



The line to prepay 2018 property taxes before the end of 2017 stretches well outside of the Boulder County, Colo. courthouse. Photo courtesy of CBS4 Denver.

Tax collectors, treasurers see last-minute rush to avoid property tax deduction cap

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

As the year wound down, a lot of staff members in county

tax collectors' office figured the last weeks of December 2017 seemed ripe to use their vacation time.

How wrong they were.

Passage of the federal tax code overhaul meant homeowners' state and local property tax deduction would be capped at \$10,000 starting in 2018. Keying on that last part, thousands of people looked into whether they could prepay their property taxes before the new year, in hopes of getting in under the wire. And they showed up in long lines at tax offices across the country, eager, for a change, to pay their taxes.

In Boulder County, Colo. that meant 3,800 people coming to pay in less than a month, and the county's collecting \$32 million.

"We usually spend the last

week doing what a lot of offices do, eating leftovers and doing house cleaning," said Treasurer Paul Weissmann. "Instead we wound up working 16-hour days and coming in on New Year's weekend to process everything. I don't think anyone was ready for that."

"The line out the door was an hour long. People were waiting that long on the phone. Things got better when the assessor's office staff pitched in to help."

Weissmann said the usual pre-paid haul in Boulder County is less than 1 percent of properties. They expect a jump to 5 percent after the mailed payments are processed.

Then the Internal Revenue Service chimed in Dec. 27, saying prepayments would only be eligible for the uncapped

See TAXES page 2

Changes coming to food stamps near you?

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

Counties in Wisconsin are in an anxious "wait and see" mode as Gov. Scott Walker (R) moves ahead with a plan to become the first state to drug test able-bodied adults applying for food stamps or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The push from Walker comes as the Department of Agriculture (USDA) signals its approval to give states more flexibility on how they administer SNAP, in order to whittle down the program. SNAP served about 42 million people in 2017, at a cost of nearly \$68 billion, nearly two-thirds of whom were under 18, older than 60 or disabled.

In Wisconsin, the proposed change would affect those taking part in SNAP's employment and training program. Those who test positive for illegal drugs would be required to undergo treatment and if they can't afford it, the state would pay or they would lose their benefits. Walker's attempts to add drug testing in the past have failed because they were blocked by the USDA under the Obama administration.

Counties in Wisconsin are concerned about potential increases to their budgets, even though the state promises reimbursement. "We're not exactly sure how this will work — we're in a holding pattern at this point," said Sarah Diedrick-Kasdorf, deputy director

of government affairs at the Wisconsin Counties Association.

Diedrick-Kasdorf said she's fielding questions from members, like "Who's going to do this?" and "Who's going to pay?"

The earliest the new plan in Wisconsin would be implemented would be in November and even that might not happen because the state has said it expects to be sued over the measure, Diedrick-Kasdorf said.

See SNAP page 5



NACO LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES SETTLED FOR 2018

NACO's Board of Directors adopted eight legislative priorities for 2018 at its fall meeting in Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas Dec. 9. The priorities reflect the association's founding principles: to preserve local decision-making, to protect counties from unfunded mandates and local preemption and to strengthen the federal-state-local partnership.

See PRIORITIES page 3

All hands on deck for early tax filers

From TAXES page 1

deduction if the properties were already assessed and billed for 2018. That meant the 13,000 or so residents of Fairfax County, Va. who had already paid \$93 million would end up having to pay more for their tax bills in the end. The Montgomery County, Md. Council fast-tracked a bill to allow prepayments, but the IRS ruling scuttled those plans.

Tarrant County, Texas had never allowed prepayments. Attempts to do so registered as an overpayment of the prior year's taxes in Assessor-Collector Ron Wright's computer system.

"When we found out about the deduction cap, we developed a workaround to be able

to accept the prepayments," Wright said. "We told the public we would make no judgment of what the IRS would do, but we would accept them, and we considered the payments a good-faith effort to pay their taxes early."

After the IRS ruling, Wright said the system was changed again to process refunds.

"In Texas, everything is valued as of Jan. 1, so we couldn't accept the prepayments," Wright said. "We tried, though."

Pennsylvania taxpayers were mostly out of luck, save for four counties on the western end of the state that had different collection systems. Lawrence, Beaver, Washington and Allegheny counties saw some late-year traffic in their treasurers' offices.

Allegheny County Deputy Treasurer Kevin Fischer said his office usually saw prepayment for a dozen parcels every year until 2017.

"We processed 3,125 parcels, that meant about \$4.7 million," he said. "I've never seen anything like it before."

Cook County, Ill. was not surprised by the rush, though.

"We started hearing rumblings in early December," said Treasurer Maria Pappas. "We got 200 emails and 300 phone calls in a day, people asking if they could prepay."

Pappas directed a team of 20 programmers to put together an online pre-payment tax bill, which was available starting Dec. 11.

By Dec. 30, roughly 90,000 people had prepaid their property taxes, totaling \$748 million.

"We used to have 258 people working in six offices, now we're down to 70 in one office," she said. "We had to have something set up online, otherwise we never would have managed."

She said the success with the county's prepayment was the fruit of 20 years' worth of computerization efforts.

"We had 80,000 people debit their bank accounts, another 10,000 pay with credit cards, all online," she said. "People still came into the office, though. I was handing out baklava and Eli's cheesecake on New Year's Eve."

Weissmann noted a similar atmosphere in Boulder County.

"I tended bar for 23 years, and that week was the closest environment in the treasurer's office that compared," he said.

Fitting, then, that it was the week of New Year's Eve. **CN**



SNAP/STATS

SNOWIEST STATES

Days	State	Place
66.4	N.Y.	Syracuse (Onondaga County)
54.4	Vt.	Burlington (Chittenden County)
48	Alaska	Anchorage (Anchorage Municipality)
37.7	W. Va.	Beckley (Raleigh County)
36.7	Wyo.	Lander (Fremont County)

Source: National Climatic Data Center — average snowfall 1981-2010

PROFILES IN SERVICE

DEBORAH (DEBBIE) A. LIEBERMAN

Board Member
Commissioner
Montgomery County, Ohio



LIEBERMAN

Number of years involved in NACo: 13

Years in public service: 30

Occupation: County commissioner

Education: BA, JD, University of Dayton

The hardest thing I've ever done was: Complete law school.

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: The 14th Dalai Lama, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mother Teresa.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Raced cars.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: Rappel down the 27-story KeyBank Tower in Dayton, Ohio.

My favorite way to relax is to: Spend time at any beach or time on the water with my WaveRunners, friends and family.

I'm most proud of: My sons.

Every morning I read: Several newspapers.

My favorite meal is: Filet and Ohio walleye at my favorite restaurant.

My favorite movie is:
The Wizard of Oz.



Photo: Flickr user Tadson Bussey

My motto is: "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams," a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt.

