



NACO REPS BUSY ON
CAPITOL HILL **PG. 3**

COUNTIES
SHOULDER
MORE INDIGENT
DEFENSE
COSTS **PG. 4**



THE BIG SCREEN LURES
SALT LAKE COUNCIL
MEMBER **PG. 5**

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION *of* COUNTIES

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Medicaid rules clarified for 'justice- involved'

By **Brian Bowden**
associate legislative director

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued new guidance on April 28 that clarifies important ways Medicaid can be used for justice-involved individuals in community settings. It's estimated that approximately 54,000-64,000 individuals are supervised outside of jails.

Released as part of National Reentry Week, the guidance updates policy issued 19 years ago in 1997. Specifically, it clarifies that Medicaid can continue to be used for services provided to eligible individuals on parole, probation and home confinement. In addition, it extends eligibility to those living in cor-

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It's a great day for baseball and the Columbus Clippers, the Triple-A affiliate of the Cleveland Indians owned by Franklin County, Ohio, and seen here on their home field at Huntington Park Stadium. The Clippers play in the International League. Last year, they brought home the league championship, and this year, as of May 12, they sit atop their division. Photo courtesy of Franklin County, Ohio

ANALYSIS

Appropriations process moving forward...for now

By **Jack Peterson**
legislative assistant

As Congress returns to work after its May recess, pressure is mounting in both chambers to pass a number of appropriations bills, and time is running short before they adjourn for an early summer recess in July.

In recent years, the House and Senate Appropriations committees have struggled to reach agreements on total spending numbers and instead, pass individual appropriations bills, often — eventually — resorting to omnibus spending bills that

approve spending levels for all federal agencies and programs at once in a large package.

For FY17, however, Congress is hoping a running start will allow both chambers to pass all 12 spending bills and issue a conference report for the first time since FY12.

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, signed by President Obama last November, set top-line spending levels for FY16 and FY17. For FY17, the top-line spending level is set at \$1.07 trillion, which is \$30 billion higher than initial sequestration levels that had been set

in the Budget Control Act of 2011.

Senate Progress

Although the U.S. Constitution gives lead role to the House in driving the appropriations process, the Senate Appropriations Committee is taking the unusual step of moving ahead of the House on parts of the process this year.

To date, the committee has approved four bills, while the House Appropriations Committee has passed three. House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers (R-Ky.)

skeptically welcomed the Senate's progress, reportedly saying he'd "dance a jig on top of the table" if the Senate passed all 12 spending bills.

While the Senate has made progress, there is still a long road ahead, and time is running short, ahead of the summer recess slated to begin July 15.

The Energy and Water Appropriations bill was the first to hit the Senate floor and was expected to have smooth sailing. However, it hit a speed bump after Democrats strongly op-

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NACo members key to decision

From MEDICAID page 1

rections-supervised community residential facilities, also known as halfway houses.

It also:

- maintains the ability of counties to seek federal Medicaid reimbursement for inpatient hospital services provided to inmates (also known as the Medicaid inpatient exception).
- acknowledges that gaps in health coverage lead to poor outcomes and increased recidivism, and reaffirms that states should suspend, instead of terminate, Medicaid benefits for inmates, and
- calls on states to take action to support connecting inmates to services when they are released from custody.

The updated guidance, contained in a letter to state health officials, comes after multiple meetings and calls between

HHS and county officials to reinforce the role of counties in the nation's health and justice systems, and the importance of Medicaid for the 11.4 million individuals that annually cycle in and out of the nation's county jails.

"We're very pleased that HHS heard the voices of counties and issued guidance that makes sense from a community and economic perspective," said NACo President Sallie Clark. "The new guidelines will assist counties by improving physical and mental health outcomes for individuals reentering communities.

"This is a big step forward in our work to make our neighborhoods safer and more secure while advancing individuals' health, reducing the revolving door of recidivism and lowering costs to counties and taxpayers." **CN**



MOST POPULAR COUNTY NAMES*

Name	Number
Washington	31
Jefferson	26
Franklin.....	24
Jackson	24
Lincoln	24
Madison.....	20

*Shared by counties in seven or more states

Source: Wikipedia, List of the Most Common U.S. County Names

House struggles with budget process; conservatives balk at spending levels

From APPROPs page 1

posed an amendment prohibiting the U.S. from purchasing "heavy water" from Iran (heavy water is water that has a high chemical component that can be used in nuclear reactors).

