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Keystone XL Pipeline helps kick off 114th Congress

By JULIE UFFNER
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

It didn't take long for the new 114th Congress to tackle the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Congress opened the week of Jan. 5. On Friday, Jan. 9, the House passed the Keystone XL Pipeline Act (H.R. 3), by a vote of 266-153.

The measure, sponsored by Rep. Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.) with 30 cosponsors, would authorize construction of the northern section of the Keystone XL Pipeline. The southern section of the pipeline, which runs from Cushing, Okla. to the Gulf Coast, went operational in January 2014, but construction of the northern section of the Keystone XL Pipeline project has been delayed.

Also on Thursday, Jan. 8, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee passed a companion bill (Keystone XL

Pipeline Act, S. 1) by a vote of 13-9. Debate on the measure is expected to last several weeks to accommodate the president's State of the Union Address and lawmaker retreats.

S. 1 is identical to a measure debated in the Senate in the 113th Congress (S. 2280). It was introduced by Sens. John Hoeven (R-N.D.) and Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) on Jan. 6 and has 59 cosponsors.

Both bills would approve construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline to transport crude oil to the Gulf of Mexico from Canada.

The legislation would also streamline pipeline approval by waiving regulatory conditions that require a permit from the U.S. State Department because the pipeline would cross the U.S.-Canada border.

The Keystone XL Pipeline project was originally proposed in 2008 by TransCanada, a Canadian energy company.

The proposed project would stretch from Alberta, Canada and the Bakken regions of North Dakota and Montana to a hub in

See **KEYSTONE** page 6



Infrastructure needs get a boost on Capitol Hill. Scaffolding encases the U.S. Capitol dome as workers begin to repair more than 1,000 cracks on the 149-year-old iron structure. If laid end-to-end, the scaffolding would be 52 miles long.

Pa. county pioneers pipeline tracking

By CHARLIE BAN
SENIOR STAFF WRITER



Pipelines are ominous. For property owners, they're looming nightmares, complete with concerns about leakage and explosions.

For developers, they're a dwelling annoyance. For counties, they're another layer of infrastructure to worry about.

Dubbed a "nexus of pipelines" in Southeastern Pennsylvania, Chester County has the third-highest percentage of pipelines in the commonwealth, due in large part to the increasing number of transmission pipelines between counties atop the Marcellus Formation and their ultimate destinations.

The county also doubles as

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State of the Union includes county priorities

NACo stands ready to strengthen local, state, federal partnership

In its response to President Barack Obama's State of the Union Address, NACo vowed to work with the president and Congress to achieve shared priorities important to the nation's counties, including economic recovery and investing in transportation and infrastructure.

"Many of President Obama's domestic policy goals align with

priorities county governments work to achieve every day," said NACo President Riki Hokama, council member, Maui County, Hawai'i. "We look forward to continuing to work with the Administration and leaders on Capitol Hill because federal decisions have a cascading effect on county governments and residents. We stand ready to strengthen counties' intergovern-

mental collaboration to benefit everyday Americans."

One of the president's top priorities is making sure more Americans feel the national economic resurgence he discussed. While the national economy has seen progress, recovery on the ground remains sluggish and uneven.

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READER COMMENTARY

Publicly-owned voting systems could reduce costs by 50 percent

BRENT TURNER

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF VOTING OFFICIALS

Many election system experts have projected tremendous cost savings for counties moving toward publicly owned voting systems as an alternative to vendor sold systems. The open source software-commodity off the shelf election systems are being considered by county CAOs and CEOs nationally.

The last round of election system purchases was funded by the Help America Vote Act, which enabled \$4.5 billion to be spent by jurisdictions seeking electronic voting systems. The purchases were largely made over a decade ago, and now those systems are in need of replacement. Currently there is little money available for the necessary purchases and the counties have been concerned about the next step.

One option becoming available is the construction of publicly-owned voting systems. Under the plan headed by the non-profit California Association of Voting Officials (CAVO), counties would utilize free open source General Public License (GPL) software with low cost commercial hardware for solution. Costs would be expected to be reduced by at least one half, resulting in tremendous savings.

The election reform community has been advocating for publicly-owned systems since 2000 and recently has embarked on an education campaign directed toward election officials nationally. CAVO recently presented at the California State Association of Counties



Brent Turner

(CSAC) in Orange County (Anaheim), for the state's chief administrative officers (CAOs).

In California, passage of SB-360 has paved the way for certification of publicly-owned open source systems and many counties have expressed an interest in pooling resources toward having a transparent system certified. The author of the bill — former state Senator, now Secretary of State Alex Padilla — has stated he believes open source is optimal for securing vote counts. SB-360 allows the state to “opt out” of the murky federal certification process and validate its own systems. Under the “shareability” of GPL open source, all interested jurisdictions would be able to utilize community efforts toward the system.

San Francisco County recently resolved to direct their elections department to analyze the GPL—open source option and referred the matter for internal study. Los Angeles County has been working on its own project for years, but has not yet announced whether they will be utilizing “corporate owned” vendor systems or going with the open source model. Their latest projections anticipate a commencement date as far out as 2020.

The solution to the crisis is now available, but it is a matter of political will. There are major forces at work to preserve the status quo of counties buying high-priced, inefficient vendor models. The time is now for the counties to take charge of this environment.

For more information please visit www.cavo-us.org or contact Brent Turner directly at 650.726.1133.

Quick Takes

Counties with the Best Ski Slopes 2015

- Teton County, Wyo. Jackson Hole Mountain Resort
- Salt Lake County, Utah Alta
- Salt Lake County, Utah Snowbird Ski and Summer Resort
- Anchorage Borough, Alaska Alyeska
- Eagle County, Colo. Vail

Source: Source: Forbes

High court delivers mixed ruling on telecom siting applications

By LISA SORONEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
STATE AND LOCAL LEGAL CENTER

In *T-Mobile South v. City of Roswell*, the Supreme Court held 6–3 that the Telecommunications Act (TCA) does indeed require local governments to provide reasons when denying an application to build a cell phone tower. The reasons do not have to be stated in the denial letter but must be articulated “with sufficient clarity in some other written record issued essentially contemporaneously with the denial.” The “written record” can include council meeting minutes.

T-Mobile had applied to construct a 108-foot cell tower in a residential zoning area in Roswell, Ga. Two days after a council hearing on the application, where city councilmembers voted to deny the application and stated various reasons for why they were going to vote against it, Roswell sent T-Mobile a brief letter stating that the application was denied and that T-Mobile could obtain hearing minutes from the city clerk. Twenty-six days later the minutes were approved and published.

The court's ruling that written minutes can meet the TCA's “in writing” requirement is favorable to local governments, many of

which routinely compile meeting minutes regardless of whether a cell tower application is being considered. But the court's requirement that a local government issue a denial letter and minutes at more or less the same time will be new to many local governments, and “could be a trap for the unwary hamlet or two,” as Chief Justice John Roberts said in his dissenting opinion.

The majority of the court, in an opinion written by Justice Sonia Sotomayor, held that local governments must provide reasons for why they are denying a cell tower application so that courts can determine whether the denial was supported by substantial evidence. The court rejected T-Mobile's argument that the reasons must be set forth in a formal written decision denying the application instead of council meeting minutes because nothing in the TCA “imposes any requirement that the reasons be given in any particular form.”

At the same time, however, it ruled that since wireless providers have only 30 days after an adverse decision to seek judicial review, the council meeting minutes setting forth the reasons have to be issued “essentially contemporaneous[ly]” with the denial.

Following this decision, local governments should not issue any written denial of a wireless siting application until they set forth the reasons for the denial in that written

decision, or make available to the wireless provider the final council or board meeting minutes or transcript of the meeting at which the action was taken.

In other Supreme Court news ... Free speech at center of license plate case

The Supreme Court will decide in *Walker v. Texas Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans* whether a decision by the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles Board to reject an application for a specialty license plate featuring images of the Confederate Flag violates the First Amendment.

The decision could have implications beyond the specialty license plate context. Lower courts have struggled to determine whether government websites, advertisements on city buses, memorial bricks and tiles at public schools are government speech or private speech.

A lower court decision ruled in favor of the Texas Sons of Confederate Veterans request, holding that specialty license plates are private speech, not government speech.

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President | Riki Hokama
Publisher | Matthew Chase
Public Affairs Director | Tom Goodman
Executive Editor | Beverly Anne Schlotterbeck
Senior Staff Writer | Charles Taylor
Senior Staff Writer | Charlie Ban
Graphic Artist | Jack Hernandez

ADVERTISING STAFF

Job Market/Classifieds representative
National Accounts representative
Beverly Schlotterbeck
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The Voice of America's Counties

DHS bill takes aim at immigration order

By YEJIN JANG
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The House of Representatives passed a \$39.7 billion FY15 funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security Jan. 15. As expected, the bill contains riders intended to block President Obama's executive order on immigration, setting the measure on an unclear path in the senate and inviting a presidential veto.

The \$39.7 billion level is \$400 million above FY14 enacted levels. State and local programs saw no increases. They are funded at a total of \$1.5 billion, the same as FY14 enacted amounts.

Specifically, homeland security programs of interest to counties are funded at the following levels:

- Emergency Management Performance Grant: \$350 million
- Pre-disaster Mitigation: \$25 million
- Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI): \$600 million
- State Homeland Security Grant: \$467 million, and
- Assistance to Firefighters: \$680 million (\$340 million for SAFER staffing)

The bill also includes language that prohibits using any DHS funds to implement the National Preparedness Grant Program (NPGP) unless explicitly authorized by Congress. In the past, the President has submitted budget proposals that include the consolidation of homeland security grant programs into one program, the NPGP, which NACo opposes.

Counties not waiting for federal minimum wage hike

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Pleas for a higher federal minimum wage have largely fallen on deaf ears in Congress. President Barack Obama again made raising the pay floor a priority in his latest State of the Union Address, as he did in 2014.

In the meantime, counties aren't waiting for Washington or their State Legislatures to act. From Santa Fe County, N.M. to the Metro Government of Louisville-Jefferson County, Ky., counties have passed or are debating laws to increase the local minimum wage. The federal rate of \$7.25 an hour was raised to that level in 2009.

