

BY CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Chris Rodgers, NACo president, and leaders from the National League of Cities (NLC) and the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) called on Congress and the Administration to reject proposed changes in the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds at a recent news media briefing in Washington, D.C. Those changes would cost counties billions of dollars and hurt their ability to finance local infrastructure projects, they said.

See **MUNI-BONDS** *page 2*

Why Counties Matter

click to play ▶

NACo premiered its *Why Counties Matter* video at the Legislative Conference's Opening General Session.



Legislative Conference After Action Report

BY BEVERLY SCHLOTTERBECK
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

With the ink on the sequester order barely 24 hours old, 1,500 county government officials gathered in Washington, D.C. at NACo's Legislative Conference March 2-5 to take the "Why Counties Matter" message to Capitol Hill and to learn new ways to keep their communities

safe, secure and prosperous.

Two key communication tools in the just-launched Counties Matter campaign were debuted at the conference: a two-minute fast-paced video that uses data to dramatically delineate the impact of county government services on the communities counties serve. Also, on hand was an info graphic fact sheet, designed to be left in offices, libraries or meetings with constituents — anywhere the Counties Matter message needs to be told.

Both the video and fact sheet are available to download on NACo's website at <http://www.naco.org/countiesmatter>.

NACo also changed the conference schedule to accommodate a renewed focus on taking the county message to Capitol Hill and federal agencies. Tuesday afternoon, usually reserved for workshops, was set aside for Hill office visits, with at least 50 scheduled for the day.

As the campaign for Counties Matter picked up speed so did the campaigns of the four candidates seeking election as NACo's new second vice president. Allan Angel,

Kent County, Del. Levy Court commissioner; Stan Batemon, St. Clair County, Ala. commission chair; Sallie Clark, El Paso County, Colo. commissioner; and Tim Josi, Tillamook County, Ore. commission chair not only addressed NACo members at the conference's Opening General Session, but also made the rounds of steering committee meetings and important caucuses events.


This is the first time in more than 20 years that four candidates have vied for the office of NACo second VP.

In addition to the candidates, conference participants also heard from general session speakers as varied as *Washington Post* editor and author, Bob Woodward, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Moody's Analytics chief economist Mark Zandi, Attorney General Eric Holder, Missouri Sen. Roy Blunt (R) and Idaho Rep. Lee Terry (R).

Many of the speakers had the nation's fiscal woes and the sequester on their minds. Assailing sequester supporters for reducing the deficit

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BY CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER



The lobbyists approach the lectern. Taking the lead, a spokesman says:

"It's no secret that today in government we see a lot of political divide at every step of government.... This is one of those rare areas in politics where both sides can really get along, albeit for different reasons."

If only this were in the halls of Congress. But perhaps even better, it's at County Hall in Miami-Dade, Fla. The "lobbyists" are a group of high school students participating in the county youth commission's first "It Ought to be an Ordinance" competition.

The team was proposing that

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West Virginia county library wins "best small library in the country" honor [▶ Page 4](#)

Camden County, N.J. takes over law enforcement duties for its city namesake [▶ Page 5](#)

Upstate New York counties fire back at Gov. Cuomo's gun control law [▶ Page 5](#)

Read NACo's new interim policies adopted by the Board of Directors
[▶ Page 6](#)

Quick Takes

Top 5 Michigan Counties Child Well-Being

- 1 – Ottawa**
2 – Livingston
3 – Clinton
4 – Midland
5 – Oakland

Child Well-Being Study – Kids Count in Michigan

Muni bond interest exemption fuels local growth, jobs

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to state and local governments,” Rodgers told reporters at the National Press Club Feb. 27, “because borrowing costs would increase, which hurts local taxpayers and can jeopardize whether local projects are completed.”

One proposed change to the federal tax code would impose a 28 percent benefit cap for certain taxpayers on many itemized deductions and exclusions, including tax-exempt municipal bond interest. The effect would be a partial tax on interest that would otherwise be exempt from income tax.

Had that cap been in effect over the last decade, it would have cost states and localities an extra \$173 billion in interest payments, according to *Protecting Bonds to Save Infrastructure and Jobs*, a new report from NACo, NLC and USCM.

The greater fear, a full repeal of the exemption, would have cost \$495.3 billion.

Tim Firestine, chief administrator, Montgomery County, Md., said local governments are worried that a cap would be just the beginning. He is also president-elect of the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

“Once you go to cap it, I think the concern is that now we’ve done something that we’ve never done before, and they’ll go back to the well a second time,” he said. “That’s why we’re really saying the true impact we’re concerned about here is repeal.”

The research compiled with assistance from the GFOA, highlights the broad use of muni bonds by several counties — and how much a repeal of the tax exemption would have cost them in 2012.

Firestine said repealing the exemption would cost his county \$40 million annually. “That’s \$40 million worth of stuff either we can’t do in the operating budget because we have to pay more in debt service,” he said, “or we have to reduce our capital program because we can’t afford to do all the stuff that we could.”



Photos by David Hathcox

NACo President Chris Rodgers speaks during a briefing in Washington, D.C. Feb. 27 about federal proposals that could repeal the tax exemption on municipal bond interest. With him (l-r) are Timothy Firestine, president-elect, Government Finance Officers Assn.; Ronald Green, controller, Houston, Texas; and Scott Smith, mayor, Mesa, Ariz. and vice president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

As an example, he noted that amount equates to cutting 536 teachers from schools or almost 300 police officers.

For Rodgers’ Douglas County, it would have cost \$1.16 million, and the cost to Wake County, N.C. would have been \$36.8 million. The report also estimates losses for Linn County, Iowa; Prince George’s County, Md.; Grand Traverse County, Mich.; Taney County, Mo.; Mecklenburg County, N.C.; Athens County, Ohio; and Fairfax County, Va.

Muni bonds offer local governments a low-cost way to finance projects such as schools, hospitals, water, sewer facilities, public power utilities, roads and mass transit. State and local governments financed more than \$1.65 trillion of infrastructure investment between 2003 and 2012 through the tax-exempt bond market, the

report said.

The report states: “Curtailing or eliminating the tax exemption would raise costs for financially-strapped state and local governments and would result in less investment in infrastructure at a time when jobs are scarce and the physical state of our public works is deteriorating.”

**To view the full report, see the online version of this article at www.naco.org/countrynews.*



Commissioner Daniel Troy, NACo Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs Steering Committee chair, presents NACo’s case to Capitol Hill staff for keeping municipal bond earnings tax-free during a Hill briefing March 5. Also supporting NACo’s case on the panel were Montgomery County, Md. CAO Tim Firestine and Past NACo President Lenny Eliason.

Top six state and local infrastructure categories using tax-exempt financing 2003–2012 (\$BIL)

Primary and secondary schools



\$514

Roads, highways and streets

\$178

Water and sewer facilities



\$258

General acute care hospitals



\$288

Public power projects



\$147

Mass transit



\$106

How the Bond Interest Tax Exemption Saves Counties Money

Under the federal tax code, investors are not required to pay federal income tax on interest earned from most bonds issued by state and local governments. The tax exemption for municipal bond interest has been in law since the creation of the federal income tax 100 years ago.

As a result of this tax exemption, state and local governments receive a lower interest rate on their borrowing than they would if their interest was taxable to investors. The tax exemption can save states and localities up to two percentage points on their borrowing rates under typical market conditions.

Youth commission fosters teen involvement in county government

TEENS from page 1

the roofs of all county buildings be painted white to save energy, and that incandescent lighting be replaced by fluorescents or LED bulbs — measures, it said, that could save the county more than 20 percent on its annual electric bills.

