

CountyNews

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES ■ WASHINGTON, D.C.

VOL. 47, NO. 24 ■ DECEMBER 14, 2015

Diversifying NACo revenue sources, key goal in FY16 budget

By **BEVERLY A. SCHLOTTERBECK**
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

NACo's Board of Directors approved a \$14 million budget for FY16 at its meeting in El Paso County (Colorado Springs) Colo., Dec. 4-5. It also adopted a full spectrum of legislative policy priorities and participated in a forum where members discussed the pressures and demands counties face as they enter the 2016 federal election season.

The budget, which includes one-time costs associated with moving to a new headquarters building in the fall of 2016, also supports additional strategic priorities intended to protect, grow and diversify NACo revenue sources; invest in

See **DIRECTORS** page 2



PEACE ON EARTH

San Bernardino County recovers from tragedy with 'heavy hearts'

By **CHARLES TAYLOR**
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

San Bernardino County, Calif.'s Environmental Health Services (EHS) offices reopened this week, nearly two weeks after a shooting

rampage at a staff event left 13 county employees and another man dead, and 17 wounded.

While EHS operations will resume, county spokesman David

See **SAN BERNARDINO** page 3



James Ramos, chairman of the San Bernardino County, Calif. Board of Supervisors, leads a news conference on the Dec. 2 shootings that left 13 county employees and another man dead. Photo courtesy of San Bernardino County, Calif

Life in the FAST lane... finally

Congress passes long-term surface transportation reauthorization

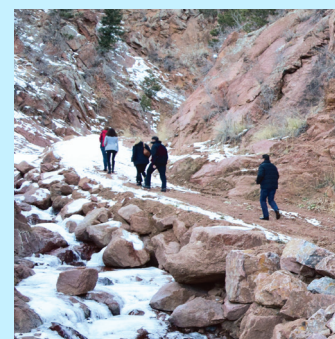
By **JESSICA MONAHAN**
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Congress has accomplished something unheard of for over a decade: It passed a long-term surface transportation reauthorization bill.

After a year of short-term extensions of MAP-21, federal highway and transit programs now have a long-term policy framework

See **TRANSPORTATION** page 6

INSIDE THIS ISSUE ►



NACo symposium points the way to safer and more secure counties ► **Page 8**

Virginia's Jim Campbell announces his retirement ► **Page 5**

NACo workshop inspires job fair for high-schoolers ► **Page 7**

Oregon county finds funds in fungi ► **Page 13**

NACo FSC projects modest growth in revenue for coming fiscal year



Polk County, Iowa Assessor Randy Ripperger; Fairfax County, Va. Supervisor Gerry Hyland; Ramsey County, Minn. Commissioner Jim McDonough; Santa Cruz County, Ariz. Supervisor Manuel Ruiz; St. James Parish, La. President Timmy Roussel and Otero County, Colo. Commission Chair Keith Goodwin discuss one of the questions posed to the Board of Directors. Not pictured: Dane County, Wis. Supervisor Dennis O'Loughlin. Photo by Bev Schlotterbeck

DIRECTORS from page 1

the association's communications and advocacy infrastructure; and retain and recruit staff.

NACo Executive Director Matt Chase told the Board that the FY16 budget represented a "modest increase of 1.6 percent" and included a planned spend-down of \$1.4 million of reserves to fund the office move.

The NACo Financial Services Corp. (FSC), which accounts for 52 percent of NACo's current revenue, is projecting growth of 2.8 percent in 2016, while membership dues, which provided 28 percent of revenues in 2015, are expected to remain essentially flat with growth expected to be a little more than 1 percent.

Chase said NACo will make a concerted effort in 2016 to preserve and expand revenue sources. Retiree health care and infrastructure finance pooling are among the new value-added enterprise solutions the FSC is exploring for counties.

"Overall, NACo is a financially strong organization with healthy reserves," Chase said. "We continue to have steady revenue streams in conjunction with stable membership dues."

Policy Priorities

NACo's policy efforts in FY16 will concentrate in seven areas: protecting the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds; the federal-state-

SAMPLE "COUNTY LANDSCAPE" TRUE/FALSE QUESTIONS

- Anti-government, anti-tax, anti-government employee public attitudes are increasing
- The political gridlock often seen at the federal level is occurring more frequently at the local level
- There has been a perceptible shift toward outsourcing government services (particularly at the state level)
- Many counties are still below re-recession staffing levels
- A county employee retirement "wave" has begun

local partnership for Medicaid; county interests in the "Waters of the U.S." rulemaking; and promoting county priorities in the new surface transportation law implementation, funding and financing, Legislative Affairs Director Deborah Cox reported.

Also on the list is support for collecting existing sales and use taxes from remote, i.e., Internet, sellers; policies to prevent and treat mental illness and substance abuse, and reduce the number of people with mental illness in jails; and restoring full funding for the payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools (SRS) programs.

NACo's 10 policy steering

committees also selected priorities for the new year. They range from modernizing biotechnology policies from the Agricultural and Rural Affairs Steering Committee to supporting broadband deployment and adoption from the Telecommunications and Technology Steering Committee.

Rebranding Continues

Board members received a sneak preview of the new *County News* redesign, which will make more use of illustrations, infographics and photo images, and target coverage to include more stories about county innovations.

Public Affairs Director Brian Namey walked members through the new design, which along with the website redesign, marks a major milestone in the NACo rebranding campaign and updated communication efforts.

Namey also shared with the Board new membership surveys that will be launched next year to gather data in an effort to streamline and target membership marketing activities.

The Board meeting resumed on Saturday morning, Dec. 5, with a lively extended dialogue on the present and future state of the nation's counties. The County Landscape exercise, as it was dubbed, presented a series of 20 True or False statements guaranteed to spark discussion and an exchange of views.

NACo Legislative Priorities 2016

The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports federal policies and programs that equip county governments with the resources and tools needed to effectively serve their residents. Each year NACo's Board of Directors adopts the association's federal policy priorities, which help shape NACo's advocacy efforts on behalf of America's counties. All NACo advocacy is shaped by its underlying core commitment to preserving local decision-making, and opposing unfunded mandates and preemption of local authority.

PROTECT THE TAX-EXEMPT STATUS OF MUNICIPAL BONDS:

NACo supports the preservation of the federal deductibility of local property and income taxes and the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds that provide critical funding for public facilities, infrastructure and development. Provisions like the tax exemption for municipal bond interest have been part of the federal tax code for over 100 years, helping finance more than \$3.7 trillion in public works projects.

taxes and Main Street business find themselves at a significant competitive disadvantage to various online sellers.

SUPPORT THE PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES (PILT) AND SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS (SRS) PROGRAMS:

NACo supports restoring full mandatory funding for the PILT program which compensates counties for tax-exempt federal land within their boundaries. NACo also supports extending the SRS program as a transitional funding mechanism until the federal government fully implements a sustainable long-term forest management program with adequate revenue sharing for forest counties and schools.

PROTECT THE FEDERAL-STATE-LOCAL PARTNERSHIP FOR MEDICAID:

NACo supports maintaining the federal-state-local structure for financing and delivering Medicaid services. Counties continue to be concerned about measures that would limit the ability of states to direct supplemental payments to county providers, curtail the ability of counties to contribute local funds to match federal dollars or otherwise shift health care costs to counties, including cutting, capping or block-granting Medicaid.

PROMOTE COUNTY PRIORITIES IN SURFACE TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION, FUNDING AND FINANCING:

NACo will work to ensure that the new surface transportation law is implemented to reflect county priorities, including allocating more funding for locally owned infrastructure, increasing local decision making authority and prioritizing investments that increase safety. Additionally, NACo continues to urge Congress to resolve the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund through user-fee based revenue sources.

SUPPORT COUNTY AUTHORITY TO COLLECT EXISTING SALES TAX:

NACo supports legislation to permit the collection of existing sales and use taxes from remote sellers. The issue of taxing remote sales has compounded in recent years due to the extraordinary development of the Internet as a retail marketplace. As a result, state and local governments have lost billions in uncollected sales

SUPPORT POLICIES TO PREVENT AND TREAT MENTAL ILLNESS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS IN JAILS:

NACo supports measures that maintain funding for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) block grants, fully implement and expand mental health parity, ease the Institute of Mental Disease (IMD) exclusion, expand access to health information technology (HIT), develop and expand the behavioral health workforce, simplify health privacy provisions, respond to the needs of veterans and provide services across the life cycle. NACo also supports programs and legislation to support local efforts to reduce mental illness in jails and provide appropriate treatment to those in custody.

PROTECT COUNTY INTEREST IN "WATERS OF THE U.S." RULEMAKING:

NACo believes that local streets, gutters and human made ditches should be excluded from the definition of "Waters of the U.S." (WOTUS) under the federal Clean Water Act. NACo calls on Congress to require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to withdraw the new WOTUS rule and rewrite it in consultation and collaboration with state and local governments.

In the pipeline: Comments wanted, rural health funding available

EPA Seeks Comments on Forest Roads—Comments Due Jan. 11, 2016

On Nov. 10, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a Federal Register notice asking for input on existing public and private sector programs that address storm water discharges from forest roads. Comments are due Jan. 11, 2016.

For the past two decades, forest roads have been regulated through state-adopted Best Management Practices (BMP), however, due to a recent court decision in *Environmental Defense Center (EDC) v. EPA*, the EPA is required to assess whether the agency should oversee storm water runoff from logging roads.

Whether a forest road is considered a point or non-point source is relevant to county governments who own 45 percent of the roads and highways in the U.S., some of which may run through federal, state and private forested lands.