Democratic filibusters forced the Senate to delay two weeks before taking up the bill for a third time, when it was defeated again. Despite the delay, the Senate still expects to schedule other floor votes on additional funding bills.

House Faces Hurdles

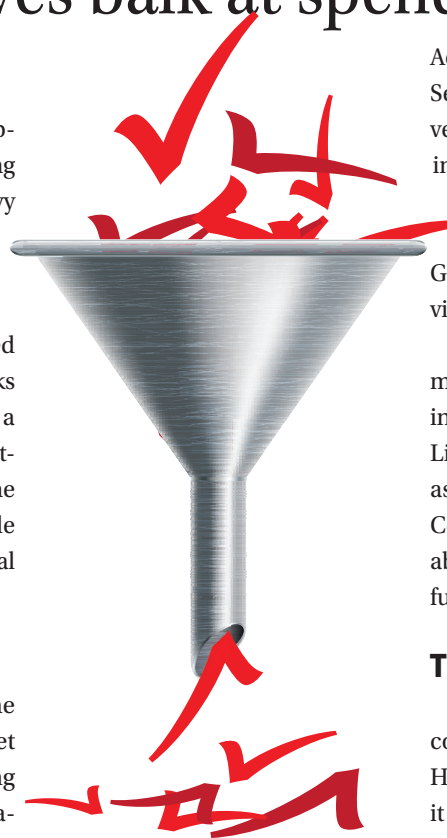
Across the Capitol, the House is struggling just to get the process started. According to House rules, no appropriations bills may be voted on by the full House before May 15 unless the House has agreed to a budget resolution.

However, a large contingent of conservative members oppose a FY17 budget resolution adhering to the top-line spending levels set in the Bipartisan Budget Control Act last year, and instead would like to see further decreases in federal spending.

Delays in the budget process are forcing leadership to consider passing appropriations bills without an overall budget blueprint, a process that would not start until later this week, giving the House even less time than the Senate to pass all 12 spending bills.

County Priorities

The spending bills already passed by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees affect a number of county priorities. The Senate's Commerce, Justice and Science bill



cuts funding for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) in half, but boosts spending for the Byrne-JAG Program as well as the Second Chance Act (the Senate bill also cut SCAAP last year, but it was funded in the House bill and ultimately in the final omnibus package).

The Senate's Transportation and Housing and Urban Development bill maintains level funding for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the HOME Investment Partnership grants, while boosting spending for the Transit Formula Grants consistent with the FAST Act and increasing spending on federal-aid highways and TIGER grants.

The remaining appropriations bills also contain a number of county priorities. The Labor, Health and Human Services and Education bill will govern spending levels for the Workforce Innovation Opportunity (WIOA)

Act, Community Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment spending, and two block grants essential to local communities: the Social Services Block Grant and the Community Services Block Grant.

The Interior and Environment bill will also lay out spending levels for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program as well as the Land and Water Conservation Fund. All of the above programs received slight funding increases in FY16.

The Path Ahead

Predictions on a final outcome vary. Leadership in the House and Senate have made it a priority to pass as many regular appropriations bills as possible, which could lead to a smoother omnibus process this summer or at the end of the fiscal year.

Yet, a number of hurdles remain, including whether and how to fund government responses to issues such as disaster assistance for Flint, Mich. or the response to the Zika virus. And, similar to years past, there could potentially be a number of other battles over the president's executive actions on immigration and environmental policies that could also delay the process.

At the very least, Congress is likely to pass a continuing resolution that would continue funding the government at current levels if the appropriations process stalls out entirely. **CN**

CORRECTION

McLennan County, Texas was misspelled in "News From Across the Nation" in the April 18 edition of County News.

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NACo hits Capitol Hill twice in hearings on policy proposals

NACo was front and center at two House hearings on Capitol Hill May 12. NACo President Sallie Clark appeared before the House Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management, testifying on policy changes intended to reign in federal disaster-assistance expenditures.

Meanwhile, Humboldt County, Nev. Commissioner Jim French spoke before the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations about the impact on counties of a proposed new planning rule from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

At the hearing focused on policy changes that could decrease the federal government's disaster-related expenditures, Clark's testimony emphasized three principles to guide Congress in considering these policy changes: 1) federal spending on disasters should be viewed in the context of disaster spending by all levels of government and the capacity of each level of government to fund recovery efforts; 2) federal disaster expenditures should decrease only as a result of disasters becoming less costly overall, rather than through cost-shifts to counties; and 3) local disaster mitigation efforts have proven effective at decreasing the overall cost of disasters and should be supported and incentivized by the federal government.