On Jan. 2, Louisville Metro Mayor Greg Fischer signed a law raising the minimum wage in Louisville-Jefferson County to \$9 an hour by July 2017, becoming the first locality in the South to

enact such an ordinance. Two incremental bumps will occur before then: to \$7.75 by July 1 and to \$8.25 by July 2016. It also ties future increases to the consumer price index (CPI).

Among other counties that raised or are trying to increase their minimum wages are Montgomery and Prince George's counties in Maryland; Dona Ana County, N.M., and the City and County of San Francisco.

"We felt it was necessary because the feds had not accomplished what they should have accomplished, nor had our state legislature, so somebody had to do something," said Metro Councilman David James, who was among the majority that approved the measure 16-9.

Santa Fe County passed a living wage ordinance in February

See **WAGE** page 12

NACo NOTICE

Regional Rep elections at 2015 Legislative Conference

Because of election losses in November, two vacancies have occurred on NACo's Executive Committee for South and Central Region representatives. Interim elections will take place during the 2015 NACo Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.

The South Region includes Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. The unexpired term for South Region representative ends at the 2015 Annual Conference — at which time another election will be held for a complete two-year term.

The Central Region includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin. The unexpired term for this position ends at the 2016 Annual Conference at which time another election will be held for a complete two-year term.

Elections will be held at the Regional Caucus Meetings on Monday, Feb. 23 from 7:30 a.m.–8:30 a.m. States have one vote each for this election.

For more information, contact Jamie Richards, administrative assistant at jrichards@naco.org or 202.942.4298.

In Case You Missed It

News to Use From Past County News

► Registration is now open for NACo's annual Legislative Conference

Held at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C., the conference runs from Feb. 21–25, and features workshops on county cybersecurity, community engagement and outreach, social security and more, as well as a day of lobbying on Capitol Hill. You can learn more and register at: www.naco.org/meetings/participate/LegislativeConference

Obama argues for infrastructure funding

SOTU from page 1

According to NACo's County Economic Tracker 2014 released last week, 95 percent of county economies have not returned to their pre-recession employment rates and only 65 out of 3,069 county economies have recovered on the four key indicators NACo analyzed: economic output (GDP), jobs, unemployment rate and home prices. Further, wages have declined in half of county economies, and only 40 percent of jobs created have been in industries paying more than the average wage in the county where the job is located.

As the Administration works with states and local governments to bolster economic recovery on the ground, counties agree with President Obama that the country must invest in its transportation systems and infrastructure.

At the same time, county leaders expressed concern about tax and finance reforms for funding capital projects.

NACo's Transportation Steering Committee Chair Peter McLaughlin, commissioner, Hennepin County, Minn., said, "As major owners of the nation's transportation system, we are intimately familiar with the growing need to invest. Counties need the kind of certainty provided by a long-term reauthorization of MAP-21."

Counties own and maintain the greatest share of the nation's road

miles (45 percent) and nearly 40 percent of the number of bridges. Counties are also the stewards of more than a third of the nation's transit systems and airports.

"At the local level, we simply cannot afford for Congress to kick the can down the road with more stopgap measures," McLaughlin said. "No great nation has ever made lasting progress on transportation and infrastructure by setting its policy six months at a time, and the United States won't either."

Financing tools can help efforts to fund infrastructure projects, but they are only a part of the equation. They are not a sufficient replacement for Congressional action and tax-exempt municipal bonds.

County leaders are concerned about the future status of tax-exempt municipal bonds. Though they have been open to considering a wide range of public financing options and additional tools, they have long opposed eliminating or reducing traditional funding and tax-exempt municipal bonds, which provide indispensable financing for major infrastructure projects.

"Counties need more financing options, not fewer," said NACo's Executive Director Matt Chase. "One infrastructure financing tool cannot cancel another. For more than 100 years, tax-exempt municipal bonds have been the lifeblood of the nation's public infrastructure. Over the last


decade alone, they have played a key role in financing trillions of dollars in essential projects like schools, hospitals, roads, bridges, water and sewer systems, ports, airports and other public works projects."

In addition to the legislative initiatives the president discussed, federal regulations can also have a major effect on counties' ability to provide services to residents. Counties echoed the need for collaboration on federal environmental regulations like the Administration's Waters of the U.S. proposal.

County leaders favor common-sense environment protections and can work with the federal government to achieve this goal without inhibiting public safety and economic development efforts.

Chase concluded, "President Obama's address made it clear that federal policies matter to county governments and county governments matter to America. Every level of government must work together to shape policies that improve the quality of life for all Americans."



"Whether it's building and maintaining infrastructure, providing essential services or fostering conditions for economic growth, counties are on the front lines serving communities. NACo stands ready to work with the Administration and Congress to make America's communities healthier, safer and more vibrant places to live and work."



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Congress focuses attention on transportation funding

By JESSICA MONAHAN
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

As the new Congress turns its attention to resolving the looming insolvency of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), messages from Con-

gressional leaders about the viability of a gas tax increase appear mixed. In the Senate, Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), whose committee has jurisdiction over revenue measures, and Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman James Inhofe (R-Okla.), whose committee is responsible for the highway section of the next surface transportation law that will replace MAP-21, have each signaled his interest in a gas tax fix. This is noteworthy because,

historically, Republicans have not entertained the concept of increasing the gas tax.

In the House, however, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-Pa.), has gone on record in several newspaper articles as ruling out a gas tax increase or other user-fee-based revenue sources such as vehicle-miles taxes to fix HTF.

The threat of insolvency — or the trust fund’s going “broke” — is not a new issue for Congress. In fact, spending from HTF has outpaced revenue since 2000. Rather than addressing the trust fund’s solvency by finding more revenue

or reducing spending, Congress has transferred \$65 billion from the general fund since 2008. Most recently, it transferred \$11 billion before the beginning of FY15 to avoid a serious funding crisis.

That \$11 billion was tied to an extension of the current surface transportation authorization law, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). Together, the short-term measures provide enough funding and spending authority to continue federal highway and transit programs through the end of May.


See TRANSPORTATION page 7

SOME KEY PROPOSALS TO BOOST HIGHWAY TRUST FUND

PROPOSAL SOURCE	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>● National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Commission (2008)</p> <p>Congress created The National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission in 2005 to examine short and long-term alternatives to replace or supplement the fuel tax as the principal revenue source to support the Highway Trust Fund over the next 30 years.</p>	<p>Gas Tax Recommendation: Increase the gas tax by 25 to 40 cents and the diesel tax by 15 cents; and index both rates to inflation.</p> <p>Alternative Revenue Options: Examine mileage-based user fees as potential replacement for the gas tax.</p>
<p>● National Surface Transportation Financing Commission (2009)</p> <p>Congress created the National Surface Transportation Financing Commission to make recommendations regarding alternative approaches to financing transportation infrastructure.</p>	<p>Gas Tax Recommendation: Increase the gas tax by 10 cents and diesel tax and commensurate taxes by 15 cents; and index all rates to inflation.</p> <p>Alternative Revenue Options: Examine mileage based user fees as a potential replacement for the gas tax.</p>
<p>● National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform “Simpson-Bowles” (2010)</p> <p>President Obama created the bipartisan National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform to address our nation’s fiscal challenges.</p>	<p>Gas Tax Recommendation: Increase the gas tax by 15 cents per gallon.</p> <p>Alternative Revenue Options: Not addressed.</p>
<p>● GROW AMERICA Act (2014)</p> <p>The Obama Administration released its plan for MAP-21 reauthorization in 2014, which included a proposal to pay for the proposed \$302 billion four-year bill.</p>	<p>Gas Tax Recommendation: Continue at current rates.</p> <p>Alternative Revenue Options: Pay for the four-year proposal by supplementing the existing gas tax and other highway-related taxes with an infusion of \$150 billion in “transition” revenues raised by addressing untaxed profits U.S. multinationals have accumulated overseas.</p>
<p>● Former Ways and Means Chairman Dave Camp’s Discussion Draft (2014)</p> <p>While chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, former Rep. Dave Camp (R-Mich.) released a discussion draft outlining proposals for comprehensive tax reform.</p>	<p>Gas Tax Recommendation: Continue at current rates.</p> <p>Alternative Revenue Options: Dedicate \$126.5 billion in revenue generated from corporate and international tax reform to maintain the trust fund’s solvency through 2021 (assuming level funding).</p>
<p>● Congressional Budget Office (CBO) Options (2014)</p> <p>On May 6, 2014, Joseph Kile, the assistant director for microeconomic studies at CBO testified before the Senate Finance Committee and outlined options for Congress to keep the trust fund solvent.</p>	<p>Gas Tax Recommendation: Raise the tax on motor fuels by between 10 cents and 15 cents per gallon beginning in FY15 in order to meet projected obligations for the trust fund (in lieu of spending cuts).</p> <p>Alternative Revenue Options: While not a revenue option, the CBO warned Congress that relying solely on spending cuts to keep the trust Fund solvent would require bringing spending authority down to zero in FY 2015 and then reducing highway spending by 30 percent and transit spending by 65 percent from 2015 to 2024.</p>
<p>● UPDATE Act (2013)</p> <p>In 2013, Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) introduced the UPDATE Act of 2013, which turned the recommendations from prior commissions into proposed law.</p>	<p>Gas Tax Recommendation: Phase in a 15-cent gas tax increase starting in 2014 and index the rate to inflation.</p> <p>Alternative Revenue Options: Bill confirms Congress’ intention to replace the gas tax with a more equitable, stable source of funding by 2024.</p>
<p>● Corker-Murphy Proposal (2014)</p> <p>In 2014, Sens. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) and Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) proposed a bill to address the Highway Trust Fund’s insolvency.</p>	<p>Gas Tax Recommendation: Phase in a 12-cent increase for the gas and diesel taxes (6 cents per year for two years) and index the rates to inflation. The increase would be fully offset.</p> <p>Alternative Revenue Options: Not addressed.</p>

In addition to the options outlined above, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) examined existing excise taxes and 33 other transportation-related revenue sources as options to shore-up the Highway Trust Fund. These options range from a 10-cent increase in the gas tax, which would yield \$78.12 billion 2015 – 2020, as well as a \$100 registration fee for electric vehicles that would yield \$60 million over the next five years.