EPA is taking comments on the following:

1. Should EPA create a regulatory definition for forest road? Currently, EPA uses the term “forest road” to mean a road located on forested land

2. EPA seeks comments on the implementation, effectiveness and scope of existing federal, state, local, tribal and other programs to address storm water discharges from forested roads

3. EPA requests comments on what specific elements of a forest road program are the most important to protect water quality

4. Finally, the EPA will accept comments on the additional measures that could be implemented

For more information, contact Julie Ufner, associate legislative director for energy, environment and land use: 202.942.4269; jufner@naco.org

Funding Opportunity Announcement: Rural Health Network Development Planning Program — Deadline to Apply Jan. 8, 2016

The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) has announced the release of the Rural Health Network Development

See PIPELINE page 14



Photos of the 14 victims of the Dec. 2 shootings in San Bernardino County, Calif. are displayed outside the county Government Center in memory of the deceased, 13 of whom were county employees. Authorities called the shootings an act of terrorism. Photo by Rachel Luna/The Sun, San Bernardino

County heightens security focus in aftermath of shootings

SAN BERNARDINO from page 1

Wert said it won't necessarily be with a full complement of staff. “No one from EHS will be asked to return before they feel they are ready.”

The county has asked the California Department of Public Health to assist with interim management and staffing, he added. That may include San Bernardino County employees who formerly worked for EHS but moved elsewhere in the organization, retired county EHS employees and EHS staff from other counties who have offered assistance.

“Our hearts are heavy during this time, but yet we must move forward,” Board of Supervisors Chairman James Ramos said at a Dec. 7 news conference. “But we are sad and angry about the events that took place, still searching for answers as to why.”

The alleged shooters, Syed Rizwan Farook, 28, and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, 27, fled the scene. They died in a hail of gunfire from pursuing law enforcement. Farook was an environmental health services employee, and authorities have said the couple are ISIS sympathizers.

“We extend our prayers to the victims of this horrific shooting, including San Bernardino County employees and their families,” NACo President Sallie Clark said. She is also a county commissioner in El Paso County, Colo., where a similar tragedy occurred last month in Colorado Springs at a Planned Parenthood facility.

The San Bernardino shootings took place at the Inland Regional Center, which is not a county building but rather one from which county employees provide services.

Trudy Raymundo, the county's public health director, said she and her deputy, Corwin Porter, arrived at the facility about an hour before the shootings. “When we arrived, they were upbeat; they were happy; they were learning from each other,” she said of the employees who had gathered for a day of training that included a holiday-themed lunch.

In the immediate aftermath of the tragedy, the county heightened security at its facilities — no small task.

“We have over 10 million square feet of office space within the county,” said Greg Devereaux, the county's chief executive officer. “We'll be assessing all of them to see if we should make or need to make physical changes.”

The county has increased the number of Level 3 security personnel

at buildings — those who are armed “and permitted to engage in any kind of threat.”

Security has been an ongoing focus for the county, he said. “We had already redoubled our efforts to look at physical security and the layout of our buildings and whether there were measures that we could take. In several facilities we had already begun additional physical measures that would impede someone from coming into a facility.”

The Board of Supervisors and the local United Way have established a relief fund for the victims of the Dec. 2 tragedy (See sidebar). Donations will be used to address the needs of victims and their families.

A crisis hotline has been set up that is available for any county employee to call, not just those in EHS. It's there for victim's families as well. Supervisor Josie Gonzalez added that all managers have been asked to look for “signs of distress” among their employees and ensure that they get the help they need.

The Board of Supervisors acknowledged that the events of Dec. 2 have been a blow to the entire county's psyche, and emotional wounds may take months to heal. But Supervisor Janice Rutherford said the county won't be cowed by the senseless violence that occurred.

“The purpose of terrorism is to make ordinary people afraid to do the ordinary things that make up their lives,” she said. To honor the slain and injured employees, “we have to fight to maintain that ordinary.”

“We stand with them to tell the terrorists, you may not have our fear; you may not have our liberty; and you may not have our love. Those are the

things that make us different and distinct. That love for each other is what will give us the hope and strength — and the resilience — to embrace the ordinary again and to let all of our employees give their extraordinary public service.”

CountyNews

President | Sallie Clark
Publisher | Matthew Chase
Public Affairs Director | Brian Namey
Executive Editor | Beverly Anne Schlotterbeck
Senior Staff Writer | Charles Taylor
Senior Staff Writer | Charlie Ban
Design Director | Leon Lawrence III

ADVERTISING STAFF

Job Market/Classifieds representative
National Accounts representative
 Beverly Schlotterbeck
 (202) 393-6226 • FAX (202) 393-2630
 Published biweekly except August by:
 National Association of Counties
 Research Foundation, Inc.
 25 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
 STE. 500, Washington, D.C. 20001
 (202) 393-6226 | FAX (202) 393-2630
E-mail | cnnews@naco.org
Online address | www.countynews.org

The appearance of paid advertisements in County News in no way implies support or endorsement by the National Association of Counties for any of the products, services or messages advertised. Periodicals postage paid at Washington D.C. and other offices.

Mail subscriptions are \$100 per year for non-members. \$60 per year for non-members purchasing multiple copies. Educational institution rate, \$50 per year. Member county supplemental subscriptions are \$20 each. Send payment with order and address changes to NACo, 25 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

POSTMASTER:
 send address changes to

County News, 25 Massachusetts Ave. N.W.,
 Ste. 500, Washington, D.C. 20001
 (USPS 704-620) ■ (ISSN: 0744-9798)
 © National Association of Counties
 Research Foundation, Inc.





Live Healthy U.S. Counties

FREE for NACo Member Counties

Be a Live Healthy county with health discount programs for residents

Help your residents save on everyday prescription, dental and health costs.

Prescription Discounts at more than 68,000 pharmacies nationwide.

- Free to residents – they can save an average of 24%* off retail prices

Dental and Health Discounts at a national network of providers.

- Low-fee programs save residents 15% to 50% on dental and health costs

The Live Healthy program is offered at no-cost to our member counties – and we'll provide everything you need to market these savings to your residents, including:

- Customizable posters
- Customizable free prescription discount cards
- Dimensional counter display
- Press releases and more

Become a Live Healthy county – it's free!
Visit www.naco.org/health or call toll-free **1-888-407-6226**.



The Live Healthy discount program is NOT insurance.

* Savings may vary by drug and by pharmacy.
The Prescription Discount Card is operated by CVS/caremark™. The Discount Medical Organization for NACo Health and Dental Discounts is Alliance HealthCard of Florida, Inc.

©2015 CVS/caremark. All rights reserved. 106-34469c 082515

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE By Sallie Clark



Our NACo family is deeply saddened by the tragic events that took place earlier this month in San Bernardino County, Calif. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the victims' families, friends and co-workers, many of whom are county employees. All of America's counties extend our condolences and will help our San Bernardino County colleagues in any way we can.

One week prior to the attack, my community in El Paso County, Colo. experienced similar events in Colorado Springs, where three people, including a police officer, died needlessly.

In the wake of tragedies, we learn of heroic and compassionate efforts both large and small that shine as bright spots in otherwise dark times. This is the case with San Bernardino County and Colorado Springs.

In San Bernardino County, Denise Peraza says she is alive today because her friend and county co-worker, Shannon Johnson, shielded her. In El Paso County, Ke'Arre Stewart, an Iraq War veteran, ran back inside the building to warn others to take cover before he died of his wounds. And University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

Officer Garrett Swasey lost his life trying to save others.

We must emphasize that our communities are defined by incredible heroism in the face of adversity. From the courageous law enforcement personnel and first responders, to everyday citizen bystanders who make the ultimate sacrifice, to our communities' residents who come together to help those in need, we find hope in the compassion and heroism that emerges in difficult times.

Tragic events like these remind us of the critical role counties play in strengthening safety and security across the nation. There are countless examples of how we deliver programs that keep our residents safe, mitigate damage and prepare for future disasters. Counties, parishes and boroughs provide the human services safety net, maintain roads and bridges, protect public safety, support public health, build resilient local economies and so much more.

Our work to strengthen the safety and security of our counties will never end, and I look forward to continuing to work with you in the New Year. Until then, warmest wishes from NACo, and let us all pray for peace this holiday season.

VACo chief's retirement will mark 'end of an era'

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Jim Campbell has guided the Virginia Association of Counties through times of scarcity and plenty. His 25 years at VACo's helm make him the longest-serving executive director in the association's 81-year history.

That will come to an end on June 30, 2016, his recently announced retirement date.

When Campbell was hired in 1990, VACo was awash in red ink for the second year in a row and leasing space in Richmond's old City Hall.

Today, it's a thriving organization with significant reserves and assets, and owns its LEED Gold-certified headquarters building.

"Jim took VACo from a small, sort of parochial organization to a very robust, statewide advocacy organization on behalf of all 95 counties," said Penny Gross, VACo's immediate past president and a Fairfax County, Va. supervisor.

"I am proud of what we've accomplished during my tenure," Campbell said, "and believe the association is primed to launch to greater heights in the coming years."

Mid-January will mark the start of his final session of the Virginia General Assembly. His successor has yet to be named.

Over the years, Campbell's financial acumen has often been credited with securing the association's bottom line. Current VACo President Judy Lyttle said Virginia counties have benefited from the association's "non-dues revenue ventures." She chairs the Surry



Campbell

County Board of Supervisors.

Lyttle describes Campbell as "a visionary in professional association matters," adding that through his leadership, "counties have saved millions of dollars."

In 2008, recognizing counties' liabilities to account for Other Post-Employment Benefits, he helped form an OPEB Trust that pools funds to earn a higher rate of return on investments. The OPEB Trust currently comprises almost 50 counties, cities and towns investing nearly \$1 billion. It's believed to be the nation's largest pool of its kind, according to VACo.

He also helped establish the Virginia Investment Pool (VIP). Local governments use the investment program to enhance their return on reserve funds. Currently, the VIP program has 30 localities participating with more than \$300 million invested in the pool.