“Democrats champion the cause of helping the environment, where as Republicans champion fiscal responsibility,” the Belen Jesuit Preparatory School team’s spokesman said. “This accomplishes both at the same time.”

Belen Jesuit won in the parochial school category. There were two other winning teams — from public middle and high schools.

The idea for the competition came out of a brainstorming session held by the Miami-Dade County Youth Commission’s executive committee on ways it could become involved in county government, according to Jude Bruno, 18, chairman of the commission.

“We plan to provide the presentingschools with technical assistance on perfecting their ordinances,” he said, “and the youth commission



Photo courtesy of Belen Jesuit Preparatory School Miami-Dade County, Fla.

Youth Commission members (r-l) Jude Bruno, chair; Brenda Abreu-Molnar; Anyssa Chebbi; and Emily Freeman, pose with students and faculty from Belen Jesuit Preparatory School. The boys, members of the school’s new Social Studies Honor Society, were one of three winning teams in the commission’s first “It Ought to be an Ordinance” competition.

will lobby to get their (county) commissioners to bring the ordinance forward to the Board of County Commissioners.”

The youth commission was conceived by Miami-Dade Commissioner Barbara J. Jordan in 2011 to provide high school students with an opportunity to learn and participate in county government.

“It makes me so proud to see how these bright, young minds move forward and develop such an understanding on how local government works,” Jordan said.

Candidates for the youth commission, aged 15 to 18, are nominated by Miami-Dade County Public Schools and, after a screening process, most are appointed county commissioners and the mayor. To qualify, the youths must be in grades 10 through 12, have a minimum 2.0

grade point average, demonstrate a sincere interest and motivation to work for the community, and have a background in community-based activities.

Bruno has those qualities in abundance, said Jeannette Garcia, a special projects coordinator in the county’s Juvenile Services Department and staff liaison to the commission. “He’s a little dynamo,” she said, quickly adding that all of the commission members bring intellect, curiosity and motivation to their positions.

Their questions to the teams in the competition bore evidence of that. “It was incredible the back-and-forth and the kind of questions the youth commissioners asked and the responses the youth gave; I was highly impressed,” said Garcia, who joked that she works “for a bunch

of 17 year olds.”

By watching an online video of the commission meeting and competition, it’s readily apparent how mature, poised and professional these students are.

Among the ordinances proposed by other teams was one to ban drag racing on county highways. The team from Jose Marti, a public math, science and technology academy, advocated for a six-day school week: The sixth day would end two hours earlier, and pupils would have an extra week of summer. “The reason for doing this is because the United States is ranked 17th in world education,” the team’s spokesman said.

Another group lobbied for a ban on the sale of medications containing Dextromethorphan to anyone younger than 18.

The winners were chosen by the youth commissioners.

Garcia said no Miami-Dade Youth Commission suggestion has yet made it into law, but its members have actively provided input to the Board of County Commissioners on several issues, including registering their opposition to candy-flavored tobacco.

“In the three short years they’ve been around, they have accomplished quite a bit,” she said. “Right now, we are planning a trip to Tallahassee during spring break so that they can meet with some legislators and get exposure to some of our state leaders, and learn about the governmental process.”

**To view or download a video of the ordinance competition online, see this article at www.naco.org/countynews.*

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In Case You Missed It

News to use from past County News

» NACo announces first National Cyber Symposium

The NACo National Cyber Symposium will take place April 17–19 in Omaha, Neb. Hosted by the University of Nebraska-Omaha and the Peter Kiewit Institute, the symposium will examine cyber policies, threat mitigation, and best practices and solutions for local officials and IT personnel. The registration fee is \$100.

The deadline to register for the 2013 National Cyber Symposium is Wednesday, April 3.

For more information, contact Karon Harden, kharden@naco.org or 202.942.4277.

Youth Commission Serves Advisory Role

The Miami-Dade Youth Commission is charged with fostering increased youth involvement in county government, holding forums on issues concerning local kids, recommending community programs beneficial to youths, commenting on proposed legislation impacting children and teens, and submitting an annual report of activities to the County Commission and mayor. It currently has 29 members.

The commission meets at least once a month and is subject to the same Government in the Sunshine and Public Records requirements as any other county body. Each member also meets with the official who appointed them on a quarterly basis to discuss teen and community issues of concern to them.

Jeannette Garcia, who staffs the commission for the county, said it was modeled on the Chatham County (Ga.) Youth Commission, now in its 21st year, whose members frequently attend NACo conferences.

Smallest library in W. Va. recognized with national award

By CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT



With a service population of 496, the Southern Area Public Library (SAPL) in Harrison County, W. Va. was recently recognized as the 2013 Best Small Library in America.

Sponsored by *Library Journal* and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the award was founded to encourage and showcase exemplary work of small libraries. Now in its ninth year, the award honors the public library that most profoundly demonstrates outstanding service to populations 25,000 or below and achieves accomplishments over time.

"It's great to be recognized for our hard work," said Mary Beth Stenger, SAPL director, who wrote the winning grant application.

Stenger became the library director in July 2010 after running the library's book club and helping the previous director obtain grants for new shelving. When the director stepped down and the position opened, Stenger answered the ad.

"I have wanted to do something to help my community," she said. "I love to read and help others. The library gives me that opportunity."

Under Stenger, the SAPL has been transformed from a basic, traditional



Courtesy of Southern Area Public Library

The smallest library of the 175 in West Virginia, Southern Area Public Library, moved into this former bank building off Main Street in 1984.

public library into a modern, bustling center of community activity, information and learning. It has seen much needed technology updates with new computers, new programs, books and movies, and an increase from 3,000 to 8,000 patron visits in and out of its doors annually thanks to those improvements.

Stenger's predecessor ran the library solo, and when it hired her, the board planned to only bring her in. In her interview, Stenger told the board she didn't want to work alone without backup.

"The budget does not allow the hiring of two people for all the library open days, so I recommended that they hire me to work 20 hours, and an assistant that could work the remaining 15 hours to complete the 35 hours SAPL is open weekly," she added.

Wilma Bennett is the only other staff member paid to work at the library and oversees the after-school program. Twenty volunteers pop in and out throughout the day to help run the circulation desk so Stenger has

the chance to work on the library's pressing issues such as fundraising and events.

She credits implementing a technology mandate, setting goals to bring in more patrons and increasing the number of library volunteers and programs offered to the public for the turnaround.

They accomplish this on a 2013 budget of just under \$35,000 and the labor of a staff of two, a band of 20 volunteers, and a small board of trustees. Harrison County contributes \$11,000 to the budget, while other local and state government agencies fill in the rest.

When Stenger started as director, they were still checking out books the old fashioned way using book cards and had no computer system to keep track. Now people check out books using a yellow card that is scanned, becoming the last of the 45 libraries in the West Virginia Northern Library Network to use it. The network includes 18 counties that promote cooperation to enhance and

expand availability of resources and information.

In addition to electronic check-out, the new system runs bills, overdue notices and interlibrary loans. All libraries in the network can share books, run circulation statistics and issue new cards.

The library also has a website, a Facebook page, a Google calendar, and accounts with Twitter and Pinterest. Two new computers from the West Virginia Library Commission bought with funds given by the Legislature will bring the SAPL computer total to eight. They are constantly in use as many residents widely depend on dial-up, and people who need to use faster wireless Internet to complete homework and other tasks come to the library.

Last fall, the library started a charity program called "Little Library with a Big Heart" — something really close to Stenger. The library sponsors different charity events each month and invites patrons to make donations. In March, the library will be making gift bags for HOPE Inc.,

a task force on domestic violence, to give to women in their shelter.

