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CountyNews

The Voice of America's Counties

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Officials lobby against congressional cuts to CDBG

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

NACo President Glen Whitley argued against major cuts to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program at a news conference to release a preliminary report on CDBG's impact on local communities.

NACo, the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) and the National League of Cities (NLC) released the report by IHS Global Insight. It

See CDBG page 2

QuickTakes

Top 5 States for 'Haycations'

- 1 - Pennsylvania
- 2 - California
- 3 - Vermont
- 4 - Wyoming
- 5 - Virginia

Source: States with the largest number of farm vacation listings; FarmStayUS.com database, 2011



Photo courtesy of Henrico County, Va.

Guest 'kiters' help liven the mood for Henrico County's annual kite festival. This year, the festival took off on a special note — the county is celebrating its 400th anniversary.

Quake-hit Japanese localities: 'Counties ... stand behind us'

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Following the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan earlier this month, it's likely the thoughts of many county officials went to what they could do to help the people in prefectures hit by the disasters.

Masaaki Akagi, executive director of the Japan Local Government Center (JLGC) in New York, said at this point, the Japanese people are best served by the American people's good thoughts and intentions.

"We ask that American counties and cities stand behind us," he said. "We are still assessing the damage and figuring it out."

NACo has partnered with JLGC for years to send American county officials to Japan for the Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar. Participants spend

10 days learning about Japan's local and national governments, though there is no level of government in Japan similar to the county. The program includes home stays with families in one of Japan's prefectures — similar to American states.

Despite the continuing coverage of the trouble at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear complex in north-eastern Japan, Akagi expressed confidence that the situation would be contained.

"There's been a lot of exaggeration and sensationalism about the nuclear reactor," he said. "Please, be confident that we can contain it and control it."

Akagi said despite an estimated \$200 billion in damage and a possible death toll that could reach 20,000, he felt the country was reacting positively and those numbers were likely to plummet. Of the

47 prefectures in Japan, 14 have reported damage from either the earthquake or tsunami.

"Unlike other disasters, you don't see the same kind of collateral confusion and consequences," he said. "There's no looting, no rioting, a much more stable environment than you would find in other places," in reference to widespread media attention paid to orderly lines for food in devastated areas and crowds that remain calm in the face of frustration and danger.

JLGC Senior Researcher Seth Benjamin said his boss' stoicism was not cultural rhetoric, but rather a reflection of a realistic assessment of need.

"It's hard to say exactly what they need because communications in disaster areas is spotty," he said.

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April marks national county government celebration

By JIM PHILIPPS
MEDIA RELATIONS MANAGER

Counties across the country are finalizing plans to celebrate National County Month (NCGM) in April. Many counties are finding thoughtful ways to incorporate this year's theme — Serving Our Veterans, Armed Forces and Their Families — into their plans.

Curry County, N.M. has school events planned for every grade level. Pre-K through second-graders will be competing in a poster coloring contest recognizing veterans, armed services and their families. Third- through sixth-graders will be creating their own posters to honor servicemen and women, past and present. Seventh- through 10th-graders will be writing essays based on this year's NCGM theme.

Elected Curry County officials and department heads are serving as the judges.

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Hennepin County, Minn. uses faith communities to help heal the environment » **Page 5**

County uses Web chat to track down welfare fraud » **Page 16**

Rural innovation roundtable focuses on county-led efforts

By ERIK JOHNSTON

ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Commissioner Don Larson of Brookings County, S.D. was the featured speaker at USDA's third Rural Innovation Roundtable March 4 in Washington, D.C.

Larson, who chairs NACo's Agriculture and Rural Affairs Steering Committee, discussed NACo's ideas for enhancing rural development opportunities in the next Farm Bill and showcased examples of rural innovation in eastern South Dakota.

He was joined on the panel by Dallas Tonsager, undersecretary for rural development at USDA, and Doug O'Brien, acting deputy undersecretary for rural development. Larson thanked USDA for beginning to reorient USDA programs toward a regional approach.

"For the past decade, our nation's counties and an array of other stakeholders have been asking Congress and USDA to incentivize regional collaboration and provide greater flexibility for local innova-

tion," Larson said. "We sincerely appreciate that this administration is listening and striving to provide this flexibility for rural innovation and collaboration."

The next Farm Bill offers an opportunity for federal policymakers to start testing and pursuing new policies for rural development. NACo supports all titles in the reauthorization of the Farm Bill, but NACo's key priority focuses on advocating for a bill that provides enhanced resources to rural development programs and policies.

One key policy objective is a re-orientation of current programs so they bolster, not hinder current and potential county and multi-county rural development strategies at work across the country.

Larson emphasized that one model for updating USDA's rural development programs is the U.S. Economic Development Administration's (EDA) very small but effective economic development district (EDD) planning program. This successful model could be adapted

to USDA rural development's clientele by providing incentives for both multi-county planning and integrated planning among municipalities and unincorporated areas within a single county.

For example, in Larson's home county, through regional planning and innovative partnerships, the region created the South Dakota State University Innovation Campus, the first research park developed in South Dakota. The SDSU Innovation Campus provides a place where people and ideas come together in Larson's region to combine the experience of university, business, industry and government. It's an environment that uses innovation and critical thinking to generate new ideas, promote research, entrepreneurialism and business mentoring — providing opportunities to keep young people in South Dakota.

The SDSU Innovation Campus is the product of the SDSU Growth Partnership, a nonprofit corporation whose partners include Brookings County, the city of Brookings, Brookings Economic Development

Corp., SDSU, the South Dakota State Foundation and a state representative. The county and city put up front money, and the First District Association of Local Governments developed a business plan and grant application for EDA funding.

These federal planning investments provided vital gap funding that helped make this regional vision a reality. The First District serves 11 counties and 75 communities within the counties of Brookings, Clark, Codington, Deuel, Grant, Hamlin, Kingsbury, Lake, Miner, Moody and Roberts.

The site includes retail and support services. Local private developers have built a 120-unit housing complex, The Innovation Village, on property adjacent to the park. The campus has walking, jogging and biking trails, and open green spaces, and is also accessible via public transportation.

Most importantly, the new ideas and businesses developed at the campus are designed to incubate innovators who will locate not only in Brookings County, but in

the wider region as well.

The economic success story in Brookings County and the surrounding region, clearly demonstrates that rural communities and institutions can make substantial progress by working regionally to achieve economies of scale, technical expertise, workforce pool and infrastructure financing to compete nationally and globally, Larson said. The project has helped Brookings County and the region prosper. In fact, they enjoy one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country at around 4 percent.

Rural unemployment in the nation has remained high overall, however, despite the strong performance of the agricultural sector. Other rural communities would like to start planning and implementing regional strategies but do not have the funding to get started.

Larson said that NACo will continue to advocate for refocusing USDA towards a regional approach that will provide needed resources to assist rural communities with seed money for planning and to expand locally driven rural development efforts.

Officials protest proposed cuts to CDBG funding

CDBG from page 1

concluded that CDBG grant funds of \$3.95 billion generated 120,000 jobs and contributed \$10.7 billion in gross domestic product over the past year.

Both President Barack Obama and House Republicans have proposed reducing the program as part of their deficit-reduction efforts. Obama's budget would reduce the program by 7.5 percent. The House would cut it by 62.5 percent.

Whitley said there are more effective ways to cut the federal budget, especially when counties and cities are also contributing money to the CDBG-funded projects. "Leveraged projects ought to be at the very bottom of those things you're cutting," he said. "It's not a matter of 'give me dollars and I'll find a place to spend them,' we're putting up money, too."

Despite support from NACo, USCM and NLC members, CDBG remains a target for federal legislators who are dead set on cutting the deficit, Whitley said at the event March 16.

"We understand there's a real need for fiscal responsibility, but we have to take a comprehensive look at all areas of spending," he said. "I believe if we're going to solve these we have got to look at everything — entitlements, defense, the



Photo by Jim Philipps

NACo President Glen Whitley speaks at the news conference releasing the study on CDBG impacts on local development projects.

whole broad picture of where our money's going."

His refrain to Congress was simple — use a scalpel, not a meat cleaver when cutting the budget.

Also speaking at the news conference was Prince George's County, Md. Executive Rushern L. Baker III and Kathy Ricci, executive director of the Utah Microenterprise Loan Fund (UMLF) in Salt Lake County, Utah.

Baker recalled his employment at a nonprofit organization in Washington, D.C. funded by CDBG, which he said helped him

understand CDBG's importance in serving communities and offering employment.

Ricci said she cringed at the thought of losing the CDBG funding that had sustained her organization for more than 10 years. CDBG funding has helped the UMLF make more than 100 loans totaling just under \$2 million to entrepreneurs who did not have access to any other source of funding to start or grow their businesses. Ricci said these loans helped create or retain more than 250 jobs.

"Without CDBG funding, those loans, and those jobs, wouldn't have happened," she said. "We've been using that funding for 10 years, so it's become a foundation of our program, it would be devastating for it to go away."

The report released at the news conference examines CDBG's impact on two counties — Dekalb County, Ga. and Los Angeles County, Calif.

In Dekalb County, \$7 million in CDBG funding included \$2.9 million for public improvements and \$1.2 million for housing. IHS Global Insight calculated that those expenditures resulted in 253 jobs with \$13 million in wages, generating \$34 million in economic output. Those jobs added \$1.3 million in local and state tax revenue annually, with an annual grant expense of \$27,700 per job created.

Los Angeles County saw \$182 million in economic output, \$108 in gross metro product and \$9 million annually in state and local tax revenue from \$45 million in CDBG expenditures. That \$45 million was leveraged to raise an additional \$42 million from other sources. Each job generated came to \$41,900 in annual grant expenditures.

The preliminary report on CDBG's economic benefits is available at www.naco.org/cdbgsurvey.

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Narrowbanding is happening; here's how to prepare

By TIM LOEWENSTEIN
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY
STEERING COMMITTEE

The next two years will be busy for public safety agencies across the nation. With the FCC's narrowband mandate deadline of Jan. 1, 2013 approaching, public safety agencies will be devoting significant resources to planning for and executing a coordinated transition. To help these agencies with the transition, this article provides an overview of the narrowbanding mandate and its impact on public safety agencies.

What is Narrowbanding?

Narrowbanding requires VHF and UHF radios to use less radio bandwidth (i.e., spectrum), leaving the vacated spectrum available to form new channels. Narrowbanding ensures more efficient use of the spectrum and greater spectrum access for public safety and other users. Narrowbanding may relieve channel congestion and increase channel availability. Currently, there is often not enough spectrum available for licensees to expand their existing voice systems or implement new systems.

Overview of FCC Narrowband Mandate and Deadlines

The FCC mandated that all non-federal public safety licensees operating 25 kilohertz (kHz) (wideband) radio systems in the VHF and UHF bands must migrate to 12.5 kHz (narrowband) emissions on or before Jan. 1, 2013. Many local public safety radio systems have not migrated to 12.5 kHz emissions yet. With less

than two years to coordinate narrowbanding efforts, concerns are growing that many public safety agencies will not meet the deadline.