In addition to revenue estimates, AASHTO laid out the pros and cons for each option. For one of the more popular alternative revenue options — a vehicle-miles traveled fee — AASHTO acknowledges that while the fee would generate significant revenue (\$246.31 billion between 2015-2020) and be highly sustainable, public and political opposition is high, particularly with regard to privacy.



Profiles in Service

Priscilla Taylor
NACo Board of Directors
Mayor
Palm Beach County, Fla.

- Number of years active in NACo:** Five years
- Years in public service:** 16 years in state and local government
- Occupation:** County commissioner and retired insurance business owner
- Education:** B.A., Barry University; M.A., Palm Beach Atlantic University
- The hardest thing I’ve ever done:** finishing the Leukemia Marathon at Disney
- Three people (living or dead) I’d invite to dinner:** Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X and Oprah Winfrey
- A dream I have is to:** do what I can to help those most in need. Ensure all needy people have opportunities to survive and thrive.
- You’d be surprised to learn that I:** like antique cars, especially the Edsel and Thunderbird.
- The most adventurous thing I’ve ever done is:** climb Machu Picchu while traveling in Peru.
- My favorite way to relax is:** a glass of sweet white wine with a great book.
- I’m most proud of:** personally, my children and the business I built; politically, my service to the community.
- Every morning I read:** *The Bible*.
- My favorite meal is:** fresh catfish and fried green tomatoes ... you can tell I live in the South.
- My pet peeve is:** people who complain too much.
- My motto is:** “If you’re not a part of the solution, you’re part of the problem.”
- The last book I read was:** *Sycamore Row* by John Grisham.
- My favorite movie is:** *Imitation to Life* and *Love Story*.
- My favorite music is:** R&B and jazz gets me going, classical helps me relax, and the Golden Oldies remind me of the good times.
- My favorite president is:** Barack Obama, with Bill Clinton as a close second.
- My county is a NACo member because:** NACo is a place where our county can share ideas; learn about new, successful ones; speak with a strong, united voice and place good policy over politics.

COUNTY INNOVATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

Pierce County, Wash.

Self-scheduling Makes Difference for District Court

By CHARLIE BAN
SENIOR STAFF WRITER



Getting one's day in court, even if it's a consequence that someone would rather not face, can be difficult.

Especially in Pierce County, Wash., which has grown by two-thirds between 1980 and 2012. There were 58,000 misdemeanor citations filed in district court in 2012, more than 16,000 going to court hearings. Scheduling those hearings, either by phone or in person, can be a frustrating, time consuming process.

"We had staff members who were on the phone all day helping people," said Court Administrator Chuck Ramey said. "This was on top of their other duties. It was really time consuming."

In 2013, staff members from the district court and information technology department tried to work out a way for people to schedule their own hearings. Unraveling the scheduling knot was even more critical since a district court closed, eliminating two judges and 25 employees — a 16 percent workforce cut due to the recession.

The IT court team honed in on expanding the court's online options, in two ways — a self-scheduling tool and live chat service with clerks. The six staff members from the IT department and district court worked 560 hours, at a cost of \$69,000, to develop the services.

The self-scheduling service allows users to schedule court dates, request hearings by mail, petition for anti-harassment protection orders, file small claims, petition for name change and check the status of petitions and filings. Each option walks users through the process in an interview format.

The live chat allows users to

get clear responses, in writing, from clerks, who can handle several questions from users in the time it would take to handle one phone call.

Both have combined to reduce the number of phone calls and office visits to handle routine business.

“We were worried early on about culture shock — would people accept this service, and trust it?”

More than 1,100 cases were self-scheduled in 2013, and in 2014, that number rose to 1,429. Over the same year, the number of live chat users increased to 10,653, from 7,931 in 2013.

"We were worried early on about culture shock — would people accept this service, and trust it? Would our staff be comfortable?" Ramey said. "Turns out they did, and it's just gaining steam. We were most concerned with live chat, but it allows our staff to work so much more efficiently, and the customers can see the answers to their questions — and clearly."

By the end of the first year, Pierce County figured the benefit-to-cost ratio to be roughly 10-1, and that increases as more people use the services.

County Innovations and Solutions features award winning programs. "Live Chat and Self-Scheduling Tools for District Court" was named Best in Category for Court Administration and Management for the 2014 NACo Achievement Awards.

**Read this story at www.countynews.org to access Pierce County's self-scheduling site.*

Investing platform redefines how county treasurers do business

By KELLY BOGGS
FSC OPERATIONS SPECIALIST

Saving time, greater control of investment portfolios and being fully knowledgeable about current market pricing are key drivers to eConnectDirect's success with county treasurers. And while having real-time access to the fixed-income market is a true innovation, it appears the real story is a new, collaborative relationship with their Multi-Bank Securities, Inc. (MBS) account executive.

In Ohio, Dawn Cragon, Ashtabula County treasurer, explains, "I used to send out emails and wait. With eConnectDirect, I can see the marketplace in real time."

Cragon adds, "My MBS account executive has all of our investments on eConnectDirect. He even reminds me of maturities I have with other firms."

NACo recently announced an exclusive alliance with MBS, developer of the eConnectDirect platform.

"Following two years of evaluating broker-dealer offerings, we selected Multi-Bank Securities largely because of their eConnectDirect offering," says Matt Chase, executive director. "The service is complete in its ability to sort, select and purchase investments."

Chase believes eConnectDirect empowers counties to more effectively manage investments while ensuring transparency, control and better pricing. The agreement allows counties no fee access to this one-of-a-kind investing platform.

eConnectDirect compiles fixed-income offerings from hundreds of broker-dealers. Asset classes include CDs, U.S. agency securities, Treasuries, corporate and municipal bonds. The suite of services provides online ordering along with notifications of upcoming maturities. In the meantime, it is how county treasurers work with their MBS account executive that garners the most comments.

"I have a different relationship with my MBS account executive broker. And he'll get my attention when he calls," says Jennifer Bryant, finance manager at Helix Water District in La Mesa, Calif. "We work more 'side-by-side' than across the table."

Bryant continues, "It is no longer about a broker selling their product, it's about working with a broker to make the best decision based on our opportunities to invest."

David Maccagnone, MBS

founder, had the vision to create eConnectDirect. "Today, most industries operate in a transparent marketplace. It's time for county treasurers to have this vantage point and capability."

Jeff Self is an eConnectDirect customer with Tarrant County, Texas, one of the fastest growing counties in the U.S. "I'm able to get a view of what's available in the entire market and make decisions,"

While Self still compares investments he finds on eConnectDirect with other brokers, he is self-sufficient on the service. "I'll occasionally call my MBS account executive. Other than that, the selection and transaction capability is all in the eConnectDirect service."

Maccagnone explains, "As we envisioned the eConnectDirect platform, we also imagined how our account executives would collaborate with clients in a totally new way. It's why we intentionally refer to our team of licensed brokers as 'account executives.' Instead of selling a single offering, we're working with clients, evaluating choices across the entire marketplace. And that's a better experience for everyone."

Laurie Steele, treasurer for Marion County, Ore. is among the

most avid eConnectDirect users. "In the past, I was only able to evaluate offers based on what other brokers provided. Now, I just go to eConnectDirect and see what's in the marketplace in real time. It's right at my fingertips."

Steele believes that "control is the trigger to people getting started on the service. No longer settling for something just because it was offered that day." For Steele, "It allows [me] to make better decisions in a shorter amount of time." She goes on to say, "I feel more comfortable with my decisions and more confident we're being good stewards of the county's funds."

Current users of eConnectDirect encourage interested counties to begin with a webinar. They believe that by experiencing the online "marketplace," along with the ease of selecting relevant investments, other treasurers can realize the value of the service.

Through the negotiated NACo partnership, counties have access to the service once Multi-Bank Securities is established as an approved broker.

For more information or to schedule a webinar, contact Kelly Boggs, operations specialist, at 202.942.4290 or at kboggs@naco.org.

Utah counties to honor law enforcement

Several Utah County commissioners, along with the Utah Association of Counties, have joined forces to organize an event to honor, pay respect and pledge continued support for law enforcement.

The event, Utah Salute to Law and Order, will be held Jan. 29 in the Hall of Governors at the Utah State Capitol Building. It will feature speeches by Utah's Lt. Governor Spencer Cox, Attorney General Sean Reyes, Salt Lake County Mayor Ben McAdams, and Beaver County Commissioner Mark Whitney.

Iron County Utah Commissioner Dale Brinkerhoff, who originated the idea of a tribute day to law enforcement said, "We need to remember each and every day nearly 1 million officers put their lives on the line to keep citizens across this nation safe. Sometimes we forget the thousands of good things these people do."

Piute County Utah Commissioner Darin Bushman echoed



Dale Brinkerhoff
Commissioner, Iron County, Utah

Brinkerhoff's sentiments: "These people work in a job that most wouldn't want nor would they have the courage to do, yet many are quick to second guess them and criticize their actions. I for one am grateful for each and everyone of them that work everyday to keep us safe and ensure our welfare."

To learn more about the event, visit <http://utahsalute.com>.

NACo series will examine integrity

By **STUART BRODY**
FOUNDER, INTEGRITYINTENSIVE

NACo is offering a new webinar series called *Managing Integrity and Civility in Public Life*, a “skills-based” approach to tackling the complex ethical challenges of public office.

This five-part interactive webinar series beginning spring 2015 will revise participants’ thinking about ethical decision-making and managing confrontation, transforming their experience as public leaders.

A preview of this new series will be featured in a presentation by series facilitator, Stu Brody, on Monday, Feb. 23 at NACo’s Legislative Conference. A look at Brody’s framework follows.

