

# NACo unveils new report on how counties are investing ARPA dollars

by **Stacy Nakintu**

On the second anniversary of the signing of the American Rescue Plan Act on March 11, NACo published a new report on how counties are investing ARPA dollars in their communities.

In the initial months of the pandemic, counties faced a growing crisis when the demand for services increased rapidly as county revenue streams were strained.

In mid-2020, over 70 percent of counties were estimated to have cut or delayed capital investments, and over two-thirds of counties cut or delayed various services.

Faced with these profound challenges, county leaders acted swiftly to provide front-line workers with hazard pay and to support businesses' recovery through investments, including providing personal protective equipment (PPE), offering direct assistance to small businesses and supporting pandemic-impacted workers.

Counties stood up novel testing and tracing programs at a larger scale than ever, and when the vaccine was

approved for public use, we played an instrumental role in the effort to mass vaccinate Americans

The State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (Recovery Fund), established through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), provided \$65.1 billion in direct relief to counties so that they could continue to meet the increased demand from residents and weather the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the two years since the historic passage of ARPA, counties continue to make transformational investments, spur recovery efforts and bolster the economy through our Recovery Fund allocations.

## Counties are allocating SLFRF funds to fund crucial local services

As counties transition from investing in short-term pandemic response to long-term investments, local leaders are making strategic investments to strengthen America's workforce, improve housing conditions, support local businesses and foster strong and

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Recent storms have significantly increased reservoir levels well into the flood control pool at Lake Sonoma in Sonoma County, Calif., for the first time since 2019. Read about how atmospheric rivers impact reservoirs, on page 4.

# Working for the county pays off for Colorado retirees

by **Charlie Ban**  
senior writer

Telluride's growth as a ski and resort town has been a wild ride, but it can leave some older residents a little queasy. As San Miguel County, Colo.'s property assessments increased, so did

property taxes, and homes that seemed sensible earlier in life can become a financial albatross in retirement.

For most of the last six years, residents over 60 or with disabilities have been eligible to work for the county in exchange for property tax forgiveness.

At the same time, the program helps the county fill staffing holes that are challenging because of the area's high cost of living.

"It's really a win-win," said Carmen Warfield, chief deputy

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# Get ready to 'RISE!' During National County Government

by **Mary Ann Barton**  
editor

For more than 30 years each April, NACo has helped counties get the word out about the diverse role they play in communities across the country during National County Government Month.

NACo encourages counties

to spend time in April participating in community outreach, planning events, raising awareness and promoting the programs and services counties provide.

This year's theme is "Counties RISE!" echoing the message unveiled last year by NACo President Denise Winfrey of Will County, Ill.



RISE! stands for Resiliency, Inclusion, Solvency and Empowerment and the exclamation point speaks to the enthusiasm and passion with which county officials tell those stories.

County officials are encour-

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# Counties mark second anniversary of progress since ARPA passed

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equitable economic recovery.

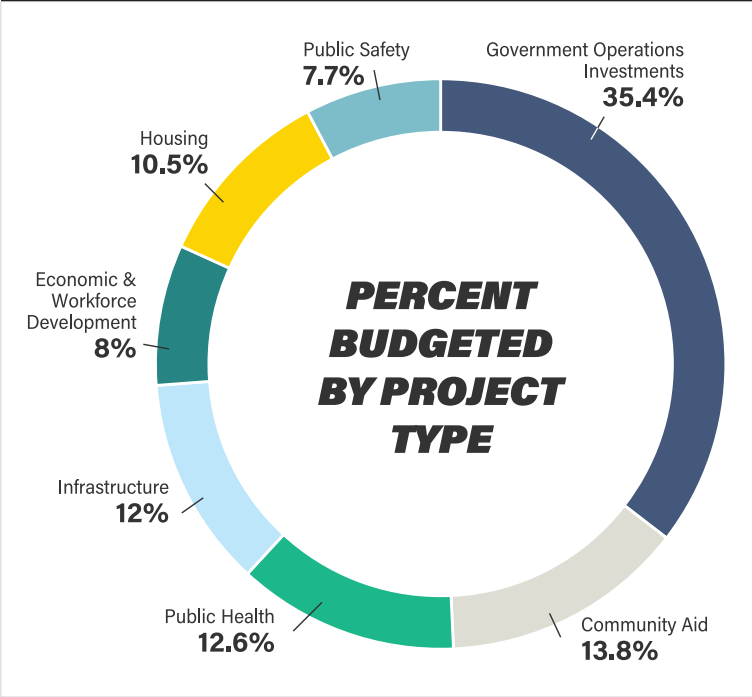
Howard County, Md., is offering support services to entrepreneurs and small businesses in the county.

Benton County, Ark., is helping lower-income wage earners move to higher-wage, high-demand jobs, specifically in the healthcare industry, through additional education and certification.

The Recovery Fund helped counties to stabilize budgets and restore public-sector capacity, but the county workforce continues to struggle to recover from pandemic-related job losses amid growing demand and need for local government services.

One month after peak unemployment, local gov-

## CORONAVIRUS STATE AND LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY ALLOCATED DOLLARS, COUNTIES WITH POPULATIONS OVER 250,000



ernment jobs decreased by more than 1.2 million.

To this day, full recovery

within local government jobs continues to lag. Despite a

slower recovery in the coun-

ty workforce and increased demand for service delivery, counties continue to invest recovery funds rapidly, working to foster equitable economic recovery.

Check out NACo's new resource examining how counties are leveraging American Rescue Plan resources to support communities and rebuild the economy, even as the pandemic continues to affect jobs, public health, housing and more.

Please visit <https://www.naco.org/resources/strengthening-local-economies-through-recovery-fund-executive-summary> for more information.

Stacy Nakintu is senior analyst, Research and Data Analytics, in the NACo Counties Futures Lab.

# 'Will work for property tax'

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clerk to the Board. "People look at their tax bills, wonder how they'll pay them, but they know there's a way to do that and give back to the community."

Warfield canvases the county's departments to assess their needs, and matches them with volunteers based on their interests. Their "wages" are paid directly to the county treasury.

"We've noticed a few advantages compared to hiring temps," she said. "One gentleman did some document scanning a few years ago and he put a lot more care and attention into it than we expected. He wasn't rushing through it."

The program also benefits from volunteers' professional skills. An attorney was able to pare down legal records by sorting out duplicates, and Art Goodtimes, a former commissioner who championed the program while in office, has worked in the county's pollinator garden.

"I strongly feel that if you give this opportunity to people you can actually get people involved in government who are really talented," he said. The garden, for instance, "provides a very simple kind of operation for people to go weed or do simple things that older people can do, and you don't have to watch them so carefully."

