

Photo by Jethon Williams, Monroe County, Fla.



Monroe County, Fla. and the City of Key West join to celebrate Diana Nyad and her historic swim. She is congratulated here by Key West City Commissioner Tony Yaniz, as Monroe County Mayor Heather Carruthers (right) applauds the gesture. Also celebrating are Monroe County staffers (l-r): Cynthia Hall, Brian Bradley, Nat Cassel and Lisa Tennyson. Hitching a ride (in hat) is Kristy Callaway, Monroe County and Key West native.

Nyad, 64, completed a grueling 53-hour, 103-mile swim from Cuba to Florida, Sept. 2. She became the first person to complete the swim without shark protection. It was her fifth try.

Will counties follow Detroit's path to municipal bankruptcy?

By EMILIA ISTRATE
DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH

Two months ago Detroit filed for bankruptcy, turning its \$18 billion debt into the largest municipal bankruptcy filing ever. The financial markets followed with significant sell-offs of municipal bonds, making debt more expensive for other cities, counties or towns. Some local governments, such as Saginaw County, Mich. postponed their bond sales this summer because of this situation, according to news reports.

The main question on ev-

erybody's mind: Is Detroit the beginning of a flood of municipal bankruptcies? Are more counties, cities and towns going to follow in Detroit's footsteps?

Let's get the facts straight:

Most counties, cities and towns cannot go into bankruptcy

While the federal government allows municipalities to file for bankruptcy under Chapter 9 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code, 26 states

See **BANKRUPTCY** page 2

Flood insurance policy changes could increase premiums dramatically

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER



Parishes in Louisiana are starting to press their congressional delegations to amend recent changes to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) upon which their residents rely.

The changes were enacted to help bring the federally managed insurance program out of debt. FEMA, which administers the

program, released new flood insurance actuarial data Sept. 4, giving the rest of the country an idea how their premiums will change.

Also on the table are new flood plain maps, which could dramatically alter insurance premiums for homeowners.

Louisiana was the first state to have new flood mapping completed after the reforms were passed, and consequently is serving as a test site when those reforms are enacted. New York and New Jersey are also being remapped, following 2012's Superstorm Sandy.

St. James Parish President Timmy Roussel said that up to 100 homes in his parish and 1,000-plus homes in nearby St. John the Baptist Parish could see drastic increases in their flood insurance premiums.

"Houses that were paying \$600 a year for their premium could end up owing \$20,000," he said. "We have some questions about new policies that if they aren't addressed could put people out of their homes."

The expected leap in insurance premiums can be laid at the

See **INSURANCE** page 8

NACo sets elections town hall meeting for Sept. 26



In the aftermath of one of the most contentious and highly competitive elections for NACo second vice president in several years, NACo President Linda Langston has formed an Election Review Committee, to be chaired by Lenny Eliason, former NACo president and commissioner, Athens County, Ohio.

The committee's first major undertaking will be to host a town hall webinar for all NACo members on how the association can improve the election process. The webinar is scheduled for Sept. 26 at 2 p.m. EDT. Final recommendations will be made to the NACo Board of Directors at their fall meeting.

Langston, who announced the committee's membership Aug. 19, said she formed the committee to review the elections process for those

See **ELECTIONS** page 8

CountyNews Features

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Harris County, Texas looks to score a major victory for its 'Dome' in November ▶ [Page 6](#)

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Ohio county mounts campaign to arm its residents against fallout from disasters ▶ [Page 3](#)

NACo officials, staff recall the impact of the 1963 March on Washington ▶ [Page 4](#)

MEMO FROM NACo's PRESIDENT

Participate and Prepare

By LINDA LANGSTON
NACo PRESIDENT



September is National Preparedness Month, and FEMA's Ready Campaign, in conjunction with the Ad Council, aims to educate and empower Americans to prepare for all types of emergencies now and throughout the year.



This comes at an important time for NACo, as we have launched my presidential initiative, Ready and Resilient Counties. In order to remain healthy, vibrant, safe and economically competitive, America's counties must be able to anticipate and adapt to all types of change. Through the Ready and Resilient Counties initiative, NACo is working with counties and their stakeholders to bolster their ability to thrive amid changing physical, social and economic conditions.

Preparedness is a nationwide effort, and no county official can do it alone. Below are a few steps we hope you and your county can take during National Preparedness Month 2013.

1. Join the National Preparedness Community, where more than 29,000 people connect and collaborate on emergency preparedness.
2. Find preparedness events in your community. Or better yet, create and promote your own event!
3. Join regional groups in your area to connect and build relationships.
4. Share and compare preparedness best practices.

For more information about National Preparedness Month, visit www.Ready.gov. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact FEMA's Intergovernmental Affairs Office at 202.646.3444 or at FEMA-IGA@fema.dhs.gov.

And be sure to save the date for an upcoming County Leaders Forum, Resilient Counties: Responding to Rapid Change, which will be held Dec. 5-6 in Linn County, Iowa, prior to the NACo Board of Directors meeting.

If you have questions about this event or the Ready and Resilient Counties initiative, please contact me, Linda Langston, linda.langston@linncounty.org or Kathy Nothstine, NACo program director, knothstine@naco.org or 202.661.8807

*Check out the online version of this story at www.countynews.org to find links to the resources mentioned in this column.

In Case You Missed It

News to use from past County News

» Toolkit now available to help with 'Obamacare' enrollment

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has released an Outreach and Enrollment Toolkit specifically designed for local leaders to help support the Marketplace Affordable Care Act enrollment process, which kicks off Oct. 1.

The kit, available for download at www.naco.org/ACAtoolkit, provides contact information, educational materials, webinar session schedules and community outreach strategies, among other items — all in support of a successful enrollment process for your county.

Bipartisan bills would limit local taxing authority



Sens. Ron Wyden (D – Ore.) and John Thune (R – S.D.) have proposed two bills that aim to limit the ability of local governments to collect taxes on Internet access and the sale of digital goods and services.

The first bill, the Internet Tax Freedom Act (S. 1431) would make the current seven-year ban (PL 110-108) on assessing state and local taxes on Internet access providers permanent. This bill is set to expire on Nov. 1, 2014.

The second bill is the Digital Goods and Services Tax Fairness Act of 2013 (S. 1364). It would eliminate discriminatory and multiple taxation of digital goods and services. Es-

entially, this bill would block taxes on digital goods whose tangible counterparts are not taxed.

For example, electronic music downloads would not be taxed if their tangible counterpart, the compact disc, was also not taxed. This bill would apply not only to music downloads but also to digital goods such as electronic newspaper and magazine subscriptions; if a home-delivery subscription is not subject to taxes, then neither would its electronic counterpart. The prohibition on local taxing authority would also extend to digital services like Netflix or cloud computing services.

The bill also seeks to eliminate multiple taxation of a single digital

good or service by limiting taxing authority to jurisdictions that encompass the customer's tax address.

