

## Proposed bipartisan relief bill aids counties

by **Mary Ann Barton**  
editor

U.S. Representatives Antonio Delgado (D-N.Y.), Lee Zeldin (R-N.Y.) and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) introduced legislation last week that provides relief to counties, related to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Direct Support for Communities Act, a bipartisan relief package, provides much-needed aid for counties and cities to address both lost revenue and increased expenditures as the result of the pandemic.

Additionally, U.S. House Appropriations Committee Chair Nita M. Lowey (D-N.Y.) announced, in coordination with Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), that House Democrats will release a proposal for the next phase of coronavirus relief, which will include two separate, equal funds for counties and cities that will address both lost revenue and increased expenditures.

"We are grateful to Representatives Delgado and Zeldin and Senators Gillibrand, Schumer, Manchin, Brown and Jones for their bipartisan efforts to support counties in serving our residents," said NACo Executive Director Matt Chase.


"The Direct Support for Communities Act, and the

proposal announced by Chairwoman Lowey, both reflect counties' essential frontline responsibilities to deliver public health and safety services and our role in fostering economic recovery.

"This crisis is wreaking unprecedented fiscal impacts on America's local governments at a time when our most vulnerable residents and small businesses need our immediate assistance," he said.

"County revenues are plummeting while our costs are skyrocketing," he noted. "We found that the pandemic could result in budgetary impacts of at least \$144 billion over the next 18 months, which could result in major job losses and reductions in public health, business support and essential community services.

"Counties are committed to working in a bipartisan fashion to secure direct, flexible and equitable funding for counties of all sizes. Investing in counties is a nonpartisan issue because we focus on keeping our residents healthy and our communities safe and vibrant."

Find helpful resources related to the pandemic, including response efforts, maps tracking county and state emergency declarations and analyses of federal actions at [www.naco.org/coronavirus](http://www.naco.org/coronavirus). 



**In a sign of the times, David and Lindsay Kranson kiss on their wedding day in front of their children Zoe, 7, and Josie, 6, and Alachua County, Fla. Deputy Clerk Cheryl Jordan at a drive-through window April 30 at the Alachua County Clerk of Court in Gainesville. It was one of two days Clerk of the Court Jess Irby designated for drive-through weddings, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to allow couples who had licenses to do the next best thing to having a ceremony.** Photo by Sam Thomas/special to The Sun

## Natural disaster planning takes on urgency during pandemic

by **Rachel Looker**  
staff writer

Lawrence County, Miss. Emergency Management Director Tony Norwood's county was hit with not one severe weather event in April, but

three — two tornadoes and a severe storm — all in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Easter, EF3 and EF4 tornadoes struck the southern portion of the county, killing a county deputy and his wife. Later in April, in the northern

portion of the county, a severe windstorm destroyed five houses.

"Our first responders, our volunteers, our fire departments, some of them had

*See DISASTERS page 3*

## NACo AIMS TO PUT FACE ON COUNTY EMPLOYEES BATTLING PANDEMIC

by **Mary Ann Barton**  
editor

NACo has launched a campaign to help put a face on frontline workers — many of whom are county employees — battling the coronavirus pandemic.

Called "We Are Counties," the campaign aims to drive home the fact that America's

3.6 million county employees — including EMTs, nurses, doctors and support personnel, as well as law enforcement officials, firefighters, public

health experts, human services professionals, coroners and medical examiners, and other county government employees — are saving lives and serving communities.

NACo announced the creation of the campaign on April 29, in a nationwide call with the media and county officials,

*See CAMPAIGN page 2*





# Report: Counties will need more funding for safe elections

by **Mary Ann Barton**  
editor

A new report released April 30 by election security experts provides an in-depth look at the equipment, staffing, supplies and other costs of administering elections this year that keep voters and election workers safe from the coronavirus while remaining open, accessible, secure and fair.

In Weber County, Utah, Clerk/Auditor Ricky Hatch estimates his county will need to spend \$1 per voter due to

COVID-19.

“Now this might seem low, but keep in mind over 90 percent of voters in Utah already vote by mail,” he said during a media call about the report.

With a population of 260,000 and 110,000 active voters, Weber County is two and a half times larger than the average county in the United States, Hatch pointed out. Seventy percent of counties have a population of less than 50,000 and over half of those counties have fewer than 27,000 people.

Handling elections, he not-



**Ricky Hatch**

ed, is “just one third of my job. Now fortunately, I have three excellent employees who can administer the elections. But

what about a small county that has one employee or even half an employee and who also processes marriage licenses, tax appeals, keeping records or even HR? County clerks always make do with what we have. But with this pandemic, we need help.”

To prepare for an election during a pandemic, Hatch said “we’ll have a single drive-through polling place for in-person voters.” They will need to purchase cleaning equipment, signage, label printers, voter education

materials, personal protective equipment and generators, among other items, he said.

“I can only imagine the cost for counties that aren’t already vote by mail, whether they’re either switching to vote by mail or whether they need to protect in-person voters, including protecting and recruiting poll workers whose average age is 65,” he said.

“The overwhelming majority of elections in this country are administered at a local level

See **ELECTIONS** page 6

## ‘We Are Counties’ campaign highlights frontline workers of COVID-19 pandemic

From **CAMPAIGN** page 1

who talked about how county employees are in overdrive fighting the pandemic.

“Dedicated county employees are addressing unprecedented challenges related to the coronavirus pandemic,” said NACo President Mary Ann

Borgeson, a Douglas County, Neb. commissioner.

“The ‘We Are Counties’ campaign will show everyone that counties are people — public servants who are making tremendous sacrifices, putting their own lives at risk — to save lives and keep all of us healthy and safe,” she said. “That’s what makes them heroes.”

ties are urging federal support for counties’ vast health, safety and economic recovery responsibilities, many of which are mandated by states and the federal government.

“We have been strongly advocating for direct and flexible federal funding for county responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and our lost revenue,” Borgeson added.

“These are more than just numbers in a spreadsheet. We are talking about vital services our residents need and the people who deliver them day in and day out.”

We Are Counties will feature pictures and videos of county workers across the country. Look for #WeAreCounties on social media and learn more at [www.WeAreCounties.org](http://www.WeAreCounties.org).

**SNAP/STATS**



**NATIONAL WINE DAY IS MAY 25**

STATE	NUMBER OF WINERIES
California.....	3,674
Washington .....	689
Oregon .....	566
New York.....	320
Virginia.....	223

Source: [WorldAtlas.com](http://WorldAtlas.com)

Nationwide, counties serve more than 300 million residents by supporting and operating nearly 1,000 hospitals, over 800 long-term care facilities, 750 behavioral health centers, 1,900 public health departments, emergency operations centers and 911 systems.

The We Are Counties social media campaign will highlight the service of counties’ 328,000 hospital workers, 330,000 law enforcement officials, 93,000 first responders and many other frontline warriors in America’s battle against the coronavirus.

The campaign comes at a time when America’s counties are facing at least a \$144 billion budget impact as a result of skyrocketing costs and plummeting revenues. Coun-



**Dr. Gregory Branch, director, Baltimore County of Health**



**Rachel Spivack, library assistant for Loudoun County, Va. Public Library, holds up a “We Are Counties” sign.**



**Edgefield County, S.C. EMS employees hold signs.**

**CountyNews**

**President**  
Mary Ann Borgeson

**Publisher**  
Matthew Chase

**Chief Public Affairs Officer**  
Brian Namey

**Editor and Senior Writer**  
Mary Ann Barton

**Digital Editor and Senior Writer**  
Charlie Ban

**Staff Writer**  
Rachel Looker

**Design Director**  
Leon Lawrence III

**ADVERTISING STAFF**

**Job Market/Classifieds representative**  
National Accounts representative

Mary Ann Barton  
202.942.4223  
FAX 866.752.1573

Published biweekly except August by:  
National Association of Counties  
Research Foundation, Inc.  
660 N. Capitol Street, N.W. STE. 400,  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
202.393.6226 | FAX 866.752.1573

**E-mail** [cnews@naco.org](mailto:cnews@naco.org)  
**Online address** [www.countynews.org](http://www.countynews.org)

The appearance of paid advertisements in County News in no way implies support or endorsement by the National Association of Counties for any of the products, services or messages advertised. Periodicals postage paid at Washington D.C. and other offices.