Campbell has been a bridge-builder, says Gerry Hyland, a Fairfax County supervisor and VACo's president in 2002-2003. The interests of Northern Virginia's bustling Washington, D.C. suburbs

are a far cry from those of the peaceful Shenandoah Valley or the coalfields of Southwest Virginia.

"Through his efforts, rural counties and large urban-suburban counties have been brought together to speak with one voice," Hyland said, "whereas when he started, I think there was a division among the large and the small that was not a situation in the best interests of all counties in Virginia."

To many, perhaps Campbell's crowning achievement was overseeing the purchase and renovation of 1207 East Main Street in Richmond for VACo's headquarters, a stone's throw from the State Capitol.

Under his leadership, the 1866 building was updated with an eye towards preserving its historical significance while developing an environment-friendly "green" building.

Campbell plans to stay active in retirement, he said, with more time for family and travel with his wife, Christine. New England and the Pacific Northwest might be on their itinerary.

"Certainly I'll miss the many friends that I've made," he said, "not only in Virginia but across the country—county officials I've worked with over the past 25 years and made some great friends. I'll miss that a lot."

Gross, who has served on VACo's board for 20 years, called Campbell's impending retirement "the end of an era."

"But Jim has put together a fine young staff that will continue to pursue the goals of VACo just as VACo has always done under Jim's tutelage," she said.

Celebrate the great
work your county does!
Send us your stories for
the New Year!

cnews@naco.org
202.942.4249

Holiday Trivia Quick Takes



The first **Christmas tree farm** was planted in 1901 in Mercer County, N.J.

12%
of annual online donations occur in the last 3 days of December



The town of Claxton in Evans County, Ga. lays claim to the title, **Fruitcake Capital of the World**

Jam-filled donuts, or "**sufganiyot**," are a traditional Hanukkah food.



Financial Services News

Counties recognized for cost-saving measures



Robert Steele, County Commissioner; Bryan Desloge, First Vice President NACo; General Manager for U.S. Communities Chris Mellis; Shannon Andrews, Chief Procurement Officer; Toni Preckwinkle, Board President; and Bill Jasien, Executive Chairman NACo FSC.

By SARAH LINDSAY
FINANCIAL SERVICES CENTER

On behalf of its national sponsors, including NACo, U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance recently honored Cook County, Ill. with the Customer Appreciation Award for its excellence in saving taxpayer dollars through the use of cooperative purchasing.

It is the fifth county to be recognized with the award in 2015, joining previous winners Orange County, Calif.; Greene County, Mo.; San Bernardino County, Calif.; and Fort Bend County, Texas.

"We feel fortunate that U.S. Communities has acknowledged us with this award" said Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Board president. "The programs created by U.S. Communities are a useful tool for streamlining the purchasing process, improving efficiency and saving taxpayer dollars. We are extremely proud to be part of such a strong purchasing program."

NACo First Vice President Bryan Desloge, who was present at the award presentation, added that "through the combined efforts of U.S. Communities and NACo, our counties are seeing large savings."

Cook County was recognized in part for its strategic use of several of the quality brand contracts in a wide variety of categories offered by the program. Throughout 2015, it utilized the Graybar contract, which offers data-communication, networking, wireless, security, electrical and lighting products; HD Supply, a distributor of maintenance, repair, and operations products; and Safeware-Mallory, which provides public safety equipment. The county also took advantage of the U.S.

Communities contract with Home Depot.

U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance cooperative contracts allow counties to save time, administrative costs, and receive the best price available from a vendor. There are no costs or fees to participate, and the program promises best overall supplier government pricing.

U.S. Communities recently

launched contracts for travel services and solutions with Hotel-Planner, public sector consulting with Alvarez & Marsal, electronic balloting with Democracy Live, and HVAC products and services with Trane.

For more information, visit www.uscommunities.org.

What's in a Seal?

Buffalo County, Neb.



One of just two counties in Nebraska with an animal namesake, Buffalo County's rolling plains coursed with the big furry powerhouses. Their preponderance made them a natural namesake when the county was organized in 1864, three years before the state was admitted to the union. Appropriately, a buffalo looms large on the county seal.

Settlers in covered wagons were attracted to the area for the fertile soil in the Platte River Valley and surrounding hills in the south.

The railroad's expansion into Nebraska helped the population grow, and in Buffalo County the growth centered on an Oregon Trail stop called Fort Childs, later renamed Kearny Junction and later, just Kearny, now the county seat. Newspaper publisher Moses Sydenham used the *Kearny Herald* to push for the town to become the nation's capital because of its central location.

One prominent animal not featured on the seal is the swarm of grasshoppers that overwhelmed and threatened the area in the 1870s. Instead, two birds occupy a prominent position. The seal was created by design contest winner Joyce Linn in 2008. It replaced a seal featuring a buffalo (which then-Commissioner Hoss Dannehl reportedly said looked skinny and sickly) on a grassy plain and the words, "Buffalo County Nebraska: County Seal" that had fallen out of use.

Buffalo County Clerk Jan Griffin assisted.

Ex-Im Bank funding renewed in long-term transportation legislation

TRANSPORTATION from page 1

and funding through the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (H.R. 22). President Obama signed it on Dec. 4.

The fully funded five-year measure represents a compromise between the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform (STRR) Act of 2015, which passed the House in November, and the Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy (DRIVE) Act, which passed the Senate in July.

While many county priorities were included in both the STRR and DRIVE acts, the FAST Act responds to NACo's call for the inclusion of preferred policy reforms and funding from each of the proposals. Rather than going forward with a partially funded six-year bill, as had been previously proposed, Congress ultimately provided a five-year authorization with sufficient funding to keep the Highway Trust Fund solvent through its duration.

The FAST Act addresses two other NACo priorities, by renewing the Export-Import Bank and removing the ban on municipal bond financing for projects receiving aid through the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act.

About the FAST Act

The FAST Act authorizes \$280 billion in spending out of the Highway Trust Fund for highway and transit programs. This works out to an average of \$56.2 billion per year, an annual increase in investment of almost \$4 billion over current law. The bill reflects a compromise between the two chambers' reauthorization proposals and includes a number of county priorities. They include:

- Long-term certainty: A five-year bill, the FAST Act will provide counties the long-term certainty they need in order to plan, fund and deliver transformative transportation projects.
- Funding for locally owned infrastructure: The act increases the amount of funding available for locally owned infrastructure by increasing funding for the Surface Transportation Program and making an additional \$116 billion available for county-owned highway bridges. This additional funding more than repairs the 30 percent decrease in funding that occurred under MAP-21.
- Increased local decision-

making: The act acknowledges and uses the value of local decision-making by sub-allocating a great share (up to 55 percent by FY 20) — or roughly \$28 billion — of the Surface Transportation Program to local areas and local governments.

- Funding for off-system bridges: The act protects set-aside funding for off-system bridges, which provides over \$776 million annually for bridges that are primarily owned by counties and other local governments.

- Funding for rural and urban public transportation systems: The act continues funding for urban and rural public transportation formula grants. In addition, the bill increases funding for the Bus and Bus Facilities formula grant program and creates additional competitive bus grants programs that will provide discretionary funding to further support counties' bus purchases and bus facility investments.

- Provisions to streamline project delivery: The act builds on the reforms of MAP-21 aimed at expediting and streamlining project delivery. Specifically, the bill establishes a new pilot program to allow states to substitute their own environmental laws and regulations for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and requires an assessment of previous efforts to accelerate the environmental review process, as well as recommendations on additional means of accelerating the project delivery process.

- Reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank: The act reauthorizes the Export-Import Bank, which is designed to help American businesses compete in the global marketplace by financing exports of various goods and services.

- Removing limitations on the use of tax-exempt municipal bonds: The FAST Act removes a provision from the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) that prohibits tax-exempt bonds from being used in conjunction with WIFIA funding. This improves flexibility for counties and boosts their ability to finance key water infrastructure projects.

To better understand how the FAST Act addresses NACo's priorities for reauthorization and how it compares to current law, NACo has developed a chart that can be found at www.naco.org/map21.

NACo workshop leads to Leon Works: promoting careers where 'skills pay bills'

A workshop at the NACo conference in New Orleans in the summer of 2014 — plus the unfortunate plumbing issue at the home of a Leon County commissioner — inspired what became a 2015 strategic initiative for Florida's Leon County Commission.

It culminated in a project called Leon Works, aimed at reinvigorating interest and education in the middle-skill trades, those not requiring education beyond high school.

The NACo workshop featuring Michigan Works, which attracts young people to careers in public works and building trades, struck a chord with Leon County Commissioner Mary Ann Lindley, who sits on her County Board with soon-to-be NACo president Bryan Desloge. She came back to Leon County curious to explore what role county government might play in this once-essential part of public education, preparing students for careers that don't require a four-year college degree.

Coincidentally, when her kitchen plumbing went bad and two young plumbers came to the rescue, Lindley started interviewing them about why they seemed to like their jobs so much. They liked to solve problems, they said, boasting, "... and we're good at it." They said they liked to fix things. They liked

Not every middle or high school student needs to go to college, or wants to go to college regardless of his or her grades or financial ability.

not working in an office and they liked, at the end of the day, to go fishing without the carry-over 24/7 stress of many other jobs.

Leon Works began with a regional workforce survey that revealed some 10,000 jobs would be going wanting for employees with middle-skill training in the next 10 years in this North Florida area alone. Careers in things from welding to health care, from aviation mechanics to electricians pay well and allow young people to create their own version of success.

Not every middle or high school student needs to go to college, or wants to go to college regardless of his or her grades or financial ability. It's not for everyone, yet the emphasis in recent years has suggested that

everyone ought to aspire to a four-year college degree. For those who didn't, education became a dreary thing indeed, with dropping out or low-wage jobs their apparent bleak future.

