

# CountyNews



## GREEN WITH ENVY

### Local sand trap makes good

By Charlie Ban  
senior staff writer

Ten years ago, while pre-teen Jordan Spieth spent hours chipping and putting his way toward this year's U.S. Open, Pierce County, Wash. was laying the foundation for the course where he would claim that championship.

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES ■ WASHINGTON, D.C.

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## Hokama: 'NACo stronger, more effective' — outgoing president reviews his year in office

**Q: How would you describe your year as NACo president?**

RH: Busy, memorable, and

gratifying! I spent so much time eating at airport restaurants that servers knew me well enough when I asked for "the usual." Seriously, it was a successful year for NACo. Our Transportation and Infrastructure Initiative facilitated gains in lobbying efforts for a six-year reauthorization of MAP-21 and the Highway Trust Fund. Also, participation was up for conferences, seminars, webinars and educational activities. More was done to provide information and outreach that county officials can use to help them get the job done.

NACo is now playing a greater role as a government partner in the federal decision-making-consultation process in Washington, D.C. A big *mahalo* (thank you) to the NACo Board and standing and working committees, Executive Director Matt Chase and the NACo staff, and the Financial Services Corporation and corporate sponsors.



Riki Hokama

**Q: What was the most challenging part of your role as president?**

RH: Dealing with multiple requests to be available at the same time for a meeting.

**Q: What did you find most interesting or exciting?**

RH: From my visits around the

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## Conference races to a close

NACo's 2015 Annual Conference and Exposition wrap up today, July 13, with votes on policy positions and new NACo leadership, including a four-way race for NACo second vice president.

Attendees have already heard from Secretary of Defense Ash Carter and at day's end, Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx. Carter and Foxx's appearance as keynote speakers underscores NACo's strong commitment to supporting county efforts to aid veteran and military families and the significant stake counties have in the federal reauthorization of surface transportation legislation.

The conference, held this year in Mecklenburg County (Charlotte), N.C., provided the perfect stage to roll out NACo's new logo, theme and website. The fresh contemporary look of the new logo coupled with the graphically rich and easily navigated website at NACo.org dynamically complement the new theme: "Stronger Counties. Stronger America."

The new theme's impact on the conference programming was evident in the workshop tracks, which offered attendees opportunities to

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Presidential parting words: NACo in good hands

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nation, I met county officials who are getting the job done on a daily basis under challenging circumstances. I was most impressed by their dedication, innovation and energy! It's exciting to know that counties are getting the job done and leading our country forward. It's a big contrast to the endless debate and inaction that goes on in Washington D.C.

Q: What are you proudest of?

RH: NACo is now getting more consideration as a government partner whose input is valued in the federal decision-making and consultation process. The "Why Counties Matter" outreach is making an impact on Capitol Hill and at the local level. A recent survey found that local government received the highest public approval rating, followed by state government and at the bottom, federal government. NACo's advocacy and research to educate and communicate "Why Counties Matter" is making an impact where it counts!

Q: What advice would you give your successor?

RH: 1) Have good staff to manage your crazy schedule; and 2) Take a lot of vitamins.

Q: What's next for Riki Hokama?

RH: I'll continue to be an active participant on the NACo Board and back home on the Maui County Council and in the Lanai community.

Q: Final thoughts?

RH: I know that NACo is in good hands. Sallie Clark is ready to step up to the plate as president. NACo is in good financial shape. The organization is well managed and represented by Executive Director Matt Chase, who has worked to meet his goals and increase the quality level of staff production. NACo is gaining in reputation as a valued resource on county matters in Washington D.C. This month, NACo rolled out a "new look" as part of its re-branding effort. By working together, NACo is becoming a stronger and more effective voice for county governments.

The 'Clean Water Rule' will affect counties in major ways

By JULIE UFFNER  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

On June 29, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) published their final *Definition of Waters of the U.S. Under the Clean Water Act*, renamed the "Clean Water Rule," in the *Federal Register*. It will become effective 60 days after publication, on Aug. 28.

Since the rule was proposed, NACo has expressed numerous concerns about the federal consultation process and the rule's impact on county-owned ditches and other water infrastructure. The final rule defines key terms for tributary, adjacency, regional water bodies and 100-year flood plain designations that may have significant impacts on both state and local governments.

As expected, the issue now moves to the courts and Capitol Hill for resolution. Under the Clean Water Act (CWA), lawsuits can be filed at the federal district court level. To date, 27 states have filed four lawsuits challenging the final rule. The lawsuits state the final rule expands jurisdiction, violates existing federal laws and infringes on state rights.

States that Have Filed Suit

- In the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia – Georgia (lead), Alabama, Florida, Kansas, Kentucky, South Carolina, Utah, West Virginia and Wisconsin
- In the District of North Dakota – North Dakota (lead), Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, South Dakota and Wyoming; and New Mexico's Environmental Department and State Engineer
- In the Southern District of

WHAT COUNTIES CAN DO

**While the rule is finalized, there are still are several actions counties can take on the final rule. These include:**

- Contact your member of Congress, especially your senators, and urge them to support any legislative vehicle that would stop the final rule until key issues are resolved
- Send a letter to the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works Chairman James Inhofe (R-Okla.) explaining how the rule will impact your county and why a legislative fix is needed

- Write a letter to the editor or op-ed for your local newspaper
- Talk to other local and state government officials, including elected city and state representatives and educate them about the potential impacts of the final rule
- Take your congressional members (or their staff) to see the county's network of roadside and drainage ditches, flood control channels, storm water features or wastewater recycling infrastructure to demonstrate how the final rule would affect your county

For more information, visit NACo's "Waters of the U.S." information hub at [www.naco.org/wotus](http://www.naco.org/wotus).

Ohio – Ohio (lead) and Michigan  
• In the Southern District of Texas – Texas (lead), Louisiana and Mississippi.

Most of the states are Republican, except Kentucky, Missouri and Mississippi, and although New Mexico's Environmental Department and State Engineer signed onto the District of North Dakota suit, New Mexico's attorney general did not.

Litigation will likely be a multi-year and multi-state process as the cases move through the federal court system (District Court, Court of Appeals, Supreme Court).

It is likely that more lawsuits will be filed by both public and private entities in the coming weeks.

Action on Capitol Hill

Several bills have been introduced in Congress including the Regulatory Integrity Protection Act of 2015 (H.R. 1732) and the Federal Water Quality Protection Act (S. 1140). The House passed H.R. 1732 May 12 by a vote of 261–155. The measure would stop implementation of the final rule

and require the agencies to restart the rule-making process with state and local government involvement. It next moves to the Senate.

Meanwhile, the Senate is expected to take up its measure, S. 1140. Like H.R. 1732, the Senate bill would also stop implementation of the final rule. Additionally, it contains a list of principles the agencies should consider when rewriting the rule, including the types of waters that should be considered exempt. S. 1140 passed out of committee and is awaiting floor action.

NACo Analysis on the Final Rule

NACo's analysis has found the final rule will likely broaden the types of waters that are considered to be under federal regulation (jurisdictional), including county-owned and maintained roadside ditches, bridges, flood-control channels, drainage conveyances and storm water features and wastewater recycling infrastructure.

The rule includes eight categories of waters. The first four

waters — traditionally navigable, interstate waters, territorial seas and impoundments — are relatively non-controversial since they have long been considered jurisdictional.

The following four categories of waters are at the center of the controversy and contain new definitions: tributaries, which can include ditches, adjacent waters, regional waters and waters in a 100-year flood plain or near a high-tide line or ordinary high-water mark.

The term "water" or "waters" is used broadly in the rule to identify features that contain water or that show physical signs that water flowed in the system at some point.

While the final rule includes specific exemptions for certain types of ditches and infrastructure, these exemptions are very narrowly crafted and many county-owned ditches and infrastructure may still fall under federal permitting authority.

For more information about the final rule, please see NACo's "Waters of the U.S." Fact Sheet and Comparison Chart. They can be found at [www.naco.org/wotus](http://www.naco.org/wotus).

Conference ends on a high note

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learn more about topics ranging from community development and economic resiliency to public safety to county administration and services. The County Prosperity Forum, intended to assist small and mid-sized counties strengthen their economies, and the Stepping Up Summit, which explored ways to reduce the number of people with mental illness in jails, gave extended attention

to these critical topics.

Another chance for conference participants to extend their knowledge base came from NACo's premier member program. The PMP launched a new series of product and service solutions, dubbed "Premier Solutions Sessions." They showcased how NACo's member companies can help counties solve critical problems.

Attendees at NACo annual conferences can always expect

to recharge their batteries either from networking with their peers or by hearing from high-powered motivational speakers with great stories to tell.

This year's conference features talks from Brad Daugherty, a NASCAR team owner, ESPN broadcaster and former NBA all-star with the Cleveland Cavaliers; Soledad O'Brien, CNN reporter and independent producer through her company Starfish; and at the all-conference

celebration event, Danica Patrick, the most successful woman in the history of American open-wheel racing. Her win in the 2008 Indy Japan 300 is the only women's victory in an IndyCar Series race, and her third place in the 2009 Indianapolis 500 the highest finish there ever by a woman.

A full report on the conference will be published in the Aug. 3 issue of *County News*. Meanwhile, be sure to visit [NACo.org](http://NACo.org) for more immediate conference coverage.



# Golf course has county seeing green

**GOLF COURSE** *from page 1*

They had the same ambitions — greatness.

When the county started building its third golf course, on a former rock and sand quarry, the goal was nothing less than to someday be home to the biggest golf tournament in the world. And less than seven months after then-County Executive John Landenburg drove the ball off the first tee in 2007, the United States Golf Association (USGA) awarded the 2015 Open to Chambers Bay. Back then no course younger than 10 years had ever received that honor. It was also the first county-owned golf course to hold the prestigious tournament.

Preliminary estimates say the county saw between \$140 million and \$150 million in economic impact — with \$8 million in projected tax revenue — and the county itself will get a 10 percent cut of merchandise sales. That's against the \$20 million for course design and construction.

"It was a spectacular success," said County Executive Pat McCarthy. "We know anecdotally that it was phenomenal for the region, and when a number of formal studies come out, we'll have a better idea what it all meant economically. But this put Pierce County, the state of Washington and the Pacific Northwest on the map. We knocked it out of the park."

She's not a golfer, but McCarthy was able to keep the course operating when the recession led to drops in the course's revenue from greens fees.

"The course was really strug-

gling," she said. "A higher-end golf course was the kind of thing people cut out when the economy was bad."

Once she transferred course management to the parks department from public works, the additional programming led to increased revenue.

"We're in the programming business; it's a natural fit," said Parks Director Tony Tipton. "The community understands that and embraces the active recreation and the passive recreation — you can play a championship course or walk the trails and see the Puget Sound."

## Off the Tee

The course's urban setting along the Puget Sound helped fuel the county's dream.

Early on in his tenure as county executive, Landenburg saw potential in the quarry, which was purchased for \$33 million in 1992 as a buffer for a sewage treatment plant.

"I looked at the land, and knew we had to open up this property on the Puget Sound to our residents," he said. "The best thing here would be a park."

But parks aren't revenue neutral.

"Golf courses pay their own way," he said. "Everything else is subsidized."