Mail subscriptions are \$100 per year for non-members. \$60 per year for non-members purchasing multiple copies. Educational institution rate, \$50 per year. Member county supplemental subscriptions are \$20 each. Send payment with order and address changes to NACo, 660 N. Capitol Street, N.W. STE. 400, Washington, D.C. 20001.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to County News, 660 N. Capitol Street, N.W. STE. 400, Washington, D.C. 20001

(USPS 704-620) n (ISSN: 0744-9798)  
© National Association of Counties  
Research Foundation, Inc.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES

**NACo**



We are committed to getting County News on your desktop ASAP. Send your address corrections to [cnews@naco.org](mailto:cnews@naco.org).



# COVID-19 impacts natural disaster response: 'New territory for almost everyone'

From DISASTERS page 1

masks on to do what they needed to do, but it's kind of hard to wear a mask trying to talk and assess folks and run a chainsaw," Norwood said. "For about 26 hours, social distancing and COVID-19, which is not a good thing to do, but, it kind of went out the window for a little while."

The county is working with the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and the state department of health to obtain personal protective equipment, some of which is going to a Red Cross-affiliated shelter in the county where masks are required.

"COVID-19 has changed everything," he said. "We're trying to re-write our comprehensive emergency management plan as we go."

## Hurricanes

Ahead of hurricane season, Leon County, Fla. Emergency Management Director Kevin Peters said the county is working with the state's division of emergency management, the FEMA regional office and the state's emergency management association to discuss changes to shelter operations.

New measures at shelters may include entrance screening, taking temperatures, using CDC guidance for health questionnaires and creating isolation areas for those who may present COVID-19 symptoms.

When it comes to providing long-term shelters for individuals who have lost their homes, Peters said the county is holding conversations with the Red Cross to discuss shelter options in a post-storm environment while dealing with COVID-19. New criteria may include a cap on the number of people per square foot. The county is also working on plans to allocate personal protective equipment for those in shelters.

"There is no question that the coronavirus will change how Florida and Leon County shelter vulnerable populations," said Leon County Commission Chairman Bryan Desloge. "But what won't change is our county's commitment to keeping our community safe in the face of a storm."



Leon County Emergency Management Director Kevin Peters stands in the emergency operations center following its activation during Hurricane Michael in October 2018.

Peters predicts challenges with some individuals who may be less willing to evacuate during a hurricane.

"They may fear not knowing where to go or have a fear of going to a shelter," he said. "We hope that individuals make good plans and take time to think about what they're going to do if a disaster affects their community."

Whenever the county is hit by a hurricane, Peters said the department reviews plans and obtains recommendations for future disasters.

"It's kind of the silver lining to the COVID-19 experiences... it's given us a chance to develop newer plans and lessons learned that we can apply with respect to coordinating," he said.

In Broward County, Fla., Regional Emergency Services and Communications Director Tracy Jackson said the main difference preparing for this hurricane season with the pandemic

is dealing with individuals who are COVID-19 positive being in close proximity to each other following a hurricane.

"We plan on using social distancing as well as masks and gloves to help provide as much protection as possible," he said.

## Wildfires

Sonoma County, Calif. Director of Emergency Management Chris Godley said his department turns to concurrent hazard planning ahead of fire season with an overlapping event such as COVID-19.

"We've never operated with a potential set of national hazards compounded by manmade hazards like power shutoffs against the backdrop of a global pandemic," he said. "This is new territory for almost everyone."

Last year, Godley said the county prepared for two concurrent threats with fires and power shutoffs. The county worked to find ways to alert

residents about the spread of fires with loss of power.

"This year, we're looking at taking both those hazards and bringing in that third one, of COVID-19," he said. "The COVID-19 complications require us to do a lot more detailed planning and forces us to change the way we're going to respond to the event."

When it comes to power shutoffs during the pandemic, Godley said he is working with the California Public Utilities Commission to ensure that power remains on at hospitals.

He referenced potential complications during the pandemic, such as providing warnings to the public now that people are using different communication systems such as Zoom calls.

"I can't insert a warning message into an internet streaming device," he said.

If evacuations are necessary, Godley said he sees challenges with the lack of resources and

mutual aid as well as safely finding ways to evacuate individuals whose health may be compromised and they are breathing in smoke.

The county is looking at more diverse shelter options so fewer people are housed in each location and can practice social distancing. For those who may have COVID-19-related symptoms, hotels are being considered rather than a congregate shelter.

Godley said he anticipates more individuals will need to stay at community shelters because they won't be able to stay with friends or family, over health concerns.

Currently, the planning focus is aimed at evacuating larger areas earlier and creating more resources to care for individuals after they're forced out of their home, he said.

"Our model for disaster response is to slow resources from unaffected areas into affected or impacted areas, that includes nonprofits, government organizations, volunteers," he said. "We do believe that is going to be somewhat limited this year."

Godley said the county is focusing on spreading the message of preparedness to residents because "their ability to fall back on large institutional resources may not be an option."

"We need our residents to understand that this next time around if we have a COVID-19 wave coming and they turn off the power and if a fire starts, it could be really challenging," Godley said.

Godley said the long-term effects of COVID-19 on fiscal health will have a significant impact on public safety.

"We're going to need real resources to ensure that as our communities are lacking resources because of COVID-19 to respond, that we are in the position to step in and support them," he said.

FEMA's Public Assistance Program provides funding to local governments for emergency measures related to COVID-19. The agency uses an online information technology tool called the PA Grants Portal that can be accessed at <https://grantee.fema.gov>. **CN**

# CAPITAL LOOP

## HHS offers COVID-19 funds for hospitals

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will distribute \$12 billion to hospitals in areas hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, with \$10 billion going to 395 hospitals that provided inpatient care for 100 or more COVID-19 patients through April 10, 2020. The agency will distribute an additional \$2 billion to hospitals serving a disproportionate share of low-income and uninsured patients. Funding will also target rural hospitals and rural Community Health Centers. Find out more here: <https://bit.ly/2SKhqCO>.

## Supplemental child-care funding

Maintaining access to child-care for essential workers is a major challenge for county and state governments, and Congress allocated \$3.5 billion in supplemental funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program in the CARES Act. Counties play a role in administering the federal child-care assistance program in at least eight states. The supplemental funding must be used for activities authorized under the CCDBG Act that prevent, prepare for and respond to COVID-19. The Center on Law and Social Policy projects the child-care

industry needs \$9.6 billion a month in federal assistance to stay afloat.

For counties administering CCDBG, the CARES Act supplemental funding is a crucial support that will help provide child care services to first responders and essential workers and extend relief to child care businesses. However, the supplemental funding is likely only a down payment on what the child care sector requires to weather the economic crisis. As states and localities contemplate reopening, child care providers will face new challenges and expenses associated with social distancing and sanitation measures.

## DOT: \$36 billion in CARES Act funds

NACo has published an analysis of funding opportunities from the Department of Transportation as it relates to COVID-19. It's available at <https://bit.ly/3cbQ6VY>. DOT released guidance on the CARES Act's \$36.1 billion in funding for programs to provide relief from the pandemic. It includes \$10 billion in Airport Improvement Program funds, which do not require a local match and are available to airports that are a part of the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems and may have lost revenues due to the pandemic. The Federal Transit Administration is awarding \$25 billion for public transit systems, which includes \$22.7 billion for large and small urban transit systems and \$2.2 billion for rural areas, and \$30 million for the Tribal Transit Formula Grants program, with no local match required, and is available to support capital, operating and other expenses eligible under the grant programs incurred since Jan. 20 as a result of a county's efforts to prevent, prepare for and respond to COVID-19, including lost revenue.

tive applicants in their respective regions, as well as assistance and support to grantees across the duration of the initiative. Visit [www.arc.gov](http://www.arc.gov) or [www.dra.gov](http://www.dra.gov) for more information.

## DOT awarding \$311 million

The Department of Transportation will award \$311 million in FY 2020 for projects that improve the safety, efficiency and/or reliability of intercity passenger and freight rail systems. Applications are due June 19. For more information visit: <https://bit.ly/3dlivc8>.

## COVID-19 workforce legislation introduced

U.S. House Education and Labor Committee Chair Bobby Scott (D-Va.) and U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-Wash.) led congressional Democrats in introducing the Relaunching America's Workforce Act, which would invest \$15 billion in America's workforce development system in response to the negative impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the nation's workers and businesses. The legislation authorizes funding to help workers sharpen their skills and quickly re-enter the workforce as the U.S. economy emerges from steep decline.

It is based on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act model and funding would be directed through existing workforce development programs to direct resources to the local level as quickly as possible. The legislation includes \$7.5 billion for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I, including \$2.5 billion each for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth grants, a key workforce funding program for state and county governments.