Thanks to vigorous and committed county staffing and community outreach, Leon Works culminated in the Leon Works Expo in October. There, some 400 high school students met with 80 business and academic exhibitors who told them about the job opportunities, salaries, requirements and costs and lengths of training — three months, six, a year — and the certification or licensing necessary.

Leon Works Expo, in collaboration with the school district and local workforce leaders, was an enormous success. Students reported having a fun and eye-opening day into worlds of interest they never knew existed and had not been guided to consider before. That fact alone had left many of them feeling marginalized if they weren't "college bound," and missing opportunities to know, as our Leon Works slogan promoted, that "skills pay the bills."

Beyond that, they learned, that skills can also be an avenue to starting one's own business, hiring others and making a good living along the way.

That county government got involved with public education and nothing less than an effort to shift society's thinking about educational options was met with such support community-wide that now Leon County is working with the Florida Legislature to expand partnerships and promote skilled

career opportunities throughout the state.

And it all started with a one-hour workshop at NACo.

(Leon County Commissioner Mary Ann Lindley wrote this report. She can be contacted at lindleyam@leoncountyfl.gov or 850.606.5369.)

Profiles in Service

Debbie Wood

NACo Board of Directors
Commissioner
Chambers County, Ala.



Number of years active in NACo: 12

Years in public service: 12

Occupation: real estate broker

Education: associate degree in business and graduate, Avery Yarbrough School of Real Estate

The hardest thing I've ever done: battle breast cancer. I was diagnosed this year and had a double mastectomy in March.

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: my grandmother (dead), Max Lucado (living), Oprah Winfrey (living)

A dream I have is to: provide a home for a family that has never owned their own home.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: have been married for 25 years to the same man.

My favorite way to relax is: travel in my RV.

I'm most proud of: my family.

Every morning I read: a devotion and my Bible.

My favorite meal is: dessert first and then the main course. I prefer meat-loaf and green beans.

My pet peeve is: uncomfortable shoes.

My motto is: A smile makes everyone feel better.

The last book I read was: *Grace for the Moment*.

My favorite movie is: *Pretty Woman*.

My favorite music is: Country.

My favorite president is: Ronald Reagan.

My county is a NACo member because: we understand the value of joining together with other counties to protect ourselves against unfunded mandates — and the knowledge we gain by learning from our peers.



The most adventurous thing I've ever done is:

Parasail over the Bermuda Triangle.



A Leon County, Fla. high school student explores his options with staff from a local culinary school.

Photo courtesy of Leon County, Fla. Community and Media Relations



From viewing canyons torched by fire to roundtables on mental illness in jails, the Safe and Secure Symposium touched on a number of challenges county governments deal with.

SAFE & SECURE

Mobile workshop participants climb into Waldo Canyon. Photo by Charlie Ban

By **BEV SCHLOTTERBECK**
EXECUTIVE EDITOR, and
CHARLIE BAN
SENIOR WRITER

Yes, it can seem at times that governing at the local level pretty much translates into keeping the roads plowed and the jails open. But for the county leaders who participated in early December's Safe and Secure Symposium, leadership took on a whole new dimension.

NACo President Sallie Clark's Safe and Secure initiative embraces the priorities of several former NACo presidents and spotlights the many challenges county leaders must confront as they build healthy vibrant and safe communities.

The two and a half day symposium, Dec. 2-4, preceded NACo's fall Board meeting held this year in El Paso County, (Colorado Springs), Colo., Clark's home county.

It targeted three challenge areas: cybersecurity; disaster response, recovery and preparation for future disasters; and the criminal justice system and its relation to people with mental illness.

Like previous high-level NACo symposiums, this one packed a lot in its schedule. Four mobile workshops and eight sessions were offered, which wove site visits with expert speakers and presentations on risk

management, crisis communications, local efforts to de-criminalize mental illness, cybersecurity and preparing for and recovering from both natural and man-made disasters.

Cybersecurity

Symposium participants hit the road Dec. 2 with a trip to Peterson Air Force Base, home to the Air Force's Space Command and cybersecurity defense for the Joint Command and the country.

The base's second in command, Maj. Gen. Dave Thompson, welcomed NACo members and set up the presentations, which explained the core responsibilities of the Space Command and its 67th Cyberspace wing.

The Space Command capabilities, according to Maj. John Gearing involve "space situational awareness," which is military-speak for keeping track of some 23,000 larger objects orbiting the earth; missile warning, military satellite communications; two rocket launch bases and "Position Navigation Timing," maintained by 32 satellites and better known as GPS.

While threats from space may seem more dramatic, threats from cyberspace are more dangerous, Gearing said.

Next up: Col. Michael Moyles, the chief technology officer for

the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and the U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) at Peterson, explored those threats and outlined the scope of his responsibilities: protecting the Air Force — its 122 bases and 85,000 users — from cyber intrusions; managing vulnerability by patching and updating servers and client systems; and providing enterprise services to all Air Force users such as e-mail, directory and authentication services and data

storage.

Cybersecurity issues bookended the symposium. At the closing luncheon, experts from the cyber industry offered their assessments of the greatest threats facing county leaders. Perhaps the most pressing: a shortage of cybersecurity professionals. Steve Hurst, AT&T's security services director, said there is now a 1 million to 1.5 million gap in needed security personnel. The shortage has led to skyrocketing salaries, where it's not uncommon

to see annual salaries ranging from \$178,000 to \$233,000. What can counties do? Hurst said they could work with local schools to produce more trained cybersecurity professionals, make use of interns from community colleges or outsource. AT&T along with Cisco offer to help school systems establish STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) and STEAM (same as STEM, but with the Arts added) programs, he said.

Another promising avenue to



Justice and Public Safety Committee Chair Sally Heyman discusses cybersecurity with Col. Michael Moyles at Peterson Air Force Base home the Air Force's Space Command. Photo by Bev Schlotterbeck



The U.S. Air Force Academy Chapel. Photo by Charlie Ban

addressing the cyber staffing gap is being explored by Cisco, which is developing ways to automate responses to threats, according to Peter Romness, cybersecurity program lead with Cisco.

Probably not surprising was the assessment voiced by all three panelists that threats are increasing; nonetheless their opportunity for damage is unsettling.

For example, Romness said advanced threats could stay in networks, on average, 200 days stealing data before they are discovered. And as the “Internet of things” expands, even more entry points became available for hackers. Already 40 percent of all medical devices are networked now, he said. In the not-so-distant future, it will probably be 65 percent.

Despite the significant threats from intruders in county networks and the data they store, the most dangerous threat lurks closer to home.

“Employees are the weakest link in the cybersecurity chain,” Hurst said. To address their threat, he said, “There needs to be a high-level focus that supports regular, persistent employee training.

A high-level focus is also called for in times of natural disasters. Several symposium sessions offered strategies county leaders can undertake to address the demands disasters bring to the table.

Risk Management Assessment

A designated professional emergency manager can assess actual risk in a disaster scenario — as opposed to perceived risk — and can prepare recommendations for county officials to receive and act on, according to Judd Freed, Ramsey County, Minn.’s emergency management and homeland security director. It’s a job best done by someone buffered from the pressure that comes from the public.

“Government doesn’t look downwind; that’s what a professional emergency manager does,” he said.

“Part of planning for disasters means focusing on the most probable situations and studying the interdependencies in a community,” Freed explained. “Most of the time we neglect probability because people are really interested in what they think they need to know,” and that is effectively taking their eye off the ball.

Understanding the true risk, discovering hidden vulnerabilities and preparing for the unexpected threats go a long way toward remediating them.

Freed pointed out that although the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) predicted years before that New Orleans would

flood, the conventional wisdom was that the rainfall, not levee failure, would be the culprit.

Another presenter at the workshop discussing risk management was Ajita Atreya, a research fellow at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton Risk Management and Decision Processes Center, whose studies on flooding led her to formulate what she thinks is the most comprehensive measure of resiliency.

She quantifies resilience as a synthesis of five kinds of a community’s capital—financial, natural, human, physical and social—and its robustness, repeatability, redundancy and resourcefulness.

While established resiliency evaluations did not fully measure a community’s resilience, the National Flood Insurance Program’s Community Rating System’s scores could be interpreted to that end.

The system is a program that gives flood insurance discounts for remediation plans designed to lower flooding risk. Not only do those measures, like open space preservation and flood plain buyouts, mean discounts for policy holders, they make a community safer and more

resilient.

Margaret Larson, manager for assurance services at Ernst and Young, advised quantifying the cost of recovery with and without

preparation to make the case for taking those steps.

She stressed communication.

“When you think about information sharing — are we doing it

CYBER SAFETY SUGGESTIONS

Panel discussions on cybersecurity can often produce many bullet-point lists. The discussion in El Paso County, Colo. was no exception. Here are some examples:

From Tom MacLellan, FireEye’s director of national homeland security policy and government affairs: Seven questions county leaders should ask:

1. Who’s already in your network? Who’s been in your network?
2. Do you understand your risk profile?
3. How are you reducing your liability? By using cyber insurance, for example?
4. Do your budgeting practices support effective cybersecurity defense?
5. Are you using intelligence and information effectively?
6. Can your critical systems defend against advanced persistent threats, also known as APTs in cyber speech
7. Are you ready to respond when an attack occurs?

From Steve Hurst, AT&T security services director: How to Protect Your County’s Systems:

1. Put policy in place
2. Keep current with patching
3. Undertake risk assessment



Kathleen Koch is greeted by Bryan Desloge, Sallie Clark and Roy Brooks. Photos by Charlie Ban



Judd Freed stresses assessing risk of probable disasters, rather than listening to emotional fears.



El Paso County’s Hazardous Materials Response Team truck, trailer decontamination vehicle and communications support vehicle were on display during the Safe and Secure Counties Symposium.

enough?” she asked. “The answer is, probably not. It can be done at every level, in every department.”

Crisis Communications

The way a message is delivered can mean as much as the words in the message, probably half as much.