This deadline affects all FCC-licensed state and local public safety radio systems. Wideband radio operation will violate FCC regulations beginning in 2013, and counties not meeting that deadline face the loss of communication capabilities or fines.

The original narrowbanding rules were adopted in 1995, so the FCC believes counties have had sufficient time to prepare for this migration. Planning for the narrowband migration in advance of the deadline is essential to avoid maintenance shop scheduling issues (as they will be overwhelmed with requests closer to the deadline) and limited availability of replacement equipment. Failure to address the narrowband migration requirements may result in communications interference and loss of interoperability. Counties should also note that it is highly unlikely that the FCC will extend the Jan. 1, 2013 deadline.

Who is Affected?

This mandate affects all radio systems—including voice, data (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition [SCADA]) and telemetry—operating at VHF (150–174 megahertz) and UHF (421–512 MHz) utilizing FCC Part 90 frequencies made up of the public safety, and industrial and business licensees. This includes, but is not limited to state and local governments, public safety agencies, public works, utilities, hospitals, private industry, higher education institutions, and K-12 schools.

Certain FCC frequencies designated for paging use are excluded from the narrowbanding mandate.

How to Prepare for Narrowbanding

1) **Verify** that your agency has a current and valid FCC Part 90 radio station license. Check here to do a FCC License search: <http://wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsApp/UlsSearch/searchAdvanced.jsp>.

2) **Conduct a full inventory of all radios in your system**, including all portable (hand-carried) radios, mobile (in-vehicle) radios,

dispatcher-used radios, wireless data or SCADA radios, and on- or off-site base or repeater radios.

3) **Contact a local professional two-way radio service vendor for assistance** in determining which models are capable of being reprogrammed for narrowband operation and which models are not. Most new equipment has the capability for both 25 kHz and 12.5 kHz operation, because any VHF and UHF radio equipment accepted by the FCC after Feb. 14, 1997, had to have 12.5 kHz capability.

4) **Initiate the internal busi-**

ness process of budgeting for and procuring any new narrowband-capable replacement radios that may be needed as well as contracted labor to program radios. Many public safety agencies only have one budget cycle left to secure funding.

5) **Develop a “wideband-to-narrowband” system conversion plan** that reflects well-coordinated logistical and implementation strategies. The plan should address the need for any new narrowband-capable off-site base or repeater

See NARROWBANDING page 4

Additional narrowbanding deadline information resources

The following resources or websites may provide additional information on narrowbanding.

- **FCC Narrowbanding Website** – Includes a countdown clock, recent articles written about narrowbanding, links to helpful resources, and FCC contact information: www.fcc.gov/pshs/public-safety-spectrum/narrowbanding.html

- **FCC Narrowbanding Mandate** – A Public Safety Guide for Compliance: A guide published by the International Association of Fire Chiefs and International Municipal Signal Association that provides guidance to state and local public safety entities on the requirements of the FCC Narrowbanding Mandate: www.iafc.org/associations/4685/files/commComm_Narrowbanding.pdf

- **NPSTC Narrowbanding Website** – A comprehensive list of narrowbanding resources including

technical briefs, articles about the narrowbanding process, the cost of narrowbanding, and general fact sheets about narrowbanding: www.npstc.org/narrowbanding.jsp

- **Wireless Radio Narrowbanding Website** – Provides information for FCC Part 90 Private Land Mobile Radio (LMR) licensees, dispatch system managers, consultants, integrators, sales and service facilities and end-users facing the narrowbanding deadline: <http://wirelessradio.net/>

- **Vermont Communications (VCOMM) Narrowbanding Website** – Provides information about what narrowbanding is, how to prepare for the deadline, instructions on how to narrowband FCC licenses, and links to useful narrowbanding resources: <http://vcomm.vermont.gov/narrowbanding/>

In Case You Missed It ...

News to Use from Past County News

► 2011 Arts and Culture Award applications now being accepted

Has your county used arts, culture or historic preservation to address a particular issue or recently completed a project that preserves arts and culture in the community? Submit an application for the 2011 NACo Arts and Culture Award. Applications are due April 15.

Visit www.naco.org ► Programs and Services ► Arts and Culture Award or contact Jacqueline Byers at jbyers@naco.org or 202.942.4285.

► Updated Media Relations Guide now available

The new and improved Media Relations Guide for Counties is now available for members. In addition to the Dos and Don'ts of speaking with a reporter, the free guide contains new sections detailing best practices for using Facebook and Twitter, as well as tips on making the most of your out-of-county travel to events such as NACo conferences.

For more information or to obtain a copy, contact Jim Philipps at 202.942.4220 or jphilipps@naco.org.



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COUNTY GOVERNMENT WORKS

An Initiative to Raise Awareness and Understanding of Counties

Webinar gives keys to successfully telling county story

By MARIA SPROW

MANAGING EDITOR, COUNTY
TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

With budget deficits affecting the state and federal governments — and therefore county governments via unfunded mandates and funding cuts — it's important that counties have the tools and resources necessary to tell the county story to lawmakers and residents.

"Now more than ever, local governments need an effective communications plan," said Jim Philipps, NACo media relations manager. NACo has developed a nationwide initiative called County Government Works to help counties better tell their stories.

Part of the initiative, spearheaded by NACo President Glen Whitley, included a recent NACo webinar, "Tell Your County Story: Creating a Countywide Media/Communications Plan." The webinar discussed strategies to help counties create effective communications plans, including how to spread awareness of the plan throughout county departments and how to create a mission and goals for the plan.

The first step to any communications plan is to create a mission statement for that plan, advised presenter Kathy Carter, the community relations director in Washoe County, Nev. She said her county's Board of Commissioners has developed a plan that includes strategic objectives, strategic outcomes and performance measurement. Additionally, the county has a communications team that includes one employee representing each department in the county.

"You have to decide, who are you? What do you really do?" Carter said, adding that after the values have been defined, employee behavior should follow those values. "For us, we are a transparent, credible and responsible provider of community services."

Counties should focus on just a few big-picture messages and have

a list of talking points that relate to those messages. They can be about the purpose of the message, how message relates to the audience and a particular call to action.

Having too many talking points may make it too difficult for others to remember.

"When we are talking about communications, it's important to remember that 9 times 9 equals zero and 3 times 3 equals 3," said presenter Linda Burkley, a former Pennsylvania county clerk who is with the public relations firm Ardis Communications.

"If you have nine separate messages and you continue to say them nine different times, nobody's going to remember anything. Our brains are only set to remember a certain amount of information.

"What you have to think about from a key message perspective is: three is a great rule of thumb. If you can, come up with three concise, consistent messages and repeat them three times," she said.

It's important, Burkley said, to share those talking points and key messages with department heads and employees.

"Everybody has a role in the overall public image of your organization," she said, stressing the importance of having consensus internally before trying to go public with a specific message. "Trying to create a communications strategy without familiarizing department heads and employees about that strategy and without getting buy-in from

other elected officials can result in mixed messages and public arguments. Truly, without a consistent internal approach to communications and an ongoing effort to keep moving that forward, your external message is going to be completely ineffective."

Fortunately, today counties have access to more than just newspapers and cable news stations to share their stories. They own or manage websites, Facebook pages, Twitter feeds, county newsletters, blogs and public forums. Other public relations avenues include radio programs, citizen surveys, leadership academies, community publications, press releases, homeowners associations, and local festivals and fairs.

But to get the maximum results from each tool, they must be used correctly.

"Everyone should have a website," Burkley said. "And more importantly than a fancy website that looks pretty, you've got to give good information. Your residents go to your website because they need something."

The bottom line, the speakers said, is that counties should have a written plan that covers how they want to tell their county's story and what exactly the focus of that story will be.

"Have a plan but be flexible. Write it down," Carter said. Otherwise, "you can go down a lot of rabbit trails and you can just lose your way."

A recording of the webinar is available for NACo members on the "Media Tools for County Officials" page of the Media Center section at www.naco.org/newsroom/latest/Pages/Members'MediaTools.aspx.

Tools to assist counties to take part in Whitley's County Government Works initiative are available in the Presidential Initiative section at www.naco.org/about/president/Pages/default.aspx.

County Government Works!
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more information.



Profiles in Service



» Mark Luttrell, Jr.

NACo Board Member
Shelby County, Tenn.

Number of years active in NACo: 1

Occupation: Mayor

Education: B.A., Union University; M.P.A., University of Memphis

The hardest thing I've ever done: get the nerve to propose to my wife

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Andrew Jackson, Mahatma Gandhi and Dwight Eisenhower

A dream I have is to: travel the world at a leisurely pace.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: like cheap cigars.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: whitewater rafting.

My favorite way to relax is: mountain hiking.

I'm most proud of: my family.

Every morning I read: the local newspaper and overnight emails.

My favorite meal is: Memphis barbeque.

My pet peeve is: people missing deadlines.

My motto is: the Serenity Prayer.

The last book I read was: *Decision Points* by George W. Bush.

My favorite movie is: *Gettysburg*.

My favorite music is: Country Western and Blues.

My favorite president is: Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Narrowbanding mandate takes effect Jan. 1, 2013

NARROWBANDING from page 3

station radio(s); simultaneous reprogramming of all radios in a system to assure minimal disruption to normal radio communication operations, and include local, regional, and statewide mutual aid channels

6) Coordinate narrowbanding implementation schedules with neighboring public safety agencies and other non-governmental agencies that might access the channels that you are responsible for. Coordination with other public safety agencies is an essential component of the narrowbanding process. If coordination does not take place, communications with other critical agencies may be compromised; this will prove especially damaging during emergency situations.

7) As soon as possible, schedule and coordinate with your radio service vendor dates and times for the actual system conversion (or cutover). Ensure that all radio users have been advised in advance and are aware of the process. Try to coordinate narrowbanding with regularly scheduled radio maintenance, if possible.

8) Finally, modify your FCC



radio station license to remove any "wideband" emission designators, replacing them with the correct "narrowband" emission designators. This step may occur earlier in the process or at the end; regardless, it needs to take place before the process can be considered complete. (Please note: various constraints may prevent converting all operations to new narrowband emissions at the same time and on all licensed frequencies.) Check here for instructions on how to modify your FCC license: http://vcomm.vermont.gov/sites/vcomm/files/Narrowbanding_-_FCC_Instructions__01_11_.pdf.

Toolkit helps churches in county care for ‘creation’

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

(This is the first in a series of articles on county faith-based initiatives. In the next installment, learn about one Missouri county sheriff’s approach to faith-based disaster preparedness.)

Hennepin County congregations have an unlikely ally in their efforts to promote stewardship of God’s creation.

The county’s Department of Environmental Services recently updated its *Environmental Education Toolkit for Congregations*, a free 68-page booklet designed to help faith communities that are involved in or wish to start environmental programs.

