**N E W S R E L E A S E**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** [DATE]
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**County leaders focus on building stronger counties for a stronger America at national conference**

***U.S. Secretaries of Defense, Transportation address more than 2,500 officials at NACo Annual Conference and Exposition***

**Charlotte, N.C. –** [NAME AND TITLE] joined more than 2,500 elected and appointed officials to participate in the 80th National Association of Counties (NACo) [Annual Conference](http://www.naco.org/meetings/participate/NACoAnnual/Pages/Annual-Conference.aspx), where attendees adopted positions on pressing federal policies affecting counties and worked with one another to identify innovative solutions to challenges facing American communities. The conference was held in Mecklenburg County (Charlotte), N.C. July 10–13.

[INSERT QUOTE ABOUT THE VALUE OF ATTENDING NACo’s ANNUAL CONFERENCE]

Several workshops and meetings addressed counties’ role in maintaining the nation’s transportation and infrastructure systems. NACo President Riki Hokama, council member, Maui County, Hawaii, made [Transportation and Infrastructure](http://naco.org/sites/default/files/NACo-Transportation-Infrastructure.pdf) the signature initiative of his 2014-2015 term.

“NACo’s Annual Conference is the largest opportunity for counties to learn from one another, share best practices and set national policy priorities for the year ahead,” said Hokama. “Counties work to strengthen infrastructure networks across the country, including roads, bridges, airports, broadband and other systems that keep our communities moving forward.”

Counties are responsible for building and maintaining 45 percent of the nation’s roads, 40 percent of bridges and a third of the nation’s transit systems and airports.

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx urged conference participants to continue efforts on Capitol Hill to pass a multi-year surface transportation reauthorization.

“When we starve our counties of the resources they need to keep America’s infrastructure moving, it literally starves our country. And we shouldn’t do it,” Foxx said. “We need a long-term bill.”

U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter discussed the role counties play in supporting the armed forces and their families and in building the “force of the future.” Counties and local communities “are the source of the American military’s enduring strength, because you provide our men and women in uniform the preparation, the care and the purpose they need to defend our country,” he said.

“Our men and women don’t come from the Pentagon,” the defense secretary said. “They come from your communities. We recruit from your communities. Our service members and their families live in your communities while they’re serving, including our Guardsmen and reservists. And when they leave military service, they are, once again, in your communities.”

NACo’s conference, held in a different county each July, provides opportunities for county leaders and staff to learn, network and guide the direction of the association’s national advocacy efforts.

There were more than three dozen educational workshops that explored topics including the pros and cons of body cameras in law enforcement, how automated vehicles and mobile technology affect transportation patterns, medical and recreational marijuana policy impacts on counties, legislative updates and new research findings for counties.

[NAME] participated in several workshops including [INSERT INFO ON WORKSHOPS/SESSIONS ATTENDED]

[INSERT QUOTE ABOUT WHAT YOU LEARNED AND HOW IT WILL HELP RESIDENTS]

Conference delegates discussed federal policy and legislation on a wide range of key topics like transportation and infrastructure; rural and urban development; energy, environment and land use; public safety; emergency preparedness and response; housing and community development; health and other topics.  The resolutions that were adopted by conference delegates will serve as NACo’s official policy positions – the American County Platform – for the next 12 months.

For more information, visit: [www.naco.org/conferencedaily](http://www.naco.org/conferencedaily).

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*The* [*National Association of Counties*](http://www.naco.org) *(NACo) unites America’s 3,069 county governments.  Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials together to advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new leadership skills, pursue transformational county solutions, enrich the public’s understanding of county government, and exercise exemplary leadership in public service.  More information at:* [*http://www.naco.org*](http://www.naco.org)*.*