Goodtimes has not worked much lately, due in large part to Colorado's long winters making it hard to garden during the tax period. Residents receive their property tax bills in December and payments are due in April, limiting the work-off period. The limited opportunities for outdoor work put the program into hibernation for a few years, because the COVID pandemic

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## SNAP/STATS



### States with Highest Fertility Rates

STATES	PERCENTAGE
#1 North Dakota .....	67.4
#2 South Dakota.....	66.7
#3 Alaska .....	65.7
#4 Nebraska .....	64.7
#5 Utah .....	64.1

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, 2020

## PHOTO CORRECTION



### Oops!

We misidentified Barbara Rush (left) in a caption in the March 13 issue of *County News*. Rush is chief of staff for Travis County, Texas Commissioner Brigid Shea; Rush is pictured here with Travis County Commissioner Ann Howard.





**Soleil Gaylord and Art Goodtimes work in San Miguel County, Colo.'s pollinator garden at Down Valley Park.** Photo courtesy of San Miguel County Parks and Open Space

#### From RETIREES page 2

prompted the county to limit volunteers to outdoor roles to limit the spread of the virus.

That has depressed the program's participation lately, but Warfield said the county will keep it going for however many residents are interested.

"If we're able to help out just a few every year and make life a little easier for them, it's worth it," she said. "It's nice to have people around the office like that. You get to know them and you talk to them and you ask about their family, and so you truly get a connection like you would with another coworker,

depending on how long they're with you."

The property tax work-off program, and others like it in the state, including in Arapahoe and Pueblo counties, applies to a taxpayer's primary residence.

Dorchester County, S.C. has also maintained a property tax work-off program, and after suspending it for a few years because of COVID-19, the 2023 program has returned to pre-pandemic levels. This year, 50 Dorchester County residents are participating.

Dorchester County, however, is home to more than 163,000 residents, compared to San Miguel County's 8,000. **CN**

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Send an email with your name, title, county and address to:  
[cnews@naco.org](mailto:cnews@naco.org).



## What does your county have planned for NCGM?



**NACo President Denise Winfrey addresses members in Adams County, Colo.** Photo by Denny Henry

#### From NCGM page 1

aged to reflect on this theme as they choose how to celebrate NCGM. NACo encourages all counties to adopt a proclamation declaring the month of April to be National County Government Month.

To celebrate NCGM, counties have participated in a multitude of events like opening their doors to the public, conducting educational tours to raise awareness about what counties

do and how important they are to the daily lives of their residents. Because of the pandemic, more residents have interacted with county government than ever before and NCGM is a fantastic time to capitalize on that interest and awareness.

One of the ways counties can raise awareness is by distributing county fact sheets to local media outlets, schools and through social media.

Take the opportunity to share with the community all the county does for their aging

residents, veterans and first responders. Show what the county offers for supporting children and families and what they have done to support employment and local business.

In previous years, counties have taken to social media to share short stories of community excellence.

Every county is unique and has a different story to tell. For more information, a sample resolution, examples of social media posts and more, visit <http://www.naco.org/NCGM>. **CN**

Dear Fellow County Leader,

National County Government Month (NCGM) is an opportunity - a moment to elevate our work and educate citizens on the importance of county government. Residents deserve to know about the many ways our work touches their lives, and the broader framework of intergovernmental partnership wherein we county leaders deploy local, state and federal programs on the ground.

Our role is broad and deep, and there is much to say - when considering your approach to NCGM, think of how our counties RISE!:

Resiliency refers to our focus on the future and our determination to serve our communities even as they grow and change

Inclusion focuses on programming that ensures no one is left behind, especially those who have historically been underserved

Solvency means fostering economic mobility opportunities that help residents and communities prosper

Empowerment is a commitment to sharing resources, educating and informing one another

My presidential theme ends with an exclamation point because we must tell these stories with the passion and energy that convey the commitment of county governments to the communities we serve.

This NCGM, we will tell stories that celebrate our work and inform our residents. Spotlight your county's role in making life better for every single resident, and in contributing to the intergovernmental partnership that makes effective governing possible.

As you celebrate your finest programs, I also encourage you to nominate them for a NACo Achievement Award now through April 7, 2023.

In the spirit of NCGM, we celebrate you and thank you for your service and your commitment to helping Counties RISE!

*Denise Winfrey*  
The Hon. Denise Winfrey  
NACo President  
Board Member, Will County, Ill.



# Atmospheric rivers offer Sonoma County reservoirs opportunity



The Russian River, pictured here north of Bodega Bay, is a southward-flowing river of Sonoma and Mendocino counties in Northern California.

by **Charlie Ban**  
senior writer

Even though the floods, atmospheric rivers can't rain on James Gore's parade.

The meteorological phenomenon is having a moment in 2023, with 12 recorded in California through mid-March, well ahead of the typical six to 10 for an entire year. Sonoma County is seizing the opportunity to use new hydrological research into atmospheric rivers to gain more flexibility in managing its reservoirs, getting leeway from federal regulations set during the Eisenhower administration.

"We're holding more water in our reservoirs than ever before and we are finally moving away from the post-World War II infrastructure system of risk management," said Gore, a Sonoma County supervisor and NACo second vice president. "We effectively have built the new system to allow more

water to be there, the water to be managed effectively, but in these boom-and-bust cycles."

Primarily responsible for preventing catastrophic flooding, the Army Corps of Engineers must release significant amounts of water from reservoirs at a certain level. That requirement, set in the 1950s for Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma in Sonoma County, has no regard for whether rain is forecast.

In 2012, it wasn't, and the county spent years waiting for replenishment after it was forced to release 25,000 acre-feet of water in anticipation. One acre foot equals about 326,000 gallons or enough water to cover an acre of land, about the size of a football field, one foot deep.

Normal rain showers are rarely enough to change a reservoir's water level.

"We had curtailments of water rights," Gore said, a result of persistent lower water levels.

"The irony is that water rates do not go down even though people are using less water.

"Another big impact on this is total lack of public trust, because the Army Corps was being held hostage by the regulations that it has to live by."

Research by the Scripps Institution of Oceanography over the last decade is helping meteorologists forecast atmospheric rivers up to seven days in advance. With that information synthesized in Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations — FIRO — it's giving the Sonoma Water agency and the corps enough notice to release water and prepare to receive more from the Russian River watershed, which feeds into the reservoirs.

How much more? In January 2023, a single atmospheric river filled Lake Mendocino to nearly 100,000 acre-feet of water, up from less than 40,000 acre-feet in December 2022.

Thanks to FIRO, the Sonoma

County's reservoirs can hold 20 percent more water.

## Rivers of dreams

Atmospheric rivers are streams of moist air pulled from the tropics that travel to higher latitudes, typically running into the mountains in California and pouring rain for about a day or so.

"Systems of thunderstorms in the Great Plains, those are really hard to get down more than a day or two ahead," said meteorologist Marty Ralph. "We rarely have [an atmospheric river] that we didn't see three or five days at least. Even seven days, though we might not know which watershed it will hit, yet."

Ralph's track record gives him more credibility than any TV weatherman. As director of Scripps' Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes, he's the foremost expert on atmospheric rivers, which are far more predictable than

storms elsewhere in the country. While they can be destructive, atmospheric rivers are the mechanism for filling reservoirs quickly on the West Coast.