“Hennepin County wants to reach as many people as they can with environmental messages, and this is an incredible way to do that,” said Ellie Jones, who runs the department’s outreach program to faith communities. “Religion is just this core motivating force in people’s lives ... It reaches so many people at such a deep level.”



Photo courtesy of Hennepin County, Minn.

Sean Gosiewski, program director, Alliance for Sustainability, listens as participants at a networking event share “green” ideas for congregations.

The toolkit provides information in five topic areas to help religious groups succeed in their environmental education and action: reducing waste, recycling, toxicity reduction, energy conservation and climate change, and

protecting water resources.

Its suggestions for congregations include:

- Form an ongoing green team, environmental stewardship team, or creation care team. Many congregations in Minnesota have formed teams to sustain their environmental efforts from year to year.
- Develop an action plan for the congregation in areas such as worship, education, buildings and grounds, discipleship at home and work, and public ministry, and
- Promote your identity as an environmentally conscious and active congregation.

The resource guide was unveiled this month at networking event for religious communities in Hennepin County, where attendees could learn from other congregations’ experiences and ideas.

“I really think it’s a very exciting merger of public supporting private efforts in growth and learning,” said Teddie Potter, who spoke at the gathering and leads the environmental stewardship program at Mayflower Church in Minneapolis. She calls the toolkit and other county-provided resources “tremendously helpful.”

A program such as this could raise “separation of church and state” issues, but Jones said there have been no “raised eyebrows.” The department strives to make sure the program is agnostic in terms of promoting particular religious beliefs.

It’s “a struggle,” though. She said most of the “centralized information and movement on this right now with Christian denominations,” but the county provides information that can be adopted by any faith tradition that

wishes to pursue environmental sustainability.

Potter calls the county’s efforts religiously “nonpartisan.” “The most recent outreach effort, they invited mosques to participate, people from synagogues to participate, any religious-affiliated group could attend their most recent toolkit orientation,” she said.

Angie Timmons, a spokeswoman for Hennepin Environmental Services, said the department created its first toolkit for congregations about three years ago. Much of the information in the revised edition is identical to guidebooks the county has produced for non-religious groups and for schools, but it’s refocused with an awareness of the needs and interests of faith communities — be they Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or other.

The booklet also includes a calendar to help faith-based communities to coordinate their environmental campaigns and projects with existing events and holidays.

For spring, it lists Buddha’s birthday and the Hindu festival *Maha Shivratri* as occasions that can be celebrated with an environmental focus. For Lent, it notes the theme of “reducing waste and consumption.”

Timmons says churches and religious groups are a natural audience to help spread the message of environmental care and concern.

“A stewardship message just really ties with religious themes,” she said. “Just about every religion has some sort of concept of protecting the earth’s resources.”

Congregations participating in the toolkit program also receive

training and support to form a green team, and may attend quarterly networking meetings with other program participants, Jones said.

Through a regional environmental program called Community POWER Networks, congregations can choose to submit a toolkit-based activity work plan and receive \$500 in free educational supplies — such as reusable cloth tote bags and kits to make your own non-toxic household cleaning spray — and further support from Hennepin County.

“What’s really big with congregations right now is taking part in the local food movement, so I’m seeing a lot of that,” Jones said. One church submitted a proposal to hold weekly local food potlucks and use the opportunity to promote buying local foods and shopping at farmers markets.

Her church especially appreciates the county’s efforts. Mayflower Church has been designated an “Earthwise” church within its United Church of Christ denomination.

“You can’t separate faith from creation,” Potter said. “If we’re people of faith, we believe that God made creation. ... If we care about being God’s people, we care about whether life on the planet survives.”

For more information about Hennepin County’s Environmental Toolkit for Congregations, contact Ellie Jones at ellie.jones@co.hennepin.mn.us or 612.348.9352. Copies of the toolkit are available online at www.hennepin.us/communitypower ► Environmental Education Toolkits.

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| 5) NEWTON | 12) WORTH | 19) SCOTLAND |
| 6) RALLS | 13) PULASKI | 20) WARREN |
| 7) ADAIR | 14) STE. GENEVIEVE | |

Source: U.S. Census Population Estimates, Missouri Senior Report
Created by: Christopher Johnson

What’s Facebook? What’s Twitter?

How is social media useful? How do I get started?

Get answers to your questions and learn more about using social media effectively in your county!

Contact Emily Landsman at elandsman@naco.org or Matthew Fellows at mfellows@naco.org.



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Speaker line-up spans both sides of the aisle at Legislative Conference

Conference Report

Attendees at NACo's 2011 Legislative Conference, March 5-8, had several opportunities to hear leading administration and congressional officials from both sides of the political spectrum on the pressing issues of the day. Following is a report on their remarks.

Opening General Session, March 7

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder challenged counties to be more creative in times of fiscal distress and staffing woes, but

in prison. Additionally, he said in half of jurisdictions, juvenile offenders did not have access to legal representation.

"We have to transition from a prosecution-and-incarceration model to an intervention-and-prevention model," he said, framing it as a moral issue. "How we treat our children answers the question of who we are as a nation. These reforms will also save money."

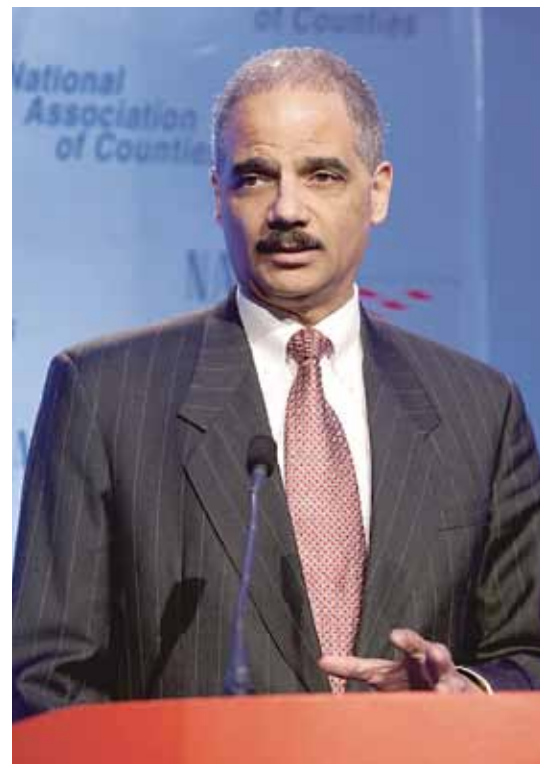
Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff

Counties can extend the reach of federal efforts to help military veterans and their families, said Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And while helping veterans, counties also stand to benefit.

He said returning vets are "wired for service" and want to use those same instincts in their communities.

"Once you get into creating opportunities for these young men and women, they will continue to serve for decades to come," he said.

Americans have a duty to help veterans, some of whom face great challenges such as growing rates of homelessness and mental illness, to reintegrate into their communities, Mullen added. Suicide rates are also on the rise among Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. The departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs can't do it alone, he said, nor should the



U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder

addressed his two main goals for justice reform: increasing the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system and improving access to legal services.

He said the current juvenile justice system does not spend resources wisely, and bemoaned the disparate population of incarcerated African-American youths relative to the overall population, the likelihood of children who have been abused ending up in prison and the percentage of inmates who have suffered sexual abuse

effort be Washington-based.

He praised NACo's efforts, through President Glen Whitley's veteran-focused presidential initiative, to honor and assist veterans.

"I'm looking for local leadership in your counties willing to take this on, tied to this initiative that you've put in place," he said. "And I think all of us — DoD, VA and you — can really make a difference for these young men and women and their families who have made such a difference for us as a country."



HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan

Joe "Morning Joe" Scarborough, MSNBC

Joe Scarborough, a former Republican congressman from northwestern Florida, told county officials that the federal budget was balanced four years in a row when he was in Congress and can be balanced again with proper leadership on Capitol Hill.

He said county officials need to tell their members of Congress that the national deficit cannot be reduced on the backs of counties, cities and states. "Balancing the budget on your backs is preposterous. It's bad for you and bad for America."

He castigated the current Congress for not having the courage to face up to the real budget issues, and said his party's presidential



Photos by David Hathcox

NACo President Glen Whitley greets Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff.

candidates are not facing up either. "We Republicans have a bunch of candidates who haven't been acting as seriously as we need them to act," he said.

General Session, March 8

Shaun Donovan, HUD secretary

HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan said his agency worked closely with counties to turn the economy around. "Through the Recovery

Act alone, we've renovated and developed over 410,000 homes—and reached over 850,000 men, women and children who were either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless," he said. "Foreclosures are down nearly 30 percent from a year ago."

At the height of the foreclosure crisis, the housing market seemed to have no bottom, Donovan told the audience. "Home prices had fallen for 30 straight months—and jobs were declining for 22 straight months. But thanks to the work that

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Joe Scarborough talks 'budget' to the General Session crowd.

Republican committee chairs brief NACo members at luncheon

MAIN SPEAKERS from page 6

you did with the tools we provided, we're able to submit HUD's 2012 budget in an economic environment that is significantly improved from when President Obama took office."

Donovan urged county officials to contact their members of Congress to defend Neighborhood Stabilization funds. The program has invested \$7 billion across the country to buy foreclosed and abandoned properties, he said, reducing vacancy rates in those neighborhoods by 50 to 75 percent.

"Remind them that because of these kinds of tools, an economy that was shrinking when we took office is growing again today—and instead of rapid job loss, more than a million private sector jobs were created last year," he said.

Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.)

The first elected official to go from county executive to the U.S. Senate since Joe Biden in 1972, Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.) spoke to delegates about how his first term in the Senate will be challenging because of the unyielding focus on budgets this year. The federal budget is slated to reach \$3.8 trillion

These grants are used at the discretion of local governments.

Coons said all levels of government must cooperate to "Restore the Partnership," a NACo campaign that Coons was active in while in local government. Along with Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-Va.)—another former county CEO—Coons said they will work on the county, municipal and state levels to legislatively restore and sustain a partnership with the federal government.

"Far too many people in Congress do not understand counties and how they work," Coons added. "Restore the Partnership will help counties have a greater voice on Capitol Hill and help people clearly understand the issues affecting counties."

Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.)

Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.), who chaired House Speaker John Boehner's leadership transition team, railed against the federal government's budget planning, or lack thereof. "This cannot continue, we have to get debt under control and back to manageable level," he said. "We can't cut deficit spending without cutting spending."

"States and local governments are the best place to try out solutions," he said, noting that if the ideas fail, they would have limited liability and if they succeed, they can be replicated.

Luncheon, March 8

Two members of the new House majority leadership spoke at the conference luncheon. "With the change in control of the House, NACo leadership thought it was very important to hear from those decision makers who will be working on issues of importance to county officials," said NACo President Glen Whitley.

Representing the new majority were Reps. John Mica (R-Fla.), chair, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and Doc Hastings (R-Wash.), chair, House Natural Resources Committee

Rep. John Mica (R-Fla.)

In his sixth term in the House of Representatives, John Mica (R-Fla.) spoke to delegates about improving the nation's infrastructure and said transportation is important both on a national and county level.

