

What's next for the 2020 Census?

by Lisa Soronen

A federal district court has held that a question about citizenship may not be included in the 2020 census. The Trump administration is likely to appeal this ruling to the Second Circuit, and it is likely the Supreme Court will ultimately resolve the dispute.

Additional challenges to including this question have been brought but not yet decided.

Judge Jesse Furman summarizes the significance of having an accurate census for state and local governments in his 277-page opinion: "[The census] is used to allocate hundreds of billions of dollars in federal, state and local funds. Even small deviations from an

See **CENSUS** page 4



Montgomery County, Md. Councilmember Tom Hucker greets attendees at a "Shutdown Social" he organized for furloughed federal employees. County housing and human services departments answered questions from concerned residents. Photo by Dave Asche

Counties step up during federal shutdown

by Mary Ann Barton
editor

When Montgomery County, Md. Councilmember Tom Hucker put out word that he was hosting a "Shutdown Social" potluck for federal workers furloughed due to the government shutdown, he had no idea that more than 600 people would show up.

"I was struck by how many people...when you see hundreds of them in one place, it really is impactful," Hucker said. Restaurants donated dinner and bands played to give furloughed feds a night out.

"A lot of people said they felt supported by the community,"

he said. "They felt like we had their back."

The county had tables set up to help people with questions on housing and human services and also arranged for utility companies and others to brief residents who might need help with bills.

It's not just counties near the D.C. area that are getting hit. It's also furloughed workers in places like Alaska, New Mexico, Alabama and South Dakota. Federal workers in communities across the country are reeling four weeks into the longest federal government shutdown in American history. The partial

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House bill introduced to dismantle FCC 5G order

by Zach George

Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-Calif.) introduced a bill that would effectively dismantle the Federal Communications Commission's controversial September ruling on 5G siting that severely limited counties and other local governments.

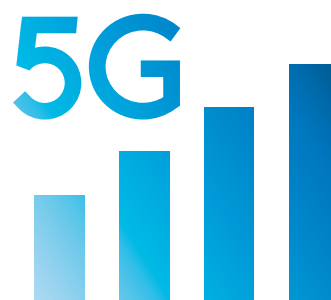
The FCC order gives coun-

ties 60 days to approve small cells being attached to existing structures and 90 days for erecting new poles, and limits local fees. The ruling, which went into effect Jan. 14, curtails local authority over public rights-of-ways for 5G wireless broadband deployment.

Eshoo introduced the Accelerating Wireless Broadband Development by Empowering Local Communities Act of 2019 (H.R. 530) the same day.

Eshoo noted that "5G must be deployed responsibly and equitably [but] the FCC let industry write these regulations without sufficient input from

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Three-way focus may advance infrastructure bill

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

The chance for a bipartisan infrastructure package looks to be one of the “bright spots” of the new divided Congress, according to the ranking Republican on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. He went as far as to say the goal was to have a plan done in six months.

“It’s one of those things that everybody believes the government should do and should do well,” Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo.) told the National Council of County Association Executives Jan. 10, during its winter meeting in Washington, D.C.

“The chances this gets done? I actually think they’re pretty good,” he said. “Our side wants to get something done on infrastructure, their side wants to get something done and the president wants to get something done. I think this is the one area that we might be able to come



Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo.) briefs state association presidents and directors on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee’s agenda. Photo by Hugh Clarke

together and craft a good compromise, a good proposal.”

The question, as always, remains how to fund such a package and replenish the highway trust fund. Graves favors using vehicle miles traveled, though not putting off payment until the end of the year. Chairman Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) reportedly wants to index the gas tax, allowing for inflation adjust-

ments.

“I’d like to do something different,” he said. “We don’t like the idea of a carbon tax at all... I’m not a fan of tolling.”

Graves said the overall spending on the bill could range between half of \$1 trillion and \$1.5 trillion, but acknowledged that the process was still in its infancy while congressional committee assignments were being

decided.

He was excited to note that his committee would be growing. “Transportation has traditionally been the largest committee in the House, and we’re working back toward that under the Democrat Party, which I think is a good thing...after dropping six years ago,” he said. Specifics from the White House about President Trump’s wishes for

an infrastructure bill have been scant, but Graves said there was some movement away from Trump’s earlier stated preference for heavy use of public-private partnerships.

We initially heard a lot about P3s but they create some problems in some of our states simply because there isn’t P3 authority, so the president has backed off, he noted.

Whatever bipartisan fever Graves sees working in infrastructure’s favor won’t last long, though, which will motivate both parties to work efficiently to get a deal done within the year before the reality of the looming 2020 election quashes deal-making across the partisan aisle.

“It’s going to have to be done this year because nobody believes we’ll be able to get anything done in an election year with a split Congress,” he said. “Both sides aren’t going to let the other body have something.” **CN**

SNAP/STATS

**TOP STATES WITH
FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
IMPACTED BY SHUTDOWN**

(AS PERCENTAGE OF ALL WORKERS)



WASHINGTON, D.C.

**ALASKA
MARYLAND
MONTANA
NEW MEXICO**

Source: Office of Personnel Management

Problem Solvers pitch bipartisanship

By **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

For public servants whose roles require them to act in a nonpartisan manner, county officials rarely have the luxury of having grand philosophical discussions about the direction of the policy they enact.

That’s something Rep. Stephanie Murphy (D-Fla.) sees in the position she has staked out in the U.S. House of Representatives.

“The vigorous debate of ideas is great for democracy, but it doesn’t have an impact on that person (at home),

whatever their needs are in my community,” she said Jan. 10 to the National Council of County Association Executives (NCCAE) during its winter meeting in Washington, D.C.

She and Rep. John Katko (R-N.Y.), two members of the Problem Solvers Caucus of moderates in the House, explained how their group of 48 legislators hopes to keep the country moving.

“It’s like walking down the middle of the road,” in that you can be hit by cars going either direction, she said. Katko agreed and said that resisting the extreme wings of either

“It’s like walking
down the middle of the
road, in that you can
be hit by cars going
either direction”

— Stephanie Murphy (D-Fla.)

party was crucial to crafting legislation palatable to both parties.

“I’m concerned about the rise of ‘vocalness’ of the far left and far right,” he said. “But you just have to know if we’re getting the crap beaten out of us by both, we’re doing some-

thing right.”

A divided Congress gives bipartisanship a chance, and an opportunity to enact long-lasting legislation.

“Whatever legislation we expect to make it into law has to be able to pass the Republican Senate and be signed by a Republican president,” Murphy said. “The only legislation that matters to my constituents’ lives are things that can become law.”

Katko goes as far as to not sponsor legislation that can’t find a Democrat to join him.

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Counties get creative to help constituents hurt by shutdown

From SHUTDOWN page 1

government shutdown is due to a dispute over funding of a wall along the country's border with Mexico, a measure that failed in the Senate.

In addition to fears about future federal funding for county programs (*see box, this page*), county officials are also looking at impacts to everything from tourism to crash investigations. Counties are feeling the heat and helping out where they can.

In Utah, Washington County is spending \$1,000 a day, partnering with others to fund trash pickup at Zion National Park, the area's biggest money maker. In Hawaii, Volcanoes National Park is being kept partially open during the busiest tourism season thanks to donations and a pledge from Hawaii County to fund three days for about \$38,000, if needed; funding would come from the county's department of Research and Development.

The federal government shutdown forced Saginaw County, Mich. sheriff's deputies into duty. A plane crash left a man dead and the sheriff's office called the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to investigate the crash. Because of the shutdown, the FAA directed the county to guard the scene and not touch anything, aside from removing the pilot's body, Sheriff Bill Federspiel said. The FAA initially wanted to have its own medical examiner do the autopsy, but with that timeline unclear, Saginaw County performed it using a special kit sent by the FAA. Federspiel said he hoped the FAA would reimburse the county for his department's time spent protecting the scene.