In the House, Judiciary Committee Chairman Robert Goodlatte (R-Va.) has expressed concern about the breadth and complexity of the Internet sales tax mandate and has stated plans to release a list of principles dealing with the issue.

NACo will continue to monitor the progress of these bills.

For more information, contact Yejin Jang at yjang@naco.org or 202.942.4239.

*Links to the Internet Freedom Act and the Digital Goods and Services Tax Fairness Act of 2013 are available by reading this story online at www.countynews.org.

Municipal bankruptcies trail corporate insolvency filings by a wide margin

BANKRUPTCY from page 1

either do not allow or have no specific authorizations or unclear laws regarding bankruptcy for counties, cities and towns. This totals to more than 17,500 localities in 26 states, about 43 percent of all local jurisdictions.

Municipal bankruptcy is a very rare event

Out of 3,069 counties, only two counties — Orange County, Calif. and Jefferson County, Ala. — have ever declared bankruptcy. When we look at all the counties, cities and towns, 14 of them have filed for bankruptcy over the last five years, according to *Governing* magazine data. This is one in 1,525 eligible counties, cities and towns.

Five of the filings were dismissed, leaving only nine county-city-town bankruptcy filings over the last five years. In contrast, there were more than 300,000 commercial bankruptcy filings over the same time period, according to the American Bankruptcy Institute and Epiq Systems.

The overwhelming majority of counties, cities and other localities practice sound fiscal and debt management.

That's why bankruptcy is such a rare event and municipal bonds are one of the safest investments in the United States. For example, municipal bond issuers of Baa Moody's credit rating had 0.3 percent default rate over the last 42 years, lower than corporate issuers of AAA rating.

Counties, cities and towns are fiscally conservative for a number of reasons. The market taxes any missteps in fiscal stewardship at the local level.

Credit agencies will lower the credit ratings of an impendent muni bond issuer, consequently causing higher borrowing costs for a county's future debt. The county has to cover this additional debt service expense either by cutting other costs or raising revenue.

Often, counties cannot raise taxes without the approval of their constituents or state government, making the revenue option a hard path to choose. Counties are also constrained by state limitations on the amount of debt they can issue or prohibitions against bankruptcy.

Counties impose limits on themselves, as well, for issuing debt, to avoid bigger problems down the road. For example, Montgomery County, Md., in addition to other criteria, uses a spending-affordability approach, which stipulates that the annual bond interest payment (together with lease payments) should not be higher than 10 percent of the operating budget. In addition, the county pays upfront another 10 percent of the planned bond issuance as a type of down payment.

The threat to municipal debt and general obligation owners has been overblown. Because municipal bankruptcies are such a rare event, the media can overplay cases such as Detroit. But Detroit is the exception to the trend, not the trend.

One exception does not warrant a one-size-fits-all federal regulation of states and localities, nor interference with reform initiatives on the ground.

CountyNews

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(202) 393-6226 • FAX (202) 393-2630

Published biweekly except August by:

National Association of Counties

Research Foundation, Inc.

25 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.

STE. 500, Washington, D.C. 20001

(202) 393-6226 | FAX (202) 393-2630

E-mail | cnws@naco.org

Online address | www.countynews.org

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Mail subscriptions are \$100 per year for non-members. \$60 per year for non-members purchasing multiple copies. Educational institution rate, \$50 per year. Member county supplemental subscriptions are \$20 each. Send payment with order and address changes to NACo, 25 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to

County News, 25 Massachusetts Ave. N.W.,

Ste. 500, Washington, D.C. 20001

(USPS 704-620) ■ (ISSN: 0744-9798)

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NACo National Association of Counties

County helps families prepare to face disaster

By CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT



If you had five minutes to grab everything you and your family needed for survival, would you know what to take?

According to the American Red Cross, only 28 percent of households in the U.S. have a preparedness kit for their families in case disaster strikes. That's a statistic which Hamilton County, Ohio's emergency managers and commissioners along with the Cincinnati Red Cross are partnering up to improve.

During National Preparedness Month in September, the American Red Cross and Hamilton County are teaming up with local retailers to help prepare the tri-state area (Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana) for disasters with their Preparedness Month campaign "5 to Get Ready." The goal for the campaign is to help every family in the tri-state area to prepare their own disaster kit.

Courtesy of Hamilton County's Emergency Management YouTube channel, residents will be able to

watch weekly videos that show how easy it is to build a family preparedness kit using items they have in their home or cost less than \$5 at local stores.

For example, week one has families getting non-perishable food to put in the kit. This includes one gallon of water per person, per day (3-day supply); easy-to-prepare, non-perishable food such as canned fruit, canned soup, meat, tuna, energy bars and peanut butter.

"Community preparedness is a partnership between individual citizens and local government," Hamilton County Commissioner Todd Portune said. "Having a preparedness kit and an evacuation plan for your home is a simple way to ensure that you and your family have vital items available in case of a disaster."

The 5 to Get Ready campaign kicked-off Aug. 24 with a Disaster Preparedness Fair. This free, family-oriented event taught more than 200 attendees how to assemble their disaster kits by gathering the necessary items and provided families

See **PREPAREDNESS** page 4



The Hamilton County, Ohio Emergency Management team talks about preparedness kits with attendees at a Disaster Fair.

Photo Courtesy of Terry Simendinger

Future Voter?



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civic education in our schools

CivicMissionOfSchools.org



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With the generous support of the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation

50 years later, March on Washington still resonates

By BEVERLY SCHLOTTERBECK
EXECUTIVE EDITOR



C. Vernon Gray, past NACo president and Howard County, Md. council member, was a young graduate student in the summer of 1963, well familiar with sit-ins and marches as an undergraduate student at Morgan State.

He was among the hundreds of thousands who attended the historic March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Aug. 28. As the nation celebrated the 50th anniversary of the march last month, he and other NACo officials and staff recalled the impact the event had on their lives then and in the future.

Gray attended Dr. King's march as a personal statement. "I was committed to civil rights and wanted to be involved. I wanted to be there." He had met Dr. King while in graduate school in Atlanta. It was also in



C. Vernon Gray
Past NACo President

Atlanta that he experienced his first taste of Deep South segregation.

He had left de-segregated Union Station in Washington, D.C. for a train trip to Atlanta. "When I got there, I started to walk across the waiting area to go outside and catch a cab. I heard people calling and gesturing at me. There was a small waiting room for black passengers that I was supposed to use. I wasn't supposed to

be in the white area of the station," Gray related. And as an afterthought, he added, "I had to catch a black taxi cab too. I couldn't ride with a white driver."

The day of the march, he and his wife drove to Washington from Detroit, Mich. and parked in the northwest section of the city. It was a clear sunny day, Gray said, a festive day, a day when "we could be involved in something bigger than ourselves."

Yet there were other expectations in the air. "We walked down 14th Street to the Lincoln Memorial. We were astounded by the number of National Guard soldiers surrounding the area. The town was practically deserted."

Gray and his wife had an upfront view at the Lincoln Memorial. "It was a great event for a significant, majestic cause — to make real, the promise of democracy."