The library also provides after-school snacks for the many children that school buses drop off every Tuesday through Friday and has become another vital program for the community. The snacks—mostly healthy fruit and other foods—are donated by several local families. While there, children can get homework help and computer support. High school students get essential assistance with their student resumes and college applications, including editing and proofreading.

SAPL receives a \$20,000 cash award, and membership and conference costs to attend the Public Library Association Biannual Conference in 2014 in Indianapolis, Ind. The library will use the award to start opening every Monday and enrich existing programs.

**Check out this story online at www.naco.org/countynews to learn more about the Best Small Library Award and Southern Area Public Library.*

Tax-exempt leasing survey underway

To understand how counties, cities and states use municipal leasing and why banks and other financial institutions invest in them, the Equipment Leasing & Finance Foundation has commissioned The Alta Group to study the historic performance of these leases and understand the benefits and risks.

Tax-exempt leases have been a part of municipal budget and debt management for the past 30 years. The tax-exempt nature of the transaction results in significantly lower borrowing costs for the acquisition of municipal equipment and facilities.

County finance officers and others involved in capital budgeting and finance are invited to participate in a survey, available at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TaxExemptMunicipalLeaseSurvey>.

For more information, please contact Bob Neptune at bneptune@thealtagroup.com or 816.520.2158.



Patron Pam Eakle (r) and library assistant Wilma Bennett show off the "geek the library" banner, one of the many programs run with the help of volunteers.

Profiles in Service



» Janie Hoffman

NACo Board Member
Assessor
Quay County, N.M.

Number of years active in NACo: 4

Years in public service: 21

Occupation: assessor

Education: associate – business administration

The hardest thing I've ever done: watch a baby fight for every breath it took

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Jesus, Corrie ten Boom and my mom

A dream I have is to: be completely debt free.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: dress up in a clown suit to go visit a nursing home on Saturdays.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: when I went to Disneyland with my children, brothers, sister and dad.

My favorite way to relax is: spend time with my husband.

I'm most proud of: my daughter and son.

Every morning I read: my Bible.

My favorite meal is: steak, baked potato.

My pet peeve is: not being on time.

My motto is: "Treat others the way you want to be treated."

The last book I read was: *Who Stole My Cheese?* (Thanks to President Chris Rodgers.)

My favorite movie is: *Gone with the Wind*.

My favorite music is: country.

My favorite president is: Franklin D. Roosevelt.

BY CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

New York's new gun law — the New York SAFE Act — isn't just a 2nd Amendment issue for Herkimer County; it's an economic threat as well, county officials say.

The upstate county is home to Remington Arms Co., the county's largest private employer and the nation's oldest gun manufacturer. Thirteen-hundred of the county's 64,000 residents work there, and its presence accounts for another 800 spin-off jobs, according to Vincent Bono, chairman of the Herkimer County Legislature. The company has a \$150 million economic impact on the county, he said.

So it comes as no surprise that the county was one of the first to go on record with a resolution opposing the SAFE Act and calling for its repeal. As of March 8, 37 of the state's 58 counties had passed resolutions calling on Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) and the State Legislature to amend or repeal the law.

"The way it was passed, just the

transparency of it was reprehensible,” Bono said. “Here’s a bill that was drafted in eight hours; it was placed on the desks of legislators, and in 20 minutes they had to debate it and vote on it.”

He and other county officials said normally there is a three-day “maturing” period on bills, which was “circumvented” in this case by the governor’s citing its “necessity.”

The Secure Ammunition and Firearms Enforcement Act was the first statewide gun law approved in the aftermath of the Newtown, Conn. School shootings in December. Cuomo signed it into law Jan. 15. It includes provisions to keep guns out of the hands of convicted felons and potentially dangerous mental health patients, and bans high-capacity magazines and assault weapons.

Other counties — most upstate or rural — have their own reasons for opposing the law. Most decried the speed with which the legislation passed, 2nd Amendment concerns and the importance of hunting and recreational shooting in their parts

Resolutions Opposing NY SAFE Act

Passed
Proposed
None Proposed

Source: www.nysaferesolutions.com, as of March 8, 2013

Source: www.nysaferesolutions.com, as of March 8, 2013

of the state. A resolution passed by the New York State Association of Counties' (NYSAC) board of directors also addressed the issue of unfunded mandates.

“NYSAC’s resolution seeks to address the concerns raised by a number of counties throughout the state,” said Mark Lavigne, NYSAC’s deputy director. But the spate of resolutions has been largely a bottom-up movement, not top-down.

Terry Bernardo is chair of the Ulster County Legislature and believes the 25,000-word bill with 60 sections was rushed through without adequate opportunity for public to provide input.

"We think that it should be repealed in its entirety and go through the process," she said. "Let the people participate."

In Madison County, John Becker, chairman of the county Board of Supervisors, called the SAFE Act “flawed.” “I don’t think anybody’s against commonsense legislation that does background checks—that checks for the mental health of folks, that kind of thing,”

he said. "But let's have a debate about it."

Cuomo has said 70 percent of New York state residents “support the types of provisions that we have in the bill.” However, demographics show there’s an upstate-downstate divide on the issue.

Almost 62 percent of the state's population resides in the New York City-Long Island metropolitan area, which includes the suburbs of Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester counties — none of which have passed resolutions opposing the SAFE Act. Quite the contrary.

In January, the Westchester County Legislature's majority sent a letter of support to the governor. Since then, it has passed a Gun Violence Prevention Resolution directed at the federal government.

It supports greater federal gun control measures, including mandated universal background checks on all gun sales, lifted database restrictions to allow local law officers access to Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives information, and increased sentencing penalties for

criminals convicted of using firearms during violent crimes.

“The aim is to protect the rights of people in this country but also to protect people from the use of guns that are similar to some of the tragedies that we’ve seen in the recent past,” said Bill Ryan, who chairs the county Board of Legislators’ legislation committee.

In Suffolk County, the County Legislature recently passed a measure sponsored by Legislator Kara Hahn that aims to keep guns out of the hands of individuals who have been involuntarily transported to hospital emergency rooms for psychiatric reasons.

The resolution requires Suffolk law enforcement agencies to cross-reference the names and addresses of individuals undergoing a psychiatric crisis and transported to Stony Brook University's Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program against Suffolk County's pistol license registries. If there is a match, that information will automatically be provided to the respective pistol licensing bureau, where an investigation can be made regarding suspension or revocation of the license.

“This is just a no-brainer,” Hahn said. “Someone is involuntarily transported because they’re a threat to themselves or others to a psychiatric emergency room—that’s a red flag in my mind.”

The SAFE Act will also allow for cross-checking potentially unstable individuals against a yet-to-be created statewide pistol license database.

Hahn said any potential redundancy would be a good thing.

Tuolumne County, Calif. Facts

Learn more about this featured county in 'What's in a Seal?'

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

CAMP (lake)
FLORA (lake)
GOLD (gold mining popular in the 1800s)
KIBBIE (lake)
MUD (lake)
ORO (Tuolumne referred as such until California statehood in 1850)
SAW MILL (timber and lumber industry was shaped in county by gold miners)
SIERRA NEVADA (mountain range in the county)

SONORA (incorporated city)
STANISLAUS (part of National Park
 located in the county)
TABLE (mountainous landform)
TALMALAMNE (Mi Wuk Indian
 word meaning 'a cluster of stone
 dwellings')
VERNON (lake)
YOSEMITE (part of National Park
 located in the county)

Created by Christopher Johnson

Regional police force in Camden County, N.J. nears launch date

BY CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

With hopes of addressing one of the worst violent crime rates in the United States, Camden County, N.J. is taking over policing for the city of Camden at the end of April. The 9-square-mile city across the Delaware River from Philadelphia recorded 67 murders in 2012.

