charges from misdemeanors to felonies. For example, cell-

phone data helped to document a domestic abuser's intention to buy GPS tracking devices to hide in the victim's car.

Once the county's line officers learned of the unit's capabilities and shorter turnaround times — a few days in most cases down from 60 days previously — "the submissions of cell phone and computer evidence as well as prosecutions from these cases increased," Leslie said.

"You're really missing the boat if you think you can do everything by yourself. I guess maybe LAPD and NYPD and those really big departments can probably do it on their own, but most of us cannot.

"And so rather than try to make your palace really big — share, collaborate, because the effectiveness is really for the citizens." **CN**

ON THE MOVE➔

NACo OFFICERS, COUNTY OFFICIALS

● NACo President **Bryan Desloge** addressed members of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) at their Annual Conference in Guilford County Aug. 11-14. Desloge next traveled to the Association of County Commissioners of Alabama Annual Meeting in Baldwin County (Orange Beach) held Aug. 16-18.

● NACo First Vice President **Roy Charles Brooks** addressed the North Carolina Association of Black County Officials at their meeting held in conjunction with NCACC's event.



Desloge



Brooks



Gilmore



Marklund

NACo STAFF

● **Maeghan Gilmore**, program director, represented NACo at the American Correctional Association meeting in Boston Aug. 7.

● **Jacob Terrell**, associate legislative director, and Eryn Hurley and Austin Igleheart, legislative assistants, represented NACo at the 2016 Six-County Association of Governments Congressional Briefing in Richfield, Utah from Aug. 15 - 18.

● **Chris Marklund**, associate legislative director, represented NACo at the Alaska Municipal League Conference in Wasilla, Alaska, held Aug. 16 - 19.

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

CALIFORNIA

● There's a new sheriff town in **SANTA CRUZ COUNTY**...or at least a deputy, if only for a day. Eight-year-old Nicky Clark Kent Draper was sworn in as an **honorary deputy** by the county Sheriff's Office on Aug. 6.

Nicky has suffered from an undisclosed serious illness since the age of 3 that requires him to undergo regular chemotherapy, the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* reported.

When a sheriff's office employee learned of Nicky's interest in law enforcement, the agency invited his family and him to visit without providing details of what the day would entail.

Deputy Draper received a custom-made pint-sized deputy's uniform, sunglasses and his own badge. A highlight of the day had Nicky arresting a "perp" for a motor vehicle infraction. Deputy Mike Pruger played the role during a staged traffic stop.

A woman who identified herself on Facebook as Nicky's mother posted to the Sheriff's Office page: "...I'd like to thank you all from the bottom of my heart. This was an incredibly [special] day for him and we talk about it daily!! He will always remember how special you made him feel."

Photo courtesy of Santa Cruz County, Calif. Sheriff's Office



● It'll be up to **LAKE COUNTY** voters to decide in November if the county **should tax commercial medical marijuana growers**. If the tax passes, growers in unincorporated areas of the county would be billed from \$1 per square foot for outdoor cultivation to \$3 for indoor growers.

Individuals who grow medicinal pot for personal use and caregivers growing for up to five people would be exempt.

According to *The Press Democrat*, the tax could generate about \$8 million per year for the county.

COLORADO

In other cannabis news, **DOUGLAS COUNTY** commissioners have passed one of the state's **toughest laws on medical marijuana** growers. The ordinance, which applies to unincorporated parts of the county, restricts the number of plants at one's primary residence to a dozen, bans out-

door "grows" and prohibits renters cultivating the drug without the property owner's permission.

Additionally, growing or processing areas will need to be fully enclosed and locked. Common areas of multifamily or attached housing development are not permitted as grow areas, the *Denver Post* reported.

FLORIDA

NACo President Bryan Desloge isn't the only **LEON COUNTY** official who stepped into a **national leadership position** this year. County Attorney Herb Thiele is now president of the International Association of Municipal Attorneys.

At the state level, Commissioner Nick Maddox was elected second vice president of the Florida Association of Counties last month, according to County Board Chairman Bill Proctor, and County Administrator Vince Long serves as president of the Florida Association of County Administrators.



GEORGIA

There's a whole lot of squawking — and maybe even talking — going on in **DEKALB COUNTY**, where county officials are looking for volunteers to take care for more than **300 parrots seized in an animal hoarding case**. The birds were removed from a local man's home last month, according to the Associated Press.

DeKalb's animal services officials said they needed help with feeding, watering, clean-

ing and other tasks. No experience necessary, but volunteers can't already have pet birds in their homes.

ILLINOIS

Gov. Bruce Rauner (R) has signed a bill that would allow the **MCHENRY** and **LAKE COUNTY** Boards to eliminate a handful of small governmental units. The bill authorizes the County Board to **do away with any taxing body** for which they appoint a majority of trustees, the *Northwest Herald* reported, if its boundaries are completely inside the taxing district.

