



PRESIDENT TO ADDRESS NACo MEMBERS

by Mary Ann Barton
editor

President Donald J. Trump will address county officials from across the country Tuesday, March 3 at NACo's 2020 Legislative Conference, which



Trump

kicked off Saturday, Feb. 29 in Washington, D.C.

Nearly 2,000 county officials from across the United States are in the nation's capital to explore solutions to some of the biggest challenges — including health policies in jails, the lack of broadband service and affordable housing — awaiting them back home.

In addition to Trump, NACo members will also hear from Colin Powell, a four-star general who served as President Reagan's national security ad-

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CATCHING AIR: Two cycling enthusiasts try out San Diego County's new bike park, Sweetwater Summit Regional Park. The 4-acre course offers a range of options for all skill levels. The park is part of the county's "Live Well" initiative, encouraging residents to embrace a healthy lifestyle. Read more about it on Page 5. Photo by Max Mandell

Work at the local level vital for success of 2020 election

by Charlie Ban
senior writer

Discussions about the 2020 election typically gloss over the fact that it will be the sum of thousands of moving parts. The individual counties conducting the elections in hundreds of polling places will face challenges and changes as they gear up for a high-turnout year.

Los Angeles County's voting experience hasn't been that different than the end of the Johnson administration, when punch cards were introduced

in 1968. That's going to change when voters in the nation's most populous county, with 5.4 million registered voters, get the choice of 11 days to cast their votes from any polling place in the county.

"It's about moving to where (the voters) are," County Registrar/Recorder Dean Logan said

while participating in a recent panel discussion held by the Election Assistance Commission. "I think there's no doubt we're going to have unprecedented turnout in November."

"(We're) moving away from a system where the voters need to seek out the voting experience and actually approaching

it from the standpoint of being visible in the community over the course of that 11 days so that when voters have that intrinsic movement, desire to have their voice heard...they're going to see that there's a place they can go in and cast their ballot and

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CDC: Prep for 'social distancing' to combat potential coronavirus

by Mary Ann Barton
editor

Communities across the country should prepare for "social distancing measures" in the event of an outbreak of the coronavirus, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned last week.

Some of the suggested social distancing measures include dividing school classes into small groups of students, closing schools, conducting classes online, canceling meetings and conferences and arranging for employees to work from home, said Nancy Messonnier, the CDC's director of the National

Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases.

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), on behalf of the nation's 3,000 local health departments, is urging Congress to pass emergency supplemental

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Poll worker recruitment is key to county election administration

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have their voice heard.”

The longer voting period allows election workers to train on the job in the first few days and be ready to handle more responsibility as Election Day approaches.

“What’s exciting is that it addresses a lot of the challenges we’ve seen on Election Day in the past,” he said. “It gives us that full 10-day period to predict and see and react rather than on a single day.”

Logan said his office spent 10 years of study gathering data and designing the new system, which should reduce the number of provisional ballots cast, which happened most commonly because a voter went to the wrong polling place. And this year, eligible inmates will be able to cast ballots from inside the county jail, rather than voting by mail. That will be available to more than 2,000 inmates who have retained their voting rights. Cook County, Ill. will also



Los Angeles County, Calif. Registrar-Recorder/Clerk Dean Logan speaks during a recent Election Assistance Commission panel at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. From left, EAC Commissioner Donald Palmer; Logan; Navajo County, Ariz. Recorder Doris Clark; Sarasota County, Fla. Supervisor of Elections Ron Turner; Cook County, Ill.; Clerk Karen Yarbrough and Fairfax County, Va. General Registrar and Director of Elections Gary Scott. Photo by Ron Sachs, Consolidated News Photos, courtesy of the Election Assistance Commission

bring voting machines into its jail this year.

The machines are new, and Cook County Clerk Karen Yarbrough has a good feeling about them, after her office used some of them in a pilot project in 2019.

“The experience for our area was good, so good that one of the people who voted said, ‘I love the machines, I want to

marry the machine,’” she said.

Running all of these operations typically falls to poll workers, and Gary Scott, Fairfax County, Va.’s general registrar and director of elections, said that’s a hot topic among his colleagues.

“Like everyone else we have a problem recruiting and retaining election officers,” he said, recounting a conference where a fellow registrar described the average age of an election officer as “deceased.”

“How lucky you are, ours have generally been dead for three years,” he recalled thinking.

Scott recruits from local high schools and universities, but it’s hard.

“Trying to bring younger people into the election officer pool is a big challenge,” he said.

Adding to that, Virginia has a general election every year, so election work is an even heavier load. Scott did say the state’s county registrars opposed a state bill to select election workers the same way jury pools are elected.

“We don’t want any non-volunteers working in our elections,” he said.

Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections Ron Turner said his office has found good results

moving to year-round recruiting for poll workers.

“We have a number of elections workers who stay with us through several election cycles because they like what they do,” he said. “I don’t think it’s necessarily because they enjoy the 15- or 16-hour days and the large pay that we give them,” he joked, “but I do think that they enjoy a sense of civic pride in carrying out their jobs.”

Reaching voters means speaking to them in a language they understand. Navajo County, Ariz. has been undergoing a continuous process to make sure its 76,000 registered voters, spread out over nearly 10,000 square miles and as members of 20 different native American tribes, can all have access to voter education.

“To this day, there are still people out there that don’t have electricity and running water,” said Recorder Doris Clark. “We can’t advertise on TV, but every home has a battery-operated radio.”

Because those messages will be coming from a single place, the county needed to develop a consistent glossary so the terminology used in communications would be consistent.

“Reviewing that is an ongoing

process,” Clark said.

Fairfax County’s population is diverse, and that creates another hurdle for Scott’s poll worker recruitment.

“It’s a difficult sell for us to go into those communities because the cultural background is different than ours. For many of them, being from the government is an item of suspicion.”

Ron Turner pointed out that Sarasota County, Fla. essentially has three Election Day operations. He’s the supervisor of elections there.

“We have early voting, vote by mail and Election Day voting,” he said. “It’s about one-third in each. We have a number of poll workers who stay with us through several election cycles.”

Turner noted that a court order requiring 32 counties to provide language assistance was an opportunity to do their jobs well.

“We try to embrace it in a positive way,” he said. “We’re helping voters, we’re helping those with limited language ability... this is the positive change for us and we’re in the customer service business, that’s how we have to look at this, not as a purely bureaucratic function. These are our customers. We want repeat customers.” **CN**

SNAP/STATS



IRISH EYES ARE SMILING

U.S. residents who claim Irish ancestry	32 million
U.S. residents who report Ireland as their birthplace	123,950
Cook County, Ill. residents who claim Irish ancestry.....	470,277
U.S. residents who speak Irish Gaelic	20,590
Percentage of Americans who celebrate St. Patrick’s Day	60 percent

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; WalletHub

County podcast on death investigations proves popular

by **Rachel Looker**
staff writer

Every morning when Milad Webb, an assistant medical examiner, comes to work at the Wayne County, Mich., Medical Examiner's Office, he and the other pathologists view a docket that lists the cases for the day.

In addition to performing autopsies, the pathologists are using their knowledge and skills to add a new task to the docket: Podcasting.

The Wayne County Medical Examiner's Office, located in Detroit, launched "Detroit's Daily Docket," a 30-minute to 60-minute biweekly podcast that features four of the office's pathologists discussing a variety of forensic pathology topics.

The podcast, which launched on Feb. 14, aims to increase the community's awareness about the job of a medical examiner and how they serve the community, as well as educate listeners about the medical aspects of death investigation.

It's a job that is in short supply in many counties. Eleven years ago, the National Research Council issued a warning that there were fewer than 500 forensic pathologists in the country, *The New York Times* reported. That's a number that couldn't cover half the annual deaths that require autopsy, the newspaper pointed out.

Since then, the opioid epidemic has increased case-loads drastically.

Webb said while the field of forensic pathology has existed for a long time, very few people know about the job of a forensic pathologist.

"The community always has some great questions about what happens during an autopsy or explanations for what tests were performed," he said.

Webb said there are limited online resources to find answers to questions about the field and many people do not know how to reach the medical examiner's office.

"It's a great opportunity for us to educate the public, let them know we are here, what

kind of integral role we play in the community as well as answering a lot of questions they have," he said.

According to Webb, many individuals have questions about the death of a loved one or how current public health matters such as the opioid crisis or the coronavirus may impact them. The podcast allows the pathologists in the medical examiner's office to take questions from listeners and hear suggestions for future topics.

"Detroit's Daily Docket" is produced in partnership with the University of Michigan, which partnered with the Wayne County government to run the medical examiner's office, Webb said.

"That puts us in a very unique position to have the flexibility of resources to be able to do things like the podcast," he said.

Podcast episodes cover a variety of topics including gunshot wounds, the opioid crisis or death by asphyxiation.

"We want to talk about some of those things and how if a medical examiner comes out and says, 'We think this is a suicide,' what is our confidence in knowing that?" Webb explained. "I think it would give some people some insight into the situation."