"Our challenge is taking diminishing revenues and making them go further," Mica said. "We have to be committed to create jobs, cut waste and do more with less."

After being named chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in January, Mica said there were many bills left in shambles. There have been 17 short-term extensions of the Aviation Bill and seven extensions of the largest bill on the docket—the surface transportation act that funds highway and transit programs. Mica stressed that he believed a long-term bill must be passed for the betterment of counties and states, and with an extension of the current legislation through Sept. 30, he believes Congress will have enough time to pass permanent legislation.

"Congress probably wouldn't have taken the beating at the polls if people were working, and the highest rate of unemployment wasn't in the construction industry," he added. "They need to pass a transportation bill that will last at least six to 10 years."

Mica said more transportation spending is needed to build the nation's infrastructure.

"This important work begins in the subcommittees, and I am confident these experienced chairmen and members will provide dedicated, effective leadership as



Rep. John Mica

they work to improve our nation's infrastructure in a fiscally responsible manner," he said.

Meanwhile, Mica is turning to members of Congress and counties to help draft legislation that will benefit everyone involved.

"This is your time to reverse the process and make your voices heard," he said. "With your help we can make transportation a priority and not a background topic."

Rep. Doc Hastings (R-Wash.)

President Obama's policies don't match his rhetoric when it comes to eliminating regulations that strangle businesses, Rep. Doc Hastings (R-Wash.) told conference delegates.

"Rules and regulations imposed by the Obama administration have allowed the federal government

to insert itself in places that it's never been and frankly it doesn't belong," said Hastings, who chairs the House Natural Resources Committee.

A "perfect example," he said, is an order issued by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar late last year directing the Bureau of Land Management to designate appropriate areas with wilderness characteristics under its jurisdiction as "Wild Lands."

Critics say the order strips Congress of its sole statutory authority to designate wilderness areas. However, BLM draws a distinction

between wild lands and "wilderness areas," which, a BLM news release acknowledges, "are designated by Congress and cannot be modified except by legislation."

Hastings' committee held oversight hearings on the order a week before his conference remarks, and during the conference, NACo's Public Lands Steering Committee passed a resolution calling on Salazar to repeal the order.

"From my point of view," he said, "this is a clear attempt by the administration to create de facto wilderness areas without congressional approval." He added that the order will disproportionately affect "rural communities that depend on public lands for their livelihoods," drawing applause from some in the audience.

Hastings said, as with this issue, his committee intends to hold more oversight hearings. "I believe that Congresses have been negligent in the past—regardless of the administration—in carrying out their oversight responsibility," he said, "but we are going to do that."

When the federal government restricts the use of public lands, Hastings said programs like Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools become even more important to maintain. PILT impacts some 2,000 counties in 49 states, he said.

"I support the PILT program; I think it's integral because, by definition payment in lieu of taxes describes what it's supposed to do," he said. "But just think about this, it



Sen. Chris Coons



Rep. Greg Walden

with national deficit projected at \$1.6 trillion.

"The way to solve our national deficit problem is to solve our national deficit problem and not drive counties and towns into bankruptcy," Coons said.

He added that Congress cannot simply solve the deficit crisis by cutting programs that counties need to thrive, such as the Community Development Block Grant. CDBG funds local community development activities such as affordable housing, anti-poverty programs and infrastructure development.

For example, he said constituents tell him they want to reduce the deficit, but in his 12 years in Congress, nobody has walked through his door and said, "cut my program." He lauded procedural reforms in the House that would make the legislative process more transparent, especially the requirement for Congress to wait three days to read legislation after drafts have been published.

He praised county government for being an idea incubator in a way he said federal and state government are not.



Rep. Doc Hastings

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Workshops examine course changes to which counties must adjust

Conference Report

Workshop participants examined the rapidly changing federal landscape in several arenas, including the Affordable Care Act, Clean Water Act, Americans with Disabilities Act and how the new Republican congressional majority will affect legislation.

Monday, March 7

Government Initiatives to Lower Jail and Prison Populations

Who spoke?

- Liz Maloy, legal advisor, Senator Judiciary Chairman Patrick Leahy
- Stefan LoBuglio, Montgomery County, chief, Pre-Release and Reentry Service
- Timothy Murray, executive director, Pretrial Justice Institute

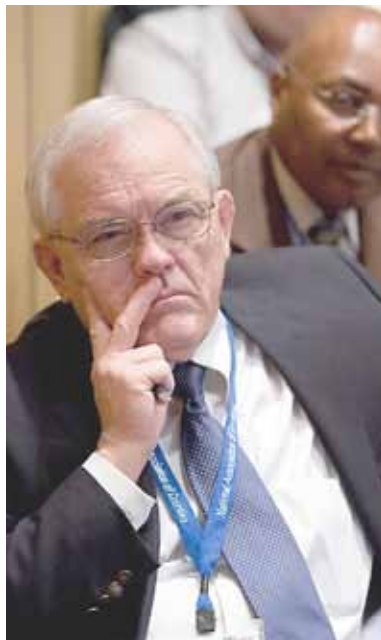
What participants learned:

Counties nationwide spend \$70 billion per year on jail costs. The speakers provided insights on how counties could spend money wisely on jails and prisons as county budgets get tighter.

LoBuglio discussed Montgomery County, Md.'s Pre-release and Reentry Service (PRRS) Division and how with the right tools a county can use this model to save money. PRRS provides residential and non-residential reentry services to convicted and sentenced individuals who are within 12 months of release and who have been incarcerated in the county's correctional system. This nationally recognized program has served over 15,000 individuals since its founding in the late 1960s and currently has an 85 percent success rate.

Murray talked about what counties are paying for when it comes to their jails and prison population. Of the people who get booked for minor offenses, 4 percent are sent to jail because they could not afford bail. Most of these county jails are paying for inmates to stay in a cell.

"What drives the population is not crime but an increase on courts to use financial bonds," Murray said. "You're keeping them behind bars not because they are scary or



Photos by David Hathcox

David Unruh, Sedgwick County, Kan., listens to a speaker at Government Initiatives to Lower Jail and Prison Populations.

dangerous but because they can't afford to pay the bail."

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Redistricting in a Nutshell

Who spoke?

- Richard Leadbeater, industry solutions manager, State Government and Trade Associations, Esri
- Cathy McCully, chief, Census Redistricting Data Office, U.S. Census Bureau
- Tim Storey, senior fellow, National Conference of State Legislatures



The chief of the Census Redistricting Data Office, Cathy McCully, was on hand to discuss the redistricting process at the educational session, Redistricting in a Nutshell.

What participants learned:

Two explosions since the 2000 census will have a major impact on the redistricting based on the 2010 data: explosive growth in America's Hispanic population and the proliferation of social media, according to experts.

In the 26 states that had received 2010 census data by March 7, the Hispanic population has increased 79 percent since 2000, according to Jim Torey, a redistricting expert with the National Conference of State Legislatures. The non-Hispanic growth rate in those same states was 7.5 percent, he told a capacity audience for the workshop "Redistricting in a Nutshell."

The 2011 redistricting will be the first since the proliferation of social media. Twitter took off in 2007, Facebook launched in 2004.

Richard Leadbeater of Esri, a GIS systems company, said he sees as many as 100 unique "tweets" a day on the topic of redistricting, some of which are "really visceral." He advised county officials to monitor the Twitter-sphere to



Sally Conway (r), U.S. Department of Justice, explains how to comply with the new Americans with Disabilities Act regulations that went into effect in March. Also on the panel at A New Day — A New ADA, were Marion Vessels (l), Mid-Atlantic Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center; and Nancy Greene, Montgomery County, Md. compliance manager.

gauge public sentiment.

"The public access to this process will be at the highest it's ever been in the modern era of redistricting," Leadbeater said. "Joe Q citizen" can go to the Census

Bureau and obtain the data used in redistricting and find software on the Internet that's "close to free." "They can get their neighbors

See **WORKSHOPS** page 9

Military veterans returning from deployment face struggles reintegrating

MAIN SPEAKERS from page 7

may not be necessary to have a PILT program if the federal government didn't own so much land. That's just food for thought."

Finally, Hastings addressed America's energy policy. He said with gas prices breaking \$100 a barrel recently, for the first time since 2008, the United States needs an "all-of-the-above energy plan."

"I'm going to be as aggressive as I possibly can as chairman of the Natural Resources Committee to try to promote ... more exploration on our federal lands," he said, "whether it's on the OCS (Outer Continental Shelf), or whether it's the intermountain West or whether it's in Alaska. I think all of that needs to be on the table for our national security purposes."

David Brown, Psy.D

David Brown, psychiatrist for the Defense Centers of Excellence, shared his insights into issues that service members encounter when returning to their civilian communities.

Most importantly, he said, people must understand that veterans don't snap back to their previous selves, whether for good or bad.

"Close existential calls with death can cripple us, or they can help us grow," Brown said.

Understanding veterans' culture prevents service providers from wasting efforts and makes their communication more effective. Within the military, family relationships develop among people who deploy together. After missions are over, though, redeployments break up these families, and repetitive deployments can make servicemen wonder if it is worth forming new relationships.

Along with recognizing that veterans aren't the same people who left for war, Brown said it's important to engage

their new skill sets while everyone figures out what the new normal is.

(County News staff, Charlie Ban, Bev Schlotterbeck, Charles Taylor and Christopher Johnson contributed to this report.)



David Brown, Psy.D

Workshops clue participants into recent and looming federal changes

WORKSHOPS from page 8

around their kitchen table and start doing redistricting scenarios in the evening. It's that easy," he said.

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A New Day, a New ADA

Who spoke?

- Sally Conway, deputy chief, ADA Technical Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice

- Nancy Greene, ADA Title II compliance manager, Montgomery County Md.

- Marion Vessels, director, Mid-Atlantic Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center

What participants learned:

Starting March 15, counties will no longer be required to accommodate service animals that are not dogs. Though that is a setback for citizens who claim the benefits of service snakes, iguanas or goats, Sally Conway said it will simplify requirements for counties to conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

"Counties can still choose to admit these animals if they wish, but they don't have to," she said.

ADA regulations' revisions took effect March 15, including changes to the rules on nondiscrimination on the basis of state and local government services and by public accommodations and in commercial facilities. The regulations were last changed in 1991.

Conway stressed that if counties had conformed to the 1991 ADA regulations, they would not be required to perform expensive renovations to meet 2011 regulations unless they are planning to renovate anyway.

"The ADA is a civil rights law,



Commissioner Bob Fox and daughter, Laura, from Renville County, Minn., listen to presentations at a workshop on the upcoming reauthorization of the Farm Bill.

not a building code," she said, mentioning that intent and spirit of cooperation go a long way. "We'll go after damages from those who thumb their noses at us. If you make a good-faith effort, we're looking for that."

Greene stressed reading the recommendations sections to determine the intent behind the changes and training front-line employees.

Vessels pointed out that county websites would need to make accommodations for the hearing- and visually-impaired.