I. What We Don’t Know about Integrity

Integrity is the most admired quality in a leader, assumedly

because it is a rare one. How is it, then, that everyone believes he or she possesses it? Yet, everywhere around us we see evidence of integrity breaches: in business, sports, academia, certainly in our world of politics and government, even the clergy.

This belief that a person possesses integrity — and that its breaches are committed by others, not by us — is a common belief about integrity.

Consider these 10 other common beliefs about integrity:

- integrity is the bold assertion of conviction
- integrity is about right and wrong
- integrity is built on a strong belief system
- integrity is something you either have or you don’t
- integrity is embodied in the Golden Rule

• the right thing is obvious and something you just do

• integrity is a matter of instinct and will, not practice and habit

• breaches of integrity are usually the product of corrupt intent

• a conflict of interest is synonymous with a breach of integrity

• integrity is synonymous with ethics

These common beliefs are just that: beliefs and common. They are also largely distortions of what it means to “practice” integrity.

Integrity is “practiced” in the same way someone practices law or medicine, or, for that matter, the way one gets to Carnegie Hall: by working on it over and over again until habit displaces instinct. Or, to put it another way: until devotion to careful deliberation overcomes the temptation for boisterous assertions of belief. It is created in the moment of decision-making. It is not a state of being or a permanent achievement of character.

II. What is the “Practice of Integrity”?

Here are three basic tenets of the practice:

- the capacity to discern one’s duty
- the will to take risks to fulfill it, and
- the ability to articulate it to others.

It sounds simple, but it is not. Many people have the discernment to perceive duty but lack the ability to weigh risks, and therefore don’t take any. Some have plenty of courage, but use it to serve intemperate beliefs. Articulate speech is a great gift, but a squandered one if deployed to disguise self-interest. Blending these skills — discernment, courage and credible expression — is hard.

Many people know through personal experience:

- how hard it is to withstand the ridicule of disgruntled constituents at a crowded public meeting after countless hours of painstaking effort to craft a budget, or
- how to refrain from resorting to negative advertising in a close election when a candidate’s advisors tell him or her it must be done in order to win, or
- how to explain to an uncomprehending young son or daughter

See **INTEGRITY** page 7

Northern pipeline segment requires White House okay

KEYSTONE from page 1

Nebraska before reaching refineries along the Gulf Coast.

The southern section of the pipeline was quickly approved but since the northern section of the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline crosses the U.S.-Canada border, the project requires a Presidential Permit review process.

However, even if both chambers pass legislation, it may

continue to face challenges. On Jan. 6, the White House issued a veto threat. If the president vetoes the bill, Congress would have to muster a two-thirds majority vote in both chambers to override the veto.

In July, NACo adopted a policy resolution supporting the Keystone XL Pipeline (page 61): “NACo Urges Presidential or Congressional approval for the Keystone XL Pipeline.”

Presidential Permits for Pipeline Siting

The pipeline is slated to cross six states. Concerns have been raised over siting across environmentally sensitive lands and oil spill safety issues. The original proposal had the pipeline sited across the Sand Hills region, and a significant amount of the water used in Nebraska comes from this region.

TransCanada successfully worked with the governor of Nebraska to site around this environmentally sensitive area. However, in 2014, a Nebraska District Court ruled against the state law that gave the governor authority to negotiate on behalf of the state. On Jan. 9, the Nebraska Supreme Court overturned the District Court decision.

Normally, the siting of oil pipelines is left up to state governments. While the federal government regulates pipeline safety, it generally leaves oil pipeline siting decisions to the states. However, oil pipelines that cross boundary lines between the U.S. and either Canada or Mexico require a Presidential Permit. This permit process is overseen by the State Department. Under Executive Order 13337 signed by President George W. Bush in 2004, the secretary of state is granted authority to approve or deny a project in the national interest. Prior to making this determination, the State Department is required to undertake a rigorous review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA is a federal law that requires comprehensive environmental review on projects to determine environmental impacts.

In January 2014, the State Department completed the final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Keystone XL Pipeline, but noted the proposal is still undergoing further review.

Pipeline Background

The Keystone XL Pipeline project was originally proposed in 2008 by TransCanada Corporation, a Canadian energy company. The proposed project would stretch from Alberta, Canada and the Bakken regions of North Dakota and Montana to a hub in Nebraska before reaching its terminus at refineries along the Gulf Coast, stretching over 1,100 miles. The southern section of the pipeline was quickly approved but since the northern section of the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline crosses the U.S.-Canada border, the project requires a Presidential Permit review process.

The northern section of the pipeline has been mired in controversy since proposed for two reasons — development of oil sands (also known as tar sands) and the route of the proposed pipeline.

Tar sands are a combination of clay, sand and water, and a thick, heavy oil (bitumen). Because the bitumen is heavy, it cannot be processed in the same way as traditional oil recovery. Instead, the bitumen needs to be extracted from the sand and water, which some stakeholders have argued releases more greenhouse gases and affects climate change.

NACo, DOJ seek to improve care for those leaving jail

By **BRIAN BOWDEN**
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Earlier this month, NACo was invited to a stakeholder meeting hosted by the Department of Justice (DOJ) Bureau of Justice to examine current efforts across the nation to improve individuals’ access to healthcare services for those engaged in the criminal justice system and to identify research, policy and practice gaps. Jail health has long been a priority of NACo, since counties nationwide spend more than \$70 billion annually on justice and public safety services, including the entire cost of medical care for all arrested and detained individuals. Counties are required to provide healthcare for the approximately 11.6 million individuals cycling in and out of county jails each year.

The health needs of this population and current financing models can significantly challenge the justice system. For instance, the prevalence of serious mental illness amongst inmates is three to four times higher than the general population, and almost three-fourths of inmates have co-occurring substance abuse disorders. Currently Medicaid — the federal insurance program for low-income adults — will not pay for medical care for individuals in jails and prisons, even when they have not been convicted of a crime. Moreover, in most states, Medicaid coverage is terminated instead of just

being suspended, requiring individuals to reenroll when they return to the community, which can take months and causes disruptions in health care and substance abuse treatment.

The Affordable Care Act creates opportunities for improving the continuity of care for those leaving jail. For the first time, a significant portion of this population will qualify for Medicaid, having previously not met disability criteria or had dependent children. Thus, it is to state and localities advantage to leverage the Medicaid program to divert more individuals to treatment and realize cost savings. Multnomah County, Ore., shared its experience of using an eligibility specialist to do just this, and estimates that 70 percent–80 percent of inmates leaving their jails are eligible for Medicaid.

Following the DOJ-convened meeting, the Council of State Governments sought input on needed technical assistance resources. At a Capitol Hill briefing last month, NACo joined with the Council of State Governments to announce a national initiative to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails.

“This cutting-edge initiative will help counties focus on results and take their efforts to the next level. It will support action-oriented, comprehensive strategies to provide needed services in appropriate settings,” said NACo Executive Director Matt Chase.

Self-interest will hamper, block performance of duty

INTEGRITY from page 6

why his or her parent had to miss their big game or recital because of a public hearing that ran over.

Holding public office, according to a famous quip, is like being

a javelin thrower who wins the coin toss and elects to receive. What is it, then, that enables a person to perform duty under such circumstances, to resist emotions pulling at him or her to flee, retaliate or lie? One thing: to

understand duty as the exclusive foundation of action in one's life.

III. The Invisibility of Self-Interest and the Illusion of Objectivity

There are two reasons why this

is extraordinarily difficult. First, because self-interest is not only highly compelling, it is also highly imperceptible. People think they see things objectively but in reality they tend to view "facts" through a distorted filter of self-interest; to view one's motives as always noble and oneself as "moral, competent and deserving."

Polls consistently show how people tend to view themselves in inflated terms.

For instance, 98 percent of people polled believe they are above average judges of character. Stock brokers believe in their own competence when numerous studies have shown that success in the stock market is almost invariably a matter of pure luck. Political parties clamor to portray themselves as the exclusive guardians of virtue, right thinking and policy innovation.

A striking illustration of one's inability to acknowledge self-interest was on display a few years ago, when Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia went duck hunting with then-Vice President Cheney while Cheney had a case pending before the Court. When asked whether he thought this was a conflict of interest, Scalia said, "I don't see how my impartiality can reasonably be questioned."

Self-interest is so embedded in culture that people's everyday parlance features scores of expressions to justify it. For instance:

- everybody does that
- I'm just looking out for number 1
- it's just politics
- you snooze, you lose
- what difference does one person make?
- it's only a white lie
- my family comes first

IV. The Difference between Ethics and Integrity

The other reason why integrity is so hard to practice is that it is seen solely as conformity with written rules. County officials are the subject of extensive and sometimes incomprehensible codes of ethics.

This proliferation of ethical rules compels them to focus on compli-

ance and avoiding sanctions for technical breaches — like allowing a county contractor to buy one's lunch. This yields a mindset oriented toward compliance — essentially a disposition to stay out of trouble.

SpeedRead » » »

- » 98% of people believe they are above average when judging character
- » Integrity manages where there are no rules

Integrity, on the other hand, is about managing conflicts in the absence of a written code: like accommodating loyalty to campaign contributors with the duty of trust to the public, balancing public duties with political ambitions, and public duties with family ones. There are no sanctions for one's decisions on these matters. Yet, reaching the right accommodation of these competing duties is the essence of integrity and the hallmark of leadership.

V. Integrity: A Mountain with No Summit

Why should one voluntarily undertake such a difficult path to constrain self-interest, to painstakingly balance multiple duties, to question one's deepest beliefs in the search for truth?

The decisive question for leaders is whether to acquire wisdom and serve their communities authentically, or to profess wisdom and serve their own goals selfishly.

Some of the time, this critical distinction is not even apparent, and some don't even know how to ask the question. Those who can, may rightfully claim the true mantle of leadership; those who can't, only the fleeting satisfactions of ego. Integrity is a mountain with no summit. But people can learn, slowly, through practice, how to situate themselves on the path upward.

(Stuart H. Brody is founder of *IntegrityIntensive*, a company that teaches the principles by which ethical judgment can be taught and practiced, and is adjunct professor of ethics in the Business School of SUNY New Paltz.)

