

Countdown on for NACo 2021 Annual Conference

by **Rachel Looker**
staff writer

The National Association of Counties' 2021 Annual Conference and Exposition is just two months away and set to be held in person and virtually July 9 - 12 in Prince George's County, Md., right outside of Washington, D.C.

The conference is a hybrid event and will allow participants to choose an in-person or virtual conference experi-

See **CONFERENCE** page 2



The 2021 NACo Annual Conference will take place July 9-12 at the Gaylord National Resort & Conference Center in Prince George's County, Md. The conference is both in-person and virtual this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo courtesy of Gaylord National

Registry matches teacher needs with county funding

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

Matt Meyer was used to stretching his underfunded school's resources for his middle school math students.

When his Teach for America school got infusions of new resources, they weren't always as welcome as he'd hoped.

"I can't tell you the number of times as a teacher where thousands of dollars were spent on software, or books or a curriculum that were not relevant to my class or my students," he said. "I'd hear from a senior education official, they usually had

taught earlier in their career, but after hearing them talk, I'd think 'They have no idea what it's like for me to teach in my classroom, so how could they possibly get me the resources that I need?'"

As the executive of New Castle County, Del., Meyer wanted to change that. When the county tried to figure out how best to spend CARES Act money, he knew the best people to ask were the teachers themselves. The county launched a series of task forces to gauge the needs of different communities, with a particular ear toward front-line employees. And that group was expanded.

"There's a lot of talk about the heroic work that our medical professionals — police officers, paramedics, fire fighters have done," Meyer said, "but educators too have been on the front lines, and we've asked them to do extraordinary things. They continue to get students to perform, they have to teach in hybrid settings and

they have to keep kids engaged. We are at risk of losing part of a generation of children to learning loss or other things that may spark their interest outside of the classroom.

"They know the kids they're teaching better than anyone, and they're the ones who know what they need."

But that diversity of needs is

hard to meet on a large scale. Representatives of the Rodel Foundation of Delaware put Meyer and his staff in contact with Donors Choose, a New York-based nonprofit that operates like a well-vetted gift registry. Teachers identify up to \$1,000 worth of materials for

See **REGISTRY** page 3

Counties create strategies to measure, manage emissions

by **Rachel Looker**
staff writer

On Earth Day, President Joe Biden announced the United States will set a goal to reduce 50 to 52 percent of U.S. emissions by 2030.

In alignment with the president's goals, local governments are making their own efforts

to contribute to the country's overall objective.

Miami-Dade County, Fla. Mayor Daniella Levine Cava made a similar announcement on Earth Day regarding emissions in the county. She announced the release of a draft of the Miami-Dade strategy with a short-term goal of cutting countywide emissions in half

by 2030 and a long-term goal of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The strategy calls for creating green jobs and improving the health and quality of life for residents.

"We have a very big stake in national and international commitments to reduce green-

See **EMISSIONS** page 5

NACo to hold first hybrid Annual Conference in Prince George's County, Md.

From CONFERENCE page 1

ence.

Both in-person and virtual attendees will have access to general sessions, workshops and committee meetings, voting ability in committee meetings and the Annual Business Meeting, the opportunity to ask questions in real time, peer-to-peer networking and the option to attend the NACo Achievement Awards luncheon.

The conference will be held at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center, located on banks of the Potomac River. The resort is located less than 10 miles outside of Washington D.C. and its many landmarks including the White House, U.S. Capitol, U.S. Supreme Court, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial and the Vietnam, World War I and World War II memorials.

The Gaylord National Resort is part of National Harbor, a waterfront community and major tourist destination surrounded by more than 40 restaurants and 160 retail outlets. Water taxis carry passengers from the National Harbor marina on the Potomac River to Georgetown, as well as across the river to the historic city of Alexandria, Va., and Mount Vernon, George Washington's estate.

At National Harbor, attend-



NACo's Annual Conference will take place at the Gaylord National Resort at National Harbor in Prince George's County, Md.

ees can ride the Capital Wheel, a Ferris wheel that provides harbor views from 180 feet above the Potomac River or visit the hotel and casino at the MGM National Harbor.

For in-person attendees, the conference agenda and format will be altered to ensure the safety of all participants. Safety measures include a reduction in the number of sessions to maximize the use of conference space and conference attendees will be required to wear an appropriate mask at all times.

"Safety is our top priority,"

NACo President and Boone County, Ky. Judge/Executive Gary Moore said. "We are reimagining the conference agenda and the format to reduce the overall number of sessions and maximize the use of our entire conference space to avoid overcrowding."

Because of the evolving public health crisis, the schedule and structure of the conference is subject to change depending on national public health guidance and health protocols set by Prince George's County.

"After a long but highly anticipated return to in-person

events, we are excited to invite you to social distance here," Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks said.

The following are key dates regarding conference activities and deadlines:


- Policy resolutions: Submit policy resolutions by June 4, 2021 to resolutions@naco.org. (See Page 3 for more information.)
- Presidential appointments: Apply for a presidential appointment online by June 11, 2021 at naco.org/appointments. (See Page 6 for more information.)

• Voting credentials: The Annual Business Meeting and election will be held in-person and virtually on Monday, July 12. NACo members must designate one voting delegate by July 9, 2021. (See Page 9 for more information.)

Both in-person participants and those participating virtually will have the opportunity to network, learn and connect with other counties and shape NACo's federal policy agenda for the upcoming year during the four-day event.

"The last several months have been such a dynamic and exciting time with so many accomplishments to celebrate—we just reached an all-time high in county membership in NACo," Moore said. "Come and be a part of the celebration."

To receive a discounted rate for the conference, be sure to take advantage of early-bird registration, which continues through June 11. Register here: www.naco.org/Annual.

For questions regarding NACo's 2021 Annual Conference and Exposition, contact naco-meetings@naco.org. 