As an El Paso County, Colo. commissioner, Clark was well positioned to weigh-in on this conversation. El Paso County has suffered a string of major disasters recently, including two of the largest wildfires in Colorado history — the Waldo Canyon Fire in 2012 and the Black Forest Fire in 2013. She shared with the subcommittee her personal account



NACo President Sallie Clark testifies before the House Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management May 12. Photo by Alix Kashdan



Jim French, Humboldt County, Nev. commissioner, testified on BLM's Planning 2.0

of the devastation caused by these disasters, including tens of thousands of acres burned, thousands of damaged and destroyed homes, four lives lost and millions of dollars in county funds spent on disaster mitigation and recovery.

In her testimony, she highlighted examples of successful federal-state-local collaboration on mitigation efforts that have proved effective at driving down the cost of disasters. She

told the subcommittee about Black Hawk County, Iowa's partnership with FEMA and the state of Iowa to purchase dozens of homes located in floodplains and move almost 100 families out of the area.

Using these examples, she stressed the importance of federal-state-local collaboration in helping counties "better utilize their own resources and authorities to build safer communities

after a disaster and decrease the impact of future disasters."

Also discussed at the hearing was FEMA's recent "disaster deductible" proposal, which would require states and localities to meet certain mitigation requirements before receiving Public Assistance funds from FEMA under the Stafford Act.

While recognizing the importance of incentivizing mitigation efforts at the local level, Clark cautioned the sub-

committee that the "disaster deductible" proposal prompted many questions that would need to be addressed before the proposal is implemented.

Throughout her testimony, Clark urged the subcommittee to avoid shifting federal costs to state and local governments.

By observing the principles she put forth during the hearing, the subcommittee, she said "could lessen the likelihood of achieving savings in federal spending at the expense of state and local governments, and instead promote policies that foster crucial federal-state-local collaborations that decrease the cost of disasters for all levels of government and make America's Communities more resilient when disasters strike."

Clark was on a panel that also included Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-Fla.); Joseph Nimmich, FEMA deputy administrator and Brian Koon, president of the National Emergency Management Association.

BLM Planning 2.0

BLM's proposed rule, dubbed "Planning 2.0," would make a number of changes to

the procedures the agency follows to prepare resource management plans ("RMPs") and could have a significant impact on the ability of state and local governments to participate in the planning process.

In his testimony, French suggested the proposed rule would limit local government's ability to ensure federal consistency with local plans and policies. "BLM would not be required to consider locally implemented policies, programs or other local government actions, nor would BLM have to consider local land use plans that are in the process of being crafted or revised," he said.

"This change could significantly impact the ability of local governments and BLM to work together to address the evolving needs of a community or the local landscape."

He also raised concerns over BLM's decision to give its default planning area a regional focus stating: "Shifting the BLM's focus to a regional '30,000-foot level,' rather than focusing on discrete local landscapes, dilutes the local voice in resource management planning, empowering regional line managers' decisions far removed from the land."

He went on to note the important role counties can play as invaluable allies to federal land managers in the resource planning process.

French is a NACo Western Interstate Region Board member. He was joined on the panel by Pete Obermueller, executive director, Wyoming County Commissioners Association.

The BLM owns or manages land and mineral resources in 477 or 15 percent of counties nationwide. **CN**

Associate Legislative Directors Chris Marklund and Hadi Sedigh contributed to this report.

New eligibility guidelines for indigent defense means unfunded mandate in N.Y.

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

The threshold for qualifying for a public defender in Upstate New York will double this October, but without a commensurate boost from the state, counties are going to be shouldering more of the burden.

Meanwhile, a Pennsylvania Supreme Court case argued in April will determine whether public defender clients may sue to prevent the violation of their right to counsel.

The popular depiction of the overworked, underpaid public defender holds. In 17 states, counties and local governments contribute more than 60 percent of funding for indigent defense. Pennsylvania leads the nation with all of its funding coming from counties, but Utah, Nevada and Arizona are close behind, all contributing at least 99 percent of costs.

In the Empire State, public defenders' offices will likely see a boom in cases in the last quarter of 2016 when a court settlement increases the eligibility for indigent defense to 250 percent of the federal poverty level, qualifying a single person with no dependents who earns \$29,700.

"I think it's fair to say that in certain areas of the office, the caseload impact will be significant," said Monroe County Public Defender Tim Donaher. "Right now the (attorneys) are frustrated and concerned. If the state can't find us a way to increase funding, and with the counties being fiscally stressed, it's going to have a deleterious effect on quality."

