



Photo courtesy of the National Park Foundation

The nation's Christmas tree shines bright from its post on the Ellipse in Washington, D.C.

RAC sets 2011 rural priorities

By **ERIK JOHNSTON**
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

A key factor in the dramatic shift of power in the U.S. House of Representatives was Republican

victories in 39 rural congressional districts previously held by Democrats.

NACo's Rural Action Caucus (RAC) Steering Committee met recently to analyze this new political landscape and decided to focus its advocacy efforts in 2011 on five key issues. Farm bill reauthorization, surface transportation-aviation reauthorization, rural health care, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination

Act-PILT and food safety are RAC's 2011 key legislative priorities.

The caucus will focus on educating Congress, especially new members, about these rural concerns and

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QuickTakes

Counties with Holiday Season Towns

Christmas (Gila County, Ariz.)
Eggnog (Garfield County, Utah)
Holiday (Pasco County, Fla.)
Noel (McDonald County, Mo.)
North Pole (Essex County, N.Y.)
Rudolph (Wood County, Wisc.)
Santa (Benewah County, Idaho)
Wiseman (Izard County, Ark.)

Source: Holiday Season Towns, www.accuracyproject.org

Non-violent offenders receive holiday 'get out of jail' card

By **CHARLIE BAN**
STAFF WRITER

With family visiting, friends throwing parties and holiday cheer abounding, the slammer is last place most people want to spend December.

Santa Clara County, Calif. is offering residents with some minor legal troubles a way around the booking process this month. Anyone with a non-violent misdemeanor or a traffic citation can turn themselves in to their law enforcement agency

within the county — the sheriff's department or municipal police departments — and in return will get a citation and avoid jail time.

"This program serves us in a few ways," Sgt. Rick Sung said. "It saves us the booking and housing costs of containing these people, and it keeps us from having to spend valuable time and money searching for them, especially because they are non-violent offenses."

See NO JAIL page 2

Board approves \$20 million budget, 2011 legislative priorities

By **TOM GOODMAN**
PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIRECTOR

The NACo Board of Directors approved a \$20 million budget for 2011, key legislative priorities for next year and a strategic plan that guides programs for future years at its meeting Dec. 3-4 in Tarrant County, Texas.

NACo Executive Director Larry E. Naake told the Board in his budget presentation that the association is "ending 2010 strong financially." NACo is forecast to end the year with a surplus of \$495,000, which is \$434,000 higher than the \$61,000 surplus budgeted. Increased revenue in some areas and savings in others resulted in the higher surplus number, he said.

Naake said NACo is also in this positive financial situation because of diversified revenue sources. For-profit programs provide 47 percent of the revenue, while dues contribute slightly below 20 percent. Naake noted that for the fourth consecutive year dues will not increase, and conference registration rates will remain the same for the third year in a row.

The FY11 budget, which begins Jan. 1, provides a \$268,000 surplus

that is the result of additional non-dues revenue and strategic expense cuts. Included in the budget is a membership initiative that will pay all non-member dues from a special fund, a 3 percent merit increase for staff, a 3 percent employer match for staff retirement accounts as well as capital purchases of \$74,500, a decrease from \$245,000 in 2010.

The Board also approved as part of the budget, a relaxation of the 3.5 percent surplus requirement. The easing of the surplus was sought because NACo will end 2010 with nearly \$20 million in reserves, and meeting the requirement would require additional cuts of \$500,000.

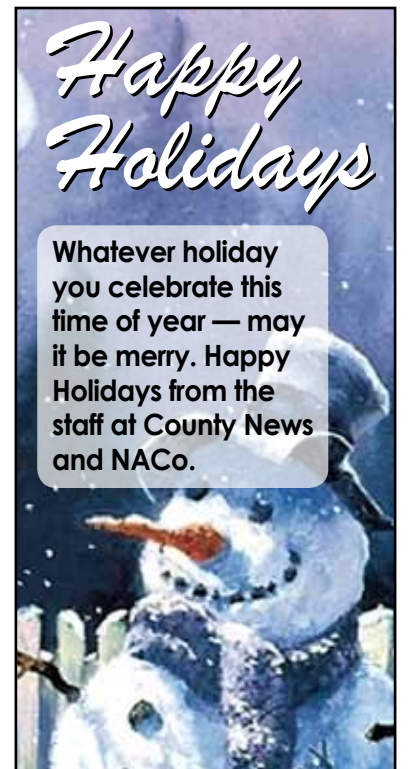
The key legislative priorities are:

- Promote county fiscal relief and save jobs
- Save jobs by repealing the 3 percent tax withholding requirement passed by Congress
- Support job creation by enacting aviation and surface transportation program reauthorizations
- Support county health priorities

See NACo BOARD page 6

Happy
Holidays

Whatever holiday you celebrate this time of year — may it be merry. Happy Holidays from the staff at County News and NACo.



RAC will educate new Congress on PILT-SRS 'county payments'

RAC from page 1

will ramp up efforts to influence administration officials who are writing rules and regulations that will affect rural counties.

"It is more critical than ever for rural counties to educate Congress and the administration about rural county priorities," said Keith Langenhahn, board chair, Marathon County, Wis. and RAC chair. "I ask my fellow rural county officials from across the country to become involved in RAC and work with us to advance these priorities."

RAC will work to ensure that both the surface transportation reauthorization and aviation reauthorization take into account the key role of rural counties in the nation's integrated transportation system. RAC will also emphasize the need for multi-year authorizations that give counties certainty in their planning and budgeting processes.

Raising the profile of NACo's farm bill priorities is also critical to addressing rural infrastructure needs. NACo supports enhanced provisions aimed at bolstering renewable energy, beginning and young farmers, and flexibly funded

rural development programs in the next farm bill. This work will be complemented by a simultaneous focus on securing strong appropriations for USDA Rural Development programs.

USDA Rural Development's grant and loan programs bolster local initiatives to enhance and maintain water and wastewater infrastructure, community facilities, broadband infrastructure, rural business programs and rural housing. The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) and PILT are also critical to many rural counties. RAC will work with NACo's Public Lands Steering Committee and Western Interstate Region to support full funding of PILT and SRS.

RAC will also support NACo priorities within health reform implementation, with a particular focus on funding for critical access hospitals, the Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage (FMAP) and the shortage of medical professionals in rural communities. Lastly, RAC will urge Congress to focus on improving food safety regulations, especially through enhanced inspection standards of imported food products.

RAC holds its annual meeting to establish priorities that can influence federal legislation, regulations and funding affecting rural county government programs and services. The meeting was held Nov. 18–20 in Dane County, Wis. and was hosted by the Wisconsin Counties Association.

Meeting participants interacted with policy experts who helped RAC strategize on its priorities, including Paul Dietmann, deputy secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, as well as key staff from the offices of Sen. Herb Kohl (D-Wis.) and Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.).

USDA's Wisconsin Rural Development State Director Stan Gruszynski provided an update on federal rural development priorities. Rick Klemme, dean and director of cooperative extension, University of Wisconsin-Extension, discussed the status of rural America, and the tools and resources the nation's land grant universities have to help counties face upcoming challenges.

NACo's Rural Action Caucus is a bipartisan coalition of rural elected officials, who strive to enhance the quality of life in rural counties through effective federal legislation.

(For more information or to join RAC, contact: Erik Johnston at 202.942.4230 or ejohnston@naco.org)



Photo by Sharon Larson

Keith Langenhahn, (second from left) and his wife, Paula, show off their dairy cattle to NACo members and staff: (from left) Erik Johnston, NACo associate legislative director; Ed Rosado, NACo legislative affairs director; Don Larson, commissioner, Brookings County, S.D.; and NACo President Glen Whitley.

Minor offenders turn selves in to avoid jail

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"It's also good for the citizens because they don't have to spend time in jail, and can spend more time with their families around the holidays."

Santa Clara County has been offering this option for five years and has processed more than 1,700 offenders in that time, with 360 taking the county up on it last year.

Sung said most people come in with petty theft or vandalism charges. The Sheriff's Department hasn't spent any money publicizing it, he said, and instead is relying on the media and word of mouth to spread news of the program.