Closer to the nation's capital, Northern Virginia counts about 178,000 federal employees, with many in Fairfax County, home to the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

"It's not unlike a factory town when the factory is shut down and everyone's at home stressed out and waiting," said Fairfax County Supervisor John Cook. "We're a government town and the government is our factory. It's a pretty big deal when our number one employer closes its doors."

The county is stepping up to help by offering free rides on county buses and reducing fees for childcare, he said. The county held a job fair for substitute teacher positions which attracted a lot of furloughed workers. "We're in the stage right now where we've asked all the county agencies to find ways we can help," Cook said.

In nearby Prince George's County, Md., county officials there offered up a relief package on Day 20 of the shutdown and like other counties, set up a website of resources for residents. The county waived fees for its fitness centers as well as for before and after childcare at park and rec centers. The county also has an emergency relief fund to help furloughed workers. "I have authorized our county budget director to put an additional \$70,000 into our Emergency Assistance Fund, giving us a total of \$150,000 to help those with immediate financial need," County Executive Angela Alsobrooks said. The fund can help with items such as delinquent mortgages, utility bills and other financial needs. **CN**

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The shutdown could impact counties in a number of ways, with funding tied to federal agencies. Here's a look:

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

- USDA recently announced a plan to fund SNAP through February despite the partial government shutdown.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

- WIC is not receiving federal funds at all. WIC can continue to operate at the state and local level with any prior-year funding or commodity resources that remain available.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program

- The program expired Dec. 22 with no new funding. The program needs to be reauthorized, and has been operating on a series of short-term extensions since 2010.
- Given that TANF's reauthorization is tied to the funding extension, the program cannot issue second-quarter payments.

- To ensure residents continue to receive TANF benefits, states may use prior-year funding or non-federal funding to continue the program. State spending during the shutdown may be used to meet matching or maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements.

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)

- The mandatory/matching portion for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) has expired with no new funding. States may use prior-year funding or non-federal funding to continue the program.

FDA and USDA

- At the FDA, overall food safety is taking a hit in routine inspections, guidance development and staff training and technical assistance programs that trickle down to local health inspectors.
- Work has been suspended in USDA data and reporting offices such as the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and the Office of the Chief Economist- World Agricultural Outlook Board (OCE-WAOB) has been suspended causing a lapse in agricultural data and intelligence reporting.

- While most direct funding programs continue, the non-exempted staff – particularly Rural Development State Directors – are unable to provide support and advice to constituents relying on indirect assistance from USDA Rural Development like guaranteed home loans that are no longer supported by the agency during the partial shutdown.

Department of the Interior

The Indian Health Service

- The Service has suspended grants that support tribal health programs and preventative clinics run by the Office of Urban Indian Health Programs. Currently clinic employees are working without pay.

Shutdowns at federal land agencies

- Full closure or partial staffing at federal lands sites can lead to canceled trips/reduced tourism and public safety issues (illegal camp fires, for example). Search and rescue or law enforcement operations may be curtailed.
- Permits for projects on public lands (i.e.: applications for permits to drill for oil/gas) will be backlogged.
- Possible delays in the processing of payments to counties – SRS payments and timber harvest receipt share payments are due to go out in March and a longer shutdown could delay those payments.

Environmental Protection Agency

- Cleanups and inspections at Superfund sites will stop.
- Inspections for drinking water systems, hazardous waste management sites and chemical facilities will stop.
- Funding for Clean Water/Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) programs, brownfields grants, etc. will stop.
- Signoff on Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act permits and plans will not take place.

Department of Housing and Urban Development

- FHA loans – processing is impacted – only those committed prior to Dec. 21 are in the approval process.

al process.

- Section 8 Housing Vouchers: Staff is available for first 30 days of the shutdown for payments of Section 8 contracts and rent supplement contracts.

- Multifamily Housing: No applications for Multifamily FHA mortgage insurance will be accepted or processed.

Transportation

- Counties are involved in a third of the nation's public airports. As the shutdown continues, TSA agents working without pay are expected to increase the number of "call outs" as they face the looming reality of not receiving their next paycheck, creating not only congestion at the airport but also safety concerns.

- Further impacting air travel, almost 18,000 Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) employees who are not air traffic controllers or safety inspectors continue to be out of work.

- The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has been almost entirely shut down since Dec. 21. Essentially all grant activity has been suspended. FTA has also discontinued reimbursement to transit agencies for ongoing operations.

- The Federal Railroad Administration has suspended its support to the Build America Bureau regarding the transition of administration for the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing for which local governments are eligible borrowers.

Justice and Public Safety

- Counties will continue justice and public safety operations, however the grants that fund these programs are impacted. As part of the shutdown impacting the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice, federal agency grants staff are unavailable to provide assistance counties need to comply with grant requirements. Grant applications from the DHS are not being processed due to the shutdown.

Information courtesy of NACo Government Affairs.

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'Small deviations from an accurate count can have major implications'

From CENSUS page 1

accurate count can have major implications for states, localities, and the people who live in them — indeed, for the country as a whole.”

Census counts are also used for congressional redistricting and for enforcing civil rights laws.

In March 2018, Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross issued a memorandum stating he would add the question (for the first time since 1960). He claimed the Department of Justice (DOJ) wanted the data to enforce the Voting Rights Act's prohibition against diluting the voting power of minority

[The census] is used to allocate hundreds of billions of dollars in federal, state and local funds.

groups. The Census Bureau “strenuously” objected warning “that adding a citizenship question would harm the quality of census data and increase costs significantly and that it would do so for no good reason because there was an alternative way to satisfy DOJ's purported needs that would not

cause those harms.”

A number of state and local governments and nonprofits sued the Secretary claiming that adding this question violates the Administrative Procedure Act (APA). The APA prohibits federal agencies from acting in a manner that is arbitrary and capricious or not in accordance with law.

The court found numerous APA violations in the manner in which the question was added to the census. For example, “[Ross] failed to consider several important aspects of the problem; alternately ignored, cherry-picked, or badly misconstrued the evidence in the record before him; acted irrationally both in light of that evidence and his own stated decisional criteria; and failed to justify significant departures from past policies and practices — a veritable smorgasbord of classic, clear-cut APA violations.”

Interestingly, the court did not find that Ross violated the “equal protection component of the Due Process Clause” because the challengers were unable to prove he was “motivated by invidious discrimination.” While the court did find that Secretary Ross's decision to add the question was “pretextual” it was unable to find “on the record before it, that the decision was a pretext for impermissible discrimination.”

While the federal district court in this case has authorized Ross to be deposed about his motives to adding the citizenship question, the Supreme Court has stayed that order. This spring the Supreme Court will hear argument in *In re Department of Commerce* where it will decide whether Ross may be deposed for this purpose. **CN**

Lisa Soronen is the executive director of the State and Local Legal Center (SLLC). Prior to joining the SLLC, Soronen worked for the National School Boards Association, the Wisconsin Association of School Boards and clerked for the Wisconsin Court of Appeals.

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Legislation aims to extend child welfare waivers

by Eryn Hurley

Bipartisan legislation introduced in the U.S. Senate would extend the child welfare waiver program and offer flexibility to county foster care systems.

On Jan. 9, Sens. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) introduced the State Flexibility for Family First Transitions Act to extend the Title IV-E waiver for two years, through FY 2021. The current waiver is set to expire in September 2019.

Title IV-E waivers provide federal funds for costs related to the placement of youth into foster care or for subsidies to support families who adopt foster children.

Although most states operate child welfare systems, 12 states either delegate or share child welfare administration with county agencies. In these states, counties use Title IV-E waivers to support services meant to prevent abuse and neglect or encourage the placement of children in family foster care settings when

appropriate.

Under the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) legislation passed in February 2018, Title IV-E waivers were amended in two key areas: allowing prevention services to be covered by federal funds and emphasizing the use of family foster care placements. Specifically, the legislation permits child welfare agencies to use federal funds for prevention services with the goal of allowing children that are on the path to entering the foster care system to stay

with parents or relatives. The 2018 bill also aimed to curtail the use of congregate or group care for children and instead place at-risk children with family members.