Under the new law, county boards must give a legitimate reason why the body to be eliminated provides duplicative or unnecessary services. Voters within the body's boundaries can petition the county clerk to call a referendum on the proposed elimination.

Illinois has almost 7,000 units of local government.

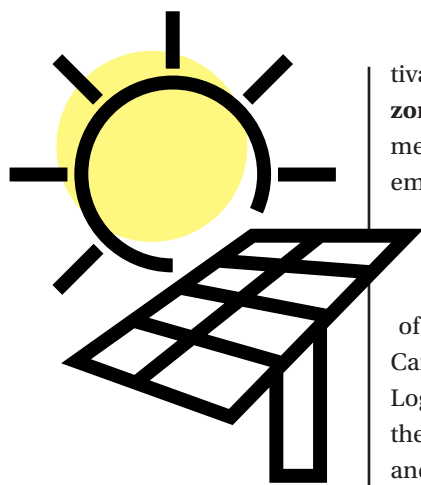
KANSAS

WYANDOTTE and **JOHNSON** counties will have to find another source to fund their **sex education programs** — or end them after next year — now that health officials declined to renew federal grants.

Since 2010, the counties received nearly \$500,000 annually to provide sex education courses in local schools to prevent teen pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, according to *The Kansas City Star*.

The federal government makes similar grants available to local agencies whose states don't apply, but those are competitive, rather than formula, grants.

Kansas is one of seven states that decided not to apply for grants from the federal Personal Responsibility Education Program this year. The others are Florida, Texas, Virginia, Indiana, North Dakota and South Dakota.



MARYLAND

● **MONTGOMERY COUNTY** will exceed its commitment to install **6 megawatts of solar power** on county facilities by adding a new project at a former landfill. The county's departments of Environmental Protection and General Services recently signed a contract to add 5 megawatts of solar power. That would nearly double the amount of clean energy generated on county property.

With the new solar project, the county could generate more than 13 million kilowatt-hours of electricity each year. That's enough to power more than 1,300 homes.

● **Public-private partnerships** (P3) will be a part of **ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY's** strategy to clean up more than 530 miles of shoreline.

The county's FY17 budget includes \$5 million for storm water projects that will be designed and built by county government and the private sector. Vendors will make proposals on a package of projects that will remove pollutants such as phosphorous and nitrogen from the Chesapeake Bay.

A request for proposals will be issued in the next few weeks for P3 projects to supplement the county's storm water program and help it meet federal waterway cleanup deadlines, County Executive Steve Schuh said.

NEW YORK

NIAGARA COUNTY has ac-

tivated a 31-acre **foreign trade zone** in which commercial merchandise would be exempted from customs duties and ad valorem taxes.

A 1970s-era U.S. law encouraged development of foreign trade zones. The Canadian firm Borderworx Logistics will initially operate the zone. The firm, the county and the Niagara County Industrial Development Agency must still formalize the operating agreement.

NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY sheriff's deputies no longer have to wait **for animals locked in cars** to show signs of distress before they intervene.

The department's new policy, adopted in early August, directs deputies to document a vehicle's interior and exterior temperatures at least twice and use their discretion as to whether an animal should be recovered from the vehicle and if it should be returned to the owner or if criminal charges should be filed.

PENNSYLVANIA

● As opioid drug overdoses rose in **ALLEGHENY COUNTY**, the health department has **crunched the numbers** to help direct anti-drug efforts.

A report has identified the hardest-hit neighborhoods in the county, based on a variety of data sets, including emergency and health care information, from 2008 through 2014.

The analysis started with 1,962 accidental overdose deaths in Allegheny County over those seven years, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported. Of those, 1,355 were county residents whose deaths were related to opioids including prescription drugs, heroin and fentanyl.

● Most jurors in **WESTMORELAND COUNTY** are paid \$9, given the small number of cases that go to trial. Now President Judge Richard McCormick Jr. will ask jurors to **donate those checks to charity**.

The Tribune-Review reported that the county paid more than \$78,000 in 2015 to jurors for daily wages and mileage expenses, and almost 3,600 of those jurors were paid for just one day of service. In addition, 301 received wages for trials that lasted for two or three days — at \$25 per additional day.

Donations will benefit the Blackburn Center Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and the Court Appointed Special Advocates.

TEXAS

GRIMES COUNTY is trying to stop a bullet — a **bullet train**, that is, planned between

Houston and Dallas.

The County Commission voted to require high-speed rail developers to acquire a permit and provide sufficient proof of eminent domain authority before building a rail line over county roads, the *Texas Tribune* reported.