A \$26 million budget shortfall forced a 46-percent layoff in the city's police department in 2011 and set the stage for Mayor Dana Redd to accept the county's proposal for a county-wide police force later that year that will bolster the number of uniformed officers and sup-

port personnel. In turn, the city is dismantling its police force, which has been operated by the state since 2005.

"It's a drastic measure, taken to address a drastic situation," said County Freeholder Lou Capelli Jr. "We had to take a chance and (Camden Mayor) Dana Redd had the political courage to do something different."

The plan for a county-wide police department came from recommendations from a committee made of various mayors of cities in the county, administrators, municipal officials and union representatives.

FBI statistics from 2011, the most recent year compiled, count

47 murders and non-negligent manslaughters in Camden, second only in the state to Newark, which has more than three-and-a-half times as many residents.

The county will operate a metropolitan division of its department focused entirely on the city, funded through a shared-service agreement and \$10.5 million in startup funding from the state.

The city's current officer roster is 208, which Camden County spokesman Dan Keashen said puts the department at roughly the level it maintained during the 1960s. The county's new plan for the city calls

New NACo policies adopted at D.C. conference



Legislative Conference After Action Report

NACo's policy steering committees deliberated over a two-day period at the Legislative Conference on policy concerns of significant importance to the nation's counties. Collectively, they presented 20-plus recommendations to the Board of Directors as interim policy positions. Interim policy resolutions are considered again for final adoption at NACo's Annual Meeting in July.

The Board voted down one recommendation on requiring state approval for federal regulations. The controversial proposal was considered by eight of NACo's 10 steering committees. Three committees supported it, while five rejected the proposal.

The Board also tabled a recommendation that supported the establishment of regional infrastructure improvement zones.

Following is a report on NACo's newest policy proposals

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Enhanced Export Opportunities for Agriculture and Related Businesses

Issue: Improving agricultural export opportunities

Policy: NACo supports federal efforts to partner with local governments, producers and businesses to expand agricultural export opportunities for U.S. producers and businesses. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS), through its programs such as the Market Access Program, is one of the key federal agencies that enhances export opportunities and global food security. NACo encourages FAS to partner with counties to expand links between county governments, their agriculture-related businesses and foreign markets through trade missions and direct support and technical assistance for local businesses.

■ Local Food Systems in the Farm Bill

Issue: Supporting local food systems

Policy: Support county development and expansion of local food systems by incorporating into the Farm Bill preference for locally grown and produced foods.

■ Efforts to Cut USDA Rural Development's Salaries and Expenses

Issue: Maintaining rural development services and technical assistance for rural counties

Policy: NACo opposes efforts to cut the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Development's salaries and expenses. The agency's staff plays a critical role as partners, funders and technical assistance providers in county-led economic development and infrastructure efforts.



Photo by Jack Hernandez

NACo Legislative Affairs Director Ed Rosado announces his retirement to the Board of Directors at their Legislative Conference meeting. Rosado served 17 years as the association's chief lobbyist.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

■ Funding for the Community Development Block Grant Program

Issue: Support for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program

Policy: NACo urges Congress to fund the CDBG program at \$3.3 billion.

■ FY2013 and FY2014 Appropriations for the Department of Housing and Urban Development

Issue: Support for FY 2013 and FY 2014 appropriations for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Policy: NACo urges Congress to support the following levels of funding for core HUD in the final FY 2013 and FY 2014 appropriations bills: no less than \$3.3 billion in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) formula funding; no less than \$1.6 billion in formula funding for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME); \$1.9 billion for Homeless Housing Assistance grants, including an amount to fully fund expiring supportive housing and Shelter Plus Care rent subsidy contracts; full funding for existing Section 8 project-based and tenant-based contracts; funding for homebuyer education; and \$275 million in Section 108 Loan Guarantee authority. This would restore funding for CDBG and HOME to their FY 2011 levels.



Photo by David Hathcox

Roy Brooks, Tarrant County, Texas, listens to steering committee recommendations at the NACo Board meeting.

■ Reauthorization and Appropriations for the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration

Issue: Appropriations and reauthorization legislation for the U.S. Department of Commerce's (DOC) Economic Development Administration (EDA)

Policy: NACo urges Congress to support reauthorization and appropriations for the DOC's EDA to keep communities strong and economically viable at a time when our nation needs it the most.

■ Enactment of the Jobs Originating through Launching Travel Act

Issue: Support for the Jobs Originating through Launching Travel (JOLT) Act

Policy: Support introduction and enactment of the JOLT Act, federal legislation to boost international travel to the United States, generating significant new revenues and supporting new American jobs.

■ Protect the Tax-Exemption for Single-Family and Multifamily Housing Bonds and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits

Issue: Protecting tax-exempt single-family and multifamily housing bonds, and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTCs)

Policy: NACo urges Congress to protect the tax-exemption for municipal bonds, including those that help finance single-family and multifamily housing, and to maintain the authority to allocate LIHTCs.

ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND LAND USE

■ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Levee Vegetation Removal Policy

Issue: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) levee vegetation management policy

Policy: NACo supports H.R. 399, the *Levee Vegetation Review Act of 2013* and to modify the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers levee vegetation policy to address significant local government implementation challenges.

FINANCE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

■ Tax-exempt Status of Municipal Bonds for Use in Deficit Reduction

Issue: Tax-exempt municipal bonds

Policy: NACo opposes efforts to alter the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds in any proposals to deal with the federal deficit.

HEALTH

■ New Funding Stream for County/Community-Based Mental Health Programs

Issue: Lack of sufficient federal funding for community-based mental health programs

Committees vote on policy resolutions at legislative conference

RESOLUTIONS from page 6

Policy: NACo supports the continuous and increased use of federal funds to improve early intervention community-based mental health programs, in coordination with local human services and law enforcement, as part of a comprehensive response to gun violence. A 1 percent increase to the funds collected by the federal government from the manufacturers of firearms and ammunition under the Pittman-Robertson Act should be allocated to the counties/community-based providers upon a formula approved by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Health and Human Services in order to maintain successful community-based programs at the local level.

■ Ongoing Federal Support for Local Safety Net Providers

Issue: Maintaining a strong health care safety net system as the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is implemented

Policy: NACo urges the federal government to ensure the availability of adequate and sustainable funding for safety net providers as they continue to care for the uninsured.

■ Development and Expansion of Parity for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders under the Affordable Care Act

Issue: Parity for mental health medical coverage for newly-insured populations under the Affordable Care Act (ACA)

Policy: NACo supports implementation of the ACA so as to ensure access to a broad array of the highest quality mental health and substance use disorder services for all insured populations, including those under the Medicaid expansion.

HUMAN SERVICES AND EDUCATION

■ Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Issue: Congressional action needed to fix our broken immigration system

Policy: NACo urges Congress and the President to enact comprehensive immigration reform this year that:

- Secures our borders;
- Includes a national strategy for coordination among federal, state, local and tribal authorities;
- Establishes a sensible and orderly guest worker program;
- Imposes no unfunded mandates on state and local governments;
- Includes no mandates on counties to enforce immigration laws;
- Preserves the eligibility of legal non-citizens for federal-funded health benefits and provides a sustainable funding stream to counties for their cost of providing health services to legal non-citizens who are denied federal-funded health benefits.
- Establishes an earned path to citizenship that includes registering, background checks, demonstrating employment, learning English and civics, paying back taxes and fees that



Photos by David Hathcox

Cook County, Ill. Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Cook County Commissioner Gregg Goslin register their votes at the Board Meeting.

may be required;

- Improves and simplifies the current legal immigration system; and
- Provides green cards for science, technology, engineering and mathematics students who have received a graduate degree from American universities.