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Affordable Care Act: Prevention and Public Health Investments:

Who spoke?

- Eli Briggs, senior government affairs specialist, National Association of County and City Health Officials

- Mayra Alvarez, director of public health policy, Office of Health Reform, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

- Craig Martinez, health policy advisor, U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

What participants learned:

Martinez said that although some people derided the Prevention and Public Health Fund as "a slush fund for jungle gyms and bike trails," it serves an important role in meeting people's health needs on a local level.

"You have to put a public face on community health and prevention," he said. "You have to make it compelling to the local population and decide what your community needs."

Martinez has served on the staffs of Democratic Sens. Tom Harkin and the late Ted Kennedy. He stressed that the fund would supplement programs, not supplant them.

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The Next Farm Bill: Advocating for Rural Counties

Who spoke?

- Cheryl Cook, deputy under secretary for rural development, U.S. Department of Agriculture

- Chuck Fluharty, president and CEO, Rural Policy Research Institute

- Mike Dunlap, staff director, House Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on Rural Development, Research, Biotechnology, and Foreign Agriculture

remainder of this year and next. Second, the Farm Bill process is in its early stages, and now is the time to advocate for policy changes such as streamlined application procedures and targeting of resources to locally driven county and multi-county regional development plans.

Fluharty discussed the importance of the Farm Bill for rural America and the need for a new rural policy that empowers local communities and regions, and invests in holistic rural develop-



As working parents know, childcare is sometimes hard to come by: witness James O'Keefe, senior economist, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, and son Elias at the New World in Transportation workshop. O'Keefe was a featured speaker.

What participants learned:

Advocating for greater funding and local flexibility for USDA Rural Development programs within the Farm Bill reauthorization process is a key legislative priority for NACo.

There are two key ways that county officials can advocate for the grant and loan programs available to help rural counties fund rural housing, community facilities, water and wastewater infrastructure, broadband and business development projects, the speakers said. First, county officials should educate their congressional delegation about the importance of strong yearly appropriations for these programs, which are under threat of significant cuts for the

ment approaches that increase competitiveness in multiple sectors of the rural economy.

Participants were surprised to learn the degree to which farmers in their communities are increasingly dependent on off-farm sources of income. Ninety-one percent of farm household income in the U.S. comes from off-farm sources, which means that NACo's focus on enhancing rural development opportunities in the next Farm Bill is not only critical to rural communities, it is also critical to the nation's farmers and ranchers.

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Tuesday, March 8

Out with the Wash: Proposed Clean Water Act Changes

Who spoke?

- Jon Pawlow, counsel, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee



Mayra Alvarez (r), Office of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, briefs attendees at the Prevention and Public Health Investments session. Also presenting were: (l) Craig Martinez, Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension Committee policy advisor; and Eli Briggs, National Association of County, City Health Officials.



Nancy Stoner, acting assistant administrator for water, EPA, talks about proposed changes to the Clean Water Act at the workshop Out With the Wash: Proposed Clean Water Act Changes.



Steering committees, tech summit mark pre-conference sessions

Conference Report

The Legislative Conference traditionally serves as a marker for other NACo-related activities such as policy deliberations and associated meetings. These auxiliary events, held during the few days before the official opening of the conference, feature specialized topics and speakers.

Following is a report on some pre-conference sessions.

Technology Summit: Chief Information Officer Perspectives, March 5

Struggling to cope with shrinking revenues and increasing demands for services, counties are constantly seeking innovative ways to deliver essential services to communities. The speakers provided insights on how counties are changing the way they do business in the midst of budget crises.

Phil Bertolini, chief information officer, Oakland County, Mich., said reengineering enterprise technologies can help with service delivery through cloud computing. Cloud computing is a general term for anything that involves delivering hosted services over the Internet. These services are broadly divided into three categories: Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS), which provides virtual servers using a pay-for-what-you-use model; Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS), such as website portals or gateway software installed

on the customer's computer; and Software-as-a-Service (SaaS), which includes the vendor that supplies the hardware infrastructure.

He added that IT governance is needed, and elected county officials need to be on board to make sure things such as social media sites are "their voice" when any items are posted.

Rafael Mena, CIO, Orange County, Fla. discussed Orange County's IT governing structure. He said that different departments in all counties must work together to find a standard that every agency must have. They need to use their IT departments to develop applications that connect these agencies for the betterment of the community. One example Mena offered is Orange County's electronic signature process for affidavits that all agencies can use.

Jeffrey Porter, platform technologies director, Fairfax County,



Photo by Jack Hernandez

(l-r) Jeffrey Porter, platform technologies director, Fairfax County, Va., talks about county innovations in saving money as Rafael Mena, CIO, Orange County, Fla. and Harold Tuck, CIO, San Diego County, Calif. look on.

Va., said county leaders and IT departments need to be innovative in saving money by consolidating

resources and having employees telecommute. The use of mobile devices makes it a lot easier to work

productively from home including wing devices such as smartphones or iPads.

San Diego County CIO Harold Tuck suggested that contracting out for IT is "recession proof" and provides a negotiated rate that is comfortable for the county in the midst of budgetary constraints.

The panel concluded with a discussion on how mobility devices are the next challenge for all county IT departments.

"Instead of shelling out \$2,000 for a laptop, people are buying iPads for \$500," Porter said. "Use of mobility devices, such as the iPad, are what IT departments will be looking at in the future."

Healthy Counties Initiative Advisory Board,

First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move!" campaign was a

See PRE-CON page 15

Workshop hints at federal economic developments

WORKSHOPS from page 8

- Nancy Stoner, acting assistant administrator for water, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- John Thorne, senior policy advisor, Crowell & Moring, LLP

What participants learned:

Stoner said the United States had not yet turned the corner on storm water management.

With impervious surfaces expected to increase by 36 percent by 2030 nationwide as a result of new construction, storm water runoff will become more problematic. But Stone said the EPA was unlikely to mandate any new technologies, including permeable pavements or green roofs.

Continued innovation in those technologies is likely to happen on the state and local levels.

"It's very helpful because it brings investment into communities, beautifies those communities, and ensures development is done right the first time," she said, adding that \$1 spent on protection is worth \$27 in cleanup.

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What to Expect from the New Congress

Who spoke?

- Will Kinzel, policy advisor

and counsel, House Speaker John Boehner

- Wendell Primus, senior policy advisor on budget and health issues to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi

What participants learned:

With the 112th Congress already two months old, proxies from the speaker of the House and minority leader debated like two divorcing parents fighting for custody of an infant.

Kinzel called the fiscal situation horrible at every level and blamed overspending.

"The fact of the matter is, we're broke," he said.

He said budget cuts within discretionary spending be enough to reign in overspending.

"A lot of issues need to be looked at through a new prism," he said. "The way we did things before isn't sustainable."

Primus characterized the economic situation as a huge jobs deficit on top of a spending problem. He also said economic losses at the end of the Bush administration tied President Obama's hands in terms of spending.

"Almost every economist has said if you cut spending, we'll lose jobs," he said. "Losing jobs means it will take longer to recover. If we get the

economy back, more revenues will flow into the government."

He called Obama's budget a very good starting point in cutting spending.

Both expressed hope for successful bipartisan negotiation, Primus citing former Speaker Tip O'Neill

and President Reagan's negotiations over Social Security changes in the 1980s as a model, and Kinzel praising this year's negotiations for HR1, the continuing resolution to fund the government.

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Photo by David Hathcox

Joshua Gordon, The Conrad Coalition, outlines his ideas about how efforts to reduce the federal debt will affect counties in an educational session dealing with the topic. Also pictured is the workshop moderator, Rod Bockenfeld, Arapahoe County, Colo.



Share your point of view ...

Letters to the Editor

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

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Conference Photo Review

County Government Works!

All photos by David Hathcox unless noted



Larry L. Johnson, DeKalb County, Ga., participates in the Q & A session following Sen. Chris Coons formal remarks.



Second Vice President Chris Rodgers (l) confers with Lenny Eliason, NACo first vice president, during policy discussions at the Board of Directors meeting.



Ron Sims, HUD deputy secretary and former King County, Wash. executive, briefed members of the Rural Action Caucus at their March 7 breakfast meeting.



(Left) Thomas Davidson, Summit County, Colo., listens to presentations at an educational session on the impact to counties of congressional efforts to reduce the federal debt.

(Right) Washington state colleagues, Charlotte Garrido, Kitsap County, and John Austin, Jefferson County, concentrate on Nationwide economist Paul Ballew's data-dense presentation.





Photos by David Hathcox unless noted

Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee Chair David Hudson, Sebastian County, Ark., presents his committee's policy recommendations at the Board of Directors Meeting March 7. Also pictured is committee staff, Dalen Harris, NACo associate legislative director, and the committee's senior policy advisor, Donald Murray (l).



Top policy advisors to House leaders briefed NACo members at the educational session on the new political congressional landscape: (l) Will Kinzel, policy advisor and counsel to House Speaker John Boehner; and Wendell Primus, senior policy advisor on budget and health issues to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi.



A popular educational session, Kids and Gangs: The Preventive Potential of Federal Youth Legislation, drew many questions during the Q & A session, including some asked by Fernando Armenta, Monterey County, Calif.



Lawrence Schoen, Blaine County, Idaho, takes notes at the Rural Action Caucus meeting.



Members of the Chatham Youth Commission and their sponsors pause for a group portrait. The commission members, high school students from Chatham County, Ga., have been attending NACo's Legislative Conference since 1999



Broward County, Fla, Commissioner Kristin Jacobs asks a question at the New World in Transportation workshop.

