Meth Action Group refines policy, positions, work plan

By M. Mindy Moretti
Senior Staff Writer

The NACo Meth Action Group (MAG) met recently for their first policy working session in Washington, D.C. In addition to getting a legislative update and hearing from a variety of state and federal officials, the group also adopted draft policy recommendations and a template for a plan of action.

Draft Policy Recommendations

During the Annual Conference in July, the NACo membership adopted two broad resolutions regarding meth. Both resolutions were intentionally broad to give NACo the flexibility to endorse various approaches.

The draft policy recommendations adopted by the Meth Action Group (MAG) were designed to give clarity to NACo’s positions and recommend specific legislative measures. Some of the highlights of the recommended policy include:

Precursor Control — NACo supports the Combat Meth Act (S. 103/H.R. 314, see sidebar) and NACo also supports pursuing a repeal of the blister pack exemption. The term “precursor control” refers to restrictions placed on ingredients, such as ephedrine or pseudo-ephedrine, used to produce meth.

Clean-Up — NACo supports H.R. 798, the Methamphetamine Remediation Act of 2005, which would require EPA to establish voluntary guidelines on the clean-up of former meth labs.

Drug Endangered Children — NACo has endorsed H.R. 2335, the Meth Endangered Children Protection Act of 2005. It is a bipartisan bill that would authorize $10 million per year for rapid response drug-endangered children (DEC)

NACo releases short-term agenda for rebuilding Gulf Coast counties

By Daren A. Harris
Associate Legislative Director

Long before the terror acts of Sept. 11 and the destruction of Hurricanes Katrina, NACo’s American County Platform emphasized the need for accelerated federal assistance in times of emergencies and encouraged counties to enhance their all-hazard disaster plans and practice robust prevention and mitigation measures.

In addition, NACo has actively worked to provide additional federal funding to local governments so they can respond and recover expeditiously during times of disaster, and provide much needed services to citizens.

In light of the critical role counties play on the front lines of disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery, NACo recently distributed a 13-point agenda — the Agenda for Immediate Gulf Coast Relief — to the president, relevant federal agencies and Congress that provides short-term recommendations to federal officials in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The policy document outlines recommendations for strengthening critical infrastructure, assisting citizens affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and urges immediate financial aid to county and state governments impacted by these catastrophic disasters. The 13-point agenda follows:

1. Strengthening Critical Infrastructure

   Expediting critical infrastructure projects to get vital services back on line
   • Federal and state assistance for rebuilding
   ■ See POLICY on page 8

Wisconsin supervisor on the ground in Katrina-devastated Louisiana

By Dan Miller
Staff Writer

Dane County, Wis. Supervisor Don Eggert found himself living in an airplane hangar and sleeping on a cot next to F-15 planes in his efforts to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Eggert, a staff sergeant in the Wisconsin Army National Guard, had been working full time, on a temporary basis, at the National Guard’s state headquarters in Madison when he found out that 450 Wisconsin troops were being sent to Louisiana. He immediately volunteered his services.

Staff Sergeant Don Eggert, a Dane County (Wis.) supervisor, drives a Hummer on a route reconnaissance through New Orleans while serving with the 64th Support Detachment of the Wisconsin Army National Guard.

■ See EGGERT on page 4

County News

Quik Takes

Average salaries for U.S. counties with the largest number of businesses (2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Average Salary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manhattan, N.Y.</td>
<td>$73,032</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa Clara County, Calif.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fairfield County, Conn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Francisco County, Calif.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfax County, Va.</td>
<td>$43,214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: U.S. Census Bureau
State, local governments look for ways to comply with HAVA mandates without busting their budget

**By Alyssou McLaughlin**

The Help America Vote Act imposes numerous mandates on states and counties related to the administration of federal elections. Most of these requirements kick in on Jan. 1, 2006.

These mandates include installing electronic voting equipment in every polling place to meet the needs of disabled voters. Right? Wrong. Technically, the federal law requires at least one “direct-recording electronic voting system or other voting system equipped for individuals with disabilities at each polling place.”

Many states are requiring counties to purchase direct-recording electronic voting equipment, which provides a touch screen or other electronic means to record voters’ choices on an electronic ballot, which is then stored in an internal storage medium such as a tape cartridge, diskette or smart card.

Beginning in 2006, federal law also requires such equipment to generate a permanent paper record that is suitable for audit. Other states are purchasing electronic voting equipment that is designed to assist voters with disabilities to mark and then print a paper ballot.

Electronic voting systems that offer an audio capacity for the blind and features that are designed to assist individuals with impaired dexterity are readily available. Such equipment has broad support among organizations representing individuals with disabilities and major vendors are willing to guarantee that their equipment complies with the requirements of the law.

Many state and county officials have cited this vendor guarantee as a major reason for their decision to purchase direct recording electronic equipment. The federal law was deliberately vague to give states the widest possible latitude in implementing voting systems.

However, courts have since permitted lawsuits to proceed on interpretation of the Help America Vote Act, and states and counties are treading cautiously, not certain which systems will eventually be deemed compliant.

Promised federal guidelines are still in development and it is clear that these guidelines, as well as the technology itself, will continue to evolve well after states and counties must make their decisions about purchasing equipment to comply with the law.

Electronic voting equipment can cost several thousand dollars per unit.

To reduce the cost of installing this equipment in each polling place, many states and counties are consolidating precincts or conducting elections by mail. However, even jurisdictions that eliminate polling places altogether are meeting the accessibility requirement in HAVA by installing DRE or other electronic voting equipment in one or more locations that are accessible to voters with disabilities on election day.

Regrettably, states are permitted to adopt — or allow counties to adopt — a paper-based system, a telephone voting system, or even a combination of election management practices that they determine will meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

The law leaves specific choices on the voting systems that are implemented with the states, and defines a voting system as the “total combination of mechanical, electrical, mechanical or electronic equipment” as well as “the practices and associated documentation” involved in the election process; it also asserts that voting equipment already in place need not be replaced entirely, but can be modified to meet the requirements of the law.

**Telephone voting**

Few jurisdictions are bucking the trend toward electronic equipment.

Last month, however, Vermont Secretary of State Deb Markowitz announced that voters in her state will soon be able to cast their vote using familiar technology — a standard telephone. The voter will place a call to a secure location, listen to the instructions and recorded ballot choices, then complete and cast the ballot using DTMF tones, the familiar “touch tones” that are generated from pressing the buttons on a telephone.

The system then generates a paper ballot, scans it and reads it back to the voter to verify.

Vermont is requiring voters to cast their ballot in their assigned polling place to confirm voter identity and prevent fraud. However, a vote could technically be cast using the system from any telephone in any location.

The secretary of state and the vendor who developed the InspireTM Vote-by-Phone System worked with representatives of people with a variety of disabilities to develop the program. Steve Pouliot, executive director of the Vermont Association of the Blind and the American Foundation for the Blind, is quoted describing it as “an accessible voting system as well as a very easy to use system.”

“It is important to me to preserve Vermont’s long-standing tradition of voting by paper ballot,” Markowitz said in announcing the contract to purchase the Inspire Vote-by-Phone System. “This system will allow us to do that.”

Voters at most polling places in Vermont cast their votes on paper ballots, which pollworkers then count by hand. Voters cast 314,220 ballots statewide in the presidential election in 2004. Vermont is spending $325,000 to purchase the system; annual licensing, maintenance and operating costs are estimated at $110,000.

Kathy DeWolfe, director of elections and campaign finance for the secretary of state, says that she is “on the phone all day answering questions from county and municipal officials.” In fact, the response has inspired them to hold a mock election and demonstration of the equipment on Oct. 5. Several county and state officials from elsewhere in the nation are flying to South Burlington, Vt., to participate in the demonstration.

**Computerless accessibility?**

Ellen Theisen, founder and executive director of VotersUnite!, is a critic of electronic voting who believes that all voting systems should offer a voter-verified paper ballot — a printed ballot that the voter reviews after making his choices, but prior to casting his vote, that serves as the official ballot of record.

After speaking with officials from several rural counties and small municipalities that were resisting all forms of computerized voting — with or without a paper ballot — because of the cost, she became convinced that there had to be a way for disabled voters to mark a paper ballot without using a computer. Since she could not.

![See HAVA on page 4](Image)
I am a survivor…cancer survivor that is. I clearly remember sitting in my urologist’s office with my wife and hearing his words, “they found cancer in your prostate.” Because September was National Prostate Cancer Month, I want to tell you a bit about my journey.