Omar Rayes, assistant medical examiner at the Wayne County Medical Examiner's Office, said the four pathologists independently launched "Detroit's Daily Docket" after Deputy Chief Medical Examiner Leigh Hlavaty made an appearance on a different podcast, which inspired them to start their own.

Assistant Medical Examiner Lokman Sung built a podcast room in an unused office and added curtains, soundproofing material and equipment for recording.

Each pathologist focuses on a different task to keep the podcast running including writing scripts for each episode and managing social media accounts.

Rayes runs the digital aspects of the podcast and ensures it is available on all podcast platforms. He also helps organize the social media posts.

"We all work as a team to bring it to life and we're very proud of our podcast," he said. "It's getting over 1,000 listeners for the first episode. That was the introduction one so I'm sure we'll get more listeners as we go with the next episodes."

Rayes said that forensic pathology is often misrepresented when television shows and movies portray inaccurate scenes.

"Our main goal of the podcast is to deliver a real and more accurate picture of our job and hopefully encourage those who are interested in forensics in general to seek an opportunity to work in this field," he said.

Both Webb and Rayes emphasized that the podcast provides information to prospective forensic pathologists and

medical examiners to learn about the job and the education required to work in the field.

"I think it's unique because it is the first podcast to have real forensic pathologists talking about forensic pathology," he said.

The podcast will occasionally feature guests including Jeffrey Jentzen, who was the medical examiner in Milwaukee County, Wis., during serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer's murders.

"We'll get to cover a case if you're dealing with somebody who is a serial killer or somebody who has disembodied human parts," Webb said.

"Detroit's Daily Docket" is available on all podcast platforms.

"Forensic pathology is there not just to serve the people who have died, but it's there to serve the people who remain behind," Webb said. "That is the most critical responsibility we have, to those loved ones who are left behind." **CN**



(L-r) Deputy Chief Medical Examiner Leigh Hlavaty and Assistant Medical Examiners Lokman Sung, Milad Webb and Omar Rayes record the "Detroit's Daily Docket" podcast in a vacant office that was repurposed for recording in the Wayne County Medical Examiner's Office in Wayne County, Mich. Photo by Kelly Root

Nearly 2,000 county officials expected at NACo 2020 Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.

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visor. He was also chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the administrations of President George H.W. Bush and President Bill Clinton.

Other speakers set to ad-

dress attendees include HUD Sec. Ben Carson and Interior Sec. David Bernhardt.

In a discussion moderated by journalist Sheryl Gay Stolberg of *The New York Times*, Rep. Stephanie Murphy (D-Fla.) and Rep. John Katko

(R-N.Y.) will discuss bipartisanship on Capitol Hill.

Other highlights of the Legislative Conference include briefings on Capitol Hill that will feature the release of a task force report from NACo and the National Sheriffs As-

sociation addressing the federal Medicaid inmate exclusion policy. Also on Capitol Hill, other briefings will explore the county role in ensuring safe and secure elections and county priorities in transportation and infrastructure

legislation.

Reports on broadband data and county economies are also on tap. [CN](#)

Look for a full report of the conference coming up in the March 16 issue of County News.

Local health departments need help fighting potential coronavirus outbreaks, NACCHO says

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funding “to sufficiently support the work of local health departments to prepare for and respond to the coronavirus.”

The Trump administration is requesting \$1.25 billion in new funds and another \$1.25 billion taken from other programs to help fight the virus.

“We appreciate the Administration acknowledging that additional resources are needed to address current and future response activities, but the way they propose to do, primarily by reprogramming other HHS dollars, and the relatively small amount requested, fall short of what is needed for a govern-

ment-wide supplemental to make a meaningful impact,” NACCHO said in a statement.

County health departments have been the “front lines” of helping to slow its spread in the United States, the group noted. Across the country, local health departments are responsible for:

- assessing people for the risk of contracting the disease
- finding and testing persons of interest who have recently traveled to China or who are exhibiting symptoms
- monitoring anyone who has been in close contact with people under investigation
- and arranging for isolation and quarantine when necessary.

They are working with health

care providers to help ensure medical professionals know what to look for — and how to report — suspected cases. They are also working with their community partners to disseminate credible information, calm fears and dispel myths.

As of last week, the United States had 60 cases, including 40 connected to a cruise ship that was overwhelmed by the virus after it docked in Japan.

A resident of Solano County, Calif. was the first reported case of coronavirus via “community spread” Feb. 26, authorities said.

Despite the relatively low number of confirmed cases in the United States to date, local health professionals are already

working above and beyond the call of duty, NACCHO noted. In far too many localities, the group pointed out, that means diverting staff and limited resources from other projects — strategies that are not sustainable and which run the risk of compromising other critical work. This is particularly challenging as local health departments have lost nearly a quarter of their workforce in the past decade due to budget cuts, they said.

Among other things, local health departments need new dedicated resources to support vital isolation/quarantine related activities, including transportation and lodging and wrap-around services like behavioral

health support or even necessities like food and toiletries, said Lori Tremmel Freeman, CEO of NACCHO. They need the support to locate and monitor the health status of patients who are currently under investigation, provide trusted outreach to the general public (including translation of public health materials) and healthcare facilities, and they need personal protective equipment, she noted.

Emergency supplemental funding — both for the federal response, but also directed to local and state activities — is “absolutely critical” to support current response activities, she noted, as well as future work to combat the virus. [CN](#)



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GNARLY PARK

GIVES MOUNTAIN BIKERS A HOME IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

It's called Sweetwater Summit Regional Park, but you're more likely to catch some sweet air if you bring your bike.

San Diego County, Calif. recently opened a new feature to one of its parks, a 4-acre bike course that offers a range of options for different skill levels. It has jump lines, a jump track, a kid's pump track, a skill zone, two flow trails, a perimeter trail and more.

"San Diego County was great to work for because they listened, they really listened," said Deven Schneider, principal of Schneider Grading and Excavating, which performed the technical work on the park.

"You think of government as being set in stone, but with bike courses, you have to build it, then test it, over and over again. They were always willing to change plans if we needed to make it better."

Why invest in a niche feature like a BMX park? It's the latest in the county's Live Well San Diego initiative that encourages residents to be active and healthy.

Supervisor Greg Cox, long an advocate for the bicycling community, thought that since the county had some room to work with for the park, it should swing for the fences and try something new. If area bikers were looking for technical places to hone their skills and have fun, why shouldn't

the county offer it?

"We have a very active bicycling community here, and good weather year-round," Cox said. "We wanted to develop a park to meet the needs of all levels of riders."

With the help of the San Diego Mountain Biking Association, the county was able to build the park with the features that would cater to users' needs. That meant working with Schneider, who is an experienced bicyclist.

"They did a prequalification to bid, you had to prove that you knew what you were doing," Schneider said. "They could say OK, you ride, you've built before."

Schneider said he had seen a lot of empty bike parks that

were mostly abandoned soon after their novelty wore off, so he aimed to make the park offer something for everyone.

For instance, the jumps at Sweetwater don't include gaps which allows beginners to work their way up without as much risk if they are unsuccessful. Less Evel Knievel, more Timmy from down the street.

"It's not an X Games value, but it offers something for experienced riders," Schneider said. "What's important is that it gives people something they can work their way into. It gives hope to the kid who says 'I can do that.' Their confidence is up and they learn more. That's what the county wants."

"I've been to so many parks

where people who didn't ride designed it. And you don't see anybody there, because it's not fun."

Working with S&B Engineering, Schneider used a polymer in most of the technical work that is less expensive than paving, but more durable than using straight dirt.

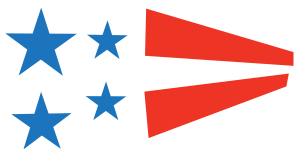
"The county doesn't realize how easy the maintenance is with it," he said. "Without it, you'd be repairing it after every rain, you'd have guys out there with shovels doing work and the park would be out of commission while it dries."

County parks employees will be responsible for maintenance of the park, which will be open during most daylight hours. **CN**

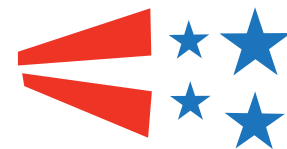


Bicyclists test out the features at San Diego County, Calif.'s Sweetwater Summit Regional Park.
Photos by Max Mandell

2020 NACo SECOND VICE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION



MEET THE CANDIDATES



Cindy Bobbitt

County Commissioner
Grant County, Okla.

Why are you interested in serving as a NACo officer?

As a commissioner from a small rural county, Grant County, Okla., the opportunities that I have had and the knowledge I have gained during my 12 years as an active NACo member have benefited me, my county and my state. As a NACo officer, I will continue to empower others to do the same by showing that through hard work, a person from any county, from any location can make an enormous impact.

NACo is an amazing organization because of its diversity. While there are differences in each county, borough and parish, they all also have much in common. I will continue to build partnerships between all members by working to give everyone an equal opportunity and working to make each county and each county official the best that they can be.

The bridge-building doesn't stop there — I have advocated on the federal and state levels on behalf of counties for over a decade. I want to contribute my experience so NACo can continue to build on its ever-growing presence at the U.S. Capitol, and it will also help to equip each NACo member with the opportunity to do the same at home.

