House passes Continuing Resolution

On Saturday, Feb. 19, the U.S. House passed H.R. 1, the Continuing Resolution (CR) which funds the federal government for the rest of the fiscal year, by a vote of 235–189. The current Continuing Resolution expires March 4.

House Appropriations Committee Chair Harold Rogers (R-Ky.) originally announced cutting domestic discretionary programs by $40 billion. However, Republican freshmen and other conservatives insisted on $100 billion in cuts forcing Rogers back to square one. The

See CR page 4

Fiscal responsibility, creating jobs spotlight Legislative Conference

Jobs and the role of county governments in the economic recovery is the main focus for more than 1,300 elected and appointed county officials attending NACo’s 2011 Legislative Conference, March 5–9, in Washington, D.C.

During the five-day conference, county officials will discuss NACo’s 2011 Key Legislative Priorities, meet with Obama administration officials and members of Congress, and hear from prominent national leaders and commentators.

Featured guest speakers include Attorney General Eric Holder, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Mike Mullen, Housing and Development Secretary Shaun Donovan, Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.), Reps. John Mica (R-Fla.) and Doc Hastings (R-Wash.), as well as MSNBC talk show host and former congressman Joe Scarborough.

Holder has served as Attorney General since Feb. 3, 2009. He served as deputy attorney general in the Clinton Administration, the first African-American named to that post. Prior to that he served as U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia. He is a native of New York City and a

See CONFERENCE page 9

House votes to protect PILT payments

The House of Representatives defeated an amendment to the FY11 Continuing Resolution (H.R. 1) Feb. 16 offered by Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio), which would have cut funding to the payment in lieu of taxes program (PILT) by 75 percent.

Upon learning of the amendment, NACo quickly developed an overnight grassroots campaign against the Kaptur amendment, which culminated in a vote of 394–32 in opposition.

During the House debate, Rep. Norm Dicks (D-Wash.) said, “I just want to rise in very strong opposition [to the Kaptur amendment]. Being a westerner, I have counties in my district that receive these payments. I think it’s justified. I appreciate the fact that the new majority has tried to protect these

See PILT page 2
Major progress made on FAA bill

By ROBERT FOGEL
SENIOR LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Both the Senate and House took big steps on reauthorizing the federal airport and aviation programs, a NACo priority for 2011. These programs expired in 2007 and are currently on their 17th short-term extension.

The Senate approved its version of the FAA bill on Feb. 17 by a vote of 87–8. S. 223 was the first major piece of legislation debated by the Senate in the new Congress. The final vote took place after a compromise was worked out on the contentious issues of long-distance flights from Washington, D.C.’s Reagan National Airport. The Senate bill would allow the number of those flights to increase from 12 round-trip flights to 24 flights. This was one of the issues that had prevented legislation from passing last year.

The Senate’s two-year bill is funded at $34.6 billion annually and does not include any increase in the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC).

The Senate defeated a NACo–opposed amendment from Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) to eliminate the Essential Air Service (EAS) program. However, two EAS amendments offered by Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) passed; the first limited EAS subsidies to the 16 airports that are 90 miles away from the nearest medium or large airport and a second that would limit EAS subsidies to airports that average 10 or more enplanements per day, reporting 25 airports.

The House is slightly behind the Senate. By a vote of 34–25, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved H.R. 58, its version of the FAA bill. The four-year bill funds the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) at $3 billion annually, a 15 percent cut from the current funding level of $3.51.

Like the Senate bill, the House legislation does not include any increase in the PFC, currently capped at $4.50. (In the last Congress the House proposed an increase of the PFC to $7). Funding is gradually reduced for the Essential Air Service Program (EAS), and after FY13 the program is eliminated except in Alaska and Hawaii.

Rep. Bill Shuster (R-Pa.) offered and then withdrew an amendment to fully fund EAS and continue the program in all states. Shuster obtained an agreement with committee Chairman John Mica (R-Fla.) that discussions would continue on resolving differences over EAS.

NACo had sent a letter to the committee opposing the budget cuts and elimination of EAS.

It is likely that H.R. 658 will be considered by the full House in the near future.

PILT not a ‘giveaway’ for counties, Polis says

PILT from page 1

payments.” Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo.) said of PILT: “This is not in any way, shape or form a giveaway to counties. This is land we cannot tax, we cannot develop, we cannot benefit from. In fact, PILT payments are insufficient. They’re too low to compensate for the burden of having all this land that’s not part of our local tax base.”

Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah) said, “PILT is not welfare; this is rent on the land [the Federal government] controls. To be honest, we’d rather have the land back, but until that time, pay for what you control.”

NACo suggests that all county officials who receive significant annual PILT funding review the roll call vote to see how their members of Congress voted. The roll call vote can be found at http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2011/roll117.xml. Please thank members of Congress who voted “no” on the Kaptur amendment for their continued support for county government.

As the only national organization that advocates on behalf of the PILT program, NACo will continue to work diligently to maintain full funding for this program critical to sustaining local county governments.

For additional information, please contact Ryan Yates, NACo associate legislative director at ryates@naco.org.

NACo testifies: rural development should be priority in next Farm Bill

By ERIK JOHNSTON
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Brookings County, S.D. Commissioner Don Larson (l) talks with House Agriculture Committee member, Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.).

Brookings County, S.D. Commissioner Don Larson testified Feb. 15 in support of making rural development a priority in the next Farm Bill before a House Agriculture Committee panel.

Larson, who chairs NACo’s Agriculture and Rural Affairs Steering Committee, also told the panel that federal rural development programs in the next Farm Bill must allow counties greater flexibility to advance their strategic local and regional priorities.

Congress is in the early stages of considering reauthorization of the Farm Bill, which expires near the end of next year. Reauthorization and funding for key provisions such as rural business programs, rural community facilities, broadband deployment and rural water-wastewater infrastructure is a key 2011 legislative priority for NACo.

“Rural people and places are increasingly operating in dynamic regional economies, and rural counties and regions are often arbitrarily placed into categories by academics and the federal government,” Larson said. “We encourage you to focus on providing enhanced flexibility for USDA Rural Development’s state offices to provide assistance that fits the uniquely rural nature of their states, by focusing on serving rural regions, both multi-town and multi-county, and by funding these regions’ strategic priorities.”

Larson urged Congress and the Obama administration to work together in a bipartisan manner to make rural development programs a priority within Farm Bill reauthorization.

“Our agricultural sector needs more investments in our rural community infrastructure to remain competitive, both from a quality-of-life perspective as well as the production, transport and safety of agricultural food and energy crops,” Larson said.

“The agricultural sector is a primary beneficiary of just about every investment made by USDA Rural Development, whether related to improved water and wastewater treatment facilities, improved housing options for workers, more affordable access to business financing, assistance for value-added production marketing, or cheaper and reliable services from rural electric, telephone and broadband cooperatives.”

Larson testified before the House Subcommittee on Rural Development, Research, Biotechnology and Foreign Agriculture, which is reviewing rural programs operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The testimony was delivered on behalf of NACo and the National Association of Development Organizations, whose members are key rural development partners for rural counties. The subcommittee is chaired by Rep. Tim Johnson (R-Ill.).