The legislation will be referred to the Senate Finance Committee and considered by legislators during the 116th Congress. The House has not yet introduced companion legislation.

Counties support extending Title IV-E waivers to maintain flexibility as new systems are implemented under the FF-

PSA legislation. Additional flexibility through the waivers could minimize anticipated cost-shifts to states and counties that could occur by limiting Title IV-E eligibility to children who would otherwise be eligible for such funds and enable counties to provide continuous care to at-risk children. **CN**

Eryn Hurley is an associate legislative director at NACo; Valerie Brankovic, legislative assistant, contributed to this article.

Trump issues executive order on forest management

by Austin Igleheart

President Trump issued an executive order last month directing the secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to implement policies to improve forest management practices by reducing hazardous fuel loads, mitigating fire risk and ensuring the safety and stability of local communities.

The order (E.O. 13855), issued Dec. 21, identifies active forest management as a key tool to protect communities from catastrophic wildfires while supporting the success of local economies. The order also recognizes counties as critical partners in managing our federal forest lands.

The order directs both secretaries to coordinate federal, state, tribal and local assets re-

lating to post-fire restoration and help reduce hazardous fuels through active forest management. The order also clarifies that the two agencies shall prioritize fuel reduction treatments as part of their forest management activities, while also pursuing benefits to rural economies by encouraging productive uses of forest by-products.

Both agencies also must collaborate with state, tribal and local partners to create a comprehensive wildfire strategy that prioritizes the highest-risk lands, considers regulatory and economic challenges related to managing DOI and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) land and encourages local economic growth through timber and biomass sales.

Additionally, the departments are directed to establish specific

forest management objectives. For example, for 2019, Interior is expected to establish a goal of treating 750,000 acres of Interior-administered land for fuels reduction and 500,000 acres to protect water quality and mitigate erosion and flooding risks resulting from forest fires.

USDA, meanwhile, is expected to establish a goal of treating 3.5 million acres of Forest Service land for fuels reduction and 2.2 million acres to address water quality and post-fire erosion and flooding. DOI and USDA are also instructed, through these activities, to offer up for sale 600 million board feet and 3.8 billion board feet of timber from DOI and USDA Forest Service lands, respectively. (A board foot is one square foot, 1 inch thick.) The order also prioritizes proper maintenance of

public roads vital to conducting management activities.

The departments are instructed to coordinate with other federal agencies and streamline relevant administrative and regulatory processes. This may be done by minimizing the time period for regulatory comments, consultation and administrative review, using all applicable categorical exclusions and developing new categorical exclusions.

Counties support this executive action, as it requires expanded collaboration with local governments, including through Good Neighbor Authority agreements and long-term stewardship contracts. **CN**

Austin Igleheart is a legislative assistant at NACo; Jonathan Shuffield, an associate legislative director, contributed to this article.

President signs water infrastructure bill

by Zach George

The bipartisan Water Infrastructure Improvement Act, signed into law Jan. 14 by President Trump, codifies the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) permit process for integrated plans for wastewater and stormwater management under the Clean Water Act (CWA).

The bill allows communities to develop an IP for combined sewer overflows, sanitary sewer collection systems, storm water systems, municipal wastewater discharge and/or total maximum daily load water quality requirements.

The bill established a municipal ombudsman office within EPA.

That office will work with

communities to provide technical assistance on CWA requirements.

The measure gives local governments with more flexibility to try new, innovative approaches that can simultaneously improve water quality and lower costs for residents, such as green infrastructure.

NACo worked closely with leaders in the 115th Congress to address CWA compliance issues and advocated for policies that would streamline the CWA permitting process and save counties money, many of which were included in the final bill. **CN**

Zach George is a legislative assistant at NACo; Julie Ufner, associate legislative director, contributed to this article.



USDA proposes expanding SNAP work requirements

by Eryn Hurley

A proposed U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulation would more strictly enforce work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The Dec. 20 proposal coincided with the passage of the farm bill and would see reduced expenditures of about \$15 billion over the next 10 years under the proposal, a cut of about 1.7 percent.

The proposal identifies changes impacting one specific group of SNAP recipients referred to as able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs), which includes recipients ages 18 through 49 who are not disabled or caring for children or other dependents. In 2016, ABAWDs accounted for about 3.8 million of the 40 million individuals who received SNAP.

Under current law, ABAWDs cannot receive food stamps for longer than three months during a three-year period, unless they are working or enrolled in an education or training program for at least 80 hours a month. States can



receive waivers for these work requirements under two conditions: If the state's unemployment rate exceeds 10 percent, or if the state has a demonstrable lack of "sufficient jobs." A state or geographic area meets

this "lacking sufficient jobs" threshold if the unemployment rate in that area is at or exceeds 20 percent of the national average unemployment rate. Currently, 36 states have received partial waivers for ABAWD work requirements and seven states and territories are operating under statewide waivers.

While the proposed regulation would not alter the 10 percent unemployment rate for waivers, it would redefine "sufficient jobs" to require eligible areas to have had at least 6 percent unemployment for two years. For example, a county with a 5.4 percent unemployment rate is currently eligible for a partial waiver through the state. However, under the proposed regulation, the county would not meet the new 6 percent threshold and therefore would not be eligible for a waiver.

Furthermore, the proposal would prevent states from granting waivers for large geographic areas or combining data from high-unemployment areas with that of low-unemployment areas. Instead, waivers would only be allowed in

local areas, such as counties and cities, that meet the criteria outlined above. According to USDA estimates, there are currently 775,000 ABAWD recipients who reside in areas that could lose their waivers if the proposal is enacted.

The proposal would also limit state waivers for ABAWD time limits to one year, reduced from the current two-year limit.

In addition to the waiver changes, the proposal would also limit states' carry-over exemptions. Under current law, states can exempt up to 15 percent of their ABAWD population from work each year. If these exemptions are not used, they can be "rolled over" for future years, which has permitted states to build up large surpluses of exemptions. Under the proposed rule, the carry-over allowance would be limited to just one year, removing the ability of states and counties to store these exemptions for a future economic downturn.

Counties could be impacted by this proposed rule in multiple ways. First, more stringent time limit and work requirements for ABAWDs may create

an additional administrative and financial burden on county agencies who may see an increase in time spent screening and tracking beneficiaries as they move on and off SNAP.

Additionally, the new one-year waiver limit may create an additional burden in time spent researching residents' employment status or the region's unemployment rate. In response to the new requirements, counties may have to increase administrative capacity in the form of personnel or data, while receiving no new federal resources to offset increased costs. This could especially impact rural counties, who face limited flexibility and resources to comply with new mandates or reporting requirements.

Now that the proposed rule has been published in the Federal Register, the public has 60-days to comment. After USDA considers these comments, the agency will issue a final rule. **CN**

Eshoo: FCC left out local leaders

From 5G page 1

local leaders."

NACo Executive Director Matt Chase said: "Counties are committed to ensuring that all residents have access to affordable broadband while timely 5G facilities and services are deployed. As we achieve these goals, we must also fulfill our responsibilities as trustees of public property and rights-of-way, without adding unnecessary red tape."

NACo and the National League of Cities said in September "the FCC's impractical actions will significantly impede local governments' ability to serve as trustees of public property, safety and well-being. The decision will transfer significant local public resources to private companies,

without securing any guarantee of public benefit in return."

The statement cited more than 100 local governments from 22 states that have filed comments prior to the FCC action. In response to the ruling, several lawsuits were filed in federal appeals courts questioning the legality of the FCC rule.

Following these filings, NACo joined a letter with more than 40 local governments and associations requesting the FCC issue a stay on the 5G order until the courts reach a decision. The FCC ultimately declined to issue a stay on the order. **CN**

Zach George is a legislative assistant at NACo; Arthur Scott, associate legislative director, contributed to this story.

Eryn Hurley is an associate legislative director at NACo; Valerie Brankovic, a legislative assistant, contributed to this article.