I am strongly passionate about infrastructure needs, and as a NACo officer, I will

bring my solid experience and proven work ethic to strengthen its foundation. It's about more than just concrete and steel beams, it's about building bridges between the big and the small, the east and the west, and the right and the left and getting the job done.

What do you consider to be your most important contribution to the National Association of Counties to date? What do you consider to be your most important contribution to your state association of counties?

NACo is a team made up of intelligent and industrious county officials supported by a great staff, and I have been honored to contribute to this team. I have worked tirelessly building and retaining membership and earned the 2010 NACo Membership Recruiter of the Year award for my efforts. I have worked to build a strong federal-state-local partnership through my effective advocacy efforts. I testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works on the importance of modernizing our nation's infrastructure. As NACo vice chair of Transportation, I advocated in the U.S. House and Senate on timely transportation issues. As Central Region Representative, I have participated in countless meetings with administrators and staff from the White House, government agencies and legislators promoting county issues.

As an Association of County Commissioners of Oklahoma (ACCO) District Director on the Legislative Committee, I successfully advocated for county transportation and retirement benefits at the state level. I lobbied hard for the passage of the Emergency Transportation and Revolving Fund. This legislation saves money and time on road projects and could not have been possible without the coun-

ty-state partnership that I helped to build. I was elated that after three years of educating Oklahoma legislators, my determination was rewarded with the passage of legislation strengthening the ability of counties to provide competitive deferred compensation packages to employees.

I am only one person, and the contributions that I have made on the federal and state levels would not have been effective without the rest of the members of each team putting in their share of the work as well. It is through active members that contributions are most strongly felt, and I have led by example.

What do you consider to be the two or three most important challenges facing NACo in the near future on which the Officers/ Executive Committee/ Board of Directors should focus? Why?

The sale of U.S. Communities has energized the NACo Board and staff to focus on ensuring the future financial strength and viability of the organization. NACo's Blueprint, with the mission to "Strengthen America's Counties," can only be achieved if NACo is financially sound. Discovering new value-added, cost-effective revenue solutions for NACo that benefit member counties and the publics they serve will be a challenge. My background in accounting, experience budgeting in a rural county with limited resources and my life-long experience in agriculture — I was renting my own land to farm at 16 — have prepared me to understand the issues, options for consideration and the solutions that will lead to NACo's financial success.

NACo cannot allow the external pressures of an increasingly divided America to weaken our strategic focus. NACo's value of "the diversity of thought, heritage and experience" of members has been

a critical factor in achieving legislative success on several important issues. Successes that I have achieved through my advocacy efforts have not come easily. I have built bridges between parties, cultures and counties of all shapes and sizes to reach solutions that bring benefit to all citizens. As a NACo officer, I will embrace the challenge of working to strengthen the unity of our membership through our shared goals.

What measures would you recommend to increase and retain NACo membership and to encourage broad participation in NACo by elected officials and employees of NACo member counties? What specific role would you be willing to assume to help build and sustain membership in NACo?

I am extremely passionate about NACo membership and have been active on the NACo Membership Committee since my first meeting over 12 years ago. I have served as chair and vice chair and am currently the Executive Committee Liaison to the Membership Committee. I truly enjoy educating others about the many benefits counties receive from NACo membership.

Growing the membership and participation of all counties, parishes and boroughs in NACo is extremely important. Rural counties represent nearly 70 percent of all counties in America, and they face many challenging issues. Nearly half of our nation's population lives in 127 urban counties. When our memberships come together to share ideas and seek common goals, every citizen in America benefits. I see my role as an officer as helping bridge the differences among our diverse membership.

NACo staff has been instrumental in recent years in fast-tracking recruitment ef-

forts by attending more state association meetings and increasing outreach. Executive committee, board and active members should use their leverage in their networks to support this work and further increase membership.

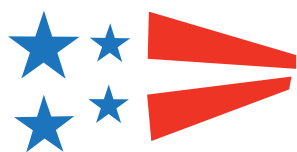
I will continue to support budgeting for free conference registrations for all county officials and staff from new member counties and will support extending this to a full year of conferences. I have served as a NACo Ambassador since its inception and have learned a lot from the first-time attendees that I have mentored.

Bringing multiple individuals from each county for two conferences would greatly increase the likelihood that they would become active and sustained members. Like many of us — they will be hooked.

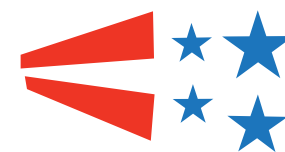
The demographic landscape of county officials and staff is changing. A younger generation is bringing exciting ideas and increased involvement to NACo. I support bridging the skill sets of the NextGen members with the knowledge of experienced members to create the best outcomes for county government. Working together we can learn from the past while moving forward with innovative solutions.

As a NACo officer, I will continue to lead by example when it comes to promoting NACo membership. I will continue making those personal calls, continue attending those state association meetings and continue to present NACo membership workshops. I am very grateful for the cost savings for my constituents, the partnerships that have been built for my county and the leadership growth that membership in this great organization has brought me personally. Although it has taken hard work and determination, I hope sharing my story about my NACo engagement will interest others in following my path. I want to continue my efforts as the next NACo 2nd Vice President. I ask for your support.

2020 NACo SECOND VICE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION



MEET THE CANDIDATES



Denise Winfrey

County Board Speaker
Will County, Ill.

Why are you interested in serving as a NACo officer?

I am interested in serving as a NACo officer because I believe in the value of NACo membership to counties, and the services NACo can provide to all 3,069 counties across the country. When I joined the Will County Board, I was encouraged by a colleague to join and be active in NACo. That was May of 2009. He said many board members didn't understand the benefits of being involved. Unfortunately, that is still true, not only on my board but across the country.

Being an officer of NACo would help not only with my goals for Will County, but also help to convince other counties in Illinois of the benefit of NACo membership. We have

been making great progress with our state association, but I would like to see us become a 100 percent state. If Illinois were to be the home of the next Second Vice President, other counties might be inspired to join. I would certainly be pushing that agenda.

Looking at some of the past presidential initiatives, I see one consistent theme: inclusion. As Ralph Ellison said, "America is woven of many strands. I would recognize them and let them so remain... Our fate is to become one, and yet many."

Inclusion encompasses many things — breaking the cycle of poverty; lowering infant mortality; connecting people from all walks of life; ensuring health care for all; protecting our seniors and elderly; being allies to the LGBTQ+ community and criminal justice reform — in short, inclusion means valuing each and every person in our communities.

What do you consider to be your most important contribution to the National Association of Counties to date? What do you consider to be your most important contribution to your state association of counties?

I believe that being a NACo Ambassador allows me the

opportunity to share with newcomers the value of NACo and the benefit my county and I have gained from being involved. I am also able to serve as a resource of NACo information for my county and for other counties in my state who may be thinking of joining. As a graduate of the NACo High Performance Leadership Academy, I know at a personal as well as a county level, the value of belonging to NACo, and see that as a benefit for my state association. That course will also serve me and the NACo organization well in my position as a NACo officer.

What do you consider to be the two or three most important challenges facing NACo in the near future on which the Officers/ Executive Committee/ Board of Directors should focus? Why?

I see changing demographics as a challenge to NACo. Elected officials are getting younger every day. This provides energy and new ideas but does not preserve the historical knowledge and relationships that allow us to build alliances that support and sustain the organization. Supporting counties in ways they feel are relevant and useful depends on knowing the changing face of counties and including everyone in the strategy development.

As the look of the organization changes, it is imperative that we tell our story. Both new and existing members need to know who we are, where we've been, what we offer and how they can be part of this phenomenal group.

What measures would you recommend to increase and retain NACo membership and to encourage broad participation in NACo by elected officials and employees of NACo member counties? What specific role would you be willing to assume to help build and sustain membership in NACo?

I would recommend a speaker's group to help tell the NACo story. We currently have people from staff going out to solicit membership, and they do a great job. I think adding some member county volunteers to that touring group could help increase our appeal and give prospective members a first-hand account of the benefits of belonging. An old ad line ran "membership has its privileges." That is true of NACo, and we need to make sure people know it.

I would be willing to speak to prospective counties at their state association meetings and to be part of advertising material focused on membership. I recommend ad material fea-

turing actual county board members instead of actors. Identify the individuals' state and county in the ads. Those featured should be reflective of an inclusive membership.

All our counties need to understand what a benefit it is to be a part of NACo.

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Global market engagement helps boost county economies

by Jonathan Harris

Strong economic growth in the United States at the national level does not imply strong growth for every local jurisdiction. From 2001 to 2018, the national economic output increased over 40 percent.

Despite strong national numbers, over a quarter of the nation's counties have not yet returned to pre-recession levels of economic output and nearly a quarter of the nation's counties experienced a decline in GDP in the most recent year-over-year analysis.

That's according to a new NACo report, *County Economic Output Trends*. This report, and a second titled, *Local Economies in the Global Market*, which analyzes county engagement with the world economy, are part of NACo's new County Economies 2020 series.