"We're not going to spend any money promoting this," Sung said. "We're saving money on the costs of not having to track these guys down and hold them, and it's to their benefit to take us up on it, provided they don't have a violent offense or resisting arrest hanging over them."

NACo recognizes Keith Langenhahn



Photo by Erik Johnston

Keith Langenhahn, board chair, Marathon County, Wis. shows off his recognition plaque from NACo. Also pictured are his colleagues, Don Larson, commissioner, Brookings, S.D. (l) and Kenneth Dahlstedt, Skagit County, Wash. (r).

During the 2010 RAC Annual Meeting in Dane County, Wis., NACo President Glen Whitley recognized RAC Chair Keith Langenhahn as the longest serving steering committee chair in NACo history. Langenhahn has since resigned as RAC chair to focus on his duties as Central Region representative on the NACo Executive Committee (Lu Barron, Linn County, Iowa supervisor, is the new RAC chair).

Langenhahn, board chair in Marathon County, Wis., served as Agriculture and Rural Affairs Steering Committee chair from 2002–2009 and as RAC Chair from 2009–2010.

Whitley presented a plaque from NACo and a letter from U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack commending Langenhahn for his years of service to NACo and his tireless efforts to advocate for rural counties and agricultural issues.

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Food safety overhaul passes Senate; hurdles remain

The Senate passed the Food Safety Modernization Act (S. 510), on a bipartisan 73–25 vote Nov. 30. The House passed its own food safety bill, H.R. 2749 over a year ago, but is expected to accept the Senate bill, making it possible for President Barack Obama to sign the bill into law this year.

The legislation would give the Food and Drug Administration more authority to recall tainted products, increase inspections of food processors and require producers to follow stricter standards for keeping food safe. NACo does not have policy on the overall bill, but has worked to support key provisions.

NACo supported the establishment of a national collaborative science-based food safety system that will integrate and fund food safety activities, provide support for county authorities who have primary front-line responsibility for the inspection and compliance of food service establishments and

address consumers' behavior related to safe food handling practices.

Local health departments have been challenged as local government budgets are stretched, and support of workforce and capacity at the local level is critical. S. 510 helps to strengthen local, state and federal partnerships by creating a working group on food-borne illness surveillance and requires the U.S. Health and Human Services Department to develop and implement strategies to leverage and enhance the food safety and defense capacities of public health agencies.

In addition, NACo strongly supports the intent of Title III, which seeks to strengthen federal authority to improve the safety of imported food. Full funding of this title is critical to ensure that the law provides rigorous inspection of foreign food facilities.

Some original supporters of the bill opposed final passage of the Senate version after Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) successfully added

an amendment to exempt smaller-scale farming and processing operations from some of the bill's new regulatory requirements. Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.), opposed the bill overall, protesting that the measure will impose unnecessary new regulations and costs on the

food industry without reducing the rate of food-borne illnesses.

Several hurdles remain for the food safety overhaul. First, the bill could be headed back to the Senate after Democrats violated a provision requiring tax provisions to originate in the House. Secondly, House mem-

bers could insist that the legislation go to a conference committee to resolve differences, potentially running out the clock. Finally, even if the bill becomes law, appropriators will be hard pressed to find additional funds next year to pay for greatly expanding federal FDA inspections.

2011 Achievement Award applications available online

By KATHRYN MURPHY
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

Applications for the 2011 NACo Achievement Award program are now available. The annual program is non-competitive and recognizes innovative county government programs. Since it is not competitive, each submission is judged on its own merits based on the criteria outlined in the application information.

Last year, more than 470 programs were recognized from 107 counties in 31 states.

The Achievement Award program provides a way for counties to recognize not only innovative programs, but also the dedicated employees who make these programs successful.

"As the economy continues to



flounder, counties are taking innovative steps to provide services and programs to their residents," said Jacqueline Byers, NACo research director. "Sharing innovation through the Achievement Award program is a way to help other counties with their own problems and also a way to recognize your hard-working employees for their successes."

The application process includes the completion of an online form that requires submitting con-

tact information and the title and category of the program. Payment by credit card can also be made online, but checks and purchase orders may still be mailed.

The program description and any supplemental materials must still be mailed along with the e-mailed confirmation page. All applications and materials must be postmarked by Feb. 11, 2011.

Since the program's inception in 1970, the achievement awards have honored thousands of county government initiatives that have improved service delivery, achieved greater cost efficiency, provided better customer service, and helped to develop a better-trained work force.

For more information including the 2011 application instructions, please visit www.naco.org/achievementawards.

This Month in ... County News

County News celebrates NACo's 75th Anniversary with a look back at the issues and events that affected counties over the past several decades.

★ December ★

1984

- The U.S. Supreme Court case *Williamson County Regional Planning Commission v. Hamilton Bank of Johnson City* left counties worried about thousands of dollars in monetary judgments that could be found against them and other local governments.

The case, which stemmed from a dispute over zoning regulation in Williamson County, Tenn. could have left counties open to damage suits if regulatory actions that were overturned in court were found to have resulted in financial loss to the complainant.

An *amicus* brief filed by the State and Local Legal Center on behalf of NACo and other groups said, "If the issue is decided adversely to the (county), the costs of government at every level may vastly increase, and the ability of government to regulate in the public interest may be crippled."

- A Treasury Department proposal for tax reform prohibited federal taxpayers from deducting state and local taxes on their annual returns.

In addition, interest on bonds issued by state and local governments for economic development, low-interest mortgages and hospitals would no longer be exempt from federal taxes.

Implicit in the Treasury Department report was the assumption that the deductibility of state and local taxes is a subsidy of state and local government.

1995

- The NACo board endorsed a new 10-year contract with PEBSCO and Nationwide Insurance, extending the NACo Section 457 Deferred Compensation Program. The NACo Financial Services Center executed an agreement naming PEBSCO as its "sector partner" for retirement savings and related employee savings programs.

(This Month in County News is compiled by Charlie Ban, staff writer, and Christopher Johnson, editorial assistant.)

*Drive your future forward.
(And theirs too.)*

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Nationwide/NACo 2011 College Scholarship

For more information go to
www.naco.org/retirementscholarship or www.nrsforu.com/scholarship
 Submission deadline: January 31, 2011

Nationwide Retirement Solutions (Nationwide) makes payments to the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the NACo Financial Services Center Partnership (FSC) for services and endorsements that NACo provides for all its members generally related to Nationwide's products and services sold exclusively in public sector retirement markets. More detail about these payments is available at www.nrsforu.com.
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Profiles in Service



» Noah Woods

Board of Directors
Chairman, Board of Commissioners
Robeson County, N.C.

Number of years active in NACo: 20-plus years

Years in public service: 30-plus years

Occupation: Administrator with the public schools system

Education: Master's degree in public administration, MAE Specialist degree

The hardest thing I've ever done: Learn to hit a golf ball straight. I am still trying to figure out how I did it the first time

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Commissioner DuPont Davis from Herford County, Mr. and Mrs. Delton Ray Locklear, and Broughton Oxendine, chairman of the Lumbee River Electric cooperative

A dream I have is to: continue to serve as a county commissioner beyond my 20 years of service and continue to unite the people in Robeson County.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: have never had a rival opponent campaign against me for my seat as county commissioner.

The most adventurous thing that I have ever done is: Remarry, go back to school, and start a new career. All three turned out to be great decisions.

My favorite way to relax is: to visit people who are less fortunate, have few living family members and no social supports.

I'm most proud of: my grandchildren.

Every morning I read: *The Fayetteville Observer*.

My Favorite meal is: chicken, with cake for dessert.

My pet peeve is: dealing with unethical people, especially employees.

My motto is: "Do something for someone each day."

The last book I read: *To Die is to Gain*.

My favorite movie is: *The Horse Whisperer*.

My favorite music is: country.

My favorite president is: John F. Kennedy.

FCC Web page to assist with public safety radio 'narrowbanding' shift

In a little over two years (by Jan. 1, 2013), counties operating their public safety radios in the VHF-UHF 150 megahertz (MHz)–174 MHz and 421 MHz–512 MHz bands will have to migrate their systems from 25 kilohertz (kHz) to 12.5 kHz or narrower channel bandwidth.