Twenty years after the march the promise of democracy became real. He became the first African-American elected to the Howard County, Md. council and served five terms in office. Today, as Howard County Office of Human Rights administrator, he enforces the same rights and helps others seek the same opportunities he marched for in 1963.



Deborah Stoutamire
NACo HR Director

Deborah Stoutamire, a Washington, D.C. native and current NACo HR director, was 9 years old when she accompanied her mother and grandmother to the march on Washington. "I saw people embracing, laughing and standing side-by-side, and I remember people were listening intensely."

"It was very exciting. I never saw my mother and grandmother so happy," Stoutamire recalled.

Although she admitted she didn't really pay a lot of attention to the speeches, she knew the event represented something special for African Americans. "There was a sense in the air that everything was going to get better."

She was lucky to have attended the march. Not so, another D.C. native, Fulton County, Ga. Commissioner Joan P. Garner. "We were told as Washingtonians not to come to the mall because it wasn't safe and there was no guarantee of our safety," Garner said.

In a video commemorating the 50th anniversary of the march posted on the Fulton County website, she told how she tried to coerce her cousin into sneaking off to the mall. "There was so much excitement in the air. I wanted to be a part of that." Garner never did make it to the mall and Lincoln Memorial, but she did hear Dr. King's now-famous speech.

"I was shaken. I knew there was something I could do for my country. So, I wanted to actually marry a politician so I could help them create policies." But instead, in a twist of fate, she became the elected official she had dreamed of marrying.

"As a result, I have spent most of my life and career working on social justice issues."

** To access Commissioner Garner's and other Fulton County Board members' video tribute to the 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington, see this story online at www.countynews.org.*

Profiles in Service



» Arthur Wallenstein

NACo Board of Directors

Director, Department of Correction and Rehabilitation
Montgomery County, Md.

Number of years active in NACo: 36

Years in public service: 42

Occupation: adult correctional administrator

Education: B.S. — Georgetown University; M.A. — University of Pennsylvania

The hardest thing I've ever done: worked as an assistant warden at Stateville Penitentiary in the 1970s

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Socrates, Martin Luther King and Gandhi

A dream I have is to: see prisons, jails, probation offices and youth detention facilities closing due to the absence of new admissions.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: attended Nelson Mandela's speech before the Joint Session of Congress after his release from Robben Island.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: refugee resettlement work on the Thai-Cambodian border after the Khmer Rouge genocide.

My favorite way to relax is: hiking and flat water kayaking.

I'm most proud of: my colleagues in the field of corrections.

Every morning I read: *The Washington Post* — never miss it.

My favorite meal is: hardcore Jewish deli favorites.

My pet peeve is: meetings that do not start and end on time.

My motto is: "12 Hours is Only Half a Day."

The last book I read was: *Atonement* by Ian McEwan.

My favorite movie is: *The Reader*.

My favorite music is: Bach, James Taylor and Carol King.

My favorite president is: John F. Kennedy.

Kits help families prepare for disaster

PREPAREDNESS *from page 3*

with tips on how to be prepared for a disaster. More than 30 agencies in the tri-state community were present and exhibited how they respond during and after a disaster, such as flooding or tornadoes, and also showed families how they can prepare and be safe during disasters.

Some area retailers are helping to make it easier for families to gather these items by offering sales or coupons to keep items affordable. This includes flashlights and other usually higher-priced items, like batteries.

"Working with the Red Cross and local retailers, counties can partner up to ensure residents have these kits," Commissioner Portune's Chief of Staff Kathy Binns said. "The more families are prepared, the better result when disaster strikes."

For more information about the Disaster Fair, or the 5 to Get Ready campaign, visit Redcross.org/cincinnati.

**To follow the weekly tips that Hamilton County Emergency Management has posted on YouTube, see this story online at www.countynews.org.*

Preparedness Kit Guide

A complete Preparedness Kit should include:

- **Water** — at least 1 gallon daily per person for 3 to 7 days
- **Food** — at least enough for 3 to 7 days
 - » non-perishable packaged or canned food, juices
 - » foods for infants or the elderly
 - » snack foods
 - » non-electric can opener
 - » cooking tools, fuel
 - » paper plates, plastic utensils
- **Blankets, Pillows, etc.**
- **Clothing** — seasonal, rain gear, sturdy shoes
- **First Aid Kit, Medicines, Prescription Drugs**
- **Special Items** — for babies and the elderly
- **Toiletries, Hygiene items, Moisture wipes**
- **Flashlight, Batteries, Radio** — Battery operated and NOAA weather radio
 - **Cash** — Banks and ATMs may not be open or available for extended periods.
 - **Keys, Toys, Books and Games**
 - **Important documents** — in a waterproof container
 - insurance, medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security card, etc.
 - **Tools** — keep a set with you during the storm
 - **Vehicle fuel tanks filled**
 - **Pet care items**
 - » proper identification, immunization records, medications
 - » ample supply of food and water
 - » a carrier or cage
 - » muzzle and leash

Source: Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency



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Harris County voters to weigh in on Astrodome

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

If you ask a Texan to name the Eighth Wonder of the World, don't be surprised to learn it's not the Empire State Building, the Panama Canal or the Sydney Opera House in Australia — all three laid claim to that moniker during the 20th century.

To Texans, the title belongs to the county-owned Harris County Domed Stadium, more popularly known as the Astrodome. And "wonder" or not, it was, when built, the largest covered stadium in the world.

But it's fallen on hard times since its heyday. It's been more than a decade since a professional sports team called it home — the last big game played there was staged for the 2004 movie *Friday Night Lights* — and it has been declared uninhabitable,

SpeedRead » » »

- » County approved \$217-million bond ballot question to transform Astrodome
- » Voters will decide Nov. 5
- » Shell and dome would be retained, improved for major exhibition and event space

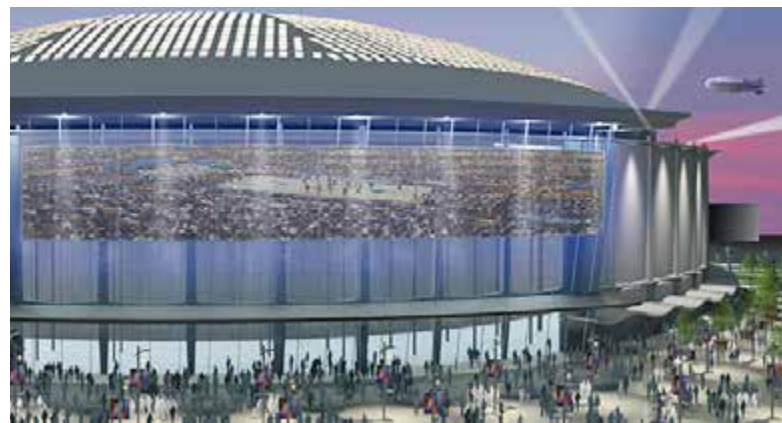
while costing the county more than \$2 million a year in upkeep.