Donaher expects most of that increase in caseload to come from family court and misdemeanors.

Broome County Public Defender Jay Wilber said the increase will come at an odd time for counties, regardless of whether they start their budget

years in January or July. And that's not all.

"Once these guidelines get out, people who may not have applied in the past may now apply," he said. And, "with the increase in number of clients, we'll also probably see more conflicts of interest, especially in counties where they do family court."

Yet, Wilber thinks the new eligibility standard will have some positive effects.

"The standard in Broome County versus Tioga County versus Tompkins County... there was a patchwork of eligibility throughout the state. This is a concerted, thoughtful, logical effort to come up with some guidelines."

State Sen. John DeFrancisco has sponsored a bill to require the state to fully reimburse counties for indigent legal services.

Donaher, meanwhile, hopes the state will delay the eligibility increase until after a funding mechanism can be worked out.

In Nevada, counties are facing a different indigent legal challenge. In some of the largest yet least-populous counties, attorneys are hard to come by.

Though the state offers coun-

ties the chance to participate in its public defender program, two counties have dropped out in the last two years.

"We heard that they (public defenders) weren't traveling out to the rural counties and weren't doing what they were supposed to be doing," said Dagny Stapleton, deputy director of the Nevada Association of Counties (NACO). "They just couldn't cut it; they weren't providing the service."

In 2015, the Nevada Supreme Court banned flat fee contracting for public defenders, joining Idaho and Michigan. That the flat fee structure gives attorneys an incentive to do little work on each case is only part of the problem. The distance between attorneys and their clients, often hours and hundreds of miles, limits the time available for legal work and transportation costs mount.

"It's hard for a contract defender in Nevada to balance travel in rural counties with a regular legal practice," said Jeff Fointaine, NACO's executive director. "And with few attorneys in each area, it's hard to avoid conflicts of interest in cases."

Most of the rural counties

contract with attorneys to handle indigent cases, but the work is staggering, and when the death penalty is in play, it challenges both the defender and the county.

"Lyon County had a capital case (in 2013) and they budgeted \$200,000 for the defense," Fontaine said. "It's a rural county; it's a poor county that can ill afford this kind of expense, but they did. But there's no adequate funding to support public defense in a case like that."

"There's been a lot of concern about the level of indigent defense services in rural counties."

The recent legislative session saw the third defeat for a bill to transfer capital cases to the state public defender's office to relieve the cost burden on rural counties.

In Pennsylvania, where counties cover all of the public defender costs, state association Deputy Director Brinda Penyak sees skilled defense as an investment.

"What counties are learning is there is return on investment in effective indigent defense in the pretrial area," she said. "If you've got a good defender, someone who can work with clients when they're sitting in jail pre-trial, can provide them with guidance and maybe get them into some programming if they are going to be incarcerated down the road, maybe it's for less time because they've completed some of that upfront."

But, of course, getting that good defender is a challenge. And although Pennsylvania's budget situation currently looks better than last year's, which went unresolved for more than six months, Penyak doesn't see any help coming from the state.

Habitual underfunding led then-Chief Public Defender Al Flora to sue Luzerne County, claiming his office was

stretched so thin it had to turn away clients, violating their right to counsel. His suit, filed in 2012, was argued before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court last month.

Penyak said in addition to the cost of defending a capital case, the public defenders often just don't have the experience to do it right.

"In a lot of cases, they haven't been through that kind of trial, they haven't had the kind of experience putting together the kind of defense an individual needs," she said. "They just don't have the trial experience to know what to put on to get the best outcome."

But it's not all bad. In Ohio, the Legislature agreed to take on a 50-50 partnership with local governments. According to the 2008 Spangenberg Project, counties and local governments were handling more than 67 percent of the costs.

"We had a lot of successful grass roots advocacy," said Suzanne Dulaney, executive director of the County Commissioners Association of Ohio. "We really got great participation from our members."

It comes to an additional \$12 million total from the state, plus \$1.5 million that will go to fund defense in capital cases.

In Idaho, the Legislature will put \$5.5 million into grants for counties to meet new standards for indigent defense services established by the Public Defense Commission.

"A minimum of \$25,000 if you're a small county and up to 15 percent of the average of your last three years," said Dan Chadwick, executive director of the Idaho Association of Counties. "That means \$1 million for Ada County."

The counties will get their money in October, before negotiated rulemaking sets up the new standards.