(The full testimony is available at www.naco.org. For more information, contact Erik Johnston at ejohnston@naco.org or 202.942.4283.)
New ‘bath salts’ hide a synthetic drug similar to cocaine

STAFF WRITER

Word had evidently already reached retailers in Etowah County, Ala. Feb. 22 when county drug enforcement visited to spread the news about a ban on synthetic stimulants sold as bath salts or plant food. A few hours after the state’s attorney general signed an order banning the substances in Alabama, workers at most of the 62 shops, mainly convenience stores, had already pulled the packages from their shelves. What the 46 law enforcement officers could do, however, was hammer home to themselves that after midnight, any of those bath salts would be illegal to sell or possess.

“Our focus wasn’t on making arrests,” said Natalie Barton, Etowah County sheriff’s public information officer. “We were simply taking the dangerous drugs out of circulation so people could not buy them.”

The stimulant causes effects similar to cocaine or methamphetamine and is sold under the names “Ivory Wave,” “Vanilla Sky,” “Meow Meow” and “Bliss,” among others. Bath salts sold at mainstream retailers or national brands list their ingredients; these substances do not.

The situation is similar to how synthetic marijuana has recently been sold as incense. The substances themselves are legal in most places, but despite the packaging warning against human consumption, people, particularly young adults have been smoking or snorting them, the Drug Enforcement Agency reports. Several states in addition to Alabama, including Louisiana and Florida, have enacted temporary bans on the products and others, including Mississippi, Kentucky, Michigan, Hawaii and North Dakota, are in the process of writing and ratifying bans.

Although the chemicals in these products are fundamentally different from banned narcotics, they have a comparable effect when consumed. “Bath salts” can cause hallucinations, paranoia, a rapid heart rate and suicidal inclinations. They also cause insomnia, irritability and panic attacks.

The culprit, DEA spokesman Dave Levey said, is a pair of chemicals that his agency lists as chemicals of concern — methadone and mephedroline — MDVP), neither of which is banned federally.

“They are so dangerous because they are unregulated,” Levey said.

“There’s no quality control, no potency control. The effect someone might experience from one hit can be 100 times stronger from another batch.”

“Although we lack sufficient data to understand exactly how prevalent the use of these stimulants are, we know they pose a serious threat to the health and well-being of young people and anyone who may use them,” U.S. Drug Czar Gil Kerlikowske wrote in an Office of National Drug Control Policy release on synthetic stimulants.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers reported 236 calls to U.S. poison centers in 2010 traced to synthetic stimulant use and 251 similar calls in January 2011 alone. Levey said synthetic stimulants started appearing in the United States in 2009, but became more prevalent after states and counties started combating “Spice” use. He said they tended to be developed in Europe, mainly Germany and the United Kingdom, where they started showing in the mid-2000s. Currently, the DEA is not prepared to enact a federal ban of bath salts. Because their ingredients are not listed, authorities have yet to determine what the active ingredients are. Banning them is complicated by the ease with which the creators can change the composition and circumvent a ban.

“It is possible to tweak them, so it’s a challenge to keep up with a ban unless we know exactly what we’re outlawing,” Levey said. “That’s what makes dealing with synthetic drugs difficult; the effect can come from any combination of ingredients.”
House makes deep cuts in domestic discretionary spending

RESOLUTION from page 1

bill that was taken up by the House had approximately $60 billion cut from the president’s FY11 budget request.

H.R. 1 targets many programs of interest to counties for deep cuts or elimination, including adult and youth job training, the Community Development Block Grant, Community Services Block Grant, and Juvenile Accountability Block Grant programs, and Community Health Centers.

Despite these cuts, there were several positive amendments among the nearly 500 that were considered. County allies easily defeated an amendment by Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) to cut funding to the payment in lieu of taxes program (PILT) by 75 percent. The amendment was defeated by a margin of 394 to 32. (See “PILT Package Survives,” p. 1)

Initially, the legislation sought to eliminate hiring grants for law enforcement and emergency personnel, however, amendments to provide $298 million for COPS hiring, and $510 million for SAFER grants restored funding for these important public safety needs.

There is still a long way to go before the bill is enacted. The Senate took up its own version of the CR after the Presidents’ Day recess, and Senate Appropriations Chairman Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) has already rejected the House version.

The Senate bill is likely to be a funding freeze instead of deeper cuts. Additionally, the president has already indicated that he will veto the House bill in its present form. If Congress and the president cannot agree by March 4, the federal government may shut down, the first time this has happened in 15 years.

Following is a summary of other program cuts and amendments in H.R. 1.

Agriculture and Rural Development

The agriculture portion of the CR includes a total of $18.1 billion in funding, which is $5 billion, or 22 percent, below the president’s FY11 request. These totals reflect spending cuts below FY10 in every agriculture account, including conservation, rural development, domestic and foreign food assistance programs, and the Food and Drug Administration.

The House CR targets USDA Rural Development’s Rural Utilities Service and Rural Business-Cooperative Service for reductions of 24 percent below the president’s FY11 proposal. Subsequently, county-supported business development programs and key utility programs such as water and waste disposal fare much worse under the CR.

The Water and Waste Disposal programs receive $405.5 million or $118 million less than Obama’s FY11 proposal, for a cut of 22 percent. The Rural Housing Service (RHS) programs receive nearly the same level of cuts as the president’s FY11 proposal. However, community facility grants, which are the key county-supported account within RHS, receive $11.5 million less in the CR, representing a cut of 26 percent below the president’s FY11 request of $44 million.

Community and Economic Development

The bill cuts the Community Development Block Grant funding by 62 percent — from $3.94 billion currently to $1.5 billion. It would cut HOME Investment Partnership funding by 10 percent, from $1.82 billion to $1.65 billion. It would also eliminate funding for the Sustainable Communities Initiative and HOPE VI/Choice Neighborhoods programs.

Employment and Training Programs

H.R. 1 includes more than $2 billion in cuts to Department of Labor-administered employment and job training programs, including the elimination of all funding for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in Program Year (FY) 2011. Other programs targeted for deep cuts or elimination include YouthBuild, Job Corps, green jobs training and reintegration of ex-offenders.

In documents published by the House Appropriations Committee, the committee seeks to explain its reduction to workforce programs by implying that the workforce system can be sustained through next year with current-year funding and carryover. The committee claims, “These programs have significant carryover balances from prior year appropriations and have already received $1.5 billion in advance funding available for the current fiscal year.”

While it is true that $1.5 billion was advanced this year as part of WIA’s 2010 allotment, these funds were intended to support WIA activities for the current 2010 program year — from October 2010 through June 2011. If the cuts to WIA in H.R. 1 become law, no new funds will be appropriated for workforce programs in FY11, and as a result, states and local communities would not receive new funding to enroll participants and operate programs beginning July 1 of this year.

Environment

In FY10, the EPA received the largest funding boost since its inception. However, the CR slashes EPA’s budget by close to $3 billion to approximately $7.2 billion.

Some of the largest EPA cuts are in the arena of the Clean Water (CW) and Drinking Water
Teen Moxie program has girls ‘taking steps together’

BY CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

A white stretch Hummer pulls up, and out spills a group of excited, chattering teenage girls — not for girls’ night out at a Justin Bieber concert, but at a county medical clinic.

The 20 or so girls come to this Hennepin County, Minn. building every Thursday night to show their Teen Moxie, or rather, to participate in a program by that name. The nutrition and healthy lifestyle education sessions are a spin-off of Hennepin County Medical Center’s successful Taking Steps Together program for kids and their families.

Participants discuss meal planning, body image, time management and other topics in a safe environment with their peers — and get physical — all under the watchful eye of Rachel Newby, the program’s coordinator. Most were referred by their doctors or nutritionists in the county’s public health system because of high body mass index ratios. Others tagged along with friends or relatives.