On Nov. 5, county voters will decide whether the future of the iconic structure, that they, as taxpayers own, is to be a resurrection. The Harris County Commissioners Court recently voted, unanimously, to place a \$217 million bond question on the ballot. If it passes, the Astrodome

would be transformed into what's being called The New Dome Experience, a multipurpose covered, climate-controlled venue that could be used to host everything from trade shows to Super Bowl revelers when the big game comes to adjacent Reliant Stadium in 2017. The bond issue would add a half-cent per \$100 of assessed valuation to residents' tax bills.

Renovations to the former home of the Astros and Oilers would begin immediately and take about 30 months, according to County Judge Ed Emmett.

"For that \$217 million, we will completely gut the stadium, take everything out," he said. The exterior shell of "the Dome," as locals call it, would be refurbished with new ceiling glass and "fancier, bigger glass windows and doors, so you're not just



Artist rendering of the proposed New Dome Experience.

behind metal walls," Emmett added. "At that point what we have is unique space, and that space can be used for any number of things. So we're referring it as really a special events venue."

The plan, devised by the Harris County Sports and Convention Corp. (HSCC), wouldn't be another convention center — the Houston area already has two — but rather it could be used for events like an annual Offshore Technology Conference, which brings in huge exhibits related to the oil and gas industry, or the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, the nation's largest.

Kevin Hoffman is deputy executive director of HSCC, the county agency that oversees the development, maintenance and operation of Reliant Park. "Whenever you have 350,000 square feet of unobstructed air-conditioned space that you can utilize, you want to take advantage of it," he said. "It certainly is going to improve our overall competitiveness and marketability of Reliant Park, and create new event opportunities."

One event Emmett can envision is hosting a major international cricket match — not the chirping variety. "We have a huge Indian and Pakistani population here, so my dream would be to get an India-Pakistan test match going for cricket," he said. The dome could also be used for high school graduations, sporting events and playoffs.

County Commissioner El Franco Lee, who represents the district that includes the Astrodome, said, "We would be derelict if we didn't look for creative ways to project it into the future, if at all possible. The challenge is to tell the Dome's story, and its potential, so people can make up their own minds to give informed choices on Election Day."

Robert Eckels, a former Harris County judge, said there appears to be a lot of support for the idea, which among other things, would preserve the domed structure for uses that future private developers might propose and fund. "So far we haven't found any strong, organized

opposition," he said, "but I expect there will be a share of people who say why spend tax money for exposition space?"

Early public sentiment, as expressed on a local newspaper website's comments section, ranges from "Whatever it takes: Save the Dome!" as one person wrote, to "Is this a joke? Blow it up, already"

While other iconic sports palaces like Seattle's King Dome and New York's Yankee Stadium have bitten the dust, Emmett said the Astrodome is different. "Yankee Stadium was just a stadium. The Astrodome was more than that. Muhammad Ali fought there; Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs played tennis there ... We had a bullfight here, we had a Billy Graham Crusade, and one and on and on," he said. Elvis Presley performed there several times in the early 1970s; the 1992 Republican National Convention was held at the Dome. More recently, thousands of evacuees from Hurricane Katrina-ravaged Louisiana were housed there.

As landmarks go, the Dome is often spoken of by locals — without a hint of grandiosity — in the same breath as another city's greatest icon. "Paris has the Eiffel Tower," Hoffman said. "It's one of the things really makes the city stand out as the Astrodome has done historically for Harris County, and we want to continue with that legacy."

County leaders have about two months to plead their case to the voters. "I think it's our job in the county to explain why we want to keep it, and to me it is asset utilization," Emmett said.

"The taxpayers of Harris County own a very unique asset called the Astrodome. And yes, it costs money, and I've been badgered by some in the media who say well, show us the business model," he added.

"Well you don't have a business model for a park. There are a lot of things that government does that provides an asset or a service to the taxpayers that doesn't necessarily pay for itself."

Publication, webinars highlight Cybersecurity Awareness Month

By CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT



NACo will launch this year's National Cybersecurity Awareness Month with the release of a new publication, *Cyber for the Counties Guidebook*. It is a practical guide to protecting a county's information by preventing, detecting and responding to cyber-attacks. It outlines the basic components of cybersecurity strategy, is tailored to the specific needs of county governments and offers a number of resources to assist counties at every stage of development. The guidebook will be available for order Oct. 1, and county officials and staff can request electronic or hard copies at www.cyberguidebook.com.

In 2011, NACo launched the Cyber for Counties initiative to promote cybersecurity awareness and educate county government officials and IT professionals on how to prepare for potential cybersecurity attacks.

Under the direction of Immediate Past President Chris Rodgers, this initiative has grown to include collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security, AT&T and the Center for Internet Security, among others.

This year NACo, along with its Cybersecurity Task Force, has the following planned throughout the month of October.



10TH ANNIVERSARY

National Cyber Security Awareness Month

Webinars

Many counties are responsible for critical infrastructure that is directly tied to cyber networks. It is imperative that county officials and staff are armed with the necessary resources, knowledge and partnerships necessary to combat the threats.

NACo has teamed up with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), National Cybersecurity Alliance and the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) to present five webinars devoted to the subject of cybersecurity every Wednesday at 2 p.m.

Topics include:

- Oct. 2 — Stop. Think. Connect. The Stop. Think. Connect. Campaign and progress in cybersecurity over the last 10 years and a look forward to the next 10.

• Oct. 9 — Critical Infrastructure: National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Framework

Bringing awareness of how cybersecurity relates to keeping traffic lights, running water and other critical infrastructure secure.

- Oct. 16 — Education: K-12,

careers, workforce, etc.

Why having a digitally literate American public and a highly qualified cyber workforce are necessary.

- Oct. 23 — Cybercrime: Combatting cybercrime with a multi-defense approach.

- Oct. 30 — Being Mobile: Online Safety and Security

How to protect your information on the go.

County officials and staff may register at <http://www.naco.org/research/Education/Pages/Webinars.aspx>.

County Solutions and Innovation Blog

The County Solutions and Innovation blog will include entries on cybersecurity throughout the month. The blog can be found at <http://www.naco.org/programs/CSI/default.aspx>.

*For additional resources, information and programming on Cybersecurity Awareness Month, including social media status update tip sheets, visit NACo's Cybersecurity Task Force page at <http://www.naco.org/about/leadership/Pages/NACoCybersecurityTaskForce.aspx>.

County's registry of precious metals looks to expand

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

SpeedRead » » »

- » Pennsylvania state law requires pawn shop owners to file paperwork with local authorities
- » Luzerne County's District Attorney's Office started digitizing records

Pawn shops might serve as a less-formal savings and loan for some people, but they don't offer online banking. At least for consumers.

The situation differs though for law enforcement personnel. Luzerne County, Pa. has created a digital registry of items sold to pawn shops and is trying to interest the entire commonwealth in its endeavor, in hopes of tracking down stolen property and lightening detectives' workloads.