SNAP/STATS

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

County health departments	1,943
County hospitals	903
Community Health Systems/Justice and Public Safety	\$176 billion
County jails	2,875
Inmates with serious mental illness	20 percent

Source: NACCHO, NACo



County teams up with non-profit to spread CARES Act funding to schools

From REGISTRY page 1

specific projects. If the request meets the Donors Choose standards and the U.S. Treasury Department's allowable uses for the CARES Act, the projects are funded. Donors Choose purchases the materials for approved projects, so the teachers don't have to handle the money.

"We'd have to spend a lot of money in the right places very quickly," said Max Williamson, New Castle County's special projects manager. "The logistics of it, not to speak of the legal work and the auditing and accounting, was beyond the scope of our staffing."

Larger than Delaware's two other counties combined, New Castle County was the only locality in the state to receive direct CARES Act funding, so Meyer expanded the project to field requests from all schools in the state.

The effort totaled 1,617 projects, accounting for nearly one-fifth of all classrooms and distributing \$1.3 million. New Castle County estimated that the projects could benefit up to 50,000 students in the state.

"We were expecting 500 teachers, that's what we thought we could reach in a couple of weeks," said Ali Rosen, Donors Choose's head of foundation giving.

It was the organization's first project with a county government, and Rosen saw the opportunity to meet teachers' needs in a new way.

"None of those ideas are something a district, county or state would invest in normally," she said. "It was a way for the county to impact thousands of students but allowing each teacher to address their needs, all without burdening the small team there with administrative processes."

Williamson said the hardest part was developing a clear set of criteria for the projects to be funded so teachers felt their requests were being treated fairly.

"We wanted to be totally transparent from the start," he said.

The requests ranged from flexible seating options to cleaning supplies and instructional materials.

One elementary school teacher sought funding for "active seating," which included large rubber balls and stools that moved, all of which helped children expend energy.

"Because of social distancing in the classroom, she couldn't have them get up and do a freeze dance, but 8-year-olds still have a lot of energy," Rosen said.

Meyer took a liking to a classroom's use of bicycle desks, which served the same purpose,



Ms. Casey's pre-k class at the George Washington Carver Center in Sussex County, Del. makes use of supplies purchased with CARES Act money. Photo courtesy of Donors Choose

but he admitted that despite being an avid cyclist, he still found the most value in more ordinary requests.

"A lot of the best projects weren't the ones that get on the front page," he said. "They're more mundane but they make a difference. They're the ones that make it possible for five to 10 more students to come to school and make it easier for a few more families in each class."

The entire process took six weeks to execute, and although the CARES Act deadline loomed large before it was eventually

extended, Meyer said the process could have been expedited to spend the allocated money in time.

Though he was confident in the system, he was buoyed when he saw supplies being used in classrooms, the result of all the planning and execution.

"The good it created, and the creativity it sparked among teachers, it was a huge win for teachers and classes and schools when there weren't many wins," he said. "We, as local leaders, need to be thinking

creatively about making sure education can be an exciting opportunity for students."

He hopes the county's success will open the door to additional partnerships between county governments and Donors Choose. While awaiting federal guidance on American Rescue Plan funding, Meyer said he saw opportunities to continue the project in different areas.

"This gave teachers an opportunity to get resources to teach better at the most challenging time to educate." **CN**

Deadline coming up for submitting policy resolutions

by Zach George

In preparation for the NACo 2021 Annual Conference July 9-12, NACo members are invited to submit policy resolutions and platform changes to be considered at the conference.

The NACo resolutions process provides members with the ability to participate in national policy decisions affecting county governments.

During the Annual Conference, NACo's 10 policy steering committees, Board of Directors and the general membership consider proposed policy resolutions and platform language that will guide NACo advocacy until the next NACo Annual

Conference in July 2022.

The American County Platform and the association's policy resolutions are carefully considered statements of the needs and interests of county governments throughout the nation.

These federal policy statements serve as a guide for NACo members and staff to advance the association's policy agenda before Congress, the White House and federal agencies.

How to submit and format resolutions

All policy resolutions must be submitted electronically (preferably as a Word document) via email to resolutions@naco.org.

org by June 4, 2021. Submissions must identify the title and issue area in the email subject line (e.g. Social Services Block Grant, Human Services and Education).

Resolutions should be concise and no more than one page in length. The standard format includes:

- **Issue:** Short sentence stating the purpose of the resolution and how the issue impacts counties.
- **Proposed policy:** Concise statement specifying a position or action by NACo and/or other entities.
- **Background:** One- to two-paragraph statement clearly outlining the county in-

terest in the particular issue.

- **Fiscal/urban/rural impact:** A short statement addressing the potential impact(s) for counties in the specific issue area.

- **Sponsor:** The name and contact information of the NACo member sponsoring the resolution. It is important to include contact information so that the NACo staff can follow up if there are any questions or additional information required.

Platform changes and existing resolutions

Platform changes may also be considered at the Annual Conference.

All resolutions previously passed, both at last year's 2020 Annual Business Meeting and at NACo's 2021 Virtual Legislative Conference, expire at this conference and must be resubmitted as either a resolution or platform change in order to continue as NACo policy.

Questions

Please contact NACo Director of Government Affairs Mark Ritacco at mr Ritacco@naco.org or the appropriate steering committee liaison with additional questions or concerns. **CN**

Zach George is a legislative assistant in NACo's Government Affairs Department.

Oklahoma counties get crucial new budgeting tool

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

Oklahoma counties are about to get something that officials in most other states take for granted. As of July 1, they'll be able to set aside money in rainy day funds for natural disasters and save money for capital reserves.

The state has had a rainy-day fund for nearly 40 years, but counties have had to rely on a tenuous workaround if they wanted to carry over their budget surpluses.

"We could designate a surplus as a carryover, but its use wouldn't be restricted," said Jason Carini, treasurer of Rogers County. "The plan was only as good as our elected officials, because we could carry over \$2 million, then new county commissioners could come in, see that and want to spend it on something else than what their predecessors planned for."