“The limo rides are a great way to build their self esteem, get them excited about coming to our program and treat them like queens,” Newby said. The swanky rides are discounted through a partnership the hospital developed with a local limousine company, and — to Newby’s surprise — turned out to be cheaper than renting school buses or vans. Teen Moxie is an outgrowth of the Taking Steps program, which began about four years ago. The Taking Steps curriculum includes nutrition education, physical activities for families and individuals, trying new cooking techniques and recipes, and stressing the value of eating meals together as a family.

That 16-week program had a waiting list to get in, but the two groups most interested in Taking Steps didn’t have much in common, Newby explained.

“Our wait list started to break down to 8-to-11-year-old boys and 11-to-18-year-old girls,” she said.

“You can imagine that those two groups of people don’t always love hanging out together. If you’re a teen-age girl, it’s not cool to be hanging out with your little brother.”

So the hospital created Teen Moxie, a 20-week program just for “tweens” and teen girls. Participating girls’ weights and other vital statistics are measured at the start of the program to track their progress.

Lizbet Becerra, 13, is an eighth-grader whose cousin invited her to come with her. “She told me it was really fun. You get to meet new people and play lots of games and stuff, so I decided to go with her,” Lizbet said.

She’s enjoying learning “new ways to be healthy and how it’s really fun to meet new people.”

On one recent Thursday, the girls did Zoomba, a form of dance aerobics to Latin, reggaeton and hip-hop beats. “There are two rules,” Newby said. “Keep moving and have fun.”

The program is funded as part of Taking Steps, which received about $170,000 from the local United Way, and the General Mills and Minnesota Twins foundations.

Newby said free transportation is an important part of the program, because it is “logistically hard” for the girls’ parents — many of whom don’t own cars — to drop off and pick up their daughters. Limos like the Hummer are chosen for their “Wow factor.” Two are needed each week to transport participants who come from all corners of the 557-square-mile county.

Traveling as a group also gives the girls and Newby extra time together that can be put to good use. Recently, while in transit, the girls did yoga stretching and breathing exercises in the limo before arriving at the clinic, Newby said. The extra “program time” also facilitates positive conversation en route.

Diana Cutts, M.D., a pediatrician at the county hospital, said the program fills a “real void,” especially for inner-city families with limited resources and poor access to full-service grocery stores. Those families often live in neighborhoods where fast food may be more affordable than more nutritious offerings.

She said it’s paradoxical to some that people can come from lower-income families but yet be able to eat enough food to become overweight. “When you look at studies of what brings the least expensive sense of satisfaction, it tends to be foods which are less healthful,” she explained, such as fast or junk foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt.

The program hopes to show increased consumption of fruits and vegetables in the girls’ diets, increased physical activity and better decision making about food. “We hope also to give the participants a sense of their own power and their active participation in their health,” Cutts said.

“Girl power” may be a new concept for some in the program. About half of the participants come from families who speak Spanish at home, said Newby, a former Peace Corps volunteer in Paraguay who is bilingual. Working with girls from different cultures requires an understanding of cultural norms, such as how that culture values physical activity and competition for girls, Cutts said.

“The value of daily physical activity and the whole sort of fitness movement and working out is a very middle-class concept,” she said. And the way many girls are introduced to physical activity in school is through team or competitive activities, which may not be seen as having value for girls in some cultures.

“I think there are a lot of cultural barriers that get in the way in some situations,” she said, “so we’re still learning and thinking about this together.”

Teen Moxie is about a month old, and Newby says so far feedback from the girls has been “phenomenally positive.”

“I had three girls at the beginning who were very hesitant to come. They didn’t want to meet any new people; they weren’t really sure they wanted to try any new activities, and they weren’t jiving with it,” Newby said. She convinced them to come to one class, saying if they hated it, they never had to return.

“All three of those girls called me after the first time they came to class and said, ‘I know I said I didn’t really want to come again, but would it be OK if I came again?’”

Profiles in Service

» Leigh Lenzmeier
NACo Board Member
Commissioner
Stearns County, Minn.

Number of years active in NACo: 14
Years in public service: 20
Occupation: Commercial real estate appraiser, litigation support
Education: MBA, St. Cloud State University (Minn.)
The hardest thing I’ve ever done: bury my son.
Three people (living or dead) I’d invite to dinner: my son, Mom and Dad.
A dream I have is to: beat diabetes.
You’d be surprised to learn that I: once worked as a prison guard.
The most adventurous thing I’ve ever done is: I owned an auto thrill show for three years.
My favorite way to relax is: being a dedicated quality control volunteer for Bulleit bourbon.
I’m most proud of: Alice, my wife.
Every morning I read: the local paper online.
My favorite meal is: Cold Spring beer and pizza.
My pet peeve is: control freaks.
My motto is: “I’ll start my diet tomorrow.”
The last book I read was: Minnesota 13—The History of Bootlegging in Stearns County.
My favorite movie is: Slap Shot, a ‘70s comedy about a minor league hockey team.
My favorite music is: BB King, Willie Nelson and Pink Floyd.
My favorite president is: the next one, or maybe the one after that.
First NACo rail conference on track in April

By Bob Fogel
Senior Legislative Director

NACo will hold its first rail conference April 27–29 at the Wyndham Lisle-Chicago Hotel and Executive Conference Center in Lisle, Ill, a suburb of Chicago. The conference, Moving Freight and Passengers in the 21st Century, will focus on the impact of freight and passenger rail on county, city, and state governments and their communities. It will look at the movement of freight in the urban, suburban, and rural communities of the United States and discuss who will pay to modernize and expand passenger and freight rail systems.

Participants will get to meet and hear from experts in the field, including representatives of the rail industry, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the shippers who use the system, commuter rail experts, Amtrak and proponents of high-speed rail. The conference will conclude with a half-day discussion on how city, county, and suburban and rural communities of the United States and discuss who will pay to modernize and expand passenger and freight rail systems.

Participants will get to meet and hear from experts in the field, including representatives of the rail industry, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the shippers who use the system, commuter rail experts, Amtrak and proponents of high-speed rail. The conference will conclude with a half-day discussion on how city, county, and suburban and rural communities of the United States and discuss who will pay to modernize and expand passenger and freight rail systems.

NACo encourages county officials to register early at www.naco.org/railconference. The registration fee for this conference is $150 and includes an opening reception, breakfast both days, a luncheon, and refreshments throughout the day.

Hotel rates are $112 per night and should be made directly with Wyndham, 1.800.WYNDHAM and be sure to reference “NACo 2011 Rail Conference” to receive the group rate.

Please e-mail questions to nacometing@naco.org or contact Bob Fogel at 202.942.4217 or bfogel@naco.org.

Apply now for EPA’s National Award for Smart Growth Achievement

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced that the application period for the 10th annual National Award for Smart Growth Achievement is now open. Through this award, EPA recognizes communities that have successfully used smart growth principles in the following areas: Programs, Policies, and Regulations; Smart Growth and Green Building; Civic Places; Rural Smart Growth.

Winners will be recognized at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., in December. Entry deadline is April 6, 2011.

To view the application and complete entry guidelines, please visit: www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/awards.htm#2011app or contact Ted Cochin, cochin.ted@epa.gov, 202.566.2181.