■ Recognizing Prostituted Children and Youth as Victims of Sexual Exploitation

Issue: Recognizing youth who are victims of sexual exploitation as children in need of protective services

Policy: NACo urges state and local governments to change their approach to dealing

with juveniles who are engaged in prostitution by shifting focus away from treating them as offenders to, instead, recognizing them as children in need of protective services. Further, NACo urges Congress to provide grants to states and counties to support these important protective services.

JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

■ Prevention Efforts Related to Community Violence

Issue: Support prevention efforts related to community violence

Policy: The federal government should expand on the recent Presidential Memorandum

to engage in public health research on the causes and prevention of gun violence, and fully address the many forms of violence that impact community well-being.

■ Funding and Amend Disaster Coverage Policies for the Management and Mitigation of Post-Wildfire Flooding Damage

Issue: Funding is either unavailable or inadequate to effectively deal with the newly created or increased flooding and debris flow risks from post-wildfire events.

Policy: NACo urges Congress to take the following Post-Wildfire Disaster Actions:

- Amend the Fire Management Assistance Grant Program (FMAGP) and Stafford Act declaration time period to help states, tribes, and local governments respond to floods and debris flows that directly result from a declared fire.
- An improved FMAGP would provide cost-sharing grants to fund flood and debris flow emergency work in Categories A (Debris Removal) and B (Emergency Protective Measures) for a period of two years after the fire declaration and allow for construction of temporary protective structures under Category B or direct federal assistance.
- As an alternative, for declared fires that originated on federal lands or enough federal lands were burned that a BAER team was involved and created a post-wildfire assessment that identified post-wildfire flood and/or debris flow risk, the incident period should remain open until federal funds (USFS, BLM, NRCS) are made available and mitigation work identified in the BAER report is completed.

Even with a declared FMAGP, all expenses eligible under Public Assistance (and therefore FMAGP) Categories A–H should be considered toward the state and local per capita indicators when requesting a Presidential disaster declaration.

• Trigger the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program with a Fire Management Assistance Grant declaration for mitigation actions directly associated with the actual fire event and secondary consequences. Allow for a shorter application period and time frame to address the sudden new risks.

• Fully fund the USDA NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP).

• Fully fund the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program.

• Revise and simplify the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program (PDM) application process. As an example, require FEMA regions to pursue programmatic agreements with other federal and state agencies with the intent of completing environmental and historic preservation reviews faster and more efficiently.

■ Adequate Funding for the Legal Services Corporation

Issue: Restoring adequate funding for the federal Legal Services Corporation (LSC)



Baltimore, Md. City Councilmember Helen Holton expresses her opinion on a policy recommendation.

Public lands policy proposals address fracking laws, active forest management

RESOLUTIONS from page 7

Policy: NACo urges Congress to fulfill our nation's promise of "Equal Justice Under Law" by restoring funding for the LSC to the level necessary to provide critically needed services to low-income and vulnerable Americans.

■ Stopping Tax Offenders and Prosecuting Identity Theft Act and Similar Legislation

Issue: Misuse of taxpayer identity

Policy: Urge Congress to pass legislation supporting action to reduce tax crimes and identity theft. Legislation would encourage the Department of Justice (DOJ) to dedicate additional resources, including the use of investigative task forces, to address tax-return identity theft. The legislation would ask DOJ to focus resources in areas with a high rate of tax-return identity theft, coordinate investigations with state and local law enforcement agencies, and protect vulnerable victims, including veterans, seniors and minors. The legislation would increase penalties to help deter this type of crime and protect victims.

Public Lands Steering Committee

■ Bureau of Land Management's Promulgation of Duplicative Hydraulic Fracturing Regulations

Issue: The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) intent to adopt duplicative hydraulic fracturing rules

Policy: NACo requests that the BLM continue to defer the regulation of hydraulic fracturing to the states that already have hydraulic fracturing regulations in place which are based on State primacy over groundwater as defined in the state constitution. The BLM should assist with basic rules to States which have no rules related to hydraulic fracturing.

■ Active Federal Forest Management with Bridge Funding

Issue: While counties are deeply grateful for the financial lifeline of the Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act (SRS), NACo urges a new direction in management of our federal forests, for the very health of the forests themselves, and for job opportunities and social and economic sustainability. While some form of "bridge funding" to

maintain solvency in our counties will be required, particularly given the dominance of federal forest presence in many counties, it is essential that there be a new direction in federal forest management.

Policy: Legislation that provides bridge funding to forested counties and school districts while economic vitality is restored in these communities is vitally important and essential. Also, for there to be economic vitality, Congress must mandate active sustainable forest management to achieve resilient forest lands managed by the United States government.

■ Emergency Hazardous Fuels Reduction Projects

Issue: Supporting Emergency Hazardous Fuels Reduction Projects

Policy: NACo supports the components of H.R. 818, the "Healthy Forest Management and

Wildfire Prevention Act," which gives states the authority to identify areas afflicted by the bark beetle epidemic, drought, deteriorating forest health conditions, and high risk of wildfires and to put in place emergency hazardous fuels reduction projects.

■ Wilderness Legislation with County Input

Issue: Support of multiple use activities, including conservation on all federal and state public land must be balanced with protection of the environment and consideration of local needs.

Policy: NACo supports special land designations of federal lands that are by local residents and businesses, is consistent with existing land use policies, and is strongly supported by the affected counties and stakeholders within which the designation is. NACo strongly encourages congressional delegations

to only consider future wilderness legislation with affected counties' support, as exemplified by S. 341, the San Juan Wilderness Act.

Telecommunications and Technology

■ Antennas on Public Property

Issue: Limits on local government authorities regarding antennas on public property

Policy: NACo opposes efforts to impose additional limits on local authorities to determine the installation of antennas on public property.

Transportation

■ Harbor Maintenance Fees

Issue: Need for investment in the maintenance and improvement of coastal and inland port infrastructure to promote economic growth

Policy: NACo urges Congress

to enact legislation that supports full expenditure of Harbor Maintenance collections; and to provide equity for deep draft ports that contribute collections to the fund, but do not have significant dredging needs, and should be allowed to access these funds for limited port-related uses.

■ Towards Zero Deaths Safety Strategy at the National and Local Levels

Issue: Counties have a significant role in reducing highway fatalities and serious injuries

Policy: NACo endorses a Towards Zero Deaths (TZD) Safety Strategy at the national level and will support actions and promote policies that support its effective implementation across all levels of government and encourage counties to make full use of available tools and funding to reduce fatalities within their jurisdictions.

More officers, civilian staff will converge on Camden, N.J.

POLICE from page 5

for more officers — 401 — but also 110 civilians doing forensic, administrative and technological support work.

"We want them doing everything that can be done without a gun and a badge," Keashen said. "As soon as a crime scene is cleared, they can come in. They can take a lot of the work off the plates of the officers that can better serve the city by being visible."

Capelli said the county is planning to hire between 220 and 230 officers in the next six weeks.

Because the city's police union rejected an offer that would have allowed all of its members to be hired into the non-union county force, no more than 49 percent of its membership can be hired. So far, 160 officers from the city department have applied.

Cappelli said the county would like to get as many of its 37 municipalities to join the county-wide force to help cut costs for the municipalities, while maintaining and sometimes increasing staffing.