First of all, a few facts. Prostate cancer is the most common form of male cancer. Each year nearly 255,000 American men will be diagnosed with this disease. The sad news is, more than 67,000 men die every year due to prostate cancer. Sad, because most of these men did not have to die.

Prostate cancer is only fatal if it goes undetected, continues to grow and escapes the prostate gland. When cancer cells leave the prostate, they move to other parts of the body and re-colonize. Once this occurs, the cancer is now terminal. There is no cure.

Plenty of thoughts went through my mind that day in March over five years ago. Life takes on a different perspective when cancer is found in your body. What made the difference for me was the early discovery, and this is the reason I am sharing my experience.

Statistically, there are some of you men reading these words right now, who have prostate cancer and you have no idea it is there. You feel fine, no problems, all is well, and there is no reason to be checked. Prostate exams and blood screen tests for PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) levels have been developed to detect cancer early. They certainly did for me.

For some reason, we macho men go 50 years without even a routine physical. Every man over 50 years of age should have an annual prostate exam. I am a survivor because my cancer was detected early.

Obviously, you women reading this will not get prostate cancer, but the men in your life might. Whatever it takes, encourage them to do the routine prostate examination. It could literally be the difference between life and death.

If cancer is present, there are several procedures to fight it. In my research, I found a treatment that does not have the negative side effects that many of the treatments can have. It was the proton beam treatment at Loma Linda University Medical School in Southern California. My cancer is gone, and my quality of life remains the same. Should you want to find out more about this treatment, you can reach them at 1-800-PROTONS (776-8667). Modern medicine has come a long way in the battle of cancer. But men, it will be of no beneﬁt to us if we have our head in the sand. Do your part with regular exams and check-ups. I hope you never develop cancer, but if you do, I want you to be a survivor.

BY KELLY ZONDERWYK
COMMUNITY SERVICES ASSOCIATE

NACo’s ENERGY STAR® Courthouse Campaign and Financial Services Center (FSC) are working together to promote the Sixth Annual Change a Light, Change the World Campaign Oct. 1 to Nov. 30. The annual campaign sponsored by EPA and the Department of Energy encourages Americans to change the world, one energy-saving light at a time. The campaign is held in conjunction with National Energy Awareness Month and daylight savings time.

NACo encourages counties to change lights in government buildings, and to promote the campaign to residents. Counties can save money by purchasing ENERGY STAR-qualiﬁed products through U.S. Communities, a NACo FSC partner.

ENERGY STAR-qualiﬁed lighting provides bright, warm light while requiring two-thirds less energy than standard lighting, generates 70 percent less heat and lasts up to 10 times longer. Replacing a 100-watt incandescent light bulb with a 32-watt compact ﬂuorescent lamp (CFL) can save at least $30 in energy costs over the life of the bulb.

If the few most-used lights in every home in America were changed to an energy-efﬁcient light bulb, EPA estimates the country would see a $6 billion energy savings — the equivalent to the annual output of more than 21 power plants. In Barnstable County, Mass., for example, changing one light bulb in every home would allow county residents to see a savings of $8.6 million throughout the life of the bulb (see box).

Another beneﬁt to switching to ENERGY STAR lighting is that CFLs last six to 10 times longer than standard incandescent light bulbs, therefore saving time buying and replacing bulbs. For each CFL bought as many as 10 trips to buy an incandescent bulb are saved.

Most U.S. homes still get their energy from power plants that burn fossil fuels and release “greenhouse gases” (naturally occurring greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, while unnatural gases include hydrochlorofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulfur hexafluoride) into the atmosphere. That is why EPA estimates that a home can cause up to two times more greenhouse gas emissions than a car.

Counties can not only change...
**PROFILES**

In Service...

Sok Son  
NACo IT Manager

Number of years active in NACo: 7 years

Education: B.S. in information systems at the University of Maryland at Baltimore County.

The hardest thing I’ve ever done: Moved to the U.S. from South Korea when I was 17 years old.

Three people (living or dead) I’d invite to dinner: Jesus Christ, Abraham Lincoln, Tiger Woods.

A dream I have is to: Play in a PGA tour golf tournament.

You’d be surprised to learn that I: Am planning on going on a mission trip to Thailand next year.

The most adventurous thing I’ve ever done is: Scuba diving in Hawaii (I cannot swim).

My favorite way to relax is: Golfing and watching movies.

I’m most proud of: My wife and my daughter.

Every morning I read: My e-mails.

My favorite meal is: Sushi.

My pet peeve is: Selfish and disrespectful people.

My motto is: Trust in the Lord with your all your heart.

The last book I read was: The Lord of the Rings

My favorite movie is: The Lord of the Rings.

My favorite music is: Contemporary Christian music.

My favorite president is: George W. Bush.

**CORRECTION**

The given name of our last “Profiles in Service” subject was incorrect. His name is Richard English, Jr., commissioner from Troup County, Ga., and a NACo board member. County News regrets the error.

Some advocate flexibility in voting approaches

- HAVA from page 2

find such a device, she and several colleagues designed a prototype—the “Voting-on-Paper Assistive Device” or V-PAD—and posted a description online at www.votersunite.org/vpad.asp.

The concept is based on the tactile ballot that was originally developed by former Rhode Island Secretary of State Jim Langevin. The tactile ballot uses a paper sleeve into which the ballot is inserted. The paper sleeve indicates, using raised bumps and cutaway sections, where the voter can record his choices for each selection that appears on the ballot. Instructions are provided using an audiotape or other voice recording.

Thiesen believes that, with a few modifications and a rubber stamp or mousetrack, the tactile ballot can be adapted for the use of voters with dexterity or motor impairments relatively inexpensively.

Thiesen is working with several disabled individuals in developing and testing the concept. One of these individuals is A.J. Devies, the disability chair for Handicapped Adults of Volusia County, an advocacy organization in Florida. Devies, who lost full use of her fingers in a car accident several years ago, is a fan of the model and has been helping to refine the prototype.

Devises cautions, however, that different disabled voters require different accommodations to vote privately and independently. Devies doubts that any single voting system—even a DRE—can provide the opportunity for all voters to vote privately and independently regardless of disability.

Similarly, the modified tactile ballot might not be a “perfect solution” for all individuals with disabilities; for example, she is currently working with Thiesen to make it less difficult for a dexterity-impaired voter to cast a ballot for a write-in candidate. Devies advocates a toolkit approach, in which election officials and voters would have the flexibility to choose from a range of voting systems based on the needs of individuals who vote at that particular polling place.

Technology is changing so quickly these days that, you know, there’s a whole realm of possibilities that can be worked into choices that are available to a supervisor of elections for a county or a state depending on the amount of money that they’re willing to spend on it,” said Devies.

She hopes that counties will consider adopting a modified tactile ballot or that the example will spark others to consider innovations of their own. “Maybe what we provide will prompt somebody else to come up with something that works better for them.”

- (Is your county experimenting “outside the box” with another device or set of management practices to comply with the Help America Vote Act? Let us know. E-mail amclaughlin@naco.org.)

**National Insurance serves as nation’s public insurance policy, Eggert says**

- EGGERT from page 1

“I consider the National Guard to be the public’s insurance policy,” Eggert said. “When something really bad like this hurricane happens we’re there and people count on us. I think the guard effort in the days and weeks since Katrina struck has proven exactly that.”

“The National Guard answered the call when what I think is particularly impressive is we had over 20,000 National Guard soldiers from almost every state in the nation down on the ground in Louisiana.”

Eggert was deployed with the 64th Support Detachment out of Monroe to Task Force Belle Chasse Operations Center. While in Louisiana, he served as an operations sergeant working with incoming units, taskforce leadership and operations personnel. Basically, he helped incoming units from other states get where they needed to go quickly and efficiently.

As a local elected official, Eggert viewed the relief efforts from a county perspective.

“A lot of the difficulties we saw as a result of the hurricane were due to problems in planning,” he said. “At the local level, we saw that it didn’t do any good to give a mandatory evacuation order if you can’t account for the residents who can’t evacuate themselves. We have to look at those plans that are on the books right now and take those into account.”

Additionally, he states that communication is a major issue for disaster relief that needs to be secured for future disasters.