Superfund, drinking water, waste water programs face significant reductions

CR from page 4

(DW) State Revolving Fund (SRF) programs. SRF programs provide water grants to eligible communities based on state water quality projects. The FY11 budget proposed giving the CW fund $2 billion and the DW fund $1.3 billion. The State Continu ing Resolution on the other hand, contains much lower numbers, $690 million for the CW fund and $830 million for the DW fund.

For FY11, the president proposed giving the Superfund program $1.3 billion, the CR reduces the amount to $1.27 billion. Superfund is a federal program used to clean up uncontrolled hazardous waste sites nationwide.

In previous budget years, the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) received $60 million a year but CR cuts the program to $50 million. DERA funds are used to convert diesel engines to lower-pollution engines.

The CR continues a number of environmental policy provisions that may be of interest to counties:

• The bill states that no funds made available by the CR may be used by the EPA to implement, administer or enforce a change to a rule or guidance document in regards to the “waters of the U.S.” definition under the Clean Water Act (CWA).

• The CR also prohibits its funds from being used to enforce any greenhouse gas emissions regulations.

• Regarding the particular matter National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), Rep. Kristi Noem (R-S.D.) sponsored a successful amendment to stop this regulation. The bill states that no funds made available by the CR may be used by the EPA to implement, administer or enforce a change to a rule or guidance document in regards to the “waters of the U.S.” definition under the Clean Water Act (CWA).

• The CR also prohibits its funds from being used to enforce any greenhouse gas emissions regulations.

• Regarding the particular matter National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), Rep. Kristi Noem (R-S.D.) sponsored a successful amendment to stop this regulation. The bill states that no funds made available by the CR may be used by the EPA to implement, administer or enforce a change to a rule or guidance document in regards to the “waters of the U.S.” definition under the Clean Water Act (CWA).

• The CR also prohibits its funds from being used to enforce any greenhouse gas emissions regulations.

Energy

The CR contains a provision to eliminate any unobligated funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). This is especially important for local governments who have yet to spend their Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) funds. According to the House Appropriations Committee, the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) accounts have more than $10 billion in unspent ARRA stimulus funds. EECBG funds come out of EERE.

The CR gives notice to Yucca Mountain and prohibits the Nuclear Regulatory Commission from terminating Yucca Mountain’s license review as a nuclear waste dump without due process.

Health

The CR makes deep cuts to health programs that will significantly reduce the ability of county governments to deliver health services. Implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) was, as expected, the target of a number of amendments.

Community Health Centers would lose over $1 billion, which would, according to the National Association of Community Health Centers, eliminate their capacity to serve about 11 million patients and require 127 new health centers to close.

An amendment by Rep. Mike Pence (R-Ind.) to cut off all federal funding to Planned Parenthood and its affiliates was also adopted. Counties with indigent care responsibilities and those that operate or support public hospitals and clinics will likely see dramatic increases in demands for health services in their facilities as a result of these reductions.

An amendment offered by Rep. Alcee Hastings (D-Fla.) was adopted by voice vote which reallocated $42 million from agencies within HHS to boost AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAP), which support HIV treatments for low-income, uninsured or underinsured individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

The CR cuts $142 million from the National Health Service Corps which places health professionals in underserved rural and urban areas and $269 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Public Health Preparedness and Response. The proposal also uses the entire Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF) to offset or partially backfill cuts to other ongoing CDC functions and programs.

NACo strongly supports the purpose of the PPHF, which is to significantly reduce high and costly rates of preventable disease by expanding the use of strategies for prevention that are based on scientific evidence of effectiveness, and opposes redirecting the funding.

The CR cuts support for state and local mental health, and substance abuse prevention and treatment programs by $14 million plus an additional “general reduction” of $200 million. These cuts will reduce the ability of county behavioral health agencies to serve clients with mental illness or substance use disorders, who as a result require treatment in county hospital emergency rooms or become involved in the justice system.

The following amendments targeting implementation of ACA were adopted:

• Freshman Rep. Cory Gardner’s (R-Colo.) amendment to bar HHS from paying salaries for any federal employee, contractor, or non-profit organization from being used to implement the ACA or any funds released under the ACA.

• Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) successfully offered an amendment prohibiting federal monies from being used to implement TMDLs or water implementation plans in the Chesapeake Bay.

See CR page 7

Share your point of view...

Letters to the Editor

Please include a phone number with your letter. Mail, fax or e-mail to:

County News / NACO  
25 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.,  
Washington, DC 20001  
202.393.2630  
news@naco.org.
Health care reform, LIHEAP, Head Start take hits

CR, from page 6

- Rep. Jo Ann Emerson’s (R-Mo.) amendment to bar the IRS from enforcing its part of the ACA
- An amendment to cut off funding for the new Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight, offered by Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)
- Two sweeping amendments offered by Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) to prohibit any funds to implement the ACA and to prohibit paying salaries to officials to carry out any provisions of the ACA
- Rep. Tom Price’s (R-Ga.) amendment to block HHS from implementing the medical loss ratio requirements

- Salaries would be denied for HHS, Labor and Treasury Department officials taking action to define essential health benefits as required by the ACA under an amendment proposed by Rep. Joseph Pitts (R-Pa.), and
- Rep. Denny Rehberg’s (R-Mont.) comprehensive de-funding amendment to prohibit paying any employee, officer, contractor, or grantee of any department or agency funded by the Labor-HHS-Education portion of the CR to implement the provisions of the ACA.

Human Services and Education

The effect of the House’s Continuing Resolution on human services and education programs is mixed. The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) are the most affected county programs, with a reduction of 43 percent, from $700 million to $395 million for CSBG; and 11 percent, from $5.3 billion to $4.7 billion, for LIHEAP.

Even popular programs such as Head Start and WIC received significant cuts. On the other hand, programs for the elderly and many of the education programs were not affected, with Elementary and Secondary Education Title I grants receiving a slight increase.

The maximum Pell Grant amount would be cut from $5,500 to $4,700, an issue of great concern to community colleges.

Interior

House Republicans, led by Interior Appropriations Chairman Mike Simpson (R-Idaho), included a provision to defund the Department of the Interior’s “Wildlands” policy. Secretarial Order 3310, which was signed by Secretary Ken Salazar on Dec. 23, 2010, would direct the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to begin to inventory, designate and manage federal lands as “wilderness” independent of the United States Congress.

The order undermines the established public process for land use planning and expressly violates the intent of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) as only Congress has the authority to designate lands as wilderness, according to House Republicans.

NACo actively opposes the order and has publically called on Salazar to rescind it.

Justice and Public Safety

For the Department of Homeland Security, H.R. 1 provides $1.9 billion for DHS State and Local Grant Programs ($2 billion enacted in FY10), $65 million for FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants ($100 million enacted in FY10), $204 million for State and Local Training and Exercises ($267 million enacted in FY10) and $100 million for FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter Program.

The CR eliminates Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grants, Buffer Zone Protection, Interoperable Emergency Communication Grants, but provides a record $3.1 billion for FEMA’s Disaster Relief Fund.

Transportation

H.R. 1 would cut a number of transportation programs. The federal transit program is reduced by 4 percent from $10.78 billion to $10.23 billion, mainly through reductions in the New Starts and Small Starts programs. Amtrak is cut from $1.637 billion to $1.435 billion, a 12 percent reduction, and funding for High-Speed Rail is eliminated. In addition, funds are rescinded that have been previously appropriated in several programs, including $3.72 billion in stimulus funding for High-Speed Rail and $600 million in TIGER grants.