VIRGINIA

ROANOKE, GILES AND CRAIG counties have asked the federal commission reviewing the proposed **Mountain Valley Pipeline** to delay issuing a draft environmental impact statement that's currently set for release in September.

The counties contend that too many questions raised by the staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the U.S. Forest Service and pipeline opponents remain unanswered or unresolved about the proposed natural gas transmission pipeline, according to *The Roanoke Times*.

The proposed 301-mile, 42-inch diameter, buried pipeline would transport natural gas at high pressure from **WETZEL COUNTY**, W.Va., to the Transco pipeline in **PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY**, Va.

WASHINGTON

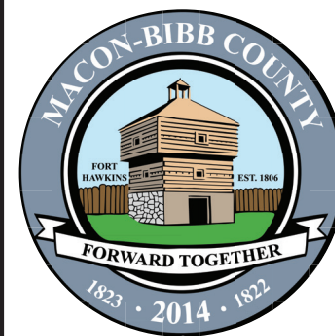
A majority of **SNOHOMISH COUNTY** voters rejected a ballot measure that would have **increased sales taxes** to pay for more sheriff's deputies to crack down on heroin and opioid painkiller trafficking, and for more social service and treatment programs, the *Seattle Times* reported. **CN**



MACON-BIBB COUNTY, GA.

Introduced in: 2014

The consolidation of Bibb County and Macon, Ga. demanded a new seal.



In addition to the new entity's name, the seal included the years 1822 — when the city of Macon was founded

1823 — when Bibb County was founded

2014 — when the governments consolidated

A tagline that joins the two entities — "forward together," also became a part of the seal.

Fort Hawkins serves as the seal's centerpiece. The fort was built starting in 1806 and used until 1824, and it spurred the development of a trading settlement that became Macon.

Would you like to see your county's seal featured in County News? Contact Charlie Ban at cban@naco.org.

Sometimes Loneliness Can Be a Good Thing

I dictate this article while staring out the window looking out at a lovely pasture. I can roam around the property and the house and encounter only my two canine friends. I can talk to myself or talk to them, or not talk at all. The reason is that for the past 10 days the beautiful HR spouse Charlotte is in the south of France at a watercolor painting workshop.

Like many of us, she has had a dream of doing something extraordinary to reinforce a personal passion — as an amateur watercolorist. She loves being able to retreat into the world of her painting studio for the sheer pleasure derived from doing something she loves. I am very proud of the progress she is making as a dedicated amateur.

I benefited from the loneliness of not being in constant communication with my dear Charlotte; I appreciated her even more. I anticipated sharing in her excitement and adventure when she returned. She will share her drawings, photos and paintings with me, and I will be infected by her obvious joy at being back home and having learned a lot.

The more you love a hobby and, if you are very lucky, your profession, the more it is obvious to other people who sense your excitement and cannot help but smile. In fact the root of the word “amateur” itself is first to do something for the love of it.

The very luckiest people are those who have found a career, if not also a particular employer that makes them happy every day as they go to work. Work in these cases does not describe how they feel about what they do. I am one of those fortunate enough to have found a county government career. I felt excited virtually every day for decades. I know many friends and



colleagues who are also lucky in that regard.

Conversely, I know there are many people struggling in jobs they don't like. They feel trapped and as a result, their work gives them no joy.

Part of successfully overcoming the ill effects of loneliness is to be comfortable with your own self and with the skills and experiences that have shaped your life so far. I actually enjoy opportunities to be alone with nature. I enjoy time on a clear night in my observatory communing with the amazing wonders of the sky. The evening often involves my large telescope, “Olivia,” and me. The equipment allows me to do things, which the greatest professionals in astronomy could not do until only a few decades ago.

However, a more permanent state of loneliness is not a healthy thing for an individual. Feeling lonely and sad about your work, let alone the other parts of your life, is not what human beings are all about. We were meant to associate with others, ideally in productive ways with our families, our fellow tribal members or colleagues at work.

In the mentoring and training I've done, I offer some basic points about how a career and an overall life of joy and passion, can be found.

The first is to explore. Deliberately work to understand what different jobs or different hobbies are all about and how you might expand them. Decide which pursuits bring you a meaningful sense of achievement and excitement. Do not to be afraid to be explorers and hunters searching through the many opportunities available in the world. Build on the things that get you excited and curious.