County Economic Output Trends analyzes new county-level GDP data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). The analysis finds a diverse national economy on the rise, but evi-



dence that not all local economies are experiencing the same expansion.

Large counties with populations over 500,000 experienced a 62 percent higher per capita GDP than small counties with populations of less than 50,000. Western county economies led in growth, driven by the finance, insurance, real estate and information sectors.

Just over 2 percent of all counties did not experience any economic decline at all during the recession. Montgomery County, Texas fared among the best in surviving the recession with consistent year-over-year growth and a 173 percent increase in GDP from 2001 to 2018.

Local Economies in the Global Market analyzes county engagement with the world economy through NACo's new Global



Market Engagement (GME) Index, emphasizing the key role counties play in encouraging exports and exploring foreign investment. Overall, the South was the most globally engaged region, followed closely by the Midwest. The manufacturing industry drove global market engagement in counties: the clear majority (61 percent) of the most globally engaged counties relied on manufacturing as their top industry.

When breaking down exports and foreign investment, the report finds that export-reliant counties tend to have faster economic growth, but slower jobs growth. Shifts in the manufacturing industry contributed largely to this phenomenon: since 1987, jobs in the manufacturing industry decreased by 28 percent, yet real production

grew by over 85 percent, demonstrating an increase in worker productivity, more advanced machinery and streamlined processes. Most exports came from large counties, but small county economies were more reliant on exports.

Foreign investment has also played an important role in economic development for many counties, bringing in over \$542 billion in new investments and creating over 1.2 million new jobs between 2003 and 2017. Large counties received more foreign investment in total, but small counties received more lucrative projects on average. Only 40 percent of the nation's counties (1,226) received foreign investment between 2003 and 2017. Those counties experienced faster GDP and jobs growth.


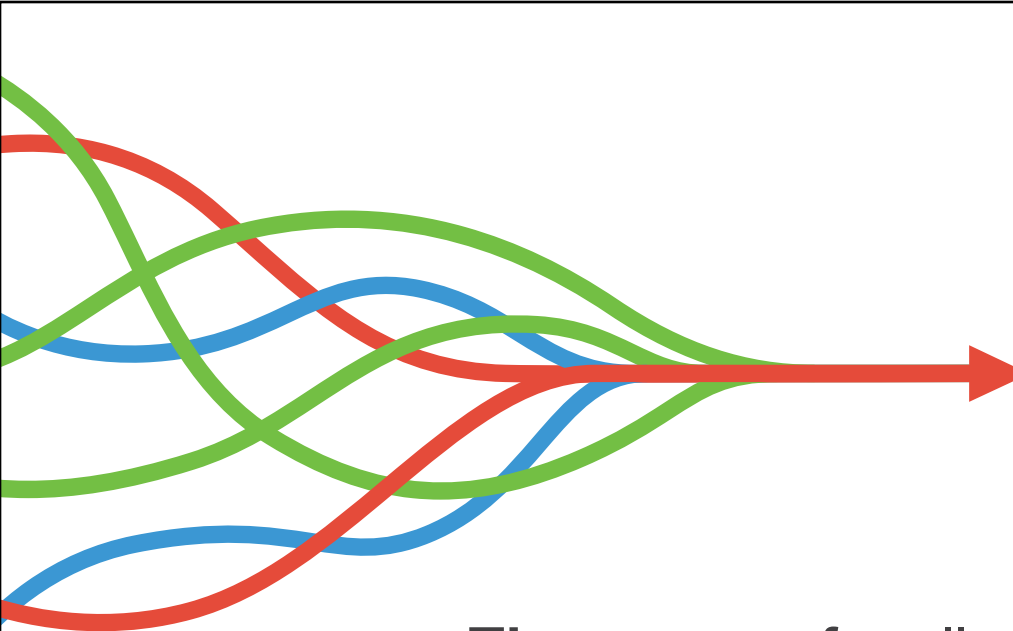
The report finds county economies are becoming more reliant on the global market, both in terms of exports and foreign investments. Many counties are, in fact, augmenting their traditional economic development strategies with a global

focus, encouraging local businesses to export and stimulating foreign investment into the community.


County leaders play a crucial role in ensuring their local economy is healthy and growing. They are engaging in more international economic development by developing international business relationships, forming regional partnerships and advancing local infrastructure. Nevertheless, each county must consider its own unique situation and partner with cities, states, the federal government and the private sector to ascertain the appropriate level of global engagement for its local industries.


Check out the full County Economic Output Trends and Local Economies in the Global Market reports, as well as the seven county examples featured in the reports, here: www.NACo.org/CountyEconomies2020

Jonathan Harris is the associate research director in NACo's County Innovations Lab.



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GIS map helps identify ‘hot spot’ polling locations

by Rachel Looker
staff writer

Just as weather radar maps predict the areas where a storm is likely to hit, heat maps in Linn County, Iowa are also making predictions — but not about temperatures.

County officials have been looking to establish permanent satellite voting locations for in-person absentee voting and are using heat maps to identify areas in the county where there are large concentrations of active voters.

“Are you putting the sidewalk where people walk or are you putting the sidewalk where you want them to walk?” Linn County Auditor Joel Miller asked. “I can tell you which one is going to win, and I think it’s the same way with voters.”

In Iowa, casting absentee ballots by mail or in person is the only form of early voting. The absentee ballot can be sent and received through the mail with the postage paid both ways by the county. For absentee voting in person, a voter may cast an absentee ballot at a designated location prior to the election where each location has ballots for all 86 precincts.

To identify the best locations to establish satellite locations for in-person absentee voting, the county turned to heat maps.

“I wanted to ensure that we were going to place satellite locations within areas where we hope that they would be utilized the most,” Miller said.

The heat maps use voter registration data and voting records from past elections to identify points on the map where voters are located.

“They give us an idea of where our overall voters are coming from, where they are living,” Miller said. “And are we putting these satellite polling places in locations that are easily accessible by people?”

Elections Systems Administrator Eric Loecher created the heat maps using 126,000 records and geographic information system (GIS) mapping.

“GIS is a helpful tool in multiple fields, so I think it’s a good way to apply voter data and see a spatial result or see a map,” he said. “I think maps are very easy for people to digest.”

Loecher compared the heat maps to weather radar maps where areas in red have higher intensities, or in this case more active voters. After analyzing the map, Loecher and Miller found three “hot” areas in the Cedar Rapids metro area.

“It’s much easier to look at a picture and kind of determine information rather than just looking at a spreadsheet of data,” Loecher said. “This gives the de-

cision-makers data that is easy to consume.”

While Miller said his office had hunches as to where there are areas with more active voters, the data and maps confirmed their thinking was correct.

“Certainly, the maps are more precise than our hunches,” he said. “It gives us a visualization of the data that we normally wouldn’t think of in those terms and we’d have no way of visualizing that without a map to help us.”

Miller said he is expecting half of area voters to vote absentee before the 2020 election. In the last presidential election, 35.7 percent of people voted absentee at both satellite locations and by mail-in ballots.

With a 76 percent turnout of registered voters in Linn County in the last election, Miller said his office is assuming they will have a 76 to 80 percent turnout of registered voters in 2020. If half show up to vote early, between 50,000 to 60,000 early voters won’t be at the polls on election day, he said.

“We’re trying to basically remove the peak demand from polling places on Election Day so we kind of level out our demand so we don’t have long lines and then we can provide a higher level of service,” Miller said.

The county established in-person absentee voting loca-

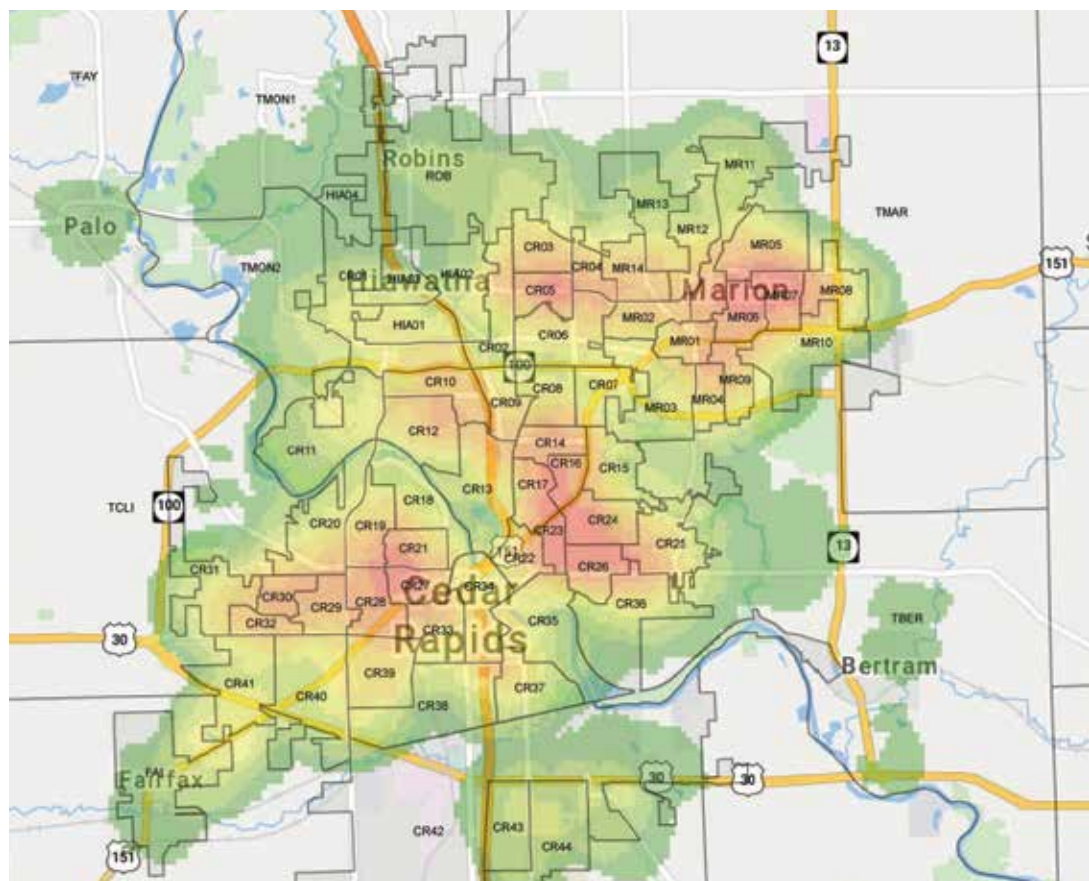
tions for past elections, but only for a few days at select colleges or grocery stores.