Long-term solution critical for planning

TRANSPORTATION from page 4

Peter McLaughlin.

"As the owners of 45 percent of the nation's roads and 39 percent of the nation's bridges, it is critical to counties that Congress works toward a long-term solution for the trust fund," said Transportation Steering Committee Chairman

"Without a trust fund fix, Congress will be unable to pass a multi-year reauthorization of MAP-21 and is likely to continue to pass short-term measures that inhibit counties' ability to plan and deliver critical highway and transit projects," he added.

NACo is encouraging its members to reach out to their congressional delegation in Washington and explain why it's critical to their counties that Congress fixes the trust fund. Specifically, members are encouraged to use NACo's HTF advocacy toolkit, which can be found at www.naco.org.

Learn about the Trust Fund

How does trust fund work?

The Highway Trust Fund was established by Congress in 1956 as a dedicated funding source for highway construction and maintenance projects. In 1982, Congress created a second account within the Highway Trust Fund to pay for mass transit capital costs. Currently, the Highway Trust Fund collects 18.4 cents per gallon of gasoline, a rate that was set in 1993, with an additional 24.4 cents per gallon tax on diesel and other transportation fees to pay for federal highway, transit and transportation safety programs.

The revenue collected is divided between the highway and mass transit accounts, with 83.9 percent of gas tax revenue going to the highway account and 15.5 percent going to the mass transit account. Diesel fuel tax revenue is similarly divided with 87.9 percent going to the highway account and 11.7 percent going to the mass transit account.

What caused this crisis?

Several factors have contributed to the current funding crisis facing HTF. One of those reasons is that spending has outpaced revenue coming into the trust fund since 2000, primarily due to the dynamics plaguing the federal gas tax. Since the gas tax constitutes almost two-thirds of the Highway Trust Fund's total revenues, the rate at which Americans purchase and use gasoline greatly influences the solvency of the trust fund. With greater fuel efficiency standards and more gasoline-independent vehicles on the roads, the rate of gasoline consumption has decreased.

In addition, the last time the gas tax was raised occurred over two decades ago and it was not indexed to inflation at that time. So, while construction and labor costs increased at a rate that exceeded regular inflation, the gas tax remained fixed. As a result, that 18.4 cents per gallon has decreased in purchasing power. If the gas tax had been indexed in 1993, it would be equal to 29 cents today or in other words, the trust fund has lost about 38 percent of its purchasing power. In sum, the country is trying to run a 2015 transportation system on 1993 dollars that are not being collected at a rate to meet demand.

How much money do we need?

The amount of money needed to keep HTF solvent for the near and long-term varies based on projected spending levels. For example, if Congress merely tried to maintain spending at current levels with an increase for inflation, HTF would need an additional \$170 billion over the next 10 years.

In order to fill this gap, Congress would need to increase the taxes on motor fuels (both gas and diesel) by about 10 cents per gallon. However, the U.S. Department of Transportation has estimated that simply maintaining the current performance of nation's surface transportation system would require at least \$13 billion per year more in spending and that funding for all highway projects whose benefits exceeded their costs would require even more spending — up to \$83 billion per year more than current spending.

How are counties impacted?

Uncertainty in HTF means counties cannot invest in the kinds of infrastructure projects that benefit families, businesses and the economy. In fact, many counties have already started operating under a "worst-case scenario," in which HTF is unable to reimburse the cost for projects. In numerous counties, current projects have been stalled and projects in counties' long-term plans are facing an unclear future due to the uncertainty in future federal investment. This uncertainty stymies job growth and makes transportation projects more costly for counties and less dependable and safe for families and businesses.

Proposals for Averting a Crisis in the Highway Trust Fund

Members of Congress and independent groups have proposed both user-fee and general fund options to address the short and long-term solvency of HTF.

As an association, NACo has adopted a position to support an increase in the federal gas tax and is in favor of Congress pursuing alternative user-fee-based revenue sources to ensure the trust fund's long-term certainty as drivers' dependency on gasoline continues to decrease.



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In Western counties

Federal payments to plunge more than 80 percent

(This story is excerpted from Greenwire with permission from Environment & Energy Publishing, LLC. www.eenews.net. 202.628.6500. Read the full story at <http://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060011821/>)

By PHIL TAYLOR
E&E REPORTER

Counties across the West should brace for a drastic cut in federal payments used for schools, roads and forestry work after Congress failed to extend Secure Rural Schools, the Forest Service announced.

The Forest Service said \$50 million will be paid this year to 41 states and Puerto Rico to support local schools and roads, compared to roughly \$300 million that was available last year under SRS.

It's the first time Congress has

failed to reauthorize the program since its inception in 2000.

SRS, which was authored by Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and former Sen. Larry Craig (R-Idaho), has been a financial lifeline for forested counties that were hammered by the loss of timber sales and logging and milling jobs beginning in the late 1980s. Last year, SRS handed out \$270 million to more than 700 counties, according to the National Association of Counties.

But when Congress failed to extend the program during last month's lame-duck session, it meant counties must revert to a century-old law that entitles them to 25 percent of revenues from national forests — a pittance compared to SRS.

Most of the 25 percent revenue comes from logging, which has dropped from a high mark of 12.7 billion board feet sold in 1987 to about

2.6 billion board feet sold in 2013.

In addition to the drop in funding, counties will not be able to use the \$50 million on SRS programs for conservation work on national forests, wildfire protection or emergency services, the Forest Service said.

The hardest-hit state appears to be Oregon, whose Forest Service payments drop from \$68 million in 2014 to \$6 million in 2015. California's payments fall from \$36 million to \$9 million, Idaho's from \$28 million to \$2 million, and Washington's \$22 million to \$2 million.

Who is to blame depends on whom in Congress you ask.

"This drop unfortunately shows the fallout from House Republicans' puzzling decision at the end of 2014 to reject my efforts to fund and pass Secure Rural Schools payments for one more year," Wyden said in an emailed statement. "These payments

are an essential lifeline for rural Oregonians who need to fund their roads and law enforcement as well as their schools."

Oregon counties last year received a total of more than \$100 million from SRS when counting payments for Bureau of Land Management (BLM) forests in western Oregon. It was not immediately clear how BLM's school-and-roads payments will fall.

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Chairwoman Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) blamed the Forest Service for failing to harvest enough trees to support local communities.

"The SRS program was originally set up by Washington bureaucrats to mask the loss of economic activity in our forested communities caused by declining timber harvests," Murkowski said in a statement. "It's clear that the Forest Service can no longer count on those payments to cover its refusal to cut timber."

Forest Service payments to Alaska will fall from \$14 million to about a half-million dollars, a decline that will be felt hardest in southeast Alaska, where Murkowski was born.

The funding drop foreshadows a major battle over forestry policy in the 114th Congress.

Republicans hope to phase out SRS in favor of a logging renaissance that would boost local revenues while generating local logging, trucking and milling jobs.

"We must return to a policy that allows for sustainable timber harvests and gets our forested communities back to work," Murkowski said. "The alternative is to allow Alaska to manage its national forested lands."

But the Obama administration proposed a five-year reauthorization for SRS in its 2015 budget request. Environmental groups would also like to see it extended, fearing that a return to timber-harvest payments would stack the political deck against forest conservation.

The National Association of Counties, which last Congress endorsed a bill by then-House Natural Resources Chairman Doc Hastings (R-Wash.) to double logging levels on national forests and enact a "modern revenue sharing program," said SRS should be reauthorized immediately.

"Without swift reauthorization, counties could face devastating shortfalls in funding for schools, roads and many other critical services," said NACo spokesman Brian Namey. "There is no time for delay."

STATE → TO → STATE

★ WASHINGTON ★

What issues are driving state associations' legislative agendas? What are the latest and most persistent challenges your county colleagues in other states are facing? What looks to be looming on the horizon?

State-to-State explores these questions and helps keep you in touch with your fellow leaders across the country.

Washington

Washington state's counties took a major step forward over the last two years when the Legislature agreed that their fiscal situation was not caused by the recession. Rather, 20 years' worth of data has demonstrated that years of decisions by the Legislature and results of citizen initiatives have put counties behind the eight ball.

"We have a structural problem with the way county government is funded," said Eric Johnson, the Washington State Association of Counties executive director. "We were averaging about 1–3 percent revenue growth, which has been exacerbated since the recession, and our expenditures have been growing 3–5 percent, so we're structurally in a constant mode of deficit or reduction in services, and it's unsustainable."

The association's legislative agenda is driven by its county fiscal sustainability initiative, which covers three main areas. They



include determining what the Legislature can do to assist counties in controlling cost drivers by providing revenue flexibility, protecting existing state-shared revenues and allowing new revenue sources and opportunities.

"We have specific legislative proposals in each of those buckets," Johnson said. "Getting agreement from the Legislature on how we got in this situation was crucial."

How the counties move forward with the Legislature is a different story. The Republican-dominated Senate wants cost-driver controls; the Democrat-led House wants new revenue sources. Neither party favors the others' measures.

"We need options that are going to fit with our variety of counties and tax bases we have, from Garfield County in southeast Washington that has 2,300 people to King County that has 2 million," Johnson said.

Counties are trying to integrate mental health systems with physical health care delivery, and improve both in the criminal justice system. They are emphasizing the Criminal Justice Reinvestment Act to reduce recidivism. Water issues have popped up all over the state, with supply issues crucial in arid eastern Washington, flood control issues prevalent in western Washington and stormwater issues as they relate to the Clean Water Act, prevailing in urban areas.

Johnson is hopeful that the understanding the state government has about counties' issues will be helpful moving forward, but worries that distractions from court case requiring increased education funding. Although Washington's counties are not responsible for the education system, Johnson worries the Legislature's focus may be taken off county-related business. A 2012 state Supreme Court decision ordered the Legislature to make "steady, sure and measureable process each year toward fully funding K-12 public education by 2018, to the tune of \$4 billion.

"We're worried we could get sideswiped or gored in the process," he said.