Pierce County already had two golf courses, with even more public courses nearby, too. What would set the quarry apart was a championship-caliber course, bringing professional golf into Washington state.

"As an industry, it didn't exist in our state," Landenburg said. "We had our goal — holding the U.S. Open, and we knew the biggest mistake we could make was not

setting our sights high enough. If we can get the biggest tournament in the world, we'll be able to get a lot of other events."

What the quarry offered was a course designer's dream. Only one tree, no lakes, sand everywhere for a completely malleable surface.

"Every hole could be shaped the way we wanted it," Landenburg said. "We had 56 architects apply."

Pierce County chose Robert Trent Jones Jr. as the architect.

Hand-in-hand with the technical aspects of the course came the ancillary considerations for holding a tournament — the infrastructure to handle visitors, support staff, vendors, corporate tents. The 2015 tournament involved more than 300 temporary structures and the course was designed to accommodate them.

Course design considered the views cameras would capture at certain times of the day on the third Sunday of June, historically the date of the U.S. Open final round.

The construction began in 2005, finished in 2006, and after letting the course settle, play began June 23, 2007.

Throughout the process, Landenburg lobbied the USGA to check out the course, knowing the organization had an interest in holding an event in the Pacific Northwest.

"We brought the whole package to them, that we had room for the corporate village that goes along with a major tournament, that we had so many hotel rooms within 60 miles; we gift wrapped it for them."

## Along the Fairway

The course is built in the British links style, with wide fairways and solid ground. The Pacific Northwest climate is similar to that in the United Kingdom.

"The ball rolls a lot," said Tipton, the county parks director. "It's a different feel than a lot of people are used to."

There are also no cart paths. Carts are only available for golfers with medical conditions.

At 250 acres, the Par 72 course is roughly twice the size of many others.

And it has wide appeal.

"It's good for a 15 – 20 handicapper or a scratch golfer who wants a challenge," Tipton said. "Five sets of tees gives you that flexibility."

The greens fees can approach \$300 at their highest, though Pierce County residents get a discount.

The Fescue turf that covers the course, which needs considerably less water and fertilizer than other golf course grasses, contributed to Chambers Bay being named the second most environmentally sustainable U.S. course out of more than 14,000.

## On the Green

"The USGA took a risk in having the Open here," McCarthy said. "It was attractive to have the tournament in the Pacific Northwest, which it hadn't done before, but there were a lot of open questions."

But Pierce County, Kemper Sports (which manages the course) and the USGA answered all of them.

The USGA leased the course, managed the entire event and helped cover costs.

Playing host to the U.S. Amateur tournament in 2010 gave the USGA, and the county, a practice run holding a serious event on the course.

"We learned a lot about transportation issues made modifications on four holes, all of it covered by USGA," McCarthy said.

The county put in \$1 million for public safety, most of which went for traffic control. Local cities contributed \$340,000. The Pierce County Sheriff's Office was the lead agency for public safety.

In the end, the event was a success, the Open sold 36,000 daily tickets — Landenburg said

the course could probably accommodate 50,000 — and in addition to the projected \$8 million in local tax revenue and the cut of merchandise, Pierce County got the sporting world's attention on national television. And the confidence to go for another U.S. Open in the future.

## QUICK TAKES

### TOP FIVE WATERMELON GROWING STATES

Florida	Georgia
Texas	Arizona
California	

Sources: USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Vegetables Annual Summary and State Statistical Service Offices, 2012



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A golfer drives from the sixth tee at Chambers Bay during one of the opening rounds of the 2015 U.S. Open. Photo courtesy of Pierce County, Wash.



# FIGHTING THE SLIDE

## FROM 'OXY' TO HEROIN: COUNTIES FIGHT OPIOID DRUG ABUSE

By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Tammy Baney had never shared the story of her family's brush with prescription drug abuse with "total strangers," as she put it during a workshop at NACo's recent Western Interstate Region (WIR) conference.

But the Deschutes County, Ore. commissioner was willing to speak out to show a different face of drug abuse.

"Most of us think of prescription drug abuse or drug addicts ... they look like other people," she said. "They're *those* people; they're people that we don't know."

But not always.

Baney's ex-husband, Kevin — a pilot, musician and successful hotelier — died in 2008 from an accidental prescription opioid drug overdose. His spiraling substance abuse had been a factor in their divorce.

"This is a silent epidemic within our communities that we need to

address," Baney said.

Pharmaceutical opioids include Vicodin (hydrocodone), OxyContin (oxycodone) and Opana (oxymorphone). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that such drugs were involved in more than half of the 38,300 overdose deaths in the United States in 2010, the latest available figures.

Counties large and small are confronting the issue of prescription drug abuse and its links to heroin use. Rural Scott County, Ind. is in the midst of an HIV epidemic linked to shared drug paraphernalia, prompting state officials to authorize needle exchanges for the first time.

In addition to its toll on individuals, opioid drug abuse also has societal costs, according to the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which reports annual medical costs of opioid painkiller abuse at more than \$72 billion a year.

How are counties addressing the problem? One approach involves the formation of opioid task forces, bringing together stakeholders such as law enforcement, the medical community and drug treatment experts, according to Susan Weinstein, director of congressional affairs for the National Alliance for Model State Drug Laws (NAMSDL).

### Taking a Regional Approach

Three Northern Kentucky counties are doing just that. Boone, Campbell and Kenton counties are jointly funding a Northern Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy to fight opioid addiction, starting with heroin, said Kris Knochelmann, Kenton County judge-executive. The counties, with a combined population of almost 390,000, sit just south of Cincinnati, Ohio.

"The number of overdoses showing up both at the hospital and that our police and EMS people are having to deal with are on the rise. The most heart-wrenching are the number of infants that are being born addicted," about 120 at the main local hospital last year," he said.

The three counties' Fiscal Courts have approved \$120,000 to launch the effort. Kenton and Boone each chipped in \$40,000, while less populous Campbell County approved \$20,000 plus an equal amount of in-kind services such as office space and IT support. The money will fund two positions: a nurse with legislative and political advocacy experience and a person to coordinate legal, funding and human services issues, Knochelmann said.

Deaths from opioid drug overdoses have risen steadily over the past 20 years, according to HHS, so much so that they currently out-

number deaths from car crashes in the United States. In Oregon, Baney said, there's been a 450 percent increase in deaths from prescription drug overdoses in the past 10 years.

### From Rx Pills to Cheaper Street Drugs

Prescription opioid abuse also has other consequences. It often can lead to heroin addiction, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. It cites recent surveys which showed that increasingly young people are "taking up heroin because it is cheaper and easier to obtain than prescription opioids."

Pat Herrity, a Fairfax County, Va. supervisor, said two deaths in his community, including one in his neighborhood, brought the problem into focus. "I found out because I knew the people — that they were heroin overdoses, and they weren't reported as heroin overdoses," he said.

The Board of Supervisors commissioned a report late last year on "recent trends and strategies for prevention" of prescription drug and heroin abuse in the county. Its results will be implemented in a Prescription Drug and Heroin Abuse Prevention Strategic Action Plan, currently under development, to address: education and awareness; prescription drug storage, disposal and monitoring; treatment; enforcement; and data and monitoring.

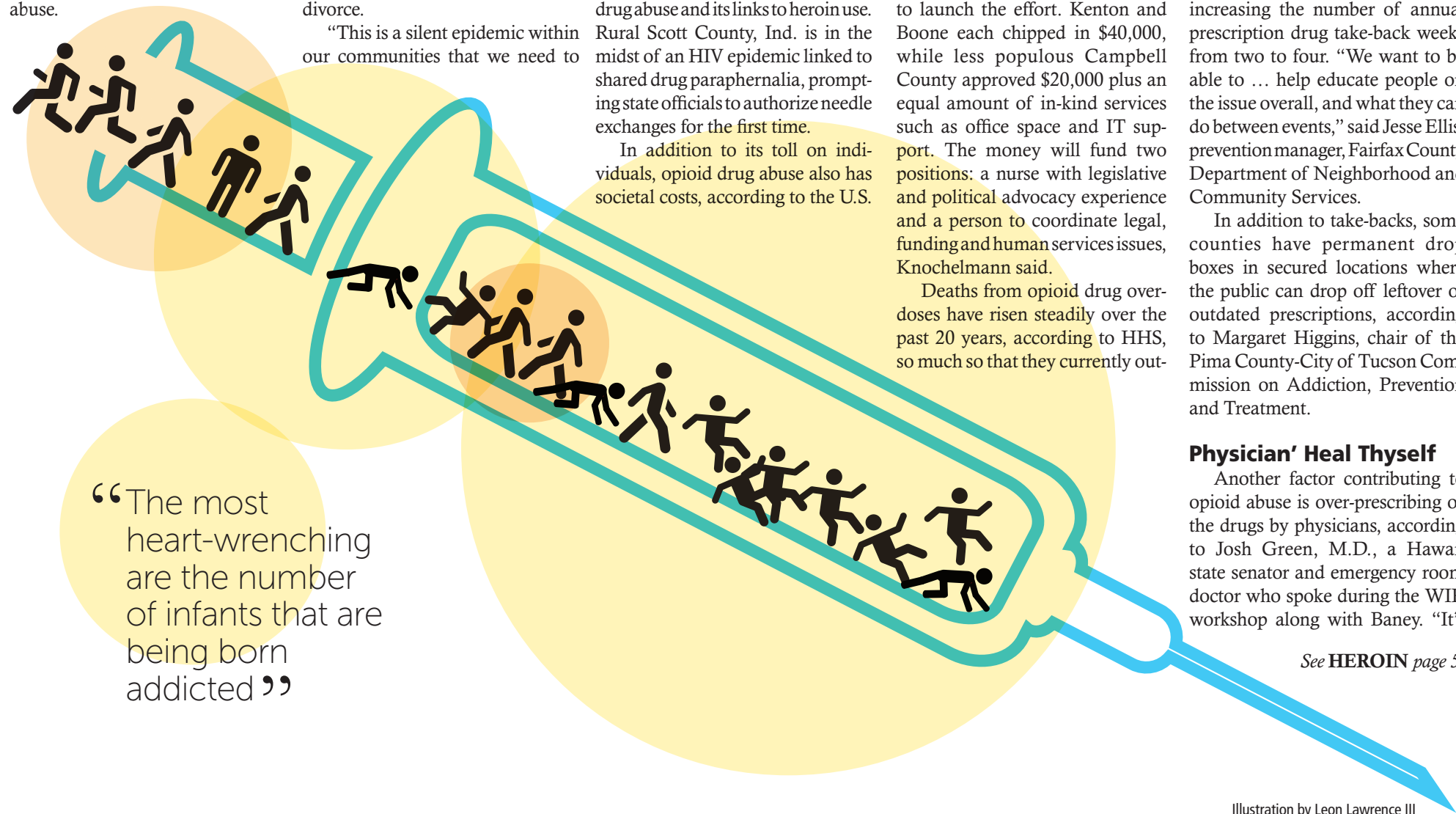
The county has already begun to target storage and disposal by increasing the number of annual prescription drug take-back weeks from two to four. "We want to be able to ... help educate people on the issue overall, and what they can do between events," said Jesse Ellis, prevention manager, Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services.