This is a hard deadline. Migration of these systems to narrow-band operation will ultimately help reduce spectrum congestion, improve communications and increase access to the spectrum for users of the 150 MHz–174 MHz and 421 MHz–512 MHz bands.

Waiting to migrate county systems to the new bandwidth could prove to be expensive as demand will drive up costs for engineering services, new equipment and other items associated with the transition.



The Web page, www.fcc.gov/narrowbanding, includes the following information:

- narrowbanding benefits for public safety users
- frequently asked questions answering technical and policy-related questions

NACo leaders explore health reform, criminal justice systems

A delegation of NACo members, led by Second Vice President Chris Rodgers and including King County, Wash. Sheriff Sue Rahr, participated in discussions in Washington, D.C. last month about how the new health reform law may provide opportunities to improve the jail health system and community health in counties across the country.

The Nov. 17 conference, which was organized by Community Oriented Correctional Health Services (COCHS), included 175 participants from across the country representing a cross-section of leaders from federal, state and county government as well as policy, corrections, community health and philanthropy.

In his welcoming statement, Steve Rosenberg, president of COCHS, said that health reform under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) presents an opportunity to re-examine how to connect the care provided in the nation's jails back to the communities. He concluded, "We need to ensure that the enormous public investment we are already making in correctional health directly benefits the public health and public safety of our communities."

"Currently, this investment is largely lost soon after people leave jail," he added. "A community-based approach that ensures con-

nectivity of care after release can help protect society's investment and improve public safety."

NACo members were particularly interested in the discussion of health benefits for pre-trial detainees in county jails.

In a draft presented by principal author and Houston attorney Patricia Blair, members of the American Bar Association-Criminal Justice Section, noted that under the PPACA eligibility to participate in health plans is determined solely by income. They then went on to outline various income-level and detention-status scenarios.

Blair and her colleagues suggested that given the record of restricted Medicaid eligibility and coverage that applies to offenders, correctional as well as community and public health agencies should remain vigilant about implementation of the PPACA's provisions by both

federal and state regulatory agencies to ensure that pre-trial detainees retain their eligibility to participate in the range of health-related benefits provided under the new law.

"Counties are excited to work with our state and federal partners — and others — to take full advantage of the opportunity presented by the [PPACA] to maintain health care coverage for pre-trial detainees in our county jails, and to improve the connection between the jails and community-based health and behavioral health services," said Rodgers, Douglas County, Neb. commissioner.

"We are pleased that consensus is beginning to form around proposals that NACo has championed for years and will do whatever we can to build momentum for implementing them in ways that make sense at the local level to improve health, reduce recidivism and save money."

EPA asks court to extend deadline for boiler regs

In a motion filed on Dec. 7, the U.S. Environmental Agency (EPA) asked the federal District Court for the District of Columbia to extend final publication on upcoming emission standard rules for existing and new industrial, commercial and institutional boilers until April 2012. Currently, the EPA is under a court-ordered deadline to produce a final rule by Jan. 16, 2011.

The proposed rule was first published in April 2010. It set up a tight timetable to reduce emissions such as mercury, particulate matter (PM) and carbon monoxide (CO) from boilers. It established emission standards for boilers, based on size of boiler, design (what type of fuel it burns) and whether it was a new or existing boiler.

If the courts grant the extension, this is good news for counties. The boiler rule, as previously proposed, had a significant impact on local governments that used boilers or process heaters to produce electricity or heat. It would affect boilers used in county buildings such as courthouses, jails, schools, hospitals, clinics or other institutions that use natural gas, fuel oil, coal or biomass.

The EPA received more than 4,800 public comments on the proposed boiler rule. These comments shed light on what (if any) current available emission-reduction technologies exist for various boilers. Based on these comments, the EPA believes it needs additional time to completely redraft the rules based on the information received.

EPA has estimated that there are more than 200,000 boilers operating in industrial facilities, commercial buildings, hotels and universities located in highly populated areas and communities across the country.



County News invites Letters to the Editor

Do you have a compliment, complaint or different point of view?
LET US KNOW.

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; cnews@naco.org.

County completes extensive energy-savings project

By CINDY WASSER

COMMUNITY SERVICES ASSISTANT

This month, Berks County, Pa. is finishing the main phase of an extensive energy-savings project that will net the county \$1.2 million per year.

The Berks County Guaranteed Energy Savings Project was undertaken to address several challenges that many counties across the country face today — aging buildings running at low efficiencies, rising energy costs and limited staff for energy conservation.

In all, the project encompasses more than 20 energy conservation measures and reaches nearly every county facility — approximately 1.6 million square feet of building space. Energy conservation measures include HVAC upgrades, lighting retrofits, central plant upgrades and installation of building automation systems, among other improvements.

In 2009, Berks County contracted with an energy savings

company (ESCO) to undertake facility improvements, which would be paid for by guaranteed energy and maintenance savings. This self-funding mechanism makes much-needed capital improvements possible without added costs to county budgets.

Construction costs for the guaranteed energy savings project were estimated at \$11 million. Berks anticipates \$21 million in savings over 15 years from reduced utilities and maintenance costs, or \$1.2 million annually.

With that knowledge, the ESCO assisted the county in setting up financing for all upfront project costs. In addition, it guarantees the annual savings, and the county uses those savings to pay back a loan.

Berks used a \$2.9 million Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) from the U.S. Department of Energy to reduce the total amount it needed for upfront costs.

In Berks County, “green”



Photos courtesy of NORESCO

A NORESCO employee talks with Berks County staff about the energy demand of different types of light bulbs.

means cost savings and economic competitiveness. In 2008, the Board of Commissioners formed a Green Team Task Force to look at energy-savings opportunities

throughout the county. The board was attracted to the ESCO partnership because it is budget-neutral, there is no capital investment, key improvement areas are addressed

and there is opportunity to demonstrate environmental leadership.

During the summer of 2008, Berks issued an expression of interest (EOI) to solicit interest in an ESCO partnership. A review committee, with representatives from facilities, purchasing, commissioners and the county administrator's offices, was organized to review the 11 responses.

Three top vendors were asked to respond to an RFP. These finalists developed an extensive draft audit, representing an estimated \$30,000 to \$40,000 investment for the companies, and presented their findings to the budget director, commissioners and review committee.

County leaders selected NORESCO because of the quality of its initial audit and the level of guarantee that the energy company provided to Berks. Commissioner Christian Leinbach described Berks County's relationship with NORESCO as a “fruitful” and “long-term” partnership.

Further, Leinbach said, “The selection of an ESCO is very important, but equally important is [the county's] internal team.” The Facilities Department, which works on the energy improvements on a daily basis, becomes the “institutional knowledge of the ESCO contract” and is critical to success, Leinbach added.

As part of its package, NORESCO is delivering general energy conservation training to all county staff, including reminders to put their computers to hibernate at night, turn off lights and unplug equipment that is not in use. Interest is there. The educational energy fairs hosted for county staff have seen exceptional turnout.

Once all phases of the project are complete, annual electrical savings will be over 5 million kilowatt-hours. Carbon dioxide emissions are expected to drop by nearly 108,000 tons over the full life of the project, the equivalent to removing more than 2,700 cars from the road. Over 10 million gallons of water will also be conserved annually.

To learn about Berks County's effort, visit www.co.berks.pa.us or www.noresco.com/berks. To learn more about county energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, visit www.naco.org/energy.

New round of Five Star applications begins

By CARRIE CLINGAN

COMMUNITY SERVICES SENIOR ASSOCIATE

Applications are now available for the 2011 round of Five Star Restoration grants. NACo, in partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, EPA, the Wildlife Habitat Council, Southern Company, Pacific Gas and Electric, and FedEx, has made these grants available through the Five Star partnership.

The Five Star Restoration Program provides modest financial assistance on a competitive basis to support community-based wetland, riparian and coastal habitat restoration projects in communities. These projects build diverse partnerships to foster local natural resource stewardship through education, outreach and training activities. Grant awards range from \$10,000 to \$40,000, with an average grant amount of \$25,000.

This year additional funds will be available for Five Star projects in seven metropolitan areas including: Boston, Mass.; Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas; Los Angeles and San Francisco, Calif.; Memphis, Tenn.; Pittsburgh, Pa.; Indianapolis, Ind.; Newark, N.J.; Chicago, Ill.; Washington, D.C. and Seattle, Wash. Though these are listed by city, funds are also applicable for county projects serving these metropolitan areas.