“Like so many other significant incidents we’ve seen, one of the biggest problems is communications. The local officials couldn’t talk to the state; the state couldn’t talk to anybody locally. We’ve come to rely on cell phones so much, when the cell network is down, what are you left with?”

In the wake of the disaster, Eggert fears that local government will take a hit in the pocketbook. Citing the stress on Louisiana’s budget, Eggert said that future cuts to pay for disaster relief could make life even more difficult for local government.

Despite all of the difficulties of coordinating a relief effort and worries of future budgetary issues, Eggert stressed his admiration for the local officials who remained at their posts for the duration of the hurricane.

“I just have to say that I have the utmost respect for all of the public servants in Louisiana who stayed at their posts, even knowing that for many of them that they had lost everything they had,” he said. “I think National Guard, state police, local officials – their ability to persevere and continue to do public service in spite of their own personal losses is something we should all reflect on.”

**Letters to the Editor**

If you have a complement, complaint or different point of view, let us know.

Please include a phone number with your letter. Mail, fax or e-mail to: County News, NACo, 440 First St., N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2080; (202) 393-2630; cnews@naco.org.

**Counties News**

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October 3, 2005
Meth Legislation Hitches Ride on Justice Spending Bill

By unanimous consent, the Senate incorporated the Combat Meth Act into its FY06 Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations bill. The NACo-supported bipartisan bill would replicate many state laws that have proven successful at reducing small toxic meth labs by restricting access to cold medicines that contain pseudoephedrine. Pseudoephedrine is an essential ingredient in the manufacturing of methamphetamine. Specifically, the legislation would limit sales of pseudoephedrine to 7.5 grams per month and require an individual to show a photo-ID and sign a logbook at the time of purchase.

Methamphetamine is a highly addictive and dangerous homemade drug that can be produced virtually anywhere. On July 5, NACo released two surveys that detailed the nature of the meth crisis. The findings showed that nearly 60 percent of county law enforcement officials rated methamphetamine as the largest drug problem in their county. Additionally, 40 percent of county child welfare officials reported an increase in out-of-home placements because of meth in the last year. The overall spending legislation will now go to conference with the House, which does not contain the meth legislation.

NACo is urging counties to contact their House members to support the meth legislation in the final conference report. The House version of the Combat Meth Act (H.R. 314) is sponsored by Majority Whip Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) but has yet to be considered by the House Judiciary Committee or the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

(For more information about meth-related legislation, contact Joe Dunn, associate legislative director, at 202/942-4207 or via e-mail at jdunn@naco.org.)

NACo Meth Action Group hears from DEA, various speakers

NACo strongly supports the Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program. NACo supports the Senate funding level ($1.077 billion) and at least level funding of $804 million as a minimum for JAG program funding.

Law Enforcement — NACo supports the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant and would like to see funding at $2 billion for FY06 and barring that at least level funding of $1.77 billion.

Plan of Action

The template for a plan of action the MAG adopted during the meeting will guide the group to focus on five key elements as they move forward in their work:
1. Prevention — preventing the access to and use of meth is the best strategy for meeting the epidemic.
2. Education — every segment of our communities and counties must understand the consequences of meth use in society.
3. Treatment — treatment and treatment protocols are an integral part of an effective anti-meth strategy.
4. Enforcement — a community commitment to enforcing meth laws is vital to reducing meth use and availability.
5. Victims — the victims of meth are our children and families. We have a responsibility for their protection and care.

Speakers

Among the speakers the MAG heard from during the two-day meeting were Stephen Pasierb, president and CEO of the Partnership for a Drug Free America, and Scott Collier, chief, Dangerous Drugs and Chemicals Section of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Pasierb discussed two successful anti-meth media campaigns spearheaded by his organization, in conjunction with the American Academy of Pediatrics, in Phoenix and St. Louis. Campaign staff media-trained pediatricians throughout both cities and then worked with local media to make sure that whenever there was a meth bust in the area, that in addition to interviewing law enforcement, the media also relied on the pediatricians to discuss the effects of meth.

“The cities were saturated with health messages, not just stories about the busts,” Pasierb explained. “The television and newspaper stories about the health issues far out-ramped what we were able to do with a public service campaign.”

Pasierb said the partnership would like to take the program nationwide and is willing to work with any community that is interested in establishing such a campaign. In addition, the partnership is also going to reactivate a toll-free number (888/666-NOMETH) that was used in California in the 1980s, to disseminate meth information and advice. The organization is also planning to enhance efforts of state and local law enforcement by media training officers about the broader issues of meth.

“We really want to help combat this problem,” Pasierb said. “So wherever you are, if you want our help, we should be able to get it to you.”

DEA briefing

The final numbers for 2004 are in, and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) recorded 17,170 meth labs seized during the calendar year, which is down slightly from 2003.

Collier noted that his agency is spending a lot of its time focusing on precursor materials that are sold in non-traditional outlets such as convenience stores, gas stations and porn shops.

“The more we can do to make it difficult for them ‘meth cooks’ to find the precursors, the harder it’s going to be for them to make meth and the more that’s going to help you,” Collier said. “The smaller labs are the ones that are eating the resources for local governments.”

However, Collier pointed out that just because the number of meth lab busts is decreasing, doesn’t mean the problem of meth is decreasing.

“It’s not enough to say we’ve pushed the lab problem off-shore because the drug is still coming back into the country,” Collier said.

To give the MAG members a snapshot of how broad the meth epidemic is, Collier detailed Operation Wildfire, an effort by the DEA to gather all the relevant meth data for one week in August. During that week, nationwide, there were 96 meth-related search warrants issued, 437 arrests, 56 labs busted, 208 pounds of meth seized, 201,000 tablets of pseudoephedrine recovered and $225,000 in cash confiscated.

“And the thing is, we don’t even know if that was a bad week, a good week or just a typical week,” Collier said.

Collier also touched briefly on the cost to clean up a former meth lab site noting that the average cost per site is about $2,000, and that the DEA has distributed more than $18 million in funds to clean up sites. The DEA is working on what Collier classified as a “promising” program in Kentucky, but there are still many details and guidelines to work out before it can go nationwide.

The Meth Action Group will meet again during NACo’s Legislative Conference in March 2006.

(For additional information about NACo’s efforts to combat the meth epidemic, visit the Meth Clearinghouse on NACo’s Web site or www.naco.org or contact Joe Dunn, associate legislative director at 202/942-4207 or via e-mail at jdunn@naco.org.)
Tennessee counties set state transportation priorities

By James Davenport
Senior Associate

One critical challenge for rural county officials is the struggle to affect state transportation priorities so that transportation resources are directed to rural areas. Federal legislation, TEA-21, addressed this issue with the passage of the Rural Consultation Rule in 2003 (see box). Since the passage of the rule, still in place this summer, the state of Tennessee has been developing a process for local officials to provide input into Tennessee’s statewide planning process. The state of Tennessee has taken on this responsibility with fervor.

Local and state elected and transportation officials have been meeting all across the state to begin the planning stages in this endeavor. The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) kicked this off by setting a goal of forming a structured Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPO) program for non-metropolitan and/or rural areas. The RTPOs will be similar to the 11 Metropolitan Planning Organizations that already exist for urban areas in Tennessee.

The first round of meetings consisted of developing “regional working groups” that sought input from regional and local transportation decision makers to address both short-term and long-term transportation needs across the state. Tennessee recently completed the second round of meetings (nine in total) designed to replace the regional working groups with permanent RTPOs, which would serve as a permanent mechanism for local officials’ input in the transportation decision-making process. The goal is for each RTPO to have its first meeting in the fall.

According to Rodney Carmical, executive director, Tennessee County Highway Officials Association, “the process has been well organized and well received; Tennessee DOT should be commended for leading this effort.”

How will an RTPO work? RTPO organizations will consist of an executive board whose members will represent decision-makers for all governmental entities in the area. They will be concerned with setting the organization’s vision and policies, authorizing studies and making transportation funding recommendations to TDOT. The board will also provide an opportunity for public input at every meeting.

“The goal for establishing RTPOs in Tennessee is to ensure quality, competence and fairness in the transportation decision making process. The RTPO will consider multi-modal transportation needs on a local and regional basis; review long-term needs as well as short-term funding priorities; and make recommendations to TDOT,” said Del Truitt, rural transportation and planning coordinator for TDOT.