The law allows for half of the fund to be used for declared natural disasters, one-eighth



Carini

can cover revenue shortfalls and one-eighth can cover a revenue failure declared by the Board of Commissioners. The remaining quarter can be saved for capital expenses.

"We haven't had many revenue failures because our revenue is based on ad valorem taxes, but you never know what will happen in a few decades," Carini said. "The state's rainy-day fund came from an oil bust in the '80s, so the Legislature then saw a need for it. Once we had a sympathetic state representative and state senator, everyone got on board."

Research by the Pew Charitable Trusts found it was both unusual for states to prohibit counties from creating their own rainy-day fund and that

'Once we had a sympathetic state representative and state senator, everyone got on board.'

Oklahoma counties' reliance on sales tax would make them more susceptible than the average county to larger revenue declines.

The bill passed unanimously in both chambers and Gov. Kevin Stitt (R) signed it in April.

"The only hesitancy we heard from the Legislature was asking if this would be a slush fund for the county," said Jacob McHughes, assistant commissioner for Cleveland County. "It's exactly the opposite because it standardizes budgeting."

"The state used its rainy-

day fund a few years ago to cover shortfalls, so that really demonstrated why counties needed the same tool."

Cleveland County suffered a damaging hailstorm two weeks after the bill was signed.

"We had tried working through the state auditor's office, but a new statute made it more clear," said Rod Cleveland, a Cleveland County commissioner. "We could save money in a capital improvement fund, but it had to be tied to a future expense. It just wasn't the way we wanted to do things. We wanted an actual statutory savings plan."

Although counties are reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency for federally declared disasters, they have to front the money to pay for repairs and recovery. So too must counties cover their operating expenses between the start of their fiscal years in July and when they collect property taxes in December.

"We will be able to float our budgets without borrowing"

Carini said. "That will save us interest in the long run because we won't have to borrow against our expected revenue."

Though not every county will be able to save at the same level, the option is there.

"Not all counties can do it because their cost of government is really stressed at what they bring in in revenue," Cleveland said. "I told them that this is even better for you guys because even if it's tens of thousands of dollars, it's still a start and you can build up. Once you set up the discipline of savings, then it becomes a part of your estimate every year."

Carini noted that the ball got rolling for this bill during conversations with Cleveland during their trip to one of President Trump's county official visits to the White House in 2019.

"I feel like we're finally getting to a place where we can get on good financial footing, not just for Rogers County," Carini said, "but for all the counties in Oklahoma." **CN**

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES **NACo**

**REGISTER BY
JUNE 11
AND SAVE!**

naco.org/Annual

**2021 NACo ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MD.

**JULY
9-12**

**IN-PERSON
AND VIRTUAL**

King County tool kit provides a guide for local governments on reducing emissions

From EMISSIONS page 1

house gas emissions and we are aware, to preserve and protect this little piece of paradise that we call home, will require us to take some dramatic action immediately,” Levine Cava said during a press conference.

The plan focuses on reducing emissions in three key areas including transportation, buildings and waste.

In King County, Wash., the county council approved a toolkit earlier this year that provides guidance on reducing emissions specifically for local governments.

The toolkit identifies five steps that cities or counties can take when working to reduce emissions that focus on understanding a community’s emissions, assessing and strengthening a community’s level of commitment, developing a climate action strategy tailored to a local community, implementing emissions reduction actions and measuring and reporting on progress.

Rachel Brombaugh, director of King County’s Climate and Energy Initiatives, served as the project lead for the toolkit and said it provides a guide for local governments to measure their emissions, manage emissions and work with communities to reduce them.

The county worked with the King County-Cities Climate



King County, Wash. is working to reduce countywide emissions by electrifying its bus fleet by 2035.

Collaboration, which focuses on climate policies and initiatives, to form the toolkit, she noted. The group includes 16 cities and the port of Seattle.

The collaborative effort ensures the toolkit identifies core elements needed to reduce emissions that speak appropriately to local governments and provide examples of actions that could be impactful, she said.

“We have a lot of work to do to get these emissions down and a big part that’s really been a headwind for us has been the population growth that we’ve experienced,” she said. “With people moving to King County, everyone brings their own portfolio of carbon emissions with them. It just makes the work even more urgent.”

In 2014, King County Executive Dow Constantine announced a goal to reduce countywide emissions in half by 2030 and by 80 percent in 2050.

Since announcing the goal and since the county’s last emissions inventory in 2017, Brombaugh said emissions have only slightly decreased.

“What’s neat about it [the climate action toolkit] is that it takes the framework of our 50 percent reduction by 2030 and looks at different sectors and really actionable strategies that cities can take that are appropriate for that city,” Brombaugh said.

She referenced how Biden’s plan focuses on infrastructure, which is within the wheelhouse of local governments.

“For counties and cities, we’re

looking at specifically some of those actions that we can take and influence,” she said.

King County operates the transit system, wastewater treatment systems and the solid waste system.

Brombaugh said the county sees an opportunity to reduce emissions specifically with transportation and plans to electrify its bus fleet by 2035.

“We can work to make sure that transit is available, fast and clean,” she said, noting that making an investment in transit systems and making good use of the land available for transportation projects will benefit the county and help meet emissions goals.

She highlighted the importance of local governments involving their communities

when beginning this process and following the steps in the Climate Action Toolkit.

“Nothing will work without the cooperation of residents and businesses and the cities in the county and your local government partners,” she said. “If people aren’t bought into it, it’s going to be an even more uphill battle.”

In King County specifically, the county involved community members and engaged with stakeholders through public workshops to meet with front-line communities disproportionately impacted by climate change.

“We had a lot of outreach, that’s just how we increasingly make sure that we are touching as many groups as we can in order to craft the goals,” she said.

When following the toolkit and seeking to reduce emissions, Brombaugh advises local governments to tackle the “low-hanging fruit” such as replacing light bulbs with LEDs or adding electric vehicle chargers when it at first it may seem challenging to get hung up in the details of completing an emissions inventory.