Pawn shops are regulated at the state level, and Pennsylvania's precious metals law requires all items brought in to be pawned to be recorded onto a form that includes a description of the item, distinguishing marks and information about the seller, including a driver's license number.

"For the most part, those forms were winding up in filing cabinets and never coming back out," said Chaz Balogh, a detective with the Luzerne County, Pa. District Attorney's Office. "And those cabinets are only as good as people's motivation and time they have to look through

them. The very system was limiting."

If a local police department had a report of stolen property, they could come to the district attorney's office and look for themselves. Seeking an easier way, once all the preparation work was done, Balogh created an online database to store the information contained on those pawn slips.

For more than five years, he's entered items into the database with help from a retired state police officer and brought it to the point where law enforcement agencies can access it, and pawn shop owners can submit information. It's getting attention and participation from both—Carbon, Monroe and Lackawanna counties have all signed on to participate, and more than 200 pawn shops have registered. Some counties in the western part of

the state have shown interest, too, Balogh said.

The counties that join the effort must change their individual precious metals laws to require vendors to use the database.

Prior to joining Luzerne, Lackawanna County worked on developing its own digital registry, because the quantity of paperwork from pawn shops was building up.

"We had boxes and boxes of that stuff," said Joseph Jordan, chief detective with the Lackawanna County District Attorney's Office. "We had to keep everything for two years and it was unwieldy. It also put extra work in our laps. This is saving tons of paper, too."

It costs vendors \$39 annually to register with the database, which, given postage costs that add up, can end up as savings.

JB Jewelers in Scranton, Lackawanna County, is a participant. Owner Joby Baldassari is a fan of the digitized system and thinks it will catch on.

"Whenever something runs smoothly like this is, it's a good sign," he said. "It's productive for the business as a whole and for the community."

Jordan said since joining the database, Luzerne County had recovered a few stolen pieces of jewelry and used the information to track down the seller and in a few cases, arrest them.

"It's working for us," he said.

Balogh said more so than the monetary value of stolen goods the system helps law enforcement recover, he thinks it will help turn up objects of sentimental value, though Luzerne County saw two significant cases cracked with the help of the database in August.

"My ultimate goal for it is to have all 67 counties in the database, entering items and searching it," he said. "Criminals don't stay in one county, so spreading this database could be very helpful in returning lost property."

There is a national-scale database for stolen property, LeedsOnline, but it is a private business. The Luzerne County

database is processing more than 1,000 transactions a week, freeing Balogh up to do more than enter data.

"It alleviates that workload from my shoulders and puts it on the vendors without adding to their responsibilities," he said. "They're doing the same amount of work, I just don't have to do the extra step of adding the information to the system."

Carbon County Sheriff David Nothstein worries that even with the digital system in place, there is not enough time for a burglary victim to realize that a valuable item has been missing and report it to the authorities before it's passed the mandatory waiting period for selling a pawned item.

"Usually people don't miss things for a few days, and by that time, it's gone," he said. "What we need is a longer waiting period to give people a chance."

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Counties studying impact of federal flood insurance reforms

INSURANCE from page 1

feet of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act, which reauthorized NFIP in 2012, after 17 post-Hurricane Katrina extensions. Reauthorization seemed like good news to flood-prone counties until three details came to light that would drive up insurance costs, according to Michael Hecht, CEO of Greater New Orleans Inc., a regional economic development alliance that is home to the Coalition for Sustainable Flood Insurance.

Under the current plans to implement flood insurance reform:

- grandfathering will be phased out — houses that had previously been built to code are now in violation, according to new flood maps
- mapping will only recognize remediation work performed by the Army Corps of Engineers — unaccredited levees and pumps not placed by the Corps might as well not exist. “It’s not reflective of true risk,” Hecht said; and
- actuarial information will be used that create dramatic and sometimes prohibitive changes in premium cost — some as high as 3,000 percent.



Photo courtesy of St. James Parish

Aerial shots of St. James Parish, La. show the flooding that resulted from Hurricane Isaac in 2012.

“This is a case of unintended consequences,” Hecht said. “It’s a confluence of the Biggert-Waters reforms, inaccurate maps and questionable calculations.”

It’s no surprise to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, which found that “the extent to which the changes included in the act will reduce the financial exposure created by the program is not yet clear.”

The FEMA-run NFIP filled the

void when most private insurers dropped their flood insurance policies after Hurricane Betsy struck in 1965. Now, Hecht said, NFIP covers 98 percent of flood insurance policies nationwide.

Mounting debt over the last eight years, totaling more than \$20 billion, prompted Congress to demand NFIP reform to help stabilize the program’s finances.

The issues with NFIP are not

confined to coastal counties. Harris County, Texas recently ordered a study to see how these changes would affect its residents. The county Commissioners Court recently passed a resolution asking FEMA to delay implementation of the reforms until their effects could be studied and the Biggert-Waters Act can be amended.

“This isn’t a beachfront town,” said David Walden, chief of staff for Commissioner Jack Morman. Houston is the county seat. “This is an entire city that is affected and most of it is away from the coast, where we can have some kind of control over flood mitigation. It doesn’t make a lot of sense.”

NFIP policies are active in every state, so eventually all counties, parishes and boroughs will be remapped and residents will see how they will be impacted.

“People are really getting whacked,” Walden said. “It’s good intent gone awry. Everyone knows there needs to be changes to make it viable, but this is way too much too fast.”

* To find out more about the Coalition for Sustainable Flood Insurance, see this story online, www.countynews.org

NACo looks to improve election process

ELECTIONS from page 1

things that could be improved and updated. “As with any innovative and progressive organization you must review all your processes and seek to improve them,” she said.

In addition to Eliason, committee members include Commissioner Cindy Bobbitt, Grant County, Okla.; Commissioner Joan Garner, Fulton County, Ga.; Doug Hill, executive director, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania; Presiding Commissioner Ron Houseman, Taney County, Mo.; Todd McGee, public relations director, North Carolina Association of County Commissioners; and Chairman Manny Ruiz, Santa Cruz County, N.M.

* To register for the Town Hall Meeting to Discuss the NACo Election Process, see this story online at www.countynews.org.

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County Innovations and Solutions

San Diego County, Calif.

Treasurer-Tax Collector-led Seminars Trickle Down Knowledge about Fraud

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

With a basic goal of “not losing money,” Dan McAllister, San Diego County treasurer-tax collector, began an annual fraud prevention seminar in 2008 to help teach the 110 public agencies for which he manages money how to recognize and prevent fraud.

SpeedRead » » »

Dan McAllister shares a few tips for ferreting out internal fraud:

- » “If someone tells you they’ve been gambling every weekend, and they always come back a winner, there’s a good chance there’s more than meets the eye.”
- » “Take note if an employee is living beyond her or his means.”

“You would read about financial crimes, and fraud was just happening way too much,” McAllister said. “If we could get basic information to our smaller agencies about how to fight

this, we’ve helped them out.”