There will also be a technical committee whose members will represent the most competent and engaged transportation professionals from all levels of the governmental entities in the area, representing all modes of transportation. This committee will assist the RTPO staff in compiling data, transportation studies and analysis, and will make recommendations to the board. The committee will also provide an opportunity for public input at every meeting.

It’s TDOT’s ultimate responsibility to create RTPOs to comply with the rule, involve local rural officials in the multi-modal transportation decision making process, receive transportation recommendations and make funding decisions. From the county perspective, highway superintendents and elected officials are pleased with the results so far. John Graham, highway chief administrative officer for Marion County, Tenn. said, “As a Highway Superintendent, I am pleased that this is happening in Tennessee and elsewhere. It is long overdue and will significantly enhance cooperation between local and state transportation officials.”

(For more information on the State of Tennessee’s Rural Consultation Process is available at State of Tennessee DOT Web site www.tdot.state.tn.us, or the NACo/ NADO-sponsored rural transportation www.ruraltransportation.org web site. For more information on the NACo/ NADO Research Foundation Rural Transportation Project, please contact James Davenport at jdavenpo@naco.org or 202/661-8807.)

Educational materials promote light campaign

■ ENERGY from page 3

light bulbs in offices, but they can save energy and the environment by choosing energy-saving lighting for exit signs and traffic signals too. Exit signs that have earned the ENERGY STAR operate on five watts or fewer per sign, compared to standard signs, which use as much as 40 watts per sign. One sign alone can save about $10 annually on electricity costs and can last up to 10 years without a lamp replacement, compared to less than one year for an incandescent.

Counties across the country are already switching to energy-efficient traffic signals. Traffic signals that have earned the ENERGY STAR rating use 90 percent less energy than conventional signals and are also reliable, long-lasting and low-maintenance. These traffic signals use high efficiency light emitting diode (LED) technology, which means the traffic signals last for up to 10 years, as opposed to only two years for conventional traffic lights.

The Change a Light Campaign will officially launch Oct. 5, with a number of national and local events scheduled to take place throughout the months of October and November. Counties can take the lead in promoting the Change a Light Pledge, through which they pledge to change just one light at home. With citizens generating less energy, the county will actually reduce air pollution. The pledge as well as educational materials can be found at www.energystar.gov/changealight. Counties are welcome to link directly to that site.

(For more information on energy efficient products supplied by Graybar and U.S. Communities, visit: www.uscommunities.org/product_categories/electrical_data_comm.htm.)

For more information on tools to assist your county in assessing its energy usage, and the potential savings from energy improvements like changing to ENERGY STAR-qualified lighting, contact Kelly Zonderwyk at kzonderwyk@naco.org or 202/427-4224.)
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**Beverly A. Schlotterbeck**

Assistant to Counties

**Streem Communications, LLC**

*Corporate Member*

**Location/HQ:** Loves Park, Ill.

**Primary Business:** Streem supplies communications solutions designed to integrate, automate and manage the flow of messages, data and documents, and has been instrumental in designing and installing network fax and emergency notification solutions for hundreds of private and public sector organizations.

**CEO:** Brian Hampton

**Name of NACo Representative:** Mark Svoboda

**Why we joined NACo:** Streem Communications joined NACo as a corporate member in July, 2004. We joined primarily for the conference and marketing benefits, but also to better understand the communication needs and purchasing processes of counties. Country News also helps to keep us in the loop regarding recent news and county happenings.

**What we can do for counties:** For federal, state and local government organizations, Streem offers the first step in emergency response. Streem Center, the core of Streem solutions, combined with the Streem Alert emergency notification application, provides a reliable and easy-to-use rapid notification system.

Designed post-9/11 to meet large-scale, multi-channel emergency broadcast, Streem Alert provides a user-friendly Web interface and broadcast launch platform. Recipients receive emergency notifications via telephone, cell phone, fax, text messaging (SMS), PDA, pager and e-mail.

**Contact:** Shelley Marian, 815/282-7806, smarian@streemalert.com

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**In Service to Counties**

Streem Communications, LLC

*Corporate Member*

n. The study of a county’s ability to save millions of dollars by utilizing NACo programs and services and to help county employees save for their financial futures.

- **Retirement Programs**
  - 457 Deferred Compensation
  - 401(a) Defined Contribution
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- **Financial Services Programs**
  - U.S. Communities
  - Debt Collection
  - Pre-Employment Human Resources Program
  - County Reinsurance Limited

[www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org)
First responders risk safety at clandestine meth labs

The symptoms of meth abuse are well documented. Users can experience a plethora of symptoms, including paranoia, short-term memory loss, wild ranges, mood swings, immune system damage and hallucinations just to name a few.

In addition to the damage meth causes to addicts, first responders can put themselves at risk without even taking the drug by entering the clandestine labs where meth is produced.

Researchers like Dr. Jefferey Burgess, at the University of Arizona, and Dr. John Martyny, at the National Jewish Medical and Research Center, are trying to figure out what the precise risks are of investigating the sites of clandestine meth labs and how to prevent first responders from endangering themselves.

“Law enforcement, fire and emergency services personnel may be exposed to high levels of these chemicals as they investigate clandestine methamphetamine laboratories,” said Martyny during a congressional testimony earlier this year. Martyny testified before the House Committee on Science in support of the Methamphetamine Remediation Research Act of 2005, a bill that would create a research program for remediation of closed methamphetamine production laboratories.

“This is especially true if they enter an area where a laboratory is in operation but also may be true if the laboratory is not in operation at the time. Residual chemicals deposited on surfaces of the house as well as boxes of chemicals stored in the house may result in significant exposures to investigating personnel.”

According to Burgess, emergency personnel who respond to the site of a meth lab can experience a variety of short-term and long-term medical effects. Some individuals have even been affected while wearing respiratory protection.

Burgess says meth lab exposure can cause a variety of different symptoms, which generally fall into two types: irritant symptoms and symptoms stemming from solvent exposure. Irritant symptoms can affect the eyes, nose, mouth and lungs while solvent symptoms can include headache, dizziness and other neurological symptoms.

He said that most symptoms investigators develop resolve themselves once they leave the lab and are no longer exposed to the chemicals. However, exposure to some chemicals may cause a much longer-term effect and, in some cases, effects may be permanent.

“We’ve had some people who’ve developed a ‘chemical asthma’ that the physicians refer to as reactive airway dysfunction syndrome (RADS),” Burgess said. “I’ve been in contact with several investigators who have developed this persistent asthma-like state after high-level chemical exposures in a methamphetamine lab.”

According to Burgess’ research, prevention of exposure is the best way to treat individuals dealing with clandestine drug labs. Most of the chemicals involved in meth production don’t have antidotes. Treatment is mainly focused on decontamination and symptomatic relief.

As a minimum standard of protection, Burgess recommends cartridge respirators equipped to protect users against acid gases, organic vapors and particulates. While cartridge respirators are a safety measure, he stresses that the equipment may not be adequate for sudden blasts of chemicals.

“It is only in recent years, following recognition of potential chemical hazards, that adequate personal protective equipment has become widely used, and even now many investigators do not routinely wear respiratory protection during lab investigations,” reads a study by Burgess and Dr. David Chandler.

According to the study, individuals suffering from meth lab exposure “should receive supportive care and substance specific testing and treatment when appropriate.”

Training Prepares Officers to Handle Meth Labs

When entering a clandestine meth lab, first responders run the risk of being exposed to ammonia gases, acid gas and iodine vapors. If inhaled, these chemicals can result in long-term health issues including kidney failure and liver disease.

To help prepare state and local officers who encounter meth labs, the Drug Enforcement Administration offers clandestine lab training. The Basic Clandestine Laboratory Certification School is the most widely recognized law enforcement-sponsored clandestine laboratory training course meeting Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards.

Based in Quantico, Va., the weeklong school gives officers an overview of the different types of labs, the toxicology of different chemicals, chemical and physical hazards, air monitoring as well as reviewing the appropriate clothing and personal protective equipment.

Since its inception in 2000, the program has trained approximately 9,300 state and local officers according to Jerry Craig, instructor at the training unit.

“Meth has been more in the public eye, but our schools have been full from day one,” Craig said. “We are getting more requests, more people are getting training not only through us, but through other avenues.”

The cost of the program is covered by the DEA.

Until emergency personnel have the proper training, Craig recommends basic awareness. Officers should learn what a meth lab is and have a basic understanding of the chemicals involved.