No cuts are proposed to a number of other programs, including the Federal Highway Program, which is continued at $41.363 billion, the Airport Improvement Program, at $3.52 billion, and the Essential Air Service program at $200 million.
Celebrate National County Government Month

Serving Our Veterans, Armed Forces and Their Families

This year’s NCGM theme is “Serving Our Veterans, Armed Forces and Their Families.” It is an important and timely theme as more veterans, military service members and their families turn to their county government for services and help.

Counties should try to link activities to this theme by recognizing, honoring and thanking veterans and military personnel for their service.

A new feature this year of NCGM is the National County Government Month Award. The purpose of the award program is to encourage counties to participate in NCGM and to recognize those counties that sponsor outstanding programs to educate residents about county government during the month of April.

Check the NACo website for more information about specific judging criteria. Applications must be received by May 31 to be eligible for the competition.

National County Government Month
April • 2011
CONGRESSMAN MICA ADDRESSES GENERAL SESSIONS
Congressman Mica, Doc Hastings to address general sessions

Mullen is the highest-ranking officer in the Armed Forces and the president’s principal military advisor. Since taking office as chair in October 2007, he has focused on three main priorities: 1) defending vital national interests in the Middle East; 2) resetting, revitalizing and reconstituting the Armed Forces; and 3) properly balancing global risk.

He has placed significant emphasis on the expansion of counter-insurgency warfare training and resources and was an early advocate for a greater focus on operations in Afghanistan.

Mica chairs the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, one of the largest congressional panels in Congress. As chair, he serves on all six subcommittees, which include Aviation; Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation; Economic Development, Public Building and Emergency Management; Highways and Transit; Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials, and Water Resources and Environment. He is a national leader on a variety of transportation issues.

Hastings chairs the House Natural Resources Committee. This committee has jurisdiction over most federal land use and water policies, including national forests, national parks and monuments, wilderness areas, national scenic areas, Indian reservations and Bureau of Land Management lands. The committee has a major role in producing more American-made energy, with control over hydropower, and oil and gas reserves on public lands and waters.

Also speaking are Paul Ballew, chief economist for Nationwide, and David Brown, Psy.D., a Special Forces veteran and speaker, and David Brown, Psy.D., a Special Operations combat veteran who will share his knowledge on service member issues related to deployment and community re-integration.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
A variety of educational workshops are offered at the conference. A sampling of the titles includes A New World in Transportation; Affordable Care Act: Prevention and Public Health Investments; Government Initiatives to Lower Jail and Prison Populations; Renewable Energy Siting Issues: What You Need To Know; Homeland Security in 2011: Federal Initiatives to Secure Your County; and The Next Farm Bill: Advocating for Rural County Priorities.

OTHER BUSINESS
At NACo’s Legislative Conference
NACo’s 11 steering committees will meet during the conference to review and make recommendations on issues and legislation important to counties and communities. The issues that the committees cover include education and public safety, agriculture and rural affairs, taxes, environment and energy, telecommunications, economic and community development, health care, human services, education, labor and employment, public lands and transportation.

The policy development process initiated by the steering committees leads to the publication of the American County Platform, which NACo uses as a guide to deliver the county government message to the administration, Congress and the American public.

In addition to the steering committees, NACO has organized caucuses— the Rural Action Caucus and the Large Urban County Caucus—to perform targeted advocacy efforts focused on specific needs of large urban counties and rural counties.

(Chris Johnson and Jim Philipps contributed to this report.)

Word Search
Counties with Most Martial Arts Schools

| V L G A U U J O Q T O N L E O G E R A | U M P A D S P U T Q A L Z C N S J |
| G Z T H R A S Y E I H A R T F O R D S G | N W Q E U F O A R S D O R A B J O N |
| L A O R Z X V S R R C C B Q N Y L O Q | V K H D F R F C K L J P H O S Q Y P V T |

New Web resources added for green county projects

NACO has launched a revamped Green Government Database that provides short case studies and links to successful county programs, plans, policies and capital projects. The goal is to provide quick reference for county elected officials and staff on sustainability best practices.

Case studies highlighted include those related to county sustainability management, renewable energy generation; green building, green jobs, economic development, air quality, green fleets, green purchasing, local food systems; smart land use; water conservation and waste management.

The Green Government Database overhaul included a significant effort to improve ease-of-use for NACO members. A short format with contacts and links enables counties to quickly review sustainability practices and connect to the right places for more detail. In addition, the tool is now searchable by topic area, information type, county size, program year and keyword.

To access the database, visit www.naco.org/greendatabase.

To submit information on your county’s projects, contact Jared Lang, Green Government Initiative program manager, at lang@naco.org or 202.942.4224.
2011 Candidate for NACo Second Vice President

Linda Langston

Name: Linda Langston

Current Elected Office Held: Supervisor

County: Linn

State: Iowa

Expiration of Term: December 2012

Are you term limited? No.

Is your county a NACo member (required)? Yes.

Have you been endorsed by your state association of counties? Yes.

Please list all NACo service, including steering and standing committees, Executive Committee, task forces, caucuses and affiliates. For each, list the year(s) of service, and any leadership positions held.

- Arts and Culture Commission 2004–2011 (Vice Chair ’04–’06) (Chair ’06–’08)
- Restore the Partnership 2006–2008
- Health Steering Committee 2004–present — (Chair 2008–2010)
- Health Reform Task Force 2008–2010
- Health Disparities Sub-Committee 2006–2008 (Vice Chair)
- Health Reform Sub-Committee 2010–present — (Vice Chair 2010–present)
- ISAC – District VI – President 2010
- ISAC – Transportation Committee 2004–2008
- ISAC – Human Services Committee 2009
- ISAC – Supervisors Affiliate 2009–present; 2nd Vice President 2010
- Governor’s Innovation Fund Committee (ISAC recommendation) 2005–2006
- Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities Commission for Iowa (ISAC recommendation) 2009–present

Why are you interested in serving as a NACo officer? Being an officer of NACo will be a way to contribute in a new and meaningful way to NACo. Challenges abound for all elected officials in our present political environment and finding new ways to advance NACo, provide members with valuable learning tools, educate our constituents and other elected officials about county government and promote public service as a high calling are things that I would like to be a part of.

What do you consider to be the two or three most important contributions of NACo in the near future on which the Officers/Executive Committee/Board of Directors should focus? Why?

With a new presidential campaign only a year away, I think the need for partnerships remains a challenge for NACo. I believe that with similar commitment to activities such as those in the 2008 Restore the Partnership campaign, we can play an important role in the upcoming presidential campaign. It is vital that all presidential candidates, as well as the president, see county government as a meaningful partner in providing services to our citizens. This must happen at all levels of government. Our citizens want government to work and to work for them. That is often best exemplified in county government.

Evaluating educating our members in the teamwork and collaboration we are seeing in the Restore the Partnership campaign, NACo faces new challenges in exciting Congress about the importance of local government, the need for collaborative efforts, and broadening NACo members’ involvement in these educational and lobbying efforts. There are few areas in which local government does not intersect with the federal government. The relationships that are built at NACo and with NACo are important in moving our local government and our communications will be important if we are to improve our service delivery.

Building pride in public service and renewing trust in our public servants is important if we are to create the changes that will allow us to sustain the governmental services that our community has come to expect. We must become better at planning our futures, identifying new ways of doing things, and integrating change into our lives as public officials. We must also reach out to a younger generation so that they believe that public service is a calling and demand that they be active participants.

What do you consider to be the two or three most important issues local officials are facing in your counties that should be on the NACo agenda? Why?