Photo courtesy of Elachee Nature Science Center

Community partners celebrate Earth Day by replanting a stream bank at the Elachee Nature Science Center in Hall County (Gainesville), Ga.

For competitive applications, project partners should represent diverse groups, generally including at least five participants from local governments, corporations and businesses, schools and youth groups, environmental and citizen organizations, as well as representatives of federal and state government agencies. Partners can contribute cash or in-kind donations that should match the grant funds at 100 percent or higher.

Partner contributions amplify the effect that these grants have on local economy, spurring economic activity often three or four times as much as the grant.

Five Star projects show measurable benefits to the community including ecological, educational and economic benefits. They must include on-the-ground wetland, riparian, in-stream or coastal habitat restoration. Projects must also integrate meaningful education

into the restoration project either through community outreach, participation or integration with K-12 environmental curricula. Because public participation in restoration projects is paramount in community-based restoration, project sites should be accessible to the community.

Over the past 13 years, Five Star has funded more than \$6.5 million in local restoration projects across the U.S. These projects have attracted over \$15 million in matching funds and contributions from community partnerships and also continue to create benefits for counties in water and air quality improvement. More than 500 projects have been funded so far, and new program partners ensure many more will come.

To apply for a Five Star grant, visit www.nfwf.org/fivestar. This site also has information about the grants, past projects and partnerships. Applications open Dec. 16 and close Feb. 14, 2011. If you have additional questions, please contact Carrie Clingan at cclingan@naco.org or at 202.942.4246.

Keep up with NACo online ...

www.naco.org



Board approves membership initiative; will add 700 new members

NACo BOARD from page 1

- Support job creation by making rural development a priority within the farm bill reauthorization, and
- Oppose job-killing unfunded mandates and preemptions.

Membership Initiative

The membership initiative is being offered as a one-time, introductory promotion to enable non-members to learn more about NACo's programs and services. The initiative will add more than 700 counties to NACo's record membership base, increasing its standing as an effective force for counties in the nation's capital and across the country.

NACo President Glen Whitley said the initiative provides a historic opportunity to build NACo membership to new record levels. Since NACo has one of the highest retention rates in the country at 96.5 percent, it is likely that many of the new members will rejoin the association, he said.

CVS/Caremark, which partners with NACo to offer the Prescription Discount Card Program, will provide revenue for the initiative fund over three years. In 2011, the funding amount is \$725,000; in 2012, it is \$525,000; and in 2013, it is \$425,000. CVS/Caremark offered the funding for membership development in the first year and retention activities in subsequent years, but decisions regarding the use of the funds will rest with NACo.

NACo staff is developing a plan for reaching out to the new members to inform them about the many programs and services that NACo offers. The new members will not be required to participate in the prescription discount program.



NACo President Glen Whitley briefs members of the Veterans and Military Families Task Force during their meeting Dec. 2. The task force was established by Whitley to engage NACo members in helping to integrate veterans and their families back into the community.

Strategic Plan

The strategic plan includes goals for 2011 through 2013. The Board provided suggestions and changes to the plan during a work session at the meeting. Staff will incorporate the suggestions and changes and report back to the Board at the Legislative Conference in March. The eight goals of the plan are:

- increase member engagement
- better demonstrate NACo's value to members
- further engage the corporate community in NACo and county programs
- implement changes and new ideas to improve future NACo conferences
- transition NACo to a more digital organization
- develop value-added, new programs and services
- increase public awareness and understanding about counties, and
- further stimulate staff engagement to better serve NACo members.



Photos by Tom Goodman

Ag and Rural Affairs Steering Committee Chair Don Larson (c), assisted by NACo staff, Jeff Arnold (l), deputy legislative affairs director; and Ed Rosado, legislative affairs director (r), waits to present his committee's legislative priorities to the board.



Seasonally attired Carol Holden, Hillsborough County, N.H. commission vice chair, chats with Frank Bigelow, Madera County, Calif. supervisor during a break at the board meeting.

NACo 2011 Key Legislative Priorities: Fiscal Responsibility While Creating Jobs

Promote county fiscal relief and save jobs: Support for a commitment to maintaining federal financial assistance to counties at least at 2010 levels for county programs such as PILT, Secure Rural Schools, Community Development Block Grants, HOME, Economic Development Administration, justice and public safety programs, investments in local workforce development systems, rural development, transportation, water infrastructure development, federal Medicaid match (FMAP), Medicaid, social services and other domestic programs that are essential in creating and maintaining jobs while providing assistance for our citizens.

Save jobs by repealing the 3-percent tax-withholding requirement: Congress should immediately repeal Section 511 of PL 109-222 requiring local government to collect for the IRS a 3 percent withholding tax for goods and services contracts. This costly unfunded mandate takes effect Jan. 1, 2012, requiring action in this first session of the 112th Congress. Counties must act as agents of the IRS and begin purchasing equipment, begin training and create systems to begin collecting taxes for the IRS with no federal assistance. This is an unacceptable unfunded mandate that even the business community agrees is onerous in creating and maintaining jobs.

Support job creation by enacting aviation and surface transportation program reauthorizations: Reauthorization of

the federal airport and aviation programs needs to be completed. NACo supports a well-funded Airport Improvement Program with guaranteed funding from the aviation trust funds and increased funding for the Essential Air Service and the Small Communities Air Service programs.

Congress should develop a comprehensive legislative effort to create jobs by providing robust funding for bridges, highways, mass transit, assistance for rural roads and other local infrastructure needs by reauthorizing the highway, transit and safety programs.

Congress should explore the various financing sources available to fully fund the Highway Trust Fund into the future while addressing metropolitan congestion and rural road safety. Enactment of these programs will help build the nation's infrastructure and create additional employment opportunities.

Opposition to job-killing, unfunded mandates and preemptions: NACo is constantly vigilant against legislative or regulatory initiatives that undermine local government decision-making and contribute to reductions in our workforce. The partnership with federal policy makers should recognize local government roles and not preempt county authority on issues such as land use, rights of way and other local functions or reduce county resources and adversely affect job retention.

Support county health priorities: NACo will continue

to work with Congress and the administration to improve and implement the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act that help counties build healthy communities and ensure affordable access to health care for all Americans.

Support job creation by making rural development a priority within the farm bill reauthorization: NACo supports reauthorization of the Farm Bill and funding for key provisions such as rural development, agriculture, nutrition, research and conservation, which are critical to the economic well-being of all Americans, especially rural Americans. NACo calls on Congress and the administration to support all titles of this key piece of legislation, particularly rural development programs and strategies that promote rural prosperity.

NACo supports an enhanced commitment to USDA Rural Development programs and a new emphasis on flexible strategies, which allow counties and their regional partners to focus on local economic assets, priorities and goals. USDA Rural Development's grant and loan programs bolster and leverage local initiatives to enhance and maintain water and wastewater infrastructure, community facilities, broadband infrastructure, rural business programs and rural housing.

NACo will also focus on enhancing renewable energy programs and support for beginning and young farmers.

Commentary

Looking for good news about counties for a change?

By JIM PHILIPPS

NACo MEDIA RELATIONS MANAGER

It seems that the news media today is only interested in controversy, celebrity and absurdity. Let's apply these modern "news" criteria to county government. Controversy? Yes. Celebrity? Not like big city mayors enjoy. Absurdity? Not usually.

So under this definition of "what is news" you can see why only the negative, controversial stuff affecting your county gets ink and air time. For many reasons, it is difficult for county officials and essential county government programs and services — "positive news" — to receive coverage in the local media.

The impact of this reality is that many casual followers of county government are left under the impression that their county government is inefficient, inept or worse.

A few bad apples aside, this is untrue of course. We know that counties deliver essential services each day to their residents: clean drinking water; waste disposal, recycling; criminal justice; public safety; emergency response; roads and bridges; access to health care and more. I know there are at least a few reporters out there interested in the good stuff because I was one of them.



Follow NACo News Watch at <http://naco.newswatch.blogspot.com>

And as NACo's media relations manager, I understand county officials' struggles with their local media. Counties are serving people, helping people and saving people. But where's the coverage?