“Don’t be afraid to start with small steps and then learn how to take those bigger steps, to run later,” she said. **CN**

View the King County Climate Action Toolkit here: <https://bit.ly/3uhq3G0>.

NOBCO on CDC declaring racism a public health crisis

On April 8, Dr. Rochelle P. Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), issued a statement declaring racism “a serious public health threat.” The statement comes as the nation continues to grapple with COVID-19, an infectious disease that has infected more than 32 million Americans and claimed the lives of nearly 580,000 individuals across the nation. Various jurisdictions across the country, including more than 200 cities and counties, have also passed similar declarations.

While the impact of COVID-19 has been widespread, the CDC acknowledges

that its most extreme medical and social impact has fallen on communities of color.

Furthermore, the statement drives home the point that COVID-19 itself did not create the disparities in health we’ve seen across the nation: the pandemic has done nothing more than illuminate longstanding inequities that have plagued our nation for generations. Understanding and actively addressing the ways in which racism has hindered and continues to hinder communities of color is a crucial component in the fight towards improved health for all.

This acknowledgement by the CDC comes as a welcome confirmation of decades of



research and evidence outlining the complex relationship between race and health outcomes. In discussing the impact of racism on public health, one would be remiss to not mention the highly racialized reality of HIV in this country. An estimated 1.2 million individuals across the country are currently living with HIV, with about 14 percent of that figure being unaware of their status. While Black and Latinx individuals make up 13

percent and 18 percent of the U.S. population, they constitute 41 percent and 23 percent of HIV cases across the country respectively. Additionally, rates of new HIV infections in Black women specifically have been found to be 13 times that of their white counterparts and four times that of Latinx women. As COVID-19 continues to lead conversations around racism and its impact, let us continue to apply that lens and understanding to existing epidemics affecting our communities of color.

On Tuesday, May 18, we celebrate HIV Vaccine Awareness Day in an effort to acknowledge the efforts of the health care

and scientific communities and raise awareness surrounding the development of an HIV vaccine. This vaccine, currently in Phase I clinical trials, would be a monumental step in preventing the spread of HIV. In our current day and context, it is hard to ignore the parallels between the HIV and the COVID-19 pandemics. As infectious diseases that disproportionately impact and claim the lives of individuals of color, specifically those who identify as Black or African American, HIV and COVID-19 both drive home the importance of preventative care and the role that vaccines play in promoting health and wellness. **CN**

NATIONWIDE LAUNCHES SUITE OF NEW IN-PLAN ANNUITIES

New solutions help retirement plan participants protect savings and guarantee retirement income

The SECURE Act has opened a new era of opportunity for retirement plan participants — expanding the ability for plan sponsors to help participants not only plan for retirement, but also live in retirement. One way the Act will help is by making in-plan annuities within defined contribution plans such as 401(k)s and 457(b)s more accessible and portable than before.

This comes at an opportune time as American savers weather a perfect retirement storm. Given the pandemic's impact on market volatility this year alone, consumers are much more interested than ever before in solutions that

can provide a level of certainty and protection. Retirees are living longer and facing greater pressure to fund their own retirement, as costs for healthcare and long-term care continue to rise. Employers (plan sponsors) are looking for accessible, portable and affordable solutions to help their employees protect their savings and ensure income in retirement.

To meet this need, Nationwide will roll out a suite of new in-plan annuity products and partnerships with industry leaders, including at least five new solutions through 2021.

"We know this is not a one-size fits all problem, and we're confident that a suite of solutions will give plan sponsors the flexibility to select the option that's best for their par-



ticipants," said Eric Stevenson, president of Nationwide Retirement Plans. "Our approach is unique, by going beyond retirees' well-established need for guaranteed income, to also address their growing need to protect principal. It's the combination of both benefits that makes our approach a game-changer for our industry."

Uniquely positioned to meet this need

As an established industry leader serving government and corporate retirement plans, as well as a top provider of annuities, Nationwide is uniquely equipped to address this challenge, with the in-house exper-

tise to develop new solutions and deep partnerships across the industry to bring them to market.

Nationwide has a track record as an innovator in the in-plan annuity market, serving as an insurance carrier in AllianceBernstein's multi-insurer solution, Lifetime Income Strategy since 2012. Over the past eight years, Nationwide has accumulated \$435 million in assets offering lifetime income to more than 25,000 plan participants.

"By offering a range of guaranteed solutions within the structure of a retirement plan, Nationwide can provide even more customers access to the benefits of guaranteed lifetime income and principal protection that are only available from an annuity," said Eric Henderson, President of Nationwide Annuity.

About the suite

Nationwide's new suite of products offers a broad range of solutions to meet the needs of plan participants. In December, Nationwide introduced a new in-plan Fixed Indexed Annuity to provide principal protection with potential for growth based on the return of an index.

Additionally, this year, Nationwide will introduce several in-plan lifetime income options that pair income guarantees with Target Date Funds, all designed to be QDIA (qualified default investment alternative) compliant.

"Similar to a Target Date Fund, we will allow our plan participants to select an investment option and then we'll take care of the rest of the puzzle by providing a glide path from accumulation into retirement income," Stevenson said.

According to Nationwide's recent Advisor Authority study, two-thirds of both Millennial investors (65 percent) and Gen X investors (66 percent) indicate they are likely to incorporate in-plan guarantees within their defined contribution plans. The study also showed that nearly two-thirds of advisors and financial professionals (64 percent) say they are likely to adopt in-plan guarantees to provide guaranteed income within clients' defined contribution plans. Six in ten (60 percent) employers also say they would consider offering employees lifetime income solutions according to a 2019 survey by Willis Tower Watson. **CN**

GET INVOLVED! Apply for a presidential appointment

by **Larry Johnson**
NACo First Vice President

I am looking forward to my term as NACo president and to advocating on behalf of counties at the federal level.

If you are interested in becoming more involved with NACo, please apply to be a part of the committee leadership.