“If you suspect a meth lab, stop and secure the location,” he said. “Don’t touch, play with or move things around. Call the DEA or the local agency that has knowledge of clandestine laboratories.”

No less than $300 billion needed for infrastructure

POLICY from page 1

natural and man-made disasters must reach first responders in an expedited fashion. As a result, all levels of government should work together to ensure the timely distribution of assistance to first responders. Reimbursements should at least cover all costs incurred in responding and recovering from these hurricanes. Furthermore, in the event that federal, state and local governments, public and/or private processes delay the expenditure of funds, efforts must be made to establish an expedited authorization and appropriation process.

Strengthen transportation infrastructure

Substantial funds will be needed to repair and rebuild highways and bridges, transit systems and airports damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Katrina and Rita. Although it may be some time before the full need is determined, Congress must continue to invest in the transportation infrastructure of this embattled region.

The Emergency Relief Highway Program has $100 million for FY05 and another $100 million for FY06 beginning Oct. 1. However, this funding is likely to be totally inadequate to address the ongoing needs throughout the Gulf Coast. Additional funds may also be needed for the Federal Bridge Program because many bridges have been damaged or totally destroyed. Once a determination has been made as to the damage sustained by transit systems in the affected region, the federal government must also appropriate additional funds as no emergency program exists for transit.

Furthermore, although the larger commercial airports seem to be up and operating in the region hit by Hurricane Katrina and Rita negatively impacted the Gulf Coast region in the realm of drinking water and sanitation service, around 1,000 systems were affected. Even though most of the systems are “operational,” according to the Environmental Protection Agency “operational” systems may still need repair and/or reconstruction. Additionally, full restoration will be delayed by the many breaks in the distribution and collection systems and by the need for upgrade and repairs in older systems.

Drinking water and wastewater infrastructure

Both Katrina and Rita negatively impacted the Gulf Coast region in the realm of drinking water and sanitation service, around 1,000 systems were affected. Even though most of the systems are “operational,” according to the Environmental Protection Agency “operational” systems may still need repair and/or reconstruction. Additionally, full restoration will be delayed by the many breaks in the distribution and collection systems and by the need for upgrade and repairs in older systems.

No less than $300 billion needed for infrastructure
Without clean drinking water and wastewaster services, citizens of the Gulf Coast face even more hazards on their road to cleanup. NACo urges Congress to appropriate needed funds to address these shortages.

### Aid to Citizens

#### Investing in CDBG and HOME for short-term and long-term recovery

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) are two critical resources for providing housing and services to areas damaged by natural, and other catastrophic disasters.

As a result, counties urge Congress to provide at least $1.5 billion for these programs. Both programs have a long history in providing assistance to communities with their housing and community development needs in times of disasters. Communities assisting the citizens displaced by Hurricane Katrina are using CDBG funds to develop public facilities to provide temporary housing to disaster victims, and rehabilitate units within the community to house evacuees, provide much needed services, including food, child care, health care, case management and temporary shelter.

In addition, CDBG funds can provide rehabilitation assistance to homes and businesses damaged by the natural disasters, build new ownership and rental housing, and provide improvements to local infrastructure.

The HOME Program can provide tenant-based rental assistance to people displaced by catastrophic disasters, and be used to rehabilitate and construct new housing for low- and moderate-income people.

#### Enhance post-hurricane public health response

Additional federal funding is essential to establish a robust system to enable counties with evacuees to assess and address the ongoing physical and mental health effects of the Katrina and Rita disasters on persons who endured the disaster or who were exposed to toxic contaminants during flooding. Medicaid Assistance as proposed in S. 1716 by Sens. Charles Grassley and Max Baucus should also be enacted.

#### Additional funding and flexibility for social services block grant program

The federal government must provide an additional $1.1 billion to the Social Service Block Grant Program (SSBG) and restore it to the 1996 level. SSBG allocates funds to states to support social services programs for adults and children. During times of disaster, SSBG can provide various services to children and the elderly, and be the conduit for other funds as it was after Sept. 11.

Additionally, funds that have been or will be transferred from TANF to SSBG should be available for any hurricane victims. Currently the law restricts the use of the transferred funds, and they cannot be used for single adults.

#### Increase funding for the National Emergency Grants program

An additional $500 million should be provided for the Department of Labor’s National Emergency Grant (NEG) program which assists displaced/dislocated workers with temporary jobs for clean-up and restoration purposes as well as training.

According to the Labor Department (DOL), 214,000 job losses can be directly attributed to Hurricane Katrina. DOL has already allotted $191 million to the Hurricane Katrina impacted Gulf Coast states, which now exceeds current funding levels available for the NEG program.

The federal government should cover current NEG allocations and be prepared for future emergency needs by adding $500 million to the NEG program.

#### Reimburse counties and states for their foster care expenses

States and counties should receive 100 percent reimbursement for all their expenses in foster care. Many of the counties and states that have taken in victims of Hurricane Katrina or Rita have higher payment rates. It is unfair to expect either the host or the home states to bear this financial burden.

### Reimburse counties and states for their food stamps administrative expenses

The federal government moved very quickly to ensure that the hurricane victims receive nutritional assistance through the food stamps electronic benefit transfer system. However, there are additional state administrative expenses associated with the increased payments that should be reimbursed.

#### County/municipal debt relief

Counties continue to urge the federal government to provide simpler and more flexible criteria to determine whether arbitrage has been earned in using tax-exempt proceeds and to otherwise simplify current rules and statutes related to tax-exempt bonds.

While these rules are complicated and burdensome for all state and local governments, they impose particularly difficult, or even impossible, requirements on a jurisdiction that has lost access to offices, records or employees. The federal government must immediately provide such flexibility to jurisdictions that are affected by a major disaster.

Credit assistance should be automatically applicable to all legitimate state and local borrowing and should not be subject to elaborate administrative procedures.

In addition, NACo supports providing an additional advance refunding of outstanding tax-exempt bonds as was provided to New York City in the wake of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11.

#### Provide immunity to encourage mutual aid and support

The federal government and state governments, where applicable, should provide legal immunity from civil liability for counties and other local governments responding collaboratively to emergencies outside their primary jurisdiction. Also, the federal and state governments should allow reimbursement under public assistance for assistance rendered by mutual aid partners.

#### Sustained funding for the Army Corps of Engineers

Substantial funds will be needed to repair/rebuild the levee system around New Orleans. Hazards to navigation need to be removed in the Mississippi and other affected rivers so that goods can move safely and efficiently on these inland waterways and so that Port of New Orleans and other ports along the Gulf Coast can return to full operations. Additionally, the federal government must work with state and local governments to address beach erosion and damage to wetlands.

The Agenda to Rebuild the Gulf Coast is a part of NACo’s continuing efforts to engage the federal government on various matters relating to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. NACo President Bill Hannell has established the Parish and County Family Fund to collect money to help parishes and counties in the states hit hardest by Hurricane Katrina. Additionally, NACo continues to work with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to identify temporary shelter sites for Katrina evacuees and to compile information about how counties can assist counties and parishes hard hit by Katrina.

For more details or donations to the fund, NACo members can go to the NACo Web site (www.naco.org), and click on the headline “NACo Establishes Parish and County Family Fund.”

NACo is also compiling a policy document on long-term recommendations for strengthening county government emergency preparedness, prevention, response and recovery. This document will be featured in a future edition of County News.

Finally, NACo’s Homeland Security Task Force and Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee will begin to examine lessons learned from the disasters at upcoming meetings. This will be a key issue at the upcoming Justice and Public Safety Retreat in January 2006.

### NACo has established the Parish and County Family Fund to collect money to help parishes and counties in the states hit hardest by Hurricane Katrina.

Visit...

www.naco.org

For more information.
Organizational Liposuction

Deep down in our hearts as public administrators we know that organizations have some employees or some functions which are not necessary. We know that if some of these functions were simply to disappear tomorrow, citizens or organizational leaders might not even notice. We know that for various reasons there may be unnecessary positions “loitering” in the halls of government as they have been for many years. We may have a manager in charge of managing a manager who manages other people. We may have layers of organizational supervision which could have simply built up over the years in the same way sedimentary rock is formed. We may have some employees who use bullying behavior or are marginal performers, but are not quite bad enough for disciplinary actions. For that matter, we may have supervisors who have not bothered to document properly or made any effort at all over many years to counsel, train or discipline these employees.