This year would be the first year the county establishes more permanent satellite polling locations that will be open for the full 29 days before the election, which by Iowa law is the earliest

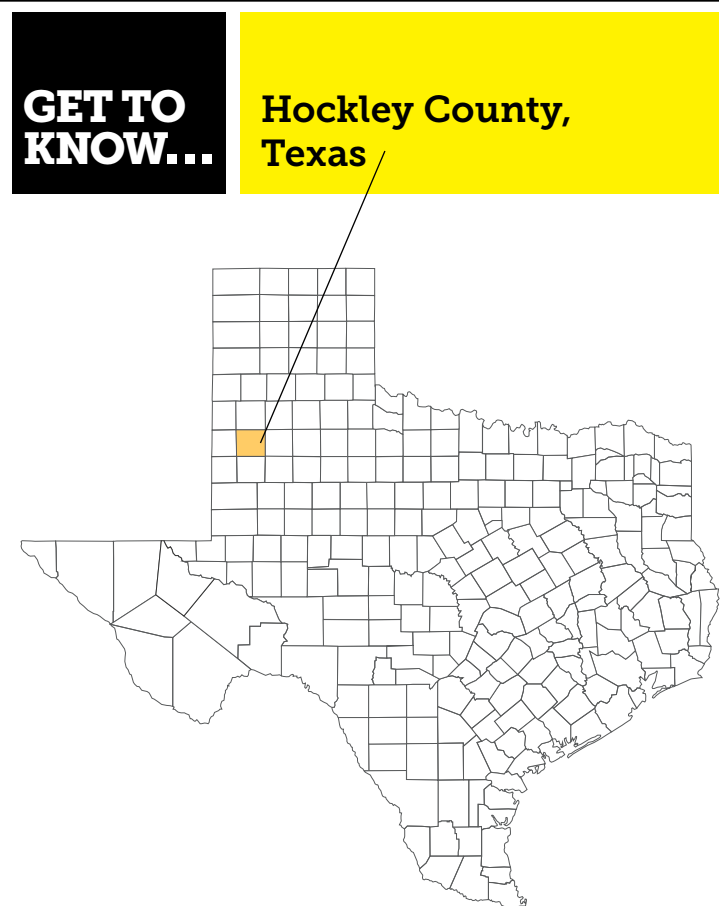
time absentee ballots are available.

“It would be nice to have a location where we could come back day after day and kind of have a presence there, so the word of mouth gets around,”

See MAPS page 16



The heat map shows areas where absentee voters participated in the 2016 and 2018 general elections in Linn County, Iowa. Photo courtesy of Linn County



Welcome, Hockley County, Texas

Hockley County is located in northwestern Texas below the panhandle, 30 miles west of Lubbock. The 908-square-mile county was named after George W. Hockley, chief of staff of the Texas Army during the Texas Revolution. Its county seat is Levelland, named after its flat terrain.

The county was formed in 1876 and was originally assigned to neighboring Lubbock County for administrative purposes because settlers were slow to move to the area. As of 1920, only 137 people lived in the county, but county residents wanted their own county government. This led to Hockley County’s official organization in 1921.

The county’s economy focuses on oil and gas production as well as agriculture. Other industries include petroleum processing, manufacturing of oilfield equipment, processing of vegetable oil and cattle feeding.

The Yellow House Canyon is located in the northern part of the county and is a significant landmark in the area.



NACo creates online forum for county technology

by Rita Reynolds

A little less than a year ago, NACo embarked on a journey to explore and develop a NACo technology blueprint. The journey started with the gathering of the NACo Board, county CIOs and IT directors and NACo staff in upper New York at Lake George and then a second focus group in Austin, Texas in October.

From those two sessions, NACo has been able to take the input and develop a new vision and mission for NACo technology:

MISSION: Promote access to secure, resilient and innovative county technologies through collaboration and cost-effective solutions.

VISION: Enable and align technology to strengthen America's counties.

To that end, the vision includes seven pillars:

- **NACo Membership Engagement:** Develop a strong and interactive communication platform for county IT leader-

ship and other county leaders to connect, share ideas and problem solve together with NACo and with their respective county leadership.

- **Public Private Partnership Engagement:** Cultivate public-private partnerships to help counties address tech needs.

- **Academia Engagement:** Identify and develop a process for academia involvement in providing technology education that supports county needs.

- **State Association Engagement:** Identify state associations that are strong in providing county technology programs and help grow those who are positioned or desire to provide technology services for counties within their state.

- **Thematic Engagement:** Identify already existing associations (i.e. IT, and other business domains) and partner with them in supporting county technology needs and initiatives.

- **National Government Engagement:** Engage with relevant national organizations that set national technology guidelines

NACo Tech Xchange is live,
at 313 members and growing.
It includes a robust discussion forum
for CIOs, IT directors and others.

and policy or provide county technology programs and services.

- **Legal Engagement:** Strengthen relationships with existing attorney firms and other county attorney resources that provide technology related services and expertise.

NACo is currently focused on the first pillar, Membership Engagement.

NACo is also pleased to announce that a new program called the NACo Tech Xchange is live, at 313 members and growing. It includes a robust discussion forum for CIOs and IT directors, as well as an online portal designed to connect county CIOs, IT directors, CISOs, and other IT leadership. The portal provides valuable

resources in a central location which counties can use to improve their overall technology infrastructure. One may ask, "What's in it for my county?" The new program includes:

- a rich community of interaction with other county IT professionals, including weekly updates from the NACo CTO, as well as daily communications among the members on critical technology topics
- an online library of technology policies, job descriptions, request for proposals, best practices as well as toolkits
- monthly IT newsletters
- technology webinars presented by speakers from the federal, state, local and corporate communities
- valuable external resources

that county IT staff can leverage to improve their county IT infrastructure

- and surveys garnering county feedback on technology opportunities such as technology software and services aggregate agreements.

As we move forward in 2020, we will be focusing the Tech Xchange efforts on four key priorities:

- further developing the online Tech Xchange Portal
- providing cyber security services and programs
- developing IT leadership talent acquisition and retention
- and providing data governance education and resources. **CN**

Rita Reynolds is CTO for NACo. You will hear more about other programs in future issues of County News, especially in the area of cyber security. For more information or access to the Tech Xchange, contact Reynolds at rreynolds@naco.org or Ashley Gallagher, Technology Programs specialist, at agallagher@naco.org.

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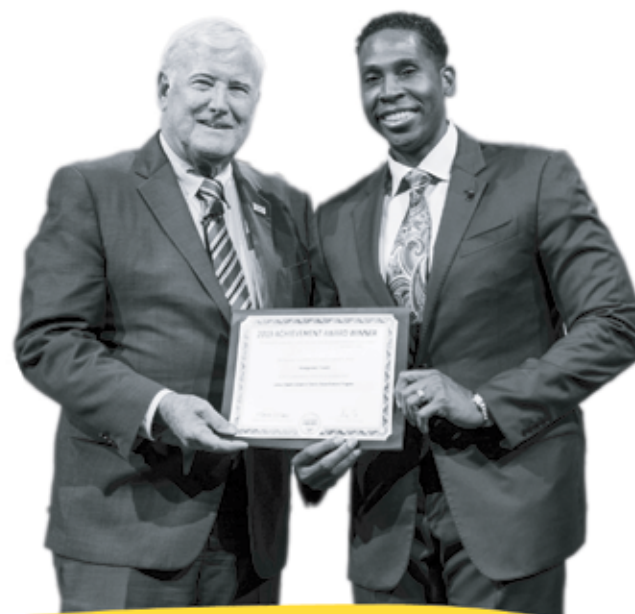
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**NACo ANNUAL CONFERENCE
AND EXPOSITION:**

July 17 – 20, 2020
Orange County/ Orlando, Florida

BRIGHT IDEAS | SONOMA COUNTY, Calif.