Well, the coverage is out there. It's just often hard to find, and you have a role in helping local reporters find good stories to report on. I look for positive county government stories and when I find them I post them on the NACo News Watch blog.

We launched NACo News Watch late last year to provide a place where county officials could find positive news about counties, NACo and our members.

With a new Congress assuming

power in January, federal policies and funding assisting states and counties could be at risk (See "Mid-term elections put county services

at risk" in the Nov. 29 edition of *County News*).

In the months ahead, NACo News Watch will post articles that detail what's at stake for the programs counties, officials and communities value. We will post articles from big media and little media; from government-focused publications such as *Governing* magazine, *American City & County* magazine, and from the Pew Center on the States' excellent online publication *stateline.org*. NACo News Watch will report on advocacy efforts of our members and the successes achieved.

News Watch is also a place where we document trends in the media industry. News organizations large and small have trimmed newsroom staffs and closed bureaus. This means that

there are fewer reporters available to cover your county meetings and any other important county information.

So the challenges are great for counties both in terms of meeting community needs, communicating through the news media the good things counties provide, and educating the State House and Congress for continued support.

The NACo News Watch blog can be a place where we can keep in touch and stay informed on these important endeavors. There are two ways to find it: the NACo website at www.naco.org ► Newsroom ► Check Media Coverage or directly at <http://naco.newswatch.blogspot.com>.

Jim Philipps has served as NACo's media relations manager since 2006.

TANF extension gets OK from Congress

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Block Grant (TANF), which was scheduled to expire Dec. 3, got a last minute reprieve from Congress last month and will now be funded through FY11. The TANF extension was included in the Claims Resolution Act, which the president signed into law Dec. 8.

The extension did not include increased program funding or flexibility, which are NACo's priorities in reauthorization. Instead, the bill added two new reporting requirements. The first requires information on individuals engaged in activities that do not count as work.

The second reporting requirement involves state expenditures that fall under the category of "other services and benefits" that are used to meet the TANF maintenance of effort requirement.

The reporting language has a quick first deadline of March 31,

2011, which is of concern to TANF program directors. The second report is due by June 30. The new language also carries a 4 percent penalty for failure to report, but the penalty is rescinded if the first report is filed by June 15 and the second one by Sept. 15.

At one point, the Senate version also had a six-month extension of state authority to use the child support enforcement incentive payments to draw down federal funds. The state authority expired Sept. 30. NACo supports a permanent extension.

The provision was dropped from the bill because the offset that had been intended to pay for it was no longer available. Sens. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) and John Cornyn (R-Texas), the chief sponsors of legislation to extend this provision, are trying to find a way to attach the extension to some other piece of legislation.

NACo Members ...

Do we have your e-mail address?



The NACo website was created for you ... The only way to log in is by using your e-mail address! Update your e-mail and take advantage of all of the exclusive cost saving benefits and resources for NACo members ...

- NACo Prescription Discount Card Program
- US Communities Government Purchasing Alliance
- Information on lobbying Congress and your state legislature
- Grants Clearinghouse
- Electronic publications, including guides to dealing with the media and running effective meetings

Update your information today! Contact Ilene Manster, membership coordinator at 202.942.4291 or imanster@naco.org. For more information on NACo membership benefits and programs, visit the new www.naco.org.

NACo National Association of Counties
The Voice of America's Counties

Counties turn some paved roads back to gravel

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Several counties across the country are going back to the Stone Age — turning asphalt roads back to gravel, or considering doing so — as rising costs outstrip their ability to maintain their pavements.

Counties in Iowa, Michigan, California and South Dakota are among those that have decided either to stop maintaining a percentage of their asphalt roads or to pulverize some paved roads and downgrade them to gravel.

“In local commission rooms or council chambers or board rooms, the economic issue always comes up first. And when you cannot afford to maintain the pavements in a safe and a serviceable condition, you have to look at something else,” said Ken Skorseth, an expert whom some colleagues refer to as Mr. Gravel Roads. He is lead author of the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) gravel roads bible, *Gravel Roads Maintenance and Design Manual*.

While costs vary from state to state, he said that in parts of South Dakota, “you can place 8 inches of gravel surfacing for the cost of 1 inch of asphalt pavement.”

County Engineer David Patterson, Washington County, Iowa, said, “Our ability to maintain our roads has diminished, particularly over the last 10 to 20 years as we’ve experienced cost increases and funding shortfalls.” Increases include the price of asphalt, a petroleum product, which fluctuates with oil prices; local revenue shortfalls have accompanied the nationwide economic downturn.

In Sonoma County, Calif., it would take an estimated \$55 million a year to maintain the county’s road network in its current condition, according to county officials. But the county can only afford to budget about \$5 million annually using existing revenues.

So last month, the Board of Supervisors, citing economic necessity, voted to prioritize maintenance of its 1,384 miles of roadways to just 150 miles or 11 percent. The priority miles comprise about 30 roads that were chosen based on the overlap of three criteria: being part of the federal highway system, being deemed regionally significant and carrying a volume of 5,000 average daily trips.

“We’re not saying we’re walking away from our roads. Clearly safety is always the highest priority,”



Photo courtesy of Brown County, S.D.

A too-heavy truck tore up asphalt pavement on an already-failing County Road 16 in Brown County, S.D. last spring. Such vehicles have helped shorten the life span of roads nationwide, making some paved roads costly to maintain, leading some counties to consider gravel.

said Phil Demery, the county’s transportation and public works director. He is also president of the National Association of County Engineers this year and sees similar trends nationwide. The county will continue to make basic repairs on low-priority roads.

The county’s road maintenance

budget shortfall stems primarily from declining gas tax revenues, which haven’t been indexed at the federal level since 1994, and a state funding formula that favors areas more urban than Sonoma County, he said. In addition, drivers of more fuel-efficient vehicles are using less gasoline, meaning less

tax collected on the gallons sold, and in the current economy, people may be driving less, he added.

While some residents have complained about Sonoma County’s road priority plan, voters were unwilling to approve fees that

See GRAVEL page 9

Model Programs FROM THE NATION’S COUNTIES

Prince William County, Va.

Holiday Celebration Capitalizes on Office Diversity

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

At the top of every hour, people somewhere in the world move from today into tomorrow.

On most days, that carries little consequence, but on New Year’s Eve there’s festivity a plenty.

In Prince William County, Va., county workers spend each hour celebrating not only their New Year’s dawning, but also the dawning of New Year’s around the world.

“We have a culturally diverse workforce, which is nice, but sometimes it’s difficult to ask something about their cultural background you don’t understand,” said Courtney Tierney, director of the county’s Area Agency on Aging. “It can appear that you’re being inappropriate

in asking, but you’re just curious.”

Tierney saw a great opportunity to use what she had developed as a ploy to tire out her young children when they wanted to stay up for midnight on New Year’s Eve.

“We would celebrate every hour along with the people who were actually experiencing the New Year,” she said. “After a few hours of that, they wanted to go to bed, but in the process they learned about a few other cultures.”

A few weeks before the end of the year, Tierney takes stock of how many employees will be working on Dec. 31, and assigns them each a culture to present when the culture’s appointed New Year arrives. They give a brief description of life in that culture and touch upon marriage and funeral rituals, topics, Tierney said, that spur the most engaging discussion.

“Those subjects have almost

universal application among communities, so there’s a great chance for people to bring their own experiences into the dialogue,” she said.

People bring in objects that represent the area they are presenting. For instance, someone brought in ice while discussing Vladivostok, Russia, and the decision of another presenter from Bangladesh to not bring in food underscored the poverty and famine rampant in that south Asian country.

“It helps us get to know each other better,” said Melodee Sheehan, who works with Tierney at the Area Agency on Aging. “People can talk about issues that they normally shy away from or find no reason to bring up.”

Interspersed among the hourly celebratory toasts of ginger ale and presentations, the staff watches National Geographic’s “Journey of Man” documentary.

Observing New Year’s Eve also gives the staff a unifying impetus for celebration as winter plods forward.

“We try to stay away from the winter holiday party thing because it’s awkward for Christians and it’s awkward for non-Christians,” Tierney said. “It works because ethnic differences don’t dismiss the fact that the year is changing.”