Randall Hyer, assistant director at the Center for Risk Communication and principal of CrisisCommunication.net, explained during a plenary session that relating to the audience was the most influential way to build trust, particularly in a situation where clear communication was necessary to fortify public safety.

“A single statement of empathy goes a long way,” he said, asking rhetorically, “Does this person care about what happens to me and my family?” regarding a public figure making a statement in an emergency. “They assess that immediately. They want to know you care before they care what you know.”

The first thing a public official should express in an emergency situation is concern for those affected.

Hammering in that perception is more influential than reality. Hyer referred to Dow Corning CEO Richard Hazleton’s 1995 appearance on *Oprah* in which his blasé reactions to questioning about the risks posed by the company’s silicone breast implants — which were later dismissed — led to his firing and nine years of bankruptcy protection for the company.

“Establishing that emotional connection ensures accurate public communication,” he said. “We need better messages, better messengers and better ways of delivering messages.”

When addressing an emergency, Hyer said, a statement of empathy should always lead off and, if possible, the speaker should align himself or herself with a credible organization before moving on to the key message.

“When you’re breaking bad news, trust brings credibility,” he said.

One of the largest looming problems for public communication is proliferation of social media and the hastening of the reactions to news.

“People in another city can hear about an earthquake on Twitter before they feel the shocks,” he said. “You cannot completely control your message” when social media is part of the communication environment.

As far as crafting messages, Hyer said 27 words, comprising three nine-word statements, was the extent to which the public could readily consume news in a high-stress situation.

“You need to be able to craft messages at a sixth-to-eighth-grade

SAFE from page 9

level,” he said. “If you understand it well enough, you can express it in simple language.”

Officials should avoid negative words, which will reinforce natural fear that and give the audience a way to find out more information. Numbers can be tricky, too.

When dealing with the press, officials should keep in mind that they are not on equal footing with reporters. While their status as elected representatives gives them a legitimacy to speak for the government, the media possesses leverage because it, as a third party, has an audience that trusts it.

Answering questions from the press can present a number of pitfalls that a trained spokesman or spokeswoman should sidestep. Resist the urge to speculate. Don’t make any guarantees about the future. Avoid describing any worst-case scenarios. Relate concern for the vulnerable as is appropriate.

Hyer, a trained epidemiologist, quoted former World Health

Organization Director-General Jong-Wood Lee to emphasize clear communication’s role in a crisis.

“We have had great success...in controlling outbreaks, but we have only recently come to understand that communications are as critical to outbreak control as laboratory analyses or epidemiology,” he said.

In longer messages, officials should clearly outline the important things for the audience to know, and communicate more complex ideas through storytelling.

“Storytelling is an effective way to change behavior,” Hyer said.

One Story, with Three Parts

For host county El Paso County, Colo., the biggest story in disaster preparedness in the last three-and-a-half years has been the fires—Waldo Canyon and Black Forest—and the flooding that resulted in Waldo Canyon.

On a mobile tour, NACo President Sallie Clark got to show her county colleagues firsthand what natural disasters had done to her



Jasper County, Mo. Collector Stephen Holt (r), chairman of NACo’s Audit Committee, talks to new committee member George O’Laughlin, a Dane County, Wis. commissioner. Photo by Charlie Ban

commission district.

On June 23, 2012, a day that became a blur for her as she was shuttled around the area, Clark saw smoke billowing from the fire while she sat in a meeting miles away. She got up to the canyon and the sight was unforgettable. By the time the fire was out July 10, it had destroyed 347 homes, forced the evacuation of more than 32,000 residents and caused two deaths. The fire was

determined to have been man-made.

“There were trees just burning,” she said. “It was a scary thing to be in the middle of a fire zone. Eventually the sheriff told us we had to leave because they didn’t want us up there.”

Now, trees burned down to their trunks stand like toothpicks sticking out of higher ground in the mountains. The burn scar doesn’t accept much water, so heavy rains have no choice but to run downhill—more than 33,375 acres were burned so badly that nothing will grow back there.

The first major flood pushed ash into the sewer systems and caused backups. Subsequent flooding also destroyed some mountain highways.

Clark continues to tell the story of the fire’s consequences, both in advocating for the authority to manage forests to limit potential tinderboxes and to remind federal legislators that the recovery is not over.

Flood remediation efforts in Waldo Canyon have improved the area’s resiliency, but even with matching funds, the county’s financial contribution was significant.

One of the remaining consequences of the fire is the forced closure of some reservoirs. Clark collected ashen debris in a water bottle, in what was a great fishing spot, dried it out and put the ashes in test tubes, labeled “Waldo Canyon

fire,” took them to Washington, D.C. and gave them to members of her congressional delegation.

“She told them: Take this vial, fill it up with water, shake it and drink it; because that’s what you’re asking us to do,” she recounted at the symposium. “When I went back, now-Sen. Cory Gardner (R) went looking for his vial so he could let us know that he knew we were still dealing with problems.”

For counties that have never faced a wildfire, these numbers may seem pretty astounding. It costs \$50,000 per day for one of those VLATs (Very Large Air Tanker) to sit on the tarmac. When it’s airborne, it costs \$20,000 per hour to fly, and its payload of flame retardant averages \$12,000–\$14,000 a run.

Meanwhile, wildfires accounted for \$1.7 billion in losses in 2013. And this year, losses are expected to top \$2 billion. That’s a lot of money up in smoke. But as the TV commercial says: “Wait, there’s more.” In the words of John Chavez, with El Paso County, “Wildfires are rolling disasters: After the fire comes the flooding.”

Chavez, along with Katie Lighthall, a coordinator with the Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy; R.C. Smith, operations manager and recovery coordinator for El Paso County’s Public Service Department; and George H. Connor, deputy director, Office of Community and Economic Development in Dauphin County, Pa. offered strategies to address forest resiliency, reduce threat and spur quick response and recovery.

One key component of a cohesive wildland protection strategy is a “willingness to take short-term risks for long-term benefits,” Lighthall said. What that really means is a willingness to let a fire burn in order to create a resilient landscape. “Do you fight the fire to protect the one lone guy’s cabin in the middle of nowhere, or do you make sure the

See SAFE page 12



(l-r) El Paso County Commissioner Sallie Clark, Operations Manager and Recovery Coordinator R.C. Smith and Stormwater Quality Coordinator John Chavez show off Waldo Canyon during a mobile workshop. Photo by Charlie Ban

Author, former CNN reporter brings Katrina lessons to symposium

“The media tends to tell you that chaos reigns after a disaster. That’s an incomplete and inaccurate picture,” according to Kathleen Koch, an award-winning journalist and author. She should know. Koch was a CNN correspondent for 18 years and among many high-profile assignments covered 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina for the net-



Koch

work.

Her experiences reporting on the disastrous Gulf Coast storm and the recovery of her hometown, Bay St. Louis, Miss., led her to write a book, *Rising from Katrina* and start a nonprofit organization—LeadersLink—to share elected officials’ disaster lessons.

She learned valuable lessons, too, which she shared with members

of the Dec. 3 luncheon audience in a well-crafted talk, which used vintage news clips to punctuate her message.

She spoke of visiting Bay St. Louis, after Katrina struck, and feeling unsettled as she walked through her hometown and became lost. “Imagine the unimaginable,” she said. She found her family home destroyed, but learned another lesson: “Buildings don’t make up a community, people make up a community. If you can get the people back, you can get the com-

munity back.”

New cooperation arises during and after a disaster. Koch said social scientists speak of a six-month grace period after a major disaster where citizens tend to set aside their personal concerns for the good of the community.

Disasters also attract volunteers eager to help. One million volunteers came to the Gulf Coast in Katrina’s aftermath, Koch said. Local leaders need to consider how they will be housed, fed and organized.

Witnessing the critical and essential role local leaders play when disasters strike prompted Koch to found LeadersLink, to create a network of the best local leaders in disaster response and recovery to act as mentors to other leaders facing similar crises. She is developing a website now for the organization, but information can be found on Facebook at www.facebook.com/leaderslink.

(Bev Schlotterbeck, CountyNews executive editor, wrote this report.)

Michigan leads effort to reduce number of mentally ill in county jails, state prisons

By LYNDA ZELLER
AND COMMISSIONER JON CAMPBELL
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICH.

There are currently a disproportionately high number of people with mental illnesses, co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders and homelessness in local jails.

Individuals with mental illnesses in jails face significant challenges, including access to

psychiatric and medical treatment, longer incarceration stays, higher recidivism rates, more criminogenic risk factors and increased risk of bodily harm. It is with this in mind that Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder (R) signed an executive order in 2013 forming the Michigan Mental Health Diversion Council.

The Mental Health Diversion Council brings together 14 members representing state and

local agencies that could effect meaningful and timely change. It includes representatives from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the Michigan Department of Corrections, the State Court Administrative Office, the judiciary, mental health advocacy, local community mental health boards, court administration, law enforcement, attorneys and re-entry experts, among others.

In 2014, Snyder signed another executive order expanding the council to include four new seats that would represent juvenile justice as well. The charge of this body is to come up with recommendations to help divert people with mental illnesses out of jail and into treatment when appropriate.

An Action Plan was drawn up to address five main goals:

- strengthen pre-booking diversion for individuals with mental illness
- ensure quality, effective and comprehensive behavioral health treatment in jails and prisons
- expand post-booking jail

SpeedRead » » »

- » The Michigan Mental Health Diversion Council brings together 18 members representing state and local agencies to help divert people with mental illnesses out of jail and into treatment when appropriate.
- » An Action Plan was drawn up to address five main goals such as strengthening pre-booking diversion for individuals with mental illness.
- » The state is working very closely with several pilot counties in an effort to maintain open and clear dialogue.

- formal standardized screening and assessment, and
- expanded post-release follow up.