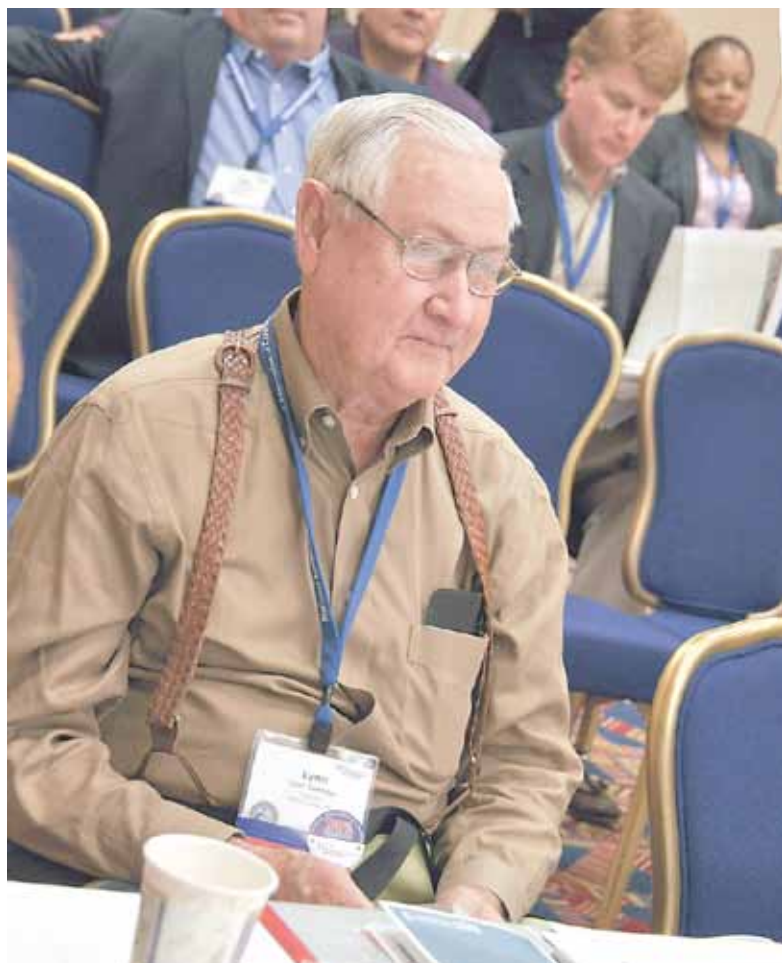


Photo by Jack Hernandez

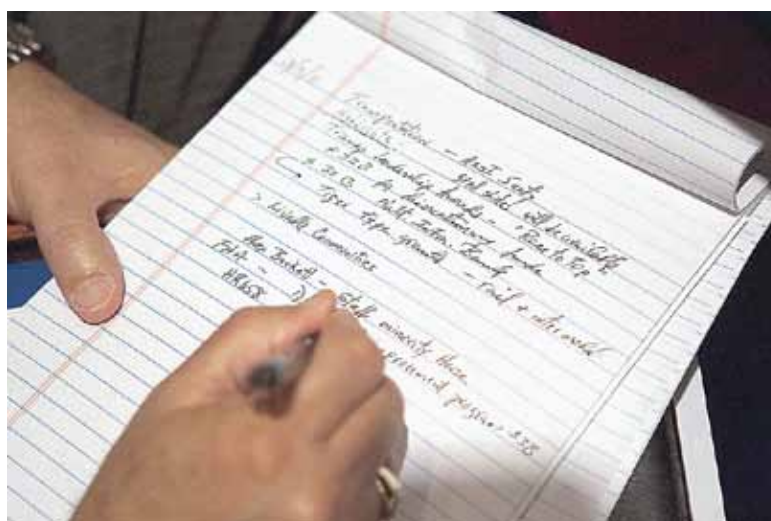
During the Community and Economic Development Steering Committee meeting, Lynn Cartlidge, supervisor, Forrest County, Miss, announced that this would be his final year attending the NACo Legislative Conference. He is retiring after nearly 36 years of service to the county Board of Supervisors — 24 years as its president. Cartlidge has served on NACo's Board of Directors since 2000 and on the Community and Economic Development Steering Committee since 1996.



Paul Ballew, Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company's chief economist, predicted improved economic activity in the second half of the year during his remarks at the March 8 General Session.



NACo awarded its Premier Partner of the Year award to Netsmart, a software solution provider, who is leading the effort on Capitol Hill to extend federal support for health information technology to counties. Accepting the award on behalf of Netsmart is Kevin Scalia (c). He is flanked by NACo President Glen Whitley (l) and Executive Director Larry Naake.



Amid all the netbooks, laptops and iPads there's still room for pen and paper technology.



Photo by Jack Hernandez

Greg Fox, vice-chair, Green Government Advisory Board, addresses attendees at the advisory board meeting. Also pictured are Salud Carbajal (l), vice chair, and Gregg Goslin (r), chair. Jared Lang, NACo staff, stands by the podium.



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Next 'highway bill' should focus on projects of federal interest

PRE-CON from page 10

featured topic at NACo's Healthy Counties Initiative Advisory Board meeting.

Let's Move! is dedicated to solving the problem of obesity within a generation. Combining comprehensive strategies with common sense, the program focuses on early childhood, schools, community and physical activity.

Robin Schepper, executive director, Let's Move! said, "Counties are a crucial part of how the Let's Move! campaign works. The more help we have moving this forward, the more success it will have."

Schepper said childhood obesity rates have increased dramatically over the past several decades. U.S. child obesity rates have tripled over the last 30 years, she said, spurred, in large part, by too much junk food and not enough exercise. Poor nutrition among youth is raising national concerns.

One way to ensure counties can help is through outreach. County leaders can promote physical fitness by working to increase safe routes for kids to walk and ride to school; by revitalizing parks, playgrounds, and community centers; and by providing fun and affordable sports and fitness programs.



Photos by Jack Hernandez

Robin Schepper, executive director, Let's Move!, prepares to speak to NACo's Healthy Counties Initiative Advisory Board.

tion Steering Committee.

It's a formula for doing more with less, said Jim Tymon, staff director for the House Highways and Transit Subcommittee. Some of the 100 or so existing surface transportation programs will need to be simplified, consolidated or eliminated if they aren't national priorities, he said.

Tymon said his boss, Rep. John Mica (R-Fla.), chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, wants to contain project costs — and stretch available dollars — by setting hard deadlines for resource agencies (such as the EPA and Corps of Engineers) to sign off on permits. Lengthy project reviews can drive up construction costs. "If they don't sign off on it in 30 days or 60 days or 90 days, whatever the appropriate number is, then they're deemed to have approved it," Tymon said.

Also speaking before the committee were Janet Kavinoky, director, Transportation Infrastructure Congressional and Public Affairs, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and Andrew Johnsen, assistant vice president, BNSF Railroad.

Kavinoky said, "What my members want is increased federal investment in transportation ... And they want those dollars to be going to things that are really going to drive the economy."

Public Lands Steering Committee, March 6

Bureau of Land Management Deputy Director Mike Pool assured committee members that there has been no change in developing natural commodities on public lands.

He also tackled the contentious issue of the order from Interior Secretary Ken Salazar for BLM to inventory the wild lands in BLM's portfolio, saying that the order was an "administrative designation only." NACo opposes the order and has asked that it be withdrawn.

Also addressing the committee



Rear Adm. (Ret.) Jamie Barnett Jr., FCC Bureau Chief for Public Safety and Homeland Security, reviews public safety communications issues with members of NACo's Telecommunications and Technology Steering Committee.

was Jay Jensen, USDA deputy under secretary, Natural Resources and Environment, who spoke about President Obama's Great Outdoors initiative and its overall goal of reconnecting people to the land.

Telecommunications and Technology Steering Committee

Rear Admiral (Ret.) James A. Barnett, Jr., chief of the Federal Communications Commission's

Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, told the committee that upgrading technological capability is the chief communications goal for emergency management agencies. Another goal involves training personnel to receive text messaging with or without GPS data. He cited examples from the April 2007 shooting at Virginia Tech, when students who were unable to speak, for fear of being found by the gunman, sent text messages to 911, which were not processed in time.

Ron Orlando of Comcast presented the company's Broadband Opportunity Program, which will supply low-cost laptops or netbooks to families with children eligible for the free school lunch program, along with high-speed wireless Internet connection for \$9.95 a month for as long as the family qualifies until their last child finishes high school. The program will take enrollees during the 2011–2013 school years and is currently being tested in New Castle County, Del.



BLM Deputy Director Mike Pool briefs members of the Public Lands Steering Committee at their meeting March 6. Looking on is PLSC Chair Tim Josi, Tillamook County, Ore.

NACo Transportation Steering Committee, March 6

A focus on results and projects in the "federal interest" are among the priorities driving the lawmakers crafting the next surface transportation bill, a key U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee staffer told NACo's Transporta-

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SIEMENS

NACo National Association of Counties
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County's Web chat targets public assistance fraud

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

A woman now living in northern Kentucky still receives welfare benefits from Hamilton County, Ohio. A county resident who lives in Section 8 housing "has had MANY roommates living with her and now has her boyfriend living there full-time."

These are two of the many reports that were received during a recent county-sponsored Web chat on public assistance fraud.

The county's Jobs and Family Services department holds regular online chats on a variety of topics related to its services. However, this was the first to target public assistance fraud, which falls under an initiative launched this year by Board of Commissioners President Greg Hartmann.

"With the downturn in the economy we've seen an uptick in fraudulent activity here in this county; it's happening across the country," Hartmann said. "It's not good for anybody who pays taxes for welfare fraud to occur because it takes money from those who need it."

Hartmann created the Hamilton County Coalition to Stop Fraud, Scams & Abuse (www.hamilton-co.org/fraud), a group of representatives from the business community, law enforcement, social service agencies and local nonprofits in the Cincinnati area who use their professional experience to combat local fraud and scams.

"We're just engaging the public and helping the public assist law enforcement, [by] being kind of a citizen activist," Hartmann said.

Brian Gregg, a spokesman Hamilton County Jobs and Family Services, said other Web chats his department has hosted have covered such topics as workforce development and child welfare. It uses a software product called BoldChat to conduct the sessions.

This was the first chat the presents "revenue-generating" potential — either through recovering funds that recipients weren't entitled to or by stopping payments to those receiving them illegally, he said. "We're going to see what kind of response we get, and if it becomes something that's popular, we'll add it to our regular round of topics that we do."

Gregg said when the chat sessions are scheduled they are publicized using news releases and social media. Some may attract as many as 100 participants, with others they may struggle to get 10 log-ins.

The chats are moderated, so no incriminating or identifying information is visible in the chat stream.

Most of the reports via the recent chat, March 22, involved people receiving assistance and not reporting others who were living with them and contributing to their household income, which might make them ineligible for the assistance, Gregg said.

One participant wrote: *[Name redacted] gets food stamps and insurance from the county and she lying she works a full time job. her husband XXX works under the table so she dont report that but he gets 1200.00 every two weeks.*

"We also received reports of people selling their Ohio Directional Cards, which are used to buy food," Gregg added — and a report about a specific store where

people are buying and selling the cards that the county is "definitely going to check out."

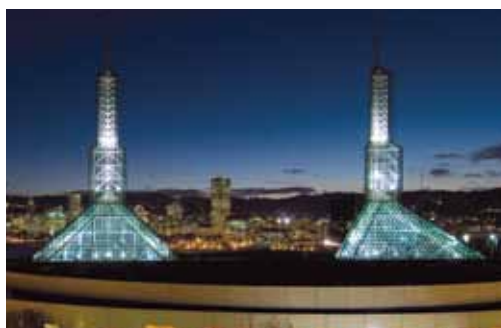
Caseworkers and investigators will attempt to verify the tips, but Gregg said some will be tough to track down. "If someone tells you no one lives at the house, how do you prove they do?"

Hartmann said one of his coalition's main goals is public education, which can aid in

reducing fraud. The group has a speaker's bureau that makes public presentations. And as with the Web chat, the effort has embraced other social media.

"Through our Twitter account we can communicate with 5,000 people quickly," Hartmann said. "It's really the future of how you communicate with the public. Social media clearly has a role in it."

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Model Programs FROM THE NATION'S COUNTIES

Los Angeles County, Calif.