"The more skillful we are at predicting atmospheric rivers on the West Coast, the more flexibility a reservoir like Lake Mendocino or Lake Sonoma may have in the future," Ralph said.

The Sonoma County coast is home to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Bodega Bay Atmospheric River Observatory, which takes hourly observations of winds and moisture. It's one of four such observatories in California, all of which Ralph, and NOAA feed into the FIRO decision-making strategy for Sonoma Water and the corps.

Shortly after the ill-fated 2012 water release from Lake Mendocino, Sonoma County

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# NACo's Live Healthy program delivered \$13 million in prescription savings to county residents in 2022

by John Losh

Since 2004, NACo's Live Healthy Prescription, Health and Dental Savings Program has provided member counties with an opportunity to lower health costs for underinsured and uninsured residents at no cost to the county.

The Live Healthy program is exclusively available to NACo members and has saved residents over \$740 million on over 51 million prescriptions since its inception.

In 2022 alone, 1,300 member counties participated in the program, saving their residents an average of 41 percent on more than 210,000 prescriptions. In real dollars, residents using the program saved an average of \$61.65 on their prescriptions for a total of \$13 million saved using the program.

- **Dental Discounts:** Residents can join the program for \$5.95 monthly or \$59 yearly to save 15-75 percent on routine check-ups, cleanings, braces, x-rays and more.
- **MinuteClinic Discounts:** Residents can save 15 percent at the medical walk-in clinic located at select CVS Pharmacies or Targets using their prescription discount card.

### How do counties join the program?


NACo members can visit [naco.org/health](https://naco.org/health) to learn more about the program, find participating pharmacies in your county and enroll. No contracts or fees are required to deliver these substantial savings opportunities to residents.

### Do residents really save money?

provide a how-to marketing guide to help you promote Live Healthy savings to our residents. While the amount of time a county chooses to spend promoting the program varies, once the marketing materials are ordered and distributed, the program manager simply needs to

manage the distribution and supply of materials throughout the year.

Enroll your county and provide these savings to residents today at [naco.org/health](https://naco.org/health). Email [LiveHealthy@naco.org](mailto:LiveHealthy@naco.org) with any questions about the program or your county's participation.

*\*The Live Healthy program is not insurance. Savings figures are based on 2022 program participation. Savings may vary by location. Visit [naco.org/health](https://naco.org/health) for more information about the program.* 

John Losh is associate membership director at NACo.



### How does Live Healthy help residents save on their health costs?

While Live Healthy is not insurance, it can help your residents save through:

- **Prescription discounts:** Residents simply take their Live Healthy discount card to a participating pharmacy and save up to 80 percent on generic and up to 40 percent on name-brand prescriptions.
- **Health Discounts:** Residents can join the program for \$5.95 monthly or \$59 yearly to access a 24/7 telemedicine service and save 15-75 percent on vision screenings, diabetic supplies, lab services, hearing aids and more.

Yes! In 2022, Pike County, Pa. residents using the program saved more than \$1.2 million on more than 4,000 prescriptions.

### How do counties market the program to residents?

At no cost to the county, NACo provides print and digital marketing materials through an easy-to-use online ordering portal. Once enrolled in the program, counties can visit [naco.org/health](https://naco.org/health) to appoint staff and elected officials to receive access.

### Not an expert in marketing?

NACo has you covered. We

PROFILES IN SERVICE

KATHRYN ELIZABETH STARKEY

NACo Board Member  
County Commissioner  
Pasco County, Fla.



STARKEY

Number of years active in NACo: Eight years

Years in public service: Six years

Occupation: County commissioner

Education: Florida State University

The hardest thing I've ever done: Rescued myself on a double-black, out of bounds, diamond ski run.

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: George Washington, my mom and George W. Bush.

A dream I have is to: Spend at least six months in another country.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Love adventure travel.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: Hiked Preikestolen in Norway.

My favorite way to relax is: Crafting or bike riding.

I'm most proud of: My family.

My favorite meal is: Barbecue

My pet peeve is: People gossiping.

My motto is: Look forward, not backwards.

The last book I read was: "The Accidental Superpower: The Next Generation of American Preeminence and the Coming Global Disorder."

My favorite movie is: "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy

My favorite music is: U2

My favorite U.S. president is: George Washington

My county is a NACo member because: You learn an incredible amount of information that is relevant to your constituents. Also, the ability to enact change while interacting with the highest levels of government.





Counties **RISE!**

Join us in celebrating

# National County Government Month

Scan the QR code  
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 #NCGM



# Federal grant funds rural health program to prevent teen pregnancies, infections

by Meredith Moran  
staff writer

Six rural counties in Maryland are combating disproportionately high rates of sexually transmitted infections and teen pregnancies by increasing comprehensive sexual health education and bringing youth into the conversation.

Allegany, Dorchester, Somerset, Washington, Wicomico and Worcester counties are all receiving funding from a federal grant to overcome barriers rural communities face in sexual healthcare and education, such as higher rates of poverty, lower rates of health insurance and limited health education programs and options for healthcare facilities and transportation.

The initiative, dubbed “True You Maryland,” provides the counties with more than \$1.4 million annually through a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Population Affairs (OPA) Teen Pregnancy Prevention program. Its goal is to reduce Maryland rural county teen birth rates by 15 percent, STI rates by 10 percent and racial disparities in teen birth and STI rates by 20 percent.

“The mission of True You Maryland is to promote the very best sex education and sexual health for all youth, no matter who they are or where they live,” said Meghan Rimelspach, Maryland Department of Health’s child and adolescent health program manager. “...All young people should have the same access not only to health information, but also to healthcare, and it should be regardless of race, ethnicity or any other social determinants of health.

“We know that in some communities, STI rates and teen birth rates are higher among some races than others, so a lot of this work is really meant to sort of even the playing field — we want everyone to have the information and the resources they need to keep themselves safe to avoid some of those negative outcomes.”

True You is led by the Maryland-based non-profit Healthy Teen Network, which places an emphasis on equity and addressing sexual and reproductive health through an intersectional and trauma-informed lens.

“It’s not just about teen pregnancy prevention, it’s not just about STI or HIV prevention, we’re trying to flip the script so that people understand the importance of this being just one more health area that you need to be thinking about,” said Deborah Chilcoat, Healthy Teen Network’s senior manager of capacity building and evaluation. “Prioritizing taking that holistic point of view is really important.”

The six counties were chosen by the Maryland Department of Health for the program because they all have higher STI and teen birth rates than the state average and had demonstrated that they wanted to bridge the sexual health gap, according to Rimelspach.

“The communities we’re working in were selected because they were already doing some work around sexual

health education, so they had a good foundation that we could build on ... and they were interested and ready to dive into the work,” Rimelspach said. “All of them recognized that some of those barriers often associated with rural health were happening in their communities, and they were excited to be part of this opportunity that would help address that.”

The Dorchester County Health Department had previously partnered with other community organizations on safe sex programming and also has school-based health centers in the county’s public schools, according to Angela Mercier, Dorchester County Health Department’s health education manager. Only 28 percent of school-based health centers are located in rural areas and an even smaller percentage provide sexual and re-

productive health services.