The last book I read was: *A Mindful Nation: How a Simple Practice Can Help Us Reduce Stress, Improve Performance, and Recapture the American Spirit* by Congressman Tim Ryan.

My favorite music is: EDM.

My favorite U.S. president is: Barack Obama.

My county is a NACo member because: Montgomery County, like all counties across the country, must have a strong national voice that represents us and the issues that we face in local

government. NACo is that voice. The professionalism that the staff provides across a wide range of issues allows us to focus on our local concerns. NACo provides excellent services to its members and works so well with the state lobbying groups like ours here in Ohio, the County Commissioners Association of Ohio.

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LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

2018 CONT. FROM PAGE 1

IN ADDITION TO THE EIGHT OVERARCHING POLICY PRIORITIES LISTED BELOW, THE BOARD ALSO ACCEPTED NEARLY THREE DOZEN RECOMMENDATIONS FROM NACO'S 10 POLICY STEERING COMMITTEES, RANGING FROM SUPPORT FOR FARM BILL REAUTHORIZATION TO PROMOTING LOCAL PRIORITIES IN CYBERSECURITY LEGISLATION.

PROMOTE COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES

NACO will work with the administration and Congress to ensure that any infrastructure package, including reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act and the Highway Trust Fund, reflects the following county priorities: allocating more funding for locally owned infrastructure, increasing local decision-making authority and prioritizing investments that increase economic development, mobility and safety.

AT STAKE

- COUNTIES OWN **46 PERCENT** OF ALL PUBLIC ROAD MILES
- COUNTIES OWN **38 PERCENT** OF THE NATIONAL BRIDGE INVENTORY
- COUNTIES ARE INVOLVED IN **78 PERCENT** OF THE NATION'S PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS AND A THIRD OF PUBLIC AIRPORTS

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

NACO supports restoring full mandatory funding for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program, which compensates counties for untaxable federal land within their boundaries. NACO also supports extending the Secure Rural Schools (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.

AT STAKE

- **61.6 PERCENT** OF COUNTIES HAVE FEDERAL LAND WITHIN THEIR BOUNDARIES
- PILT AND SRS SUPPORT CRITICAL SERVICES IN COUNTIES, INCLUDING **EMERGENCY SERVICES, SEARCH AND RESCUE, FIRE PROTECTION, FOREST MAINTENANCE, EDUCATION AND TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE**

SUPPORT POLICIES TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT AND JUSTICE REFORM

NACO supports measures that enhance the ability of counties to prevent and treat mental illness and substance use disorders, both in the community and within the context of the criminal justice system. NACO also supports programs and legislation that divert non-violent individuals struggling with mental illness and/or substance use disorders from jails and into treatment programs, while protecting overall public safety.

AT STAKE

- APPROXIMATELY **7.9 MILLION** ADULTS HAVE BOTH A MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER
- **11.4 MILLION** INDIVIDUALS CYCLE IN AND OUT OF MORE THAN 3,000 LOCAL JAILS EACH YEAR
- **64 PERCENT** OF JAIL INMATES HAVE A MENTAL ILLNESS

PROTECT THE FEDERAL-STATE-LOCAL PARTNERSHIP FOR MEDICAID

NACO supports protecting the federal-state-local partnership structure for financing and delivering Medicaid services while maximizing flexibility to support local systems of care. Counties are concerned about measures that would further shift Medicaid costs to counties, including proposals to institute block grants or per capita caps. These proposals would increase the amount of uncompensated care provided by counties and reduce counties' ability to provide for the health of our residents. NACO also supports targeted efforts to enhance flexibility in the program to support local systems of care, including easing Medicaid's Institute of Mental Diseases (IMD) and inmate exclusions.

AT STAKE

- COUNTIES SPEND **\$83 BILLION ANNUALLY** ON COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HOSPITAL SERVICES
- COUNTIES OWN AND SUPPORT **907** HOSPITALS AND **838** NURSING HOMES, **750** BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES AND OPERATE **1,943** LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY
- LOCAL GOVERNMENTS CONTRIBUTED **\$28 BILLION** TO THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF MEDICAID IN 2012

WORK TOWARDS A MORE EFFECTIVE DEFINITION OF WATERS OF THE U.S.

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 to rewrite it in consultation and collaboration with state and local governments.

AT STAKE

- MORE THAN **70 PERCENT** OF COUNTIES INVEST IN STORM SEWER SYSTEMS, SEWAGE DISPOSAL, SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND WATER UTILITIES
- COUNTIES INVEST **\$23.9 BILLION** IN SANITARY, STORM SEWER SYSTEMS AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL/TREATMENT AND WATER SUPPLY SYSTEMS

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 collecting remote sales taxes has taken on greater significance in recent years due to the Internet's growth as a retail marketplace. As a result, state and local governments have lost billions in uncollected sales taxes and Main Street businesses find themselves at a significant competitive disadvantage to online merchants. This disadvantage is amplified because online merchants and their customers use and benefit from local infrastructure and services without contributing to their provision.

AT STAKE

- **\$26.1 BILLION** OF EXISTING SALES TAX REVENUE IS CURRENTLY NOT COLLECTED— THIS REVENUE COULD PROVIDE FUNDING FOR ESSENTIAL LOCAL SERVICES LIKE INFRASTRUCTURE, PUBLIC SAFETY, EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUPPORT PROGRAMS THAT ASSIST COUNTIES TO PREVENT AND REDUCE POVERTY

NACO supports federal investments and strategies that focus on serving those most in need and the root causes of poverty. Because counties are responsible to maintain the local social safety net and are typically mandated to provide indigent care, NACO supports fully funding programs that assist our nation's most vulnerable populations and maintain the maximum amount of flexibility possible at the local level. Key federal programs that assist counties in tackling poverty include the Social Services Block Grant and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.

AT STAKE

- COUNTIES INVEST OVER **\$58 BILLION** IN HUMAN SERVICES EACH YEAR
- **TWO-THIRDS** OF COUNTIES HAVE POVERTY RATES ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

SUPPORT A COMPREHENSIVE LONG-TERM FARM BILL REAUTHORIZATION

NACO supports a long-term reauthorization of the farm bill to help counties provide critical investments in our nation's most underserved communities. In addition to a long-term reauthorization, NACO also supports full funding for all farm bill titles, which help strengthen our nation's rural infrastructure including broadband and water and wastewater systems, protect our nation's food supply, increase access to healthy food to low-income populations through the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), and promote environmental stewardship and conservation.

AT STAKE

- BETWEEN 2009 AND 2016, THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM LEVERAGED OVER **\$187 BILLION** IN LOANS AND GRANTS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT
- IN 2016, ALMOST **45 MILLION INDIVIDUALS** RECEIVED SERVICES SUPPORTED BY SNAP

Proposed policy resolutions for consideration at the 2018 Legislative Conference are now being accepted.

Deadline: Feb. 3.

Learn more at
<http://www.naco.org/policyprocess>
 or call 202.661.8819.