Visitation Centers Aid Foster Care System

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

When children go into foster care, parents' effort to improve their family's situation is complicated by their need and desire to maintain a relationship with the kids in the meantime.

With more than 18,000 Los Angeles County, Calif. children in foster care, the county's Department of Children and Family Services sought to provide a meaningful neutral site where families could reunite, one more welcoming than a noisy fast food restaurant or a sterile, clinical office.

Several regional DCFS offices have established visitation centers for families of children who have been placed in foster care. Most are located in churches, parsonages or businesses.

Sonia Contreras, assistant regional administrator for the south county DCFS office, said the department knew it had to get the community involved to improve the quality and effectiveness of the family services the county offered. After some "cold call" visits to area churches, Contreras found a few willing to donate space for visitation centers.

"Visitation is crucial to pursuing reunification of families," she said. "If getting more people and resources involved is helpful, we are going to do that."

What DCFS concocted are several home-like environments for families to spend their time. The centers resemble houses without bedrooms, with plenty of room to eat, play, relax and bond. The more-comfortable visitation centers, as a result, make the visits more calm and peaceful for families, and the families "get more" out of their time together. Most importantly, it's private.

"In a restaurant, you can't do



Photo Courtesy of Sonia Contreras

Los Angeles County, Calif.'s Family Visitation Centers are decorated to simulate a home atmosphere, with a living room, dining room and kitchen all represented.

homework with your children, have quiet, together time, or be able to focus on a heartfelt conversation without fear of interruption," Contreras said. "They're warm, den-like atmospheres, and we've seen our families flock to them."

In addition to providing a comfortable venue, the visitation

centers are staffed by community volunteers who have been trained as counselors. This also helps put families at ease, because they aren't watched like hawks by the same social workers who may have also played punitive roles in their lives previously.

"There's no judgment from

our volunteers, they help make it a more comfortable setting for the families," Contreras said. "Families and volunteers have responded well to each other."

Another advantage to using volunteers and visitation centers is that the families can schedule visitations with more flexibility than was available with county social workers in county offices. With many parents working full-time jobs, the ability to meet in evenings and on weekends is crucial to fitting in visitation opportunities.

Volunteers are trained in county social services facilities by counselors. They learn how to interact with families in the middle of an emotional juncture and how to coach parents to develop certain skills. While learning how to chaperone the visits, they get to know when a visit should be terminated and how to do so diplomatically.

"Having volunteers involved really helps put family members at ease," Contreras said. "Much more so than having a social worker looking over parents' shoulders."

She said families have been choosing to use visitation centers in dramatic numbers, and family reunifications, though there is no "normal" timetable, have generally proceeded faster when families use the visitation centers.

Suzanne Geske, executive director of the Foster Children's Foundation based in Georgia, said the visitation centers can take a lot of pressure off of families who are reuniting under stressful conditions and have limited time to spend together.

"Anything that's going to make things more comfortable for the families or children is great," she said. "The less you're worried about a clinical atmosphere, the more energy you can put toward creating good memories."

(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.)

Research News

Combating Consumer Fraud

For the 11th year in a row, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) reported it received more complaints about identity theft than any other consumer complaint. Debt collection was second with bogus sweepstakes scams coming in third.

Of the 1.3 million complaints received in 2010, nearly 251,000 (19 percent) were related to identity theft. The state of Florida had the highest per capita rate of reported identity theft complaints, followed by Arizona and California.

The report released this month breaks out complaint data on a state-by-state basis, contains data about the 50 metropolitan areas reporting the highest number of per capita complaints and the highest incidence of identity theft.

The increased use of technology has also led to new methods for targeting consumers for identity theft. Although still a small percentage, the number of complaints

consumers made to the FTC about computer spyware more than tripled from 6,012 complaints in 2009 to 22,813 in 2010.

In addition, email was the top way of contacting fraud victims with 41 percent of consumers reporting email as the initial method of contact. Phone calls were second at 19 percent and websites were third at 11 percent.

The report also shows that among the fastest growing types of fraud are those collectively known as impostor scams. Impostor scams — where impostors posed as friends, family, respected companies or government agencies to get consumers to send them money — ranked number six.

A favorite impostor scam during tax season is the fake Internal Revenue Service email. The target of the fraud gets an email with an official-looking IRS logo demanding a credit card number to settle a tax debt. The email warns that

if the person does not comply, the agency will take action by garnishing the person's wages or placing a lien against a home.

In response to the increase in impostor scams, the FTC released a new consumer alert with tips on how to spot an impostor. Most importantly, the FTC recommends taking time to evaluate the accuracy of the information. The key to successful impostor scams is getting someone to send money before verifying who is really on the other end of the request. The more time someone takes to evaluate the situation, the more likely people are to discover the impostor.

Counties are also doing their part to help residents become aware of the dangers of fraud. The Sheriff's Department in Pinellas County, Fla., created a dedicated Crime Prevention Unit to help residents prevent identify theft. By reaching out to the community, unit staff

encourage residents to take the time to safeguard personal information.

To combat the problem of mortgage fraud, which was number 13 on the list of consumer complaints from the FTC, Hennepin County, Minn. created a program to dedicate county prosecutors to assist law enforcement in investigating potential mortgage fraud cases. The prosecutors' knowledge of complex real estate transactions assisted law enforcement in investigations and allowed these prosecutors to continue with the case through the trial phase. Through this initiative, county prosecutors were able to stop fraudulent companies from spying on county residents.

To view the full report from the FTC, please visit www.ftc.gov/sentinel/reports/sentinel-annual-reports/sentinel-cy2010.pdf.

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

Notice ...

**Financial Services
News and the H.R.
Doctor will resume
in the April 11 issue.**



News From the Nation's Counties

► ALABAMA

The state Supreme Court struck down an occupational tax that would have helped **JEFFERSON COUNTY** recover from its mounting financial problems.

The state legislature enacted the 2009 occupational tax to help Jefferson County lift itself out of a financial hole, including \$3.2 billion in debt from sewer construction.

The court's 6-0 ruling said the state constitution requires that citizens of a county receive notice of any proposed legislation that will affect them before the legislature enacts it. That is done through newspaper ads, and in the case of the occupational tax, the justices said the published notice did not include parts of the law that was eventually enacted by the legislature in a special session in 2009, and that made the law unconstitutional.

Commissioner Jimmie Stephens said the ruling will require the county to make at least \$35 million in budget cuts on top of \$33 million the commission has already taken and predicted citizens would see reductions in most county services, including law enforcement, unless the commission can persuade the county legislators to enact another revenue-raising measure soon.

► ARIZONA

Mervin Fried will get his pitchfork back after being acquitted of trespassing at a **MOHAVE COUNTY** supervisors' meeting last year.

The *Daily Miner* reports Fried tried to bring the farm tool into the Feb. 16 meeting. County Manager Ron Walker told him to leave his pitchfork outside. Fried was arrested when he refused and tried to enter the building anyway.

Judge Pro-tempore Paul Julien ruled that Fried was not guilty of third-degree trespassing, saying officials did have the authority to restrict access to the building but not prevent Fried from entering with his pitchfork since members of the public with holstered handguns are allowed inside. Denying access to the defendant because he had a "holstered" pitchfork was unreasonable, Julien said.

► ARKANSAS

The Arkansas House passed a bill that would allow counties to use the Internet to meet the legal require-

ments for publishing ordinances instead of newspapers.

Rep. Randy Stewart of Kirby says county leaders asked for the bill, which passed on a 65-18 vote.

Stewart says **PULASKI COUNTY** would save \$1 million under the bill.

Rep. Andy Mayberry of Hensley, who publishes a newspaper in **SALINE COUNTY**, says it is premature to enact a change in the requirement, according to the Associated Press. Mayberry says a lot of people still rely on newspapers as their primary outlet for staying informed. He also said there is nothing to stop counties from publishing on the Internet in addition to newspapers.

► CALIFORNIA

- Greka Oil and Gas will pay **SANTA BARBARA COUNTY** \$2 million in a settlement deal related to several of the company's spills from its inland oil and gas facilities.

Greka agreed to begin paying the settlement in April and implement greater measures to prevent future spills. The company took over aging facilities in 1999 from major oil companies to turn crude into asphalt and other products.

Between 1999 to 2008, Greka spilled more than a half-million gallons of oil and contaminated water, and the Santa Barbara County Fire Department responded at least 400 times to oil spills and gas leaks.

- Qualified homeless people will get free bus and light rail rides in **SANTA CLARA COUNTY** beginning in April.

The Valley Transportation Authority approved a plan that it projected could benefit an estimated 3,500 people a year, the *Mercury News* reported.

"This will enable them to get to medical appointments, job appointments or anything related to helping deal with their homelessness," said Bob Dolci, coordinator of Homeless Concerns in San Jose, which will oversee the program. "Absolutely, it's a lifeline."

► FLORIDA

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY voters will choose a successor to ousted Mayor Carlos Alvarez, rather than have the County Commission appoint one.

Nine of 12 commissioners voted

for a special election to replace Alvarez, who was recalled by an 88-percent vote, the *Miami Herald* reported.

An elected mayor would serve the balance of Alvarez's term, which ends in November 2012.

► GEORGIA

The **GWINNETT COUNTY** Board of Commissioners approved two resolutions urging the U.S. Congress to clarify the use of Lake Lanier for public water supply and recreational purposes, and to raise the lake's full-pool elevation.

Since 1973, Gwinnett County has had Army Corps of Engineers' authorization to withdraw water and use storage space for public water supply in Lake Lanier under the Water Supply Act. A 2009 U.S. District Court ruling that water supply is not an authorized use of the lake jeopardizes that authorization.

Raising the elevation of Lake Lanier by two feet, would increase the available water supply by more than 25 billion gallons and would avoid the cost of building a new reservoir for the region's growing population.

► IOWA

Offensive odors originating from a factory may be off the books in **EMMET COUNTY** if the supervisors like what they see on a tour of the facility.

Supervisors are touring the Iowa Protein Solutions plant to determine if it will continue to record a log of complaints about odors from the plant. A recurring issue was whether all of the odors reported did in fact come from the plant.

The owner claims several recorded odor incidents could not have come from IPS because the plant was not running at the time. At other times, the wind was not blowing in the right direction for the plant to have caused problems. He said the log should apply to all odors — not just those that are said to come from his plant, the *Estherville Daily News* reported.

► NEW YORK

- The gas-extraction procedure known as **hydrofracking** won't be allowed on **ULSTER COUNTY**-owned land, the *Daily Freeman* reported.

County legislators recently voted unanimously to prohibit county land from being leased for that purpose, stopping short of an outright ban countywide, which some residents favor.

Legislator Susan Zimet, who introduced the resolution, called it

a "first step."

In hydrofracking, short for hydraulic fracturing, high-pressure water and chemicals are injected into buried rock formations to extract natural gas. Opponents say it often fouls groundwater.

- Concerned about possible gerrymandering, **RENSSELAER COUNTY** Legislator Peter Grimm wants a bipartisan commission to advise the County Legislature on **redistricting matters**.