It is an ever-growing challenge to run for public office. Learning new ways of doing business and addressing growing budgetary challenges no matter where one lives is becoming a constant way of life for most elected officials. Learning and sharing how others are confronting the constant demands of public life is valuable. Learning to use technology and to advance technology in our workplaces and our communities must continue. Technology and integrating technology into more of our government services and other communications will be important if we are to improve our service delivery.

What do you consider to be the two or three most important issues local officials are facing in your counties that should be on the NACo agenda? Why?

It is an ever-growing challenge to run for public office. Learning new ways of doing business and addressing growing budgetary challenges no matter where one lives is becoming a constant way of life for most elected officials. Learning and sharing how others are confronting the constant demands of public life is valuable. Learning to use technology and to advance technology in our workplaces and our communities must continue. Technology and integrating technology into more of our government services and other communications will be important if we are to improve our service delivery.

Building pride in public service and renewing trust in our public servants is important if we are to create the changes that will allow us to sustain the governmental services that our community has come to expect. We must become better at planning our futures, identifying new ways of doing things, and integrating change into our lives as public officials. We must also reach out to a younger generation so that they believe that public service is a calling and demand that they be active participants.

What do you consider to be the two or three most important issues local officials are facing in your counties that should be on the NACo agenda? Why?

It is an ever-growing challenge to run for public office. Learning new ways of doing business and addressing growing budgetary challenges no matter where one lives is becoming a constant way of life for most elected officials. Learning and sharing how others are confronting the constant demands of public life is valuable. Learning to use technology and to advance technology in our workplaces and our communities must continue. Technology and integrating technology into more of our government services and other communications will be important if we are to improve our service delivery.

Building pride in public service and renewing trust in our public servants is important if we are to create the changes that will allow us to sustain the governmental services that our community has come to expect. We must become better at planning our futures, identifying new ways of doing things, and integrating change into our lives as public officials. We must also reach out to a younger generation so that they believe that public service is a calling and demand that they be active participants.

What do you consider to be the two or three most important issues local officials are facing in your counties that should be on the NACo agenda? Why?

It is an ever-growing challenge to run for public office. Learning new ways of doing business and addressing growing budgetary challenges no matter where one lives is becoming a constant way of life for most elected officials. Learning and sharing how others are confronting the constant demands of public life is valuable. Learning to use technology and to advance technology in our workplaces and our communities must continue. Technology and integrating technology into more of our government services and other communications will be important if we are to improve our service delivery.

Building pride in public service and renewing trust in our public servants is important if we are to create the changes that will allow us to sustain the governmental services that our community has come to expect. We must become better at planning our futures, identifying new ways of doing things, and integrating change into our lives as public officials. We must also reach out to a younger generation so that they believe that public service is a calling and demand that they be active participants.
Financial Services News

Are County Employees Missing ‘Hidden Treasure?’

With income-tax time approaching, county employees might miss a bright spot on their returns. That bright spot is the Saver’s Credit, a hidden gem in the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 (EGTRRA) that was made permanent and indexed for inflation by the Pension Protection Act of 2006 (PPA). Qualified workers can claim the credit to receive up to $1,000 tax credit for retirement savings.

The problem is most workers don’t know about it. According to the 11th annual Transamerica Retirement Survey, only 12 percent of full-time American workers with annual household incomes of less than $50,000 are aware of the Saver’s Credit. Chances are, if your employees are not aware of the credit, they’re not claiming it.

The credit benefits county employees by making participation in their deferred compensation plan a lot more affordable — helping some to continue saving for retirement and others to start.

By helping your employees understand the value of the Saver’s Credit, you’re helping them stay on a path toward long-term financial security. You also reinforce the goodwill you’re working to earn and the security. You also reinforce the example for our communities that we must renew our members to the next generation.

Serves a significant cross-section of county employees by making participation in the credit, they’re not claiming it. The 11th annual Transamerica Retirement Survey, only 12 percent of full-time American workers with annual household incomes of less than $50,000 are aware of the Saver’s Credit. Chances are, if your employees are not aware of the credit, they’re not claiming it.

The credit benefits county employees by making participation in their deferred compensation plan a lot more affordable — helping some to continue saving for retirement and others to start.

By helping your employees understand the value of the Saver’s Credit, you’re helping them stay on a path toward long-term financial security. You also reinforce the goodwill you’re working to earn among your employees. They see that you’re committed to everyone’s success through your deferred compensation plan, not just those who “can afford it.”

Eligibility depends on the participant’s filing status and modified adjusted gross income. Through the Saver’s Credit, the federal government in effect gives qualified participants up to half of what they contribute each year, up to a maximum total credit of $1,000.

So as county employees are filing their taxes, it is important that they claim this credit if they qualify. And if they are looking for a reason to continue or start saving for retirement in 2011, the Saver’s Credit may be it. As the nearby table shows, the credit covers a significant cross-section of wage earners — households with earnings as high as $56,500 can qualify for it.

Get Help for Promoting the Saver’s Credit

NACo and the provider of the NACO Deferred Compensation Plan, Nationwide Retirement Solutions, can help if you would like to find out more information about the Saver’s Credit and how saving for retirement through a deferred compensation plan can benefit your employees.

For additional information about the NACO Deferred Compensation Program, please contact Lisa Cole at lcole@naco.org or by phone 202.942.4270, or contact Louie Watson with Nationwide at lwatson.2q@nationwide.com or by phone 614.854.8895.


Who qualifies for the Saver’s Credit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filing Status / Adjusted Gross Income</th>
<th>Amount of Credit</th>
<th>Filing Status / Adjusted Gross Income</th>
<th>Amount of Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>$0 to $3,500</td>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>$0 to $3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20% of first $2,000 deferred</td>
<td>$25,126 to $27,000</td>
<td>20% of first $2,000 deferred</td>
<td>$25,126 to $27,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% of first $2,000 deferred</td>
<td>$27,001 to $41,625</td>
<td>10% of first $2,000 deferred</td>
<td>$27,001 to $41,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Household</td>
<td>$0 to $17,000</td>
<td>Head of Household</td>
<td>$0 to $17,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single/Others</td>
<td>$0 to $25,125</td>
<td>Single/Others</td>
<td>$0 to $25,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$0 to $25,125</td>
<td>$16,751 to $18,000</td>
<td>$0 to $25,125</td>
<td>$16,751 to $18,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Linda Langston seeks NACo 2nd vice presidency

LANGSTON from page 10

that we can get important work done by working together in an atmosphere of respect and trust. I think NACO has offered us valuable education, networking, ideas and structure to advance both civility and the work we do to improve our communities and the lives of citizens. This must continue.

What measures would you recommend to increase and retain NACO membership and to encourage broad participation in NACO by elected officials and employees of NACO member counties? What specific role would you be willing to assume to help build and sustain membership in NACO?

Education and educational opportunities are key to promoting membership in NACO. Webinars, conferences, and the advancements in the NACO website are a host of membership benefits.

I also think that programs such as the CV5/CaseMark Drug card are real driving forces to promote membership and membership retention. Continuing to work with our sponsors to find new opportunities to leverage our power as a large organization will also enhance commitment to membership.

In these fiscally demanding times, people are always looking for efficiencies and ways to do things that they might not be able to do on their own. Unique services such as Network of Care can also be another tool in our membership expansion.

As monies are tight and budgets shrink, we must be mindful of constituents’ concerns related to our travel. Special efforts must be made regarding the benefits and opportunities of conference participation prior to the conferences, as well as after. Locations of conferences must be key in maximizing travel dollars.