WORD SEARCH

ISABELLA COUNTY, MICH.
Created by: Mary Ann Barton

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

BARNs: Isabella County piloted the Michigan Barn and Farmstead Survey in 1993 to help preserve rural communities. A statewide collective was formed two years later to give a voice to preservation efforts.

BIRDs: The 40-acre Florence Maxwell Bird Sanctuary in the county is home to 100 species of birds.

CANOE: You can rent canoes, kayaks and inner tubes to float down the Chippewa River, which runs through the county.

CAREY: County native Paul Carey was the announcer for the Detroit Tigers from 1973 to 1991, when he gave the play-by-play with fellow announcer Ernie Harwell. Carey is a member of the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame.

CASINO: The county is home to the Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort, located on the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Reservation.

CHIPPEWA: The area was once known as Ojibway Besse, meaning “the place of the Chippewa.”

ENGLER: Former Gov. John Engler is a native of the area.

FARMS: Isabella County is home to more than 1,000 farms including dairy, livestock, vegetable and organic farms.

LAKE: Lake Isabella attracts fishing enthusiasts who catch bass, walleye and pike. The 701-acre lake is one of 35 in the county.

MICHIGAN: Isabella County is located in the center of the state of Michigan.

OIL: Large quantities of oil were discovered in Mt. Pleasant, the county seat, in 1928. The local high school’s mascot is the Oiler.

QUEEN: The county got its name from Queen Isabella of Spain, based on a suggestion by a U.S. Indian agent and ethnologist.

TRAIL: The 30-mile asphalt Pere Marquette Rail Trail, which opened in 1993, runs through scenic rolling hills and small towns and is popular with walkers, joggers and cyclists.

UNIVERSITY: Central Michigan University, located in Isabella County, is the fourth-largest public university in Michigan. Total enrollment is more than 25,000.

WARD: Lumberman David Ward deeded five acres in Mount Pleasant on the condition that the courthouse be built there. A brick courthouse built in 1877 was demolished in 1972. A modern courthouse was built in its place.

Fueled by opioid epidemic, foster care numbers soar in Ohio

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

A thousand more Ohio children spent the holidays in foster care this season compared to last year, thanks to the opioid epidemic sweeping the state.

That somber news comes from a report released last month by the Public Children Services Association of Ohio, a statewide membership organization for county children services agencies. If the rate at which children entering the foster care system continues, that number could double to 2,000 by next year, according to the organization.

“The number of children in need of county services as a result of the opiate epidemic is staggering,” said Suzanne Dulaney, executive director of the County Commissioners’ Association of Ohio.

“While we cannot give the children in the care of county government the immediate Christmas present they deserve — healthy and intact families — we can and must respond as a state and as local communities to address their needs,” she said.

“More must be done to bring resources to the table for these children.”

“I would also add that we need to keep in mind the strain this crisis has placed on our children services staff and other county first responders,” she said. “The toll on them has been staggering as well.”

The cost of placing children in foster care in Ohio will surge by 67 percent to more than half a billion dollars a year, if entry rates continue at the current



pace. Counties shoulder more than half the cost of paying for child protection in Ohio. Foster care placement costs alone have risen by an estimated \$45 million since last year.

“There are very few in Franklin County who have not been affected in some way by the opiate epidemic ravaging communities across the nation, and the effects on children in particular are devastating,” said Commissioner John O’Grady.

“Franklin County and the city of Columbus launched an action plan in 2017 to double down on efforts to address this public health crisis from all angles, including the stress it is placing on our foster care system,” he said. “To that end, strong local-state-federal partnerships will continue to be critical to our success.”

Ohio led the nation from 2002 to 2010 in reducing the number of children in out-of-home care by 42 percent. “But the Great Recession followed by the opioid crisis led to more children being drawn into the system, and these kids are more complex, their trauma more challenging, and their placement costs dramat-

ically higher than Ohio’s child protection agencies have ever witnessed,” said Angela Sausser, executive director of the Public Children Services Association of Ohio.

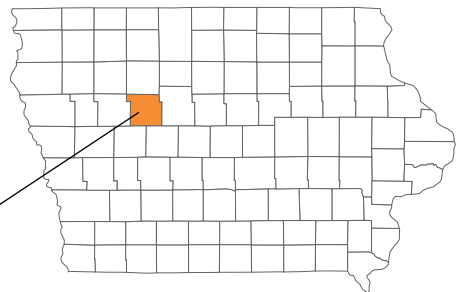
The numbers tell the story: In July 2013, 12,654 children were in agency custody. Four years later, the number climbed to 15,145. This fall, the number rose to 15,500. If the rate continues, 20,000 children may be in Ohio foster care by 2020.

“Many of these kids watch their parents overdose or die,” Sausser said. “They are missing milestones with their families such as birthday parties and ringing in the new year, and many are staying in care longer due to their parents’ relapsing.”

“Ohio needs a long-term solution to this crisis — and leadership to get us there before agency budgets collapse and our workforce jumps ship,” Sausser said. “We already have a lack of available foster homes in Ohio. With the projected increases, we will have children sleeping in county agency lobbies with no available foster family to take them in.” See the full report at <http://bit.ly/2E0U2Hy>. **CN**

New NACo Member
GET TO KNOW...

Calhoun County, Iowa



Welcome, Calhoun County, Iowa

Calhoun County was originally called Fox County, after the tribe of Fox Indians that lived in the region. **The Iowa Legislature changed the name to Calhoun County, after Vice President John C. Calhoun, in 1853.** The Calhoun County Historical Museum, located in the former Rockwell City High School, contains thousands of historical artifacts from the area, including Indian artifacts, Civil War quilts and **a collection of 1,425 unique pairs of salt and pepper shakers.**



USDA to states: Get 'flexible' to whittle Food Stamps program

From SNAP page 1

Some of the costs that counties are concerned about include the price tag for them to treat those who test positive for drugs. "Counties are saying that the Medicaid rate won't cover our costs," Diedrick-Kasdorf said. "As treatment providers, will counties be covered?"

The Wisconsin Legislature has 120 days to determine whether they approve of the new rule. Meanwhile, the association and counties are staying in close touch with the state department of human services.

What's playing out in Wisconsin — local tweaking of the SNAP program — could soon be taking place elsewhere in the country.

Although SNAP is primarily a partnership between the federal government and states, there are 10 states that share SNAP administration with county agencies. In addition to Wisconsin, they are California, Colorado, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio and Virginia. Despite being county-administered in only 20 percent of the country's states, 31 percent of all SNAP recipients reside in those states, and counties often contribute significant local funds to administrative and supplemental costs of running the programs.

The changes in Wisconsin may be just what the Trump administration is looking for.

"As a former governor, I know firsthand how important it is for states to be given flexibility to achieve the desired goal of self-sufficiency for people," USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue said in a Press Club address. "We want to provide the nutrition people need, but we also want to help them transition from government programs, back to work and into lives of independence."