By offering the seminar, McAllister hoped to disseminate knowledge and awareness about fraudulent activities in one place so the attendees can take it back to their smaller agencies, which might not have the resources to do the same. Of the 110 agencies McAllister’s office works with, 42 are school districts, which can be the target not of monetary theft, but cyber fraud, changing grades in the computer systems.

“A lot of our attendees are working hard trying to keep things working smoothly in their offices, and they could be missing little signs of something going wrong,” McAllister said. “If our speakers can give them some outside perspective, they might get them looking at their jobs from a different angle and help them find something amiss.”

The seminar is typically held in July, after the beginning of the new fiscal year for most agencies, in a central part of San Diego County. Typical guest speakers include representatives from the U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Attorney’s Office, county district attorney’s office and general counsels of corporations.



Photo courtesy of the San Diego County Treasurer-Tax Collector’s office

Dana Basney of the accounting firm of Mayer Hoffman McCann speaks to attendees at San Diego County’s Fraud Prevention Seminar July 11, 2013.

“We end up recruiting a lot of speakers from farther away, the Bay Area, the Central Valley,” McAllister said. “When you have people coming in to talk about failures they’ve seen, it’s a little better not to embarrass anyone locally.”

This year’s seminar drew roughly 150 people, par for the course. Most are government professionals who have financial management respon-

sibility for their agencies.

Through all of the presenters, McAllister said, there’s a theme.

“Everything seems obvious when you look back, if you reverse-engineer it,” he said. “The key is,

picking up on those signals that something is wrong and stopping it before it gets out of hand. Our best presentations come when people start asking questions, because then you get insight into their thought process and the other people in the room can have a look at the problems with a fresh set of eyes.”

The seminar attracts certified public accountants because it awards continuing education credits to attendees.

The entire event costs roughly \$7,000, but most costs are covered by sponsors, with just a \$25 charge per attendee.

McAllister has seen a lot of repeat attendees and said in addition to the seminars’ relevance to their jobs, he sees people interested in the subject matter — because just as television shows about crime have such high ratings, “people like to hear about criminal activity.”

County Innovations and Solutions highlights award-winning programs.

The H.R. Doctor Is In

American Culture Doused in Violent Accelerants

It is highly likely that America’s thousands of arson investigators read the HR Doctor articles... well, perhaps two or three. These fine professionals have the very tough job of identifying any forensic clues at the scenes of horrible fires to determine whether the fires were set deliberately.

One of their principal points of search is to try to find traces of a marker called an “accelerant” — a substance that increases the spread of a fire. It may involve pouring out a can of gasoline before lighting the fire or using some sort of incendiary or explosive device. Accelerants themselves may not have caused the fire but they increase the likelihood of devastating results.

So it is also with human behavior. The subject may be a one-time incidence of bullying or threatening behavior at work, in the schoolyard, or at home in a domestic violence case, or ongoing poor behavior that has a parent, teacher, coworker or police officer concerned. In any of these scenarios, it is the HR Doctor’s contention that the presence of too many accelerant factors in our culture sets the stage for things to perhaps get much worse.

At almost every speaking opportunity, the HR Doctor bemoans the fact that the average American watches television close to 5 hours a day. *The Economist* magazine recently put it a different way — about two months of our annual life is

spent watching TV. The ease with which violent shouting, pushing and shoving is portrayed on television, in films and video games, reinforces these uncivil behaviors as cultural norms. The widespread availability of guns, alcohol or drugs themselves may not cause violence or death, but their availability certainly increases the opportunities for the behaviorally impaired among us to seize the readily available accelerant to reinforce their poor conduct.

Doesn’t it make sense that in a society where forms of entertainment flood the brains of all of us and shape our interpersonal relationships, that we should recognize

See H.R. DOC page 12

What’s in a Seal?

» Orange County, N.C.
<http://co.orange.nc.us>



Orange County (pop. 135,755) was formed in 1752 from parts of Bladen, Granville and Johnston counties. It was named for the infant William V of Orange, whose mother Anne, daughter of King George II of Great Britain, was then regent of the Dutch Republic.

The first courthouse was established in 1754 near the Eno River. Childsburg was established in 1759 and was changed to Hillsborough in 1766, which has been the county seat ever since.

The three major towns in the county are Carrboro, Chapel Hill and Hillsborough. In the latter half of the 18th century, Hillsborough became an important town in the political life of North Carolina and, for a short time, was the meeting place of the General Assembly. The University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill was established in 1789 and is among the oldest universities in the United States.

The seal shows a crest combining King George II’s Prince of Hanover crest with his royal crest. The year the county was formed is seen in the middle.

(If you would like your county’s seal featured, please contact Christopher Johnson at 202.942.4256 or cjohnson@naco.org.)



News From the Nation's Counties

► ARIZONA

The U.S. Marshal's Office's decision to terminate its bed rental program with the **YAVAPAI COUNTY** Sheriff's Office could be costly for the county. The program allowed the Marshal's Office to house non-violent, minor crime classification offenders at the jail. The types of crimes the inmates committed could vary, including illegal immigrant violations.

The amount of money charged to the marshal for housing services was based on the number of "heads in beds." The county relies on the revenue source to help operate and maintain the Prescott jail, Sheriff Scott Mascher told the *Daily Courier*. Since 2008, the program has brought between \$2 million and \$3 million dollars of revenue into the county each year.

► CALIFORNIA

Animal shelters in **LOS ANGELES COUNTY** are **euthanizing fewer dogs** thanks to a variety of innovative practices, including what some might label "an Underground Railroad for canines."

The county's Department of Animal Care and Control (DACC) is required to take in any animal surrendered by the public, of which it receives more than 90,000 a year; about 42,000 of which are dogs. Over the last 13 years, DACC has reduced its euthanasia rate to 37.3 percent, down from almost 70 percent in 2001.

Small dogs run rampant in L.A. County, and a majority of the dogs received are either Chihuahuas, terriers or some mix thereof. According to PublicCEO.com, other states have high demand for small dogs but low accessibility, specifically New York, where a lot of people live in apartments and want little dogs to complement their lifestyle choices.

A local nonprofit partners with DACC to transport dogs up to 25 pounds by plane or van. The Best Friend Animal Society funds the transports and helps the county with placement. In total, the partnership has exported more than 7,800 dogs since the program began in 2008.

► COLORADO

ELBERT COUNTY joined the growing list of counties that will have a "**51st state**" measure on the ballot in November, the *Denver Post* reported.

County commissioners approved asking voters whether they want Elbert County to pursue the movement among rural counties to secede and form North Colorado. The

movement started when **WELD COUNTY** aired concerns regarding inadequate representation it was getting from the state Legislature.

So far, voters in **CHEYENNE, KIT CARSON, LOGAN, WASHINGTON, YUMA** and **MOFATT counties** will have measures to break away from Colorado on the ballot in November.

► FLORIDA

• **BROWARD COUNTY's** sewage disposal problem becomes **PALM BEACH COUNTY's irrigation opportunity** under a \$100 million wastewater pumping proposal that won a key endorsement.