NACo collaborated with the National Association of Workforce Boards NAWB, the National League of Cities and the United States Conference of Mayors USCM to send a letter of support for the legislation.

## Rural workforce funding opportunity

The U.S. Department of Labor is making \$29.2 million available in a second round of grant funding for the Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities Initiative, for which county governments are eligible.

The grants take a long-term view toward assisting eligible communities in diversifying their economies and expanding and diversifying partnerships by investing in local strategies developed by regional partners. Ranging from \$150,000 to \$1.5 million, the grants also help serve those receiving employment and training services from organizations in regions affected by the opioid crisis.

The Appalachian Regional Commission and the Delta Regional Authority will provide technical assistance to prospec-

**ASPIRE  
2020 AWARD:**  
Honoring Innovative Leadership  
in Promoting County Employee  
Retirement Savings

For more details on the **2020 Aspire Awards**, please log onto [www.naco.org/aspire](http://www.naco.org/aspire).

If you have any questions, please contact **Carlos Greene** at 770.881.0100 or [cgreene@naco.org](mailto:cgreene@naco.org)





# County animal shelters focus on fostering

by **Charlie Ban**  
senior writer

In homes across the country, people's hair is getting shaggy and they're probably looking a little worse for the wear from stress and isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Their newly adopted pets, however, have never looked better, finding comfort and security in their new homes while also relieving demands on county-run animal shelters.

“Because of the community, we’ve been able to keep our staff safe and take care of the animals.”

The Franklin County, Ohio Dog Shelter recently adapted its Holiday Sleepover program to match foster dogs with humans who are spending a lot more time at home, now that many are working there.

“I think a lot of people were excited, we usually did this for three or four days around the holidays, but now, with people being at home, the dogs are giving them as much comfort as they are giving the dogs when they were able to leave the shelter,” said Andrew Kohn, spokesman for the shelter.

“We’re getting photos of dogs lying all over couches, going on walks — we know they’re having a good time.”

Kohn said that of the 300 dogs that were matched with foster families, about half were formally adopted already, and he expected it was just a matter of time for other families to make the same move.

When Cheryl Schneider, director of Animal Services for Williamson County, Texas first heard about the threat that COVID-19 posed, back in February, she started putting out requests for fosters immediately.

“We knew if a number of staff got sick, we wouldn’t be able to take care of the animals that we had,” she said. On top of caring for animals awaiting adoption, the shelter cares for “unadopt-



**Martinez poses with Williamson County, Texas Animal Services staff member Shyah Johnson.** Photo by Shyah Johnson

able animals,” some with medical needs. The shelter was well over capacity at the time, with 139 dogs and 81 cats.

By the end of March, even with numbers increasing, the county had 118 dogs fostered, with 43 more at the shelter, and 105 cats fostered, with 14 at the shelter.

“We maintained that through the end of April. It’s amazing how much the community stepped up to help out,” Schneider said. “If they find an animal, they’ve mostly been keeping them at home and trying to find their owners themselves, so they’re staying in the neighborhood where they probably live.”

The county has also limited intake of animals to emergency cases, strays and dogs that have been deemed to be a biting risk. “You can’t just decide you don’t like your cats scratching furniture,” she said. “We’ve had inquiries, and over the last few weeks, a lot of families have resolved the issues that were a problem and they’re getting along fine.”

Other counties, like Salt Lake County, Utah, have offered free pet food and supplies to help make it possible for people to keep animals in their homes

and out of shelters in the face of financial challenges. The demand for animals was so great that Riverside County, Calif.’s Animal Services’ Riverside shelter had no animals for adoption as of April 8, though in a video posted to the department’s Facebook page, a woman identified as Julie said that population could change.

Shelters have been designated essential services, but most have been able to let administrative staff work from home to limit public interaction to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Walk-ins have been phased out, replaced by appointments to adopt.

“We’re trying our best to protect customers and staff,” Schneider said.

Williamson County broke its kennel staff into shifts, and Franklin County also closes the shelter two days a week to allow for additional cleaning. Franklin County also had to cancel weekly free classes for new pet owners.

“We’re still there for them if people have problems, they can call and we’ll help them out, talk them through their questions,” Kohn said.

Franklin County’s shelter successfully argued that spay-

ing and neutering qualified as essential surgeries that are still allowed during the pandemic.

For Williamson County and Schneider, who retired May 8, things have been successful despite the chaos surrounding the pandemic.

“Because we’ve kept such a low census with the animals, it’s been a lot less stressful because we’re not trying to figure out where to put animals in the shelter,” she said. “It’s better than it normally is this time of year, when we’re slammed,” when kittens are born.

“Because of the community, we’ve been able to keep our staff safe and take care of the animals that we have.”

Decatur County, Ind.’s shelter has not been as lucky. The four person-staff there was cut in half when two tested positive for COVID-19. The looming budget crunches facing county

governments may affect animal shelters.

The Associated Press reported that Miami-Dade County, Fla.’s expected \$300 million budget cut could mean a \$2 million loss for animal services.

Kohn said the Franklin County shelter, which is fully funded by the county, earns half of that from dog license sales.

“The county commissioners have told us that some non-essential things might have to be on the backburner for a year, a new play area in the shelters, but in terms of food and other essential supplies, we feel like we’re in a good position because of the services we provide,” he noted. “We’re still hiring essential staff.”

“The commissioners recognize we’re dealing with live animals and addressing safety risks.” **CN**

Hire Quality Staff  
@ Jobs Online  
[www.naco.org/jobsonline](http://www.naco.org/jobsonline)



# 'No voter should have to choose between their health and their right to vote'

From ELECTIONS page 2

by a local entity, not by a state. States are essential and helpful partners, but counties administer our country's elections," he noted.

The authors of the report, "Ensuring Safe Elections: Federal Funding Needs for State and Local Governments During the Pandemic," worked closely with election officials in five states with varied election systems to develop state-specific profiles of their expenses.

The CARES Act included \$400 million in federal funding for state and local governments' election needs. The total need of the five states featured in Ensuring Safe Elections is at least \$414 million.

Experts at the Alliance for Securing Democracy, the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law, the R Street Institute, and the University of Pittsburgh Institute for Cyber Law, Policy, and Security authored Ensuring Safe Elections. They profiled Georgia, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

"The funding Congress has provided so far is an important start, but it won't come close to covering the needs of the states we studied to protect their elections during the pandemic, let alone what is needed for the entire country," said Elizabeth Howard, counsel in the democracy program at the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law and former deputy commissioner for the Virginia Department of Elections.

"Congress must invest now in the infrastructure that will stop COVID-19 from interfering with Americans' ability to cast ballots and have them count."

The election officials in the five states profiled in Ensuring Safe Elections, like many election officials across the country, are preparing both to expand voting by mail and to establish in-person polling that meets public health standards for preventing the spread of the coronavirus.

A sampling of the costs identified by state and local election officials interviewed for the report:



## Voting by mail

- Printing and mailing absentee ballot applications
- Purchasing centralized vote-tabulation machines (high-speed scanners)
- Purchasing online absentee ballot application tools
- Conducting absentee ballot education and outreach

## In-person voting locations

- Supplying personal protective equipment for poll workers, hand sanitizer, gloves, single-use pens and cleaning

supplies

- Providing plexiglass sneeze guards for poll workers
- Arranging for curbside voting

"No voter should have to choose between their health and exercising their constitutional right to vote," said Paul Rosenzweig, resident senior fellow for national security and cybersecurity at the R Street Institute, and former deputy assistant secretary for Homeland Security. "That is why Congress must listen to the states and work in a bipartisan fashion to quickly

provide the resources they need to ensure all Americans can vote safely and securely during this pandemic."

Ensuring Safe Elections finds that covering these costs will fall largely to local election jurisdictions, as opposed to state governments. In Missouri and Ohio, local governments will need to cover more than 90 percent of total election-related costs.

"Congress needs to put politics aside and fund state and local efforts to implement essential election security measures," said David Levine,

Elections Integrity fellow at the Alliance for Securing Democracy. "The security of our elections depends on the work of 50 states and over 10,000 local jurisdictions. Our decentralized elections are a strength, but they don't take place in a vacuum. This report lays out the stark contrast between what state and local officials in five states need to run safe and secure elections during the COVID-19 pandemic and what Congress has provided so far. It's not a pretty picture, but Americans and their representatives need to see it."