The administrator of the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) said the agency is looking for a new focus on



Photo by Clementine Gallot (flickr)

self-sufficiency, integrity and customer service for the program and is signaling that it wants to see changes made to the program.

To encourage changes to the program, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service is offering greater local control to states and looking for states to get creative.

Meanwhile in Congress, bills have been introduced to put new work requirements on food stamp recipients. Republicans will decide after an annual retreat, held Jan. 31, whether work requirements will become a priority in 2018.

But some states aren't waiting for federal action on curbing the program. Like Wisconsin, some states are taking action now.

In Ohio, a bill recently passed in the Legislature that would require food stamp recipients to carry a color photo of the named recipient or a member of their household. The bill is still under review.

In Michigan, the state de-

More than 40 million people are enrolled in the \$71 billion-a-year food stamp program nationwide, a drop from 47.4 million in 2013.

partment of health and human services notified Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Clinton, Eaton, Grand Traverse, Ingham, Ionia, Kalamazoo and Livingston counties that able-bodied adults ages 18-49 without dependents will be required to meet work requirements that have been waived for more than a decade to continue receiving food assistance benefits.

The state department of health and human services says approximately 16,000 could be affected by the change, which went into effect Jan. 1.

In Georgia, where Perdue previously served as governor, two dozen counties now limit

unemployed adults ages 18-49 without dependents or disabilities to three months of food stamps in a three-year period. They can continue the program if they find a job or are enrolled in a job training or community service program for at least 20 hours a week. The plan is to include all 159 counties in Georgia by 2019.

Some states, including California, which receives \$7.5 billion a year in SNAP benefits or 11 percent of total national spending for the program, have remained exempt from the policy requiring able-bodied SNAP recipients to work during times of enduring unemployment.

When California's exemption waiver runs out Aug. 31, it's unclear whether the state will impose the work requirement or any other federal changes for SNAP recipients, Cathy Senderling-McDonald, deputy executive director of the County Welfare Directors Association of California, told the *Sacramento Bee* earlier this year.

"California does tend to be a state that tries to protect its recipients from bad things that happen federally," she said. "Are we going to make those changes? Or are we going to say no, and find a way to match those who would lose federal eligibility? Do we take steps to protect them at 100 percent state costs?" **CN**

ON THE MOVE

NACo STAFF



Hall

Kim Hall has joined the Public Affairs Department as the new member engagement manager. She will be responsible for creating and implementing data-driven strategies and programs that result in membership recruitment, retention, engagement and growth. Before joining NACo, she served as president of Chester County, Pa. Historical Society, executive director for Chester County Futures and later as principal of Hall & Associates Group.



Rowings

Kathy Rowings, associate program director for justice, spoke about NACo's Stepping Up campaign and county and state collaboration at the National Council of State Legislatures Conference, Dec. 10, 2017 in San Diego County.

Entries for NACo-Nationwide scholarship now being accepted

By Bob Beasley
communications consultant
Nationwide

High-school seniors whose parents, grandparents or legal guardians actively contribute to a 457(b) plan offered through the NACo Deferred Compensation Program are eligible to apply for a \$2,500 college scholarship. Four \$2,500 scholarships will be awarded in spring 2018 in honor of the scholarship program's 13th year in existence.

The NACo-Nationwide scholarship essay contest is an educational opportunity for high-school students about to transition into a new stage of their lives. "Young adults should understand the importance of preparing for a comfortable financial future as well as be aware of potential obstacles," NACo President Roy Brooks said. "The NACo-Nationwide essay contest allows the next generation of retirees to give insight into what retirement services look like to them, a group of consumers

whose purchase decision is years away.

"By the same token, educating our next generation on the importance of retirement savings will not only benefit the individual but their entire microsystems. The continued NACo-Nationwide partnership not only raises awareness in this vital area, it also continues the discussion and works to take the current retirement system to a whole new level. I expect great things from our 2018 winners. May their contributions be a ripple effect towards new and improved lifestyles," Brooks said.

How eligible students can apply

Parents, grandparents or legal guardians should talk to their eligible high school seniors about applying right away. Starting Jan. 3, the application can be completed online at www.nrsforu.com/scholarship.

Eligibility requirements

Graduating high school se-

niors who are legal U.S. residents are eligible to apply.

- Applicant's parent, grandparent or legal guardian must be enrolled in and actively contribute to a 457(b) plan offered through the NACo Deferred Compensation Program.
- Applicants must enroll in a full-time undergraduate course of study no later than the autumn term of the 2018-2019 school year at an accredited two- or four-year college.
- Immediate family members of NACo employees, members of the NACo Defined Contribution and Retirement Advisory Committee or its governing board of directors, staff of individual state Association of Counties that are members of the LLC, and Nationwide employees are not eligible to apply; this program is not offered outside the United States.
- Application and entry must be submitted online at www.nrsforu.com/scholarship between Jan. 3 and March 5.

Scholarship honors 39 years of partnership

The NACo-Nationwide Scholarship is just one of many benefits of nearly four decades of partnership between Nationwide and the National Association of Counties and its member counties. For additional information about the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, please contact David Belnick at david.belnick@nationwide.com or 410.790.5440; or contact your Nationwide representative at 877.677.3678. **CN**

Nationwide Retirement Solutions (Nationwide) partners with the National Association of Counties (NACo) to provide counties and their employees with a competitive deferred compensation program. As part of this partnership, Nationwide pays a fee to NACo in exchange for NACo's exclusive endorsement, marketing support, and program oversight of Nationwide products made available under the program. For more information, including fees paid, Nationwide encourages you to visit NRSforu.com. NRM-9556AO-NX.4 (12/17)

TIPS FROM LAST YEAR'S WINNERS

To help students consider why saving early and consistently may be important, Brooks shared key points from last year's scholarship winners who answered the following questions:

"Most high school students dream of the day when they will be on their own and no longer depend on their parents, but that kind of freedom requires financial independence. What does financial freedom mean to you? What is your plan to achieve financial freedom for yourself and how are you going to ensure that your financial freedom will continue through your retirement years?"

Hailee Sparks from Hudson, Wis. Senior High School in Hudson says she learned how to save for her future from her first employer. "They offered a direct-deposit option. So, I signed up to have 25 percent of my paycheck placed into a savings account for college. It's a great way to save money because I don't need to take additional steps to move my money into savings every pay day." Hailee also credited her mother for teaching her the importance of savings accounts and retirement accounts.

Anfernee Alsta already has his financial future mapped out.

The graduate of Robinson High School in Tampa, Fla., says his first step to achieving financial freedom is to attend college and eventually grad school. As a civil engineer, he plans "living comfortably while still being able to save." Anfernee also expects to fully utilize his future employer's 401(k) plan, as well as save at least six months' worth of income for any unplanned expenses.