Framework Helps County's Resiliency Efforts

PROBLEM:

Sonoma County faces challenges recovering after destructive wildfires damaged lands, destroyed communities and took lives.

SOLUTION:

Establish the Recovery and Resiliency Framework to integrate recovery efforts countywide through the collaboration of community partners and county departments.

Fires, flooding and power shutoffs.

With a variety of natural disasters in the last few years impacting Sonoma County, Calif., county officials established a long-term vision for recovery and resiliency.

The 2017 Sonoma Complex Fires burned over 100,000 acres, destroyed 5,300 homes and killed 24 throughout the county. Following the fires, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors created the Office of Recovery and Resiliency. The office works with county department heads to coordinate recovery efforts.

Interim Deputy County Administrator Christel Querijero said the county modeled their office after similar offices in other counties. She said the office's initial goal was to establish a framework for recovery.

Supervisors approved the Recovery and Resiliency Framework to focus on planning and preparing before a disaster occurs. The framework is a foundation for integrating countywide recovery efforts and is a collaboration among residents, community partners, county departments, cities and other jurisdictions.

Prior to the 2017 fires, Querijero said there were no dedicated staff members to address collaborative efforts with partners to ensure the county recovered from disasters.

"The board was really supportive of having staff work on that [collaboration] specifically and making sure we were coor-



Permit Sonoma Director Tennis Wick, with the Permit and Resources Management Department, speaks with a resident during a community meeting for the Recovery and Resiliency Framework. Photo courtesy Sonoma County

dinating effectively," she said. "All of these departments do great work, but we're in our silos a bit and sometimes it takes a little extra energy to ensure the coordination is happening appropriately."

Supervisors redirected three positions within the county administrator's office toward the implementation of the framework to focus on strategic areas which include community preparedness and infrastructure, housing, economy, safety net services and natural resources.

Querijero, who managed the completion of the framework, said the Office of Recovery and Resiliency facilitated a community engagement process to receive input from the community for the framework. This included focus group sessions and large community meetings with partners, members of the community, small businesses and nonprofits.

"We just let people talk about what they wanted, what was important to them, what were their major concerns," she said, adding that most concerns fo-

cused on housing and mental health issues.

The framework includes eight principles: Social equity, pre-disaster recovery planning, leadership and local primacy, engaged partnerships, timeliness and flexibility, resilience and sustainability, unity of effort and psychological and emotional recovery. Aspects of the framework are also based on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Disaster Recovery Framework.

Since establishing the framework in 2018, the county began its implementation following additional natural disasters including the Kincaid Fire in October 2019, power shutoffs and two major floods, Querijero said.

County agencies have already installed cameras and plans to install an eight-camera network of high-definition cameras for an early fire detection system. Additionally, stream/rain gauges and rain-only gauges have been installed along streams near burn areas and are monitoring

dangers during rainstorms.

Querijero highlighted the SoCo alert system which the county has aggressively encouraged members of the public to sign up for at community events as part of the framework. The county has successfully increased the number of subscriptions by 100,000, she said.


The wildfires had a significant impact on the housing shortage in the county. To help establish a resilient housing market, the county opened a resiliency permit center to allow those who are rebuilding to quickly obtain permits. The Board of Supervisors also approved zoning code changes and established a new housing type for low and medium-density residential uses.

Querijero said the biggest differences since the framework has been implemented from the 2017 fires to the 2019 fires were the quality and diversity of communication and responsive messaging with alerts in Spanish, messages posted on social media and the use of the SoCo emergen-

cy website.

"With this focus, I think it has encouraged and created a culture of thinking about resiliency," she said.

The county is seeking reimbursement from FEMA for recovery costs and applied for hazard mitigation grant funds. Querijero estimated the county applied for \$38 million of hazard mitigation grant funds and is currently receiving close to \$10 million in awards.

"The framework implementation is going to still be watched very closely," Querijero said. "We're just going to keep pushing ahead with vegetation management, with advocating for infrastructure, advocating insurance regulations to support future survivors of disasters if they lose their home or their property is damaged." 

Sonoma County's Recovery and Resiliency Framework was named best in category for Risk and Emergency Management in the 2019 NACo Achievement Awards.



The Rocket's Red Glare— After a Brief Pause



The HR Doctor lives about an hour's drive from Cape Canaveral, Fla. From the front deck of our house, we get a view of many of the rocket launches from the Cape, including the Space X Falcon 9s and the Atlas-Centaur rockets. And so it was that we watched the late-night launch recently of the Solar Orbiter satellite. Space launches are always majestic and inspirational, especially when astronomy is your principle hobby. You get to see the fire-breathing dragon emerge above the horizon, drive its way above the trees, and then disappear — all right from your own yard.

Just to make sure we don't miss these flights we often record or watch the NASA Channel's live coverage. In the pre-launch phases of these missions, the countdown becomes increasingly exciting as it gets closer to "T-0 and lift off." But at about three minutes before the moment of truth, even as everything is proceeding smoothly and properly and the launch is imminent, NASA stops everything and puts a 15-minute hold on the whole process.

There is an important reason for stopping everything, taking a deep breath and pausing for one more series of checks by staff. That purpose is to temper enthusiasm and excitement with the need for extra caution

and yet another moment to raise any concerns about anomalies. This checking helps to make sure that all these very smart people scan one more time to identify any liabilities not previously noticed, bring them out in the open, to be eliminated or at least controlled.

The pause is also a time for checking in with all of the various scientists and managers whose individual roles may be relatively minor in the overall program, but whose roles collectively make or break the success of the mission. Finally, it is a time to have a sip of coffee, have a very brief chat with the person at the next workstation over, and enjoy a calming thought or two.

As was the case with Solar Or-

biter, every system was a "Go" all the way down to the three-minute mark as well as throughout the 15-minute launch hold. Everything during the hold period checked out perfectly and I got to see a successful launch.

What great lessons this process holds for public administrators or indeed anyone else as we maneuver through large-impact decisions in our work lives and in our "real" lives. A major lesson focuses on the value of stopping, taking time to double check assumptions and to "... be on the lookout..." (BOLO), as my law enforcement friends would say, for risks before they turn into catastrophes.

The opposite idea is also true. Taking a brief pause lets you savor a moment ahead in which

your work of the past days, perhaps years, is about to reach fruition. Once a new project launches, into space or within your community and family, things may change in your work in complicating and stressful ways.

During the hold, you may find that in all your work, you may have forgotten to coordinate with a key partner, such as the Purchasing Department, HR or Budget because you made some faulty assumption that some other person was responsible for doing that. The time to take all this into consideration is before the project launch rather than to scramble, perhaps make lower quality decisions and endanger success.

In an increasingly compli-

cated environment, where government agencies rely on finely balanced mixtures of complex technology and the need for experienced, skilled and thoughtful employees, the NASA concept of a brief hold before launch reveals itself to be essential to project success. Not only work projects but life events may also be moved much closer to success by stopping for some deep breaths, taking the dog for a walk or not pushing the enter button on that Internet purchase without just a little bit more thought.

How ironic it is that the best way to take decisive action may be to hold your breath for a little while before things go far down the road, perhaps in the wrong direction. **CN**



Missaukee County is located in northern Michigan. The county seal includes four images that represent the county.

If you would like your county's seal featured in "Behind the Seal," contact Rachel Looker at rlooker@naco.org.

In the upper right corner of the seal, a farm symbolizes dairy farming's large presence in the county. The county ranks fifth in the state for dairy milk production.

The trees in the lower left corner of the seal represent the large number of Christmas trees that are produced in the county. Missaukee County ranks first in Christmas tree production in the state, according to the most recent agriculture census, from 2017.

The American flag in the left corner of the seal represents Lake City's "Greatest 4th in the North" Independence Day celebration held on the Fourth of July to celebrate the country's freedoms.

A boat on the county seal symbolizes the 33 total freshwater lakes located within the 574-square mile county that offer county residents and visitors opportunities for boating, swimming, fishing and other water sports. The county's biggest lake is Lake Missaukee, centrally located in the county seat of Lake City.



Public comment period open for NEPA updates

by Jessica Jennings


The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) is accepting public comments until March 10 regarding proposed changes to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

CEQ's proposed changes would alter the decades-old regulation to expedite the delivery of infrastructure projects. These projects grow more expensive while waiting out delays due to difficulties coordinating across different federal agencies.

As co-regulators and inter-governmental partners with federal agencies, but also shouldering significant environmental protection responsibilities, counties have a direct interest in any proposed changes to the NEPA process.

With an annual infrastructure maintenance and public works investment budget totaling more than \$134 billion, counties support revising NEPA implementing regulations to require federal agencies to

regularly provide meaningful opportunities for states and counties to be involved in the review process for planning and in projects that may affect the economy, environment and culture of constituents. NACo encourages increased opportunities for involvement of the public during the legally mandated public comment process, including opportunities for verbal input during town halls, hearings and listening sessions within or in close proximity to the impacted communities and, when possible, increased time to provide written input and testimony.