“The programming wasn’t strictly [about] safer sex, but it was curriculum around reproductive health and healthy relationships that included role playing and educational information, so it addressed the education but also gave the skills to have those difficult conversations and relationships,” Mercier said. “We in the past have mostly worked with faith-based organizations, nonprofits and afterschool programs, and then True You Maryland gave us an opportunity to work more with the schools.

“...We are fortunate to have school-based wellness centers, so there’s health department employees who are staffed within the middle and high schools who can offer things like contraceptive services or clinical services with youth, so we already had that connec-

tion within the schools, and it just made sense to expand on what we were doing in offering the comprehensive curriculum and more support services.”

True You is a partnership of the six counties’ health departments and public schools, with universities and organizations at the county and state level, including YMCA and Planned Parenthood Maryland.

“The state supports have been fantastic, just the wealth of information that they’ve pulled together and provided expert level information to help shape some of our workshops and educational presentations and materials,” Mercier said. “I say that they’ve been more of a TA role, but we’ve really looked to our local community partners to kind of guide what we’re doing on the day-to-day.”

Each county involved in True You has created a youth advisory board for teens to provide input on what young people want to know more about regarding sexual health. The 130 youth board members also serve as a mouthpiece for the

See *TEEN HEALTH* page 9





# BRECC announces two inaugural cohorts for counties with coal-impacted communities

by Grace Blanchard

Crisis of economic change brings with it the opportunity for rebirth as coal communities across the country face the future. Helping local leaders navigate those transitions, the Building Resilient Economies in Coal Communities (BRECC) initiative supported by the U.S. Economic Development Administration includes two competitive programs through which coal communities can receive capacity-building support: the Action Challenge and Commitment Coalition.

Spanning across Appalachia, the Illinois Basin, the Mountain West and the Four Corners, BRECC's Action Challenge will connect eight community teams with economic development experts from NACo's BRECC partners: the West Virginia Community Development Hub, EntreWorks Consulting and Community Builders. For one year, the selected teams will receive one-on-one coaching to develop a locally driven economic diversification strategy. This programming will prepare communities to pursue a wide range of eco-



Newly selected BRECC participants gather to meet Dennis Alvord (center), U.S. Department of Commerce at the NACo Legislative Conference. Photo by Denny Henry

nomic development opportunities, including workforce training, infrastructure improvements and alternative energy, placemaking and outdoor recreation, entrepreneurial ecosystems and business development and sustainability and funding planning.

The Action Challenge communities are:

**Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission, Va. :** This regional economic development district serves Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell and Tazewell

counties. This team seeks to grow economic resilience through regional entrepreneurship and business development strategies.

**Richwood, W. Va. :** In central West Virginia, the Richwood is experiencing population loss tied to the decline of the local coal industry. This team looks to expand its outdoor recreation economy with a special focus on a local trail network.

**Apache, Coconino and Navajo counties, Ariz. :** In Northern Arizona, Apache, Coconino and

Navajo counties face the closure and decommissioning of several coal-fired power plants. This team will coordinate planning to create a complimentary, shared strategy for economic diversification.

**Floyd County, Ky. :** In eastern Kentucky, Floyd County has seen a decline in coal production over the past three decades and recent flooding has exacerbated economic hardships. This long-term recovery group will pursue opportunities in outdoor and cultural tourism as well as residential attraction.

**Pike County, Ind. :** In southwestern Indiana, Pike County's employment and tax base are closely tied to a coal-fired plant slated to be decommissioned. This team will create a local strategy around business attraction and workforce retention goals.

**Perry County, Ohio:** Perry County is facing the closure of its last two coal mines. This team will advance planning for placemaking economic development strategies.

**Northwest Colorado Development Council, Colo. :** In Northwest Colorado, the Northwest Colorado Development Council serves Rio Blanco, Moffat and Routt counties, which face the closure of two coal-fired power plants. Partnering with a regional community college, this team will expand on strategies for advancing clean energy initiatives.

**San Juan County, N. M. :** In northwest New Mexico, San Juan County is experiencing the

closure of one coal-fired power plant and faces the impending closure of another. This team will work with Four Corners Economic Development to advance strategies for workforce redevelopment and business expansion.

BRECC's Commitment Coalition invited local leaders from coal communities to apply to join a leadership-building and peer learning network. Through virtual education sessions and in-person site visits, Coalition members will build relationships with leaders from across the country and gain an increased understanding of strategies nationwide to diversify coal-reliant economies.

The Commitment Coalition members and their corresponding coal community counties and states are:

- **Stephen Allen**, liaison, South Lincoln County Economic Development Corporation, Lincoln County, Wyo.
- **Marcie Barlow**, community development director, Scioto County, Ohio
- **Stuart Clason**, regional growth director, Utah Association of Counties, Carbon and Emery counties, Utah
- **Sandi Curd**, Promise Zone coordinator, Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, USDA Rural Partners Network; Bell, Clay, Harlan, Knox, Leslie, Letcher, Perry and Whitley counties, Ky.
- **Jenna Draper**, economic development director, Six Coun-

## What do Sonoma, Erie, Cook, and DeKalb counties have in common?



**They are counties featured in Season Three of the Good Government Show!**

Download the podcast from your favorite audio app or listen at [goodgovernmentshow.com](http://goodgovernmentshow.com)

THE  
**GOOD  
GOVERNMENT  
SHOW**

**PREMIERING APRIL 6**

See BRECC page 12



# Improved forecasting may better inform county water resource planning

From *FORECASTS* page 4

started working with Scripps to study atmospheric rivers. Three years into the five-year study, the Army Corps of Engineers saw enough deviations from the 1950s rules. Based on the forecasts’ accuracy, the reservoirs can hold 20 percent more water than before, thanks to the notice the agency will have to release water in advance of the next atmospheric river.

“Sonoma County embraces innovation,” Ralph said. “I don’t believe FIRO would have been developed without that interest and risk taking, the forward-looking posture from Sonoma County leaders and the population they represent.”

Sonoma County’s investment in the project, since 2013, has totaled roughly \$6 million.

“Our upfront costs were necessary to pull together a collaborative, interagency team and have been highly leveraged by state and federal funding,” said Grant Davis, Sonoma Water’s general manager.

## Where is the river headed?

When the Army Corps of Engineers established its protocols for Sonoma County’s reservoirs, that water served roughly 100,000 residents. More than 70 years later, the population has grown by almost 400,000, with 100,000 more in northern Marin County served by Sonoma Water. For a county that has endured years of drought, local officials, the water agency and the agricultural and fishery sectors had all long found the Corps’ strict regulations hard to swallow.

“When we started, we were told it would take an act of Congress to change the rule,” said Bob Anderson, executive director of United Winegrowers for Sonoma County “It’s the battle we’ve faced from the start.”

Thanks to FIRO, Sonoma County doesn’t need an act of Congress, but Gore sees an opportunity for new investment to pay off for counties nationwide.