Morgan Webb from Cardinal Newman High School in Sebastopol, Calif., admitted that she initially had trouble understanding what financial freedom meant. Fortunately, she wrote, her high-school economics teacher assigned a project for which she had to develop an eight-year budget, starting with college and ending four years after. "I love math and science — so I really geeked out." The assignment taught her a lot about the importance of saving. "I now understand about financial freedom."

CN SPOTLIGHT



ARTS AND JUSTICE

Kay Cashion (l), Guilford County, N.C. Commissioner, chair of NACo Arts and Culture Commission chats with Doug Logan, director of Guilford County Juvenile Detention Center, and Georgia Lineback, president of the Dolly Madison Woman's Club, after the club presented a check Dec. 29 to the Guilford County Juvenile Detention Center for arts and education programs at the facility.

Each year the local non-profit, GFWCNC Dolly Madison Woman's Club collaborates with the American Legion Henry K. Burtner Post 53 of Greensboro to raise funds to support arts programs at the Juvenile Detention Center. The club annually provides a live Christmas tree and individual gift bags for each youngster at the Center during the Christmas holiday. In collaboration with the Greensboro City Library, a county-funded library, books are also collected and provided to each juvenile as well as books collected for the Center's library. Photo courtesy of Guilford County, N.C.



ISABELLA COUNTY, MICH.

Isabella County, in Central Michigan, was named after Queen Isabella I of Castile. The area where it formed was once known as Ojibway Besse, which translates to "the place of the Chippewa."



The seal shows the year the county government organized in 1859.

The long history with the Saginaw Chippewa tribe is depicted through the image of the settler and Indian shaking hands. The county seat of Mt. Pleasant remains located within the Isabella Indian Reservation.

The oil derrick represents Mt. Pleasant's being one of the major centers of oil discovery in the state in the late 1800s, once being called the "Oil Capital of Michigan."

Compiled by Lindsay Maggard. Would you like to see your county's seal featured? Contact Charlie Ban at cban@naco.org.

Community transformation starts with the mall

By Beverly Harris
public information officer
Richland County, S.C.

When Richland County, S.C. officials went shopping for a new place to provide core government services, they settled on what many saw as the unlikely location — a local mall.

Having lost two of its anchor stores in recent years, Columbia Place Mall was on the decline, like many malls across the country. But thinking outside the retail box, Richland County will transform the mall to a site that offers a comprehensive range of local government services. But this is just one component of a grander vision for Richland County.

The mall makeover serves as the foundation for a new initiative to enhance services, attract more business investment, draw tourists and improve residents' quality of life — all without raising taxes.

The transformative project is Richland Renaissance.

Richland Renaissance is the county's first comprehensive endeavor to address, in one plan, several issues facing the county. The initiative includes multiple major capital improvement and building projects, an extensive revitalization strategy to clean up blighted areas and an effort to highlight the county's many historic sites and create a tourist destination.

The Richland County Council gave County Administrator Gerald Seals the green light in December 2017 to move forward with the project.

The initiative will:

- Consolidate county core operations through the acquisition and development of space at Columbia Place Mall, a local mall in an area with many small businesses.
- Redevelop the site of the current county administration building to house a new judicial center, as existing location of the judicial center is not suitable for expansion.
- Construct a multi-purpose facility in the far southeastern

part of the county on county-owned property. In addition to serving as a county outpost, the site will offer space for critical health care access, as well as a sports venue and tourist attraction.

- Develop a multi-purpose hub in the county's northwest area, which also has a once-thriving mall that lost its major anchor stores.
- Create a comprehensive historic trail to highlight key landmarks and spur tourism.
- Implement a major revitalization strategy to boost economic development, eliminate blighted areas and enhance the overall livability and image of the county.

"Richland County is addressing the national trend of malls closing and the negative aspects for small retail merchants and surrounding businesses that often accompany such closings," said Richland County Council Chair Joyce Dickerson. "Moving highly visible government offices to sites across the county will positively impact both the neighboring businesses and residents with improved

SPEEDREAD

Richland County, S.C., with a population of 407,000, is home to the state capital of Columbia. Learn more at: <http://www.rcgov.us/>

safety, increased business activity and convenience for county services."

The idea for Richland Renaissance is rooted in residents' concerns expressed by county councilmembers at a planning session in 2016 and feedback from various constituent groups about the need to address space issues at the aging judicial center on Main Street in downtown Columbia. But moving Richland Renaissance from an idea to reality — without raising property taxes — required sound financial footing.

The estimated price tag to the county for Richland Renaissance capital projects totals about \$144 million, funded through the use of financial reserves, short-term debt, funds already approved in the current

two-year budget and the sale of county-owned property, if needed. The initiative also calls for private investments to fully realize the plan for the community.

Seals, a native of Richland County, S.C., who was hired in 2016, has tackled major projects across the country throughout his career in the public sector. In his book, *Taming City Hall: Rightsizing for Results*, he offers a window into his methods for improving government services and residents' quality of life without raising taxes.

In addition to serving as a city and county manager, Seals also has advised local governments with fiscal emergencies, most notably, Orange County, Calif. when it faced bankruptcy. To get an idea of what a local government with a sound financial structure can do to improve its delivery of services and the overall livability of a community, many in South Carolina look to what Seals did in Greenville County. While serving as the administrator, he led the development of several

major projects:

- Greenville County's major entertainment arena, Bon Secours Wellness Arena (formerly known as the BI-LO Center)
- Road improvement program that put the county at an economic competitive advantage by having a superior transportation infrastructure
- Greenville County Courthouse, which was completed on time and under budget
- Main library of the Greenville County Library System
- Acquisition of a soon-to-be abandoned rail line that now serves as the backbone of the internationally recognized tourist attraction Swamp Rabbit Trail.

Without the financial restructuring Seals put in place in Richland County, pursuing the types of projects in Richland Renaissance would have required an increase in property tax rates — or not been attempted at all.

"To have that kind of experience here is wonderful and, quite frankly, is why Richland Renaissance is possible," Dickerson said. **CN**



Richland County, S.C. Council gave the OK last month to renovate Columbia Pike Mall, part of an overall revitalization plan called Richland Renaissance. Photo courtesy of Richland County, S.C.