"Pennsylvania's election officials, like so many others across the country, are facing an unprecedented challenge to our democracy during this public health crisis," said Christopher Deluzio, policy director, University of Pittsburgh Institute for Cyber Law, Policy and Security. "More funding is urgently needed to make voting safe and accessible, and the federal government, in particular, must step up and provide additional financial support to the states."

To read "Ensuring Safe Elections: Federal Funding Needs for State and Local Governments During the Pandemic" visit <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/ensuring-safe-elections>.

WORD SEARCH

GREENE COUNTY, Mo.  
Created by: Mary Ann Barton

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

**BATTLE:** The first major Civil War battle west of the Mississippi Aug. 10, 1861, took place in the county, the Battle of Wilson Creek.

**CABIN:** A log cabin served as the first county courthouse, from 1833 to 1835.

**CARDINALS:** Springfield has its own Minor League Baseball team, playing at Hammons Field; the team is owned by the St. Louis Cardinals.

**CAVE:** Fantastic Caverns offers drive-through tram tours through a cave created by an ancient underground river.

**CHOCOLATE:** The county is home to craft chocolate-maker, Askinosie Chocolate.

**COLLEGES:** The county is home to three colleges: Missouri State, Drury and Ozarks Technical Community College.

**COURTHOUSE:** The county has had five courthouses; the current one was built in 1996.

**KICKS:** "Get your kicks, on Route 66," is the song made famous by the roadway built in 1926, starting from Springfield, Mo.

**HICKOK:** Gunslinger James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok shot a man to death in the downtown Springfield Square in 1865 during a shootout after losing a card game and his watch. A jury found him not guilty.

**NATHANAEL:** The county is named for American Revolutionary War General Nathanael Greene.

**OZARKS:** The county seat is known as the "Queen City of the Ozarks" (the Ozark Mountains).

**SOUTHWEST:** The county is located in the southwest part of the state.

**SPRINGFIELD:** The county seat is Springfield, population 168,122 (in 2018).

**TURNER:** Award-winning actress Kathleen Turner was born in the county.

**ZOO:** The Dickerson Park Zoo, a division of the Springfield-Greene County Park Board, is home to more than 500 animals that roam across 60,000 acres.



# Overflow hospitals to aid in possible virus surge



In two weeks, the Greater Columbus Convention Center transformed into a 1,000-bed overflow surge hospital facility in Franklin County, Ohio. Photo by CTV Columbus Government Television

by Rachel Looker  
staff writer

In just two weeks, the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Franklin County, Ohio transformed from stands in exhibit halls to beds in makeshift hospital rooms.

"It's quite the awakening to see what's generally a place where people are moving about, laughing, enjoying their experience to a place with hospital beds for people who will be sick and working their way through a very serious virus," Franklin County Commissioner Kevin Boyce said.

The county is the controlling entity of the convention center, which has been turned into a 1,000-bed overflow surge hospital facility that is cooperatively operated by three hospital systems — the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, Mount Carmel and Ohio Health.

Franklin County is investing up to \$5 million in the facility as part of a contract with state and local emergency management agencies and the Ohio

National Guard.

"We built the Franklin County convention center to host many, many things in its lifetime and the least it could be is a hospital on behalf of the residents of the community," Franklin County Commissioner John O'Grady said.

Centrally located downtown to all the hospitals in the community, the 375,000-square-foot facility had the space available after the COVID-19 outbreak prevented any large gatherings.

Inside the facility, cubicles separate the open space into small rooms with curtains in the front and patient beds inside.

Meeting rooms have been transformed into break rooms, pharmacies and locker rooms.

The convention center will serve solely as an overflow facility for COVID-19 patients and is not currently being used.

"We've got patients going into the hospitals every day," O'Grady said. "We just haven't gotten to a point where we need the overflow yet."

Franklin County Emergency Management Director Jeff

Young said the facility will be used for recovering COVID-19 patients with non-critical care needs.

If hospitals are experiencing a surge in patients, Young will activate the facility, which needs 72 hours to become fully operational.

"We built 72 hours for them [the hospital systems] to stock it, get their staff over there and then begin to receive patients," Young said.

The convention center is providing the utilities, food services and janitorial services as well as sanitation stations and hand washing stations.

The biggest challenge to constructing the surge hospital in only two weeks was bringing in generators and running cabling to support backup power, Young said.

"Should the situation arise, we will have the resources to serve the residents the best we can and that's what counts most and quite frankly that's what the citizens and residents require from us to serve their needs," Boyce said.

Patients in the county will first



Commissioner John O'Grady tours the 1,000-bed overflow surge hospital facility at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Franklin County, Ohio. Photo by CTV Columbus Government Television

visit the main hospitals where they will be registered and triaged before being transferred to the surge facility, Young explained.

Those patients who are too sick to go home but not sick enough to stay in the main hospital will stay at the convention center.

"We can't be in a situation where the residents of Franklin County have a need during this time and it's not met," O'Grady said. "We can't be in a situation and look back and say we weren't prepared."

O'Grady said the facility would also be available for patients

from surrounding counties.

"It would be great for us to have built this and never see patients," he said. "That would be fantastic."

O'Grady, Boyce and Young credited the collaborative efforts from the hospital systems working together in getting the facility off the ground. Each of the three hospital systems will independently run a section of the surge facility.

"When the community is in need, when residents of the community are in need, people step up, stack hands and make

See **HOSPITALS** page 10

# NACo Adds Telemedicine Access, Increased Rx Discounts to 'Live Healthy' Program

by John Losh

As millions of Americans are being laid off, working fewer hours and needing greater access to healthcare due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many county residents are stretching every dollar.

Especially during these challenging times, NACo has been working to bring county residents new ways to cut healthcare costs through our "Live Healthy" discount program. Now more than ever, saving feels better.

At no cost to NACo members, counties can provide significant savings for residents and their pets through NACo's Live Healthy discount program which provides savings on prescription, health and dental costs.

Since 2004, nearly 1,300 counties, parishes and boroughs have enrolled to save

residents over \$705 million on their prescriptions.

To assist during this time of need, the Live Healthy program has been enhanced to help residents save in new ways:

- 24/7 telemedicine access through the health discount program, providing unlimited calls with a clinician without co-pays
- An average of 30 percent savings — an increase of 6 percent — on medications with the no-cost Rx discount card
- More affordable monthly fees for the health and dental discount programs

No contracts or agreements are required for counties, parishes or boroughs to offer the Live Healthy discount program to residents.

NACo provides comprehensive marketing materials to promote this program to your community at no cost.

To learn more about the pro-

gram, order marketing materials or sign up, visit [NACo.org/health](http://NACo.org/health).

In participating counties, residents with and without insurance can visit [LiveHealthyCard.com](http://LiveHealthyCard.com) to enroll and save on their prescriptions, health services and dental care.

## Prescription discounts

Residents simply present their no cost discount to save on prescriptions at more than 66,000 participating pharmacies across the country.\* The discount card also offers instant rebates on 69 common prescriptions.

## Health discounts \*

For the new low price of \$5.95 a month for individuals and \$7.95 for families, residents can enroll online at [LiveHealthyCard.com](http://LiveHealthyCard.com) or call 877.573.2395.

The health program provides: 24/7 telemedicine access and

savings between 15 percent and 70 percent on vision, hearing, diabetic supplies, prepaid lab work and diagnostic imaging.

## Dental discounts \*\*

For the new low price of \$5.95 a month for individuals and \$7.95 for families, residents can enroll online at [LiveHealthyCard.com](http://LiveHealthyCard.com) or call 877.573.2395.

The dental program can provide savings up to 50 percent on most dental procedures with over 11,000 dentists, including check-ups, cleanings, x-rays, fillings, root canals, extractions and dentures.

These discounts are provided with no annual limits, no shopping around, no forms to com-

plete, no waiting periods, no age or income requirements, no medical condition restrictions and no catch.

The Live Healthy discount program is not health insurance and cannot be used in conjunction with health insurance.

To learn more about the program or sign up, visit [NACo.org/health](http://NACo.org/health) or contact NACo with questions about the program at [LiveHealthy@naco.org](mailto:LiveHealthy@naco.org).

*\*Savings may vary by drug and by pharmacy.*

*\*\*Available in all states, except Washington. **CN***

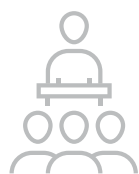
*John Losh is the Membership Outreach manager in NACo's Public Affairs Department.*



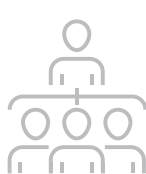
## HIGH PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The NACo High Performance Leadership Academy is a 12-week, online course that connects your staff with practical leadership training.