“I’d like the National Weather Service to make the investment for better forecasting like this, rather than having locals do it,” he said. “We don’t need to have 3,069 counties set up different forecasting systems and put the money in themselves.”


He plans to pursue support

every year now falling under a disaster designation, the world has to move from post-disaster management to pre-disaster preparedness and resilience.”

Ralph said because the hydrology will differ in other parts of the country, FIRO’s success with atmospheric riv-

and engineering to be done in a quantitative, objective way to inform decisions on these vital pieces of infrastructure that we depend on all the time for water and flood prevention.”

Gore credited the Army Corps with a willingness to work within its authority to make FIRO’s first application possible, and to serve as a model for county-federal partnership going forward.

“What they needed was an innovation partner and what we needed was a partner that was willing to challenge their own bureaucracy to do what’s right,” he said. “The question is, how do we make lemonade out of lemons? Because disasters and this kind of cycle has always been something that has limited our management ability, and now we’re turning the page on it.” 

‘Sonoma County embraces innovation. I don’t believe FIRO would have been developed without that interest and risk-taking.’

— Marty Ralph, meteorologist

through NACo’s policy resolution process this summer at the Annual Conference in Travis County, Texas.

“This is in our bread basket — active partnerships and funding — and we can identify these kinds of solutions around the country but in different ways. It might be active forecasting of atmospheric rivers in California, make it different for hurricanes, different for everybody. With more than a third of the nation’s counties

ers won’t be portable to different regions, but the fundamentals are sound. While the national conversation grows, FIRO’s success can breed more research into new applications.

“We’re optimistic that FIRO is going to have utility and value in many other places around the country,” he said. “There’s a lot at stake here, in terms of safety and water supply reliability that we really need the time and the thoughtfulness and the rigorousness for the science

*The Western Interstate Region Conference, May 17-19 in Washington County, Utah, will feature a workshop “Weathering Weather Whiplash.”*

# Health program connects parents to resources so they can help their teens

From *TEEN HEALTH* page 7

initiative, sharing among their peers why getting educated on sexual health is important, Rimelspach said. The aim is to engage teens in a way so that they aren’t just getting lectured on sexual education, but are instead a part of the conversation.

“This really helps center youth at the heart of the work,” Rimelspach said. “We want their input, we want to be working alongside them and not handing things down to them and they have so much great insight to share — they are literally the experts in what they need and what they’re interested in.”

Schools in four of the counties have implemented adaptations of the Positive Prevention Plus program, an evidence-based comprehensive sexual health education program, through True You. Research shows that teens who are educated through Positive Prevention Plus report becoming sexually active later, increased use of contraceptives

if sexually active and having more communication around sexual health issues with their parents, compared to those not educated through the program.

Schools in Allegany County and Wicomico County chose not to implement the framework. Chilcoat said she attributes the decision to a fear of backlash, referencing the “parents’ rights” movement.

There’s a growing movement of parental rights activists who think caregivers should have a larger say in what’s taught in the classroom — and legislation in some states has followed suit, from bans on critical race theory to books; however, data shows that 93 percent of parents support sex education in schools, the majority of whom want classes to cover puberty, healthy relationships, abstinence, sexually transmitted infections and birth control.

While the two counties don’t teach the Positive Prevention Plus model in their public schools, they both incorporate True You in other capacities.

Wicomico County has worked closely with the Parents, Families and Friends to Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) organization to make sexual education more inclusive and its youth advisory board distributed hundreds of backpacks stuffed with sexual health resources to teens throughout the county, while Allegany County focuses primarily on youth engagement, according to Chilcoat.

“Communities really had to opt in — they needed to want to be a part of this, so in each community that we’re currently in, we had champions, we had people who were excited for this work to come, we had people who valued this information getting to their young people,” Rimelspach said.

“And all of those communities are still interested in continuing the work together, so whatever has happened in the political climate, that has stayed a steady thread throughout that people value this information for young people and want it to happen.

“... Parents and caregivers don’t have to worry about knowing all kinds of technical information about puberty, they can leave that to the health teacher and then they can talk sort of about those values and morals around sex that the young people won’t be getting in the classroom — the classroom’s just for science-based facts.”

True You’s focus is on educating Maryland’s rural youth on sexual health, but another element of it is engaging parents and caregivers by connecting them to sexual health resources and helping them communicate with their teens about healthy relationships.

“We recognize it’s a safer-sex focus, like teen pregnancy and STI prevention, but you have to look at the bigger picture and overall health to really make an impact,” Mercier said.


“So, it’s not just strictly connecting them to contraceptive services, but maybe there are issues in the home with housing or transportation or child-

care, so it’s trying to connect the dots to make sure that they have services and support in the community.

“Some of it might be outreach and partnering with our community partners when they hold events, that could be health fairs or fun things like paint nights, and just making sure that the information is there and available.”

True You is on its third and final year of the OPA grant, but Healthy Teen Network is currently applying for new funding for the six counties to continue their work in educating the community on sexual health.

Rimelspach said there are plans in the works to expand beyond schools into clinics and community organizations.

“I sure hope we get funded, because these counties deserve it, they really do,” Chilcoat said. “Not just to drive down statistics, but the youth have spoken — we asked them about what their needs are, and they want better sex education, that was loud and clear.” 





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2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION

**TRAVIS  
C O U N T Y**

**AUSTIN, TEXAS** | 

**JULY 21 *thru* 24**



WORD SEARCH

MISSOULA COUNTY, MONT.  
Created by: Alyxa Hawkins

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

**AIRPORT:** Missoula County Airport Authority operates the local airport, Missoula Montana Airport.

**BAYERN:** Within the county seat of Missoula sits Montana’s oldest active brewery, Bayern Brewing.

**CARVEY:** Comedian Dana Carvey was born in Missoula County in 1955.

**ECONOMY:** The largest industries in Missoula County are health care and retail trade.

**HELLGATE:** Missoula County was originally founded as Hellgate Trading Post in the 1860s.

**MACLEAN:** The best-selling novella and film “A River Runs Through It” was written by lifelong Missoula resident Norman Maclean.

**MISSOULA:** Missoula County is named for the Salish name for the Clark Fork River, which runs through the county.

**MONTANA:** Missoula County is in the state of Montana.

**OREGON:** The land comprising Missoula County became part of the United States as a result of the Oregon Treaty.

**POPULATION:** With a population of 119,533, Missoula is the third-most populous county in the state of Montana.

**RAILROAD:** The Northern Pacific Railway built the Northern Pacific Railroad Depot in 1883. It sits on the National Register of Historic Places.

**REVENANT:** Author of the bestselling novel “The Revenant,” Michael Punke, calls Missoula County home.

**SEAT:** The county seat is Missoula.

**UNIVERSITY:** The University of Montana is located in the county.

**YELLOWSTONE:** Parts of the hit Paramount show “Yellowstone” are filmed in Missoula County.

GET TO KNOW...