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2018 NACo

LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE:

Schedule subject to change. For the full conference schedule go to www.naco.org/leg

FRIDAY, MARCH 2

- 8:00 a.m. CIO Forum
- 12:00 p.m. Tech Town Hall Pt. 1
- 5:30 p.m. Tech Town Hall Reception

SATURDAY, MARCH 3

- 8:00 a.m. First Timers Orientation
- 9:00 a.m. Policy Steering Committee & Business Meetings
(open to all conference attendees)
- 12:00 p.m. Tech Town Hall Pt. 2

SUNDAY, MARCH 4

- 8:00 a.m. Standing, Ad Hoc, Advisory & Task Force Meetings
(open to all conference attendees)
- 10:00 a.m. Large Urban County Caucus (LUCC) & Rural Action Caucus
(RAC) Meetings
- 1:00 p.m. Western Interstate Region (WIR) Board Meeting
- 1:30 p.m. Educational Workshop: Managing a Multi-Generational Workforce
(separate registration & fee required)

MONDAY, MARCH 5

- 7:30 a.m. Regional Caucus Meetings
- 9:00 a.m. **General Session**
- 10:45 a.m. Educational Workshops
- 12:00 p.m. **Attendee Luncheon & General Session**
- 1:45 p.m. Educational Workshops
- 1:45 p.m. Crisis Communications (separate registration & fee required)
- 3:15 p.m. Educational Workshops

TUESDAY, MARCH 6

- 8:00 a.m. Educational Workshops
- 9:30 a.m. **General Session**
- 12:00 p.m. Hill Visits
- 1:00 p.m. Educational Workshops
- 7:00 p.m. NACo President's Reception

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7

- 8:00 a.m. Hill Visits
- 8:15 a.m. NACo Open House

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GENERAL SESSION SPEAKER:

Hon. David Shulkin
Secretary of Veterans Affairs



BRIGHT IDEAS | HENNEPIN COUNTY, Minn.

Social worker 'navigator' helps residents stay in homes if property taxes are delinquent

PROBLEM:

People losing their homes when they are delinquent on property taxes.

SOLUTION:

Match them with a county social worker "navigator" who will help them figure out which social services might help them stay in their homes.

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

Hennepin County, Minn., has come up with a way to keep some residents who are delinquent on property taxes from losing their homes. By embedding a Human Services department social worker or "navigator" in the Resident and Real Estate Services department, the county is able to help those with life challenges find county services that will help them become solvent.

It's a problem you'll find in counties across the country. The national delinquency rate is 8.4 percent or 4.9 million residential and commercial properties, according to LERETA, a California company that tracks real estate taxes.

Figuring out a way to help residents who were losing their homes because of unpaid property taxes was an idea that had been simmering for a while in Hennepin County.

"A year or so ago we were having conversations internally," said Mark Chapin, director of resident and real estate services. "Coming off the recession we had so many tax-forfeited properties. And our team had so many situations in those homes that were way beyond our abilities. We're property managers, we're not social workers."



Hennepin County social worker Marie Markfort, who works as a "navigator" in the county's resident and real estate services department, meets with a client. She helps residents who are delinquent on property taxes find social services that will help keep them in their homes. Photo courtesy of Hennepin County

"We find people like veterans who had head injuries, people with mental illness, people who were hoarders and people in all sorts of crisis situations," Chapin said. "We would spend a tremendous amount of our staff time trying to help them, but we didn't really have the tools. In the past, we'd refer people to human services."

"We'd simply refer them over and we'd say 'They'll try to help you, we can't help you. Our job is to collect the taxes and if you can't pay them, then you can't stay in that house,'" he said. "Then we had a conversation with human services: 'Could we do our work a little bit differently? Could we get a social worker or somebody with the skill set to navigate the human services world to work with us more directly?'"

The conversation between the county's tax forfeitures team and human services began in

August 2016. Using resources from the sale of tax-forfeited properties, the department was able to kick off a pilot program — reimbursing the human services department for a case manager or "navigator" to be physically embedded with the tax forfeiture team — to help steer clients to services that would help them retain their homes. The county spends about \$70,000 for salary and benefits for the position.

Jeff Strand, administrative manager, has worked for Hennepin County since 1985. "The issue was, we were always recreating the wheel," he said. "We always had to go back to human services or veterans' services and start from scratch. Now we have consistency, collaboration and service integration. We're doing a better job for those who slip through the social safety net."

Human Services Adminis-

trative Manager Jillian Kyles handpicked social worker Marie Markfort for the case manager-navigator position, knowing she had the skills to do the work.

"We have found many of these individuals have been flying under the radar for years, not connected to programs or services," Kyles said. "Marie has connected people to services whose lives are improved, taxes are paid and they stay in their homes. The results are immeasurable."

After the first six months of the program last year, the county has been able to avoid forfeiture for more than half of the property owners Markfort has worked with and has collected more than \$200,000 in property taxes, Chapin said. She's helped more than 40 people stay in their homes.

The savings add up in other ways as well. When residents lose their homes, the properties

become — essentially — tax exempt, the county bears the costs of boarding them up, mowing the lawn and removing snow and then typically the houses get sold at public auction for a loss, he noted.

Even if someone loses their home, there is sometimes a happy ending. "I have a client who lost her home but she's now in assisted living with a roommate and a case manager," Markfort said. "That was the best situation for her and now she agrees."

"This is the most rewarding job I've ever had," Markfort said. "I get to see the results, be a part of the transition. That's the part that I value the most, to see where they were and where they end up." **CN**

If you'd like to learn more, contact Chapin at 612.348.5297 or email him at: Mark.chapin@hennepin.us.

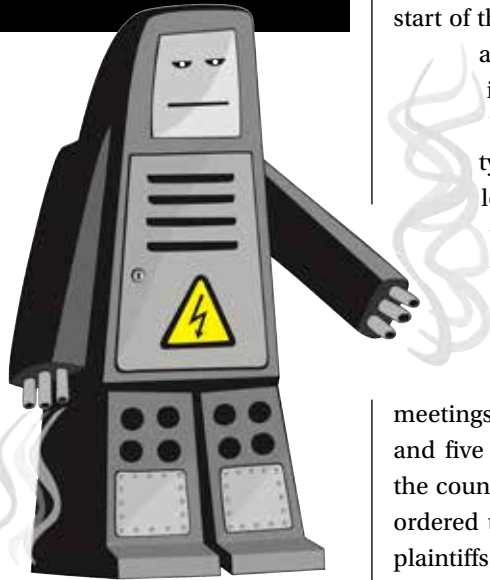
NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

CALIFORNIA

Counties are once again picking up the pieces after devastating wildfires in the state. **SAN DIEGO COUNTY** will **waive permit fees** for the rebuilding of more than 200 structures destroyed in the 4,100-acre Lilac Fire last month. More than 200 structures, including at least 100 homes, were destroyed in the fire. At least six people were injured and an estimated 200 acres of parkland burned. The county set up an assistance center for residents at a county library.

The good news: Supervisor Dianne Jacob told *The San Diego Tribune* that the county learned lessons drawn from handling fires in 2003 and 2007, and cited better communication between fire agencies and better tracking of flames. In past fires, there was little air support but this go around, 15 helicopters and seven air tankers were deployed including those from the Marine Corps and the Navy as well as San Diego Gas & Electric. Infrared cameras were also used to help track hot spots at night.

SAN MATEO COUNTY Supervisor David Canepa plans to ask the Board of Supervisors to approve a resolution that calls on Congress and the United Nations to restrict development of **killer robots**. “Killer robots are no longer just the stuff of science fiction,” Canepa told *The Mercury News*. “In fact, rapid advances in artificial intelligence and robotics could lead to humans giving up control of lethal force decisions in the very near future. That should be absolutely frightening to all of us. No robot or machine should be able to make life or death decisions on its own.”