## THE ACADEMY FOCUSES ON FIVE ESSENTIAL SKILLS:



**LEAD**



**ORGANIZE**



**COLLABORATE**



**DELIVER**



**COMMUNICATE**

The NACo High Performance Leadership Academy empowers frontline county government professionals with fundamental, practical leadership skills to deliver results for counties and residents.

**Find out more at [NACo.org/Skills](http://NACo.org/Skills)**

With a curriculum developed by **General Colin Powell** and public and private sector leaders, NACo High Performance Leadership Academy gives students the opportunity to learn from world-class faculty. All content is guided by an expert facilitator.





# Counties celebrate National County Government Month

by Rachel Looker  
staff writer

Counties celebrated this year's National County Government Month throughout April to promote county programs and raise awareness about services that counties provide. This year's theme was "Counties Matter" to highlight how counties make a difference and have an impact on county residents.

The current circumstances of dealing with the coronavirus emphasized how America's counties are on the front lines when it comes to responding to this public health crisis. While many activities that were planned were not able to be held because of the virus, counties found virtual ways to highlight the work they do. Here are just a few examples of how counties marked the month across the country:


- The Washington State Association of Counties celebrat-

ed National County Government Month by tweeting fun facts and photos about counties throughout the state.

- The North Dakota County Auditors Association announced the winner of a design contest for the "I Voted" sticker to be used for the 2020 elections. The association announced the winner at the end of April to celebrate National County Government Month. Auditors visited classrooms to talk about the contest as well as the role of county governments and elections.
- Livingston County, N.Y. shared information about National County Government Month on social media by posting about NACo's iCivics and Counties Work game, which teaches students about the functions of county government.
- The Arizona Association of



Counties highlighted why counties matter throughout the month by posting the job descriptions of various county officials including county assessors, county attorneys, clerk of the court, constables, justices of the peace, recorders, sheriffs, county supervisors and treasurers.

- Saline County, Kan. honored county departments and their work by posting photos on Instagram. The county posted images of county officials from different departments with quotes about what they do and why county government is important.
- The Washington Association of County Officials shared graphics and videos on social media, highlighting county departments and the jobs county officials do to allow followers to "Know Your County Officials." 

## County public health team sidelined by COVID-19

by Charlie Ban  
senior writer

Eric Zgodzinski's team was about to play a big series, but most of his team was on the disabled list.

Only for public health personnel, the big games were played in late March, as counties across the country grappled with preparing for the COVID-19 pandemic.

Zgodzinski, the Toledo-Lucas County, Ohio health commissioner, had an employee go home sick.

"We had him tested, but back then, tests were taking forever to come back," he said.

The department went along, responding to COVID-19 issues in the county, when Zgodzinski's epidemiologist got sick. Then most of his leadership team, most of whom were working together in the

county's emergency operations center, also fell ill.

"We're trying to run out of the department like we would for a disaster," he said. "We were becoming the disaster."

Zgodzinski himself self-quarantined while the office was closed and deep cleaned. His staff rested and recovered.

"It took about a week, but we got back to half strength," he said. "Then we recovered, but for a few days, we were decimated."

Right when the demand for their services was the greatest. Other colleagues stepped up to the plate to fill in.

"We're public health, we know the issues," Zgodzinski said. "The message to my peers in the state, and they listened, was 'who knows how we got it in here?'"


"It's a nefarious disease. The

person with the temperature, you know to exclude them. The person who is asymptomatic? You don't know who they are."

Some county services, like the TB and STD clinics and an immunization program, were unavailable for a few days once the building was closed to the public, but nutritional programs continued.

"For the most part we were fully operational, the department never shut down, we just shut down some programs out of an abundance of caution," Zgodzinski said.

His leadership team then transitioned to working from home, and has been doing so since.

"The biggest challenge at that point was conducting business while remaining compliant with HIPPA," he said. 

GET TO  
KNOW...

Monroe County, Ill.

Welcome, Monroe County, Ill.

Monroe County is located in southwest Illinois and was founded in 1816, two years before Illinois became a state. Named after James Monroe, the fifth president of the United States, the county has a population just under 34,000. The county is bordered on the west by the Mississippi River and is located 11 miles from St. Louis, Mo. Waterloo, the county's largest city, is the county seat.

In the 1600s, the French arrived and settled around a spring named Belle Fontaine or beautiful fountain, which became one of the first American settlements in what is now Illinois. The spring is located south of Waterloo on land now owned by the county's historical society.

**Eugene Field, known as the "poet of childhood" and the "father of the personal newspaper column," spent his childhood in the county.** The Field House Museum can be visited in St. Louis, Mo.



Eugene Field  
in his finest.



# Broadband demands during COVID-19 reveal disparities

by Rachel Looker  
staff writer

As the COVID-19 situation brings increased demands in teleworking, virtual learning and even telemedicine, counties are turning to public hotspots to meet the needs of residents.

In rural Pope County, Minn., Commissioner Paul Gerde said high speed internet needed for downloads and uploads is a challenge. With hills and trees part of the county's landscape, wireless internet does not work well in the area.

With Minnesota under a stay-at-home order, the disparities in broadband have become even more apparent.

"We have to be diligent and tell our legislators it's important to us," Gerde said. "Just because our area doesn't have very good service, we shouldn't be left out."

Gerde, who serves on the county's broadband committee, said the county is making efforts to get high speed internet through state grants.

"In rural Minnesota with this telemedicine and kids learning from home, it's very important," he said.

Gerde said one of his constituents told him she brings her kids more than 15 miles each day to do homework in the parking lot of a school because she is unable to get internet service at home.

"You shouldn't have to bring your kids 15 miles to get their homework done," he said. "This day and age, we should be able to have similar service."

Across the country, many school districts have converted school buses into mobile hotspots that can drive to un-



A Polk County public school bus serves as a rolling Wi-Fi hotspot to provide wireless access to students throughout Polk County, Fla. Photo by Stacy DaSilva, WFLA

derserved areas of a county to provide internet access for students.

School buses from Caldwell County, N.C. to Polk County, Fla. are being outfitted to serve as "rolling hotspots," specifically to meet the needs of students who are trying to complete assignments and communicate with teachers.

In Pierce County, Wash., Pierce Transit launched a pilot program in partnership with Pierce County Emergency Management and local school districts to provide free mobile Wi-Fi hot spots for students via transit buses.

With schools in Washington closed for the remainder of the year, students can park near the buses, where the Wi-Fi extends 100 feet, to get their work done. The buses have been parking at two locations in the county.

Sonoma County, Calif.'s Office of Education is working with schools to help connect students to the internet, specifically in rural areas of the county where the lack of broadband

has been a long-term issue.

Cody Grosskopf, director of Information Technology at the Sonoma County Office of Education, said schools are trying to provide hotspots for those without internet access at home, but the COVID-19 situation has put hotspots in high demand, and many are on backorder.

"I'm not sure long-term what's going to happen basically in terms of access," he said.

Beyond meeting the needs of students, counties are using county-owned facilities as well as public spaces to provide free internet access for all residents.

In New Castle County, Del., county residents can use free, drive-thru Wi-Fi hotspots, which were available prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. County Executive Matt Meyer recently announced that an additional 12 hotspots would be made available, making a total of 22 located throughout the county.

The hotspots are made available in partnership with Delaware Division of Libraries, Uni-

versity of Delaware, Verizon, Assurance Media, Cisco-Meraki and the New Castle County Information Systems and Public Works departments.

To use the hotspots, county residents must remain in their cars and practice social distancing. The hotspots are available during the library's operational hours. A GIS map allows residents to view locations where they can access the hotspots.

Similarly, in Baltimore County, Md., County Executive John Olszewski announced exterior Wi-Fi resources at Baltimore County Public Library branches.

A GIS map is also available and shows the Wi-Fi locations for county residents to find the closest available access point.

"This crisis has upended life in countless ways, and it requires us to find creative solutions to the challenges we face," Olszewski said. "We hope these new Wi-Fi resources will help narrow the access gap as we continue to work around the

clock to identify additional resources to support Baltimore County families during these trying times."

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, Goochland County, Va. installed hotspots at county-operated facilities. Administrative Services Manager Paul Drumwright said the hotspots are now being used during the COVID-19 pandemic and serve as internet access points for those who live in rural areas.

Additionally, he said the school buildings in the county are all offering Wi-Fi in their parking lots as well as the county's library and local YMCA.