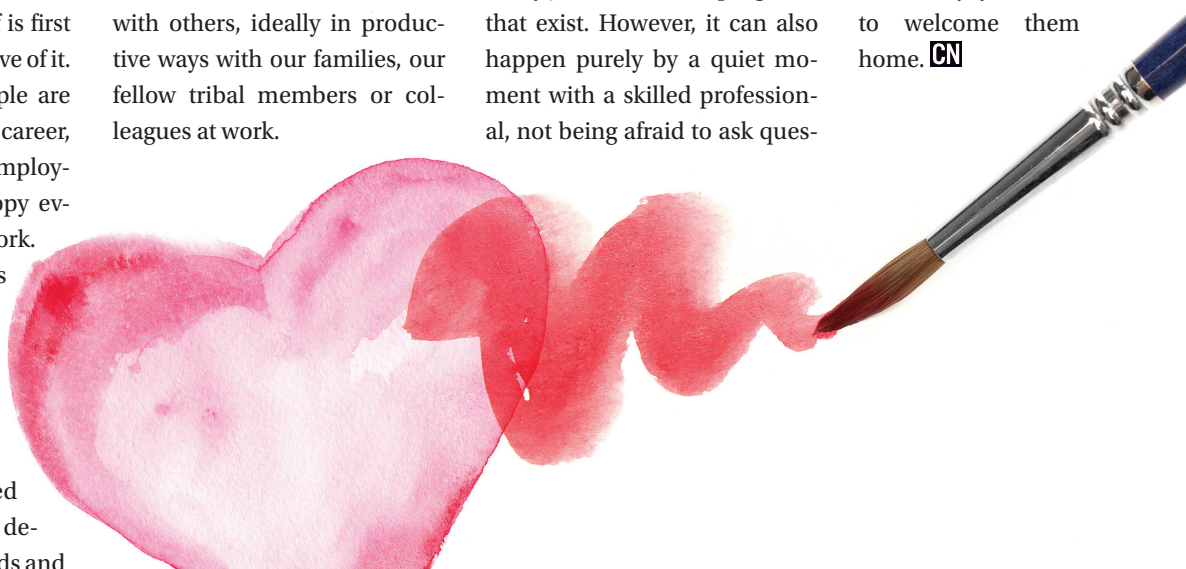
Once a person appreciates the value of exploring, the second step becomes easier. That step is to “Find Thyself a Teacher.” That advice from the ancient book of wisdom called the Talmud means to get help from someone you respect to be a mentor and role model. Perhaps that person is a parent, perhaps a teacher at school or a colleague at work — someone who inspires you to learn more and makes suggestions about how to enter a profession or pursue a hobby. “I think I would like to study medicine, doctor. How can I spend some time with you to learn what it's really like? How did you decide that medicine was right for you?”

Being a volunteer or being an intern can be done through many of the formal programs that exist. However, it can also happen purely by a quiet moment with a skilled professional, not being afraid to ask ques-

tions as you explore and search. The answers may lead you to a new career, a new place to work, or strategies to affect the behavior of your arrogant, annoying boss, “Mr. Godzilla.” One place your efforts will likely take you is the wonderful situation in which you say when you wake up early for an annoying commute, “I get to go to work today” and not “I have to go to work today.”

Loneliness can be a wonderful thing in the sense of spending time contemplating the direction in which you can steer your life, enjoying the passion of a hobby and enjoying the use of your imagination to create a positive outlook. Those are great advantages for work and for the rest of life. They are made possible by respecting yourself and enjoying the mindfulness that comes from moving away, even briefly, from many of the distractions and intrusions which pollute our lives.

Once that time ended for me one day last week, it was time to drive carefully to the airport to meet my beautiful wife and to share the joy of her experiences. In my case, my trip to pick up Charlotte included bringing our dogs with me. They too wanted to see firsthand (make that “first paw”) that she was back with them. You don't have to be a two-legged creature to miss somebody you love and to welcome them home. **CN**



New FTA rule focuses on safety first

From FTA page 1

notes a top-down structure and encourages a proactive maintenance work schedule that prioritizes safety issues over any other system expenditures. SMS builds on existing transit safety practices by using data to proactively identify, avoid and mitigate risks to safety.

NACo maintains its support for full funding of the Urbanized Area Formula and will continue to monitor FTA's further regulatory actions pertaining to federal transportation authorizations. NACo will continue to urge the administration to formulate regulations that will allow for maximum flexibility as counties are tasked with complying with new federal standards. **CN**

The FTA release can be found at <http://bit.ly/2b1GnET>.

County input sought on websites

From WEBSITE page 1

rulemaking on state and local government website accessibility and that counties have the time necessary to analyze the implications of the potential changes to the requirements for their websites,” Cox said.

NACo encourages counties to send comments to DOJ responding to the questions in the rulemaking notice before the Oct. 7 deadline. For added convenience, a sample comment letter can be accessed on NACo's website. **CN**

CORRECTIONS

Scott County, Minn. Administrator Gary Shelton was incorrectly identified in a photo caption on page 8 of the Aug. 8 issue of County News.