In addition to take-backs, some counties have permanent drop boxes in secured locations where the public can drop off leftover or outdated prescriptions, according to Margaret Higgins, chair of the Pima County-City of Tucson Commission on Addiction, Prevention and Treatment.

### Physician' Heal Thyself

Another factor contributing to opioid abuse is over-prescribing of the drugs by physicians, according to Josh Green, M.D., a Hawaii state senator and emergency room doctor who spoke during the WIR workshop along with Baney. "It's

See **HEROIN** page 5



"The most heart-wrenching are the number of infants that are being born addicted"



## HEROIN from page 4

become a problem and I'm complicit," he said. "We physicians... we're pushing a titanic amount of medicine, pain pills into society." It's been several years since he stopped prescribing powerful opioid painkillers such as OxyContin, MS Contin and Fentanyl, but many doctors are "in denial about the scope of the problem."

To address supply, 49 states, excluding Missouri, have prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMP), according to the National Association of State Controlled Substances Authorities. These rely on an electronic database of prescribed controlled substances, enabling health care professionals to identify someone who may be "doctor shopping" to obtain multiple opioid prescriptions. Higgins said counties can be a part of the solution by advocating at the state level to improve and modernize their PDMPs.

## New laws save lives

While not curbing supply, naloxone access laws and "Good Samaritan" laws — some of which were piloted at the local level before going statewide — are reducing overdose deaths, Weinstein said. Naloxone — administered by injection or a nasal spray — is an antidote that can bring an overdose victim back from the brink of death.

Naloxone access laws provide professional immunity from civil or criminal liability for first responders, prescribers or dispensers, she explained. With many state Legislatures still in session, it's hard to give an exact count, but as of the end of May, 38 states had naloxone access laws, Weinstein said, adding that NAMS DL, which is funded by Congress, is currently drafting a model naloxone access act that all states might use.

"Naloxone access should be widely available. There's no downside to it," she said. "Naloxone has no rewarding properties, so if it gets into the 'wrong hands' it can't be abused; it just doesn't work."

Good Samaritan laws extend immunity to those who administer the drug, sometimes extending to laypersons. At least 25 states have enacted them, Weinstein said.

"These naloxone access laws and Good Samaritan laws are fabulous," she added. "But within the laws there also needs to be follow-up for treatment, because you don't want people overdosing every day and then getting reversed. "You want them to be assessed for an addiction problem and then put into treatment. It's really important that any sort of program, law, whatever, has a treatment component in it."

# Make your connection with 2016 candidates

## COUNTIES CONNECT AMERICA

— **Candidate Q&A:** Provides each candidate three strategic (and county specific) questions regarding their candidacy, platform and relevant experience. Results would be used to produce a Q&A series for *County News*.

The packets also include additional products to help familiarize candidates with the county message such as Why Counties Matter; Why NACo Matters; and NACo Legislative Priorities publications.

As candidates officially announce

their campaigns for president, NACo staff and membership are beginning to meet with campaign staff to discuss opportunities for membership engagement.

The 2016 NACo calendar has many strategically placed events throughout the year for candidate engagement. Additionally, many state associations are beginning to schedule events within their states to provide opportunities for candidates to engage county officials.

NACo will continue to produce additional products to help educate and assist members with delivering the county message in their meetings with candidates.

For additional information regarding the initiative, please contact Arthur Scott, associate legislative director, at 202.942.4230 or [ascott@naco.org](mailto:ascott@naco.org).

The upcoming 2016 U.S. presidential election cycle presents counties with an excellent opportunity to bring together local elected officials with both state and federal candidates to discuss the importance of a strong intergovernmental partnership.

In addition to the White House, this cycle will include races for 34 Senate seats, all 435 House seats and 13 gubernatorial campaigns. In total, eight states will hold races for both the U.S. Senate and the governor's mansion in 2016.

NACo has developed the Counties Connect America initiative to use the presidential campaigns as an opportunity for county officials to engage candidates on the ballot in 2016. The initiative, with help from state associations, will drive the message that counties are an integral part of the local-state-federal partnership.

"Counties are the fabric that connects American civil society — designed to serve as connectors between the federal and state governments and constituents. It is that connection with constituents that serves as the foundation for our message," said NACo Executive Director Matt Chase.

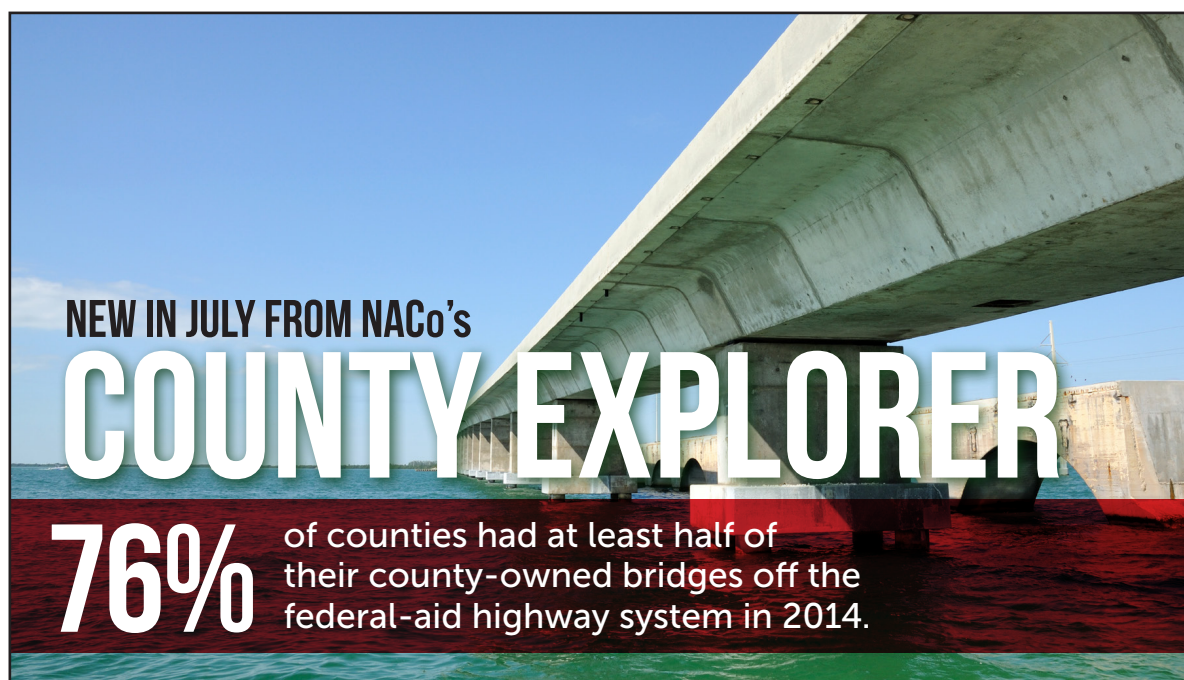
The initiative does not rely on any particular legislative issue. Instead, its message focuses on the shared goals and common constituency for all levels of government, Chase explained. These include:

- **Clear Vision:** Counties are united behind a clear vision: to foster healthy, vibrant, safe and resilient communities across America.
- **Collaboration:** Counties achieve results by joining with public, private and philanthropic partners to serve their constituents and to build more competitive local economies.
- **Connecting:** Counties are the fabric that connects American civil society — practicing pragmatism over partisanship. County governments were designed to serve as connectors between the federal and state governments and constituents on the ground.

Candidate packets have been produced to introduce presidential candidates to the county message and the Counties Connect America initiative. Included in the Candidate Packet are:

— **Introductory Flyer:** Used to introduce members, candidates and the general public to the initiative. The flyer contains the initiative mission statement and platform.

— **Blanket Candidate Invitation:** Introduces the candidate to NACo's overall mission and the Counties Connect America initiative while extending an invitation to speak at any major NACo event between now and Election Day 2016.

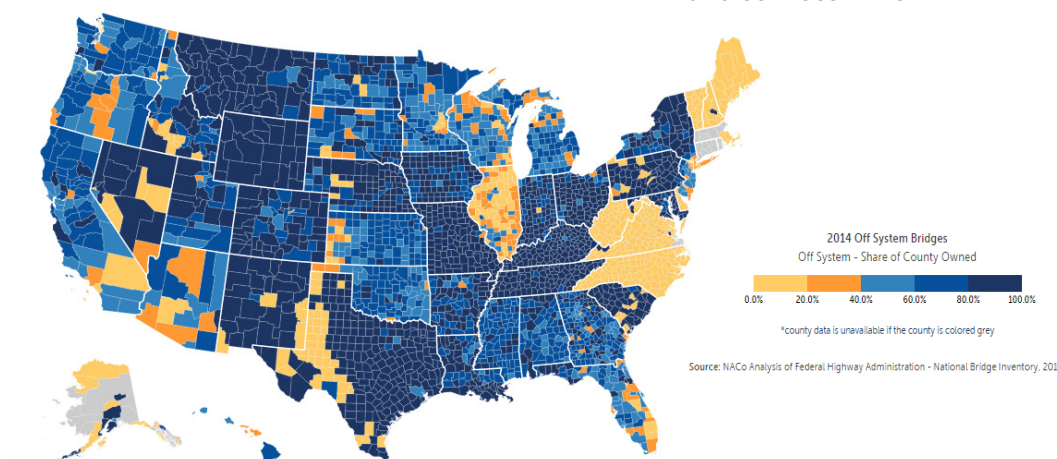


**40%** of county jails use a risk assessment at booking, as of March-April 2015.

**14** states (including Rhode Island) have passed increases to their state gas tax in the past two years.

**43%** of counties have a county administrator, as of May 2015.

**57%** of county economies exported more than \$100 million in goods and services in 2014.



[www.NACo.org/CountyExplorer](http://www.NACo.org/CountyExplorer)



# MORE FROM THE CANDIDATES

## Liz Archuleta

Supervisor Coconino County, Ariz.



Recently, I was talking with a colleague, a county supervisor, about my candidacy for 2nd vice president of NACo. She asked me what characteristics I had looked for in past candidates for our professional organization's top leadership. She asked me to relate those characteristics and to discuss how I did or did not meet those characteristics. I liked this approach because it told her what I valued in a NACo leader and allowed her to hear how I thought I matched up to those expectations.

In the past when I've had to decide who I would vote for as 2nd

vice president, I generally focused on several key characteristics and traits. I consider two important characteristics — their leadership philosophy and style and their work ethic. I also consider the candidate's leadership and advocacy experience with NACo and with their state association. And importantly, the values and the level of passion for county government they will bring to the role.

In terms of a candidate's characteristics or traits, I consider their leadership philosophy and style very important. I look for leaders who value diverse viewpoints, encourage dialogue, and then can develop consensus resulting in action. I also look for a leader who can motivate and mobilize their members to advocate — someone who can leverage everyone's skills and experiences for a proactive and positive outcome. As chair of NACo's Public Lands Steering Committee, I demonstrated an inclusive leadership style when varying viewpoints had to be melded into a policy statement. I mobilized

committee members to take action, such as advocating for federal funding for counties through Secure Rural Schools (SRS) and Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) Congressional actions.