Since most government travel and training dollars are constrained, NACO leadership opportunities and webinars offer a relatively inexpensive way to stretch the limited resources within our budgets.

It is important for members of the Executive Committee to be seen at State Association meetings. The promotional activities that are done in the states should also be supported by those who are already active NACO members. I would be willing to commit to going to as many State Association meetings as possible. If those people who are involved in NACO leadership could get together at their state meetings, they might develop outreach activities.

The LUC and RAC committees have done a wonderful job in advancing the priorities that are unique to their constituencies. I do believe there might need to be some consideration and thought given to a group that is neither large urban or rural. There are very many counties/communities that are in-between. Each of these groups has its own challenges and commonalities. I would be happy to work on the development of this idea.

Finally, there may be opportunities for the development of a survey that would help NACO, its members and general citizens understand what they think about local government, what they want to know, and what is important to them. This could be the work of the Membership Committee. This was developed in relation to the cultural community by Americans for the Arts and may be able to be duplicated by NACO. I would also be happy to assist in the development of this kind of program or serve on the Membership Committee.

Boulder County, Colo.

Talking Brings Immigrants into Community

BY CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Boulder County, Colo. is almost 600 miles from the closest international border, yet it has become a diverse multicultural area. Residents from 70 countries speak more than 40 languages and live in a county whose foreign-born population is increasing faster than the U.S.-born population.

Boulder County became part of a tier of inland immigrant magnets in the early 2000s, along with Atlanta and Chicago. “It’s a place where they knew family and knew there would be a community for them,” said Leslie Irwin, a policy analyst for the county commissioners who served as program director for Dialogues on Immigrant Integration, an amalgamation of various social service agencies.

There were jobs, too. Farming, hospitality and service industries offered common entry jobs traditionally filled by immigrants. But Irwin said immigrants frequently stayed in the communities they knew, and divisions among groups became entrenched.

“We noticed immigrants were coming to Boulder, but weren’t integrating into the community,” she said. The Colorado Trust, which had been funding grants for service delivery, changed the terms to immigrant integration, she added. “That was the impetus that got this started.”

A 22-person steering committee representing various stakeholders planned Immigrant Integration Collaborative (IIC), which was funded with $300,000 over four years. The committee settled on three goals:

• building understanding between immigrant and established communities through inclusive community conversations;
• improving relationships between communities; and
• helping to generate cooperative, community-based actions for addressing issues related to immigrant integration.

In 2006, the dialogues debuted as a series of facilitated discussions starting with individual introductions and conversation starters, followed by open-ended questions to start a discussion. The goal was to create mutual understanding.

Irwin described the program as a structured, but safe, dialogue between people who wouldn’t otherwise interact.

The county offered free child care, language interpretation and food to encourage people to participate. All events were free, held in schools or nonprofits’ offices and open to the public.

The program was timely. Immigrant groups became active in Colorado in 2006, and the state legislature passed anti-immigrant legislation.

“It was a charged and emotional time for lots of people, but the way we handled it gave us a chance to address it from our perspective,” Irwin said. “We gave immigrants a voice to explain their story, that immigration wasn’t always as simple as getting a visa and moving. Other people could explain how they felt about the importance of obeying the law. Sometimes there would be no agreement, but people came away with understanding of the complexity of the solution.”

The program was successful in a number of ways. More than 2,250 people in Boulder County participated. Evaluation forms overwhelmingly indicated that respondents’ understanding of other cultures increased. Friendships developed among different groups, and the U.S.-born participants became much more sympathetic to immigrants’ perspectives.

Participants returned to dialogues to learn how to facilitate similar discussions in other places, which prompted the DII personnel to create a capacity-building how-to manual so other communities could adapt the strategy for their own use.

In 2010, the Colorado Trust grant ended, but the effort continued at the University of Colorado and Boulder, which adapted dialogues for its Residential Academic Program.

Professor Ellen Aiken implemented dialogues in the program where she teaches, where housekeeping and dining workers, who are mostly immigrants, work and maintain the building. She saw that despite the cultural diversity in the building, there was little interaction. After beginning dialogues in 2007, she saw benefits for both students and staff. The students gained an appreciation for the staff members’ cultures. The staff members gained a little more visibility from the students.

“The staff told us there were very few messes made by the students and they believed it was attributable to the relationship the students and staff had,” said Greg Boothe, former Housing and Dining Services manager.

For more information about the IIC, contact Carmen Atliano atilanoc@bouldercolorado.gov or 303.441.3141.

(Copys Use Social Media to Fight Crime

As the use of social media has increased, recent data shows that local law enforcement agencies are seeking to integrate the use of social media tools into their everyday operations.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police recently conducted a survey on the use of social media by local law enforcement. The survey addressed current practices as well as the issues and challenges law enforcement agencies encountered in adopting social media in local jurisdictions.

The respondents include 728 local law enforcement agencies representing 48 states and the District of Columbia. Of those surveyed, 81 percent said they use some type of social media.

Those agencies that use social media are not only using it to inform the public, but also to investigate crimes. In addition to using social media to notify the public of crimes (44 percent) or notifying the public of emergencies (40 percent), 62 percent of respondents said they use it for investigating crimes, 40 percent for soliciting tips on crimes and 37 percent for vetting or background investigations.

Although agencies are still adapting to find the best use of social media to conduct investigations, some agencies have already had success. Slightly more than 45 percent of respondents indicated that the use of social media by the agency had helped to solve a crime. As agencies continue to explore the best practices of exploiting these tools, this number is expected to grow.

Overwhelmingly, Facebook was the most popular tool with almost 67 percent of the responding agencies having a Facebook page. Some agencies are also operating other social media pages including Twitter (30 percent), Nixle (30 percent), MySpace (22 percent) and YouTube (18 percent).

Despite the increase in use, agencies still faced barriers when developing and implementing a social media policy. Respondents indicated they needed to overcome security concerns (47 percent), resource constraints in terms of time (45 percent), privacy concerns (42 percent) and resource constraints.

See NETWORKING page 13
News From the Nation’s Counties

ARKANSAS
Former game show host Bob Barker has weighed in on PU-LASKI COUNTY’s proposal for a spay and neuter program.

Barker, who for decades reminded viewers to spay and neuter their pets at the end of every broadcast of The Price is Right, called County Judge Buddy Villines to voice his support for the proposal, the Arkansas Times reported.

CALIFORNIA
Matt Rexroad, chairman of the YOLO COUNTY Board of Supervisors, says he’ll introduce his own version of the so-called crash tax enacted by the Sacramento City Council.

That measure assesses a $495 fee to out-of-town victims of accidents within the city limits. Rexroad said the measure is unfair and would affect drivers when accidents might be reported.

The controversial proposal was enacted to offset the Sacramento fire department’s cost of responding to accidents. The fees would raise $300,000 to $500,000, enough to cover the cost of responding.

GEORGIA
ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY commissioners are considering creating a civil code enforcement board made up of non-lawyers that would rule instead of a judge on quality-of-life violations.

Quality-of-life cases such as parking a car in a front yard or leaving trash cans on the curb for more than a day are now heard in the municipal court.

The board would try such cases as civil offenses, not crimes, making it easier to force people to testify and lowering the burden of proof from beyond a reasonable doubt to a preponderance of evidence.

The board could not hand down as large fines as a judge and would need an outside attorney to advise it on procedure and other legal matters, he said.