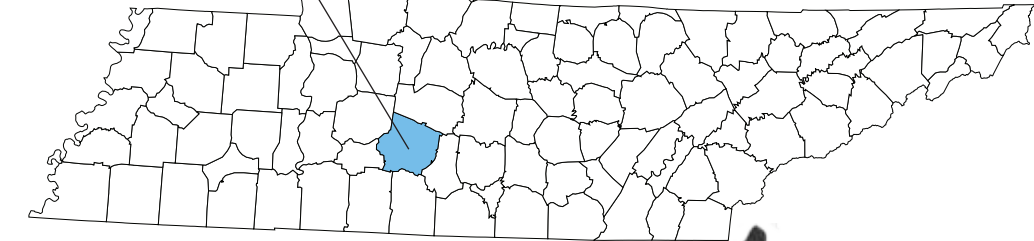
Maury County, Tenn.

**Welcome to Maury County, Tenn.**

Maury County, Tenn., was established by the state legislature in 1807 and is now the fastest-growing county of Tennessee’s 95 counties. **The county seat, Columbia, is known as the “Mule Capital of the World” and is where mules were bred and trained for the military during World War I. Mule Day, which is held annually in April and dates back to the 1840s, features square dancing, lumberjack competitions, traditional Appalachian food, and of course, mule-related events including a mule show and mule-driving contest.**

Duck River, nicknamed “The Duck,” flows through the county. The river holds more than 50 species of freshwater mussels and 151 species of fish and is the most biologically diverse river in North America.

The county has a mural with the phrase “Dimple of the Universe” scrawled across it, which is a reference from



John Trotwood Moore’s book, “Songs and Stories from Tennessee,” that is widely considered to be a description of Maury County for the richness of its soil.

James K. Polk, the 11th president of the United States, lived in Maury County before and after his presidency and his ancestral home now holds events and pop-up markets. Out of Tennessee’s 95 counties, Maury County ranks first in producing cattle and having the most pre-Civil War homes, which have names like Rippavilla and Rattle ‘N’ Snap. Many people in recent years have begun restoring buildings in downtown Columbia, including country music artist Sheryl Crow and Mike Wolfe, co-host of the antiquing show “American Pickers.”

“Get to Know” features new NACo member counties.



ON THE MOVE

NACo OFFICERS

- President **Denise Winfrey** and Associate Membership Director **John Losh** attended the Police Jury Association of Louisiana Annual Convention, held March 8-10 in Caddo Parish.

NACo STAFF

Moodley

- Kasantha Moodley** has joined NACo as a senior program manager for Resilient Economies and Communities. She previously served as a senior program manager for the Environmental Law Institute, a senior environmental consultant at Digby Wells Environmental and Environmental Resources Management and a sustainability advisor at the Arup Group. She earned a master’s of environmental management from Yale University and bachelor’s degrees from the University of Witwatersrand and the University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Executive Director **Matt Chase** attended the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania Spring Conference, held March 19-21 in Dauphin County.

HartSilvan

- Owen Hart** and **Maxx Silvan** were promoted to legislative associate positions in NACo’s Government Affairs Department.



# SPOTLIGHT ON LEADERSHIP: NACo HIGH-PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



BRADFORD

## EMILY BRADFORD

**Clerk of Commission to the BCC  
Montgomery County, Ohio**

August 2022  
NACo High Performance  
Leadership Academy graduate

**Number of years in your role:** 17 years.

**Don't miss this in my county:** The Air Force Museum or Carillon Historical District.

**My biggest challenge:** Inflation, high interest rate climate, supply chain shortages and workforce.

**My motivation for signing up for the NACo Leadership Academy:** I signed up for the HPLA to gain additional leadership skills that will prepare me as I move throughout my career within county government. As discussed in the program, many times individuals get promoted to leadership roles because of their advanced technical skillsets without the knowledge and experience of leading a team. The HPLA provided strategies in leadership that I can reference now and for years to come.

**My favorite part of the NACo Leadership Academy:** My favorite part of the HPLA were

the group sessions. The group sessions provided a weekly time to be present with peers, discuss the lessons of the week, and compare strategies and thoughts regarding those lessons and challenges. It was a great way to organically create that "Personal Board of Directors" we discussed throughout the program and hopefully, we will be able to continue those relationships throughout our careers.

**My favorite leadership rule of the NACo Leadership Academy:** My favorite leadership rule from the program is to "bring your own weather." This was a popular lesson within our breakout group, and I believe for the whole cohort. As simple as the rule is, its impact is significant. It's a constant reminder that you not only bring the weather to your own personal life and relationships, but as a leader, you also bring the weather for the team you are leading. Leaders cannot have bad days and this leadership rule is a small reminder of that.

**My leadership oath:** I will continue to study the organization, review best practices and instill the knowledge I obtain in all employees to better the organization, as well as the individuals I lead.

I will create a positive work environment by communicating effectively and providing a space that is safe to provide feedback and offer suggestions. I will lead by example and strive to create good leaders that will work to better the organization throughout their career.

**In my spare time:** I love to hike and be outdoors.

**I'm most looking forward to:** The reorganization of my office. The Commissioners have afforded me the opportunity to create a more comprehensive office that encompasses a wide range of activities and responsibilities as it relates to the Commission offices.

Enrollment is now open for the April Cohorts. Contact Brandon Natsuhara [bnatsuhara@naco.org](mailto:bnatsuhara@naco.org) or explore [NACo.org/skills](https://naco.org/skills) to learn more.

*The NACo High Performance Leadership Academy empowers frontline county government professionals with fundamental, practical leadership skills to deliver results for counties and residents. Learn more at [NACo.org/skills](https://naco.org/skills) or email [LukeAfeman@pdaleadership.com](mailto:LukeAfeman@pdaleadership.com).*

## Coal communities look ahead

From BRECC page 8

ty Association of Governments — Juab, Millard, Piute, Sanpete, Sevier and Wayne counties, Utah

• **Sharon Fain**, vice president, PacifiCorp/Rocky Mountain Power, Lincoln, Converse, Sweetwater and Campbell counties, Wyo. and Emery County, Utah

• **Cora Gnegy**, tourism director, Giles County, Va.

• **Steve Henry**, judge/executive, Webster County, Ky.

• **Marc Kiehna**, commissioner, Randolph County, Ill.

• **Carolea Mills**, deputy judge/executive and economic development director, Martin County, Ky.

• **Dan Mosley**, judge/executive, Harlan County, Ky.

• **Will Payne**, managing partner of coalfield strategies; Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Grayson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise and Wythe counties, Va.

• **Gabe Peña**, councilperson, Fayetteville, W. Va.

• **Greg Puckett**, commissioner,

Mercer County, W. Va.

• **Renee Regel**, economic development coordinator, Becker, Minn.

• **Mark Sarver**, associate professor of business and workforce learning, Glenville State University, USDA Rural Partners Network and Braxton, Calhoun, Clay, Gilmer, Nicholas, Roane, Webster and Wirt counties, W. Va.

• **Tammy Tinch**, commissioner, Greenbrier County, W. Va.