To a lesser extent, over the past four years it has convinced people to come into work on New Year’s Eve to participate.

“It’s diversity awareness without being diversity training — it’s not a lecture,” Tierney said. “People tend to lump many cultures together, particularly Asian and Pacific countries. Having so many counties change over [to the next year] in our time span at work gives us lots of material to use.”

Sheehan enjoys the celebration because it reminds her of her youth as the daughter of a professor in the Phillipines, when students of various origins would spend holidays with her family, usually around a bonfire.

“Not only did they have stories about the way they did things in their homes, but they would describe the paths their ancestors took to get where their families live now,” she said. “It helped me understand how people acquire their perspective.”

(Model Programs from the Nation’s Counties highlights Achievement Award-winning programs. For more information on this and other NACo Achievement Award winners, visit NACo’s Web site, www.naco.org ►Resource Library►Model County Programs.)

Reverting to gravel roads can create 'public relations issues'

GRAVEL from page 8

could have helped. Last month, county residents rejected a local ballot measure, Measure W, which would have added \$10 to vehicle registration fees — a portion of which would have been used to improve, maintain and rehabilitate roads. The measure failed by a 43 percent to 57 percent vote. Some observers say it lost because only 23 percent of the money raised would have gone to road maintenance; nearly three times as much would have gone to public transit.

With the resources it has, Sonoma County will continue to fill potholes on non-priority roads. However, "at some point, the roads not on a priority system, it will be just too costly to

provide those safety improvements. At that time we're probably going to pulverize them and turn them into gravel," Demery said.

That's exactly what happened in Brown County, S.D., and not everyone was pleased. Public reaction was "extremely negative," according to the county's highway superintendent, when a section of road was downgraded to gravel. One resident complained, "What the h--- are you doing with this road?" Schools voiced concerns about bus routes.

"There are some public relations issues that go along with unpaved versus paved roads," said John Habermann, who heads up Indiana's LTAP program and has conducted seminars about the

revival of gravel roads titled "Back to the Stone Age." "There would be some dust considerations to deal with. Some of the landowners who have grown accustomed to pavement, now living on a gravel road, may expect some dust control to go along with that."

In Brown County, 500 of the county's 680 miles of road are paved; 150 miles can be maintained with the current budget of \$7 million per year.

Nationwide, many county roads are reaching the end of their projected life spans, shortened by the traffic counts and loads they carry. The problem is most acute in rural areas, but Demery says some small municipalities are also affected.

"We have 21st century traffic driving on 19th century roads," Patterson said.

In some areas, mammoth farm equipment has caused damage to pristine roads in just a matter of days. But the "ag" industry isn't the only culprit, Demery is quick to add. Concrete haulers and multi-axle semis can cause similar damage. According to FHWA, in 2008 there were there were 2.7 million miles of public paved roads in the United States and 1.3 million miles of unpaved roads.

While gravel roads can be cheaper to lay in, they may not be a bargain in the long run; upfront costs can be lower, but maintaining them can be costly without the proper resources. Habermann said questions for counties considering gravel roads include the source of the gravel — the farther away it comes from, the higher the cost. Will traffic volumes require more

frequent road maintenance, and do counties have the equipment and expertise to maintain gravel roads? Skorseth says gravel roads can perform well if average daily traffic is about 150 vehicles, but costs can rise if a jurisdiction doesn't have trained motor grader operators.

"We don't have a large pool of skilled maintenance operators in this country," he explained. "If you quickly revert a lot of miles of asphalt back to gravel, you face that issue immediately."

His advice for counties considering going back to gravel? "The first thing we tell them is be sure you have accurate data on traffic volume and type, because if traffic volume, particularly truck traffic, is high when you calculate a life cycle, it may not be cheaper to go back to gravel."

Word Search

Counties with Ski Resorts

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

AROOSTOOK
(Maine)
CARROLL (N.H.)
DEKALB (Ala.)
FRANKLIN (Pa.)
GARRETT (Md.)

NELSON (Va.)
NORFOLK (Mass.)
ORANGE (N.Y.)
RABUN (Ga.)
RUTLAND (Vt.)
SHENANDOAH (Va.)

SUSQUEHANNA (Pa.)
ULSTER (N.Y.)
WASHINGTON (R.I.)
WORCESTER (Mass.)

Source: SkiResortGuide.com / Created By: Christopher Johnson

NACo grassroots Network

The political winds in Congress have shifted drastically. It's likely that federal funding for long-standing county services will be at risk like never before. Now is the time for county officials to mobilize and fight for the people of America's communities.

Please go to www.naco.org/grassroots and fill out the NACo Grassroots Network form.

Maintaining up-to-date contact information will be essential to NACo's 2011 advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill.

If we know who you know — Senate and House members and staffers — NACo will be better positioned to fight for the county programs your residents depend on.

We'll keep you informed about legislation that could impact your county's bottom line as we use your information to lobby more forcefully on your behalf.



For any questions or concerns, please contact
Matthew Fellows, legislative grassroots coordinator,
at 202.942.4205 or mfellows@naco.org

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News From the Nation's Counties

►ALABAMA

JEFFERSON COUNTY's finances took a severe blow when a **judge struck down** its occupational tax and business license fee, which accounts for 25 percent of the general fund.

Circuit Judge Charles Price ordered the county to stop imposing the occupational tax immediately. Most business license fees have been paid. Price ruled the county would not have to repay taxpayers \$90 million collected since the levies took effect in August 2009.

He said the tax was unconstitutional because the State Legislature did not properly disclose key elements of the bill before the special session that led to its passage.

Either side in the lawsuit could file an appeal to the Alabama Supreme Court. A replacement law is unlikely before the State Legislature's regular session begins in March, according to the *Birmingham News*. In the meantime, county officials could tap a reserve of close to \$50 million from a Wall Street settlement or draw on property tax revenue that is generally collected in December through February.

►CALIFORNIA

ORANGE COUNTY is using proceeds from its landfill dumping fee to **install recycling machines** that convert food waste into composting mulch.

The county plans to add nine machines to the 10 already operating in restaurants and at food producers in Irvine, Mission Viejo and Laguna Beach, plus at a café at the county's Hall of Records, the *Orange County Register* reported.

►FLORIDA

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY recently broke ground for a **Methane Sequestration Project** at its South District Wastewater Treatment Plant (SDWWTP).

This project upgrades and expands a cogeneration system which generates electricity from digester gas currently being produced at the plant. Landfill gas will be piped to the SDWWTP and be mixed with digester gases. By combining gases, the county will increase the amount of self-generated electricity, reducing consumption of electricity generated from fossil fuel.

A \$12.5 million Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant paid for the expansion, *American Recycler* reported.

►GEORGIA

The **HALL COUNTY** Board of Commissioners will ask the legislature to remove a **late penalty for governments** that collect property taxes in two installments.

In a nonbinding referendum in November, 53 percent of the county's voters favored paying their *ad valorem* taxes in two installments.

County Attorney Bill Blalock told the commission about a resolution that would have Hall County mail one notice to taxpayers that would include two bills for equal amounts, one due Oct. 1 and another on Dec. 1, the *Gainesville Times* reported.

►INDIANA

Programs in **BARTHOLOMEW** and **VANDERBURGH** counties received \$5.4 million in grants from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to **fight obesity**.

Vanderburgh County will expand a healthy schools initiative to more public schools and private schools, support breastfeeding in the workplace, support healthy vending options and promote walking.

Bartholomew County hopes to promote better nutrition by cutting the costs of healthy foods. It also will promote the use of stairs in public venues, and try to increase physical activity in after-school programs by cutting time spent on computers and in front of televisions, the Associated Press reported.

►KANSAS

The **KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES** is asking the state to reimburse counties for the **cost of housing felons**.

The *Wichita Eagle* reported that the association wants the state to reimburse counties for the cost of housing felons, to track how many are in county jails and to make that number available to the public.

►MARYLAND

Dogs in **WASHINGTON COUNTY** can now be **licensed for life**, rather than every year.

The commissioners approved a new fee schedule that keeps the one-year license fee at \$5, the current rate, but introduces options to buy a two-year license for \$9, a three-year license for \$13, or a license for the lifetime of the dog for \$25. A dog will not be eligible for a lifetime license until its initial round of rabies shots and boosters is complete.