These appointments are for:

- Policy steering committee chairs, vice chairs, subcommittee chairs and subcommittee vice chairs

- Large Urban County Caucus (LUCC) or the Rural Action Caucus (RAC) chairs, vice chairs and members

- Standing committee chairs, vice chairs and members
- Ad hoc committee, task force and advisory board chairs, vice chairs and members

- A t-l a r g e NACo Board Directors

To be considered for a presidential appointment to any of the committees listed above or as an At-large Board Director, you must complete the application by June 11.

Apply for a presidential appointment online: naco.org/appointments.

I look forward to receiving your application and working with you during the 2021-2022 year. **CN**



Johnson

**I LOVE MY
COUNTY
BECAUSE...
ART
CONTEST**

Winning artwork will be featured in a "Counties Matter" calendar, in *County News* and at NACo headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Visit naco.org/art for all the details!



NACo OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

NACo President **Gary Moore** participated in the Missouri Association of Counties’ annual Legislative Day April 19 at the state capitol in Cole County, Mo. In the photo (l-r): NACo Central Region Representative **Tracy Graham** (Audrain County), MAC Past President **Phil Rogers** (Andrew County), Treasurer **Pete Fraizer** (Cape Girardeau County), President **Susette Taylor** (Atchison County), **Moore**, Third Vice President **Lori Smith** (Adair County), Second Vice President **Batina Dodge** (Scotland County) and Vice President **Steve Hobbs** (Audrain County).

NACo STAFF

- **Marc Chavez** has joined NACo as administrative coordinator. He worked as an administrative advisor, executive administrator and executive officer for Bernalillo County, N.M. and in several positions with the City of Albuquerque.
- **Moore** and Executive Director **Matt Chase** addressed the Michigan Association of Counties Legislative Conference April 29 on the American Rescue Plan and how NACo is involved in the efforts to help counties rebuild their local economies. Associate Membership Director **John Losh** celebrated NACo’s partnership with Michigan’s counties — NACo has provided U.S. Flag Retirement boxes to every county in the state.
- Director of Programs and Practices **Ashleigh Holand** held NACo’s first DEI Officers Network Meeting April 30, gathering county members in new DEI positions to discuss issues and share best practices.
- Chief Technology Officer **Rita Reynolds** discussed county technology trends April 15 at the Texas Association of Counties Technology Workshop.
- **Losh** helped Berks County, Pa. celebrate National County Government Month April 21, during their virtual Commissioners Weekly Update and discussed NACo’s Live Healthy Discount Program.
- **Chase** addressed the newly created Congressional Local Elected Caucus April 21 alongside the National League of Cities.
- **Reynolds** and Associate Legislative Director **Eryn Hurley** presented with CompTIA to the California County Information Services Directors Association April 22 on the American Rescue Plan and county technology priorities.
- Associate Legislative Director **Arthur Scott** was a panelist for the FedInsider on Leveraging 5G to Serve the Citizen April 22.
- **Chase** spoke about the American Rescue Plan April 23 at the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia Virtual Annual Membership Meeting.



Chavez



Losh



Holand

PROFILES IN SERVICE

GREG CHILCOTT

NACo Board Member
WIR President
Commissioner
Ravalli County, Mont.



Chilcott

Number of years active in NACo: 13

Years in public service: 29
(20 as an elected official)

Occupation: Commissioner

Education: Bachelor of Science degree in Education

The hardest thing I’ve ever done: Bury my twin brother.

Three people (living or dead) I’d invite to dinner: Jesus, my twin brother and Abraham Lincoln.

A dream I have is to: Travel the British Isles and grow hair on the top of my head...

You’d be surprised to learn: I was a bush pilot and hunting guide in Alaska.

The most adventurous thing I’ve ever done: Move my family north of the Arctic Circle.

My favorite way to relax is: Find a sandy beach and cold beer...

- I’m most proud of: My children and grandchildren.
- Every morning I read: *The Ravalli Republic* newspaper.
- My favorite meal is: Ribeye steak
- My pet peeve is: Dishonesty
- My motto is: If you bring a problem, bring a potential solution.
- The last book I read was: *Modern Warriors: Real Stories from Real Heroes* by Pete Hegseth.
- My favorite movie is: Any Western starring John Wayne or Clint Eastwood.
- My favorite music is: Country, specifically Chris LeDoux
- My favorite U.S. president: Abraham Lincoln
- My county is a NACo member because: NACo is not only our voice in Washington D.C., it is a very effective voice.

My favorite movie is:
Any Western starring
John Wayne or
Clint Eastwood



GET TO KNOW...

Dodge County, Ga.

Welcome, Dodge County, Ga.

Dodge County, established in 1870, is located in central Georgia and was the state's 134th county. It was named for William E. Dodge, a New York businessman and president of the Georgia Land and Lumber Company. Dodge built the first county courthouse as a gift to the county. The 500-square-mile county currently has a population around 22,000.

The Georgia Land and Lumber Company bought more than 300,000 acres of land throughout the county during the 1870s to harvest timber which displaced many local farmers who then shifted their focus from forestry to cotton farming. They later grew crops such as watermelon, peanuts and pecans.

The county seat of Eastman is a popular spot for University of Georgia Bulldog fans and includes a monument marking the burial place of the university's first English bulldog mascot, Mister Angel.


Eastman is referred to as the "Candy Capital of Georgia" for being home to the Stuckey Candy Plant.



"Get to Know" features new NACo member counties.



CN SPOTLIGHT



Richland Creek Reservoir in Paulding County, Ga.

Georgia county celebrates new reservoir

Paulding County, Ga. dedicated its new Richland Creek Reservoir April 23, celebrating the completion of a major step of a project that has been in the works for over 20 years and has spanned four administrations. Richland Creek Reservoir is an off-stream, 305-acre reservoir holding over 3 billion gallons of water pumped to the reservoir from the Etowah River.

An 18-million-gallon water treatment plant will produce drinking water serving Paulding County citizens and businesses. The project slogan, "Water for Today and Tomorrow" represents the county striving to achieve water independence after years of relying on the Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority to supply its water.

