NACo Celebrates 75 Years of Distinguished Service and Accomplishments

July 2010

Dear County Leaders,

Founded in 1935, the National Association of Counties (NACo) is celebrating 75 years of distinguished service and accomplishments to the nation’s counties. NACo was established at the urging of county officials from Western states, who recognized a need for active representation in our nation’s capital. Today, NACo represents more than 2,300 counties serving more than 80 percent of the nation’s population.

For more than seven decades, NACo has truly been a major player in developing and setting public policy while working closely with all levels of government — whether establishing the first Urban County Congress in 1959; working on the General Revenue Sharing program in 1972; pushing to enact Payments in Lieu of Taxes legislation in 1976 to help rural counties; marching on the U.S. Capitol in 1994 to oppose federal unfunded mandates, leading to the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act in 1995; to today, initiating and seeking passage of the Restore the Partnership legislation, essential to solving the numerous problems facing our country.

NACo has also built some remarkable business partnerships that have been important to its success — with Nationwide Retirement Solutions for 30 years and with U.S. Communities for 15 years. Through its past accomplishments, dedicated members and professional staff, this strong foundation will enable NACo and its members to help America prosper now and well into the future.

NACo is an organization of give and take. As an active member for the past 12 years, I have given and shared a lot with NACo and my peers. I have also taken so many good ideas back to help my county."

— Glen Whitley, President-elect, County Judge, Tarrant County, Texas

"NACo has been a wonderful partner. Fairfax County, Virginia saves over a million dollars a year participating in the U.S. Communities program. NACo has also helped elected officials govern in small and large counties in Virginia."

— Jerry Hyland, Supervisor, Fairfax County, Va.

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— Valerie Brown, Supervisor, Sonoma County, Calif.

"NACo has provided a great opportunity for state associations of counties to be involved at the national level, to receive training for elected officials and to be involved in programs that are very beneficial to the citizens in our state."

— Brett Gardner, Executive Director, Utah Association of Counties

"At NACo, it doesn’t matter whether you are a conservative, moderate or liberal, we as county officials stand united shoulder to shoulder."

— Lenny Eliason, First Vice President Commissioner, Athens County, Ohio

"NACo is a tremendous resource for anything county officials have to deal with in their daily work. Legislative leadership, education, advocacy all rolled into one. If you need to know… ask NACO.

— Ron Houseman, County Administrator, Stone County, Mo.

"I’ve interacted with NACo for some 21 years. When I think of NACo, there are certain terms and feelings that come to mind: professionalism, effectiveness, caring, leadership, vision and a feeling of family. When you are part of the NACo family, you are part of a nationwide network of people that really care about their community and making life better. That’s what NACo is all about."

— Joe Giles, Council Chair, Erie County, Pa.

"From the first NACo meeting I attended…NACo’s openness proved to me that this organization was going to do great things for my county and community."

— Don Larson, Commission Chair, Brookings County, S.D.

"Through my involvement in NACo’s Large Urban County Caucus, Florida has become the third state in the nation to suspend, instead of terminate federal benefits for those people who have been incarcerated, saving all Florida counties money on their indigent health care. I appreciate the good work NACO does."

— Irleen Lieberman, Commissioner, Broward County, Fla.

"I have been involved with NACo for 29 years. One of the treasures of NACo, is its professional staff. Especially Don Murray, who has been with NACo for 40 years. Thanks to Don’s leadership, the Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee has met with every United States Attorney General from Edwin Meese to Eric Holder."

— Eric Coleman, Commissioner, Oakland County, Michigan

"It’s great to celebrate the 75th anniversary of NACo, an organization that has saved countless counties money and unlimited services. Joining NACo is well worth the small financial investment for the expertise received and delivered by the accomplished NACo staff."

— Ilene Lieberman, Commissioner, Broward County, Fla.

"I attended my first NACo conference in 1980 and was hooked on NACo immediately. When you want to find solutions to the challenges you face, there is no better way than to talk it over with your peers from across the country, because there’s probably no problem that hasn’t been addressed by someone somewhere. NACO members and staff are a winning combination."

— John Meese, President, Executive Director, Wisconsin Counties Association

"NACo has been the life line for Idaho counties. We have received full funding for PILT and reauthorization for Secure Rural Schools. It has been great!"

— Rose Gehringer, Clerk, Idaho County, Idaho

"For 75 years NACo has been the voice of America’s counties representing counties all across the nation. NACo has provided true value to counties and real value to citizens."

— Burrell Ellis, Chief Executive Officer, Dekalb County, Ga.

"Through my involvement with NACo, I have been able to bring back to my county juvenile justice solutions and information from national programs to help my county. Also, as a result of my involvement in NACo, my fellow commissioners are now becoming involved having seen the benefits our county can obtain."

— Chris Rodgers, Commissioner, Douglas County, Neb.

For more information on NACo visit: www.naco.org.

— Larry E. Naake, Executive Director, NACo

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Connecting the Nation’s Counties
The National Association of Counties ...

Westchester County, N.Y. Executive and NACo Past President Edwin G. Michaelian and his wife Joyce with Republican presidential nominee Richard Nixon and his wife, Pat, in September 1968.

The Voice of America’s Counties ...

President Gerald R. Ford greets Suffolk County, N.Y. Executive John N.V. Klein at the White House July 26, 1976 at ceremonies in which Ford signed coastal zone management legislation that would give local communities a greater say in offshore energy development.
Then, now and back again ... the faces of County News

1981

1991

1995

2010

1998

1998

2009

2004

2007

2010

1990

1986
President Ronald Reagan meets with NACo's Black Caucus in the White House in March 1981.

President George H.W. Bush signed amendments to the Clean Air Act with First Lady Barbara Bush and various county officials on hand in 1990.

NACo Executive Director John Thomas with NACo President Robert Aldemeyer, commissioner, Kenton County, Ky. in 1986.

President Ronald Reagan meets with NACo's Black Caucus in the White House in March 1981.

Cook County Commissioner Richard Ogilvie with President Richard Nixon and First Lady Pat Nixon at NACo's 33rd Annual Conference in 1969.

U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno speaks about the importance of early child development to NACo's Justice and Public Safety Committee during the Legislative Conference in 2000. NACo Members: Moses Carey, Jr., Orange County, N.C.; Betty Lou Ward, Wake County, N.C.; and (standing) Vernon Grey (r), Howard County, Md., with NACo staff member Donald Murray.

Vice President Walter Mondale with NACo past presidents Roy Orr, Dallas County, Texas and Charlotte Williams, Genesee County, Mich., break ground for NACo's new headquarters at 440 First Street, NW in Washington, D.C., November 1980.

NACo Executive Director Larry Naake with City and County of Philadelphia Mayor Ed Rendell and President Bill Clinton.
Larry E. Naake, then associate legislative director, testifies before the House Subcommittee on Interior. Naake urged Congress to provide full funding for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes program for FY82 and restore partial funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery program, both slated for elimination by President Reagan.

President Bill Clinton signs the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 — a key NACo legislative priority — on March 22, 1995.

Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala speaks at NACo’s 1995 Annual Conference in Fulton County, Ga. She urged the delegates to support partnerships to better serve families.

Some of NACo’s past presidents prior to 2000.