Grimm's proposal would establish a five-member panel chaired by a representative from the League of Women Voters, the *Record* reported.

He expressed particular concern about the possibility of a lawsuit, noting that the County Legislature has never had a minority member. Grimm recalled that minority groups successfully sued neighboring Albany County after the 2000 census over a district that was found to have diluted minority voting strength.

► OKLAHOMA

- An **OKLAHOMA COUNTY** District Court judge has dismissed the state's lawsuit to **collect back sales taxes** from online travel reservation companies.

Last November, Gov. Brad Henry sued Priceline, Expedia, Orbitz and Travelocity, among others, alleging that such companies shorted the state hundreds of

millions of dollars in tax payments.

Judge Dan Owens dismissed the lawsuit earlier this month.

- Officials of **TULSA COUNTY** and the city Tulsa have reached agreement on how to **solve disagreements**.

The jurisdictions' City-County Collaborative Government Advisory Committee wants to identify a neutral third party, outside of the legal system, which could help resolve disputes between the city and county, according to the *Tulsa World*.

Dispute resolution is one of eight areas the committee identified for further study at its recent first meeting.

The committee comprises six representatives from the city and six from the county. It's charged with finding ways the city and county can work together to avoid duplicating services and save money.

► SOUTH CAROLINA

Operation Scrap Trap has netted 27 arrests in a four-county area; the three-month investigation targeted salvage yards purchasing **stolen scrap metal**. Those arrested were owners and their employees.

Undercover investigators from **SPARTANBURG, CHEROKEE, UNION** and **LAURENS counties** visited scrap yards to determine which ones were

See NEWS FROM page 19

What's in a Seal?



► Torrance County, N.M.

www.torrancecountynm.org

Torrance County was created from the eastern part of Valencia County on March 16, 1903. The county was named for Francis J. Torrance, one of the promoters connected with the building of the New Mexico Central Railroad.

It is home to the Manzano Mountains, Salina's National Monument and vast open, undisturbed rangeland, which farmers, ranchers and wildlife call home.

The county is one of the most productive agricultural counties in the U.S. Pinto beans, alfalfa and pumpkins are just a few of the crops that are harvested throughout the year. Today, Torrance employs more than 100 people who serve the citizens of the county.

The seal shows a heart in the center of the state representing Torrance as the "heart of New Mexico."

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

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Job Market & Classifieds

► COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER – COUNTY OF TRINITY, CALIF.

Salary: \$93,681–\$107,064 annually; DOQ.

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The ideal candidate will possess no less than five years of increasingly responsible experience performing complex budgetary, financial, policy and organizational analysis duties preferable for a county or other large governmental agency, including experience working directly with an elected board or council. A BS or BA degree in business, public administration or a related field or equivalent professional experience is desirable. A Master's degree is preferred. A broad background in planning, monitoring and executing general local government programs and operations as well as experience as a County Administrative Officer, Deputy CAO or Department Head of a California County is beneficial. Salary may include an additional 10 percent salary incentive program.

Apply by 4 p.m. Thursday, March 31. Contact Monica Stygar at 530.623.1325, Fax 530.623.4222 or email mstygar@trinitycounty.org.

► DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY, VA.

Salary: \$80,662–\$104,861 annually; DOQ.

Spotsylvania County Government is seeking candidates for the position of Economic Development Director with extensive experience in local, state, and/or regional government economic development. To receive consideration, candidates must have a proven and demonstrably successful track record in economic development.

The county is interested in proactive people who are achievement oriented.

The successful candidate will clearly demonstrate the following:

- ability to successfully target and establish effective working relationships with prospective businesses both regionally and nationally that are looking for a great location,
- ability to identify the interests and priorities of businesses presently located in the County,
- ability to work effectively with leaders, investors, and developers,
- considerable knowledge of principles and practices of economic development, County and State regulations, business assistance programs, business cost structures, and commercial and industrial activity,
- the ability to guide and supervise staff, and
- a strong knowledge of Tourism — especially creating destinations and heritage tourism.

Candidate must be strong in public relations, negotiations, and public speaking with exceptional business and people skills with internal and external clients.

The two most important skills are an understanding of what needs to happen financially to make a deal work, and to be able to effectively negotiate with all the parties to bring closure. Further, the individual will need to understand public/private partnerships and how to implement them.

In particular, the successful candidate will recognize the need for timely and predictable decisions and be prepared to work diligently to make those happen. Requires education and/or experience equivalent to a Bachelor's degree in marketing, economics, communications, business administration, public administration and six (6) to nine (9) years of experience in marketing, real estate, economic development, and public relations management.

Please submit a cover letter, resume and writing sample with a County application online at www.spotsylvania.va.us. Salary: DOQ. Deadline: Continuous. Department of Human Resources P.O. Box 605, Spotsylvania, VA 22553; 540.507.7290. E.O.E.

Outgoing exec makes final attempt to change county airport's name

NEWS FROM *from page 18*

following reporting requirements and checking sellers' IDs, *GoUpstate.com* reported.

Spartanburg County Sheriff Chuck Wright said, "We're looking for the business owners to comply with the law along with everybody else."

► UTAH

Reforms proposed by SALT LAKE COUNTY Animal Services have some county council members wondering where to draw the line.

Among the ideas presented at a recent meeting are building a new \$5 million–\$6 million animal shelter and requiring licenses for cats.

"I'm wondering if we are crossing the line in asking people to license a kitty-cat," County Councilman Steve DeBry asked. "What is next? An Easter bunny? A parrot?"

► WISCONSIN

Will the third time be the charm for the outgoing OUTAGAMIE COUNTY executive in his effort to have the local airport's name changed?

County Executive Toby Paltzer plans to retire at the end of next month, according to WBAY-TV. But before he goes, he's trying one more time to get Outagamie County Regional Airport's name changed to Appleton Regional Airport. Two previous attempts have been thwarted by county

commissioners.

Paltzer says a name change would make the airport easier to market, arguing that more people know where Appleton is than the name of the county in which it's located, Outagamie.

"You go out to Eau Claire and La Crosse and ask them where Outagamie County is, and they have no idea," Paltzer said. "But if you ask them where Appleton is, they'll know."

County Supervisor Chuck Schmidt said of the proposal, "I don't think it has much of a chance."

(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.)

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.

Check the NACo website for more information and to apply for the National County Government Month Award!

www.naco.org/NCGM

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Sponsored by the National Association of Counties to raise public awareness about the roles and responsibilities of counties.



NACo on the Move

» NACo Staff

• **Erik Johnston**, associate legislative director, spoke at a policy roundtable session on rural development during the National Association of Development Organization's Policy Conference in Arlington County, Va. March 21.

• **Jeff Arnold**, deputy legislative director, spoke about NACo's legislative priorities, programs and the relationship with state associations at the North Dakota Association of Counties' County Officials Academy March 14.

» Coming Up

Ilene Manster, membership coordinator, will speak about member benefits and exhibit on behalf of NACo membership recruitment and retention at the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania's Legislative Conference in Dauphin County March 27–29.

On the Move is compiled by Christopher Johnson, editorial assistant.



National County Government Month • April, 2011

National County Government Month award is new

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Juniors and seniors will compete to be selected to serve as "County Manager for a Day." Students will have to fill out a "job" application and provide references. If "hired," they will accompany the real county manager to everything that is scheduled for that day.

Curry County officials decided to show their support for military families by participating in "Stand Behind Military Kids" events throughout county departments. Each department will be taking a photo with a sign stating that Curry County is standing behind military kids. The photos, along with the coloring pages, posters and essays, will be displayed in the county courthouse throughout April.

Chatham County, Ga. is embracing this year's NCGM theme as well. The county is sponsoring the inaugural "Take a Soldier Fishing-Wounded Warrior Bass Tournament" at Lake Mayer as well as a "Walk for Wounded Warriors."

In addition, Chatham County is hosting an open house and tours of the administrative and legislative courthouses featuring patriotic music, workshops, exhibits, food

and even tax-preparation assistance.

Lackawanna County, Pa. will hold a "Local Heroes Day and Family Fair" at its Center for Public Safety facility, which will feature live music, face painting and other children's activities. Special demonstrations will showcase the SWAT team, K-9 unit and ham radio operations. A Mobile Command Center and other emergency vehicles will be on display. The event is part of NCGM and the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania's 125th anniversary.

The *Post and Courier* of Charleston, S.C. reports that Berkeley County, S.C. is offering two \$100 savings bonds to a child or teen who writes the winning essay on the topic of "Serving Our Veterans, Armed Forces and Their Families" as part of NCGM.

Entrants must compose a 300-word essay on one of two subjects: "A veteran or someone in the armed forces I have reached out to and helped" or "A veteran or someone in the armed forces I would like to reach out to and help."

Rockingham County, N.C. will hold a Veterans Service Fair April 26. The event will feature 22 vendors representing a wide variety

of services and issues important to veterans and family members.

A highlight will be a visit by the Mobile Veterans' Center from the Greenville Veterans Center. Housed in a 38-foot-long motor coach, the mobile center provides readjustment counseling for traumatic military-related experiences and counseling for military family members. In addition, the county veteran service officer, a representative of the Durham VA Medical Center and a representative from the office of Rep. Brad Miller (D-N.C.) will be on hand to provide information for veterans and their families.

In Lancaster County, S.C., veterans and their families will tour the courthouse; students will compete in an essay writing contest ("The Veteran in Your Life"); flags of the different military branches will be raised during special ceremonies; the County Council will host a reception for county employees who are veterans, and the county's *LearnTV* program will feature interviews with local veterans and the county's veterans affairs director.

Since 1991, NACo has encouraged counties to actively promote county government services and programs.

New this year 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.

A team of public relations professionals from the National Association of County Information Officers (NACIO)—a NACo affiliate organization—will judge the applications. Judges will select one winner in each of three categories—rural, suburban and metropolitan counties. Each winning county will be recognized during the NACo Annual Conference and win two, free registrations that can be used at any NACo conference. This prize is worth more than \$1,000.

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

A NCGM planning booklet is available on the NACo website to assist counties. Please tell NACo about your NCGM plans. Contact Jim Philipps via fax at 202.393.2630 or email at jphilipps@naco.org.

Recovery could take a decade

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"At this point, people who are interested are best off contacting the Japanese embassy."

Akagi's optimism has been buoyed by the successful accounting for 926 Canadian and American English teachers currently in Japan with JLGC's Japan Exchange and Teaching Program. Only one has been confirmed dead and one remains missing.

"Americans and other foreigners with relatives in Japan should feel, for the most part, that their loved ones are safe," he said. "It is sometimes hard to communicate, but as we increase that ability we are finding more and more people who were thought to be missing."

As for recovery, Akagi points to the 1995 Kobe earthquake that killed 5,500 and caused more than \$200 billion in damage.

"It took us about 10 years to recover from Kobe, so I expect that timeframe in this case," he said.

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Smart phone users scan code to access the NACo website.



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