"For 550,000 people, 36 police chiefs is too many," he said. "We don't need 37 different police departments."

Home rule for New Jersey municipalities means many are supplying identical services, but sometimes not taking advantage of economies of scale and duplicating bureaucracy.

"Property taxes are high because of the way New Jersey delivers

services," Capelli said. "This setup is going to be the future of the way services are provided in New Jersey because with (tax) revenues falling and state-imposed caps on taxes, we won't be able to go on like we have been."

Two of the metro division's challenges will be reducing the number of open-air drug markets, which Keashen pegs at 170, and deterring criminals who live outside the city

from coming in, a population he said represented 85 percent of the actors in violent crimes.

"Outsiders are treating the city like their playground," he said. "With more officers walking the beats, you'll beat back the flagrant and emboldened attitude these criminals bring with them."

Throughout the process, Camden County has tried to release a lot of information on how the new police

force will work, and Capelli said the county's Congress of Residents and Clergy has been crucial to relaying information to their communities.

"We tried to get buy-in from as many groups as possible," he said. "What they told us was that people wanted to see more police on the streets. They're going to get them — on foot, in cars, on bikes — in a way they haven't seen since the '60s."

Conference speakers tackle sequester, progress of U.S. economic recovery

CONFERENCE from page 1

"on the backs of middle class families, seniors and women," Pelosi wryly observed that the "deficit hawks were an endangered species in 2008, 2009 when all this debt was being amassed." Attorney General Holder pointed out that the sequester would cut \$100 million from grants to local governments.

Blunt on the other hand welcomed the sequester's reductions: "We're appropriating more money than the law says we're allowed to spend." His colleague, Sen. James Risch (R-Idaho) decried the federal spending problem that he saw as a symptom of Congress' distance from the taxpayers. "There's a cavalier attitude about money, I don't get it," he said. "This isn't Las Vegas; this isn't make-believe

money; it's real money."

Meanwhile, Bob Woodward probably echoed a common sentiment about the sequestration. "Color me baffled that these people cannot sit down and talk and figure out how to work together," he said.

If the politicians maneuvered to convince NACo members that either the deficit or the sequester marked the end of the Republic as they knew it, Moody's Zandi gave the opening general session an optimistic national economic forecast. "I've felt as good (about the U.S. economy) as I have in a decade," he said.

He said that by adding up all deficit reduction since the austerity movement began in 2010, the 10-year deficit reduction total is \$4 trillion. "One could argue that under reasonable economic assumptions, policymakers have

come pretty close to fiscal sustainability," he said. "Enough to appeal global investors."

In other conference business: NACo renewed its Memorandum of Understanding with the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service; AT&T was honored with the association's 2013 Award for Corporate Excellence; NACo Legislative Affairs Director Ed Rosado announced his retirement to the Board of Directors; and Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-N.M.), a former Bernalillo County, N.M. commissioner, was the guest speaker at the Women of NACo Leadership Network breakfast.

There will be an extended report and photo coverage of the 2013 Legislative Conference in the March 25 issue.

Model Programs From the Nation's Counties

Richland County, S.C.

Business Inspection Blitz = Big Investment Return

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Richland County, S.C. was sitting on a gold mine.

What it needed was a bunch of miners to go and get the gold.

Pam Davis, director of the county's business service center, saw an opportunity when she found a surplus in her personnel budget. She needed help conducting business inspections and got creative in how to deploy the helpers. The inspectors inventory businesses within the county's unincorporated territory and monitor their compliance with various county codes and ordinances.

"I wanted to see what 10 inspectors could do in a short amount of

time, rather than one (inspector) for an entire year," she said. "I kind of tried it out for kicks and giggles, just to see how it worked out."

She hired inspectors from a temp agency and sent them out for three weeks to supplement the work her two full-time inspectors were doing: covering 594 square miles of unincorporated Richland County.

Those two inspectors were doing yeoman's work. During 2009, they conducted 1,762 inspections, touching roughly 16.5 percent of the businesses operating in the county. If the number of businesses in the county remained static, it would take those inspectors six years to cover all of them.

"Most businesses weren't lasting

three years, let alone six," Davis said. "A lot were going through their entire life cycle without being inspected. We were missing out on potential lost revenue from violations or from uncollected taxes. It was low-hanging fruit."

With the help of the temps, after more than 2,000 inspections in those three weeks, the county raked in more than \$330,000 in fines and tax revenue. For the \$10,000 spent on the temporary inspectors, it was a bargain.

"For the return we got, it was a no-brainer," Davis said.

Three recent changes to business regulation offered a few prime opportunities to rake in revenue — a smoking ban, a food tax and a new ordinance that requires all businesses to have a posted address.

Inspectors touched on whether those elements were being observed, checked for a posted current business license and whether a business was in operation.

Davis would like to do another canvass and to add another element.

"We could do a virtual canvass," she said. "Not all businesses are bricks and mortar, and we could search many different databases to see what is out there."

"It's important to do bricks-and-mortar canvassing, but just as important to inspect cyber businesses."

She advises other counties considering a similar program to spread the inspections out. "Maybe instead of three weeks of 10 inspectors, five weeks with six inspectors," she said. "When you blitz like that, it causes other departments — zoning, the fire

marshal — to get overwhelmed... I didn't anticipate that."

Davis worked with the Richmond County assessor's office to learn how much commercially zoned land was in each part of the county to help plan assignments for the inspectors.

"It could almost be done every year, because so many businesses will close within a year," she said. "The returns might not be as high as we had, but it's enough to at least warrant doing it every other year, at least."

Model Programs from the Nation's Counties highlights award-winning programs. Canvas the County was named best in the County Administration category for the 2012 NACo Achievement Award.

Research News

The Nation's Newest County — Petersburg, Alaska, by the Numbers

On Jan. 4, Petersburg Borough, Alaska was officially certified as the state's 19th organized borough, making it the 3,069th county government in the United States.

The new borough, which shed its city status in December by a vote of 782–600, is located in the southeast portion of the state, has 3,838 residents and a land area of 3,281 square miles. The borough's population density of 1.2 persons per square mile is on par with the population density of the state overall.

The new Alaskan borough has affordable housing prices and a young population. The residents of the borough earn less than the state average, but housing values are 30 percent lower than at the state level. As a result, 75 percent of the Petersburg residents are home owners. A typical Petersburg household includes about three people, while approximately one-third of Petersburg families have children younger than 18 years. Only 16 percent of households have an individual over 65 years old.

The recreation and agriculture



Petersburg Borough

industries are the top employers in the borough. Other popular industries include education and health care, manufacturing and retail.

When the city of Petersburg dissolved, all city staff became employees of the borough government including the former city manager, who now serves as the borough manager. The former city mayor, Mark Jensen, was elected in December to serve as the first mayor of the borough. The new government also consists of a six-seat Borough Commission.

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

Two new reports regarding retirement plans offer special insights on retirement expectations to employers and employees. The first report, by Alliance Bernstein, analyzed findings of more than 1,000 retirement plan participants in various defined contribution plans like Section 457 or 401a plans. They found that during the past five years, retirement confidence hit a low with only a quarter of participants feeling confident about their ability to have a comfortable retirement.

Respondents stated that a steady income stream in retirement was the single most important feature that employees want from their defined contribution (DC) plans. Nearly half wanted protection of principal in their plans.

The study also found that target-date funds (investments tied to projected retirement date) continue to be popular and receive high marks of satisfaction from plan participants. This has been a growing trend over the last few years, and these funds continue to be critically important for DC plans.

At a recent hearing, Pension

Financial Services News

New Research Sheds Light on Retirement Outlook



funds from a retirement plan has shown to be a large factor in lack of preparation for retirement.