An evaluation component was added by engaging the Michigan State University Data and Evaluation Team. The evaluation will compile data to measure the effectiveness of these innovative projects, and determine best practices and return on investment.

The state is working very closely with these counties in an effort to maintain open and clear dialog — not only to hear the success stories that are coming out of these initiatives, but also to be made aware of any pitfalls or challenges as they move forward with their programs.

As evidence of this, a recent “pilot summit” was held in Lansing to provide an opportunity for counties to network with one another, share information about their programs and to share with those at the state and the Mental Health Diversion Council any immediate concerns.

Counties participating in the jail diversion pilots share many

Marquette counties. These sites demonstrated such jail diversion techniques as:

- 40-hour crisis intervention training for local law enforcement

NACo on the Move

► NACo Staff

• **Germaine Schaefer** is NACo's new conference director. Previously, she was the director of convention operations at the American Diabetes Association, where she managed conference logistics, contracting and planning. Schaefer received a bachelor's degree in business administration from Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.



Schaefer

rector, participated in a webinar, Getting Involved in National Issues that Affect Your County, Dec. 10, hosted by the Nevada Association of Counties.

• Meeting in Charleston, S.C. Dec. 2-4, **Julie Ufner**, associate legislative director, represented NACo at discussions on the next steps for the Digital Coast Partnership. Digital Coast is a public-private partnership between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and eight national organizations, including NACo. It provides coastal data resources to local governments to protect vulnerable populations and public infrastructure. Ufner facilitated a session on Planning for a New Administration.



Handy

• **Daniel Handy** has landed a spot on the NACo research team as a research assistant. Handy initially joined NACo

as a research intern in spring 2015. He will work on a number of projects, particularly those related to the County Explorer and trend analyses. He holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics and economics from the American University in Washington, D.C.

• **Paul Beddoe**, deputy legislative di-

Director of Membership Marketing **Andrew Goldschmidt** (l) and Public Affairs Director **Brian Namey** represented NACo at the Kentucky Association of Counties' (KACo) 41st Annual Conference & Exposition in Lexington-Fayette County Nov. 8-20. Photo courtesy of KACo



THE STEPPING UP INITIATIVE

diversion options for individuals with mental illness

- reduce unnecessary incarceration or re-incarceration of individuals with mental illness, and
- establish an ongoing mechanism to coordinate and assist with implementation of Action Plan goals and to facilitate needed systems changes.

One of the major action steps out of that Action Plan was to implement pilot sites around the state that would come up with innovative, cost effective, sustainable and replicable ways to help divert people with mental illnesses away from jails and into appropriate treatment. Pilot sites for the inaugural launch in 2014 included participation from St. Joseph, Detroit/Wayne, Kalamazoo and

in their communities

- crisis residential facilities
- precinct-based diversion
- increased assessment, screening opportunities, and
- a diversion center built right into an existing sheriff's office.

In 2015, pilot sites expanded to include the participation of Monroe, Kent, Berrien, Oakland and Barry counties as well as expanding on the efforts in Kalamazoo and Marquette. This round of pilots implemented jail diversion techniques such as:

- expanded stable housing upon release
- crisis intervention training (CIT) for youth (administered to officers who have already been trained in the CIT method)
- forensic ACT (assertive community treatment)
- increased treatment staffing in jails

things in common, including the forging of mutual collaborations with major stakeholders within their communities. This call to action has been recognized in these counties early on, and a commitment to change the way they do business is viewed as a necessity.

The national Stepping Up initiative encourages all counties throughout the state to echo what these pilot sites have already done: resolve to recognize jail diversion as a community issue and vow to collaborate with one another in an effort to decriminalize mental illness.

For more information about the national Stepping Up initiative please visit: stepuptogether.org.

(Zeller is the deputy director, behavioral health and developmental disabilities, Michigan Department of Health & Human Services.)

SAFE from page 10

guy is safe, and let the fire burn,” she said by way of illustration.

It’s important for county leaders to create an understanding and acceptance of risk in their communities, she advised and suggested that local leaders can help by enacting smarter building codes for wildfire hazard zones; planning well for evacuations and entering into mutual-aid pacts with neighboring jurisdictions.

El Paso County had more than its share of natural disasters with the Waldo Canyon and Black Forest fires in 2012 and 2013. Together they destroyed more than 32,500 acres, 832 homes and cost four lives. The flooding that came in their aftermath also destroyed property and put lives at risk.

Chavez presented some of the



NACo Board members Priscilla Taylor and George Webb (Palm Beach County, Fla.) talk to WIR President Gordon Cruickshank (Valley County, Idaho) and Daniell Troy (Lake County, Ohio). Photo by Charlie Ban

factors that frame the direction and extent of recovery efforts after a flood; things like public health concerns, funding sources, impacted jurisdictions and infrastructure damage. He also emphasized the

importance of public communications efforts, learning the rules of the funding source you’re using and collaboration — a very popular concept often mentioned as a critical strategy throughout the symposium.



Juneau Borough, Alaska Assembly Member Karen Crane and Tyler Massey, Hildago County, N.M. treasurer, work on their messaging during the Crisis Communications session. Photo by Charlie Ban

Also explored during the symposium: The important role jails play in the criminal justice system, their impact on recidivism rates, their costs to counties and their responsibility for the well-being of

persons with mental illness who get caught up in their cells. An extensive report on the sessions offered around these topics will appear in the Jan. 11, 2016 issue of *County News*. Be sure to watch for it.

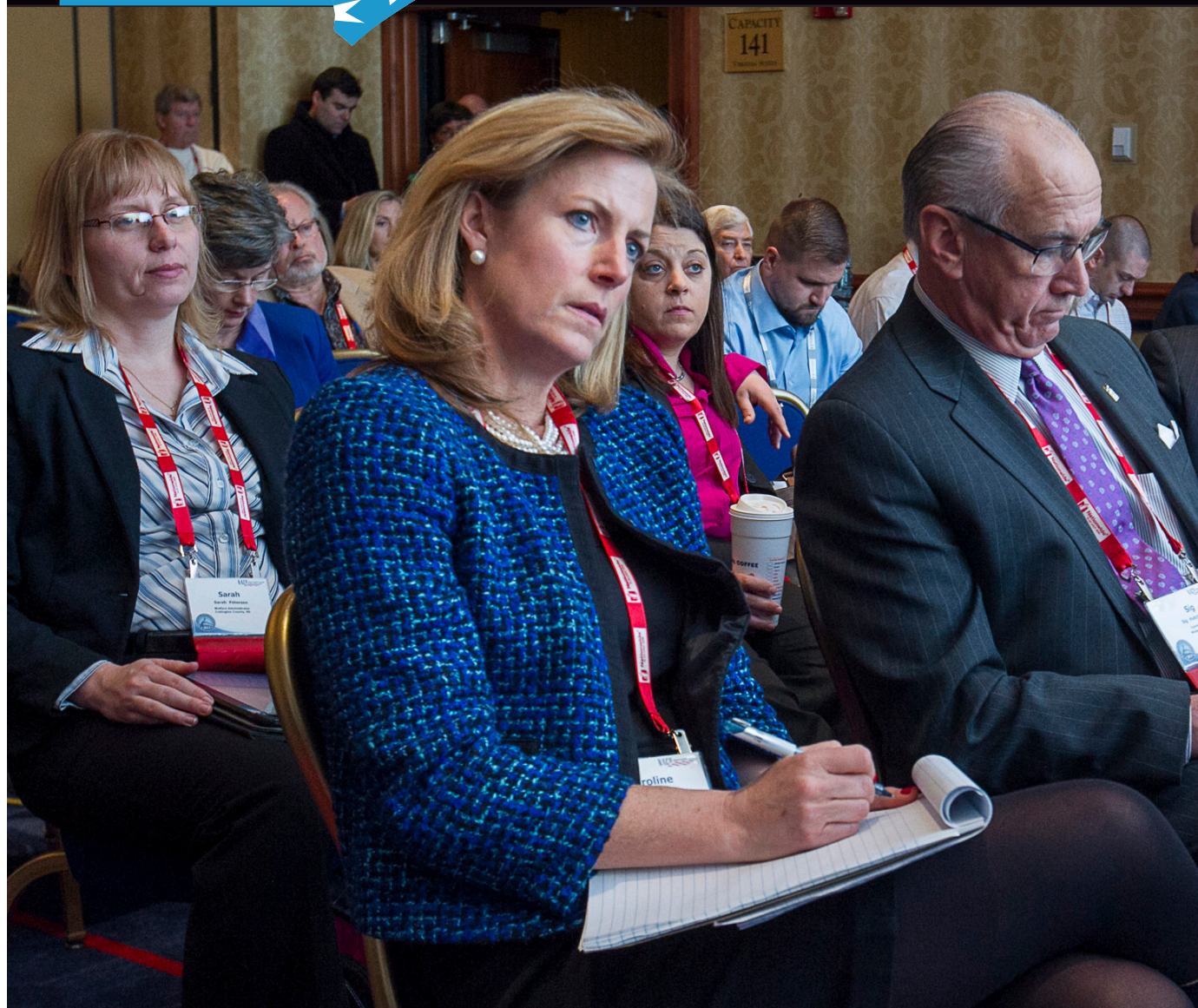
NACo
LEGISLATIVE
CONFERENCE
2016



FEBRUARY 20–24
WASHINGTON, D.C.

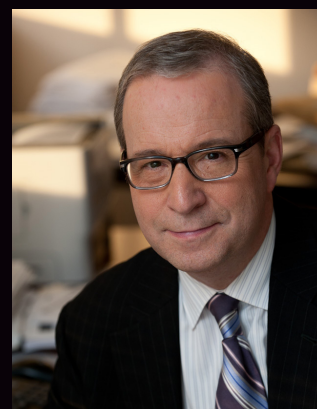
MARRIOTT WARDMAN PARK HOTEL
WASHINGTON, D.C.