The local Humane Society supported the plan because the convenience and discounts associated with multiyear licenses could encourage more dog owners to comply with the county's licensing requirement.

Dogs that have been deemed "vicious and dangerous" or "potentially vicious and dangerous" by the county's animal control authority will be more expensive to license. The additional charges will help cover the cost of monitoring compliance with restrictions on those dogs, according to the *Herald-Mail*.

►MICHIGAN

Historical county **records dating to 1839** will be available on the **MACOMB COUNTY** website by the end of the year.

Commissioners approved up to \$3,740 for a company to scan the election journals from 1838 to 1997. Records from 1998 to the present are already available online. Other online offerings include death records, campaign finance reports and county commissioner minutes that

date to 1924, the *Free Press* reported.

The handwritten records from 1838 to about 1909 will be indexed by year. Typed records starting about 1910 will be text searchable, said Todd Schmitz, chief deputy clerk.

►MISSOURI

The **ST. CHARLES COUNTY** Council voted to **prohibit protests near funerals** in unincorporated areas.

"We will not have the families harassed or disrupted by any group or individual," Councilman Joe Brazil said before vote. "We only hope that other cities and counties see what we do and will follow our example."

The American Civil Liberties Union plans to sue to block the ordinance, following up its other legal efforts on behalf of a Kansas church that regularly protests at the funerals of soldiers.

The St. Charles council patterned its law after one in Nebraska. Picketing will be barred within 300 feet of a funeral or burial site between an hour before and an hour after the observance, according to the *Post-Dispatch*.

County Councillor Joann Leykam said the bill isn't a ban but "a limitation of time, place and manner of speech."

►NEBRASKA

ADAMS COUNTY Commissioner Eldon Orthmann wants his colleagues to get behind an effort to do away with **published public notices** in favor of a Web-based system.

He'd like for the Nebraska secretary of state's office to create a website listing statewide information including public meetings, government proceedings and estate notices.

"For some time, I have been aggravated by the cost of running legislatively required ads in the newspaper for different things when, deep in my heart, I knew that hardly ... anyone read the ads and even fewer [responded]," Orthmann stated in a memo to Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy.

►NEW JERSEY

MONMOUTH COUNTY's latest online **auction of surplus property** brought in \$310,802, bringing the total of the county's online surplus property auctions to \$1.9 million since 2008.

"By continuing to conduct the surplus and seized property auctions online, the county eliminates the need to pay overtime for security and

item pick-up," Freeholder Robert D. Clifton said. "The online auction has made this process a revenue stream."

►NEW MEXICO

After more than 100 meetings — including workshops and study sessions — the **SANTA FE COUNTY** Board of Commissioners recently adopted a **Sustainable Growth Management Plan**. The vote was unanimous.

A key feature of the plan will be the creation of more opportunities for community participation, including a number of different kinds of community-centered organizations that enable citizens to work together more effectively.

The plan will not violate individual property rights, increase the size of government or raise property taxes, the commissioners said. Work will now begin on developing a Sustainable Land Use Code, a strategic plan and an action plan.

Board Chair Harry Montoya called the plan "one of the most significant projects we have done in years."

►NEW YORK

The **STEUBEN COUNTY** Legislature is urging the state's Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to include **road regulations** in its rules for the natural gas industry, according to *The Leader*.

County officials are concerned that heavy equipment related to the natural gas drilling industry could damage local roads.

DEC is currently drafting regulations for gas companies that want to extract natural gas from the Marcellus Shale that underlies parts of the state.

Steuben legislators passed a resolution that gas companies be required have a road agreement or submit a trucking plan to the DEC before drilling permits would be issued.

►OHIO

Pets and their potential adopters may find **meeting less stressful** when **COLUMBIANA COUNTY** renovates and expands its dog pound.

County Dog Warden Dawn Croft told *The Vindicator* that the expansion will include two new offices and two rooms — away from the kennel — where prospective dog owners and the animals can get to know one another.

Croft said, "It's a little more private" and less stressful for the dog and the would-be owner.

►OREGON

Transportation officials from

NACo on the Move

» NACo Officers and Elected Officials



Lenny Eliason

- **Lenny Eliason**, NACo first vice president, spoke on what NACo can offer counties through membership and the latest on NACo at the County Commissioners Association of Ohio Annual Winter Conference in Columbus Dec. 5-8.

» NACo Staff

- **Daria Daniel**, associate legislative director, spoke about NACo housing and economic development priorities at the Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding Coalition meeting in Washington, D.C. Dec. 3.

- **Erik Johnston**, associate legislative director, participated in a Farm Bill panel discussion at the Rural Coalition's Rural Outlook Forum in Washington, D.C. Dec. 1. Johnston also spoke about NACo's rural priorities at the Rural Policy Research Institute's National Advisory Board Meeting in Washington Dec. 1-2.

On the Move is compiled by Christopher Johnson.

Research News

Counties Seek to Keep Holidays Happy

The holiday season marks a time for gathering and celebrating with friends and family, gift-giving, reflection and thanks. As residents prepare to celebrate, counties across the country are implementing programs to ensure their safety this holiday season.

To help residents feel safe during the holidays, the Sheriff's Office in Lubbock County, Texas launched the Operation St. Nick initiative. The Sheriff's Office will be increasing patrols in the areas that have seen a rise in burglaries in the past. In addition, the Sheriff's Office will randomly patrol near the homes of residents who are traveling for the holidays at no charge. This added safety allows residents to enjoy time away without worrying about the security of their homes.

To prepare businesses for an increase in shoppers this holiday season, the Fulton County, Ga. Police Department, Fulton County Commission and District Attorney's Office are collaborating to present

a Retailer's Holiday Safety Seminar. The event is aimed at smaller retail establishments that may be vulnerable to shoplifting and burglaries during these tough economic times. Leading law enforcement and loss prevention professionals will provide expert advice on many topics including crime prevention, retail theft, personal and business safety.

As residents are out in force to get the best deals, police in Montgomery County, Md. are increasing patrols and preparing for the extra traffic in key business zones. The county police department's annual Shop with a Cop initiative increases police presence and hands out safety gear to shoppers at busy shopping centers.

While the police presence seeks to deter theft, the program also seeks to prevent collisions in parking lots and to assist residents more quickly when these collisions occur. According to county policy statistics, about 20 percent of pedestrian accidents in the county

occurred in parking lots between 2008 and 2010.

In addition to providing holiday safety tips this season, fire departments throughout Lake County, Ill. are encouraging community safety through the Keep the Wreath Red program. Wreaths with red lights hang on the front wall of local fire stations. For every holiday-related fire, one of the red bulbs is replaced with a white one.

The program offers an important visual reminder to residents to ensure the safety of holiday decorations and to help stop preventable fires this holiday season. The program runs from Thanksgiving to Jan. 2.

According to the Census Bureau, the population of the United States will be approximately 311 million on New Year's Day. Counties across the country want to make sure all enjoy a safe holiday season to celebrate the New Year together.

(Research News was written by Kathryn Murphy, research associate.)

County mayor tapped to become Tennessee's next deputy governor

NEWS FROM *from page 10*

CLACKAMAS, HOOD RIVER and rural MULTNOMAH counties are working together to form an **Area Commission on Transportation (ACT)** that would focus on non-urban transportation issues.

The counties comprise the only region in the state without an ACT, an advisory body chartered by the Oregon Transportation Commission that addresses all aspects of transportation, including surface, marine, air and transportation safety.

According to Clackamas County officials, forming an ACT will give residents and rural communities east of Portland "a cohesive, coordinated, strong voice in the state-wide and regional transportation decision-making."

► PENNSYLVANIA

To protect its interests, **DAUPHIN COUNTY** has **hired legal counsel** in the event the city of Harrisburg declares bankruptcy, *The Patriot-News* reported.

The county hired the Harrisburg firm McNeese, Wallace & Nurick.

Dauphin County is second in line as a guarantor of approximately half of the more than \$280 million debt on an incinerator in Harrisburg.

The Harrisburg Authority owns the incinerator. Should it and the city default on their debt, Dauphin County would be responsible.