FLORIDA
To bolster its crime-fighting arsenal, the MIAMI-DADE COUNTY Police Department is in the process of purchasing a drone, an unmanned aircraft akin to the type hovering over the battlefields in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Police officials would use the drones to act as another set of “eyes” as they patrol areas.

Some groups and residents are concerned that a drone may threaten their privacy, but experts say a drone might be very effective in SWAT or search and rescue situations.

LOUISIANA
A whistleblower hotline started by JEFFERSON PARISH President John Young has led to five arrests of people for stealing from parish government.

Those arrested include two parish employees, a parish contractor and a fire chief.

“We’ve received dozens of anonymous letters and tips, and we’ve looked into every one,” Young said at a news conference. “The message here is that this administration has zero tolerance when it comes to illegal or unethical activity.”

The alleged thefts range from $100 worth of dog food to $125,000 in fraudulent charges by a parish contractor.

New media strategy. Respondents indicated that social media with 66 percent indicating resource constraints in personnel, and 62 percent indicating resource constraints in personnel, and 62 percent indicating resource constraints in personnel.

MICHIGAN
The RAMSEY COUNTY Board of Commissioners voted to begin discussions with the Minnesota Vikings about building a new stadium, according to the Associated Press.

The stadium would be located at the site of a former army ammunition plant in Arden Hills, about 10 miles northeast of Minneapolis. Ramsey County is the first municipality to officially express interest in becoming the Vikings’ next home.

Team officials told the AP that the Metrodome in Hennepin County is outdated and no longer profitable as an NFL venue.

NEW JERSEY
The CAPE MAY COUNTY Library and Atlantic Cape Community College are offering Basic Job Readiness Computer Training classes for job seekers geared toward improving their computer and job search skills.

The training, beginning in March, is part of a $5.1 million Technology Opportunity Program and Information Administration American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant to support the New Jersey State Library’s Broadband Technology Opportunity Program (BTOP).

NEW YORK
It’s a nice problem to have for WARREN COUNTY supervisors: What to do with nearly $1 million in surplus occupancy tax money that county officials did not know existed.

The bed tax money comes from a 4 percent surcharge on hotel and motel rooms, and is required to be spent for tourism-related expenses.

County Treasurer Frank O’Keefe said the money came from unused occupancy tax money that was put toward the Tourism Department’s budget, but was not spent, over the years, The Post-Star reported.

NORTH CAROLINA
• The U.S. Navy will not pursue building a landing strip in north-eastern North Carolina until at least 2014, a development hailed by CAMDEN and CURRITUCK counties.

One of the five potential sites being evaluated for an outlying landing field (OLF) was in Camden County, overlapping the border of Currituck County.

“The Navy made the right decision,” said Vance Aydlett Jr., chairman of Currituck County Board of Commissioners. “The Navy promised that it would not build an OLF in a community that did not want it and today it followed through on the promise.”

A Navy spokesman said the search for a site will now focus on the West Coast, where the Navy plans to locate air squadrions.

COLUMBUS COUNTY commissioners have joined in an employee weight-loss challenge that mimics the popular television show The Biggest Loser.

The six-week competition was conceived by the county Health Department. Each participant contributes $5 and the “biggest loser” will take home the pot.

Columbus is ranked last among Tarrant Health in health outcomes.

OREGON
Music downloads that are free and legal? Why, you could call them Freegal.

Someone already did, and

See NEWS FROM page 15
Attend free
WEBINARS
at NACo

Participate in timely and relevant education opportunities from the convenience of your desk.

Topics include:

• Road Safety
• Water and Land Use
• County Sustainability
• Health Reform

• Public Safety
• Leadership Development
• and MUCH MORE ...

Register for upcoming webinars and access archived recordings at

www.naco.org/webinars

Only NACo members may register for the Leadership Series Webinars. Take note of your username and password to sign up the next time you’re online.
The H.R. Doctor Is In

When the Best and the Brightest Leave

Government employees work in the ancient and venerable organizational model called bureaucracy. That means, among other things, many rules codified in formal law and administrative regulation, including civil service rules and labor agreements. It also means informal rules, traditions and past practices. Bureaucracy means hierarchical structure — the stuff of which organizational charts are made. In theory, another of the hallmarks of bureaucracy is hiring, promoting and compensating based on merit rather than nepotism, political cronyism or spoils, sexual harassment or unlawful discrimination.

The bureaucratic model is really at the center of the current heated political debate over what is economically viable and sustainable in public agencies. It is this model and the accompanying legislation, court decisions and labor agreements that have led to a growing clamor to reduce pension entitlements, automatic pay increases, civil service job protections and bargaining rights.

The outcry, or perhaps jealousy, has been around for many years. It is rising again driven by economic unrest and worries about the future. Do these definitions of what it means to be a public employee really improve government and insure that public service wins out over self service? Or are they the stone-etched remnants of a way of doing business which is outdated, inflexible and pours retardant on the sparks of creativity and innovation?

There is considerable validity to raising these concerns and debating them. They are the material around which demagoguery, pundits and tea parties are organized. How can we have an affordable government in the face of these entrenched financial and entitlement barriers? How can we have a responsive, flexible government in the face of trench warfare between political parties?

Amid the controversy, which will go on for many years, this article will highlight one important aspect of the bureaucratic model called bureaucracy. (If you would like your county’s seal featured, please contact Christopher Johnson at 202.942.4256 or cj@naco.org.)

Leaders in government need these best and brightest more than ever before.

**What’s in a Seal?**

Roanoke County, Va.  
www.roanokecountyva.gov

Roanoke County was established by an act of the Virginia Legislature on March 30, 1838 from the southern part of Botetourt County. It was named for the Roanoke River, which in turn was derived from a Native American term for money. Additional territory was transferred to Roanoke County from Montgomery County in 1845.

In the 1740s, the first Scotch-Irish and German settlers reached the upper Roanoke Valley by traveling from Pennsylvania through the Shenandoah Valley. They were joined by Tidewater Virginians of English ancestry who journeyed up the valleys of the James and Roanoke rivers.

Roanoke County’s pioneering spirit extends to modern times. The county was the first in the state to have curbside recycling. It also has been nationally recognized for governmental cooperation, quality of life and support of the Explore Park.

The seal shows an Indian pioneer along the Roanoke River where the county is located.

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

**Pa. counties seek mandate relief from state**

**WASHINGTON**

Indigent veterans would benefit from a bill being pushed by Kitsap County officials. The measure would separate tax collections for the county’s Veterans Assistance Fund from the general fund levy.

County Commissioner Josh Brown said veterans’ needs currently compete with other services covered by the general fund, such as public safety and law enforcement, according to the Kitsap Sun. Isolating the discussion of the veterans fund tax rate would decrease the competition.

The bill’s lead sponsor, state Rep. Larry Seagquist, said: “I continue to be concerned about the growing number of veterans and their families that are indigent. We just need to make sure that we’re extra careful to watch out for them.”

(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 e-mail ctaylor@naco.org or cban@naco.org.)
"Contact Us" provides members with information and answers!

NACo has a free, easy way to ask questions and get information from NACo staff. Just use the "Contact Us" feature on the NACo website to e-mail your question to us. It’s in the upper right corner of the NACo website ...

www.NACo.org

If you have a question about meetings, conferences, the website, legislative issues, or want to make an address change, just click "Contact Us" and send an e-mail. Of course, you could also give us a call. The phone number is listed there, too.