Problem Solvers: Legislation without bipartisan support may not last long as law

From BIPARTISAN page 2

"Some people have been in Congress 10 years and they've had two or three bills passed in that time and they're just 'post office bills,'" he said. "They just don't care about legislation. If you really care, it's a really tough job because you have to reach across the aisle and it's really hard in this day and age."

Murphy, who has fought for a House rules change that will guarantee floor time to bills with significant bipartisan support, said that even when one party takes control, unilateral action is ill advised.

"When a bill becomes law with just one party's support," including 2017's tax overhaul and the Affordable Care Act, "it introduces instability in the business community and the country because you just don't know when the pendulum is going to swing back and the pro-



Rep. John Katko (R-N.Y.) speaks to state association executives and presidents as Rep. Stephanie Murphy (D-Fla.) (left) and NACo Deputy Executive Director Deborah Cox look on. Photo by Hugh Clarke

cess to dismantle begins. The most effective way to craft this legislation is to find common ground and make it bipartisan."

Katko said the stratification

on Congress is making it harder to reach across the aisle. "For something like tax reform, passed with no Democratic votes, that's not compromise,"

he said, before acknowledging "I still voted for it, because I believe in it."

Both represent congressional districts that are relatively

evenly divided, keeping them on their toes and forcing them to be responsive to their constituents' practical needs, rather than partisan rhetoric that gets airtime.

"It's easy to talk about bipartisanship but hard to do," Murphy said. "It's like a kindergarten playground," sharing a swing. "When you're in the minority, it's easy to talk about bipartisanship, but when you're in the majority," things are different.

Katko, who hadn't planned to go into politics, keeps his career perspective in mind as he figures out his latest job in Congress and his competitive district.

"Quite frankly, in the end, you have to understand that you don't have to have this job," he said. "If you take a tough stance that costs you your job, then so be it. I had a life before this and I'll have a life after." **CN**



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Some 164 county employees took part in NACo’s first High Performance Leadership Academy. The 12-week online program empowers front-line county government employees with fundamental leadership skills. The curriculum is developed by the Professional Development Academy in partnership with Fortune 1000 executives, public sector leaders, academics and thought leaders including Gen. Colin Powell and executive coach and author Marshall Goldsmith. To learn more about the Academy, visit the NACo website: www.naco.org/skills.

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Kevin Mallen Community Development Director Yuba County, CA	Javier Negron Jail Commander Beaverhead County, MT	Shelley Richardson Nursing Home Administrator Belknap County, NH	Maegan South Management Analyst Tarrant County, TX	



MONEYMATTERS

An Engaged Workforce Helps Your Bottom Line and Your Community

by Mike Mucha

A local government's staff deliver the day-to-day services that provide for the health, safety and welfare of the community. Employee engagement is the degree to which an employee is passionate about and committed to their job and organization.

If staff are fully engaged in their jobs, then they will put in the extra effort needed to provide the best services possible. If they are disengaged they will, at best, put in the bare minimum effort necessary to satisfy their job description and, at worst, will actively seek to undermine the organization.

The difference in work quality for engaged and disengaged employees is not trivial. One study found the following differences between work units in the top quartile in employee engagement versus work units in the bottom quartile:

- 17 percent greater productivity
- 41 percent less absenteeism
- 10 percent higher customer satisfaction

- 40 percent fewer defects in work products

Research from Gallup has shown that about 70 percent of state and local government employees are not engaged in their jobs. Further, about 17 percent are "actively disengaged" and are sabotaging the good work of their colleagues. Though this is not much different from the degree of engagement found in private companies, the consequences could be more severe given the critical role public services can play in a community.

What's missing from the statistics above is how it feels to be disengaged and how employees get there. Consider this quote from an employee in local government finance:

"I graduated from college during the onset of the Great Recession and considered myself very lucky to have landed a permanent, full-time government job in the finance department at the city after three long years of part-time work. A government job with all the great features people usually look for: security, stability, regular hours and great benefits. I was ready to arrive

on time, behave professionally, learn my job and do it well to become a great employee. I didn't hate it and I didn't love it, and I thought that was normal... However, it didn't take long for the job to become perfunctory to a fault. And as the novelty of the new job wore off, I became totally disengaged and I couldn't wait for the next 5:30 p.m., the next weekend, the next vacation. Was this what full-time work was all about? I didn't want to believe it... We know government has many advantages in the long term, but if this is what the short term feels like, then is it really worth it? ... I knew my feelings were not exclusive to me. The sad thing was that I didn't think it was even possible to change an age-old institution like municipal government, and I was going to have to either surrender my life to this humdrum reality or look for opportunities elsewhere."

This story not only highlights the lower productivity associated with disengagement while people are still employed with the organization, it also shows that disengaged employees are more likely to leave. Replacing

employees is an expensive proposition, especially in a tight labor market. In fact, estimates place the average cost to replace an employee cost between 20 percent and 30 percent of annual salary, but it could be much higher for higher skilled, higher paid positions.

Over the past several years, surveys conducted by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) indicate that employee turnover, employee engagement and ability to attract qualified finance candidates for open positions rank in the top five issues facing local government finance offices. As a large percentage of workers near retirement, this is an issue that has implications for local governments, their ability to provide necessary services and maintain a financially sustainable organization.


GFOA recently released a research report that attempts to show how local governments can improve employee engagement, thereby improving productivity and reducing turnover. More importantly, it shows how to make a difference in the lives

of staff members like the individual quoted above and, thereby, make a difference in how your local government serves its community. While the report focused on improving engagement within the finance office, lessons learned can be applied across local government.

The first part of this report is about getting the right people in the job. If the job is a good match to the person to start with, it will be easier to engage them. Second, it addresses how to engage employees after they are hired. Here, it shows how the culture of the organization can be shaped to encourage engagement and managerial tactics that can be used to bolster engagement.

Highlighted in the report are results from various surveys GFOA conducted with finance staff from across the United States. In addition, GFOA interviewed staff at local governments that had recently taken on efforts to improve employee engagement including stories from King County, Wash.

King County and its finance and business operations division rely on "lean" process improvements as the basis for an engaging culture. Lean is a method for continuous improvement in how work is performed and uses value stream mapping to address challenges and improve operations. Staff has also found that thinking about work as value streams helps employees see how they fit into the larger purpose and process. Download the full report at <https://bit.ly/2TXRySf>.

If you have any questions on the report or are looking for more information about how to engage employees or find out more about the benefits of an engaged finance staff, please do not hesitate to contact GFOA at (312) 977-9700 or at research@gfoa.org. 

Mike Mucha is the deputy executive director for the Government Finance Officers Association.

WORD SEARCH

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif.
Created by: Mary Ann Barton

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

AMPHITHEATER: The county is home to the largest amphitheater in the United States, seating 65,000.

BALLOONS: The county is home to an annual hot-air balloon festival.

CLASSIC: The Route 66 Rendezvous classic car show is a big hit every year.

COURTHOUSE: The San Bernardino County Courthouse was built in 1927 in the Classical Revival style.

EARP: Frontiersman Wyatt Earp, who took part in the gunfight at the O.K. Corral in Tombstone, Ariz., traveled to the county by wagon train in 1864. In the 1920s, he became a ceremonial San Bernardino County sheriff.

EMPIRE: The county and surrounding area got the nickname the "Inland Empire" in 1914 after developers created it based on its distance (60 miles) from Los Angeles and the Pacific Ocean.

HACKMAN: Academy Award-winning actor Gene Hackman is a native of the county.

HAMBURGER: The first McDonald's, selling burgers for 15 cents apiece, opened in 1940 and was located in the county.

LARGE: San Bernardino County is the largest county in the lower 48, at 20,105 square miles.

LBJ: Before his career in politics, Lyndon Baines Johnson served as an elevator operator while living in the county.

MICK: The Rolling Stones played their very first American concert in San Bernardino, at the Swing Auditorium in 1964. Tickets were \$6.

MOTORCYCLE: The Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club got its start in the San Bernardino area.

ORANGE: The Orange Show, later the National Orange Show, began in 1889 to promote California oranges.