NACo has created a letter template that can be used by county officials to submit individual comments. 

Read NACo's letter to CEQ <http://bit.ly/3a9Y4xh>

Access NACo's template for counties providing comment <http://bit.ly/2TonPmX>

Jennings serves as associate legislative director for transportation and infrastructure.

PROFILES IN SERVICE

MARYELLEN ODELL

Board Member
County Executive
Putnam County, N.Y.

Number of years involved in NACo: Five

Years in public service: 15

Occupation: County executive

Education: High school, some college

The hardest thing I've ever done is: Watch someone I love die.

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: My great-grandmother Julia O'Brien, my father and Hon. James F. Reitz.

A dream I have is to: Write a novel.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done was: Run for county executive.

My favorite way to relax is to: Read by a pool or beach.

I'm most proud of: My two children.

Every morning I read: Flip-board app.

My favorite meal is: Lasagna

My pet peeve is: The word "no."

My motto is: "Head on a swivel."

The last book I read was: *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens



ODELL

My favorite movie is: *The Family Stone*

My favorite music is: Bob Seger, Eagles, Carly Simon

My favorite U.S. president: Harry Truman

My county is a NACo member because: My county needs to understand where we fit in as New Yorkers and as Americans and NACo provides us the opportunity.



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NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION



ALABAMA

Officials in **BALDWIN COUNTY** are applying for a grant from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management to establish a **local recycling center** to sort and package materials. The program would be a joint effort by the county and local municipalities. Currently, recyclables are sent to a utility authority in Florida, GulfCoastNewsToday.com reported. Establishing the facility in the county would provide county residents with a place to take recyclables, giving local officials more control over operations and saving money.

CALIFORNIA

The **LOS ANGELES COUNTY** Board of Supervisors voted to **eliminate all criminal administrative fees** imposed by the county. The county will no longer collect fees for probation supervision, pre-sentence reports, alcohol testing and legal counsel fees, *CalMatters* reported. Los Angeles County is the fourth in the state to eliminate the fees.

COLORADO

A new bill approved in the Colorado House allows elected officials of small counties to **accept lower salaries**. The bill allows officials from rural counties to divert taxpayer money from their salaries for other purposes, *The Daily Sentinel* reported. Currently, state law sets salaries for elected county officials that increase automatically for inflation every two

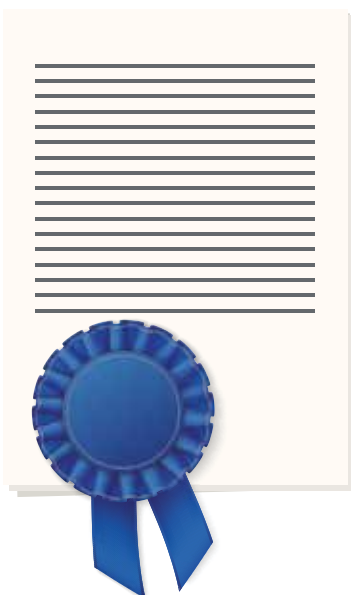
years after an appointment of a new official or an election or re-election of an official to office. The bill applies to 45 counties with the smallest populations in Colorado.

FLORIDA

County libraries in **VOLUSIA COUNTY** recently experienced a **cyberattack** that took down public-access computers. The attack involved the same ransomware that has hit other governments and large businesses across the country, according to *The Daytona Beach News-Journal*. Twenty servers and 600 computers were impacted. County officials referred the attack to law enforcement.

GEORGIA

DEKALB COUNTY is extending a temporary **ban on new dollar stores**. County officials extended a moratorium on small box discount stores for an additional 180 days after residents expressed concerns that dollar stores “drag down” neighborhoods and add to food insecurity issues in areas where there may be limited access to grocery stores, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported. The county previously passed a 45-day moratorium on dollar stores in unincorporated DeKalb last December.



INDIANA

The Association of Indiana Counties held an essay contest ahead of **National County Government Month**. The contest was for fourth-grade students in Indiana and focused on the theme, “How Does Your County Provide Cybersecurity?” The contest encouraged students to interview county commissioners, IT directors and other county officials to find out what counties are doing to prevent cyberattacks. A winner will be announced from each region of Indiana and receive \$100.

MICHIGAN

• The county clerk in **MACOMB COUNTY** took on another job responsibility on Valentine’s Day by **officiating several wedding ceremonies**. Macomb County Clerk and Register of Deeds Fred Miller performed 12 wedding ceremonies for couples in the county. Prospective couples who filed their marriage applications within a two-week period of Valentine’s Day were offered the service. Miller pro-

vided the services without any officiant fees and provided each couple with a certified copy of their marriage license. County clerks in Michigan are one of several elected officials who are able to perform marriage ceremonies.

• **OAKLAND COUNTY** is **expanding health care and support services** for 227,000 residents who are uninsured or underinsured. County Executive David Coulter announced Oakland Health 360, a partnership of Oakland County Health Division, Honor Community Health and Oakland Livingston Human Services Agency. Oakland Health 360 will enhance access to primary care, mental and behavioral health, family planning and dental services. These services will be expanded and integrated under one roof at the Oakland County Health Division offices.

MINNESOTA

RAMSEY COUNTY officials are considering a policy to **no longer name facilities** after people. Under the new policy, the county manager would review and approve proposals for new names for buildings, parks, libraries and other amenities. The policy aims to avoid controversies from naming a facility after a person who may face future backlash or be deemed racist or anti-Semitic, the *Star Tribune* reported. The county does not plan on changing any current names or removing names from existing facilities. The proposed policy comes after other names of venues throughout



MONTANA

County officials in **GALLATIN COUNTY** approved six weeks of **paid parental leave** for county employees. Commissioners hope to help retention rates and keep employees coming back to work after having a child, the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle* reported. Before, employees were using all of their sick time or vacation time after the birth of a child. The paid leave can be taken all at once or over a six-month period.

the state have faced criticism.

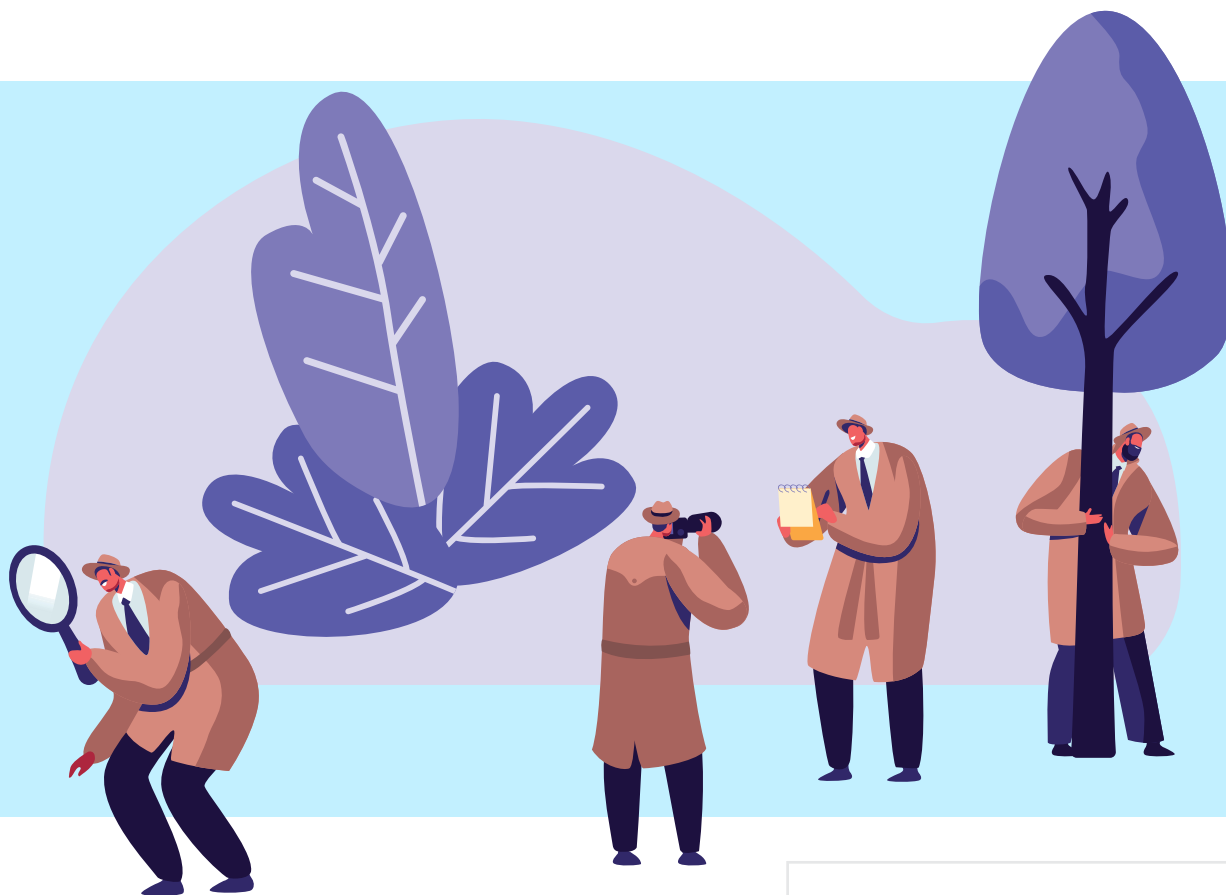
NEW YORK

There are no **smoke-free laws** for **SUFFOLK COUNTY** apartment buildings, condos, and two-family homes, but new legislation aims to change that. Offenders could be fined up to \$1,000 or even arrested when complaints are filed. Legislator Sam Gonzalez, who proposed a bill banning smoking in those different types of



MICHIGAN

• The **OTTAWA COUNTY** Department of Public Health celebrated “Give Kids a Smile Day” with a Miles of Smiles **mobile dental unit**. In the unit, Medicaid-insured and financially qualifying uninsured children can see a dentist, receive comprehensive dental care and learn about oral health. Every child received a toothbrush, toothpaste and a prize. The Miles of Smiles Program is in its 25th year.