A second key characteristic is their work ethic. I respect a strong work ethic and look for leaders with a passion for county government. These are traits that I've carried with me through my 19 years as county supervisor and as a leader within NACo and my state association. My strong work ethic is demonstrated through the extensive work I've already done on behalf of NACo over many years.

I look very closely at the candidate's experience, ability, and comfort with holding a strong advocacy role at the federal level. A fundamental role of a NACo leader is serving as a strong advocate at the federal level. I'm grateful for the opportunities and roles I've had with NACo ranging from serving as a Board member and steering committee memberships and chairmanship to testifying before Congress on numerous policy issues. I've represented our nation's counties at national press conferences, Congressional

briefings and with federal agencies. I was selected to meet with President Obama to discuss the impact of federal government decisions on counties. At the state level, I've served as president of the County Supervisors Association of Arizona and have advocated on behalf of CSA at our State Legislature on numerous occasions on a wide array of issues.

My very strong passion for county government is deeply rooted in my background. Flagstaff, Arizona has been my family's home for 5 generations. I was taught the importance of hard work and determination by my parents who started their own small business in 1973. That small business, Archuleta Ice Cream, allowed my family to create a better life for our family's future generations. I started working on the ice cream trucks as a child and put myself through college by working on the trucks.

I also learned from my parents the importance of community service. For example, my parents were instrumental in establishing the Head Start program here in Flagstaff. Watching my parents advocate for and invest in the

community motivated me to get involved and take on leadership roles at the local, state and national levels. I am blessed to continue this tradition through my work as county supervisor and with NACo.

Today, when I look back at my roots, I see strong values, a strong work ethic and a strong commitment to leadership. These are traits that I have carried with me throughout my life and are traits that I will bring to my role as 2nd vice president of NACo. I will also bring my extensive advocacy experience with NACo and my state association and an ability to work with national media. My leadership philosophy supports full participation of all NACo members and the commitment to build consensus from diverse viewpoints, and then translate that consensus into strategic action.

I'm ready to bring a fresh perspective, a lot of energy and a strong voice to NACo. I'm prepared to put NACo first. It would be an honor to represent our nation's counties and to lead NACo as an inclusive, relevant and energetic organization. I'm asking for your support.

Let's do this. Let's build a strong NACo together!

## Roy Charles Brooks

Commissioner Tarrant County, Texas



I am Roy Charles Brooks, county commissioner Precinct One, in Tarrant County, Texas (Fort Worth). I am in my 11th year as the elected commissioner for Tarrant County Precinct One; however, this is my 24th year in county government. Prior to being elected commissioner in my own right, I served as chief of staff for 14 years to my predecessor in office. I have been associated with NACo for all 24 of my years in county

government, having attended my first NACo annual conference in Salt Lake County, Utah in 1991.

I have been married for 40 years to Dr. Jennifer Giddings Brooks a retired teacher and currently an educational consultant. We have two adult children; Royce, a Harvard Law School-trained policy advocate and Marion, a University of Texas Law School graduate, practicing entertainment law. They both reside in Los Angeles, Calif.

NACo has taught me that whether urban, suburban or rural, we are All Counties and that our strength comes from unity. During my NACo service I spent 10 years on the Board of Directors having been appointed by eight NACo Presidents. I have chaired, for the past two years, the Large Urban County Caucus (LUCC), which is one of the largest caucuses within NACo and represents the 100 largest counties in America. This comprises 130 million people

or approximately 60% of the population of America.

During my chairmanship of LUCC, with the help of NACo staff and some very aggressive and hardworking vice chairs, we have built LUCC into the primary thought leader on urban policy as relates to America's counties.

I served as chair of the Healthy Counties Initiative for one year developing best practices for the initiation of citizen health programs in counties across America. I served for two years as chair of the Health Reform Subcommittee leading President Valerie Brown's Presidential Initiative on Health Reform. In addition, I served two years as president of the National Association of Black County Officials (NABCO) and for the past five years I have been chair of the Board of Directors of the National Organization of Black County Officials (NOBCO), the 501(c)3 affiliate of NABCO.

It is critical that the next 2nd vice president have a thorough grounding in both urban and rural policy issues. My experience as LUCC chair and as a leader in

establishing a strong collaboration with the Rural Action Caucus will be of great benefit to NACo going forward. In this regard, LUCC and RAC have held joint meetings, joint press conferences, joint issues related symposia, and joint advocacy efforts. We are All Counties, both urban and rural.

My NACo experience is deep and wide and puts me in a unique position to lead this great organization at this critical time in its development. Whether the issues are infrastructure and transportation, criminal justice reform, health care or PILT, Secure Rural Schools or Waters of the U.S., we need a reliable federal partner. I will reach across the political divide, the geographic divide, and the demographic divide, which puts us in little boxes in this nation, to form the kinds of lasting coalitions that will strengthen our counties, add value to our constituents, and secure the local safety net. We are All Counties and we can only build a stronger NACo if we work together.

I believe that counties will both acquire and maintain NACo memberships if we can clearly tell the story of the tremendous value proposition

that NACo membership represents. Members who attend our conferences routinely tell the story of that "one thing" that they learned, took back home and implemented; that saved money, increased efficiency and provided a return on investment which has many times the dollar value of their membership costs. I am willing to be that voice. I am willing to tell that story from County to County; from State Association to State Association until Counties truly understand that together, we are a mighty, and formidable force not only for our individual County Boards, but also for the constituents we represent.

Accordingly, I pledge to you that I will work with the NACo Executive Committee, NACo staff, steering committees, caucuses and member counties to raise our profile as key policy makers and reliable partners with other governmental entities. I will ensure that NACo is known as the premier organization representing All Counties; and that we are United and Undivided. I would be honored to help lead our association, and I ask for your support.



# MORE FROM THE CANDIDATES

## William (Bill) E. Cox Commission Chair Rich County, Utah



Advocacy, Collaboration and Purpose: A Path Forward for NACo

It is an exciting time to be a county official in America, and there is no better time to be associated with the National Association of Counties (NACo). As the single, national organization to represent county officials, our organization is poised to address national concerns on issues stretching from our nation's health care to our aging infrastructure.

Like those who founded NACo in 1935, in the midst of recovery from the Great Depression, we too now find ourselves in leadership

roles at another turning point in American history. While the recent recession that plagued many of our communities from 2006–2010 was not as severe as the Great Depression, it should not be lost on us that again, in our time of need, America is turning to its local governments to work on solutions that will aid in creating healthy, vibrant and safe communities.

We must take our mission seriously, and continue to demonstrate how counties are the cornerstones of the American community. We must show how intergovernmental collaboration, common-sense solutions and innovations at the local level can be achieved. In doing so, we will show that “business as usual,” where our nation finds itself mired in partisan squabbles and never-ending gridlock, does not have to be a part of our solution-based dialogue. It is our cooperation and affiliation as members of NACo that demonstrates our ability to work together toward a common goal is achievable.

As I review the NACo legislative priorities this year which include: protection of the partnerships in

Medicaid services, transportation funding reauthorization, restructuring the tax code to address Internet sales, along with PILT, SRS and Waters of the U.S. issues, the correlation between our national legislative priorities and our overall mission as county officials to build, maintain, and protect the homes and schools of our neighborhoods could not be any stronger. It is my hope that counties can act as a moderating force in the national dialogue and look toward local solutions to many of these national problems.

The platform I envision for NACo will require federal partnerships, but will be based on our continued local collaboration, enabling county leaders to work locally on cost-effective, first-class services within their counties. To be successful, I believe we must focus on the following areas:

### **Bolster our National Advocacy Efforts**

It will be imperative for NACo to continue to advocate nationally in the interest of counties. Promoting programs, tools and resources that allow counties to implement solutions locally that promote economic growth and improve the quality of life of our residents. I intend to use my long-standing relationships with the chair of the Senate Finance

Committee, chair of the House Natural Resource Committee and chair of the House Oversight Committee, who all happen to be from my home state of Utah, to help NACo in these efforts.

### **Maintain our Commitment to Research**

As a thought leader on issues affecting local governments, NACo must continue to be on the cutting-edge of research in the area of local government. This work will allow us to share proven solutions with counties for implementation. A perfect example of this great work can be seen in the efforts being made on mental illness and the associated impact on our jails. Our research allowed us to effectively partner and implement the “Stepping Up” initiative that many counties are using as a baseline for their own local action plan.

### **Increase Collaboration**

One of the greatest assets that NACo provides is our ability to learn from our neighboring counties. While we are diverse in our views and in our demographics, we should be embracing our diversity and recognizing those differences which make us strong. I have found that despite our differences, I often learn more from people coming from counties entirely different from my own. We often are battling

the same issues, but usually look at them in entirely different ways, allowing me to think creatively about possible solutions that could work in my own community. I will work to increase these opportunities for networking and collaboration, as it has been one of the greatest resources NACo has to offer.

### **Promote “Why Counties Matter”**

As the lines of government blur, people often forget where they receive their services. I believe we, as county officials, will continue to be called on in greater ways to serve our communities, and we must continue to let our residents know the value we provide.

From the roads they drive on to the parks they play in, there is not a time in which your residents are not affected by the services you deliver. Our “Counties Matter” campaign is imperative in maintaining the public's support of our work. I will continue to promote this vital message and ensure America understands that COUNTIES MATTER.

I look forward to my opportunity to serve and ask for your support and trust in leading NACo and promoting the nation's counties.

Appreciatively,

Commissioner William “Bill” Cox  
Rich County, Utah

## Larry “LJ” Johnson Commissioner DeKalb County, Ga.



My “Winning the Future Together”— Suburban-Urban-Rural platform is a three-pronged strategy: The first is World-Class Infrastructure. This includes a comprehensive transportation network that incorporates regional transit and 21st century technology. This also includes water supply issues, which are at the forefront of many points of discussion amongst leaders around the

country. As a group, we must focus our efforts on a global approach, which includes crafting recommendations for congressional consideration for legislation that can serve to bridge the gaps that exist and not engender polarization. This strategy also includes rebuilding our roads, shoring up and replacing bridges, establishing walking/biking trails, making our communities walkable through sidewalk installations and above all incorporating rail. Rail is a direct path to sustainable, environmentally friendly communities.

My second strategy is Innovative Economy. An innovative economy stresses entrepreneurship and innovation. In order to continue to grow our economy we must educate our workforce and entrepreneurs to meet the needs of the 21st century. This economy must increase manufacturing, farming and technology-driven jobs for our counties. Our counties

must economically think globally, act regionally and plan locally.

I will use my international relationships and resources to set up business fairs at our Legislative Conference for us to interact with foreign countries that are interested in trading with our counties. This is a way to build strategic relationships that promote not only trade but also other cultural opportunities. It is said that “a rising tide lifts all boats,” and a rising tide of economic innovations lifts the boats of all.

Last, but not least in my strategy is Healthy, Livable Communities. The continued development of communities that are walkable, vibrant centers that support people of all ages and abilities is a standard we must work to meet and exceed. A healthy, vibrant community has at its core, components that promote healthy living, as well as the arts.