Canepa sought guidance on his proposed resolution from UC Berkeley computer science professor Stuart Russell, creator of the video “Slaughterbots.” Russell co-authored a letter calling for a ban on killer robots that has been signed by nearly 20,000 people including Tesla co-founder Elon Musk, physicist Stephen Hawking and Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak. The U.N. also recently held a conference dedicated to preventing the creation and use of autonomous weapons.

In other wildfire news, **SONOMA COUNTY** in northern California is facing a \$21 million **budget shortfall** that includes the loss of property taxes from destroyed homes and businesses during the October wildfires as well as county staff overtime to respond to the county’s worst disaster. “It’s not going to be easy, but I also feel that we have great partnerships with the state and federal governments,” Supervisor Shirlee Zane, who chairs the Board of Supervisors, told *The Press Democrat*. “That has been demonstrated on a number of issues in the last eight weeks.” The county made some prudent fiscal decisions in recent years, amassing a healthy reserve and paying down debt, which will help

soften the blow, Zane told the newspaper.

FLORIDA

BREVARD COUNTY commissioners recently **dropped religious invocations** from the start of their meeting agendas, after a federal judge issued an injunction banning the county from continuing its long-standing practice. As a result, county commissioners are now asking for a moment of silence at the start of their meetings. Three organizations and five individuals had sued the county, and the judge also ordered the county to pay the plaintiffs a total of \$60,000 in compensatory damages; county commissioners voted unanimously to appeal the decision. They also heeded the advice of County Attorney Scott Knox to halt the invocation practice.

“We had a judge enter an order against the county, enjoining the holding of invocations in the manner that were being done before,” Knox said. “You’ve authorized an appeal. Pending that appeal, we feel it’s appropriate that we do the moment of silence, in lieu of an invocation, instead of trying to come up with a new policy on that. Just wait until the appellate court rules on the existing policy.”

IOWA

The Iowa Supreme Court has reversed a complete **ban on guns** in county courthouses. Chief Justice Mark Cady revised a previous edict from the summer that banned all guns from county courthouses. Now, county supervisors or other local officials can file written requests to allow guns in buildings. Cady’s order issued last month was the result of discussions with legislators, local officials and court staff and is an attempt to balance all interests, a court system spokesman said.

KANSAS

A new law limiting counties’

ability to raise **property tax revenues** — a property tax lid — is causing severe problems for counties in the Sunflower State, the *Lawrence Journal-World* reported. Melissa Wangemann, general counsel for the **KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES**, told lawmakers the group would like to see an exception for rising employee costs. “The lowest quote I have heard from my counties for health care was a 7 percent increase in 2018,” she said. “This year’s consumer price index — the measurement for the tax lid — was 1.4 percent.”

MARYLAND

The **MONTGOMERY COUNTY** Council was expected to pass a resolution to urge the federal government to **allow immigrants** — thousands who live in the county — to remain in the country, *The Washington Post* reported. “Without question, there is strong support for immigrant reform that provides a path to citizenship, that lifts the threat of deportation from these families in our community,” council President Hans Riemer told the newspaper. Riemer was recently arrested alongside 200 others demanding that Congress enact legislation to grant DACA recipients permanent citizenship.

“It’s important in times like these for the community to take a stand, and that’s what we’re trying to do with this resolution,” he said. The county is home to the second-largest share of the more than 325,000 immigrants with temporary protected status across the country, according to the county’s resolution.

MINNESOTA

The **HENNEPIN COUNTY** Board of Commissioners was set to vote last month on whether to change the **management of the county crime lab**, separating it from the sheriff’s office, which currently manages the lab. The proposal was pulled after Sheriff Rich Stanek opposed the measure, saying he didn’t want change

to happen right away. Commissioners agreed but said they hope to revisit the issue soon. They say separating the lab from law enforcement helps guarantee impartial results and would save money according to studies that included input from law enforcement. The proposal would move funding and management to a new Forensic Crime Services Department, operating under county administration.



NEVADA

CLARK COUNTY will save more than \$50,000 in 2018 by **not automatically mailing absentee ballots** to precincts with small populations. Registrar Joe Gloria told the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* that the county’s voting centers that debuted in 2017 and allowed voters to cast their ballots anywhere in the county gave residents more options and would likely lead to the absentee ballots being wasted. The decision will affect about 4,800 registered voters across 131 “mail



ballot precincts" but voters can still request absentee ballots.

NEW YORK

Gun shows are no longer welcome at the **WESTCHES-TER COUNTY** Center or any other county-owned building following an executive order by County Executive George Latimer on his second day in office. "I believe the majority of the Board of Legislators, and myself as executive, believe very strongly that this is the wrong venue for a gun show," he said, adding that the county was endorsing gun culture by allowing shows at a building that plays host to family-friendly events like basketball games and pet shows, *The Journal News* reported.

- The **YATES COUNTY** Legislature voted Dec. 29 to approve a local law authorizing an alternative tax exemption for **Cold War veterans**. Cold War veterans, as defined by the state of New York, includes military service rendered from Sept. 2, 1945 through Dec. 26, 1991. The new law would exempt 10 percent of a property's assessment up to \$4,000.

NORTH CAROLINA

Do your protestors have an appointment? After a cancelled march attracted a few people with weapons last year, **DURHAM COUNTY** will think about setting **ground rules for demonstrations** on county property. The proposal will

require groups to notify the county via its website within 48 business hours of any event will play host to or may attract more than 50 people, *The Herald Sun* reported.

- Hoping to address the affordable housing shortage, **WAKE COUNTY** commissioners passed a resolution urging all municipalities to allow **accessory dwelling units**, such as above-garage apartments and backyard cottages. The county allowed these "granny flats" starting in 2014, but the prime territory for this housing is in municipalities like Raleigh, where the units would be close to services and transit lines, *The News and Observer* reported.

OHIO

During a prolonged stretch of below-freezing temperatures, **BUTLER COUNTY** Sheriff Richard Jones has kept his office lobby open overnight for **homeless people to take shelter**. He has staff there overnight, which makes that measure possible.

Jones told *The Journal-News* that in those temperatures, "it's very important" to have a place for the homeless to go when it's this cold. "You're not looking at thousands of people, but it's the humane thing to do," he said.

OKLAHOMA

CLEVELAND COUNTY is suing its jail's **inmate tele-**

phone service provider for breach of contract, alleging the company failed to pay the county its 67 percent share of revenue from the calls for several months. *The Norman Transcript* reports that the delinquent payments were discovered during a review of the jail's finances. The proceeds fund jail operations.



OREGON

In an effort to remove barriers to access, the **JACKSON COUNTY** library system has **eliminated late fines** for up to three weeks past their return date. Outstanding fines have been forgiven. Revenue from those fines make up less than 1 percent of the library district's annual budget, *The Mail Tribune* reported. Patrons who keep items for more than three weeks past their due date will be charged for their replacement, and they will be blocked from checking out more materials if their fines total \$10.