Nationally, counties spent \$19 billion on all judicial and legal services in 2012. **CN**

PROPORTION OF COUNTY SPENDING FOR INDIGENT DEFENSE

100% Pennsylvania

More than 95% Utah, Nevada, Arizona, Nebraska, Washington

More than 90% Michigan, South Dakota

More than 80% Illinois, Texas, Idaho, California

More than 70% Mississippi

More than 60% New York, Georgia, Louisiana, Indiana

Source: The Spangenberg Project, 2008, updated in 2016 via state associations

Salt Lake County official's film, a daring Teton rescue

By Charles Taylor
senior staff writer

Wyoming's Teton Range has been a part of Jenny Wilson's life since day one. Her parents named her after Jenny Lake, one of the pristine jewels of Grand Teton National Park.

As a child, Wilson, now a Salt Lake County, Utah council member, camped there with her family. Ted Wilson, her father and a former Salt Lake City mayor, was a Jenny Lake Ranger in the park as a young man. It's where the lake's namesake first heard the stories of what would come to be known cinematically as The Grand Rescue.

Thanks to the Utah Association of Counties, the one-hour documentary will be screened at NACo's Western Interstate Region (WIR) Conference on May 24, in the shadow of the Tetons in Jackson, Wyo. The next evening brings its broadcast premiere on public television in Salt Lake City.

The film recounts the story of two climbers who were stranded on the North Face of Grand Teton — one gravely injured with protruding compound leg fractures. From Aug. 22-24, 1967, seven rescuers, including Wilson's dad, risked their lives during a harrowing rescue to save the climber and a female companion. It's a rescue that would take about six hours with today's technology, according to Ted Wilson.

"It was a very treacherous part of the mountain," added his daughter. "It was an area that they didn't know and didn't know how they would rescue, because really no one had been there before."

Jenny was two years old in 1967, but in the years since tales of the rescue would become the stuff of campfire lore during family visits to the park.

"We would inevitably end up around a campfire or we'd be



Jenny Wilson, a Salt Lake County councilmember, gazes at the Tetons during a climb. Her documentary on a heroic rescue will be shown at NACo's WIR Conference, May 24. Photos courtesy of Jenny Wilson

out hiking and a storm would roll in" and they'd take shelter, she recalled. "The story returned to this rescue, and it really was a significant rescue in each of their careers. For many it was the rescue."

Ted Wilson, who turns 77 this month, called it "a life-changing experience."

Audacity is defined as a willingness to take big risks, and though Jenny Wilson had never made a documentary before, she approached it with a characteristic confidence and tenacity.

There's very little that she's set out to do that she hasn't accomplished with distinction —

from jobs at Robert Redford's Sundance Institute to volunteer director for the Salt Lake Winter Olympics to a congressman's chief of staff in the early '90s to two-term County Council member.

"She's not afraid of anything; she'll take on any task," her father said. "She has a rare ability to stay with something with enthusiasm." A father would say that, but former colleagues of Wilson's agree.

Jenny Wilson had never thought about making a film until a visit to the park seven years ago. "My husband and I were looking at this little display in 2009," Wilson said. "It



Ted Wilson (r), here with daughter, Jenny, played a key role in the 1967 Teton rescue featured in a documentary.

mentioned the rescue, and my husband turned to me and said, 'This was a big deal.' I said, 'Yeah, this was a big deal.' By the time we left the park that day we had this idea that it would be a movie."

It would take four years to bring it fully to fruition.

"The story is really what prompted me to make the film," she said. "I had had in my career a couple of different times working for Sundance, so I knew enough to be dangerous, but I didn't know how to make a movie," she quipped. As one of the film's producers, she worked with more experienced partners and helped to raise

about \$300,000 from donors to fund the project. Filming began during a four-year break between Wilson's first and current six-year terms on County Council.

She was motivated by a desire to bring the story to life for future generations before its guardians and their memorabilia slipped away.

"Each of us has something similar in our own family histories that our parents may have or an aunt or uncle may have or a grandparent," Wilson said. "Maybe not anything as dramatic, maybe something more important...."

"But sometimes they're

tucked away, and part of my objective was for all of the families of the rescuers to have the story told while these items and this legacy were at everyone's fingertips and wasn't tucked away. So I've achieved that."

People who know Wilson aren't surprised that she's added filmmaker to her resume. Joel Lawson is a D.C.-based public affairs consultant. He was press secretary to Rep. Bill Orton (D-Utah) when Wilson was hired to be his chief of staff.

"We had a lot of smart people with a lot of great ideas and things just weren't clicking," he recalled recently, "and then Jenny shows up and a lot of us don't know what to make of her."