According to EBRI research, 44 percent of baby boomer and gen-xer households are at a high risk of running short of money in retirement. This gap in adequate retirement funding presents a significant challenge for counties who could be left funding the shortfall in terms of social safety net costs. EBRI projects for early boomers (born between 1948 and 1954) the retirement shortfall will be \$70,000 per individual for married households, \$95,000 for single males, and \$105,000 for single females. Women, in particular, have more of a challenge of being financially prepared for retirement — with a projected retirement savings shortfall for single gen-xer females of \$133,000. These findings show a troubling retirement future ahead unless retirement readiness becomes a top priority for legislators, employers and participants.

(Research News was written by Mary Bell, director, NACo Financial Services Corporation.)

Savings: Are Workers Saving Enough for Retirement, the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI) offered several insightful responses to the questions of the committee. EBRI research cited five major factors influencing retirement readiness, including:

- the availability of pension plans
- future eligibility for participating in a defined contribution plan until retirement
- increasing the current default deferral rates from 3 percent to 6 percent
- job changes have a large impact on retirement readiness along with default deferral restarts, and
- borrowing or withdrawing



News From the Nation's Counties

► CALIFORNIA

• A new online feature on the **SACRAMENTO COUNTY** Board of Supervisors web page allows the **public to submit comments** on board agenda items that will become part of the official public record.

The public can comment without attending a meeting, writing a separate letter or emailing the supervisors on specific agenda items. The "Public Comment" link will be available when a meeting agenda is posted; once the meeting starts the link will no longer be available.

• **Gunshop owners** and employees in **SANTA CRUZ COUNTY** will be required to pass background checks, under new regulations passed by the Board of Supervisors.

The new rules license and set where guns shops can go, allowing them in commercial districts only and requiring them to be at least 600 feet from schools, parks and licensed day care providers, and at least 300 feet from residential areas.

Before finalizing the rules, the board may also require a buffer around medical marijuana dispensaries, the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* reported.

• **TULARE COUNTY** supervisors approved the establishment of the **Low-Income Health Program** or LIHP, also called TulareCare, for eligible Medi-Cal patients.

TulareCare will target adults 19- to 64-years old with incomes at or below 75 percent of the federal poverty level. That takes in a large portion of those in Tulare County who have no ability to pay for health insurance or medical care. It's been called a bridge to the Affordable Care Act, which takes effect in 2014.

TulareCare will offer a core package of medical services, lab services, mental health benefits, physical therapy, podiatry, prosthetic and orthotic devices, and prescriptions. To enroll for benefits through TulareCare, residents must meet income, age and residency requirements.

Officials estimated that 1,500 to 2,000 people could enroll in the program, costing an estimated at \$8.6 million, of which the federal government will pay half, according to *The Recorder*.

► FLORIDA

ORANGE COUNTY voters will decide on a **paid-sick-time referendum** on the August 2014 primary ballot.



► NORTH CAROLINA

A musket volley by Revolutionary War re-enactors helps mark the rededication of **MECKLENBURG COUNTY**'s Historic Courthouse as part of the county's **250th anniversary celebration** Feb. 26.

The Neoclassical-style building, now home to the D.A.'s Office, is a historic landmark and one of the few remaining buildings of the 1920s building boom in Charlotte's uptown area. The building opened in 1928 as Mecklenburg County's fifth courthouse.

Mecklenburg County was founded on Feb. 26, 1763, making this its sestercentennial year.

If approved, the measure would require employers to provide paid time off to workers who are ill or caring for a sick family member. Full- and part-time employees would earn one hour of sick leave for every 37 hours they work, to a maximum of 56 hours annually, the *Orlando Sentinel* reported.

Employers with fewer than 15 workers would not have to provide sick pay but could not penalize workers who took unpaid time off for being sick.

But before voters can decide whether many local employers must provide paid sick time, the ballot measure still must survive other business-backed attempts to block it legislatively and in the courts.

At the same time, lawmakers in both chambers of the Legislature are reading bills that would block local wage-and-benefit measures. If either becomes law, any decision by Orange County voters next year would be largely moot.

► INDIANA

The **CLARK COUNTY** Election Board is considering a plan to **give voters more flexibility** on where they can vote.

County Clerk Barbara Haas said implementing a "vote centers" model — multiple sites around the county that would allow any voter registered in the county to vote there — ultimately will save the county

money on personnel, mileage, voting machines and ballots. Vote centers have secure Internet connections with electronic poll books that are updated in real time when ballots are cast. A study group would make recommendations to county leaders, who would then vote on whether to approve it.

Haas said she hopes to have the plan implemented for the 2014 elections, the *Courier-Journal* reported.

► KENTUCKY

A first step toward allowing counties to **eliminate the elected office of constable** was passed by a House committee. If approved by the General Assembly, voters would consider the constitutional amendment in the 2014 general election.

House Bill 147 would amend the constitution to give counties the choice of eliminating constables, who mainly serve civil court papers or perform security-guard functions, according to a 2012 study. Officials estimate that there are about 500 constables statewide.

That report, performed by the Department of Criminal Justice Training, found that constables were largely superfluous and get no training in modern law enforcement, the *Lexington Herald-Examiner* reported.

► MINNESOTA

The **ANOKA COUNTY** Board has rescinded a 23-year-old policy

supporting the "prevailing wage" on county-funded construction projects.

Prevailing-wage policy requires that employees on construction projects be paid at rates comparable to those that have been paid for similar work in the area. By repealing its policy, the county can award county-funded projects to the lowest bidder.

There are state and federal prevailing-wage laws that apply to federally- and state-funded projects, including county projects that involve such funds, according to the *Star Tribune*.

► OHIO

• **HAMILTON COUNTY** Sheriff Jim Neal has put the kibosh on his deputies' working off-duty jobs as **security guards at local bars**.

His chief deputy, Mark Schoonover, explained to WKRC-TV news: "We will not provide security services to bar owners in Hamilton County because it is a conflict of interest in our opinion that compromises the integrity of our deputy sheriff's working those details, and therefore we are going to get out of the bar business."

Last November, off-duty deputies were involved in a shootout in the parking lot of a local bar. Off-duty deputies will still be able to moonlight providing security to other kinds of businesses, just not bars.

► OREGON

CLACKAMAS COUNTY Commissioners **won't pursue a ballot measure** this May seeking voter feedback on making an Interstate 205 river crossing in the county a toll bridge

Commissioners remain concerned about the potential traffic impacts to the county if the Columbia River Crossing Project includes tolls.

However, they will draft a letter reiterating their concerns about the potential for traffic congestion on I-205 should bridge project officials decide to charge toll, sometime in the future.

• The **KLAMATH COUNTY** Board voted recently to pull out of the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement. It governs how its signatories **share scarce water** between fish and farms, control power costs for irrigators and restore damaged ecosystems, the Associated Press reported.

Other parties to the agreement — the Karuk Tribe and the Klamath Water Users Association — say the county can't renege on the agreement because it's a binding contract.

► TEXAS

Members of the **DALLAS COUNTY** Commissioners Court have approved spending \$350,000 to secure extra help in their **war on mosquitoes** infected with West Nile Virus. The money would

See NEWS FROM page 11

NACo on the Move

» NACo Officers, County Officials

NACo leaders were involved in a number of meetings Friday, March 1, with key staff for House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio), House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.), House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), House Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), Sen. Michael Enzi (R-Wyo.) and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.)