NACo on the Move

► In The News

NACo's release of the *County Economic Tracker 2014* report, Jan. 12, drew **significant media attention** for NACo across the country. National media outlets such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *Reuters*, *Business Insider* and *The Hill* carried stories about its release and findings. On the cable networks side: Fox Business News aired three segments on the report. According to data compiled by Brian Namey, NACo media relations director, more than 200 local media outlets covered the report.

► NACo Staff

• **Emilia Istrate**, research director, hosted a webinar about NACo's data interactive, NACo County Explorer, with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Jan. 12. She also hosted a webinar about NACo's 2014 County Economic Tracker with the Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness on Jan. 13.

• **Brian Knudsen** has joined NACo as a research analyst. Previously, he worked with Urban Innovation Analysis, Inc. as a research associate. He holds both a bachelor's degree in policy and management and a doctorate degree from Carnegie Mellon University.

► Coming Up

Andrew Goldschmidt, director of membership marketing, and **Caitlin Myers**, membership services associate, will be exhibiting on behalf of NACo at the Police Jury Association of Louisiana's 91st Annual Convention in Orleans Parish, Jan. 29–31. Goldschmidt will also be exhibiting on behalf of NACo at the New York State Association of Counties 2015 Legislative Conference in Albany County on Feb. 2–4, and presenting about the NACo Prescription, Health and Dental Discount Program at the Virginia Association of Counties board meeting in Richmond, Va. on Feb. 5.

On the Move is compiled by Sarah Foote, editorial assistant.

Chester County, Pa., keeps all pipeline information on a website

PIPELINE from page 1

a testing ground for an information clearinghouse website — the Pipeline Information Center — a resource that a local advocacy group behind the effort sees as being useful for every county in the commonwealth and eventually the country.

For Chester County residents, Carol Stauffer is an oracle. She's the county's newly-designated contact for all pipeline matters, tasked with straightening out the twisted bowl of spaghetti that is the county's pipeline map. That's included in the "infrastructure" portion of her title — director of infrastructure and plan review.

She estimates between 30 percent and 35 percent of her

time at work focuses on updating information on the information center site and acting as a liaison between residents, pipeline operators, municipalities and developers.

"I think what we've tried to emphasize is information," she said. "With so many different players, someone would have to look in several different places to get all the information they want. We put it in one place."

The information center compiles all materials related to pipeline projects taking place in the county and some in adjacent counties. Pipeline maps, plans, permits and contact information, links to regulatory agencies — all readily available. A multicolored pipeline map delineates the operator of

each pipeline. Residents can enter their addresses and see how close they are to a pipeline and access the contact information for that pipeline.

"We're not advocating for or against any pipeline projects, we're just making sure the information is out there," Stauffer said. "We try to increase communication among parties."

It's appropriate for the role in which Chester County finds itself. Most of the land-use decisions regarding pipelines in Pennsylvania are handled by municipalities, so counties play more of an input role, rather than an approval role according to Lisa Schaefer, director of government relations at the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania. That said, it is an important role.

"You used to just hear about pipeline concerns in the shale producing counties, but now it's coming to the forefront in most of our counties, across the board," Schaefer said. "For counties that haven't dealt with pipelines in decades, it's a new process, and counties are familiarizing themselves with what is involved with pipelines."

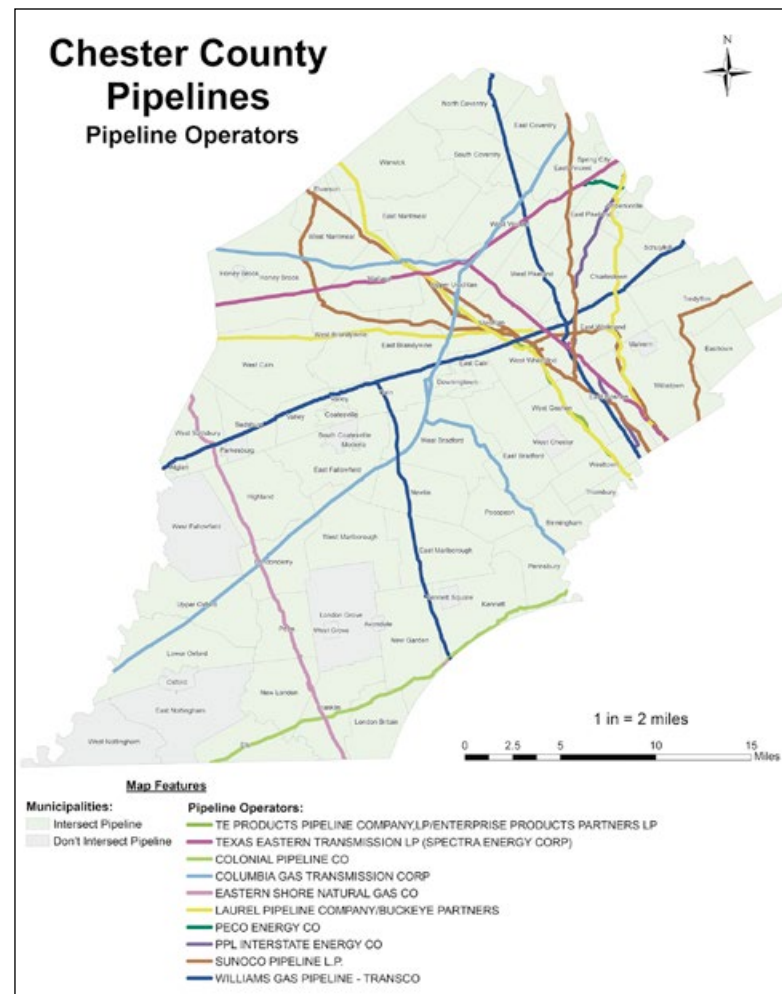
That involvement can include participation from a county's conservation district or water resources authority. For the county planning commission, for which Stauffer works, it's tracking whether the work being done is replacing pipeline, which typically falls in an existing right-of-way, or building new pipeline, requiring a new right-of-way. If the pipeline crosses state lines and falls under Federal Energy Regulatory Commission guidelines, then the county does have to review plans.

Stauffer would like to expand the range of the pipeline map to give Chester County's location more context in the scheme of the regional gas market. The county received a \$50,000 technical assistance grant through the federal Department of Transportation, which funded website upgrades, improvement mapping and enhanced user-friendliness.

"If residents can't use it easily, the site isn't working properly," Stauffer said.

Because of the heavy lifting that Chester County did, counties across the country can easily adapt the template for information sharing for all issues related to pipelines, Lynda Farrell said.

Farrell is the president of the nonprofit Pipeline Safety Coalition who started out in 2007 as a resident hoping for answers to questions



An interactive map allows users to access information on each pipeline running through Chester County, Pa.

about a pipeline running under her property. The organization helped Chester County prepare its pipeline information center. She'd like to see every county adopt some of the measures that Chester has.

"What we created here is the boilerplate, it should be adaptable by any county," she said. "The grunt work is done. A lot of the basic development work, the framework, is already complete, so it's just a matter of filling in information about a county's individual pipeline map. It would be easiest for adjacent counties to do it, because it's a smooth transition from the (shared) border with the county that already has its map complete. It would be like falling dominoes."

Farrell recommends, at least, that each county designate a contact for pipeline-related questions.

"Someone in the planning commission or planning department would be best, because they deal with the plans in the course of doing their jobs," she said.

In addition to the website development already complete for Chester County's system, the approach already has buy-in from pipeline operators, municipalities, landowners and county government. And there's a benefit for the pipeline operators, too, who will have maneuver through local government to do their work.

"It's definitely a case of 'what's

good for the goose is good for the gander,'" she said. "It should save operators time and money, counties and landowners and make living along a pipeline safer."

Her organization has been visiting with planning departments and board of commissioners throughout Pennsylvania — 20 so far — offering help to counties in applying for similar technical assistance grants to implement Chester's plan.

Schaefer said the group's proposal has been received well by Pennsylvania counties, which heard an information session at CCAP's 2014 annual conference about pipeline information systems. She anticipated more counties away from the Marcellus Shale would likely show interest.

"Rural pipelines don't have the same safety standards, but once they start to get close to dense population areas this will catch people's attention," she said.

Stauffer said the impetus for Chester County's information center development came from the county commissioners, who responded to citizen interest. "They heard concerns and gave us the go-ahead," she said. "That was necessary in getting this off the ground, even with the grant."

**Read this story at www.countynews.org to access Chester County's Pipeline Information Center.*

Financial Services News

U.S. Communities Health Care Supply Savings

U.S. Communities has launched a new contract with Premier, a health care performance improvement alliance of approximately 3,400 U.S. hospitals and 110,000 other providers, for pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and supplies. The contract, awarded by Dane County, Wis., is expected to significantly ease the financial and administrative burden associated with providing medical goods and pharmaceuticals in county jails, hospitals and other health facilities.

Some highlights of the contract include:

- access to manufacturer discounts with more than 290 pharmaceutical manufacturers and 1,100 medical equipment and supply manufacturers, saving time and money
- already-negotiated pricing from an internal team of contract directors and managers saving public entities time and expense
- full pricing transparency (credits, value-added programs, rebates and discounts) on all products and services purchased through the program. Other programs may have hidden fees added in to their final pricing, and
- leveraging Premier's over \$41 billion in member volume to achieve competitive pricing and delivering savings

What's available?

- branded and generic pharmaceuticals: oral, injectable medications and vaccines

- over-the-counter pharmaceuticals
- medical equipment: radiology equipment, lab equipment, patient beds, and
- medical supplies such as exam gloves, needles and syringes, bandages and dressings.

Premier delivers nearly 1,400 manufacturer agreements, providing savings on more than 100,000 pharmaceutical, medical equipment and supply products.

Additionally, different counties can access various cost-management solutions, technology tools, educational tools and resources beyond just Premier's pricing programs to assist in driving operational efficiencies and savings.

For more information about U.S. Communities and Premier, please contact Sarah Lindsay at slindsay@naco.org or 202.942.4228, or visit www.uscommunities.org.