PEAK: The tallest mountain peak in Southern California is in the county. Mount San Gorgonio, dubbed Old Grayback, tops 11,503 feet.

TACOS: Legend has it that the founder of Taco Bell tried to replicate Mitla Café's crispy tacos. The café has been around since 1937.

LEADERSHIP EDGE

The Foundation of Success Is a Positive Mindset

by Tim Rahschulte, Ph.D.

Leadership. Just reading the word leadership likely creates in your mind an image of someone who has inspired you, challenged you, encouraged you and helped you to believe in yourself. It's likely someone you admire. Who is that person?

Whoever comes to mind right now has something in common with all other great leaders. They all have guiding advice based on their experiences. You may call them laws, mantras, maxims, axioms or aphorisms. They can also be called leadership rules — proven rules for effective leadership.

The first leadership rule presented here represents aspirational ideas, action targets or aiming points.

Rule 1. The foundation of success is a positive mindset.

Nothing is achieved without a belief that it can be done. That's a mindset. Mindset is an attitude that colors our view of the world and what's possible in — and beyond — it. Mindset is the initiating force behind Elon Musk's goal to colonize Mars. Similarly, mindset is the initiating force anyone leverages to build something new, reengineer something to be better or to bring about a change in things.

Regardless of whether that change is incremental and evolutionary or transformational and revolutionary, achieving it starts with a positive mindset.

Our mindset initiates a sense of possibility from which our behavior and actions follow. Therefore, our mindset serves as the foundation of our results. Those most successful leaders have an unwaveringly positive mindset about who they are



Rahschulte

and the impact they'll have.

While all this may seem rather obvious, there's something else important about our mindset: It has a multiplying effect on those around us. It scales and reaches beyond oneself. The greatest leaders know the power of mindset.

This remarkable power is one reason Colin Powell, arguably one of the greatest leaders in U.S. military history, who retired as a four-star army gener-

al, served as secretary of state, led the military of the United States while serving as the chairman of the joint chiefs and authored the book "It Worked for Me: In Life and Leadership," often shares this critical piece of leadership advice: "Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier."

Now, to be sure, the opposite is also true.

Whether negative or positive, your mindset multiplies as it affects those around you. It's for this reason that Ashley Ferguson, the global director of strategy, governance, risk and compliance at SecureWorks, coaches her employees and believes in the need for leaders to "be positive, be open, be truthful, and stay optimistic." She emphasizes this because she knows that attitude is contagious, especially if you're in a leadership role.

If you're wondering if you're a leader, know that we're all leaders some of the time and followers all of the time. So yes, you're a leader, and therefore your attitude is quite important.

Regardless of role, title, or rank, make the choice to be positive. Have an "it can be done" attitude, which just happens to be another piece of leadership advice from Colin Powell. This positivity is necessary because the root cause of your results is attitude, and the foundation of your success is a positive mindset. **CN**

Tim Rahschulte is the CEO of the Professional Development Academy and chief architect of the NACo High Performance Leadership Program (www.naco.org/skills). He is the co-author of "My Best Advice: Proven Rules for Effective Leadership."

GET TO KNOW...

Woodford County, Ill.

Welcome, Woodford County, Ill.

Woodford County was founded in 1841 and is named for General William Woodford, an officer of the American Revolutionary War.

The county is home to Eureka College, the smallest college or university in American history to graduate a future U.S. president, Ronald Reagan, with a bachelor's degree. Reagan graduated in 1932 with a degree in economics and sociology. The Adlai E. Stevenson I House, **the home of U.S. Vice President Adlai Stevenson I**, is also located in Woodford County. Stevenson served as vice president during President Grover Cleveland's second term, from 1893-1897.

GO RED DEVILS!

ON THE MOVE

NACo COUNTY OFFICIALS

- NACo President **Greg Cox** spoke at the County Commissioners' Association of West Virginia Legislative Conference in Charleston (Kanawha County), W.Va., held Jan. 13-15.
- Past President **Bryan Desloge** addressed participants at the New Mexico Association of Counties Legislative Conference in Santa Fe (Santa Fe County), N.M., held Jan. 15-17.

NACo STAFF

- Teryn Zmuda** has joined NACo as director of research and data analytics in the NACo Counties Futures Lab. Prior to coming to NACo, she was senior director for strategy and analytics at Avrio Institute. She earned a master's degree in applied economics from George Washington University and a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Maryland.
- Director of Conference and Leadership Development **Marsha Saunders** was recognized by *ConventionSouth* magazine as one of the "Top Meeting Professionals to Watch in 2019."
- Program Manager **Jack Morgan** addressed participants at the SolSmart regional kickoff meeting in Wise County, Va. Jan. 15.

Zmuda

Saunders

BRIGHT IDEAS VENTURA COUNTY, Calif.

Family-style Meals Feed a Rural Town

PROBLEM:

Older residents needed nutrition and socializing.

SOLUTION:

Partner with a local restaurant that caters to the culture and also delivers meals to homebound seniors.

By **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

There isn't much in Piru, Calif.

The small, rural town in eastern Ventura County is marked by low incomes, few choices and a significant population of older residents, many of whom live alone. There's not a grocery store or transportation to get them to the next town.

Although Ventura County operates its senior nutrition program throughout the region, it's never quite like in Piru. It all combines to create a vibrant social scene at a local Mexican restaurant.

"We manage sites all over the county, many are in senior centers," said Janette Jauregui, Ventura County Area Agency on Aging spokeswoman. "In Piru, it just happens to be Brenda's."

Brenda's Casamia and Catering, a small restaurant on Piru's main drag, is now the gathering place for older residents to get both the nutrition they need and the companionship they crave. Sitting down for a daily meal with others eases their isolation and helps build a community, while offering a nutritious dish.

Many Piru residents earn less than 60 percent of the state's median household income, and 40 percent of clients served by the county's area agency on aging exhibited symptoms of high nutritional risk, with many saying they don't have the money to buy nutritional food. A quarter said they eat alone for most meals.

Ventura County had a pre-

vious partner for its nutrition program, but it wasn't cutting it, so Brenda's came on board, and things improved dramatically. Brenda's offered both a comfortable place to spend time and nutritious meals that were culturally welcoming to a population where nearly 70 percent did not speak English.

The congregate meal component that Brenda's offers is crucial.

"It's an opportunity to provide nutritionally balanced meals but also a social environment, they're getting the social aspect and for some of them, that's all of the socialization they get and also sometimes the only nutritional meal they get," Jauregui said.

"The beauty of all of this is that it goes beyond the numbers," she said. "The numbers themselves are very telling, but what you have is this very small community that has these restaurant owners, there aren't many in the community.

The family who owns the restaurant is incredibly invested in the community of Piru." That shows when the Brenda's staff makes house calls, dropping off meals to homebound seniors.

"They're not leaving food by the door, this is the owners handing hot meals to residents and having conversations with them," Jauregui said. "They're engaging regularly, many of them know each other outside of the program, too."

A crucial aspect to the partnership is that Brenda's serves nutritional food that fits the culture of most clients. The county's dietitians evaluate each meal to approve them for the program, but rather than offering nutritious but foreign foods, Brenda's speaks their language, with dishes they like.

"It's a healthy meal but something that brings them comfort, culturally," Jauregui said.

Brenda's is reimbursed \$6.75 for each meal from the Older Americans Act, which provides funding for congregate meals and home delivery. The county contributes \$7,400 annually for mileage reimbursements for meal deliveries, assessments and administrative costs.

Since Ventura County started working for Brenda's for its senior nutrition program in Piru, that community has seen a 63 percent increase in home-delivered meal services and a 55 percent increase in congregate meal services. **CN**

Brenda's Casamia and Catering was recognized as Best in Category among Health programs submitted for the 2018 NACo Achievement Awards. Does your county have an innovative program that improves county government and enhances services for county residents? Apply for the 2019 Achievement Awards! To begin your application, visit www.naco.org/achievement-awards.