The dedication ceremony gathered many current and former county officials who played a part in the planning, permitting and construction necessary to complete the project. The next three years will add a new dam, a reservoir, a water treatment plant, two major pump stations, 20 miles of pipeline and other distribution system improvements.



Your high school senior could win **\$2,500** for college!

Nationwide/NACo 2021 College Scholarship

To enter and for full details, go to naco.org/retirementscholarship or nrsforu.com/scholarship
Submission period: April 1 – May 31, 2021

NACo’S ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING, ELECTION COMING UP

by John Losh

NACo’s 2021 Annual Business Meeting and election will be held in-person and virtually Monday, July 12, at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center in Prince George’s County, Md. During the meeting, credentialed NACo members elect NACo officers, set our national policy agenda and conduct other association business. Voting credentials verify a member county, parish or borough’s eligibility to vote and the number of votes they can cast at the meeting. To be eligible to vote, NACo members are required to:

- Register for the 2021 Annual Conference
- Pay 2021 NACo membership dues in full, and
- Designate voting delegate by Sunday, July 11 at 5 p.m. ET. However, we strongly recommend that counties complete the credentials process by 5 p.m. ET on Friday, July 9 to allow the Credentials Committee and staff to prepare for the first-ever hybrid business meeting.

Since the 2021 Annual Conference is a hybrid event, designated voting delegates can cast their votes in-person or virtually. Regardless of participating in-person or virtually, delegates will use an online/



Wood County, Wisc. Supervisor Lance Pliml speaks during a NACo election. Photo by Denny Henry

mobile voting solution. To facilitate the hybrid voting process, members should only authorize one voting delegate per county and must provide the cell phone number of the voting delegate. In June, the county’s chief elected official and clerk to the county Board will receive more information on how to designate the voting delegate. Designated voting delegates can complete the credentials process while registering online for the conference. A county’s vote total is determined by the amount of dues paid and dues are based on the population of the 2010 census. Every county receives one vote and is allotted an additional vote for each \$1,200 paid in dues.

- Counties with dues of \$450

to \$1,199 receive one vote

- Counties with dues of \$1,200 to \$2,399 receive two votes
- Counties with dues of \$2,400 to \$3,599 receive three votes, and so on.
- The maximum number of votes a county can receive is 51.


NACo’s Credentials Committee will ensure that the process for the meeting is fair and transparent. The committee guides the credentials process, resolves any credentials disputes and assists during the election itself.

The 2021 Credentials Committee members are:

- Hon. Kurt Gibbs, Board Chair, Marathon County, Wisconsin – Chair
- Hon. Melissa Cribbins, Commissioner, Coos County, Oregon

– Member

- Mr. Riki Hokama, Special Assistant to the Mayor, Maui County, Hawaii – Member
- Hon. Brenda Howerton, Commissioner, Durham County, North Carolina – Reading Clerk
- Ms. Alysoun McLaughlin, Deputy Election Director, Montgomery County, Maryland – Tally Clerk
- Mr. Ronald Houseman, Administrative Liaison, Cape Girardeau County, Missouri – Parliamentarian

All NACo members will receive additional information on credentials and appointing a delegate in June. More information can be accessed at [NACo.org/Governance](https://naco.org/Governance) or by emailing credentials@naco.org. 



ESCAMBIA COUNTY, Fla.

The Escambia County, Fla. seal was selected after the Pensacola News Journal sponsored a logo contest. The newspaper narrowed down entries to five finalists whose designs were sent to the county. The board of commissioners voted on a design created by Adriana Weatherford of Pensacola. Her design was implemented as the official seal in 1985. Commissioners voted on the blue and white colors used in the seal.



The winning seal features a scene depicting the Blue Angels flying over the Gulf of Mexico coastline. The Navy’s flying team is based out of Pensacola, the Escambia County seat.

The seal includes seagulls, sea oats, a sailboat and sand dunes to represent features of the county.

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

WORD SEARCH

CAPE MAY COUNTY, N. J.
Created by: Mary Ann Barton

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

COURTHOUSE: The county’s first courthouse was built in 1764.

DUTCH: The county’s name comes from a Dutch explorer named Cornelius Jacobsen Mey. Original paperwork naming misspelled “Mey” as “May.”

FOUNDING: The county was formally created Nov. 12, 1692.

FREEHOLDERS: For years, each county in New Jersey was governed by a Board of Chosen Freeholders. As of 2021, the boards are now officially the County Board of Commissioners. The previous name was considered offensive.

HISTORIC: The county seat of Cape May is designated a national historic landmark.

LIMA: At one time, the county had more than 1,000 farms growing lima beans. In a nod to its agricultural history, the Lima Bean Festival is held each fall.

MUSEUM: Historic Cold Spring Village is an Early American open-air living

history museum.

OPRAH: Oprah Winfrey’s boyfriend Stedman Graham is a native of the county.

PARKS: Half of the county is preserved open space, funded by the Open Space Preservation Tax.

POPULATION: The county’s population stands at about 93,000; summer tourists boost the population to 750,000.

SEASIDE: The county is known for its beautiful beaches and boardwalks.

SOUTHERNMOST: The county is the southernmost county in the state.

TOURISM: Tourism is the county’s single largest industry, generating annual revenues of nearly \$7 billion.

TREASURE: There’s a legend that pirate Captain William Kidd left buried treasure in the county.

ZOO: The Cape May County Park & Zoo includes lions, giraffes, monkeys, camels, bears and more.

finally!

NACo swag is now available online!

naco.org/store

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION



FLORIDA

- The new Sabrina Cohen Adaptive Oceanside Park and Recreation Center will provide **residents and visitors with physical or mental disabilities** access to the beach in **MIAMI-DADE COUNTY**. Commissioner Eileen Higgins announced an award of \$577,000 in General Obligation Bond Funds to the project alongside a contribution of land from the City of Miami Beach. The park will be South Florida's first permanent, accessible beach with an access bridge and will include an oceanside park with an adaptive playground, fitness area and butterfly garden. The second phase of the project includes the construction of an adjacent Adaptive Recreation Center.