We have to become more strategic with our respective budgets and not simply balance our budgets by cutting arts programs designed for our citizens. Additionally, counties that have large tracts of land owned

by the federal government should be allowed a place at the table to take part in determining how the land will be utilized. I will also be an advocate for counties on common-sense water regulations. “The last thing counties need to be doing is paying a bunch of consultants to figure out regulations while economic development and green space use is held up.” I will work collaboratively with the Western Interstate Region and Rural Action Caucus to make sure counties are at the table to have input on these critical quality of life factors.

Finally, education is an essential piece to any strategy. I advocate increased educational opportunities for NACo members. I believe that we should, in our capacities as elected officials, work towards a leadership development program that provides accreditation to our membership, which includes a premier certification. As a commissioner in Georgia, the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) “Advancing Georgia's Counties” has a certification

program in which all commissioners must participate. On a national level, we can work with well-known colleges and universities to establish a program, which grants credits toward a designated certification. This would greatly enhance the knowledge base of NACo members.

Elect me, Larry “LJ” Johnson as your 2nd Vice President. I am business minded and community focused with a human service heart. I have linked and leveraged public and private partnerships locally, regionally, nationally and globally and empowered people to improve their quality of life. I have the most regional experience: I lived in Illinois (Chicago, Urbana-Champaign), Colorado (Greeley, Weld County) and Georgia (Decatur, unincorporated DeKalb County). So you will get a well-rounded, seasoned public servant who has lived in suburban, urban and rural settings. Let's win the future together!

For more information call 404.409.0962, email [larryj2vp@gmail.com](mailto:larryj2vp@gmail.com) or visit [www.ljformaco.com](http://www.ljformaco.com).



# Storm water public-partnership is ‘twofer’ for Prince George’s County, Maryland

By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Like a rewards program that pays double points, Prince George’s County, Md. will reap dual benefits from a “green infrastructure” partnership to clean up storm water runoff. It’s designed to benefit the environment and the economy.

The county has entered a \$100 million public-private partnership (P3) with Corvias Solutions to create infrastructure including rain gardens, permeable pavement and green roofs. These green features — some 46,000 of them eventually by 2025 — will absorb or filter pollutants from storm water, including nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment, before they can reach the Chesapeake Bay.

The White House Council on Environmental Quality has hailed the project as a “best practice” and “first-of-its-kind public-private partnership” for green storm water infrastructure. Nationwide, approximately \$635 billion worth of storm water- and wastewater-related improvements are needed over the next 20 years to comply with federal pollution discharge permits, according to the EPA.

“We’re in the early stages of a growth industry,” said Adam Ortiz, director of the county’s Department of Environment, which negotiated the county’s Clean Water Partnership (CWP). “And it’s incumbent on people in our position to provide the R&D not just for ourselves, but so that overall the public sector can better provide services. We’re willing to learn and willing to share what we learn.”

Corvias Solutions was selected through a competitive process to do the work. It’s charged with retrofitting 15,000 acres by 2025 and maintaining that infrastructure for 30 years — starting with 2,000 acres over the next three years, Ortiz said. Corvias will manage contracting and



Two bioswales: One in the foreground under construction and before landscaping. The background, vegetated swale is completed. This green infrastructure captures polluted storm water rushing off hard surfaces like parking lots, roads, driveways and rooftops. Other types of green infrastructure retrofits include downspout disconnection — rerouting rooftop drainage pipes to rain barrels, cisterns or permeable areas instead of the storm sewer. Image from the Wikimedia Commons, released into the public domain by the author.

can earn up to a 10 percent fee if its performance goals are met.

“Corvias is compensated in the partnership through a very simple computation structure,” said Tim Toohey, the company’s managing director. “It’s fee-based and the fee is performance-based. The contract also allows for adding additional scope to retrofit additional acres based on our performance and the county’s willingness to extend the scope.”

During the first three years of the project, Corvias will “race” against department of environment’s capital projects team, which will retrofit another 2,000 acres, and their results will be compared. “The assumption we’re operating under is that the P3 will be more efficient,” Ortiz explained. “If that’s true, we want

to be able to learn exactly how it is efficient, and be able to learn so we can best use our resources going forward.”

Economic benefits to the county will flow from the creation of new jobs and a workforce for a new industry. Corvias has agreed to hire 80 percent of its workforce from the county and neighboring Washington, D.C. suburbs, Ortiz said. That’s particularly important to Prince George’s County, where more than half of residents leave the county daily to work in other jurisdictions, he added.

It’s a business model that’s designed to stimulate and expand the county’s tax base and create mentor-protégé networks between Corvias and the developing workforce, according to Roland L. Jones,

director of the county’s Office of Central Services. The educational component of the partnership includes an Urban Watershed Restoration Contractor Training Course at Prince George’s County Community College. The course provides instruction in the construction, operation and maintenance of storm water management options.

The ultimate beneficiary, the Chesapeake Bay, is the nation’s largest estuary, and 95 percent of Maryland’s land drains into it. Prince George’s County is home to more than 300 miles of streams and rivers, which makes this project significant to the nonprofit Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

A spokeswoman said the organization is “very supportive” of Prince George’s county’s approach to reduc-

ing storm water pollution. “We do think it’s a model that others should look at throughout the watershed,” said Allison Prost, the foundation’s Maryland executive director. She also spoke favorably of the county’s level of community education and outreach, calling it a “standout.”

The EPA has created a guide to aid local governments in creating P3s to address storm water pollution: *Community based Public-Private Partnerships (CBP3s) and Alternative Market-Based Tools for Integrated Green Stormwater Infrastructure*.

“All jurisdictions are struggling with the same challenge, many of them are watching very closely how successful we are,” Ortiz said. “People are looking for fresh answers, and this may be the best one we have.”

## CN JOB MARKET

**County Administrator —**  
Franklin County, Wash.  
**Salary:** \$116,000.00–\$121,000.00  
Franklin County is accepting job applications for a County Administrator. Full Time. Full Benefits. Applicants must submit a resume and completed application to [hr@co.franklin.wa.us](mailto:hr@co.franklin.wa.us) or in person. Go to [www.co.franklin.wa.us/humanresources](http://www.co.franklin.wa.us/humanresources) for application and full job description.  
Franklin County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

## NACo on the Move

• **Matt Chase**, NACo executive director, participated in a specially convened roundtable of 20-plus national organizations in Baltimore on the future of criminal justice, sponsored by the National Sheriffs’ Association, June 24. More than half of the six hours were

focused on mental health and substance abuse challenges and how they are driving many of the issues between communities and law enforcement.  
• NACo Financial Services Corp. Presi-



Thompson

dent **David Thompson** represented U.S. Communities and spoke during a general session of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Annual Meeting, June 18–23, in San Francisco.  
• **Mike Belarmino**,



Belarmino

associate legislative director, spoke at the UAS Commercialization Conference in Arlington County, Va., June 24, about how counties are approaching the increased use of drones by local governments.



## SOLUTIONS SPOTLIGHT

## Cleaning up voter lists reduces election costs

People usually are diligent about changing their billing address, shutting off utilities and updating their driver's license when they move. Updating their voter registration information is something they rarely think of — a little oversight that was costing Orange County, Calif. quite a bit of money.

With 1.6 million voters on Orange County's rolls, costs associated with mandated election-related communications between government and citizens really can add up. "People tend to think about updating their information with us last," said Orange County Registrar of Voters Neal Kelley. "They'll update their magazine subscriptions before they contact us. When you factor in postage and printing, each bad address costs the county between \$3 and



\$4." Until the voter list is pared down and scrubbed for accuracy, those recurring costs will continue to increase.

One of the challenges faced by registrars of voters — including Orange County, the fifth-largest voting jurisdiction in the country — is difficulty in maintaining up-to-date addresses for voters, according to Jill Canetta, vice president of marketing and operations for Experian Public Sector.

There are more than 24 million (more than 12 percent) voter records that are significantly inaccurate, including 12 million incorrect addresses and 1.8 million records of deceased citizens. Studies show

that the average citizen moves 12 times over his or her lifetime, with more than 14 percent of Americans moving annually.

Experian Public Sector offers address verification services to government organizations that need help keeping their voting lists accurate. Data collected by Experian is more accurate than what government customers can get, according to Canetta. "Since we are a credit bureau, we have to go through a cleansing process with our information," she said. A name could be listed several different ways, depending on variations in spelling or if initials are used. "We bring all those instances together and find the right one, saving it as a single record," she explained. Experian® also captures data from sources like payday loan companies and rent bureaus, providing infor-

mation on people who may never have purchased a home or applied for a car loan.

Experian Public Sector offered to take the Orange County list of voters and check it against its database of known addresses. By law, the county could send Experian only the name and last known address for 260,000 inactive voters — those who had not voted in Orange County for the past four years.

Once the proper addresses came back to Orange County, post cards were sent to those voters. According to Kelley, 18,600 people returned cards confirming that they had moved out of the county and no longer were eligible to vote there. Removing those people from the mailing list saved the county \$80,000 in the next election. Had those bad addresses not been

removed, the county would have kept trying to reach those people. Other voters on the list had moved but still were living in Orange County. Their information was updated, and their new polling place was assigned. While that didn't save the county any money outright, it did make these people active on voter rolls again and likely saved some confusion and time on Election Day.

Orange County first checked its list in 2012 and then again in 2014. It was the first and so far only county in California to scrub its voter lists for accuracy using the Experian program. The cost to have its inactive voter records checked was less than 14 cents per record, representing a savings for Orange County.

— Sponsored by the NACo Premier Member Program —

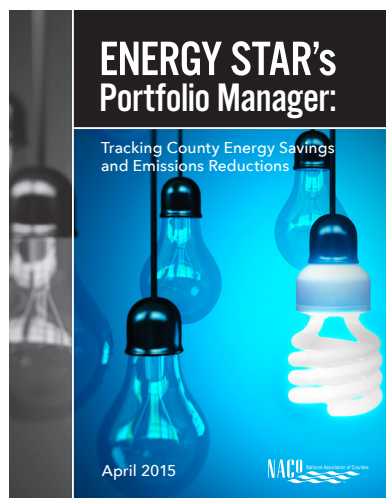
## Energy Star keeps it cool for counties

By ROB PRESSLEY  
PROGRAM MANAGER

In May, NACo released a new report, *ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager: Tracking County Energy Savings and Emissions Reductions* that explores how NACo is helping 97 counties track energy and water consumption for more than 2,079 county-owned buildings using the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager. It also highlights the benefits counties have seen using the tool, including reduced greenhouse gas emissions and energy usage.

ENERGY STAR is a free suite of products from the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy that has helped reduce energy and water demands in residential and commercial buildings since 1992. Each year, the program saves more than \$9 billion in energy costs and prevents nearly 135 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions. County-owned buildings of all sizes and ages including courthouses, office buildings and fire stations have used ENERGY STAR tools.

Through Portfolio Manager, users receive a score of 1–100 to indicate how an individual building performs against similar facilities nationwide. The score accounts for differences in operating conditions, regional weather data and other important considerations. Buildings with a score of 75 or higher are eligible for ENERGY STAR certification,



which is renewed annually to ensure that the building is maintaining high levels of performance. Mohave County, Ariz. has 10 ENERGY STAR certified buildings, the most out of the 97 counties NACo helps track through Portfolio Manager.