Joe Barragan (left) and Alfonso Barragan (center), owners of Brenda's Casamia, walk with Ventura County Supervisor Kelly Long as they prepare to make meal deliveries in Piru, Calif. Photo by Janette Jauregui

the HR DOCTOR

With Phil Rosenberg

Phil Rosenberg

The treasure of lives like that of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, Gandhi and Mother Teresa and so many others represent the spirit of our species searching for improvement and hope. They are our real heroes, far more so than the athletes, actors and politicians we seem to worship.

The symbolism of what these real heroes stood for extends far beyond the boundaries of the United States of America or any specific time or place. They are worldwide figures of respect and renown. They represent the best in our species — a next evolutionary stage in the way we all need to think about each other and act toward one another. They represent the ideals we need to instill in our children.

As many readers know, I have visited South Africa repeatedly as well as Northern Ireland to do conference keynote presentations and seminars. I witnessed firsthand how incredible it is to see persons split apart in the past — amidst religious or racial hatred and violence — bridge those artificial chasms and come together for greater achievements. If only that can happen soon in the historic “crucible of conflict” which is the Middle East.

It reminded me that in a world of caring and smart people, all things are possible. Read on and consider how you can make a difference in your own community and your own family.

King would have been 90 this year. Were he still with us, he would have lived through decades of amazing technological changes, and the continuing, if not sometimes seemingly slow progress, in America’s search to close gaps and narrow inequalities between races, between genders, between persons of different sexual orientations

and between persons of different languages and national origins. He would have seen tens of millions of immigrants continuing to come to America to realize their own versions of the American dream.

It is hard to even imagine how much more progress would have been made in creating a great and equitable society if he had been able to continue as a passionate advocate.

Conventional wisdom recounts that his great contribution to the world was in the advancement of Civil Rights through non-violence.

We can all focus on another lesson from King that as managers and administrators — not to mention as parents and community members — need to learn and practice every day. That is the importance of creating a vision and enlisting others to share in that vision to help

make it a reality.

The greatest weakness in public service is the narrowness of our vision. We spend too much time counting paper clips and not enough time looking at the long-range vision of what our city, county, country or world could be like. We focus on the memo of the day and not on the momentous changes which could happen in our world, if we only created the opening in thought and action to make these changes happen. King was able to speak with amazing eloquence about what he saw in his own mind when he went to a metaphorical mountaintop and looked at the “promised land.”

That “land” could be a county or a country in which all people, especially children, had health care coverage and adequate healthy food. It could be a place in which senior citizens are not prevented from enjoying their

final years in dignity because of the cost of prescription drugs or the lack of health insurance or the scourge of loneliness. It could be a society in which no one dropped out of school or in which the unemployment rate was statistically insignificant.

The only hope for visions like the ones above to become real is to create a view of the future that is so compelling and so articulately presented that persons throughout the society agree to put aside lesser divisions to focus on the higher loyalty which can be developed toward the common outcome. We have done this historically in times of war, and we have done this historically in times of other national opportunities, such as the mass polio vaccination program of the 1950s. We do it every day in a sense in commercial America when we create cultural icons or “heroes”

or products which sell in the millions. If only we could do this in a “micro” way in terms of the way we live and practice public administration day-to-day.

Author Neenah Ellis, in “If I Live to Be 100...” explains the common characteristics that people with extraordinary longevity share. Based on the interviews in the book, the overriding common theme is not diet, occupation, genetics or fish oil. The common characteristic is optimism.

This is also the enduring legacy of King. In his case, the optimism was focused on closing racial and economic divides. However, his legacy can also be profoundly positive for us as individuals. It can mean a commitment to career development and personal growth on the job. It can mean looking at

Walking in the Path of Martin Luther King, Jr.



Martin Luther King, Jr. delivers his “I Have a Dream” speech Aug. 28, 1963 on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

ARIZONA

COCHISE COUNTY is part of a coalition applying for a \$600,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, looking to breathe new life into **regional brown-field** sites, KOLD-13 reported. The coalition is starting by holding a community meeting this month. "The goal is to use the funding to transform underutilized properties from liabilities into assets that revitalize our community and bring our neighborhoods back to life," said Dan Coxworth, director of Cochise County Development Services. "We are inviting business owners, property owners, community organization members and residents to join us and learn more about this program."

CALIFORNIA

• **SAN DIEGO COUNTY'S "Live Well" program is hitting the road** beginning later this year. Some services offered by Health and Human Services will be offered from a mobile office, the *Times of San Diego* reported. The services will include disaster aid, community health services, housing assistance and outreach to seniors, veterans and the homeless. Part of the program's cost of \$600,000 will come from Cal-

WORKS and CalFresh, the county said.

FLORIDA

• The **ORANGE COUNTY** Board of Supervisors recently approved funding for a **program to help first responders suffering from mental health issues** who responded to the Pulse nightclub shooting in 2016, WFTV-9 reported. The attack left 49 people dead.

The \$8.4 million program, funded by a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program, seeks to provide training, assistance and service to first responders, hospital staff, medical examiner's office employees and mental health workers who were affected. The training provided by St. Petersburg College's Center for Public Safety Innovation will train them on how to care for themselves after a crisis.

• **PASCO COUNTY** residents worried about fragile family members home alone are getting some relief thanks to a new **county Lock Box Program**, WFTS reported. Participating residents purchase a steel lockbox and put a copy of their house key inside. Fire crews have a master key that

opens the box in the event of a fire or other emergency. "We are able to get in without breaking down the door, breaking windows," said Fire Marshal Karl Thompson. The lock boxes cost about \$200 and there may be county funding available at some point to offset the cost. The master keys are heavily secured and even police do not have access to them, the TV station reported.

ILLINOIS

McHENRY COUNTY saw a 35 percent decline in **overdose fatalities**, the *Northwest Herald* reported. In 2017, the county counted 78 fatal overdoses and in 2018, 51. The executive director of the county mental health board, Scott Block, attributes the decline to the availability of Narcan, which became available without a prescription in Illinois in 2016.

"It goes without saying that a single death by overdose is too many, as each person lost is a member of our community — and furthermore, a member and loved one of someone's family — but the recent reduction is encouraging," Block said. The county also participates in drug take-back events; that program has established 15 drug drop-off locations throughout the county. The county's Way Out program also encourages residents to turn in illegal drugs and paraphernalia at 20 participating police stations without fear of being arrested or charged. The county's court system also

offers court-supervised treatment for nonviolent drug offenders.

INDIANA

More than 150 people recently turned out for a meeting about proposed changes to **discharging firearms** in **LAKE COUNTY**. The county council voted 5-2 to amend its ban on shooting near neighboring homes, the *Hastings Tribune* reported. It enlarged the exclusion zone to 700 feet in unincorporated county areas. The council said the zone wouldn't apply to hunters during hunting season and it wouldn't apply if gun owners get signed permission from their neighbors.

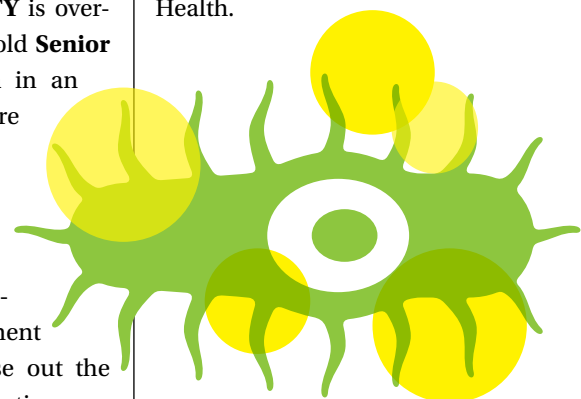
IOWA

MARION COUNTY is overhauling its 40-year old **Senior Nutrition Program** in an effort to reach more citizens who are "food insecure," KNIA/KRLS News reported. Kim Dorn of the county public health department said they will phase out the current food distribution system and eventually meals will be prepared and packaged by the Christian Opportunity Center and local restaurants that have contracts with the county. Some will continue to have meals delivered while others will eat at area restaurants. "One of the things that

the supervisors are looking for is, let's use the tax dollars for people who really need it," said Dorn. "And if they only come once or twice a month, then they probably don't have the level of need that we're looking at spending tax dollars for."