CALIFORNIA

Supervisors in **SAN MATEO COUNTY** announced a **free college education program** to send 500 students to school. The county funded a \$2 million grant to the San Mateo County Community College District's Promise Scholars Program which offers scholarships to first-time students to help increase college graduation rates. The grant covers the cost of two years of tuition, books and fees for 500 local students.



GEORGIA

DEKALB COUNTY is not letting the pandemic slow down cookie sales for local Girl Scout troops. The county is planning to buy 20,000 boxes of **Girl Scout cookies** and hand them

out at county food distribution events. CEO Michael Thurmond said recent reports show there are 720,000 unsold boxes of cookies sitting in warehouses in metro Atlanta, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported. Cookie sales account for 20 percent of funding for local troops, putting scholarships and other educational programs at risk with the lack of sales. "This is about investing in the future of young girls in DeKalb County," Thurmond said. "Without the cookie program, many girls from low-income households could not afford to participate in Girl Scouts. Every box sold gives a girl a greater opportunity to lead and succeed."

MICHIGAN

The Office of Community and Economic Development in **WASHTENAW COUNTY** reopened a waitlist for its **roof replacement program** to assist homeowners through the county's owner-occupied housing rehabilitation program. The program assists homeowners with needed home repairs through a licensed contractor. Homeowners who meet eligibility requirements earning 80 percent or



COLORADO

BOULDER COUNTY is living up to its name after large boulders near Boulder Canyon **caused an extended road closure**. The large rockslide closed the canyon and caused damage to the roads. Car-sized boulders blocked the two-lane road requiring crews to work for several days to blast and haul away the rocks before making necessary repairs to the road.



Mayor Demings speaks with the children of Orange County employees during the virtual "Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day."

FLORIDA

- The COVID-19 pandemic didn't stop **ORANGE COUNTY** from celebrating **"Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day."** Children of county employees participated in a virtual experience getting behind-the-scenes tours of the county's regional history center, convention center, parks and recreation department and public works. County Mayor Jerry L. Demings spoke with children and shared his story of becoming the first African American mayor in the county.

less of the area median income can participate in the program, MLive.com reported.

MISSOURI

- Commissioners in **CHRISTIAN COUNTY** are holding an **essay contest** that will place a piece of writing into a time cap-

sule. To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Christian County Historic Courthouse opening, commissioners will open a time capsule from when the courthouse was under construction and replace it with a new one. The essay prompt is "what it's like to be a student in 2021."

• **FRANKLIN COUNTY** implemented a new **mobile app for tax payments** to reduce foot traffic at the county government center. The custom-built County Pay application allows residents to pay taxes via the app and receive a digital copy of the receipt. DMV locations throughout the state are approved to accept the virtual receipts for licensing. "This solution has galvanized our commitment to provide easier, less burdensome methods for our constituents to fulfill their fiscal obligations while keeping them safe as well," Presiding Commissioner Tim Brinker said.

MONTANA

The Economic Development Authority in **RAVALLI COUNTY** is working to fund a **farm to school program** to make school lunches with local food. The county was designated as a Food and Agriculture Development Center by the Montana Department of Agriculture which allows access to state funding to build a new blueprint for making school lunches. The grant ends in June, but the county plans to apply for another grant to build a production model for bringing food to public school students, Montana Public Radio reported.



NEW YORK

• With some younger residents holding out on getting COVID-19 vaccines and **increases in cases among 20- and 30-somethings**, **ERIE COUNTY** is partnering with local breweries to place vaccination sites next to their taprooms and offer a free beer for every vaccine. "Here's a good incentive," County Executive Mark Poloncarz said. "If this doesn't work, I don't know what will."

• **LEWIS COUNTY** is convening a variety of entities to educate and launch new regulated in-home day care facilities, using local organizations, facilities and funds to **mitigate the childcare shortage**. The North Country Regulated Home Day Care Training Bootcamp will include the county's economic development and planning departments, the Community Action Planning Council, Jefferson Community College and the Small Business Development Center. The county currently has 7.8 children for each available regulated childcare slot and 94 percent of the county is considered a "childcare desert."

• The **NASSAU COUNTY** Legislature will require **occupants**

of **historic county-owned properties** to disclose their political contributions, boosting oversight to county real estate deals, *Newsday* reported. The regulation updates 2016 county disclosure laws that required the real estate company that manages the county's historic properties to disclose campaign donations, but not the occupancy permit holders.

NORTH CAROLINA

• The **BUNCOMBE COUNTY** Public Library system will **lend out laptops and hotspots** to patrons 18 and older for up to a month at a time. Grant funding for the program comes from the State Library of North Carolina through the CARES Act.

• **MECKLENBURG COUNTY** is establishing a **violence interruption program**. The Health Department will hire violence interrupters and caseworkers who are from specific neighborhoods. They will be called to crime scenes or hospitals after shootings to talk with victims and perpetrators to try to prevent retaliation. They would also organize events like basketball tournaments or backyard cookouts to foster a sense of community and positive energy, WFAE News reported.

OHIO

An effort to restore **CUYAHOGA COUNTY's tree canopy** will take an all-hands-on-deck approach. The county's assessment shows a 7 percent reduction in trees over six years, and 50 percent since the 1950s.

OREGON

• Drought conditions aren't ideal, but **JACKSON COUNTY** is making the most of the opportunity. Howard Prairie Lake is only about 10 percent full, so the county is **replacing a marina** that often ends up stranded on dry land. Plans call for building a new marina in a deeper part of the lake which, in regular years, will have enough water, *The Mail Tribune* reported.

• **MULTNOMAH COUNTY** approved a resolution eliminating the use of **fossil fuels in all new county buildings**. The buildings will rely on electricity going forward. In 2017, the county switched to purchasing all renewable electricity.