"We did that just to make sure we could give more options to our citizens so that hopefully people won't be crowding to the existing locations and make sure to keep social distance even if they're in their vehicles," he said.

Drumwright said the state has reached out to localities and put together a statewide GIS map highlighting hotspot locations available to residents.

"Going through this has made it even more clear for us how this is something that some of our citizens are at a disadvantage because of the lack of broadband at their location," Drumwright said. "That's given us just more reason to keep pushing on our broadband initiatives to extend service."

The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) is holding a Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Auction and directing up to \$20.4 billion over 10 years for broadband networks in unserved areas. The commission is hosting a webinar free to the public on Wednesday, May 20 at 2 p.m. **CN**

## Establishing facilities: 'We can't be in a situation and look back and say we weren't prepared'

From HOSPITALS page 7

things happen," O'Grady said.

In addition to other larger surge facilities such as the USNS Comfort and USNS Mercy hospital ships and the emergency hospital created at the Javits Center in New York City, counties throughout the country are turning to surge

hospitals as back-up options for potential overcapacities in hospital systems.

Similar to Franklin County, San Mateo County, Calif. is working with federal and state partners to establish a field treatment site with up to 250 low-acuity beds at the San Mateo County Event Center.

"The latest projections esti-

mate that a medical surge could push the hospitals in our county to capacity and we'll need another location to house patients requiring particular levels of care," County Manager Mike Callagy said in a statement.

"We can't just wait to see if this will happen."

Also in California, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced a partner-

ship with the state of California, Los Angeles County, Dignity Health and Kaiser Permanente to establish the Los Angeles Surge Hospital with additional beds and ICU capacity for those seeking medical care.

The facility operates as a referral hospital with the County of Los Angeles' Department of Health Services working to

coordinate intake and transfer requests.

"The point is, in a time like this, it's just important to do anything on behalf of the residents of your community and it's not time to point fingers, to blame folks, to squabble over resources," O'Grady said.

"It's just time to get things done." **CN**





TUOLUMNE  
COUNTY, Calif.

The Tuolumne County seal has roots back to the late 1930s. Tuolumne County resident Lino Borelli, a former Sonora High School teacher, designed the seal. Borelli taught art, mechanical drawing and leatherwork at the high school for more than 30 years.

The seal features the county's major industries and employers from the time, including logging, lumber mills and mining. Many of these industries remain important employers in the county today. The seal also depicts a stamp mill, smokestacks and an ore dump.



The seal depicts recreational opportunities — skiing, watersports, camping and hiking — that attract tourists to the county. Other images in the seal showcase the tourism industry including cabins, toboggans, tents and skiers. Tuolumne County is a major gateway to Yosemite National Park.

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

PROFILES IN  
SERVICE

VERONICA KLINEFELT

**Board Member**  
President, Michigan  
Association of Counties  
Commissioner,  
Macomb County, Mich.

**Number of years involved in NACo:** Six

**Years in public service:** 21

**Education:** BS in Criminal Justice from Wayne State University

**The hardest thing I've ever done:** Say goodbye to a loved one.

**Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner:** Jon Meacham, Colin Powell and my great-grandfather, Michael Healy, the bootlegger

**A dream I have is to:** Make a lasting difference.

**The most adventurous thing I've ever done:** Hitchhike across Ireland with my sisters and sleep on a hotel roof in Greece. (We traveled Europe with no money.)



Klinefelt

**My favorite way to relax is:** Hanging out with family

**I'm most proud of:** My children

**Every morning I read:** *The Macomb Daily*  
**My favorite meal is:** Dinner, ribeye steak flame-grilled  
**My pet peeve is:** People who litter  
**My motto is:** If you don't lie, you don't have to remember what you said or did.  
**My favorite movie is:** "The Sandlot"  
**My favorite music is:** The Eagles  
**My county is a NACo member because:** Together, our voice is heard. Great resources.

You'd be surprised to learn:  
I love to play poker.



# STANDARDS CONNECT

## The answer for all of your standards needs

A digital standards management solution that simplifies searching, collaborating, and accessing standards for your entire organization

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT [WEBSTORE.ANSI.ORG](http://WEBSTORE.ANSI.ORG)



## BRIGHT IDEAS | BERKS COUNTY, Pa.

# County Campaign Calls for Businesses to Follow Effective COVID-19 Health Standards

### PROBLEM:

The COVID-19 outbreak has shut down businesses, causing unsafe health environments for those that remain open and impacting local economies.

### SOLUTION:

Focus on health and safety standards to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus for businesses and county residents.

by Rachel Looker  
staff writer

The message during the COVID-19 outbreak to businesses and residents in Berks County, Pa., is simple: “Do Your Part— Stop the Spread!”

Berks County Commissioner Christian Leinbach launched the campaign and is asking businesses, county residents and others to follow effective health and safety standards to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

In March, Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf, like others across the country, closed all non-essential businesses throughout the state. The state health secretary laid out safety measures April 5, but Leinbach wanted to hammer home a message to local businesses to slow the rate of infection.

Some of the life-sustaining businesses such as grocery stores and home improvement stores that remained open were packed with customers, Leinbach said, noting that some were not practicing proper social distancing. He added that there was no sanitization, masks or protection for employees or customers.

“As a result, we said these businesses are becoming a petri dish for COVID-19 spread,” he said.

Following the county’s emergency declaration, the Berks COVID-19 Leadership Council formed. Each team member took on a different role and Leinbach, who has a back-

ground in advertising, became the public information officer.

Leinbach worked with Kim Woerle, a former colleague and friend, who designed posters and a website for the campaign at no charge. The “Do Your Part— Stop the Spread” campaign and website, *DoYourPartBerks.com*, launched on April 17.

“I’m concerned about our residents’ health and safety,” Leinbach said. “We need businesses to step up and do the same thing.”

The posters, in both English and Spanish, provide information on how businesses can stop the spread of the virus and rules for social distancing, wearing masks and having proper hygiene. One poster for businesses to display in storefronts reads: “We’re doing our part supporting our county businesses following health and safety regulations.”



[www.WebAddress.com](http://www.WebAddress.com)

On the campaign’s website, local businesses submitted photos to show they are participating in the campaign and doing their part to stop the spread of the virus.

“We’re letting people know that we support businesses re-opening and we believe that probably a lot of them should have never been closed if they were able to implement effective health and safety standards,” Leinbach said.

Another poster design leaves a blank space for business owners or managers to add their contact information, to allow customers to reach out

if they have recommendations about cleanliness practices.

Leinbach explained how the campaign is pushing for businesses to stay open if they’re able to follow health and safety standards.

“It’s not a question of the government picking the winners or losers,” he said. “This can be used as a tool to prod state government to say this shouldn’t be about who is open, who is closed, it should be about who can implement effective measures.”

Berks County has sent out press releases and bought ads to promote the campaign through billboards, television, newspaper stories, online stories, posters on buses, social media posts and radio ads in both English and Spanish.

“That’s critical because you’ve got to communicate to businesses and to residents some way and that’s been very

helpful,” Leinbach said.

All of the posters, graphics and website design files are available online for any county official who wants to replicate the campaign using their own county’s information. Berks County purchased the *DoYourPartBerks.com* domain name, which Leinbach said is an easy step that other counties can do to launch their own website.

Leinbach advises other counties to establish a plan to spread the word about “do your part” measures. He recommends looking internally to distribute information related to the campaign.

“When it comes down to it, it’s county government that interfaces with our community on a daily basis,” he said. “It’s county government that I believe understands the challenges our residents are facing better than any other level of government.” **CN**



Commissioner Christian Leinbach reveals the “Do Your Part — Stop the Spread!” campaign to encourage businesses to follow effective health and safety standards in Berks County, Pa. Photo by Jason Hugg, Berks Weekly



## SOLUTIONS SPOTLIGHT

# Leon County Uses Technology to Support Local Businesses During Pandemic

by Christopher Thomas

The current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, although considered a public health crisis, is putting economic strain on small businesses, which account for the bulk of U.S. employment.

While many shops have had to close, others are staying open but facing new challenges. Customers searching for providers of essential services — grocery stores, pharmacies or banks — don't always know which businesses are still open. In response, jurisdictions across the country are working on ways to help connect residents and businesses.

In Leon County, Fla., the Office of Economic Vitality (OEV) and the GIS department recognized the need early on to support the community as well as local businesses. They are using maps and apps to provide an authoritative view of locations open for takeout, delivery, drive-through and curbside pickup.