Building managers can use Portfolio Manager to track important operational data across all of their buildings, comparing current performance with historic information, a process known as benchmarking. Two of the most useful benchmarking data are total Greenhouse Gas Emissions Intensity and Weather Normalized Site Energy Use Intensity.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide gases are released into the atmosphere as a result of energy consumption at most buildings in the United States. Across all county properties in Portfolio Manager, nearly 46 percent have a

GHG emissions intensity at or below the national median, meaning that county buildings have successfully been reducing their GHG emissions.

Weather-normalized site energy-use-intensity (EUI) measures the amount of energy use one can expect to see on a building's utility bill given normal weather conditions, i.e., if there is not a significant heat wave in the summer or a milder-than-average winter. Weather-normalized site EUI can help property managers understand how utility bills have changed over time, when the effect of weather is taken into account. Nearly 45 percent of county buildings have a weather-normalized site EUI at or below the national median.

Across all building types in Portfolio Manager, county courthouses have seen the greatest reduction in both GHG emissions intensity and weather normalized EUI.

The online Portfolio Manager tool is free to use and enables counties to track their energy and water consumption as well as greenhouse gas emissions. By setting benchmarks, counties can compare current data for one building or an entire suite with past performance, and they can also see how their energy and water usage compares to similar buildings throughout the country.

For more information on how your county can get involved with ENERGY STAR portfolio manager, contact Rob Pressley, NACo program manager, at [rpressley@naco.org](mailto:rpressley@naco.org) or 202.942.4224.



## Profiles in Service

**Jim Schmidt**

NACo Board Member  
Commissioner  
Lincoln County, S.D.

**Number of years active in NACo:** 16

**Years in public service:** 18

**Occupation:** Management — nonprofit affordable housing.

**Education:** B.A. from Augustana College; master's degree from University of South Dakota.

**The hardest thing I've ever done:** terminate a friend.

**Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner:** Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Harry Truman, and my great-great grandfather.

**A dream I have is to:** go on a Grand Canyon raft trip.

**You'd be surprised to learn that I:** was a community college president.

**The most adventurous thing I've ever done is:** hiking in the Black Hills.

**My favorite way to relax is:** being on my farm.

**I'm most proud of:** my family.

**Every morning I read:** the morning newspaper.

**My favorite meal is:** scalloped potatoes and ham.

**My pet peeve is:** pretentious people.

**The last book I read was:** *East of Eden* by John Steinbeck.

**My favorite movie is:** *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

**My favorite music is:** '50s, '60s, '70s and classical.

**My favorite president is:** Franklin D. Roosevelt.

**My county is a NACo member because:** of the many services provided that help serve our constituents more efficiently and with better quality.

**My motto is:**  
"Don't be full of yourself."



# COUNTY INNOVATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

## Livable Communities Plan Unifies Governments, Organizations' Priorities

By CHARLIE BAN  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Optimistic about having the right partners committed to a shared vision for growth, Mecklenburg County, N.C. is looking toward the next 35 years with confidence, rather than unease.

With a half million new residents projected to make the county their new home by 2050, it was time to get everyone on the same page when they set their course for the future. In the end, what became the Mecklenburg Livable Communities Plan formulated a wide-ranging and clear vision for how to move ahead as the county grows.

The county's planning department identified more than 200 plans in progress by local governments, nonprofits and businesses in the county, but few, if any, were coordinated with others.

"There were a lot of conversations going on, but they weren't all about the same things," said Marcus Carson, the county's sustainability

manager. "Organizations were unintentionally competing and they would all wind up with gaps in service."

In 2013, a feasibility study gave the go-ahead for eight local jurisdictions and the Foundation for the Carolinas to prepare a plan that would be driven by the community with input from stakeholders and ultimately endorsed by local governments. It would consider input from all of those sources and aim to represent a synthesis of their shared goals.

"The first step was asking everyone, 'What does our community value?'" Carson said. "Identifying those things started the conversation that built this plan. We knew what we wanted to preserve and where we wanted to go."

The seven final answers became the guiding principles for the plan. Mecklenburg County residents idealized their community as being welcoming, innovative, connected, inclusive, prepared, healthy and resilient. Those principles helped

form the 21 strategies that became the backbone of the plan.

The strategies range from vague (manage resources wisely) to specific (promote the redevelopment, reuse and rehabilitation of declining and vacant properties).

"The scope is pretty daunting," Carson said. "We're covering essentially the entire spectrum of issues a community can face. Trying to bring all the stakeholders to talk was a big job."

But it worked out, people showed up, more than 2,000 individuals and 50 organizations, and Mecklenburg County's character played a part in making that happen — that is, getting everyone involved.

"I think it's the combination of the county's medium size and the fact that Charlotte is a young city," he said. "The city is growing, and people can have a part in making decisions about where things are going."

And in the process, Mecklenburg County learned the depth to which some concerns had taken root.

"There's a lot of concern around our at-risk residents, a lot more than we realized," Carson said. "We will be coordinating to make sure these people who need support have it."

The plan was sent off to the involved cities, towns and organizations that participated, and they were encouraged to incorporate it into their strategic planning or, for local governments, pass resolutions endorsing the plan.

The plan, however, does not include prescriptive language for specific measures, so it is nonbinding, a point Mint Hill Mayor Ted Biggers said would keep it from replacing the existing plans his town were already following.

"We have our own comprehensive plan and this isn't going to change any of that," he said. "It's kind of vague, but we thought we should be a part of it moving forward."

*County Innovations and Solutions features award-winning programs. Mecklenburg Livable Communities Plan was named Best in Category among planning programs submitted to the 2015 NACo Achievement Awards.*

## Mentally ill do not belong behind bars

By SHERIFF DAVID MAHONEY  
AND JONATHAN THOMPSON

For hundreds of thousands of mentally ill Americans, "help" consists of a jail cell where at least they can obtain the medications and psychiatric care they need to become stabilized.

Thanks to Washington's own shortsighted rules, however, Medicaid eligibility terminates when a person is placed in custody; consequently, when the mentally ill are eventually released, they are on their own. Without access to doctors, medicines or a means to pay for them, their mental health soon deteriorates and they frequently wind up back in jail. It is a revolving door of neglect, incarceration and renewed neglect.

Chillingly, jail cells have become America's "new asylums." In the wake of de-institutionalization of the mentally ill, the number of people suffering serious mental illness in jails and prisons is now 10 times the number receiving treatment in state psychiatric hospitals.

In 2012, the most recent year for which data is available, there were 356,268 inmates with severe mental illness in custody, compared to just 35,000 being treated in hospitals. In 44 of the 50 states, a single jail or prison is home to more mentally ill inmates than the largest state psychiatric hospital.

At just one facility, the Dane County, Wisconsin jail, the number of inmates being administered psychotropic medications has increased by more than 55 percent just between 2013 and 2014, by which time more than 1 inmate in 3 was receiving psychiatric care.

More than just a repository where mentally ill people can be locked away and forgotten, our prisons and jails have become, by default, the only place they can receive the psychiatric care and medication they need.

Washington, however, has decreed that a poor person's eligibility for Medicaid terminates immediately upon his or her incarceration. Although taxpayers pay the cost of an inmate's medical care during incarceration, the practical effect of Washington's rule is to ensure that the bills will be paid by the prison or jail instead of Medicaid.

Once the mentally ill person is released from custody, however, Medicaid ineligibility has a far more insidious effect, depriving the individual of medicines or psychiatric aftercare until he or she can success-

fully reapply — if that ever happens.

Without medications or care, the individual's mental state deteriorates and, eventually, he or she goes on to commit other offenses, often in a pathetic effort to get help.

In law enforcement circles, repeat offenders are commonly referred to as "frequent flyers," and among the mentally ill, the "frequent flyer" rate is higher than it is for other released inmates.

In the Los Angeles County jail alone, a 2010 study found that 90 percent of mentally ill inmates were repeat offenders, with 31 percent of those having been incarcerated 10 times or more. In Memphis, one inmate, Gloria Rodgers, was arrested 259 times before she was finally (and mercifully) committed to a state psychiatric hospital.

Jails are singularly ill-equipped to serve as mental health facilities, and the mentally ill do not belong behind bars. Nevertheless, it has fallen on the nation's sheriffs to initiate a long-overdue conversation on a problem that for decades has been ignored.

For starters, Congress should reexamine an arcane Medicaid eligibility rule whose only practical effect is to deprive low-income, mentally ill individuals of desperately needed psychiatric care and condemn them (and society at large) to a dangerous pattern of recidivism.

At the very least, however Congress should reexamine a pilot program that would continue Medicaid benefits for inmates so that, upon release, they can seamlessly continue to receive psychiatric aftercare and psychotropic medications. The nation's sheriffs advocated such a demonstration program legislatively in 2010, but Congress never acted; it should do so now, because as sheriffs, we are convinced that doing so will reduce recidivism among the mentally ill.

America's sheriffs are ready and willing to engage in an honest discussion about how best to help the mentally ill so they can resume their lives as productive members of society, alleviate the burden on law enforcement — and, hopefully, avoid the tragic consequences that can result from our continued neglect.

Mahoney is the chief law enforcement officer of Dane County (Madison), Wis. and serves on the board of directors of the National Sheriffs' Association, of which Thompson is executive director.

—Reprinted with permission from Congress Blog, thehill.com, June 26, 2015.

## What's in a Seal?

■ Pickens County, Ga.



Pickens County, Ga. formed from parts of Cherokee and Gilmer counties in 1853 to become the state's 100th county, but later lost portions to back to Cherokee County, plus Dawson and Gordon counties.

An isolated mountain region, it was once home to the Cherokee, who were later ravaged by diseases, carried by European settlers, for which they had no immunity. The Cherokee later allied with the British during the American Revolution. In 1782, Andrew Pickens and Elijah Clarke forced the Cherokee to surrender claim to all lands south of the Savannah River and east of the Chattahoochee River in the Treaty of Long Swamp, signed in what is now Pickens County.

Demographics changed further when the discovery of gold in Georgia in 1829 brought in more white settlers and the Indian Removal Act a year later further led to the Cherokee's relocation in 1838.

Jasper was designated the county seat in 1857. The Union flag flew above the Jasper courthouse at the outbreak of the Civil War, in open defiance of the Confederacy.

Consolidation of local marble quarries formed the Georgia Marble Company in the 1880s brought prosperity to the county.

The county seal depicts a crane carrying marble out of a quarry. Every fall, the county plays host to the Georgia Marble Festival.



# Highway bill reauthorization advances as Senate committee releases DRIVE Act

The long-anticipated federal highway bill, a six-year reauthorization of federal highway programs, moved out of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, June 24. Dubbed the Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy (DRIVE) Act (S. 1647), it would provide \$277.4 billion in spending for highway programs, which represents an average growth of \$5.3 billion per year. The funding levels set by the bill would require an additional \$92 billion in revenue beyond current projected receipts for the Highway Trust Fund. While the DRIVE Act addresses a number of NACo’s priorities for MAP-21 reautho-

rization, the bill is far from a home run for counties. It’s important to note that the bill is only the first step in a long and complicated process — a process that provides numerous opportunities for NACo and its members to weigh in and advance proposals that will make a final reauthorization bill a stronger product for counties. Below you will find an overview of some of the major reforms proposed in the DRIVE Act. If you would like additional information, please contact Jessica Monahan, NACo associate legislative director, at [jmonahan@naco.org](mailto:jmonahan@naco.org).