PENNSYLVANIA

• The **ALLEGHENY COUNTY** Council has voted to pass legislation to create an **independent police review board**, which County Executive Rich Fitzgerald said he will sign. *The Post-Gazette* reported that the review board will apply only to Allegheny County police officers, but other municipalities can opt in.

• The **WESTMORELAND COUNTY** Prison Board approved a plan to provide **\$25 in commissary credit** to prison inmates who receive a COVID-19 vaccine. The credits will not be "taxed" by 50 percent like other deposits, to pay for court costs and other



VIRGINIA

HENRICO COUNTY is offering a **free community-based doula program** for Black and African American women, provided by Birth in Color RVA or Urban Baby Beginnings and funded by the Office of Emergency Management. Doulas are trained labor support providers from the same culture and background as the person giving birth. A doula can advocate, perform home visits, help connect persons giving birth to local social services and provide a holistic approach focusing on prenatal and postnatal health.

expenses, *The Tribune Review* reported

TEXAS

President Biden will nominate **HARRIS COUNTY** Sheriff Ed Gonzalez to be **director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)**, the White House announced. Gonzalez ended a program with ICE that trained 10 deputies to determine the immigration status of prisoners and hold for deportation those in the country illegally.

WISCONSIN

BAYFIELD COUNTY is planning a **microgrid** connecting the courthouse and jail complexes. The work will be funded by an Energy Innovation Grant Program award from the Wisconsin Office of Energy Innovation. The county was recognized by Gov. Tony Evers (D) for achieving 100 percent carbon neutrality for county facility electricity usage in 2020.

News from Across the Nation is compiled by Charlie Ban and Rachel Looker. Does your county have news we should know about? Contact cban@naco.org and rlooker@naco.org.

FLORIDA

• **PASCO COUNTY** Commissioner Mike Moore and other volunteers distributed 16,000 pounds of food at a recent **Farm Share food distribution**. Farm Share focuses on solving food insecurity and serves as a not-for-profit organization holding food distributions throughout Florida. The event distributed the 16,000 pounds of food in three hours.

Pasco County Tax Collector Mike Fasano (far left) and Commissioner Mike Moore (far right) help unload a truck for the Farm Share Food distribution.



BRIGHT IDEAS | OKLAHOMA COUNTY, Okla.

County Clerk Applies the Arts to Public Service

PROBLEM:

School funding cutbacks removed civic education and arts classes from schools.

SOLUTION:

Create a program that simultaneously advances the arts and promotes civic engagement in the community.

by Rachel Looker
staff writer

David Hooten is a county clerk in Oklahoma County, Okla. during the day and a world-famous trumpeter on the weekends.

A multi-Grammy and Emmy nominated trumpet player, Hooten has been a professional musician his entire life, producing 22 albums and performing around the world.

"Believe it or not, because of me being known as a trumpet player, everyone answers my phone call," he said.

Hooten used his same passion and appreciation for music when elected to serve as the Oklahoma County clerk. He spearheaded the County Clerk's Spotlight on the Arts program to show students throughout the county the connection between the arts and public service.

"That's kind of the reason I

started at all was when I got into office, I wanted to bring what I know and what I care about into focus," he said.

Through the program, students visit the county courthouse and clerk's office where they listen to elected officials talk about the basics of civics and county government.

Hooten discusses his background with students and shares his story of how discovering music led to his success as a businessman and elected official.

He tells students about the variety of ways creative people can serve in county government and make positive impacts on people's lives through public service.

After learning about county government, students hold a fine arts performance on a large floor in front of Hooten's office. The performances range from dances to full orchestras. If the students are lucky (which they always are), Hooten plays his trumpet alongside them for an impromptu joint performance.

"The Spotlight on the Arts program is really cool for me in that kids get to perform," he said. "It gives them a venue, a place to perform and honestly get to talk to someone who's done it for a living for a long time."

Following the performance,

students receive a personalized certification before visiting the Oklahoma City Museum of Art across the street from the clerk's office for a tour as part of the daylong event.

Hooten said the arts aid in cognitive development for children, when they are allowed to express themselves and show emotion through creative outlets.

"The arts and music are very, very important because it makes children use both sides of their brain," he said.

The Spotlight on the Arts program uses the arts as a tool to educate young artists about local government and provide them with an opportunity to perform publicly.

Hooten said the program advances the arts for students by having them create and give live performances while simultaneously filling a void in students' civic education needs because of school funding cutbacks.

Ahead of the visit to the county courthouse, fine arts educators in schools across the county prepare for the performances two to three months ahead of the scheduled visits.

Overall, 300 students from five different high schools, one middle school and one elementary school have participated in the Spotlight on the Arts program. Before the



Oklahoma County, Okla. Clerk David Hooten plays the trumpet with students during the Spotlight on the Arts program.

pandemic paused the program at the beginning of 2020, 43 students from a middle school participated in the first event of the year. Since 2017, the program has added more schools to participate every year.

The clerk's office partners and collaborates with local groups including the Oklahoma City School Foundation, Oklahoma City Public Schools and Junior Achievement, an area non-profit, to transport students to and from schools to the county building and museum.

The collaboration promotes intergovernmental cooperation and connects county officials with school district officials, Hooten said, adding that after the first two years of the program, Oklahoma Public Schools added civics back as an elective for students.

Hooten also spearheaded the creation of the Youth in Government program to address the lack of civics classes in schools throughout the county. The program is like the Spotlight on the Arts program and provides students with a civics lesson before they visit the museum without the performance aspect.

"[These programs] changed the outcome of what's going on in our public schools and that is really the jewel to all of this," he said. "If we don't get involved and be involved in our schools, we're going to have a real problem." **CN**

The Oklahoma County County Clerk's Spotlight on the Arts program is the recipient of a 2020 NACo Achievement Award in the Arts, Culture and Historic Preservation category.



Students pose with Oklahoma County, Okla. Clerk David Hooten after performing at the clerk's office and learning about county government during the Spotlight on the Arts program.