In our heart of bureaucratic hearts, we all recognize that this can be a fact of life. It is more likely to be prevalent in a larger organization since there are more programs, facilities, staff and complexity. But even small cities and counties are not immune from being bureaucratically overweight.

On the campaign trail, elected officials and candidates systematically urge that we “get the fat out of government.” In fact, it is very much a part of American history to run for office on a platform that includes ample doses of throwing out rascals, shrinking government, eliminating bureaucracy, cutting budgets and reforming “the system.” Whether you sat next to candidate George W. in 18th century America or George W. in the 21st century, you would find similar language in similar rhetoric.

Yet, getting bureaucracies to trim their own fat has proven as difficult as getting Americans to lose weight. In a world where we crave instant impacts and gratification, we as Americans and we as public administrators find it difficult to sustain long-term programs that produce gradual change. It is easier, more dramatic, and certainly more expensive to treat problems radically after they’ve developed rather than to work on prevention and early intervention.

Like many Americans seeking to drop some pounds, organizations often turn to a kind of bureaucratic liposuction in an effort to trim the fat. How does organizational liposuction work? Some of the fastest results are achieved through the layoff of dozens or hundreds of people, closing of facilities, elimination of services and putting off things like building maintenance or fleet management scheduling. Capital investments in new technology or better ways of doing business may be scrapped. These result in quick apparent change that may, however, extract a very unhealthy toll over the long-term.

Old model civil service rules or new technology or better ways of maintaining or putting off things like building maintenance or fleet management may save some money in the short-term, but it may really be the shortsighted term. The harm done by preventable errors or accidents which can occur due to outdated or poor training in the sheriff’s or police department, for example, could cost a lot more than the maintenance had occurred. Now we face a hugely more expensive repair or replacement, well beyond what our budget cutting colleagues ever imagined.

Not investing in employee training and development may save some money in the short-term, but it may really be the shortsighted term. The instant impacts and gratification may be the shortsighted term. The harm done by preventable errors or accidents which can occur due to outdated or poor training in the sheriff’s or police department, for example, could cost a lot more than the maintenance had occurred. Now we face a hugely more expensive repair or replacement, well beyond what our budget cutting colleagues ever imagined.

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Vendor Information Solution Reduces Procurement, Contract Risk

The National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP) in partnership with Achilles Information, Inc., is offering SourceConnect™, a new online vendor information solution that reduces procurement and contract risks.

Available on a subscription basis to public sector organizations throughout North America, SourceConnect provides access to shared data about current and prospective suppliers, contractors and consultants who either do business, or seek to do business, with all participating agencies. The tools in SourceConnect help public sector purchasing staffs obtain vendor data available through the service, so they can source, select and manage the performance of suppliers, contractors and consultants.

Knox County, Tennessee’s purchasing division is using SourceConnect to improve its procurement and contract results. A very active participant in the U.S. Communities Program, the purchasing division holds the Outstanding Agency Accreditation that NIGP confers on agencies that lead the public procurement profession.

The purchasing division also has been recognized many times for its success in reaching out to minority businesses. SourceConnect fits well into the division’s overall strategy, complementing the agency’s automation of the procurement and contract management process and an ongoing emphasis on the professional development and certification of buyers and other purchasing staff.

The new service fills information gaps in several areas, including the evaluation of sole-source requests, the identification of additional sources in low-competition product/service categories, and the determination of bidder and proposer qualifications.

County Mayor Mike Ragsdale is pleased that his purchasing staff will be using SourceConnect, noting that “This new service will help us make government better every day, by enabling us to make more informed decisions on purchases and contracts.

“In terms of the potential to achieve cost savings and to improve the quality of service to our citizens, no function in our government is more critical than purchasing and contracting.”

The Purchasing Division will use SourceConnect to improve the quality and performance of its suppliers, contractors and consultants on an ongoing basis. According to purchasing agent Mike Reeves, “We are not looking for short-term deals. We are looking for long-term relationships with qualified vendors who can help the county provide the best possible services at the lowest total cost. With its detailed information about vendors, SourceConnect will allow us to do things that we should have been doing all along, but simply could not do.”

Vendors and agencies interested in more information about SourceConnect can go to www.sourceconnect.com or contact NIGP at www.nigp.org.

About NIGP

The National Institute of Governmental Purchasing, Inc. (NIGP) is a national, membership-based nonprofit organization providing support to professionals in the public sector purchasing profession. NIGP provides its members with many services, including education, professional networking, research and technical assistance. NIGP is a founding co-sponsor of the U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance.

Financial Services News

NACo on the Move

NACo in the News

• The Dallas Morning News mentioned NACo in a Sept. 12 article entitled “Congress taking on meth epidemic.” NACo Executive Director Larry Naake commented that the administration should take a tougher stance against meth.

• President Bill Hansell spoke at the opening session of the New Hampshire Association of Counties annual meeting in Coos County (Duxville Notch), Oct. 1–5. He presented NACo’s work with the prescription drug program, the meth survey and Medicare and Medicaid.

• President-elect Colleen Landkamer spoke at the Nevada Association of Counties conference in Humboldt County (Winnemucca), Sept. 27–29. She discussed all of the programs that NACo offers to counties. She also traveled to the Montana Association of Counties annual meeting in Yellowstone County (Billings) Sept. 26 and discussed NACo services, the value of membership and the importance of Montana’s involvement in NACo.

• Andrew Goldschmidt, membership/marketing director, attended the Nevada Association of Counties conference in Humboldt County (Winnemucca), Sept. 27–29 and spoke on the prescription drug program.

• Kevin Neimond, GIS specialist, spoke at the National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) Annual Conference, in Monroe County, N.Y. Sept. 26–30. His talk outlined county priorities in the coming year and how GIS based tools assist in examining these issues.

• Jennifer Wilson, associate legislative director, traveled to the Montana Association of Counties annual meeting in Yellowstone County (Billings) Sept. 25–29 meeting to speak at a Medicaid workshop.

• Steve Swendiman, FSC managing director/CEO, attended the CSAC Finance Corporation meeting in San Diego County Sept. 13–16, representing the NACo FSC programs to their board of directors.

(On the Move is compiled by Dan Miller, staff writer, and Allison Mall, editorial assistant.)

NACo Staff

• Steve Swendiman, FSC managing director/CEO, attended the CSAC Finance Corporation meeting in San Diego County Sept. 13–16, representing the NACo FSC programs to their board of directors.
**FLORIDA**

Commissioners from nine counties have formed a coalition to address the poor water quality of Lake Okeechobee.

At a recent meeting, the coalition heard about the poor condition of the St. Lucie Estuary. The members discussed how recent water management decisions have affected tourism, taxes and tap water.

Previously, the coalition had approved a resolution that included a demand for a revision of lake management rules by the end of next year.

“The lake drives our economy, and it’s the worst I’ve seen it,” GLADES COUNTY Commissioner Alvin Ward told the Sun Sentinel.

Commissioner Kevin McCarthy of HENDRY COUNTY claims the water quality is so poor that the county has been forced to spend $17 million to build a water plant.

**GEORGIA**

- Voters in COBB COUNTY decided to approve a one cent per dollar increase in the local sales tax.

Previously, Cobb County was the only county in Georgia that didn’t have a sales tax to help pay for local government. County officials say the tax will generate nearly $1.4 billion over the next six years.

According to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, approximately $1.2 billion would go to transportation improvements with $110 million for a new jail, $55 million for a new Superior Court building and $27 million for emergency communications equipment.

**MINNESOTA**

ANKOA COUNTY and the Minnesota Vikings announced an agreement on a new development project that will be anchored by a $675 million, 68,000-seat retractable roof stadium.

The stadium will be the center point of a broader, mixed-use development that is projected to feature a unique mix of retail shops, office buildings, private residences and nature preserves.

“We are taking a bold step toward achieving something very special for Anoka County and the entire state of Minnesota,” said Margaret Langfeld, chair, Anoka County Board.

“Anoka County and the entire state of Minnesota,” said Margaret Langfeld, chair, Anoka County Board.

**COUNTIES**

Several counties in Oklahoma are considering suing the state Legislature over its failure to reimburse counties for funding lost because of a law that doubles the homestead exemption for low-income property owners.

According to published reports, the statewide shortage has averaged $5 million each year for the past three years. If the counties are able to recoup their money, about 70 percent of the money would go to school districts with 10 percent to run county government and the remainder divided among career centers, ambulance districts, health departments and libraries.