MISSOURI

The **ST. CHARLES COUNTY** Department of Public Health recently expanded its services to help residents traveling to new and exotic international destinations where they might come in contact with **infections and diseases**, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported. "Travel should be memorable, but those memories shouldn't be about getting sick at the destination or not having the right paperwork," said Hope Woodson, director for the Department of Public Health.



"Our expanded services will make travel planning less of a hassle by offering a health consultation about the desired destination, recommended vaccinations and assistance in obtaining identification records through one convenient location."

CALIFORNIA

• **KERN COUNTY** reports it could save millions of dollars by leasing vehicles through a third party instead of purchasing vehicles, the *Bakersfield Californian* reported. They expect to save nearly \$4 million over the next few years. After a successful first year of leasing 111 vehicles last year as a test-run, the county, which has a total fleet of about 800 vehicles, decided to expand the program. The county, which received a Merit Award for the program last year from the California State Association of Counties, also expects to see savings on repair costs. The newspaper reported that local car dealers would prefer to see the county buy local.



NEBRASKA

• Faced with a \$28 million judgment against the county to pay six people who were wrongfully imprisoned in a murder case, the **GAGE COUNTY** Board has passed a resolution in support of state legislation to **impose a countywide sales tax**.

Nebraska counties can't collect sales taxes in communities that are collecting their own sales taxes, *The Omaha World-Herald* reported, but Chairman Myron Dorn's measure would allow a blanket tax until the judgement is paid off. The county still hopes the U.S. Supreme Court will overturn the judgment that sent the Beatrice Six to prison for a combined 75 years, until DNA evidence cleared them in 2008.

• If landowners in **LANCASTER COUNTY** have wind turbines on their property, they get a little more leeway with their noise level after commissioners **raised the decibel level standard**. Lancaster County approved strict noise level requirements for wind farms in 2015 that wind energy supporters said would discourage projects in the county. Those rules established noise level limits of 40 decibels in the day and 37 decibels at night for wind turbines, measured from the home, *The Lincoln Journal Star* reported. The new rules set a 50-decibel upper limit around the clock for property owners who are part of the project.

NEVADA

With the legalization of recreational marijuana use in Nevada, **CLARK COUNTY**'s commissioners and district attorney are working on a way to **clear past minor marijuana offenses** from people's records. The state Legislature would have to approve that measure.

"Whatever they did at the time is now legal. I don't think they should be punished for something that is currently legal," Commissioner Tick Se-

gerblom said of offenders.

Commissioners want to give District Attorney Steve Wolfson the authority to wipe these convictions off the record, which individuals can do on their own at significant expense. The county will not, however, reimburse previously paid fines and court fees.

NEW YORK

BROOME COUNTY's new Estate Card program allows property owners to **save money on their property tax** when they use the debit card to shop at certain local retailers, online stores and for other purchases. Businesses are not charged any fees for participating in the program, and the cards do not require any special equipment aside from a normal card reader. Cards can be accepted anywhere that accepts Visa debit cards.

Users will save 0.25 percent off all purchases, and higher amounts with participating local businesses and on more than 3,200 websites. So far, *The Press & Sun Bulletin* reported, four local businesses are participating. The amount saved by a user is put back onto their card, which can then be used for paying property taxes or making other purchases.

• After some young girls were groped at a water park last summer, **SUFFOLK COUNTY** has passed a law requiring amusement parks and water parks to **immediately notify police** if there's a crime committed on their grounds. The new law legislates penalties if a crime is not reported to police: \$5,000 for the first violation and \$10,000 for subsequent violations. It only applies to

water parks and amusement parks, not other places where children might gather like movie theaters or indoor play spaces, according to CBS New York.

NORTH CAROLINA

A city-county committee is recommending a **DURHAM COUNTY** building play host to a **Confederate statue** torn down by protestors in 2017. The county commission would have to approve the plan.

Durham's Confederate Soldiers Monument, depicting an anonymous uniformed soldier leaning against his rifle, had stood since 1924 in front of a courthouse building that now holds local government offices. The committee's proposal calls for written passages about the statue's history to be part of an exhibit of the statue, which was bent and crumpled when it fell. The committee said displaying the statue in its current damaged form would add important context. The proposal would leave the statue's pedestal in place and add outdoor markers honoring Union soldiers and enslaved people.

OHIO

FRANKLIN COUNTY voters will have a choice **between paper ballots and touch-screen machines** starting in the May primary. The County Commissioners' approval of the purchase capped two years of work that included consideration of different voting machines, input from advocates and others and mock elections to test the equipment before making a final purchase, *The*

Columbus Dispatch reported.

OREGON

A lawsuit against a jail that serves **HOOD RIVER, WASCO, SHERMAN** and **GILLIAM counties** could end up with changes to Oregon's **sanctuary state law**.

Some Wasco County residents are suing the NORCOR regional jail for housing detainees for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which they say violates the state's 31-year-old law prohibiting state and local resources from being used to enforce federal immigration law if a person's only crime is being in the country unlawfully. That law was upheld on the November 2018 ballot. NORCOR argues it's only housing detainees, not arresting them.

Oregon Public Broadcasting reports the judge's ruling in the case could bring clarity to the sanctuary law, which has never been meaningfully interpreted by the courts.

PENNSYLVANIA

With dozens of unsolved

homicide cases, the **LANCASTER COUNTY** district attorney's office is adding a **cold case unit**. The initial \$10,000 budget may end up only funding two DNA analyses, but the recent successful prosecution of a 25-year-old murder case shows there is some momentum for the allocation, Lancaster Online reported.

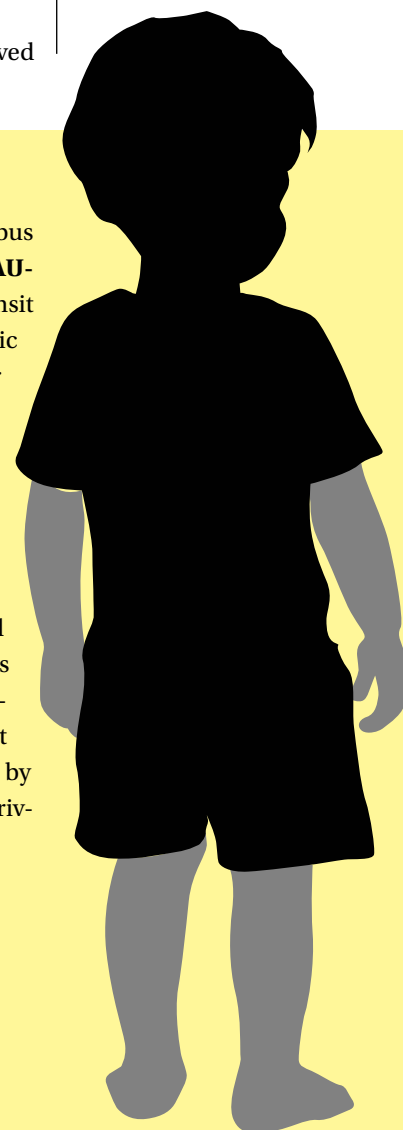
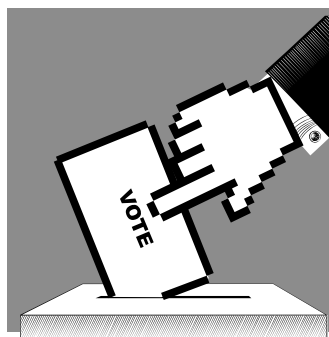
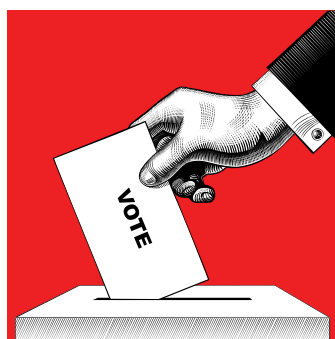
TEXAS

TRAVIS COUNTY is the first in Texas to install an **x-ray** in its jail to screen incoming inmates. The machines can detect "on the body" hidden narcotics, cell phones and even drugs that were ingested with up to 40 to 50 percent more accuracy than other conventional methods, KXAN News reported.