U.S. Communities is the leading national government purchasing cooperative, providing solutions and savings to members by aggregating the purchasing power of public agencies nationwide. U.S. Communities provides members with access to a wide variety of competitively solicited contracts with national suppliers who have committed to providing their lowest overall public agency pricing. NACo is a founder and exclusive sponsor of U.S. Communities.

(Financial Services News was written by Sarah Lindsay, marketing specialist.)



News From the Nation's Counties

► ARIZONA

PIMA COUNTY supervisors have approved a new policy to end the practice of **board members' making donations** from their office budgets to nonprofits or outside agencies. The vote was unanimous and the policy takes effect July 1.

Supervisor Ramón Valadez' proposal requires county administration officials to create a new process for small public grants. It would be similar to an existing policy for allocating county funds to outside agencies and charitable causes, *The Arizona Star* reported.

The supervisors would submit proposals to the county's Outside Agency Citizen Review Committee, made up of appointees from each supervisor and the county administrator. And all spending decisions would require County Board approval.

Supervisor Ally Miller said that other counties in the state don't allow elected leaders to spend their office budgets in the way Pima County supervisors have been doing.

► CALIFORNIA

The consolidation of three **LOS ANGELES COUNTY** departments that deal with public health has moved a step closer to reality. County supervisors recently voted to combine the departments of **public health, mental health and health services**.

Supervisor Michael Antonovich, who proposed the measure, said a consolidated health agency would lower costs and promote more comprehensive service to patients.

The three departments would maintain separate budgets and have their own directors but would be overseen by a single director, according to Mitch Katz, the county's health services director, the *Los Angeles Times* reported.

"I believe that having the three health-focused departments working more closely together will ... result in less bureaucracy and better efficiency across the county," he said. Details remain to be worked out.

Opponents worry that mental health would become a "stepchild" in terms of priorities. Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas assured those concerned that the move "is not about cutting dollars for services. What it is about is better coordination and integration."

► FLORIDA

• **BROWARD COUNTY** commissioners **won't sue the Uber and Lyft ride services** — not yet at

least — to stop them from operating illegally. Rather, they want to rewrite county taxi laws to make the services legal. If that doesn't work, they'll reconsider legal action within 60 days.

Taxi drivers complain of unfair competition. They say they've paid for county taxi permits, which are so scarce that they are rationed by lottery. And now, these smartphone app-based ride booking services are coming in and aren't regulated, nor do they pay fees to the county.

The Uber-taxi debate has also been brewing in **MIAMI-DADE** and **PALM BEACH counties**, in other states and in countries abroad.

• **PALM BEACH COUNTY** commissioners approved a new incentive program to spur **job creation in the construction trades**. The dollars will support apprenticeships for positions such as ironworkers and carpenters.

The county will use taxpayer dollars to pay contractors 20 percent to 30 percent of the salaries of apprentices and new employees hired in several communities with persistently high unemployment rates. The cost of the program will depend on how many contractors participate, according to the *Sun Sentinel*.

Palm Beach County will pay 20 percent of the salaries for trainees, up to \$100,000 per county construction project. That cap increases to \$200,000 on bigger jobs.

The county chose to go the incentive route rather than trying to require companies on county construction jobs to train new workers.

► IOWA

The Des Moines waterworks plans to **sue three counties over nitrate levels** in the Raccoon River, the water source for Des Moines, the state capital. Gov. Terry Branstad (R) calls it a "war on rural Iowa," *The Des Moines Register* reported.

Rural **BUENA VISTA, SAC and CALHOUN counties** have been targeted because they manage several drainage districts that feed into the river.

The waterworks complains that nitrates reaching its treatment facility exceed Environmental Protection Agency requirements. EPA limits nitrates to no more than 10 milligrams per liter. Recent samples from Sac County waterways were five times higher, according to waterworks officials.

Denitrification of the water has cost the utility about \$4,000 per day since December.



Photo courtesy of Franklin County, Ohio

(from left) Franklin County Commissioners Paula Brooks and John O'Grady; Gary Collins, senior performance analyst for the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, and Commissioner Marilyn Brown spell out "Ohio" in homage to Ohio State's football team's NCAA title.

► OHIO

In case you haven't heard, **THE FRANKLIN COUNTY** University, or Ohio State as it's known elsewhere, defeated the **UNIVERSITY OF LANE** (the University of Oregon), in the NCAA Football Championship, 42–20.

Following through on a **friendly wager between the counties**, Franklin County commissioners feasted on marion berry syrup, a milk-chocolate Eugene bar from Euphoria Chocolate, hazelnut scone mix and lavender sugar, all while wearing Ale Trail or Eugene-Cascades-and-Coast sweat-shirts. Commissioners will also learn a little more about Lane County with an Imus Map of Oregon, covered bridge coaster set, "Go Ducks" wood round, a hike sticker and an *Animal House of Blues* DVD.

Had the Ducks prevailed, Franklin County would have anted up an array of locally sourced goodies such as Anthony Thomas buckeyes, notecards from the Columbus Museum of Art featuring local artists, buckeye necklaces and a frozen Crave Case of White Castle sliders.

► MICHIGAN

Gov. Rick Snyder (R) vetoed two bills that would have **eliminated county gun boards**. Members of gun boards include representatives from the county sheriff departments, Michigan State Police and the county clerk's offices. They review applications for concealed pistol licenses, *The Times Herald* reported.

The Senate bills, S. 789 and S. 790, would have transferred much of that responsibility to county clerks and state police.

St. Clair County Sheriff Tim Donnellon said, "We absolutely support the right to bear arms, but we'd still like to be part of the gun board because of the local perspective the sheriff department has," according to the newspaper.

► MINNESOTA

DAKOTA COUNTY is rapidly moving forward in 2015 with plans for a 200-mile **system of regional greenways** that connect parks, schools and community centers. The projects will link longer routes for walkers, cyclists and runners.

"A lot is coming together in a relatively short time. Sometimes,

it's a little overwhelming," said John Mertens, senior planner for Dakota County, according to the *Star Tribune*.

Five projects are underway or in the planning stages. Construction begins this winter on four miles of the Mississippi River trail. Other projects include pedestrian bridges across ravines, and construction should begin in the winter of 2016 for a section of greenway — currently in the planning stages — that skirts the Minnesota Zoo.

► NEW YORK

• **MONROE COUNTY** may sponsor construction of a **solar power farm** to provide lower-cost, renewable electricity to a county-owned facility.

County officials are reviewing proposals by energy development companies that have offered to finance and construct a solar farm. Electricity generated by the photovoltaic cells would be sold to the county under a long-term purchase agreement. The county now obtains electricity through wholesale purchases on the energy market, the *Democrat and Chronicle* reported.

The idea behind power-purchase agreements such as the one being contemplated is that private companies, unlike municipalities, can take advantage of state renewable-energy subsidies and federal tax credits.

• The first three-county agreement in the state to share a weights and measures director could be the harbinger of a **merger between two counties** in the Finger Lakes region.

YATES COUNTY is getting in on the position shared by **SCHUYLER and CHEMUNG counties**, ahead of the release of a study, planned for early February, examining ways Yates and Schuyler counties could **work together to save money**.

The weights and measures director agreement gave both Schuyler and Yates counties immediate savings of 20 percent in the department, TWC News reported.

"By lowering the cost of government without sacrificing the level of service, we think that we can lead the way in terms of demonstrating what collaboration can actually accomplish," said Schuyler County Administrator Tim O'Hearn.

► PENNSYLVANIA

Thanks to a provision in November 2013 legislation, counties can tack on a \$5 vehicle registration fee this year to help them **fund road and bridge repairs**. PennDOT records show the commonwealth's counties own 952 structurally deficient bridges. The \$5 fee can be used only for work on county-owned roads and bridges, not to boost a county's general fund. Local municipalities cannot levy a similar fee.

Statewide, the fee could raise \$55 million, \$5 million alone in **ALLEGHENY COUNTY**, *The Pittsburgh Tribune Review* reported.

► TEXAS

Transitioning areas of DALLAS COUNTY will benefit from revised economic development policies.

Under new rules, any large housing development that wants a property tax break from the county will have to set aside 10 percent of its units for affordable housing.

Meanwhile, retailers and other consumer-oriented businesses — grocery stores, hardware stores, movie theaters — will be eligible for the tax reductions, which previously were reserved for large commercial

The H.R. Doctor Is In

Are We Smarter than the Dinosaurs? Maybe not

Compiling a list of candidates for the award of “most horrific civilization-destroying scenario” is a sobering process. Accidental or deliberate nuclear explosions would rank high on the list. So would pandemics and drug-resistant superbugs. A rising “star” on the list would be natural catastrophes spurred on by global warming, such as super storms. The horror

list certainly would include the potential for catastrophic volcanism and earthquakes, perhaps in Iceland or Yellowstone. A scary list, indeed.

However, there is one equally realistic horror story that has not yet captured much of the public’s attention. It is a very real threat and one of which we should all become aware. It is the potential for catastrophic asteroid impact. We

know this possibility is real because it has already wiped out most of the species of living things on earth.

There are millions of bodies of rock and ice moving around in the depths of the solar system. Most are tiny. Every day there are impacts on earth of a tiny fraction of these. We don’t realize it because the atmosphere protects us. Larger asteroids on a collision course

with Earth would not be stopped by the atmosphere. They could be city-destroying, nation-destroying or world-destroying depending on their mass and speed as they smack into our planet. The threat is very real — more real than we appreciate — since we have catalogued only a small fraction of the potential villains lurking out there.

Yet interestingly, we have the

technology to defend ourselves, to detect and to destroy these killers, and the know-how to act.

Enter a thoughtful and forward-looking charity called the B612 Foundation. It is a nonprofit group creating the Sentinel Mission (visit www.sentinelmission.org). Sentinel would place in solar orbit a threat detection satellite far more advanced and far better located than our current Earth orbiting satellite systems.

Sentinel would detect and warn us of the danger of collision. In its six-and-a-half year lifespan, Sentinel cataloged 98 percent of the threatening asteroids. Detection satellites around the earth are limited in their detection value compared to placing a satellite in much farther orbit. Sentinel would detect many more distant threats than we currently can. These threats are unrecognizable if you’re too close to the planet.