**OREGON**

The MARION COUNTY Sheriff’s office was all set to launch a bait-car program to help with an ongoing problem of stolen cars, but the only problem is that the car they were prepared to use as a bait car had itself been previously stolen, and it arrived with a damaged ignition.

According to the Statesman Journal, the Sheriff’s Office is trying to give back the damaged car, for which it paid $1, and get a different one from the insurance company that donated it.

“Instead of sending several hundred dollars to fix it, it’s easier for us to get another,” office spokesman Kevin Rau told the paper.

The county’s bait-car program will begin once the new car arrives and remote locks, an ignition cutoff switch and video, audio and computer equipment can be installed in it.

“I don’t see this as a negative necessarily,” Rau said. “I don’t see this as a major setback. We will implement the program; it’s just a matter of when.”

**TENNESSEE**

If folks at the HAWKINS COUNTY emergency call center are looking a bit pale recently, there’s a good reason.

Emergency dispatchers were given permission to purchase a tandem bed — with their own money — and set it up as a way to wind down after long hours. However, the county 911 Board voted recently that the tandem bed must be removed from the central dispatch center.

According to the Associated Press, the dispatchers had had the approval of Board Chairman Chili Sanders.
Program Encourages Employees to Get Fit

BY M. MINDY MORETTI SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Faced with a growing body of evidence that healthcare costs related to obesity are on the rise, the Mecklenburg (N.C.) Board of County Commissioners decided to take a proactive approach with county employees.

The Board approached the director of the county’s health department and asked that a task force be created to look into the issue, and what came from that task force is the Employee Fit City Challenge incentive plan. The Fit City Challenge is a community-based initiative to encourage physical activity, and fruit and vegetable consumption. The primary goal of the program is to impact the community through education and behavior modification.

“We are not a weight-loss program,” explained Dianne Thomas, Fit City director. “We are about creating healthy lifestyles and healthy behaviors which we know can lead to weight loss and other important health indicators.”

It was determined that an incentive plan would be an effective way to positively affect the county’s workforce. The county manager and human resources department agreed to provide an incentive of vacation time for participation in the program. Thomas said because they wanted the program to be attainable for all county employees, the following criteria were created:

• one point earned for physical activity per day that equals one mile or more
• one point earned for eating five or more servings of fruit and vegetables per day
• maximum number of points that can be earned per day is two points
• maximum number of points that can be earned per week is eight points; and

Once participants reach 200 points, which would take approximately 26 weeks if they are earning the maximum per day, they will receive a vacation certificate for four hours. The next 200 points they will receive an additional certificate for four hours.

To track the points, the Health Department webmaster developed an online system for employees and team leaders to track their progress. Because some employees, like those in the parks and recreation department, are not necessarily tied to a desk and computer, Fit City kiosks were installed in the lobbies of several county buildings. Each department appoints a team leader to promote the program within his or her department, track the progress of department employees enrolled in the challenge, and help with the distribution of vacation certificates. The team leaders receive free memberships to the county’s fitness facilities for the entire time they remain a team leader. Each leader must commit up to one year.

According to Thomas, the biggest obstacle the program faced was dissemination of information such as communicating how the program works, how to register online, how the point system worked and how to check your progress.

“We had a fair amount of confusion in the beginning,” Thomas said. “Communication will always be somewhat of a challenge, but we are learning the best ways to reach different departments and the nominal group results should help.”

When the program launched in April 2004, the goal was to sign up 1,500 employees. In the first two months of the program, more than 1,600 employees signed up and to date, the program has distributed 321 vacation certificates. Thomas said that despite some of the challenges, the success of the program is obvious and she feels it is something that most counties can do for their employees as well.

“Obviously not everyone could afford to do vacation time as an incentive,” Thomas said. “But that is the beauty of this program; it is flexible so they can use a different point system and different incentives.”

For more information about Mecklenburg County’s Fit City Challenge, contact Dianne Thomas, Fit City director at 704/432-1467 or via e-mail at thomadg@co.mecklenburg.nc.us.

(FocusOnAchievement highlights NACo’s 2005 Achievement Award Winners. To learn more about other winners, the program or how to submit your county program for an award visit the NACo Web site at www.naco.org/awards or contact Jackie Byers, research director at flybers@naco.org or 202/942-4285.)

Texas county bans parking near Bush ranch

NEWS FROM PAGE 12

“Told them they could put it there, but they could not use it while they were on the clock,” Sanders told the AP.

Although there were never any reports of the bed being used by an employee on duty, the Board feared the tanning bed in the call center presented a poor image of the organization’s work ethic.

TEXAS

• Commissioners in McLennan County say they don’t have a problem with anyone’s First Amendment rights, but what they do have a problem with is dangerously parked cars and raucous behavior.

That’s why the commission recently voted four to one to ban parking along 23 miles of road near the Crawford, Texas ranch of President George W. Bush.

Commissioner Ray Meadows told the Associated Press that about 80 residents had complained about blocked roads, loud music and public health and safety concerns during the recent 26-day anti-war protest led by Cindy Sheehan.

Sheehan began camping in ditches near the president’s ranch on Aug. 6 and her vigil drew thousands of fellow protestors and counter rallies in support of the president, as well as sightseers. All this led up to miles of parked cars on the sides of a two-lane, winding road.

“It’s not a First Amendment issue,” Meadows said. “It’s a safety issue.

Meadows had also proposed to prohibit residing, erecting shelters or placing sewage receptacles in right-of-way areas on all county roads, but the commission deferred action on that proposal.

• For the second time in less than a year, voters in Rockwall County have defeated a bond proposal to fund a new county government center.

According to the Associated Press, the proposal was rejected by 66 percent of the voters, up from 58 percent who opposed it in November of 2004.

County commissioners had called for the special election, which, if approved, would have provided for a new government center to house state and county courts as well as many administrative offices.

County Judge Bill Bell said he got the message from voters that they don’t want a new courthouse any time soon.

(News From the Nation’s Counties is written by Dan Miller, staff writer, and M. Mindy Moretti, senior staff writer. If you have news about your county, please e-mail them at dmiller@naco.org or mmoretti@naco.org.)

What's In a Seal?

Allegheny County, Pa.

The Allegheny County seal is directly derived from the seal of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and is the same as the Pennsylvania state seal in all essential details.

The origins of the Pennsylvania seal hearken back to colonial days, when the seals of the colonial counties of Pennsylvania were formed by mounting a distinguishing crest upon the Penn family’s coat-of-arms.

The crest of the Chester County seal was a plough, the crest of Philadelphia County was a ship under full sail; and the crest of Sussex County, Del., which formed a part of Pennsylvania when a province, was a sheath of wheat. The seal of the city of Philadelphia bore on its shield both the sheaf of wheat and the ship in full sail.

The present form of the Allegheny County Seal was decreed by the Pennsylvania Legislature more than 100 years ago, and the colonial emblems have remained, while taking on new significance.

• The ship symbolizes the vast commercial traffic which Allegheny County carries on with the rest of the world.
• The plough signifies subterranean earth-related resources, reflecting the agricultural and mining activities of the county. The sheaves of wheat typify the county’s harvests, both agricultural and as the result of human industry and initiative in the areas of mining, manufacturing and intellectual production.
• Surrounding and surmounting the seal are a cornstalk, signifying abundance; an olive branch, which stands for peace; and an eagle, which denotes sovereignty.

(If you would like your county’s seal featured, please contact Alison Mall at amall@naco.org or 202/942-4256.)
Sponsored by Your County Government — Worry-free Wireless Web-Surfing

What was once thought to be a crazy idea in the early 1980s has become a mainstream of everyday life for citizens around the globe. The Internet was started as an effort to allow computers to share information about military and scientific matters. The early Internet was only used by computer experts, scientists, engineers and librarians. Today, middle school students are teaching their moms, dads and other older relatives about navigating the World Wide Web. For many local governments, the answer is “Wireless Hot Spots.”

A key question for today’s civic leaders concerns the role government can or should play in providing Internet access for their citizens. For many, the answer is “Wireless Hot Spots.”

The National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH) is an important partner in the country’s public health system. If you are a member of a local board of health or otherwise involved in developing public health policy in your community, you will benefit from a NALBOH membership.

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For more information about NALBOH, the annual conference, educational materials (including the Guide to Appointing Local Board of Health Members) and programs, please contact 419/353-7714 or nalboh@nalboh.org.