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.

WISCONSIN

In the middle of her bus route Dec. 22, **MILWAUKEE COUNTY** Transit System driver Irena Ivic **saw a barefoot toddler** walking on a highway overpass. Ivic stopped the bus and retrieved the child, who was unharmed and attended to by first responders and returned to her father. WLS News reported that the toddler was the ninth lost or missing child found by county transit system drivers in recent years.





SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, Calif.

Approved: Sept. 7, 1948

San Bernardino County was formed in 1853 and was named for Saint Bernardino of Siena, an Italian priest and Franciscan missionary. William Dedrick of the Planning Commission designed the seal and the Board of Supervisors approved it on Sept. 7, 1948.

Information provided by Genevieve Preston, San Bernardino County archivist.



The seal is shaped like an arrowhead to represent the county's famous geological rock formation found on the side of San Bernardino Mountain.

The two levels of government for which the county acts as an agent are represented: the State of California and the federal government.

The green mountains pay tribute to the county's mining history

The orange groves and vineyards portray the historic agriculture industry of the region.

A wagon represents the early history of settlers arriving to the San Bernardino Valley — it transforms through a gear and out comes a modern train, depicting the industrial progress the county has witnessed.

If you would like your county's seal featured in "Behind the Seal," contact Charlie Ban at cban@naco.org.

Remembering the words of MLK, Jr.

From KING page 13

a vacant lot filled with litter and imagining a new senior citizens' health and recreation facility. It can mean a personal commitment to stop smoking, exercise regularly or finish that college degree.

There is no end to the number of positive visions which can turn into reality if we learn to move with commitment and optimism to make the changes happen.

Here are a few of my favorites:

1. Make a commitment as a manager or executive in government to be a mentor to subordinates at work and children in the community. Be a big brother or big sister or a high school mentor. Be a teacher and a champion of the career development and success of others.

2. Find a teacher as well as be one. Commit to learn new skills. Learn to speak Spanish, Chinese or some other second language. Learn to take up hiking or photography, or one of my favorites, music.

3. Commit to personal health improvement by getting a check-up and following through on actions to reduce health risks through regular exercise, weight loss, smoking cessation, and other steps to help you live longer and live happier. Do these things and do them soon. While you're at it, take someone with you, such as a colleague at work or a member of the family. It is easier to succeed in a plan if you have support from an understanding friend.

4. Make a major difference in the community. Be the catalyst to turn that vacant lot into a senior health center. Be a United Way or Rotary Club champion. Be a "go to" person for charities so that your own reputation is enhanced and your own leadership skills are developed. What better way to improve these personal elements in your life than by also helping other people on the way? There are

no shortages of charities in the neighborhood, in the county or in the world that need your help.

5. Spend time with people you care about, including private time with yourself away from the excessive intrusions of the modern world. My dogs Isibindi and Major join me regularly, especially in the morning, for this purpose by taking walks together. It's harder and harder to find privacy, meditation — call it what you will — but the more our lives are intruded upon by smart phones, horns honking, telemarketers, loud neighbors, etc., the more we lose some part of the essence of our individuality.

6. Spend more time away from the television and away from the computer to pursue some personal passion.

7. Dream and plan ahead for what your own life may be like after retirement — no matter how young you are. Invest energy in not only saving for financial security but by taking steps to increase your long term "intellectual security" as well. Think about things like where and when you might retire and what active steps, including other employment, you will take to keep alert, alive and contributing.

Do all these things and you will have a significant set of resolutions. You will also be walking in the path of King. Each of us individually can make the choice of whether to live our lives surrounded by large piles of paper clips or surrounded by a legacy that will make our children look back at us and say that we stood for something wonderful.

I wish King a very heavenly birthday and you all an incredible 2019. I hope you will spend some time reliving the great "I Have a Dream" speech and remembering the power of those words. **CN**

PROFILES IN SERVICE

EDWARD ZACKERY

Board Member
Director, Medina County
Veterans Service Office
Medina County, Ohio



ZACKERY

Number of years involved in NACo: Six

Years in public service: 31

Occupation: U.S. Army First Sergeant (Retired); Director/County Veterans Service Officer

Education: Bachelor's degree in Resource Management

The hardest thing I've ever done is: Leave my family on three different deployments in the U.S. Army.

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner are: My parents, Dwight D. Eisenhower and Abraham Lincoln.

A dream I have is to: Grow old.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: Go on a 10-day backpacking trip with my son.

My favorite ways to relax are to: Do outdoor activities like hiking or boating.

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

Every morning I read: A joke and then the headlines.

My favorite meal is: Pizza and beer.

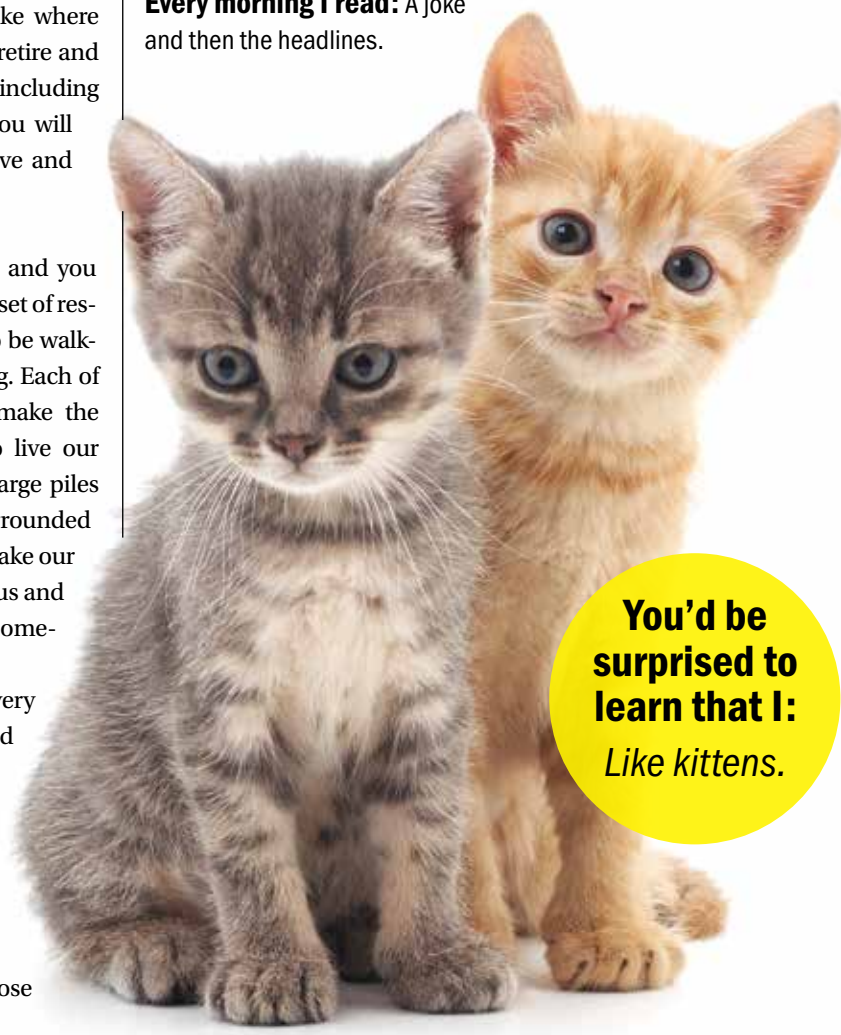
My motto is: "Screw 'em if they can't take a joke."

The last book I read was: *What the Boys Did Over There by "Themselves"*

My favorite movie is: *Bonnie and Clyde*.

My favorite music is: Jazz.

My favorite U.S. presidents are: George Washington and George H.W. Bush (Sorry, it's a tie).



You'd be surprised to learn that I:
Like kittens.