Early detection of threats means early warning. Just as with early warning of a disease like cancer, a precious window of time opens up for us to harness our technology to deflect incoming catastrophes. Time is the magic tool, which we do not yet possess because of limited detection capabilities.

No county government, despite the dedication of its public safety personnel and the technology of the emergency operations centers, can manage the aftermath of a large-scale super catastrophe. The Federal Emergency Management Agency would soon be impotent. The harm to the species and to a civil society could well return us to the Stone Age — if we survived at all.

Take it from a career public servant, not to mention an amateur astronomer since childhood: invest the time to learn about the B612 Foundation and consider a donation. We can make something happen which government alone will not.

We would like to think that we are far smarter than the dinosaurs that were wiped out by an asteroid impact. However, by not acting on such a real threat — one that we recognize and can do something about — we may be demonstrating that we are really no smarter than a bunch of lizards.



Phil Rosenberg
The HR Doctor

Wyoming county employees could join state health plan

NEWS FROM *from page 10*

projects expected to create hundreds of jobs, the *Dallas Morning News* reported.

That kind of deal would be offered only in areas that aren’t affluent but are considered to have growth potential. The wealthiest parts of town wouldn’t qualify because there is no need to provide added incentives for development. And the poorest parts don’t need additional inexpensive housing.

The abatements for retail stores, meanwhile, would be offered in poor or transitioning areas. The goal there, county officials said, is to make neighborhoods more

livable: residents shouldn’t have to drive 20 minutes to buy groceries or see a movie.

►UTAH

Temperature inversions, which can trap smog close to the ground, have prompted the **SALT LAKE COUNTY** Board of Health to **ban wood burning** on bad-air days.

The regulation bans burning wood, coal or pellets in fireplaces or stoves, along with outdoor fires like bonfires, patio pit and charcoal grill fires — unless the fire is the only source of heat.

The wood burning ban doesn’t apply to households that rely on wood fireplaces or stoves as their

sole source for heat or in an emergency situations such as a power outage when it’s cold.

Fines will be issued starting in January 2016, as high as \$299 per day for repeat offenders, Fox News reported.

►VIRGINIA

The **YORK COUNTY** Board of Supervisors approved a zoning amendment in to allow **micro-breweries, micro-distilleries, micro-wineries and micro-cideries** to expand in the county. There is currently one micro-brewery in York County.

The amendment to the zoning ordinance allows micro-breweries and other micro-alcohol facilities to open a business in four zones. Previously, a micro-brewery company was only able to open in the two industrial zones without a special-use permit.

The amendment to the zoning ordinance also limits micro-breweries to producing 15,000 barrels a year, which is a uniform standard, the *Daily Press* reported. Micro-distilleries, micro-wineries and micro-cideries are limited to producing 20,000 gallons a year.

►WYOMING

A bill in the Legislature could allow counties struggling to provide health insurance to employees to join the state employee’s **group insurance plan**.

House Bill 65 gives counties the option to join the state plan, but requires them to continue enrollment in the plan for at least five years upon entry. Legislators say the change is similar to recent changes allowing school districts to join the state plan and would allow counties the option to join.

If H.B. 65 is signed into law, legislators expect three counties to join the plan in the next year, according to the *Casper Star Tribune*.

►CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to **CURRITUCK COUNTY, N.C.** and **MONMOUTH COUNTY, N.J.** for their 2014 Walter B. Jones Memorial Awards from NOAA’s National Ocean Service (NOS).

The award is given to local governments that have inspired positive change in the field of coastal management by developing or implementing principles embodied by the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972.

Currituck County was recognized with the Excellence in Local Government award for its efforts to protect natural resources while supporting development, according to NOS. The county, for example, created the “Currituck Goes Green” initiative that resulted in the application of sustainable development techniques to county projects and the development of a formal Sustainability Plan.

Currituck County is a demonstrated leader in the green movement, making water quality and environmental protection a priority to secure economic and environmental sustainability.

In the aftermath of super storm Sandy, the Monmouth County Office of Emergency Management and Monmouth County Planning Department came together to provide leadership and direction for the Monmouth County municipalities interested in becoming part of the FEMA Community Rating System.

By combining their knowledge and departmental resources, the county was able to provide GIS support and enhanced education and outreach products and services across the county

(News From the Nation’s Counties is compiled by Charles Taylor and Charlie Ban, senior staff writers. If you have an item for News From, please email ctaylor@naco.org or cban@naco.org.)

What’s in a Seal?

► Dane County, Wis.



When Roberta Osmundsen was directed, along with the rest of her high-school classmates, to enter a seal-designing contest in 1954, she told her teacher she “didn’t want to,” and consequently, she “just doodled at it.” That doodle, much to her surprise, was chosen as the winning design and thus inspired what is now recognized as the seal of Dane County.

The rural Madison girl figured that because “three fourths of the county is involved in agriculture,” she needed to depict farming and livestock as some key elements. Her original doodle included four equal sections, filled with illustrations: a farm, a cow, a sheaf of wheat and the university and capitol buildings.

The modern seal, much like Osmundsen’s original design, is divided into equal quadrants, which in turn depict a dairy cow and farm; the capitol dome located in the county seat, Madison; a mortarboard and diploma, which represent the University of Wisconsin, also centered in Madison; and a fisherman and sailboat representing recreation in the county. A sheaf of wheat and an ear of corn flank the design, and the bottom of the seal indicates 1839, the year the county was founded.

Kirt Morris, Bedford County commissioner, contributed.

County needed to match city increases

WAGE from page 3

2014 establishing a pay floor of \$10.66 per hour, and also linked it to the CPI. As is the case with a number of the counties, the increase followed minimum wage hikes in major cities within their counties.

SpeedRead » » »

- » Competition for employees can drive minimum wage hikes
- » Dueling data fuels debate over any hikes
- » 75% favor minimum wage increase

“The city of Santa Fe had raised its minimum wage for several years,” said Commissioner Liz Stefanics, “and some of our employees were jumping ship to go over to the city of Santa Fe or suburbs closer to their homes.” The same was true in Bernalillo County, where Albuquerque passed an ordinance in 2012. In California, Santa Clara County’s efforts to increase pay for low-wage workers were preceded by the city of San Jose’s action.

Stefanics said the county

benefits from more residents earning a living wage because it relieves some of the demand for county safety net services. In 2014, average per capita earnings in the county were 23 percent below the national average, while the cost of living was 18 percent higher than nationally.

“We have a lot of people who are land rich and cash poor,” she said, “where they’ve inherited land from their families for generations, but the wages that they earn are very low.”

Christine Owens is executive director of the National Employment Law Project (NELP), a nonprofit that researches issues and advocates on behalf of low-wage and unemployed workers.

“Throughout the country, voters and local governments have heeded the public’s demand for higher wages,” she said “But the wage crisis is a national crisis and one that Congress would wisely address by taking a page from the books of states and localities.”

NACo members, at the association’s annual conference last July, adopted a resolution urging Congress to “adopt legislation addressing the minimum wage in all sectors of the economy.” NACo has taken no position on

local ordinances.

Whether a higher minimum wage benefits local economies or harms them is a matter for debate. Dueling data differ.

A recent released poll by Hart Research Associates showed 75 percent of Americans favor raising the federal minimum wage to \$12.50 by 2020, according to the NELP.

However, the Cato Institute, in a policy brief, cites an “overwhelming body of evidence” that suggests hiking base wage rates would reduce employment opportunities.

Opponents argue that higher wages will increase the cost of doing business for employers, resulting in higher prices to consumers and reduced investment, creating a competitive disadvantage.

That’s what worries Kevin Kramer, a Louisville councilman who voted against the ordinance. He says the law is bad for businesses on his side of the Ohio River, which forms the border with Indiana.

“If you can cross the river and get your labor cost at one rate — versus on this side of the river labor costs are considerably higher, it doesn’t take much to figure out you’re going to have folks crossing that river.”

Job Market & Classifieds

■ County Administrator — Palm Beach County, Fla.

Salary: Contingent on qualifications. The Board of Palm Beach County, Fla. is seeking candidates for the county administrator position. The county administrator, as the chief executive officer, is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the county and provides leadership to implement the goals, policies and procedures as directed by the County Commission.

The selected candidate should possess a B.A. in public or business administration, finance, economics, engineering or a similar field; a Master’s degree is preferred. Additionally, the candidate should have at least ten (10) years of executive level management experience preferably as a county or city manager, deputy or assistant manager, or executive leader in an organization of similar structure, size and complexity; or any equivalent combination of related training and experience. The successful candidate should also have considerable knowledge of and experience in budget management, economic development, public-private partnerships, strategic

planning, performance measurements, capital improvements, community relations, project management, human resources and labor relations.

The county offers an excellent benefits package. Resume review will begin Feb. 11, 2015; position is open until filled. To apply, visit www.srnsearch.com and apply online. Questions may be directed to S. Renée Narloch, President, S. Renée Narloch & Associates, 850.391.0000 or info@srnsearch.com. A detailed brochure is available.

In accordance with Affirmative Action requirements of Sec. 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the County provides reasonable accommodation. If you need a reasonable accommodation for interviewing or initial employment, please notify the Palm Beach County BCC Human Resources Department. EO/AA Employer M/F/D/V; (DFWP). The County is a Veterans Preference and E-Verify employer.

According to Florida’s broad public records-Sunshine laws, applications and resumes are subject to public disclosure.

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Good employees are crucial to getting the job done!

www.naco.org/programs/jobsonline



Your voice is needed in Washington, D.C.

FEBRUARY 21–25, 2015 ★ WASHINGTON, D.C.
MARRIOTT WARDMAN PARK HOTEL

We urge you to register for NACo’s 2015 Legislative Conference, which will be held February 21–25 at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C. At the conference, you will join with fellow county officials to shape NACo’s policy priorities, learn key issues from Administration and Congressional officials, and most importantly, join with your colleagues in advancing the federal policy priorities of county government.



For up-to-date information on the 2015 Legislative Conference visit the NACo website at www.naco.org.