(Affiliate News was written by Tiffany L. Hinton, MPH, the liaison director for NALBOH.)

ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR GRANTS??

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RESEARCH NEWS

The National Association of Local Boards of Health

The National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH) is the voice for effective and competent public health governance, and represents the approximately 3,000 local boards of health across the country. NALBOH’s mission is to strengthen and prepare local boards of health, enabling them to protect and promote the health of their communities.

Through its office in Bowling Green, Ohio, NALBOH provides information and educational programs tailored to local boards of health on governance and a number of public health issues including emergency preparedness, environmental health, injury prevention and tobacco control. The satellite office in Washington, D.C. allows the association to work closely with other national organizations and contribute to the advancement of effective public health policy.

Goals of NALBOH are to provide a national voice for the concerns of local boards of health, and to help them obtain the knowledge and skills to effectively improve the health of their community.

In general, a local board of health is the link between a local public health department, elected officials and citizens. Local boards of health provide oversight. They may approve or set budgets, help assess the particular health needs of a population, and develop policies and programs to keep the public healthy and safe.

NALBOH supports local boards of health by providing an annual educational conference featuring experts on local board governance, public health issues and relevant research; technical assistance in programs, policy and organizational development; orientation and training for new and existing board members; a quarterly newsletter with the latest news about prominent public health issues and initiatives, grant resources and events; and advocacy.

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NOTICES

■ Conferences
  • The Foundation for Child Development Annual Forum will take place Oct. 20 in New York City. Educators from Cook County, Ill. (Chicago), Jackson County (Independence, Mo.), and Hudson County (Union City, N.J.) will discuss how they are leveraging the current, uncoordinated investments in early childhood programs to create a new first level of education — PK-3.
  • The session will provide practical advice on aligning standards, curriculum and assessment from PK-3; funding PK-3 systems; working with community organizations; enhancing teacher qualifications and supporting families.
  • For more information go to www.fcd-us.org.

■ Symposium
  • The Public Entity Risk Institute (PERI) will hold a Fire Department Integrated Risk Analysis and Management online symposium Nov. 7 – 11. The symposium will be valuable to all local fire department officials, elected officials and local government administrators and managers who are concerned about planning for future fires and rescue services. To sign up, go to www.riskinstitute.org.

(If you have an event or publication or conference that you would like to be featured in Notices, please e-mail small@naco.org.)
ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR — LAKE COUNTY, ILL.
Salary: $90 to low $100’s, DOQ
Lake County, a population of 680,000, is located between Chicago and Milwaukee, and offers an outstanding blend of urban, suburban and rural communities, most experiencing rapid growth. The county government is ICMA recognized, has a $402M budget and triple A bond rating. The job: lake County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER — GALLATIN COUNTY, MONT.
Salary: $55,416-67-$75,500, DOQ and DOQ.
BS in public or business admin., master’s degree in public admin. preferred, plus 3-5yrs exp as administrator/admin, in public employment involving responsibility for budget, finance, organization and planning and implementation. To apply: Contact Bozeman Job Ser at 406/582-9200 or fax resume to 406/582-9210.

CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER — LAKE COUNTY, ILL.
Salary: $130’s, DOQ.
Lake County, population 680,000, is located between Chicago and Milwaukee, and offers an outstanding blend of urban, suburban and rural communities, most experiencing rapid growth. The county government is ICMA recognized, has a $402M budget and triple A bond rating by Moody’s and S&P, and employs approximately 2,800. This is a highly professional and very stable work environment with a strong commitment to professional development.
The County Administrator is a professional manager appointed by the County Board to serve as the chief administrative officer. He is supported by two Assistant County Administrators, an Assistant to the County Administrator, Office of Management and Budget, and Communications Division in addition to the department managers.
The desired candidate is an experienced local government manager or key assistant with a strong, proven record of accomplishments. This person should have a reputation for professionalism, integrity and outstanding interpersonal skills. The duties will vary but likely include project oversight in the criminal justice system, planning and development, legislative affairs, performance management, and other day-to-day operations. This position must serve as second in command to the County Administrator. The Assistant County Administrator’s serve as chief advisors to the County Administrator for policy development and operations, provide staff support to the standing committees of the County Board and various commissions and committees, and actively participate in community activities.

To apply: Contact Bozeman Job Service at 406/582-9200 or fax resume to 406/582-9210.

COMMUNITY SERVICES MANAGER — CITY OF IRVINE, CALIF.
Salary: $84,549 – $125,628 DOQ
The job: Irvine is seeking a Community Services Manager with multi-faceted business skills, proven leadership ability, professional communication and negotiation skills, public relations ability with a keen eye on the city’s future growth and multi-cultural community needs. This position often communicates with media, business leaders and community stakeholders and develops and executes community programs and services for the Recreation and Human Services division. The division oversees city programs including community parks, youth services, family services, senior services, athletics, aquatics, fine arts, disability services, animal care services. The division has responsibility for 5 community parks facilities, 2 senior centers, 7 athletic facilities, a skateboard park, over 50 tennis courts, aquatic facilities, fine arts center, animal care center (shelter) to assist in managing this division and its community responsibilities. The Community Services Manager has a staff of four section heads, over thirty full-time and 300 part-time employees. The ideal candidate will have at least ten years of experience in a related field. Extensive professional background (10 years of direct experience) and accomplished results demonstrating positive organizational impact (represented in your resume) in the competencies outlined for the position.

To apply: Contact Bozeman Job Service at 406/582-9200 or fax resume to 406/582-9210.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR — JOHNSON COUNTY DEPARTMENTAL SUPPORTS, KAN.
Salary: $83,870 – $139,783, DOQ
Johnson County Developmental Supports, a governmental agency, has been providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities, for over 30 years. The position is responsible for information technology articulating a unified strategy, foster and manage the county IT plan, and integrate, where practical, all IT activities. Requirements include the equivalent of a bachelor’s degree in a related field (master’s degree preferred) combined with significant and progressively responsible Information Technology experience including five years of supervisory/management experience. Experience in a public sector organization, preferably in a complex, large, county is strongly preferred. Must have excellent strategic visioning and management skills and service focused with proven abilities to work in a collaborative, decision-making environment.

To apply: Contact Bozeman Job Service at 406/582-9200 or fax resume to 406/582-9210.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR — BROOME COUNTY, N.Y.
Salary: $73,500
Broome County, N.Y. is seeking a highly motivated, experienced administrator to manage large multi-purpose sports/entertainment facilities.

Job Market - Classified Rate Schedule
• Line Rates: $7 per line, NACo member counties; $10 per line, others.
• Display Classified: $50 per column inch, NACo member counties; $70 per column inch, others.
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• Website advertising copy to: Job Market, County News, (202)392-2630.
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• Be sure to include billing information along with copy.
• Estimates and final cost. Advertisements are approximations only and do not necessarily reflect final cost.

For more information, contact the Job Market representative at (202) 942-4256.
Homeownership and Comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization

Wednesday, October 19th, 2005
2:00 - 3:00pm

www.knowledgeplex.org/xchat.html

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Fannie Mae Foundation

Immediate Past President Kyle will be joined by a distinguished panel of housing experts in building, finance, lending and Assistant Secretary Steven Nesmith of the United States Department of Housing and Urban development to discuss the challenges and opportunities for creating quality affordable housing and home ownership opportunities across the country. After their presentations, panelists will answer questions posed by audience members.

Presenters:

The NACo National Housing Initiative
The Honorable Angelo D. Kyle, NACo Immediate Past-President

Housing Production: Challenges and Opportunities for Builders and County Officials
Mr. Bobby Rayburn, 2004 President, National Association of Home Builders

Understanding the Regulatory Impact on Affordable Housing
The Honorable Steven B. Nesmith, Esq., Assistant Secretary, US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development

Affordable Housing Finance Tools
Ms. Gwen Thomas, Consumer Real Estate Lending Sales Executive, Bank of America

County Leadership in Housing and Development: Community Participation & Partnerships
The Honorable Robert S. Weiner, Councilman, New Castle County, Delaware

Moderator:
Ms. Sheila Maith, Managing Director, the Fannie Mae Foundation

For more information, please see the Fannie Mae Foundation’s KnowledgePlex website www.knowledgeplex.org/xchat.html, the Center for Sustainable Communities website at www.naco.org/sustainable or contact Jared Lang at (202)942-4243.