FEDERAL POLICIES MATTER TO
COUNTIES
MATTER TO AMERICA



CHRIS WALLACE

Award-winning veteran journalist
& host of Fox News Sunday



RON BROWNSTEIN

Two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist &
editorial director of the National
Journal Group

FORAGING *for* FUNDS

FUNGI FEST TRIMS COUNTY PARK'S REPAIR BILL

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

A youth camp in Curry County, Ore. will get needed repairs — work the county can't afford — thanks to mushrooms.

Oregon's southwestern-most coastal county has been struggling financially for years now, teetering on the brink of insolvency, due to declining timber receipts. About 65 percent of the county is non-taxable federal land.

So there isn't enough county money to repair cabins at Lobster Creek Camp, which is also a county park. What the county does have in abundance, however, are trees. And beneath their lush canopy, fungi flourish. Edible ones like chanterelles, porcinis, hedgehogs and black trumpets as well as toxic ones.

That gave the county's new director of economic development, Julie Schmelzer, an idea: Why not celebrate the county's fungal abundance.... with a Fungi Fest, a first for the county.

"We are a forager's paradise," she said. "We have so many varieties of mushrooms here, and because of our rain-forest climate, people come here to vacation and pick mushrooms. The people that live here pick them; we have people who are picking them and selling them.

"The restaurants use fresh

mushrooms," she added. "It's something that the people embrace, so we thought, let's make a festival out of that with the proceeds going to the Lobster Creek youth camp."

She didn't know what to expect for the event's maiden voyage. But on a rainy, dreary Saturday — perfect weather, if you're a mushroom — Schmelzer estimates about 400 people attended, and the event raised \$1,900.

Most of Lobster Creek Park's cabins are in serious need of repair, Schmelzer said. They need work to fix rotted roofs, sagging foundations, mold problems. Repair costs, she estimates, range from \$500 to \$5,000 per cabin.

County parks director Jay Trost said the financial help is "vital," since parks are self-sustaining and don't receive county funding.

"It's absolutely essential to our survival," he said.

County Commissioner David Brock Smith called the event "fantastic." He attended his family, including an "inquisitive" 7-year-old son who enjoyed learning

how mushrooms go "from forest to pan to plate."

"I was just so impressed by the diversity of the fungus that we have within the county that was displayed," Smith said.

One local restaurateur served mushroom bisque and mushroom ravioli — and kept selling out, Schmelzer recalled.

Other attractions included a silent auction whose top prize was a weekend rental of the entire 52-acre camp — the winning bid was about \$300.

Volunteers from the local Wild Rivers Mushroom Club staffed tables and booths, and explained to curious visitors how to identify different mushrooms, and which ones

to avoid. Kathleen Dickson, co-founder of the club, said she and about a dozen club members foraged the previous day to supply the fungi to be displayed.

"Our table was constantly swamped, and we did a lot of sharing," she said. "It just seemed to me that it was an event that we definitely should repeat."

Smith agrees, seeing tourism opportunities in promoting the county's fungi. "Economic development is the key to our area," he said. "Recreational tourism is the wave of the future."

While the success of the Fungi Fest doesn't add to the county's coffers — Oregon has no sales tax — Smith said events like it generate more revenue for local businesses.

Schmelzer said such events have inspired the county to do more with its parks. Curry County owns more than 900 parcels of land, a recent inventory showed. "We found more parcels that could be added into the park system, she added.

"What we realize here is tourism is our biggest industry, so some of these properties, rather than sell them, put them into your parks department, improve them, and you'll actually be bringing in more revenue in the long run," she said, "and improving the quality of life for county residents as well."



Fungi Fest-goers examine the variety of mushrooms that can be found in Curry County, Ore.'s forests, like the morels in the smaller photo. Event proceeds go towards improving campground facilities in a county park. Photo courtesy of Curry County, Ore.



CN SPOTLIGHT
HYLAND GETS A PROCLAMATION

Fairfax County, Va. Supervisor Gerry Hyland (second left) shows off a proclamation honoring his more than two decades of service to NACo as a member of the NACo Board of Directors. The proclamation was presented to Hyland by NACo Executive Director Matt Chase (second right). Former NACo Executive Director Larry Naake (l) also attended the ceremony held at the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors meeting, Dec. 8. Fairfax County Board Chair Sharon Bulova is seen right. Photo by Alix Kashdan



ANOTHER VOICE: With heart overflowing: In memory of Colorado Officer Garrett Swasey

By Commissioner Karen Joplin
Hood River County, Ore.

This past week I had the opportunity to attend the National Association of Counties' Safe and Secure Counties symposium in Colorado Springs, in El Paso County, Colo. I had the privilege and honor to attend the memorial service for Garrett Swasey, the officer killed in the Colorado Planned Parenthood shooting.

The memorial service was one of the most moving experiences I have ever had, and I came home to Hood River with a desire to share. The event was held in an enormous church capable of holding 4,000 people. At least 3,000 men and women in uniform attended to show their respects. The line to enter the church easily stretched a quarter-mile long, and the 10-acre parking lot flashed with the lights of so many emergency response vehicles that there was no sense in counting them. The formal ceremony was amazing, with a regal air that took my breath away. The procession was a sea of red and blue flashes I will never forget.

Here in our region, much work has been done to reduce the incarceration of those suffering from mental illness. This summer I facilitated a System Intercept Mapping Initiative with the National Institute of Corrections to determine, from a regional perspective, what community-level resources and policies we currently have to address the needs of our justice-involved community members. The work I have spearheaded has included all four counties (Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, and Gilliam) that NORCOR (Northern Oregon Regional Corrections) serves, as well as the

other entities that rent beds from NORCOR's facility. NORCOR Administrator Bryan Brandenburg recently instituted a nationally recognized tool for assessing inmates in terms of their treatment needs and risk of reoffending, and we are now working on enhancing mental health services inside the jail to better serve those with mental health and substance abuse issues. We are also working on crafting transition services to aid people who are re-entering the community after a stint in jail, and we are developing more robust community-level supervision services, so that we avoid incarcerating people who are at low risk of reoffending or who fail to appear for their court date. These new approaches are based on nationally researched evidence on the most effective criminal justice practices.

Those who serve our vulnerable populations do so with such commitment, passion and loyalty to improve our community that I am truly moved every time I arrange a conversation on this topic. Tragical events such as the Colorado Springs shooting should strengthen our compassion and commitment to those with mental health issues. Officer Garrett Swasey was a gallant individual: a pastor, father, brother, husband, son and public servant. Please take a moment to learn about him, his wife Rachel, his son Elijah and his daughter Faith. And remember that Google cannot tell you everything—like that he played the guitar and recently made a worm farm in a five-gallon bucket.

Officer Swasey was a year younger than me and close in age to Sheriff English and Police Chief Holste. We all have children the same ages as Officer Swasey and spouses

that, if left alone as the result of a tragic event, would struggle to stabilize their families. These similarities make his loss hit even closer to home—and make me value our local law enforcement team even more. So I ask everyone in this community to take a moment to appreciate and thank the members of our County Sheriff Department and City Police Department. They put their lives on the line to provide us the safety we expect. One witness from the Colorado shootings stated, "I was so relieved to see the police arrive."

Remind our children that whenever they need help and call 9-1-1, the police will come no matter the circumstances. When you can, introduce your children to police officers and encourage them to ask questions about the uniforms, equipment and vehicles. These public servants are our partners in safety, so teach your children what partnership means. Every child in this county should know the name and face of our county sheriff and city police chief and feel comfortable walking up to them, their deputies or their officers and talking with them. We are partners, we are a community, and these individuals have dedicated their lives to our safety. Thank them every chance you get.

As I left the service for Officer Garrett Swasey, I signed his memorial memory book as follows:

"Karen Joplin, Commissioner Hood River County, Ore., representing: Matt English, Hood River County Sheriff and department. Neil Holste, City of Hood River Police Chief and department.

Standing Strong and with love from Hood River County, Ore."

-First published in the Hood River News. Reprinted with permission of the author.

Strategies for continued access to health care are encouraged

PIPELINE from page 3

Planning Program (Network Planning) funding opportunity. This is a one-year community-driven program targeted to assist in the planning and development of an integrated health care network.

Previously funded projects supported efforts related to workforce retention and recruitment, behavioral health, telehealth, care coordination and health information technology.

Applications that propose strategies to support continued access to viable health care services are encouraged. Recognizing the challenges rural hospitals face, communities that have emergency medical

services that either have at least one rural hospital at financial risk of closing or converting or within communities that have experienced a recent hospital closure or conversion may submit an application. Network planning activities that model evidence-based frameworks or models that work are encouraged as well.

To learn more about applying for the FY16 Rural Health Network Development Planning Program (HRSA-16-017), please visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=279931> (click the "package" tab) or contact Amber Berrian at aberrian@hrsa.gov. The deadline to apply is Jan. 8, 2016.

WORD SEARCH

Buffalo County, Neb. Facts

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

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

- ANTELOPE** (State's other animal-named county)
- BUFFALO HERDS** (Once grazed the Platte River Valley inspiring county's name)
- DAWSON COUNTY** (West adjacent county)
- FIFTH** (Buffalo is the state's fifth most populous county, 46,102)
- GIBBON** (Original county seat)
- KEARNEY** (County seat)
- MORMON TRAIL** (Route through county named for Mormons migrating west, mid-19th century)
- MOSES SYDENHAM** (Newspaperman and early pioneer who advocated for Kearney as U.S. capital city)
- PLATTE RIVER VALLEY** (River valley followed by Mormon and Oregon trails)
- RAVENNA** (City in Buffalo County)
- SHERMAN COUNTY** (Neighboring county to the north)
- TRAILS AND RAILS MUSEUM** (Operated by Buffalo County Historical Society)
- UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD** (Credited with county's early development)
- UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA** (State university campus in Kearney)
- US CAPITAL** (Moses Sydenham proposed U.S. capital be Kearney because of its central location)



News From the Nation's Counties

► ARKANSAS

Four **deputy coroners** will join **PULASKI COUNTY**'s current seven coroner's office employees. Coroner Gerone Hobbs said his office received about 4,700 calls last year.