## Repurposing an application from the past

Leon County, located in Florida's panhandle, has been hit by several hurricanes in recent years. During those disasters, the county stood up a web map application that identified which businesses had power and were open and selling goods to the public. The COVID-19 pandemic has put stress once again on Leon County businesses that are delivering essential services.

"After three hurricanes in the past four years, we know that every disaster tests us differently," said Vincent S. Long, Leon County administrator. "One thing remains constant: our team's ability to find unique and effective ways to address the challenges facing our community. And these opportunities are made possible by the highest levels of leadership at Esri, who know how integral technology



The Leon County, Fla. Office of Economic Vitality and the GIS department use maps and apps to provide information about local businesses that are open during the COVID-19 outbreak.

can be in protecting public safety."

With a workflow and web map application similar to those used in past disasters, Leon County GIS staff were able to extract location data for all area businesses and filter out non-essential operations. They used ArcGIS Online, a software-as-a-service (SaaS) platform that supports data maintenance and visualization through interactive web maps. Once staff filtered data down to places that serve and sell food, they were able to quickly create the Open for Takeout Map.

"At that point, everyone in our team was working remotely, and within a day and a half, we were able to stand up the application for businesses serving and selling food throughout the community," said Ned Cake, GIS integration manager for Leon County.

## Community helps government deliver better service

The Open for Takeout Map also empowers the entire com-

munity to update business information such as available services, hours and other details. By crowdsourcing each business's information, the county government can have a dialogue with residents and provide a valuable service quickly. Crowdsourced information is routed to the OEV; once approved, the information goes live in the application.

"Standing up this application not only provided a purpose and met a need within the community during such a critical time, but it's pushed web mapping technology into the hands of those who do not typically use maps," said Scott Weisman, GIS program coordinator. "Another great thing we were able to do was provide editing capabilities to OEV staff members, so now non-GIS users can update business information faster and have ownership of this application."

Keeping residents informed of the hours and service details of essential businesses can be a daunting task for any

local government. By crowdsourcing data from the public and empowering nontraditional GIS users with the latest mapping technology, Leon County continues to provide vital resources such as the Open for Takeout Map. Within the first two weeks of standing up the application, the map had 30,000 views.

"As a small business owner, I know the challenges of keep-

ing the lights on and the doors open even during a good day, let alone a global pandemic," said Leon County Commission Chairman Bryan Desloge. "That's why I am proud of the work we have done in local government to support our local businesses, from short-term bridge loans to innovative mapping solutions that engage customers and drive interest."

The story of Leon County, Fla., is just one example of how organizations are using GIS to respond and operate more effectively during the COVID-19 crisis. This effort can be replicated in communities across the globe.

For more information on how to attain GIS software needs, technical support, services and data during times of crisis, visit [go.esri.com/Leon-Support-COVID](https://go.esri.com/Leon-Support-COVID).

As GIS technology continues to support organizations worldwide through this crisis, Esri will gather best practices and share lessons learned from jurisdictions around the globe to provide a greater understanding of and inspiration for COVID-19 response efforts. **CN**

*Christopher Thomas is director of Government Markets at Esri.*

## ON THE MOVE

### NACo STAFF

• **Natasha Botts** has joined NACo as an Information Technology help desk specialist, after assisting the IT team as a temporary employee for two months. Prior to joining NACo, she worked at Advance Concept & Technologies International, LLC in Arlington, Va., as IT support specialist and at PXYERA Global in Washington, D.C., as an information and communication specialist. Natasha earned a Microsoft certificate from the IT Academy in Washington, D.C.



Botts



**NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION**

**This facility is COMPLIANT**  
with state and local Shelter-in-Place Orders.

STAFF ARE:

- WEARING FACIAL COVERINGS
- PRACTICING PROPER SOCIAL DISTANCING AND HANDWASHING
- PROVIDING PICKUP, DELIVERY OR CURBSIDE SERVICE ONLY.

If you are concerned that this facility is out of compliance, call the COVID-19 Compliance Line at 707-441-3022.

    
County of Humboldt

## CALIFORNIA

- **HUMBOLDT COUNTY** Office of Emergency Services has created a pilot program to **certify that restaurants** are taking appropriate safety precautions and following state and local shelter-in-place orders to protect customers and employees. Restaurants can print a facility compliance certificate and sign an affidavit committing to follow operational procedures to stop the spread of the coronavirus. The certificate can be displayed in the restaurant to inform the public that they are complying with shelter-in-place orders. The program's goal is to promote the cleanliness and safety of allowable businesses. Humboldt County plans to expand the program to grocery stores.

## ARIZONA

The Community Action Agency in **PIMA COUNTY** is offering a new **rental eviction assistance hotline** for those seeking aid during the coronavirus pandemic. Staffers on the hotline answer questions about applications, provide assistance submitting information and connect renters to other resources, KGUN reported. The

aid comes from the COVID-19 Rental Eviction Assistance Program and is funded by the Arizona Department of Housing.

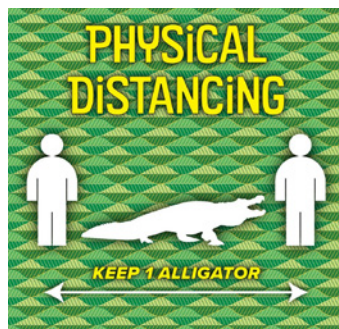
## CALIFORNIA

- All residents in **LOS ANGELES COUNTY** now have access to **free coronavirus testing**. Los Angeles is the first major city in the country offering free testing to all residents, NPR reported.

Prior to the announcement, only individuals with COVID-19 symptoms, essential workers and those working in institutional settings could be tested. Any county resident can make an appointment at one of dozens of testing sites throughout the county. Those with symptoms are prioritized.

## FLORIDA

- **LAKE COUNTY** is offering **COVID-19 and antibody testing** to all county residents at reduced costs. Through a partnership with Adult Medicine of Lake County, the City of Leesburg, Lake-Sumter State College and the Florida Department of Health, the swab or antibody tests will cost \$20 for residents and \$85 for non-residents, according to Village-News.com. The test results are returned within one to three days. Those with COVID-19 symptoms will receive free testing.



- To help remind county residents to practice **proper social distancing**, **LEON COUNTY** officials are providing a unique visual: One large alligator. The county took to social media to remind county residents to keep at least one large alligator's length away from others at all times to practice the six feet social distancing rule.

## HAWAII

Hawaii Governor David Ige issued a proclamation that **limits counties from independently**

**forming emergency response policies.** The proclamation directs all counties to obtain approval by the governor or the director of the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency before issuing emergency orders, rules or proclamations. The state has promised a turnaround time of 24 hours on approvals, Hawaii News Now reported.

## ILLINOIS

The **WILL COUNTY** Health Department's Community Health Center Mobile Medical Unit is **making trips to high-risk communities to test for COVID-19**. The department joined with the Illinois Department of Public Health to create the program, the *Chicago Tribune* reported. The state has provided the testing kits to community health centers in the state.

## MARYLAND

For families affected by the coronavirus who aren't receiving federal benefits, **MONTGOMERY COUNTY** is providing **one-time relief payments** through the Emergency Assistance Relief Program. The county has set aside \$5 million for residents whose incomes are below 50 percent of the federal poverty level and aren't eligible for stimulus checks, WUSA9 reported. Around 1,300 families that are served by the Care for Kids program will be the first to receive funds.

## MICHIGAN

Students in **KENT COUNTY** are opening their mailboxes and finding letters from county Sheriff's Department employees, through the Kent County Sheriff's Department **pen pal program**. The program aims to connect with students during the COVID-19 outbreak while



allowing them to practice their reading and writing skills, WOTV reported. Sheriff's department employees including road patrol deputies, correction officers and 911 dispatchers have signed up to participate in the program.

## MISSOURI

The **ST. LOUIS COUNTY** Council passed an ordinance allowing the county executive to spend funds received through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act **without approval from the council**. The ordinance creates a compliance program to ensure the funds are used appropriately, 5 On Your Side reported. Money received through the CARES Act will be put into a special revenue fund.

## NEVADA

- Offending motorists beware, **WASHOE COUNTY** has a new labor force to **issue parking tickets**. The County Commission voted to initiate proceedings that would amend code to allow certain non-sworn employees to do the job — non-commissioned deputies and constables. The county historically sees an increase in illegally parked vehicles on rights-of-way during the summer, thisisreno.com reported.