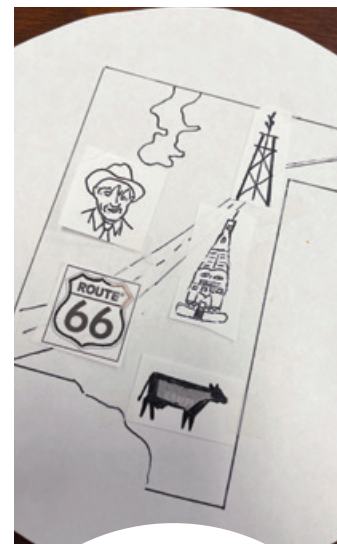
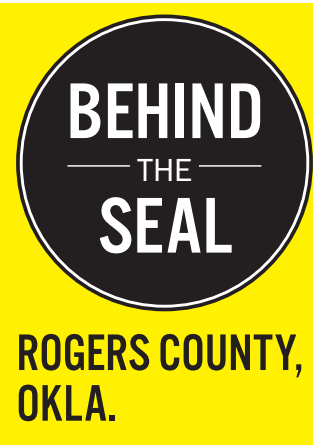
• **Tina Toyne**, economic development director, Big Horn County, Mont.

• **Melody Villard**, commissioner, Moffat County, Colo.

• **Carla Vita**, director of energy transition, Minnesota Department of Economic Development, Chippewa, Otter Trail, St. Louis, Cook, Sherburne, Itasca and Washington counties, Minn. **CN**

*Learn more about how to join BRECC activities at [www.naco.org/BRECC](https://www.naco.org/BRECC).*

*Grace Blanchard is the program manager for Resilient Economies and Communities at NACo.*



**R**ogers County, Okla. was first inhabited by the Arkansas Band of the Osage Nation. Officially founded Jan. 26, 1907, Rogers County adopted a seal in 2008 thanks to a county employee contest.

The winning seal features Will Rogers, an actor, writer and famous cowboy whose father, Clem Vann Rogers, is the namesake of the county; an oil well because the first oil well drilled by the United States Oil and Gas Company is located in the county and cattle and wheat for their prevalence and impact on



the economy. Oologah Lake, a reservoir built for flood control and Ed Galloway's Totem Pole Park, which is the largest concrete totem pole in the world, are also included on the seal.

*Would you like to see your county seal featured? Contact Meredith Moran at [mmoran@naco.org](mailto:mmoran@naco.org).*



## BRIGHT IDEAS | HOWARD COUNTY, MD.

# County Program Supports Farmers, Makes Fresh Produce More Accessible

### PROBLEM:

Some county residents did not have access to fresh produce.

### SOLUTION:

The county teamed with local farmers to bring affordable fresh produce to those in need.

by Meredith Moran  
staff writer

Howard County, Md. is supporting local farmers and widening access to fresh food for the county's low-income population through the Office of Community Sustainability's Roving Radish Marketplace. The office buys produce and protein from farmers at a higher price than they would get through a wholesaler and sells the food at half-price to low-income residents who qualify for government assistance.

"We realized that we were in a community that didn't have really good access to fresh foods and local farm products, so our goal has always been two-fold — support our local farms by creating a market for them to be able to sell their products to the community and to make it affordable, break down the barriers for people to eat local fresh foods," said James Zoller, Roving Radish program manager and agricultural coordinator for the Office of Community Sustainability.

"Our farmers love it because they set the retail price," he noted, "so if they're selling beef for \$10 a pound, we pay them \$8, which is great compared to what they would get if they sold it wholesale.

"And they get paid upfront right when they drop it off," he said. "We handle all the labor of selling it, marketing it and they're tapping into a community that typically wouldn't be buying their products because they couldn't afford it, so it's really a win-win on a lot of levels."

The marketplace opened at

the end of 2021 but didn't really pick up until October 2022 when the county was able to devote American Rescue Plan Act funding toward expanding the physical space of the marketplace, funding more staff positions and buying more refrigerators and freezers, according to Zoller. It receives additional funding through the state, the county's Office of the Local Children's Board and Department of Community Resources and also sells what food it has leftover at full-price and rolls the profits back into the program.

"A lot of things happened during COVID that were bad, but one of the positives was we became more efficient and we also became tighter with our partners, because they were trying to find ways to serve the community," Zoller said.

The marketplace sells fresh produce and protein from

local farmers who Howard County had already worked with through its existing meal kit and food bank programs, as well as from smaller-scale farmers who don't produce enough quantity to be eligible for the meal kits, Zoller said. The meal kit program came out of a food policy group the county started in 2015 that looked into how to tackle childhood obesity, promote healthy eating and ways to support local farmers.

"[The marketplace] has been really encouraging because we don't have that many farms here in Howard County and we're trying to expand them as much as we can," he said. "We've seen some smaller farms pop up that really embrace this, because they don't need the staff to sell the product year-round, they can just grow it and bring it here, and it's also a great way for farmers

to know if they've planted in excess, they have a market to sell it and make some money as well."

Anyone regardless of socioeconomic status is welcome to shop at the marketplace, but low-income Howard County residents receive a 50 percent off discount in the form of a grocery card.

To receive a card, you must have already qualified for one of the following programs within the past year: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, temporary cash assistance, free school breakfast or lunch, Medicaid, Maryland Children's Health Program or Social Security disability income.

The marketplace is located in Long Reach Village Center, which was previously a "run-down shopping center" the county stepped in to revitalize, Zoller said. It's open year-

round on Tuesdays from 1 to 7 p.m., Thursdays from 12 noon to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Starting next year, the marketplace is going mobile with its "Farmers Truck," which will go into low-income retirement communities and areas without farmers markets to widen access to fresh food for those who can't get transportation to the physical space.

"We're lucky that Howard County doesn't have any food deserts, but we do have areas with limited access to fresh, local products, so what we're doing right now is working on mapping out in the county where need is and access is limited."

The program won a NACo Achievement Award in 2022 in the Community and Economic Development category. To learn more about the program, visit: <https://www.rovingradish.com/>. **CN**



Shoppers peruse fresh produce at The Roving Radish Marketplace in Howard County, Md. Photo courtesy of Howard County



NEWS  
FROMACROSS  
THE NATION

## FLORIDA

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S** Internal Services Department is using on-demand **visual interpreting assistance services** for its visually impaired residents. Through an app called Aira, users are connected live to a specialist who helps them navigate surroundings in and around county facilities, including the Government Center Transit Station and Main Library. The goal is to increase accessibility and encourage visually impaired residents to take advantage of all the resources the county has to offer.



## INDIANA

**INDIANAPOLIS-MARI-ON COUNTY** pet stores are now **prohibited from selling cats, dogs and rabbits**. The City-County Council banned the selling of "common pet animals" to not only encourage residents to adopt from animal shelters but also for pet stores to partner with shelters, making the county one of more than 440 localities that has made a ban of this kind. Local pet stores have two years to transition to a new structure.