PENNSYLVANIA

Lead testing is now mandatory for all children in **ALLEGHENY COUNTY**. The county health department will screen each child ages 9 to 12 months old and then again when they are 2 years old. If the child is considered high risk for lead exposure, he or she will be tested each year until they are 6 years old.

- A judge forced into retirement is volunteering for most of the work he will do in the **WESTMORELAND COUNTY** family court division. John Driscoll sued the state five years ago to challenge the mandatory retirement age of

70, and worked as a part-time senior judge until the voters changed the state constitution to bump the age to 75. He can be paid to work up to 10 days a month, but plans to **work without pay** after he reaches that limit.

That will allow the court to be fully staffed. "I do like the work," Driscoll told the *Tribune Review*. "A senior judge working full time is pretty cost effective."

SOUTH CAROLINA

Sheriff's deputies in **BERKELEY COUNTY** went on the offensive to **combat mail thieves** in December by deploying decoy packages equipped with GPS tracking devices, *The Post and Courier* reported. Once a package is moved, a message is sent to a central computer at the Sheriff's Office and a deputy can respond.

"If (thieves) pick the package up and run home or run and get in a vehicle, then we can track them and obviously investigate it and arrest them for taking a package off someone's porch," Sheriff Duane Lewis said.



TEXAS

Following Hurricane Harvey, **HARRIS COUNTY** commissioners have approved a proposal to require developers to **elevate any new buildings** within the 500-year floodplain in unincorporated areas. It could add up to almost 8 feet in some parts of the county. County Judge Ed Emmett called it the toughest floodplain building rule in the country, according to KHOU News.

UTAH

SAN JUAN COUNTY leaders plan to appeal a federal court ruling that requires

the county to hold a special election in 2018 using **new district boundaries** for the County Commission and school board. The Navajo Nation sued in 2012 over voting districts drawn after the 2010 Census that gerrymandered their population. U.S. District Judge Robert Shelby found that the districts violated the Navajos' rights. He approved new district maps that ensure significant American Indian majorities in two of three Commission districts and on four of five school board voting districts. But the county says that special election could interrupt continuity of service by the governing bodies.

"Under this scenario, there would be no one with experience on the County Commission or the school board. That would hardly constitute good governance and it would most certainly constitute a significant disruption to the ordinary process of governance. And then there is the matter of the current office holders and the electorate," Jesse Trentadue, the attorney for San Juan County, wrote in the filing, Fox 13 News reported.

- State lawmakers may require all cars pass **emissions tests** in counties with the poorest air quality. **SALT LAKE, DAVIS, CACHE** and **WEBER** counties already have the requirement.

VIRGINIA

A **LOUDOUN COUNTY drone** assisted **SHENANDOAH COUNTY** Sheriff's deputies in finding a lost hunter. The man, who was 92 years old, did not return home from hunting in Shenandoah County. Within 20 minutes of the Loudoun County drone's joining the effort, the hunter was located and the Shenandoah team was able to reach him. WTOP News reports the drone was purchased for Loudoun County's Project Life-saver program, which aims to track 1 people with Alzheimer's or other medical conditions who are lost.

See NEWS FROM page 12





From NEWS FROM page 11

WASHINGTON

Solitary confinement has been banned at **KING COUNTY's** juvenile justice facility since the 1990s, but now the practice has been banned for all minors held at the King County Jail and Maleng Regional Justice Center. The County Council passed an ordinance to that effect that also requires that imprisoned juveniles receive full access to educational programming. The practice started at the adult jails to protect them from older inmates. Council Member Claudia Balducci, formerly the director of the King County Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention, said banning solitary for juveniles "puts us absolutely on the right side of history and detention practice."

News from Across the Nation is compiled by Charlie Ban and Mary Ann Barton, senior staff writers. If you have an item for News From, please email cban@naco.org or mbarton@naco.org.

U.S. Communities can be a key partner in fighting opioid crisis

By **Tiffany Anzalone McCasland**

The opioid epidemic has been called the worst drug crisis in American history with more than 170 people estimated to die from overdoses every day in the United States. According to *STAT*, opioids could kill nearly 650,000 people across America in the next decade. The race to solve the unrelenting opioid crisis is a top priority in communities small and large.

There is a broad consensus that increased access to overdose-reversing drugs is a critical component of the emergency treatment of opioid overdose.

New research by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) found that "improving access to the opioid overdose antidote naloxone hydrochloride is linked to a 9 to 11 percent reduction in opioid-related deaths," potentially resulting

in around 3,500 averted deaths nationwide each year.

To help combat this national epidemic, the U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance, Premier, Inc. and Adapt Pharma partnered to offer the first and only FDA-approved potentially lifesaving opioid withdrawal medication, NARCAN Nasal Spray, a ready-to-use nasal spray version of naloxone hydrochloride.

NARCAN temporarily reverses the effects of opioids, including heroin and pain medications like morphine, oxycodone and hydrocodone, and has become a staple for medical professionals, fire and police departments and even librarians since it does not require assembly or priming to use.

This ready-to-use, needle-free device is used along with emergency medical treatment to reverse the life-threatening effects of opiate over-

dose.

The discounted program is an effort to provide affordable access to NARCAN for entities that serve the public interest with limited funding. Public interest pricing at a 40 percent discount, or \$37.50 per dose (\$75 for a two-pack carton) is offered through the purchasing power of U.S. Communities.

Recently, Florida Gov. Rick Scott (R) directed the Florida surgeon general to issue a standing order for NARCAN to ensure that first responders across the state have immediate access to treat opioid overdoses. Similarly, in Arizona over the past four years, opioid overdose deaths increased 74 percent. James Fole, deputy chief procurement officer in Maricopa County, Ariz. said that the county will save an estimated \$100,000 annually by purchasing NARCAN through U.S. Communities.

U.S. Communities Purchas-

ing Cooperative is the leading national cooperative purchasing program, providing world-class government procurement resources and solutions to local and state government agencies, school districts (K-12), higher education institutions and nonprofits. U.S. Communities participating agencies can purchase NARCAN Nasal Spray at public interest pricing. There is no cost or fee to use the program and cooperative purchasing can also deliver significant time efficiencies when every second counts. Affordable access to this medication will allow entities that serve the public interest with limited funding to combat the number of drug-related overdose deaths across the country. **CN**

For more information, please visit www.uscommunities.org/NARCAN, call 877.981.3312, or email uscommunities@premierinc.com.



IMPORTANT DATES:

- SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE: **MARCH 26, 2018 AT 11:59 P.M. EDT**
- NOTIFICATIONS OF ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS: **WEEK OF APRIL 23, 2018**
- NACo ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXPOSITION: **JULY 13 - 16, 2018 NASHVILLE/DAVIDSON COUNTY, TENN.**

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