The Palm Beach County Commission voted to pursue negotiating a deal for building pipelines from Broward and pumping the treated wastewater to aid Palm Beach development. The goal is to craft a final agreement before the end of the year.

A state mandate requires Broward to stop dumping treated sewage out to sea, where it threatens the health of coral reefs and other marine habitat. As an alternative to the dumping, Broward proposes pumping as much as 18 million gallons per day of treated wastewater north into Palm Beach County, where it could be used to water lawns, parks, medians and golf courses, according to the *Sun Sentinel*.

• **Text messages** that **ORANGE COUNTY** elected officials deleted from their personal cell phones are **public records**, according to a state attorney who investigated the matter.

Three current commissioners, the mayor and a former commissioner will all have to pay \$500 civil fines for deleting text messages about a paid-sick-time debate that clearly were public record, State Attorney Jeff Ashton said.

Ashton said criminal charges were not warranted because "there's no evidence that they deleted these knowing that they were public records," the *Orlando Sentinel* reported. The text messages were sent among officials during a 2012 hearing on a sick-time ballot measure.

► KANSAS

DOUGLAS COUNTY commissioners have approved a **sand pit mining operation**. A concrete company will move one of its current dredging operations onto the south bank of the Kansas River. State and federal authorities still need to approve the operation.



Photo courtesy of Dane County, Wis.

County Executive Joe Parisi (r) fills up one of Dane County, Wis.' natural gas fleet vehicles with BioCNG generated by a new, larger filling station at the county landfill. Also pictured (l-r) are: John Welch, Dane County solid waste director; Maria Redmond, Wisconsin State Energy Office; and Dane County Supervisor Kyle Richmond.

► WISCONSIN

A new compressed natural gas fueling station opened recently at the **DANE COUNTY** landfill, more than **doubling the amount of biogas** that can be pumped from the trash-to-gas facility.

The compressed natural gas (CNG) station is part of County Executive Joe Parisi's "CNG by 2023" effort to expand the county's use of the cheaper, cleaner, homegrown fuel over the next decade.

BioCNG generated at the landfill costs the county the gasoline equivalent of \$1.25 a gallon to fill up its fleet. The station cost approximately \$500,000 and was funded in part by a State of Wisconsin Office of Energy grant of \$150,000. The county is converting some of its gasoline-powered fleet to run on CNG and purchasing OEM vehicles that use CNG.

The county's switch to CNG has offset the use of approximately 25,000 gallons of diesel and gasoline, saving county taxpayers roughly \$50,000 annually. The station operates in conjunction with an existing system the county created to convert landfill gas into electricity, the sale of which earns taxpayers more than \$4.3 million annually.

The *Lawrence Journal World* reports company officials insist the sand pit will not endanger public health and safety.

► MISSOURI

JACKSON COUNTY voters will decide Nov. 5 whether to approve a **half-cent sales tax** funding medical research at two area hospitals and the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

If approved, the tax would be collected for 20 years, raising roughly \$40 million annually in current dollars to fund a new Jackson County Institute for Translational Medicine, a medical practice based on interventional epidemiology.

Supporters of the tax say the idea is to build on the medical research capabilities of the three main beneficiaries. Each would hire

top scientists and furnish them with laboratories, equipment and support staff. The goal is to develop cures, treatments and procedures that would improve health care and spur business development.

► NEW JERSEY

Providing musical performances for hospice residents, presenting poetry workshops for immigrant women, and researching African American burial grounds — these are just a few of the activities that will benefit from **UNION COUNTY's** latest round of HEART (History, Education, Arts Reaching Thousands) grants.

The Union County Board of Freeholders recently announced **awards totaling \$75,000** to 49 artists, historians and local nonprofits to support projects related to history,

the arts and humanities. Grants range from \$750 to \$2,500.

"The services provided by these artists, scholars and organizations directly benefit the residents of our county and increase appreciation for the arts, our history and the humanities," Freeholder Chairman Linda Carter said, adding that they also promote economic development and cultural heritage tourism in the county.

► NEW MEXICO

County clerks across the state have joined a lawsuit seeking to allow **same-sex couples to be married**, clearing the way for a possible state Supreme Court hearing of the case.

Daniel Ivey-Soto, executive di-

Research News

Revenue Reforms

Counties depend on the strength of their economies to generate healthy revenue streams. The U.S. economy has been recovering overall, even though unemployment rates are still above 7 percent and housing prices are still below pre-recession peaks. Although the data from the U.S. Census of Governments on 2012 county revenue sources has not been released yet, the 2007 figures provide a baseline for counties' sources of revenue before the recession.

Counties collected more than \$525 billion in revenue in 2007, with more than a third coming from taxes such as residential property taxes, commercial or business property taxes, and personal property taxes. Property taxes are the bulk of the tax revenue raised by counties, at almost 60 percent.

While the 2008 housing crisis affected counties' residential property tax revenues, the strength and timing of the effects vary county by county. There is often a lag in the effect of changes in housing prices on property tax revenue since properties are taxed on the assessed

values of the houses, which may lag for years if the county has a long assessment cycle.

Counties draw another third of their revenue from other levels of government, mainly the states.



Eighty-three percent of the county revenue from other governments came from the states, showing that counties are creatures of the state. This allocation of state money does not come entirely from state sources, but often from federal formula allocations. Because states mix state funding with federal money in the allocation to counties, it is difficult to track federal funding going to counties through the states.

A little known fact is that fees and other general revenue sources generate 21 percent of the counties' revenues. These charges vary from charges on commercial activities to solid waste, sewerage charges and highway tolls. Charges from public hospitals deliver almost a quarter of this revenue stream, showing one of the aspects of the relationship between counties and health care.

Within the constraints set by the states, county leaders continue to adjust budget policies to adapt to the changing economic circumstances.

(Research News was written by Anya Nowakowski, County Intelligence Connection research assistant.)

Wind-farm payments help Texas county fund raises, hire new employees

NEWS FROM *from page 10*

rector of a group representing clerks, said a district judge in Albuquerque allowed the **NEW MEXICO ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES** and 31 county clerks to intervene in the lawsuit, the Associated Press reported.

Clerks statewide agreed that there needs to be uniform policy on gay marriage rather than allowing the issue to be decided in the courts county-by-county.

In a separate case, a judge in **LOS ALAMOS COUNTY** recently ordered that county's clerk to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples or to appear in court to explain why not.

New Mexico law doesn't explicitly allow or bar gay marriage.

► OHIO

VAN WERT COUNTY, pop. 28,744, is the **first certified "Connected" community** in Ohio, and among the first in the nation. The certification program was developed by Connected Nation, which

works with communities of all sizes on issues of broadband adoption, access and use.

The Connected certification comes after six months of the county's local Broadband Planning Committee's working with Connect Ohio to assess the broadband landscape, identify gaps and establish actionable goals and objectives.

► TEXAS

A **wind-farm windfall** will help **WILLACY COUNTY** officials boost salaries by 10 percent for about 95 current employees and fund seven new hires next year, the *Valley Morning Star* reported.