» NACo Staff

• **Erik Johnston**, associate legislative director, was a Rural Housing Workshop panelist and spoke to the Michigan Agri-Business Association about NACo's farm bill priorities at the Council of State Community Development Agencies 2013 Housing Program Managers Conference in Washington, D.C. Feb. 26.

• **Ryan Yates**, associate legislative director, spoke about partnership opportunities for counties and the energy industry related to implementation and reform of the Endangered Species Act at the Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA) conference in Broward County, Fla. Feb. 13.



Erik Johnston

On the Move is compiled by Christopher Johnson.

The H.R. Doctor Is In

Getting In is Easy, Getting Out is Not

A new book about the Afghan War was recently reviewed in *The Economist* magazine. No, not our current Afghan War. No, not the Soviet Union's effort to defeat Afghan tribal resistance. No, not the Roman Empire's efforts at conquest. Rather, this book is about the first of two British invasions in 1839.

The British sent more than 20,000 British and Indian troops (plus thousands of camp followers) to subdue the tribes and add the area to the growing power and glory of the British Empire. They were a modern army, at least in 19th century terms, going off to fight far more primitive tribesmen.

At the end of the effort, in approximately 1842, about 4,500 British and Indian soldiers had died and the British pulled out. They left behind a region which struggles even 187 years later to be effectively known as a nation. The stage was set for a subsequent Afghan War in 1878.

A tribal leader had a conversation with a British officer during this time. He asked a very impor-

tant question: "You brought an army into the country. How do you propose to get it out?" We wrestle today with that very political, military, economic, social and ethical dilemma. It is easy to get into something, to get involved and to commit resources.

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At the state of local government level, it is possible to create a compelling case for a very major change — a major operation — in the name of innovation or modernization. It is then possible to rally the forces, and at least a majority of the elected officials, for the

expenditure of millions of dollars in the name of hope, progress, and the expectation of substantial and positive expectations.

To illustrate the point that getting into a major and costly campaign is easier than getting out, the HR Doctor is considering the grand adventures of implementing a new agency-wide automated system. Perhaps it goes by the name of an Enterprise Resource Management or Finance, Payroll and Human Resources Information system. No matter the name, it involves great cost, amounts of staff time, complexity and risks.

Once a compelling case is made however, accompanied by promises usually made by the chief executive officer, county or city manager, elected officials will generally give their approval. After all, they do not want to lead organizations with outdated tools and poor infrastructure. The case presented to them for approval is also exciting, forward-thinking and feasible, at least in their individual experience.

Once approved, the project requires various budget adjustments extending into several fiscal years. Hopes to enhance other worthy programs in the tight budget environment are diminished. That's OK, however, because these programs will benefit from an agency-wide information system. The work begins after an extensive purchas-

ing process lasting months and is often filled with exotic words and technical dialects not unlike what the British may have encountered in the Afghan tribal homelands.

Finally, after a choice is made, the agents of the winning vendor invade the organization, set up shop, kidnap some of the organization's brightest employees to be part of the team and begin implementing the new system.

As the process moves along, two maxims become more and more relevant. The first is that the project is akin to the mating of elephants. There is loud trumpeting and high-level contact, but nothing happens for two years. During this time, however, the information technology director has retired, vendor staff has been moved to some newer application, and remaining county or city staff members can be seen staying late every night and generally getting more frustrated every day.

The second relates to the apple pie my beautiful wife Charlotte served last night for dessert. The vendor appears to have made "piecrust promises — easily made, easily broken." The piecrust trouble follows the sudden popping up of glitches, new system enhancements that can't be integrated with the current system, the need to buy replacement computers and other realities which somehow were not mentioned in the County Com-

mission meeting where the project was approved. These problems can be resolved, however, for a large amount of additional cost and project time delays.

After a great deal of money, effort and human capital has been expended to create the organization-wide system change, not too many months pass before the vendor announces a new version of the product. Clients are compelled to upgrade to version 8.2, since the vendor will no longer be supporting version 8.1. Of course the agency now faces further costs and frustration. By this time, the chief administrative officer has begun a more than happy retirement or been appointed to head another agency, which is only just beginning to consider upgrading its system.

During the first British Afghan War, the tribal chieftain's question about a way out was not answered until the Brits decided to withdraw and move on. In the 21st century, the question of living with the results of getting into a huge system change will often be decided by attorneys and auditors, rather than citizens, soldiers or policy makers. The option to simply withdraw is not often possible.



Phil Rosenberg
The HR Doctor • www.hrdr.net

What's in a Seal?



» Tuolumne County, Calif.
www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov

Tuolumne County was one of California's original 27 counties created upon statehood in 1850. Prior to statehood, the county was referred to as Oro County (*oro* is Spanish for gold), and parts of that land were given to Stanislaus County in 1854 and to Alpine County in 1864. Sonora is the original and current county seat, and is the only incorporated city in the county.

The name Tuolumne is of Native American origin and is believed to be a transliteration of the Mi Wuk word "Talmalamne" meaning a cluster of stone dwellings. The county contains historic gold-mining towns, the pristine Emigrant Wilderness, world-renowned Yosemite National Park, and numerous lakes and rivers.

The seal shows a sawmill and a train carrying logs, representing the timber and lumber industry that was shaped in Tuolumne County. The trees represent the forest in the Sierra. The snow in the Sierra Nevada Mountains shows a skier and sled representing Leland High Sierra Snowplay, the largest snow park on the West Coast. Boating activities and fishing show off the activities of the five lakes in the county. The color gold signifies the mineral as well as the golden hills; green captures the spring colors as well as the forests in the Sierra; and blue represents the rivers, lakes and clear blue sky.

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

Loudoun County makes its bid to host FBI's new headquarters

NEWS FROM *from page 10*

fund additional traps and spraying services, the NBCDFW.com reported.

The county reported 398 human cases of West Nile Virus last summer and 19 deaths. This followed several years of minimal West Nile activity in northern Texas.

► VIRGINIA

Add LOUDOUN COUNTY to the list of Washington, D.C.-area counties vying to be the FBI's new home. The county has proposed eight sites to the General Services Administration for consideration for a new FBI headquarters for the agency that is looking to relocate from the District of Columbia, according

to the *Washington Business Journal*.

The county's response to the GSA's request for information says Loudoun offers "the best combination and selection of site location, access, infrastructure and workforce."

FAIRFAX COUNTY and PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, Md. are also interested in accommodating the FBI's 2.1-million-square-foot space needs.

► WASHINGTON

One county commissioner likened it to a no-fault divorce: YAKIMA COUNTY's decision to relinquish its half stake in the Yakima Air Terminal in the city of Yakima and let the city run the whole shebang. The transfer ended 30 years of joint ownership.

"The Yakima Air Terminal faces many challenges," Commissioner Rand Elliott told *The Yakima Herald-Republic*. "Governance needs to move quickly, efficiently and decisively to take advantage of opportunities." The former structure didn't allow that, he said. "One owner is the best way to advance the interests of the airport."

There was no disagreement with the city, Commissioner Kevin Bouchey said, but rather a recognition of "what is in the best interests of an important asset."

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

★★★★★★

NATIONAL

COUNTY

GOVERNMENT MONTH

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APRIL

2013

Smart Justice

Creating Safer Communities

National County Government Month

(NCGM), held each April, is an excellent opportunity for your county to highlight effective county programs and raise public awareness and understanding about **WHY COUNTIES MATTER.**

Visit www.NACo.org (Solutions Center) to download the guide and other media materials to help you promote your events. Contact Jim Philipps for more information at jphilipps@naco.org or 202.942.4220.

Don't forget to enter your county program for the NCGM award and share your story with NACo and other counties via social media!

NACo National Association of Counties



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