## NEW YORK

The dormitories at **DUTCHESS COUNTY's** com-

## CALIFORNIA

- Deputies from the **SAN DIEGO COUNTY** Sheriff's Department are participating in the **You Are Not Alone** program to let seniors know they are never alone during the COVID-19 pandemic. The department's over 400 volunteers comfort seniors dealing with isolation by making daily phone calls, conducting check-ins and even visiting county residents with guitars in hand to sing feel-good songs. The program aims to offer peace of mind and provide a sense of security.

Deputy Roland Garza plays guitar with Deputy Brenden Bourgeois during a visit through the You Are Not Alone Program.







## NEVADA

• **CLARK COUNTY**'s Parks and Recreation Department is trying to make staying home a lot more fun with **driveway dance parties**. The department's "In It Together SNV" group will jump into their van with a DJ and a public address system and roll into neighborhoods to play a song or two before moving on. (SNV refers to Southern Nevada.)

munity college are now ready to serve as an **overflow recovery center** for coronavirus patients, if local hospitals can't handle the load. Dutchess Community College's Conkin Hall houses 475 beds in 176 rooms on four floors of the dormitory. The Recovery Center will be staffed by about 50 medical and non-medical professionals, most of whom are volunteers with the Medical Reserve Corps of Dutchess County, *The Daily Freeman* reported

## OHIO

**COLUMBIANA COUNTY** commissioners have approved a memorandum of understanding with two municipal local health departments in which the county agrees to **provide temporary housing** for anyone in those communities who, for whatever reason, can no longer remain at home after testing positive for the virus. The county is in talks with two motels and one local campground, the *Salem News* reported.

## OREGON

The **COOS COUNTY** Board of Commissioners approved a resolution discouraging people from **discriminating against individuals based on their perceived COVID-19 status**. Local

health officials had shared concerns of community members possibly being discriminated against over the past few weeks, including correctional staff and their family members being refused entry into grocery stores, *The World* newspaper reported.

## TEXAS

**DALLAS COUNTY**'s two main coronavirus testing centers will **test any essential retail worker**, such as grocery store employees, regardless of their symptoms, County Judge Clay Jenkins announced. Those workers will be asked to show a work ID as proof of employment.

## UTAH

**TOOELE COUNTY** may have parted ways with the motorsports complex it effectively inherited, but more than a year

after its sale, the parent company of the Utah Motorsports Campus **donated 5,000 medical-grade face masks** to the county to assist the community in the ongoing fight against COVID-19.

The county has set up a clearinghouse operation to distribute donations to the most affected businesses in the most efficient manner.

## WASHINGTON

• **SPOKANE COUNTY** Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich has created a new **property crime task force** aimed at stemming offenses that have been on the rise during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data for all areas patrolled by sheriff's deputies show notable increases in garage and commercial burglaries during March and April compared to the first two months of the year.

The sheriff's office will redeploy available investigative resources to target repeat property crime offenders, as well as integrate crime and investigative analysts with the task force. And the shifts investigators work will be changed to cover all hours during the day, *The Spokesman-Review* reported.

## WISCONSIN

**MILWAUKEE COUNTY** has enacted an ordinance committing the county to **advancing racial equity and eliminating health disparities** by identifying and addressing policies, practices and power structures that, whether intentionally or unintentionally, work in favor of white people and create barriers for black, brown, and indigenous people.

A year ago, the county passed a first-of-its kind resolution de-

claring racism a public health crisis.

Milwaukee County will focus on five areas to transform the services it provides by building a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

They hope to ensure a diverse array of employees are involved in designing equitable programs and services that meet community needs, designing services to meet residents' needs, tracking and analyzing data and generating new sources of revenue and implementing efficiencies to address the structural deficit and make needed investments that advance racial equity.

*News From Across the Nation is compiled by Charlie Ban and Rachel Looker. Does your county have an item that we should consider? Contact us at cban@naco.org and rlooker@naco.org.*

## WASHINGTON

• More than a dozen **PIERCE COUNTY** sheriff's deputies are taking on a new, decidedly safer role in their jobs — **reading to children**. Deputies are reading out loud as part of "Storytime with a Sheriff," where they stream story times from their patrol cars.

**Sgt. Darren Moss reads from his children's favorite book, *The Gruffalo*.** Photo courtesy of the Pierce County Sheriff's Department





## the HR DOCTOR

with Philpot  
& Winkeler

# Re-Entry: Venturing Out to Find a New Favorite Flavor



As a kid, the world seemed full of stores with a red, take-a-number ticket dispenser, where customers pulled a U-shaped piece of paper in order to obtain a number to receive service. The numbers allowed customers to stand wherever they chose, rather than in an actual line, while waiting for service. There was anticipation waiting for the number to be called, waiting for your turn to, say, get an ice cream cone. You were free to take time to peruse the available flavors, debating whether to try a new flavor or stick with a reliable favorite. Over time, for any number of possible reasons, the paper numbers gave way to physical lines or other queuing systems.

Today, as we have had to adjust in response to COVID-19, we continue to see shifts in the way we wait for and receive services, as well as the ways in which we as counties are delivering services to citizens.

Counties are using electronic forms, web meetings and drive-up windows to process information they traditionally found on paper. The change in service and switch from office workstations to telecommuting happened quickly, as a reaction, without months of preplanning.

But as we now contemplate the eventual lifting of restrictions, how do we switch back? And what will we switch to?

Many organizations have started to plan their re-entry to the workplace. It is hard to plan for what lies ahead when we don't know what next week will look like and the pace of change seems to be light-speed. But a plan provides a detailed map for doing or achieving something, a decision made in advance in order to create a method of action. It doesn't mean we are ready to use the plan tomorrow; it gives us a path to move forward and helps us contemplate where

we are headed when the time comes.

Here are some things to consider as you draft and revise your re-entry plan.

First, ask your team how the current state of service feels to them. What is going well? What is difficult? What have they learned? Ask each team member to write up a summary of their thoughts. When employees envisioned telecommuting in the past, it was not alongside all their family members, competing for attention or the internet.

Some employees may not find telecommuting is working for them. They may long to return to their office routine and the in-person connections there. Others who never thought they would enjoy telecommuting may have grown to like it. Maybe there is value in an office structure that incorporates more telecommuting than was considered before.

Second, think about your re-entry as a series of phases. The phases may include varying levels of continued telecommuting, flexible schedules and/or remote service options. Utilizing phases may make the transition back

to the office easier to accomplish. Additionally, as there may be subsequent spikes in virus transmission, the phases provide fluidity, allowing your team to move easily between them as necessary to respond to changing restrictions or CDC guidance.

The phases of your plan may include how much seating is in your lobby, how many people are in the building at a time, whether temperatures of staff are being monitored, whether staff will wear masks, whether training is offered virtually or in person, and how often the building is cleaned.

Third, the final phase of your re-entry plan doesn't mean the workplace will look like it did in January. The future is full of opportunity for a new definition of workspace. Can you break your department into teams who rotate together between remote work and in-person work? Perhaps three teams could rotate so each team only works in the office once every three weeks. Could people on opposite teams share desks? Would they be assigned desks or would the touch-down spaces be open for anyone to use? Would staff bring their own

laptops to these workstations or would they use a workstation at the desk and check out a laptop to take home?

As we consider the phases, can our teams reduce their building needs, using less space, requiring fewer parking spaces, demanding less commute time and improving our carbon footprint? Consolidating office space could allow counties to save money on the number of leased spaces or buildings they pay for each year.

Over time, the teams can be evaluated for efficiency including the number of teams, the staff on each team and the frequency the teams work in the office. The plan isn't just how to return to the office; it is a plan to envision the office in a new light, an opportunity to see the workspace from a perspective that was inconceivable until this moment.

Creating such a plan takes strategic thinking, innovative visioning and communication. It takes courage and adaptability as we adjust from something new to something newer.

As a kid in the ice cream shop, holding our paper num-

ber and looking through the glass case, it is tempting to order our trusted favorite flavor. It is harder to venture out to a new flavor.

But if we don't try any new flavors, we might miss out on something even better. The loss of the paper number did not change the service we received; it only changed the process. It gave us more time to contemplate taking some risks. In March, we didn't have much time to consider our shift to new service delivery.

Now, we have time to plan future service delivery and we shouldn't let that reduce our bravery to envision something new. The ways in which we delivered service previously were effective, but a new normal is coming. We should choose to plan for it with anticipation, as we consider what might be possible, rather than focusing on the loss of the process. **CN**

*From Coconino County, Ariz., HR gurus and contributors, Erika Philpot, human resources director and Rose Winkeler, deputy county attorney, address common and critical HR questions from their "boots on the ground" perspective.*