NEW MEXICO

SANDOVAL COUNTY will hire an **in-house investigator** for internal investigations. The county Commission created the position under the Sandoval County Attorney's Office after spending about \$50,000 in time, resources and contract private investigators during the 2018-19 fiscal year. Commissioners hope having their own investigator will save time that had been spent briefing contractors on how the county worked, and the investigator could also provide security. The sheriff's office had previously conducted internal investigations for the county, the *Rio Rancho Observer* reported.

housing, said the groundwork is already there.

"It's not going too far. We're heading in that direction anyway. We can't smoke in restaurants. We can't smoke in buildings. We can't smoke inside the theaters. There are parks, there are beaches that you can't smoke in. We are headed there."

OREGON

LANE COUNTY is trying to **reduce landfill food waste** with a new public awareness campaign. "Eat Smart Waste Less" challenges residents to make "small changes in the way I shop for, store and prepare the food my family enjoys. My actions will help save the time, money and love that go into bringing fresh, healthy food to my family's table."

The county is emphasizing the money, energy and water savings that come with reducing food waste, and the cumulative effect those savings have on climate change. Food waste accounts for 30 percent of the county's landfill, KVAL News reported.

PENNSYLVANIA

The **ALLEGHENY COUNTY** Council voted to **ban conversion therapy** for LGBTQ youth, the *Pittsburgh City Paper* reported. The practice attempts to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, often causing lasting psychological damage

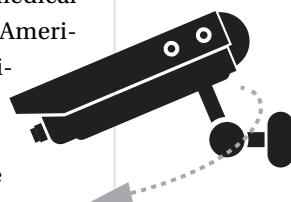
on its subjects and has been opposed by major medical groups including the American Psychiatric Association, the American Medical Association, the American College of Physicians, and the National Association of Social Workers.

TENNESSEE

With court-ordered property cleanup costs mounting, the **WASHINGTON COUNTY** Commission is considering attaching a **lien for cleanup work** to the property owner's annual tax bill. The county does place a lien against the property to recover cleanup costs, but the reimbursement doesn't come to the county until the property is sold, which could be decades down the road, the *Johnson City Press* reported.

UTAH

The **SALT LAKE COUNTY** Health Department STD clinic has a new option to help prevent against the transmission of HIV, now that the clinic's physicians can prescribe **pre-exposure prophylaxis** (PrEP) to patients, KUTV News reported. The medicine is considered to reduce the risk of getting HIV from sex by 99 percent, preventing the virus from permanently infecting an exposed patient. The medicine also benefits intravenous drug users.



VIRGINIA

• Although **traffic cameras** are plentiful around **ARLINGTON COUNTY**, they won't be showing footage following crashes. If any of the 150 cameras that feed to the county's website broadcast a crash, they will be turned off or pointed away, ArlingtonNOW reported. The change in policy is in the interest of privacy, according to county officials.

VIRGINIA

• **Outdoor lights** got new rules in **FAIRFAX COUNTY** under regulations passed by the Board of Supervisors, with an eye to reducing light pollution and glare. They lower the permissible intensity and color temperature of some lights and supported further efforts to shield local astronomical sites from light spillover.

The updated ordinance also scales back hours

of operation for outdoor lighting on athletic fields or courts that are located in single-family residential areas, the *Fairfax County Citizen* reported.

WEST VIRGINIA

Stargazers will find more amenities at **CALHOUN COUNTY** Park. The last 10 years have seen the park become a hotbed for viewing the night sky, with people coming from all over the country.

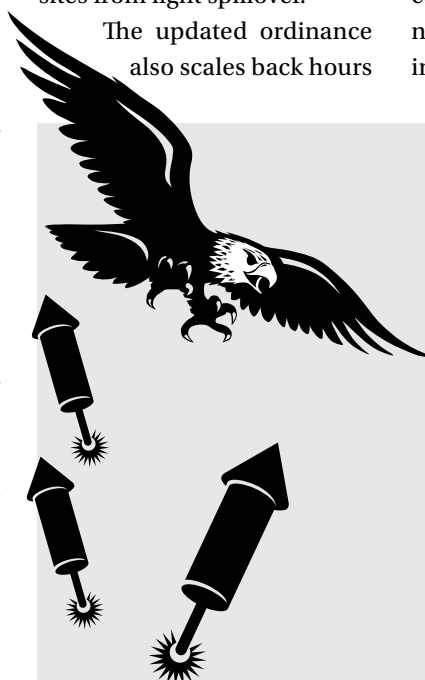
Soon, they will have cabins to stay in during their visits: Carpentry students from the Calhoun-Gilmer Career Center are building them, the *Parkersburg News and Sentinel* reported.

News from Across the Nation is compiled by Charlie Ban and Rachel Looker. If your county has an item we should consider, please contact cban@naco.org or rlooker@naco.org.

WASHINGTON

Two American icons could be heading toward a conflict in a Seattle suburb. With **bald eagles dropping trash** from the Cedar Hills landfill into people's yards, **KING COUNTY**'s solid waste department is trying a variety of methods to discourage them, including fireworks.

A few hundred eagles make their home around the landfill, along with numerous starlings, roosting seagulls and ravens. Though the county uses noise cannons to scare most birds off, eagles' protected status is a problem. The county has applied for a special permit, which would allow them to use the noisemakers they already have and use other measures — like fireworks, according to the *Seattle Times*.



WORD SEARCH

SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS

Created by: Mary Ann Barton

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

Due to an editing error, the word “population” was inadvertently left out of the Feb. 3 Word Search. We apologize for the error!

- AIRCRAFT:** The county is home to aircraft manufacturers including Learjet and Airbus.
- BROADCAST:** The state’s first TV station, KTHV, began broadcasting from the county in 1953. It continues today, as KWCH.
- BURGERS:** The White Castle burger chain got its start in the county, in 1921. The restaurant was the first to serve a “slider.”
- COURTHOUSE:** The county courthouse sits across the street from the original courthouse, built in 1888 in Victorian Renaissance style. The “new” one was built in 1959.
- COWTOWN:** The Old Cowtown Museum was established in 1952 and is situated on 23 acres.
- DINER:** If you’re in town, be sure to stop by Livingston’s Diner, a tradition in the county since 1910. If it’s Wednesday, you’ll get free pie with your meal.
- EAGLE:** Local newspaper *The Wichita Eagle* was founded in 1872.
- KIRSTIE:** Emmy Award-winning actress Kirstie Alley is a native of the county and often returns to visit.
- LINEMAN:** “I am a lineman for the county” is the opening line to “Wichita Lineman,” made famous by singer Glen Campbell.
- MENTHOLATUM:** Albert Alexander Hyde founded The Mentholum Company in the county after introducing Mentholum Ointment to the market in 1894.
- MILITARY:** The county is home to McConnell Air Force Base. The base is named for Wichita brothers who were Air Force pilots serving in World War II.
- SEDGWICK:** Founded in 1867, the county gets its name from Union Army Gen. John Sedgwick, the highest-ranking Union officer to die on the battlefield.
- WICHITA:** The county seat of Sedgwick County is named for the Wichita Indians.
- WRIGHT:** A Prairie Style house designed by architect Frank Lloyd Wright for former Gov. Henry Justin Allen is open for tours in the county.
- ZOO:** The county provides partial funding and employees for the Sedgwick County Zoo.

Heat maps help visualize data

From MAPS page 9

Loecher said.

Potential in-person absentee voting locations include libraries and a mall. The locations will be open from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. to try to catch voters after work, Miller said. He added that the Auditor’s Office is also open for in-person absentee voting and is extending its hours during the week.

Miller’s goal is to see at least 100 people vote over the six-hour period when the locations are open.

“We want to go where the people are. It’s kind of like colleges build sidewalks where the kids walk and that’s kind of our theory, too,” he said. “Don’t try to change habits. Try to take advantage of their habits.”

Miller said they are expecting a high turnout for the November election and will start preparing to open the satellite polling locations for in-person absentee voting in the beginning of October. **CN**

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