Funds in the 2016 county budget will pay for the new hires, which are expected to lessen current employees' caseloads, which last year, racked up thousands of dollars in overtime, according to Arkansas Online.

In Arkansas, coroners respond to all calls about deaths — including at hospice facilities, nursing homes and hospitals — confirm deaths, identify causes and transport bodies to the morgue.

► CALIFORNIA

• **LOS ANGELES COUNTY** Sheriff Jim McDonnell has launched a Los Angeles Regional **Human Trafficking Task Force**.

It creates an alliance between law enforcement, state and federal prosecutors, and community-based organizations — all located at a single facility — making it easier for them to work across jurisdictional lines.

Resources will include the U.S. attorney, FBI, Homeland Security, State Parole, the District Attorney's Office, Probation, and the Department of Children and Family Services.

• Things in **MARIN COUNTY** are a little squirrely these days — dangerously so. The Department of Health and Human Services and animal welfare agencies are investigating a rash of recent **squirrel attacks on people**, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

The local humane society said at least eight people have been bitten, one of whom required emergency medical treatment. In describing the attacks, officials say the squirrel's (or squirrels') "M.O." is to run up to a person, crawl up their bodies and bite. Victims have sustained injuries to their hands, arms, legs and heads.

Squirrels rarely carry rabies, but all of the victims are receiving anti-rabies medication as a precaution, authorities said.

► COLORADO

The **EL PASO COUNTY** Department of Human Services (DHS) was recently recognized for its **"innovative leadership,"** and as a "voice of change in the human



► ARIZONA

Protecting those that also serve and protect: K9 Unit member, Nina, from the **MARICOPA COUNTY** Sheriff's Office, is one of several members of the unit to receive a **bullet and stab protective vest**, thanks to a charitable donation from Vested Interest in K9s. Nina's vest will be embroidered with the sentiment "Thank You for Your Service," according to a release from the Sheriff's Office.

Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. is located in East Taunton, Mass. To date, it has provided more than 1,600 protective vests in 49 states. Photo courtesy of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

services field," by the American Association of SNAP Directors and the American Public Human Services Association.

The award recognized ongoing efforts by DHS staff, especially collaborations and application processing. In one collaboration — the first of its kind in the state — El Paso County DHS works with jail inmates as they're being released, to provide information on local resources and programs, and to screen them for eligibility

for assistance programs.

► HAWAII

MAUI COUNTY Council is considering a bill to repeal a water-availability policy — the so-called **"show me the water"** policy.

The ordinance requires applicants for development approvals to provide evidence of "a long-term, reliable supply of water." It was enacted in 2007 with the intent of conserving the county's

water resources, *MauiTime Weekly* reported.

Councilmember Gloria Baisa, chair of the council's Water Resources Committee, said the policy is being revisited because it is often cited as "one of the main reasons why affordable housing has not been built."

► MARYLAND

The **MONTGOMERY COUNTY** Council has amended its zoning ordinance to increase the setbacks between **large filling stations** and sensitive land uses to 500 feet from the current 300 feet. Large stations are defined as those capable of pumping more than 3.6 million gallons per year.

The zoning text amendment will also add dwelling units and environmental attributes to the list of sensitive land uses from which a minimum distance would be required. Currently, that list includes public or private schools, parks or playgrounds and day care centers, or any outdoor use categorized as a civic and institutional use or recreational and entertainment use.

► MICHIGAN

Local government in **OAKLAND COUNTY** just took another step toward greater transparency. It's launched an online portal to file **freedom of information (FOIA) requests** from the public and news media.

The portal will accept FOIA requests for all of the county's executive departments, the sheriff's office, the clerk/register of deeds and the treasurer's office. Anyone who files FOIA requests online will be able to track the progress of their requests. They'll also be able to review others' FOIA requests and responses to them. Oakland County receives more than 3,500 FOIA requests a year.

"County departments can now collaborate on FOIA requests that require the collection of public documents from several departments in an easier fashion," County Executive Brooks Patterson said.

► NORTH CAROLINA

In an operation they called "Home for the Holidays," the U.S. Marshals Service and sheriffs' offices in 44 eastern counties **checked on registered sex offenders** in each county to confirm they were living at their

listed addresses. In **JOHNSTON COUNTY**, 16 teams of officers checked on 209 registered sex offenders, WRAL News reported.

► OHIO

The **CUYAHOGA COUNTY** Regional Forensic Science Laboratory has opened a **fingerprint lab** to handle cases at no charge for all law enforcement and justice agencies in the county.

The laboratory's three forensic scientists will provide latent fingerprint lifting, fingerprint comparison, evidence examination, palm/footprint examination and automated database comparisons services.

Earlier in 2015, the forensic science lab began offering justice agencies in the county no-charge testing for DNA, drug chemistry, toxicology, and trace evidence services.

The \$5 million cost for renovation and equipment was primarily funded with \$4.5 million that was part of a larger settlement with firms that employed a man convicted of stealing millions from rich investors, *The Plain Dealer* reported.

► OREGON

• Despite a voter-approved ban, **genetically engineered crops** will continue to grow in **JACKSON COUNTY** for a few more years. A settlement between alfalfa farmers and the county allows the genetically engineered alfalfa that was planted before the ban to be grown and harvested, *The Oregonian* reported. After that, the farmers must switch to varieties that aren't genetically modified.

The ban went into effect in June and farmers were supposed to remove the crops 12 months after they were harvested. Farmers successfully argued that ripping out the crops would cause millions of dollars in losses.

• The **LANE COUNTY** Board of Commissioners may allow the county administrator to **order people off county property** or to ban them from it.

The ordinance would apply to all county buildings and land and allow the administrator have another county employee do so on his or her behalf. It would codify what has been the county's rule and practice by designating who

Milwaukee County, Wis. explores community ID card program

NEWS FROM *from page 15*

may do so, *The Register-Guard* reported.

►UTAH

• A grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will fund a program for house calls to people in **SALT LAKE** and **UTAH** counties for people with severe asthma.

Smog during the winter dramatically lowers air quality in northern Utah. Health educators will make three home visits to each participating household over the course of roughly four months and then follow up by phone.

They will teach participants how to spot symptoms and use medications correctly, as well as how to limit indoor asthma triggers such as mold and dust mites, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported.

- Three counties are asking the

U.S. Supreme Court to intervene in a border **dispute with the Ute Indian Tribe**.

DUCHESNE, UINTAH and **WASATCH** counties have asked the court to overturn a decision by the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which said that Utah prosecutors have no business going after Ute tribal members who commit crimes on Indian land.

The *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that the ruling has added even more confusion to the 40-year-old dispute over jurisdiction over tribal lands.

►WASHINGTON

KING COUNTY Councilmember Larry Phillips attended the **United Nations Climate Change Conference** in Paris to share the county's ambitious, 151-page climate-action plan adopted in November.

The plan contains a set of targets and timelines, and regional

strategies for lowering carbon emissions such as expanded transit, green building codes, renewable energy, recycling and enhancing the quality of life in urban areas to help protect the county's rural areas against sprawl.

He was the only county representative on a 12-member local-government delegation to the summit that was expected to include 50,000 participants, the *Seattle Times* reported.

►WISCONSIN

A Joint Task Force on Community Identification Cards, comprising **MILWAUKEE COUNTY** and city officials, will review and make recommendations related to the creation and issuance of community **ID cards for illegal immigrants and the homeless** in lieu of driver's licenses.

Taxpayers would cover the

cost of the ID program—initially \$300,000—split evenly between the city and county.

The cards will also be distributed to low-income elderly, individuals with mental illness, survivors of domestic violence and formerly incarcerated indi-

viduals re-entering the community, Watchdog.org reported.

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

The H.R. Doctor Is In

An HR Doctor Holiday Card

'Twas the night before Christmas
And throughout County Hall
Not a bureaucrat was stirring
No sounds heard at all.

The janitor's night off, the alarm systems set
The beacons for security and decoration met.
The ambient light kept the stars out of sight
No Bethlehem star could be seen in the night.

Those bringing gifts were turned back at the door
No gifts could be given, auditors hired galore.
No risk of polluting the ethics machine
Even frankincense and myrrh would have to be screened.

While Christmas and Chanukah often meet in December
We seem to forget what we all should remember
Of friendship and family, of futures so bright
Of civil behavior and doing what's right.

The holidays tell us of great lessons learned
A safer and better world to be earned
Give gratitude and joy – the greatest gifts, we believe
It's better to give than it is to receive.

*With Love and Best Wishes for a
"Service to Others" Holiday Season...*

Phil Rosenberg, the HR Doctor
Charlotte Rosenberg, the HR Spouse
Elyse Rosenberg, the HR Daughter
Rachel Brown, the HR Daughter
Evie Brown, the HR Granddaughter



►NEBRASKA

Members of the **LANCASTER COUNTY** Board of Commissioners believe in the **significance of the nonprofit organizations** in their county. They also believe in the importance of volunteering and have made it a practice to give back to the community through helping their hometown nonprofits. Their latest effort took them to the Lincoln Food Bank where they sorted food for holiday distribution.

Pictured above (l-r) are Board members Larry Hudkins, Deb Schorr, Bill Avery, Roma Amundson and Todd Wiltgen, who sorted food for holiday distribution.

In addition to the Lincoln Food Bank, board members have volunteered at the Humane Society, the People's City Mission, the Thankful Celebration for Adult Probation participants and at the Tools for Education event at the Center for People in Need, distributing backpacks and school supplies to low-income, school-aged children. Photo courtesy of Lancaster County, Neb.