► TENNESSEE

Gov.-elect Bill Haslam has named **HAMILTON COUNTY Mayor Claude Ramsey** to be his **deputy governor**. Ramsey will leave his county office Jan. 11, and the County Commission will choose his replacement.

"At the end of the day in local government, you have to solve the problem," Haslam said, the *Chattanooga Times Free Press* reported. "You have to make it work, and Claude has done that as a mayor very, very successfully."

Ramsey has served 16 years as mayor and easily won a fifth term in the August elections.

► VIRGINIA

Congrats to **FAIRFAX COUNTY**. Its Park Authority has won a 2010

National Gold Medal **Award for Excellence** in Park and Recreation Management. The award was presented by The American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration in partnership with National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) at NRPA's Annual Congress & Exposition in Minneapolis last month.

The award honors communities nationwide that demonstrate excellence in long-range planning, resource management, volunteerism, environmental stewardship, program development, professional development and agency recognition.

Fairfax parks were best in class for park agencies that serve populations of 250,000-plus. The competition included Miami-Dade County Park and Recreation Department, New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and Mecklenburg County, N.C. Park and Recreation Department.

(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.)

The H.R. Doctor Is In

An HR Doctor Holiday

'Twas the night before
Christmas
And throughout County
Hall

Not a bureaucrat was
stirring
No sounds heard at all

The janitor's night off, the alarm
systems set

The beacons for security and
decorations met

The ambient light kept the stars
out of sight

No Bethlehem star could be seen
on that night

Those bringing gifts were turned
back at the door

No gifts could be given, auditors
hired galore

No risk of polluting the ethics
machine

Even frankincense and myrrh
would have to be screened

While Christmas and Chanukah
meet in December

We seem to forget what we all
should remember



Of friendship and family,
of futures so bright
Of civil behavior and
doing what's right

The holidays tell us of
great lessons learned
A safer and better world to be
earned
Give gratitude and joy — the
greatest gifts, we believe
It's better to give than it is to
receive."

With love and best wishes for a
"service to others" holiday season!

Phil Rosenberg,
The HR Doctor

Charlotte Rosenberg,
The HR Spouse

Elyse Rosenberg,
The HR Daughter

Rachel Brown,
The HR Doctor Daughter

Toby Brown,
The HR Son-in-Law

Evie Brown,
The HR Infant

www.hrdi.net

What's in a Seal?



» **Sheboygan County, Wisc.**
www.co.sheboygan.wi.us

Sheboygan County was established on Dec. 17, 1838 and is located in Eastern Wisconsin on the western shores of Lake Michigan. It is believed that in 1635 Jean Nicolet, the French explorer, was the first recorded European settler to visit Sheboygan as he skirted Lake Michigan's shores heading south from Green Bay.

When European settlers first came, there were about 1,000 Native Americans living in the county, composed mainly of Pottawatomies, Chippewas, Ottawas, Winnebagoes and Menominees. Their villages and camps were clustered on the bank or shore of practically every lake or stream, with the largest villages situated along Lake Michigan.

Many factories have contributed in making Sheboygan County a prosperous manufacturing center. A wealth of natural water power from lakes and streams flowing generally south-easterly into Lake Michigan have attracted numerous saw and flour mills. Many of the immigrants were artisans with skilled trades, and with the abundant supply of raw materials, it was natural that early manufacturing utilized the plentiful forest resources.

The seal shows the shores of Lake Michigan, the forest symbolizing woodworking as a popular skill in the 1880s and a factory, symbolizing the prosperous center it became.

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

Financial Services News

Apply Now for the 6th Annual NACo-Nationwide Scholarship

This spring, four high school seniors will earn \$2,000 for college from the NACo-Nationwide Scholarship. Winning applicants will have written a short essay describing why it's important for a public sector employee to start saving early for retirement.

This is the sixth consecutive year that Nationwide and NACo have teamed up to encourage high school seniors to think about retirement.

Why spur students who haven't even started full-time work to think about retirement? Three reasons — by applying for the scholarship the students:

- must consider the financial impact of their decisions about college and their career, and realize it is never too soon to start thinking about saving for retirement
- begin to recognize the value perspective in turbulent financial times when often difficult decisions are required, and
- identify specific actions that

help prepare for a financially successful future.

To be eligible, applicants must be graduating high school seniors who are legal U.S. residents — their parent or grandparent must be enrolled in and contributing to the NACo 457 Deferred Compensation Plan. In addition, the student must enroll in a full-time undergraduate course of study no later than the fall term of the 2011–2012 school year at an accredited two- or four-year college.

In addition, applicants will also be asked to answer a question (in 500 words or fewer) on why it is important for a public sector employee to start early when saving for retirement.

The application and entry must be submitted online no later than Jan. 31, 2011.

The NACo-Nationwide Scholarship is just one of the services arising out of a 30-year relationship between Nationwide and the Na-

tional Association of Counties. As provider of the NACo deferred compensation program, Nationwide regularly reports to the NACo Deferred Compensation Advisory Committee on industry trends, updates statistics on the program and provides ongoing education on retirement issues.

NACo receives payment from Nationwide Retirement Solutions for NACo's endorsement, and license of its name and logo for use by Nationwide in connection with the NACo Deferred Compensation Plan, and related products and services. These funds are used by NACo to enhance programs and services for the benefit of its members.

For more information about eligibility, judging criteria and notification process visit the NACo and Nationwide websites at www.naco.org/retirementscholarship or www.nrsforu.com/scholarship.

Job Market / Classifieds

► COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR – MCLEAN COUNTY, ILL.

Salary: DOQ.

McLean County, Ill. (168,000) Agricultural heartland between Chicago and St. Louis. Largest Illinois county by area; 14th most populous. Excellent K-12, community college, several universities.

Headquarters for State Farm Insurance, Country Financial, Mitsubishi Motors, two large hospitals, Beer Nuts, Steak n Shake and Biaggi's. Numerous cultural, sports and recreational venues; excellent shopping and dining. Three interstate highway systems, busy regional airport and Amtrak station. Listed among 100 Best Places to Live in America, No. 20 on the Best Small Places for Business and Careers, on the list of America's Smartest Cities and recognized as one of the Best Small College Towns.

The County Administrator reports to a 20 member County Board elected to staggered four-year terms. The Board conducts its business through five standing committees. Over 800 employees.

\$76 million operating budget. Aa1 bond rating; GFOA Certificate of Excellence 21 consecutive years. Eight County-wide elected officials; 16 other departments. Three County Administrators since position was created in 1977. Employment Agreement. Four-year degree, MPA preferred. Minimum five (5) year's high level management experience at department head or organization-wide level. Familiarity with county government structure and laws, or similar system with independent elected officials. Base salary to the low \$140's, depending upon qualifications and experience of the selected candidate. Comprehensive benefit package. Reasonable relocation assistance.

Submit resume, at least three professional references and salary history before Jan. 31, 2011 to: County Administrator Search Committee, P.O. Box 2400, Bloomington, IL 61701. Finalist selection in March, May start date to be negotiated. EOE/AA. Go to www.mcleancountyil.gov for more details.



Hire Quality Staff

Get rate schedules for the Job Market/Classifieds both online and in print. Visit www.naco.org ► **Programs & Services** ► **Hire Quality Staff** for more information, or contact Christopher Johnson at 202.942.4256 or cjohnson@naco.org.

NACo Prescription Discount Card FREE to your county and your residents



Kickstart Your Card: Improve Your Residents' Awareness and Savings with the NACo Prescription Discount Card

Learn effective ways to promote your county's NACo Prescription Discount Card Program to help residents save big on their medicine costs. Program experts from NACo, CVS Caremark, and fellow county officials will describe how the free NACo member benefit program has resulted in more than \$300 million in savings nationwide.

**Learn More! Join our Webinar on
Thursday, December 16, 2010
2:00 PM - 3:15 PM EST**

To register go to:

<http://www.naco.org/meetings/webinars/Pages/webinars.aspx>

Need assistance with logging in to the NACo web site? Contact Tony Jamison, NACo Membership Intern, at tjamison@naco.org or 202-661-8843

Nationwide residents in
1,340 counties have saved more than

\$300,000,000

This is NOT insurance. Discounts are only available at participating pharmacies. Operated by CVS Caremark.