County commissioners have proposed a \$14.2 million budget, including \$591,000 in revenue from wind turbines. That includes \$275,000 payment in lieu of taxes from Duke Energy, one of two wind farm companies operating in the county.

"The wage increase will finally bring our employees to a livable wage," County Judge John F.

Gonzales Jr. said. "Many of the positions had been paying at poverty levels."

► VIRGINIA

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY's employee newsletter, *County Comments*, has been named the **top nonprofit internal employee communication** by Ragan Communications' *PR Daily*.

The electronic magazine format shares news about county departments and programs for employees. It was redesigned in late 2011 from a print to an electronic format, saving the county more than \$9,000 annually.

Switching to an electronic publication also enabled its editors to expand coverage with videos, slideshows and interactive graphics. It also made last-minute edits easier.

(News From the Nation's Counties is compiled by Charles Taylor and Charlie Ban, staff writers. If you have an item for News From, please email ctaylor@naco.org or cban@naco.org.)

Financial Services News

U.S. Communities Adds New Energy Services

Tradition Energy, one of the world's largest energy management advisors, was recently awarded a three-year contract to deliver its services through U.S. Communities.

It will provide a comprehensive suite of services that can help counties maximize savings on energy expenditures, provide better budget and cost control, and improve procurement efficiency. In addition to active procurement, the company can also offer services related to energy data management, bill processing and payment, and risk management. This exclusive contract was awarded through a competitive solicitation process conducted by a lead public agency, the City of Mesquite, Texas, and was eligible for use as of Aug. 1.

Tradition Energy has a history of advising Fortune 500 companies as part of the Tradition Group, as a global institutional broker of financial and commodity products. Since 1986, the company has focused solely on the energy business and providing energy market advice to clients.

It consists of 300 energy professionals in 13 offices and has been consistently recognized as an expert in the industry.

"Tradition Energy's proven track record, dedicated approach, unbiased nature and stability all make it an ideal supplier partner for U.S. Communities," said Peter Torvik, managing director, NACo Financial Services.

U.S. Communities is the only government cooperative purchasing organization founded by NACo, the National League of Cities, the Association of School Business Officials International, the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

For more information about U.S. Communities and the various products and services offered to local governments, please contact Sarah Lindsay, NACo Financial Services Corporation, at 202.942.4228 or slindsay@naco.org. Also visit www.uscommunities.org for information, a webinar on the Tradition Energy contract, and more.

(Financial Services News was written by Kelly Boggs, FSC intern.)

NACo on the Move

» NACo Staff



Julie Ufner

• **Julie Ufner**, associate legislative director, was a panelist at the American Public Works Association's Stormwater Summit in Cook County, Ill. Aug. 26. Ufner, along with panelists from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and National Association of Clean Water Agencies, discussed potential impacts of soon-to-be-proposed federal stormwater regulations on local governments.

• **Michael Belarmino**, associate legislative director, spoke on the panel The Washington Insider: Federal Actions — or Lack Thereof — Impacting Counties at the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners Annual Conference in Guilford County Aug. 23.

» Coming Up

• **Karina Golkova**, membership assistant, will be exhibiting on behalf of membership recruitment and retention at the Nevada Association of Counties Annual Conference in Douglas County Sept. 10–12.

• **Alex Koroknay-Palicz**, membership coordinator, will be exhibiting on behalf of membership at the Michigan Association of Counties Annual Conference in Saginaw County Sept. 15–17.



Karina Golkova

On the Move is compiled by Christopher Johnson.

Parents, grandparents should limit child's exposure to violent media

H.R. DOC from page 9

the impact of the presence of these accelerants and take some action to reduce the impacts? For county government, often the center of human service and health issues, does it not also make imminent good sense to realize that the same accelerants which lead to problems in an individual's life also contribute to problems in the larger society?

So where do we start in trying to reduce the risks of self-inflicted

harm? That is a highly important question in a country where the number of attorneys (about 1.2 million) is greater than the number of paid firefighters (about 344,000), police officers (about 794,000) and clergy (about 44,000) combined. It is more than twice the number of elected officials, whose estimated population is about 512,000.

A key answer is to begin as parents and grandparents by limiting the amount of exposure to the media accelerants which often dominate

the years of greatest learning and development of behavioral norms in our children. Imagine what could happen if instead of 4.5 hours a day, our children spent half that time or less watching television and used the other part of that time for music, hobbies or learning a second language?

Next is the vital role of organized education. A previous HR Doctor column proposed mandatory school curriculum on civility and alternative dispute resolution. Yet how can we do this in the face of our traditional linkage of educational funding to property taxes? In times of housing crises, our educational systems suffer. In poor neighborhoods, funding is choked just when needs are greatest.

We take nearly the entire sum-

Accelerants themselves may not have caused the fire but they increase the likelihood of devastating results.

mer off from school learning in a far-outdated system of having the children around to help with the harvest and planting of next year's crops. We measure school success and student success by standardized tests without recognizing that kids are not standardized and neither is their individual capacity to create and contribute. In short, the school models are virtual guarantors that every child will be left behind, and so will our society.

Perhaps we should consider a ban on selling alcoholic beverages at gas stations if we are really serious about not driving drunk and delivering mixed messages. State legislators who voted against mandatory helmet laws for motorcycle riders might reconsider, or at a minimum visit a Level I Trauma Center for a day, before they cast such votes. Perhaps seeing young people relegated to spending their lives in assisted-living facilities, likely at public expense, because of the brain trauma resulting from not wearing a seat belts or motorcycle helmets would help those members of our legislatures better resist lobbying by the forces of accelerant industries.

None of these thoughts unfortunately offer immediate short-term relief. They do, however, state a compelling, if not overly cryptic case, for us to get serious as a society about investing in dynamic change now to put off the day when accelerants mixed with short-term thinking produce very bad things in our country and our world.

Phil Rosenberg

Phil Rosenberg
The HR Doctor • www.hrdtr.net

Job Market & Classifieds

■ COUNTY MANAGER – EDDY COUNTY, N.M.

Salary: \$110,000 – \$150,000 annually; DOQ.

The Board of County Commissioners for Eddy County, N.M. is seeking an energetic, highly skilled public sector manager with team leadership qualities. Minimum qualifications include a Bachelor's degree in Public or Business Administration, plus 10 years of experience in executive management. The county's FY14 Budget is about \$64 million and has 327 FTE authorized. Currently, the County is experiencing a period of very strong

economic growth.

The Closing date is Friday, Sept. 6 at 4 p.m. The starting salary will be determined based on qualifications. Eddy County offers a very comprehensive benefits package.

Please send or email resume, including salary history, along with a completed County application and waiver to roxann@co.eddy.nm.us or mail to: Eddy County Board of Commissioners 101 West Greene Street Carlsbad, NM 88220.

The application along with a profile, job description and other information can be found at www.eddycounty.org.

NACo JOBS-ONLINE

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