ISSUE	DRIVE Act	WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:
Bill’s Length	The DRIVE Act is a six-year reauthorization of federal highway programs for fiscal years 2016-2021.	The DRIVE Act, as marked up by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, only addresses the highway title of MAP-21 reauthorization because that is the portion of the U.S. Code that falls under the jurisdiction of the committee. Eventually, the DRIVE Act will be combined with the transit and freight titles produced by the Senate Banking and Commerce Committees to create a comprehensive reauthorization of federal surface transportation programs.
Overall Funding Levels	The DRIVE Act \$277.4 billion in spending for highway programs, which represents an average growth of \$5.3 billion per year.	The DRIVE Act represents an increase in funding from current levels authorized by MAP-21. However, most of the program’s growth is targeted at two new programs: the National Freight Program and the Assistance for Major Projects program, which are authorized.
Revenue Required	The DRIVE Act would require an additional \$92 billion in revenue beyond current projected receipts for the Highway Trust Fund.	The funding gap will need to be addressed by the Senate Finance Committee and additional revenue will be required for federal transit programs.
Funding for Locally Owned Infrastructure	The DRIVE Act increases funding for the Surface Transportation Program (STP) by an average of \$665 million per year.	While the DRIVE Act increases funding for locally owned infrastructure, it does not completely repair the 30 percent cut to locally owned highways and bridges that occurred under MAP-21.
Bridge Funding	The DRIVE Act expands the current off-system bridge set-aside to support on-system and off-system bridges that are not on the designated National Highway System (NHS).	<p>Under STP, 15 percent of the program’s funding is set aside for off-system and on-system bridges that are not a part of the designated NHS. These non-NHS bridges capture the vast majority of bridges owned by counties and account for 75 percent of the National Bridge Inventory. Under MAP-21, the off-system bridge set-aside provides \$777 million per year for non-highway or “off-system” bridges. The expanded bridge set-aside would provide an average of \$1.6 billion annually for non-NHS bridges but does not require that any of those funds support off-system bridges.</p> <p>While NACo is pleased that the DRIVE Act attempts to designate more funding for the types of bridges owned by counties, it is working to amend the bill’s language to ensure that a portion of the set-aside supports off-system bridges.</p>
Sub-Allocated Funds	The DRIVE Act requires that 55 percent of the STP program (excluding the amounts set aside for non-NHS bridges) be sub-allocated to local areas based on population, including metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs).	MAP-21 required that 50 percent of a state’s STP funding be sub-allocated to local areas based on population. While the DRIVE Act increases the sub-allocation percentage to 55, this actually represents a reduction in funding from MAP-21 (\$4.6 billion in FY16 vs. \$4.9 billion in FY14) since it only represents 55 percent of 85 percent of the program. Currently, the off-system bridge set-aside is removed from the 50 percent of STP that is not allocated to local areas rather than coming off the top of the program.
Safety Funding for High Risk Rural Roads	The DRIVE Act changes the special rule on High Risk Rural Roads to require that states invest a portion of their Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding if the fatality rate on a state’s rural roads does not decrease over a two-year period and exceeds the national average rate of fatalities on rural roads.	MAP-21 eliminated the High Risk Rural Road program and it replaced it with a special rule that requires states to obligate HSIP funding to address fatality rates on rural roads only if the fatality rates increase over a two year period. While the change to the special rule in the DRIVE Act may appear nuanced, it better targets areas with the highest incident rates and complements the goal of moving the nation’s transportation system ‘towards zero deaths.’
Discretionary Funding for Major Projects	The DRIVE Act authorizes \$2.4 billion for a discretionary program to fund major highway projects.	The “Assistance to Major Projects” program is a reformed version of the current TIGER grant program. One of the most significant differences between the programs is that the DRIVE Act authorizes the discretionary program through the Highway Trust Fund, an important distinction that the TIGER program has lacked. Since TIGER has relied on annual appropriations to receive its annual funding, its funding level and overall fate has been uncertain year-to-year. Authorizing the program and providing its funding through the Highway Trust Fund will provide long-term certainty for the new discretionary program.
Transportation Alternatives Funding	The DRIVE Act provides \$850 million annual for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and requires that states obligate and sub-allocate 100 percent of their TAP funding	The changes to the TAP program proposed in the DRIVE Act represent both an increase in overall funding for TAP projects (a \$30 million increase from current funding levels) and a significant commitment to “alternative transportation projects” by eliminating the ability for states to transfer up to 50 percent of their TAP funding to other highway programs. In addition, the DRIVE act requires that 100 percent of a state’s TAP apportionment be sub-allocated to local areas based on population instead of the 50 percent that is required under MAP-21.



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# COUNTY JAILS AT A CROSSROADS

AN EXAMINATION OF THE JAIL POPULATION  
AND PRETRIAL RELEASE



Natalie R. Ortiz, Ph.D.  
Justice Research Analyst



## Financial Services News

# Counties get a lot more with Deferred Compensation Program

Today's county workers face some uncertainties as they prepare for and live in retirement. From investment market volatility to Social Security decisions to long-term care to "the unknowns," these types of challenges can be dizzyingly complex.

Fortunately, in counties that offer the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, even more resources are available to help employees. NACo and Nationwide have been partners for more than 35 years, dedicated to ensuring counties can make high-quality supplemental retirement plans available to their employees. As provider of the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, Nationwide gives counties access to competitive products, tools, services and pricing.

### Understanding how health care costs impact retirement savings

Let's start with health care in retirement. Many county employees may think Medicare will cover them completely, when in fact, it covers only about 62 percent of expenses associated with health care services. Even with a very good retiree health insurance plan, workers need to plan ahead for out-of-

pocket expenses, gaps in coverage and long-term care.

Through Nationwide, the NACo Deferred Compensation Program helps participants understand what Medicare does and doesn't cover; see the key differences and premiums for Medicare parts A, B and D; and develop realistic expectations for out-of-pocket medical expenses throughout retirement. Called the Nationwide Health Care Cost Assessment, this tool:

- helps participants estimate what they can expect to pay for health care in retirement
- is powered by calculations from one of the world's leading actuarial firms, and
- includes separate estimates for Medicare premiums, out-of-pocket costs and long-term care costs.

And, coming this summer, a really simple, five question, online Health Care Cost Estimator Tool will be incorporated into My Interactive Retirement Planner, Nationwide's intuitive online

tool that uses participant information to help them project their income needs through retirement. It's a free service to participants who log onto the retirement account at [www.nrsforu.com](http://www.nrsforu.com), the NACo Deferred Compensation Program website.

### Understanding the role of Social Security income in retirement planning

Thanks to prior work experience and loved ones, even public employees exempt from Social Security participation usually need to understand how it may affect their retirement planning. With over 2,700 rules in the Social Security handbook, it's difficult to have all the answers.

Nationwide has a powerful yet easy-to-use tool that helps county workers familiarize themselves with basic terminology and rules, understand benefits and work with the Social Security Administration, see the impact of longevity on lifetime value, leverage spousal or survivor benefits and address concerns about the uncertain future of Social Security. The Nationwide Social Security 360 Analyzer<sup>SM</sup> tool:

- accounts for complexity of benefits to meet unique situations
- identifies optimal and alternate filing strategy options
- positions Social Security in the context of an overall retirement income plan, and
- generates a personalized participant report.

Perhaps the biggest challenge workers face is the unknown; no one can see the future. But employees can work out scenarios to prepare for it using the array of tools and educational services provided by the NACo Deferred Compensation Program and Nationwide. It's one more way that NACo and Nationwide provide participants with choices for how they receive education and make decisions about their retirement planning.

County employers wanting to learn more about the award-winning services, action-oriented communications and new features for participants available through the NACo Deferred Compensation Program should

contact Linda Barber at [barberl@nationwide.com](mailto:barberl@nationwide.com).

(Bob Beasley, communications consultant, Nationwide, wrote *Financial Services News*.)

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

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## The H.R. Doctor Is In

# Bastille Day – and Other Days of Change

The month of July has apparently been chosen by the forces of the universe to be the time of celebration of the success of national independence movements. Besides the Fourth of July, the most famous of the other July events occurred on July 14, 1789 when French citizens stormed the Bastille prison in Paris. The Bastille was the symbolic representation of the monarchy. The event became a catalyst for what we call the French Revolution today.

President Lyndon Johnson signed the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 in July of that year. The Bahamas gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1973 — in, you guessed it — July. One of my favorite July events occurred in 1848 when an organized women's rights convention was held in Seneca Falls, N.Y. What these and other anniversary commemorations really represent, however, is the "tipping point" of movements for change in fundamental ways.

In the case of the French Revolu-

tion, there were decaying economic conditions, increasing perceptions of a non-responsive and uncaring monarchy and no other internal mechanism to bring about fundamental change. In effect, the analogy to a steam engine with increasing pressure and no relief valve seems appropriate.

As public administrators we need to build into the way we think and act several key pressure relief valves:

The first is the ability to clearly and continuously scan the environment for signs of anomalies and the need to respond to those. We must all be HR doctors in the sense of respectfully listening for symptoms and observing and knowing when the time has arrived to make positive change and innovation happen.

We are very well served by investing now in building a network of colleagues who can help us diagnose the need for change and be aware of our treatment options. These may be other colleagues inside an agency or they may be outside consultants.

They may be friends or fellow professionals in an agency next door or across the country. Wherever the source of the network help comes from, no professional will survive pretending to be an island not needing to get by with a little help from our friends (with apologies to John Lennon).

Professional training and development is a key component of being able to grow and adapt. An agency that spends little time and few of its resources improving the knowledge, skills, behaviors and capabilities of its human resources is committing malpractice. It cannot be successful in a world of changes in law, practice and technology without internal staff development.

As we spot the symptoms of the need for change and we take in advice, ideas and experience from other people, we move to another critical step — the ability to recommend specific approaches with one purpose in mind — to control the uncertainty which is building up

around us.

The French sociologist Michel Crozier studied the relationship in a bureaucracy between power and uncertainty. His thesis was that power flows to the people who control uncertainty. The role of the leader is to learn and act in ways that control and reduce, rather than increase, the uncertainty in the organization, and in the minds of individuals.

The best parents, the best elected and appointed officials, the best detectives in police organizations, the best physicians as well as the best HR professionals are those people who are the most adept at the control of uncertainty.

The world around us is changing and will continue to change at an even faster pace in the future. The changes are the result of many factors including the impacts of technology as well as climate changes, and shifts in population demographics, world economics and much more.

America's place in a changing

world and the place of every reader of HR Doctor articles is also subject to change. The change can be in a more planned, more orderly and more positive manner or it can be the bureaucratic equivalent of being run over by a tanker truck in the middle of a crosswalk.

The difference is in the ability of top leaders to anticipate change and to offer hopeful innovative alternatives, otherwise known as the control of uncertainty. Not responding to change, not adapting to it, not anticipating it means that our own inertia will take over and produce an outcome that we may very well not like at all.

You get to decide whether it's time for your own independence in terms of thinking and acting in a proactive manner. What's it going to be? Choose wisely!