## IOWA

• **JOHNSON COUNTY** is creating a **new domestic violence shelter** to meet its growing demand for emergency shelter services. The county's Domestic Violence Intervention Program is expanding its space after constantly being at capacity, with the number of people it's served increasing by 38 percent in the last five years. The new shelter will break ground in May.

• **POLK COUNTY** is devoting \$11 million in ARPA funding toward two **housing programs**. The programs, which are set to launch in April and May, are part of the county's deferred loan initiative. One program will

provide \$30,000 in no-interest down payments to low-income homebuyers, and the other aims to help low-income homeowners finance major repair projects that aren't covered by other loans or assistance. To be eligible, households must earn below 80 percent of the area median income or about \$79,000 for a family of four.

## MINNESOTA

• **HENNEPIN COUNTY'S** Safe Spaces program aims to help **human trafficking victims**, through flyers and placing phones in the bathrooms of county buildings that immediately connect to the Security Operations Center. The county enlisted the help of victims of human trafficking to make sure the program could be as beneficial as possible, making the flyers in multiple languages with pull tabs that can be given to a county employee to alert them of the situation. More than 1,000 county employees have been trained on how to handle a situation related to human trafficking and the program has received 17 calls since it launched in October.

• **SCOTT COUNTY'S** new Coordinated Response Program **embeds social workers in the sheriff's office** to provide more

support for those experiencing a mental health crisis who encounter law enforcement. The social workers will provide both crisis help and wellness follow-ups to connect them to mental health services.

## NEW YORK

• You catch more flies with honey, and **CLINTON COUNTY** is hoping to catch more flights with a minimum revenue guarantee fund.

The county Legislature established a \$1.5 million fund for **incentives for potential future airlines** at the Plattsburgh International Airport, *The Press Republican* reported.

"One way we can do that is to incentivize airlines to come here," said Airport Director Chris Kreig. "Coming into a new market, in a lot of ways, they need a safety net. This would be that safety net for them, depending on



## OKLAHOMA

Oklahomans visiting the Middle East who are feeling homesick will need only to visit the United Arab Emirates for a piece of home. The **TULSA COUNTY** Public Facilities Authority voted to **sell the Tulsa Skyride**, a gondola that has been part of the Tulsa State Fair since 1965, to an Iraq-based amusement park ride reseller. Photo by Steven Wilson

how the service shakes up. This would be a gap filler, if you will, for what they need to be profitable and what they may or may not be making."

• **SUFFOLK COUNTY** is assembling a group of volunteer community ambassadors to help spread the word about **missing children**. The county will also post information about missing children weekly on social media and work proactively with the New York Police Department to help look for runaways who have crossed into New York City. The county will also offer human services to address the underlying reasons children run away.

• Disposable cutlery will be available only upon request in **WESTCHESTER COUNTY**, following passage of a law that restricts **single-use plastics** and more. That will include condiment packets, and single-use plastic beverage stirrers or "splash sticks." Multiple disposable items will not be packaged together either.

## GEORGIA

**HENRY COUNTY** Sheriff's Office is helping incarcerated people acquire their GEDs (graduate equivalency degrees) and certifications in forklift operation and welding. The program, of which the Morehouse School of Medicine is a partner, aims to **reduce recidivism**, as research shows that 82 percent of Georgia inmates will re-offend within three to 10 years upon release.



See NEWS FROM page 15



## OREGON

The **LANE COUNTY** Sheriff's Office's Search and Rescue team got a message in a bottle rocket. A motorist trapped in the snow in the Willamette National Forest didn't have cellular service, but he did have a drone. He **attached his cell phone to the drone**, typed a text message to a friend describing his situation and exact location, hit send and launched the drone several hundred feet into the air. When the drone rose high enough, his phone connected to a tower and sent the message. While the search and rescue team were rescuing him, they found another motorist who had been stranded for several days.

Photo courtesy of the Lane County Sheriff's Office



## TEXAS

• **WILLIAMSON COUNTY** celebrated its **175th birthday** with a celebration that included a Falcon Flight flyover, a cake in the shape of the courthouse and more. Canadian artist Yasaman Mehrsa designed a mural that the public helped paint, on the side of the county's tax office.

Photo courtesy of Williamson County



From NEWS FROM page 14

## OHIO

A year after **CUYAHOGA COUNTY** voted to **ban plastic bags**, the supply chain complications resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted its execution. After distributing nearly 50,000 reusable bags for people to use, the county is offering businesses grants of up to \$5,000 to stores if they stop using the bags voluntarily.

## TEXAS

• Austin-Bergstrom International Airport will house Austin-**TRAVIS COUNTY** EMS on-site to help get **paramedics** to a patient's side rapidly when experiencing a medical emergency at the airport. The airport will be renovated to include permanent crew quarters.

## UTAH

• The **SEVIER COUNTY** Recorder's Office is providing a free alternative to title insurance to **prevent fraud**. By registering their email address with the office, property owners can receive emails when a document is recorded to their property. They can customize their notifications based on a business name, individual name or parcel number.

## WASHINGTON

With help from the Washington State Housing Finance Commission, **CLARK COUNTY** is establishing a **homebuyer down payment program**.

The county Council approved \$2 million for the second mortgage loan system, which combines loans offered by the state. Qualifying borrowers can purchase at or below \$600,000. The program loans \$60,000, at 2 percent interest while the county provides \$45,000 and the commission provides \$15,000, *The Columbian* reported. Buyers repay at the time of sale, transfer, refinance or when the borrower no longer occupies the primary residence or at 30 years.



Kassandra Mariscal and her daughter Michelle browse dresses at the Salt Lake County Library's Teen Formal Wear Swap, a program that provides men's and women's free formal wear to teenagers.

Photo by Jeffery Buidos

## UTAH

• In the same **SALT LAKE COUNTY** Library where they could check out books on textiles and read fashion magazines, local teens recently swapped no-cost formal wear. The county held its fourth **Teen Formal Wear Swap**, providing hundreds of formal items, including dresses, dress shirts, suits, shoes and accessories. Donations are collected throughout February at each of the library's 18 branches.

"Prom dresses can range from \$100 to \$700, while a man's suit typically costs around \$300," said Program Coordinator Angie Wager. "That can put a real economic strain on a family, and in some cases, make formal events too expensive. We try to close the financial gap so everyone has access to a magical and memorable night."

*Charlie Ban and Meredith Moran compile News From Across the Nation. Does your county have news we should know about? Contact [cban@naco.org](mailto:cban@naco.org) and [mmoran@naco.org](mailto:mmoran@naco.org).*





2023 NACo  
**ACHIEVEMENT  
AWARDS** CELEBRATING  
53 YEARS OF  
INNOVATION

**Submission Deadline:**

April 7, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. EDT

**Notification of Achievement Awards:**

Early May

**How To Apply:**

Does your county have an innovative program that improves county government and enhances services for county residents? Apply for the 2023 Achievement Awards! There are 18 categories ranging from information technology, health, criminal justice, human services and many more.



Scan the QR code  
to learn more  
and apply!