Phil Rosenberg  
The HR Doctor







# News From the Nation's Counties

## ► CALIFORNIA

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY** could serve as a model for other **drought-stricken counties** in the state by cleaning up storm water runoff and using it to recharge groundwater reserves. Historically, that runoff has flowed into storm sewers and, eventually, into the ocean.

Recently, the State Water Resources Control Board voted unanimously in favor of revisions to the county's storm water discharge permit. It would allow cities within the county to build green infrastructure and aquifer recharge systems to filter out pollution, *The Los Angeles Times* reported.

The Natural Resources Defense Council has argued that capturing runoff could potentially provide more than 253,000 acre-feet of water for the county for every inch of rainfall. That's almost 40 percent of water the city of Los Angeles uses annually.

## ► COLORADO

**MESA COUNTY** commissioners and the federal Bureau of Land Management remain deadlocked over what to do with 393 routes that are public land. As part of its Resource Management Plan, the **BLM wants the close the routes** — amounting to up to 2,000 miles of public lands — for environmental reasons.

A BLM official told KJCT TV that the routes are on "highly erosive soils," which could contribute to increased salinity and sedimentation in the Colorado River.

"These are routes that the community has identified as important routes for recreational value," said Mesa County Commissioner Rose Pugliese. "We are a big tourist community, and we want to make sure that we've got these recreational routes open. It's very important to our economy and our constituents."

## ► DELAWARE

A drone could join the **NEW CASTLE COUNTY** Police Department's arsenal of crime-fighting technology. County Council is expected to vote by the end of this month on whether to spend \$52,000 on an **unmanned aerial vehicle**. It could transmit images to police from emergency scenes, and be used in surveillance and searches, *The News Journal* reported.

Police Capt. Pat Crowell said the department currently calls in a State Police helicopter, which can be expensive.



## ► ALABAMA

**MOBILE COUNTY** Commissioner Merceria Ludgood kicks off a **summer job internship program** that will place 56 high school youths into premiere jobs throughout the community. The Mobile County Commission along with its partners, Mobile Works, PNC Bank and the University of South Alabama are sponsoring the program.

"Our local businesses come to this program as full-fledged partners who want to give these young people real and meaningful work and challenge them to excel in the work place," Ludgood said. "The experience is wide-ranging, including engineering, aerospace, manufacturing, and medical and the nonprofit sector."

The program consists of 30 hours of job training followed by four weeks of on-the-job performance, primarily in private sector work. Training will include technology and software classes as well as basic essential skills such as banking, budgeting and personal presentation.

Also on the technology front, the County Council earlier in June approved using part of a \$64,000 state grant to buy 25 body cameras for police and equipment to store the captured footage.

## ► FLORIDA

• It's now **illegal to ask for money** or try to sell items at 20 of **BROWARD COUNTY's** busiest intersections. Broward Commissioners passed an ordinance banning vendors and solicitors from intersections identified in a county study as having the highest traffic volumes in the unincorporated areas.

Persons covered under the ordinance include children, adolescents and adults collecting money for school and community activities; vendors selling flowers, newspapers and other items; and individuals seeking charitable donations or contributions at such intersections. The overall goal is to save lives by reducing the number of vehicle accidents involving pedestrians.

Other intersections in the unincorporated areas of Broward County could be added to the ordinance in the future based upon further study.

• **MIAMI-DADE COUNTY's**

sewer department has declared war on "**flushable wipes**" via a public awareness campaign.

"It's hard to believe the kind of problems that these things are creating," county sewage chief Lester Sola told *The Miami-Herald*. "There are some pump stations where we have to go almost on a daily basis to solve these issues."

County officials said there's a growing national problem of wipes in pipes that result in increased sewer clogs, broken pumps and other large pieces of sewer machines and equipment. They blame pre-moistened towelettes, baby wipes, cleaning wipes, paper towels

and feminine products.

These items do not breakdown within the sewer system the same way toilet tissue does.

## ► HAWAII

A federal judge in Honolulu has invalidated a **MAUI COUNTY** law that banned the growing of **genetically engineered (GE) crops**, the Associated Press reported.

The ban is pre-empted by federal and state law, ruled U.S. District Court Chief Judge Susan Oki Mollway. She added that the decision doesn't address the merits



# Henrico TV show wins Emmy Award

NEWS FROM *from page 14*

of whether genetically modified organisms are “good or bad,” nor does it express an opinion on the law’s potential benefits to the county.

The county is a major center for research on GE crops; both Monsanto Co. and Dow Chemical Co.’s Agrigenetics Inc. have research farms in the county.

## ► KANSAS

A new law that took effect July 1 requires county commissions to approve cities’ bids to annex county land that’s not adjacent to existing city territory. The new law still allows so-called “**island annexation**,” but it requires a minimum of two-thirds approval from the County Board, the *News-Advocate* reported.

## ► MAINE

The state Legislature passed a bill to **return full financial control of county jails** back to counties — and eliminate the state Board of Corrections.

As a result of a jail consolidation law, passed in 2009, the county lockups had surrendered financial authority of the board of corrections. But that system never worked as planned; jails continued to experience money woes, WCSH TV news reported.

Jail and county officials said the bill still sets a cap on how much money the counties can raise and spend on jails. They say it also reduces the amount of state funding for the jails.

“We needed \$17.1 million and we’re getting around \$13 million as I understand,” said Peter Crichton, **CUMBERLAND COUNTY** manager.

## ► MICHIGAN

**LEELANAU COUNTY** officials have created a **county housing task force** to help low-income renters find affordable housing. The panel, comprising representatives of local government, business, nonprofits and farmers, will identify solutions to the county’s housing needs, the *Traverse City Record-Eagle* reported.

In the county, a full-time worker needs to earn \$14.71 per hour to afford the average two-bedroom rental, but renters there make about \$9.28 an hour, on average, according to statistics provided by the National Low

Income Housing Coalition.

Commissioner Patricia Soutas-Little said families are leaving the county because they can’t find afford the rents. “It’s like we’re bleeding all of our young talent because we do not have a solution to a very difficult problem,” she added.

## ► MINNESOTA

**DAKOTA COUNTY** is the first in the state to reinstate the practice of **collecting DNA** from people accused of violent crimes before they’ve been convicted. The procedure entails a sheriff’s deputy collecting a DNA sample by swabbing the inside of the person’s cheek.

This resumes a practice begun in 2006 and halted that same year by a state appeals court, which found it unconstitutional. A 2013 U.S. Supreme Court decision overturned that ruling.

Officials in **HENNEPIN** and **RAMSEY counties** have said they are still examining the issue in light of the Supreme Court ruling.

## ► NEW YORK

**ORLEANS** and **NIAGARA counties** are working to finalize an agreement with an Internet service provider to bring **broadband** to the last mile.

“(The Niagara-Orleans Regional Alliance) was chosen because we’re the only cross-county (project),” Niagara County Legislator David Godfrey said of the award. “This was initiated by two counties and 17 towns that found nearly 4,000 unserved points by mapping.”

The plan was given the New York State Broadband Summit’s award for most collaborative broadband project. Under the plan, a memorandum of understanding approved by the two counties will have Orleans and Niagara helping to write the funding grant and having a private engineering firm manage the project, according to *The Daily News*.

• Gun owners in **SARATOGA COUNTY** will be able to **carry concealed firearms** in public under a new permit system county officials hope to implement soon.

The county’s pistol permitting system has long been restricted to hunting and target use, but that will change under Sheriff Michael Zurlo’s new plan. It will allow residents who possess the restricted pistol permits for a year to apply to acquire an unrestricted concealed-carry permit. Unrestricted permits allow pistol owners to carry guns, as long as they conceal them and don’t bring them to gun-free zones, such as government buildings,

schools and churches.

To have restrictions removed, applicants would need to attend an eight-hour qualification course focusing on when to use deadly force, and pass a written test and live-fire safety exam with an instructor at a firing range, the *Times Union* reported.

About 19,000 Saratoga County residents have gun permits, up from about 16,500 in 2013.

• The state Assembly’s effort to **link upstate sales taxes to New York City rent control** has drawn criticism from the **NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES** and its members.

The legislation would link the renewal of upstate New York sales tax extensions to rent control and other New York City-specific issues.

**ONEIDA COUNTY** Executive Anthony Picente, NYSAC’s president, told WIBX News the Assembly would be holding upstate communities hostage to an issue they have no stake in, sets a bad

precedent, and the move needs to be rejected.

## ► NORTH CAROLINA

A \$19 million deal with Duke Energy has convinced **CHATHAM COUNTY** officials to **not oppose a coal ash landfill** planned in their county.

County officials told the *Charlotte Observer* they will use the money for environmental monitoring and possibly for catastrophic insurance.

The agreement gives the county the right to request groundwater sampling before and after the coal ash is deposited at the landfill. Officials have yet to determine what kind of environmental monitoring will be required at the site.

Duke had previously agreed to pay **LEE COUNTY** officials \$12 million in exchange for accepting the toxic waste.

## ► PENNSYLVANIA

**CRAWFORD, MERCER** and **VENANGO counties** are working

with state funding to develop a **group home for mental health patients** who are released from a local state hospital.

According to the *Meadville Tribune*, the asking price for the home is \$90,000, and it would support one former hospital patient from each county, plus staff.

## ► TEXAS

• **Foreclosure auctions in HARRIS COUNTY** may move online, opening bidding to thousands of potential bidders who could not otherwise make it to the courthouse.

Tax Assessor Collector Mike Sullivan told ABC 13 News the current system was archaic — in place for 176 years — and eight precincts in the county are conducting their own individual sales. Texas now allows counties to set up online versions of the public square auctions.

• Oil- and gas-producing counties will get to **keep a narrow slice of the mineral wealth** that’s generated under their property, under a bill recently signed by the governor, starting Sept. 1, 2017.

The bill will let the counties keep royalty payments for the minerals produced under county lands — essentially the county road system, which has been badly battered and damaged by the drilling boom in the Eagle Ford Shale and Permian Basin. The money would be dedicated to road funding, MySA.com reported.

Right now the money for drilling under county roads goes to the state’s general fund, though the state does not traditionally pay to maintain the county road system.

## ► VIRGINIA

The **HENRICO COUNTY** Television program *The Decision: Aging Out of the Foster Care System* has earned a **2015 Emmy Award** from the National Capital Chesapeake Bay Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

The program won the award in the public/current/community affairs category. The 23-minute show features four young adults as they weigh the choice of transitioning from Henrico’s foster care system at age 18. The Emmy is the first won by Steve Boyd and the fifth by Henrico Public Relations & Media Services since launching HCTV in 2003.

(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](mailto:ctaylor@naco.org) or [cban@naco.org](mailto:cban@naco.org).)



Photo courtesy of Howard County, Md.

## ► MARYLAND

**HOWARD COUNTY** Executive Allan Kittleman gets physical during a stop along his tour of **recreational camp activities**. At the Cheer Camp at Swansfield Elementary School, he encouraged some of the county’s youngest residents — ages 6 through 18 — to adopt healthy and active lifestyles.

Kittleman participated in four county camps in conjunction with National Parks and Recreation Month: basketball, volleyball, badminton and cheer camps.

“Getting children involved with regular exercise — and having fun while doing it — needs to be reinforced every chance we get,” he said.





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