"We'd heard very good things about her, but we were a staff that was sort of at a loss for where we were going next. And she got on board, and she really made things operational. She really started to get trains on track and get them moving."

Wilson came to Washington after her father's unsuccessful bid for governor of Utah in 1988, just one of the many political campaigns she's worked on throughout her youth and as an adult. He was expected to win but lost narrowly, Wilson said.

She had just graduated from the University of Utah, and at that point, thought she was done with politics.

See TETON page 7

FEDERAL POLICIES MATTER TO COUNTIES, AND COUNTIES MATTER TO AMERICA.

COUNTIES MATTER



Stronger Counties. **Stronger America.**

NACo scholarship winners know the value of saving for retirement

For the eleventh year in a row, high school seniors participating in the NACo/Nationwide Scholarship Essay Contest communicated their depth of knowledge regarding the importance of preparing financially for retirement.

Graduating high school seniors whose parent or grandparent contributes to the NACo 457 Deferred Compensation Program were eligible. They were asked to write a short essay describing why it is important to start saving for retirement now and how this message may be effectively communicated.

The winning entries were submitted by: Alexander Olson, Livingston County, Ill.; Chandler Thompson, Sullivan County, Tenn.; Jake Shim, Broward County, Fla.; and Ayana Riley, San Diego County, Calif. Each of these seniors will receive a \$2,500 scholarship from NACo and Nationwide.

Alexander Olson

Scholarship winner Alexander Olson identifies scant financial planning education as a handicap for his generation. He recalls the mayhem surrounding the 2007 Great Recession, attributing it to the general lack of investment knowledge among millennials. He writes, "Our parents have taught us how to emotionally plan for our future. Our religious beliefs have taught us how to spiritually plan for our future. What we have not been taught to this date is how to plan financially for our future."

Olson sees potential in using various new technologies to communicate with and educate millennials about retirement planning. He writes, "My generation has grown up with the internet, social media and smart phone apps being our way to communicate with

each other as well as the world. These methods would be a great way to reach my generation and get us willing to start investing as early as possible for retirement."

Alexander Olson will attend the Milwaukee School of Engineering after graduating from Pontiac Township High School in Odell, Ill.



Chandler Thompson

Scholarship winner Chandler Thompson recognizes the information overload today's youth endures on a daily basis, and sees potential in changing the way financial planning services are advertised to millennials. Pointing out the media's focus on the fast lives of the rich and famous, Chandler writes, "The ideas of patience and living for your future self have sadly been neglected and even discouraged by media."

Instead of going against the grain, Chandler sees opportunity in playing to the lavish lifestyles the media portrays that are entrancing many of today's youth. Chandler says instead of focusing on qualities like patience and responsibility, the communication should be centered around: "...maintaining a lavish, fun-filled life of wealth and prosperity by making the connection that placing an untaxed portion of their in-

come in a secure location with a reasonable rate of return will guarantee continuance of their successes."

Chandler Thompson will attend the University of Tennessee, Knoxville after graduating from Science Hill High School in Piney Flats, Tenn.

Jake Shim

Scholarship winner Jake Shim demonstrates how parents can be a valuable source of knowledge to their children when it comes to retirement planning. While Jake's mom is more of the free-spirited, impulsive type, his father instilled in him the value of saving at a young age. Jake writes, "Mom used to laugh at dad sometimes because he would always be thinking of how to make things more efficient and ways to save money. However, I think my dad will have the last laugh when it comes time to retire."

Shim believes an ideal retirement strategy includes a deferred compensation plan such as a 457 or 401(k). He writes, "Dad also taught me that it is better to strive for safe, modest returns rather than try for the big score which may end up being a big bust."

He will attend the University of Central Florida after graduating from College Academy in Plantation, Fla.

Ayana Riley

Scholarship winner Ayana Riley points out a major deficit in education her generation encounters when it comes to retirement planning. "Financial literacy is just as important to learn as the

English language," she writes.

Witnessing many elderly members of her community struggle to make ends meet, Ayana feels messaging that resonates with today's youth is essential. She sees potential in using "visually stimulating" social media communications to connect with her generation. She writes, "A social campaign with a catchy hashtag would engage your intended audience and inspire them to educate themselves."

Ayana Riley will attend Dillard University after graduating from Lincoln High School in San Diego, Calif. **CN**

Nationwide sponsors the Nationwide/NACo Scholarship to recognize its three-decade-long partnership with NACo and its member counties. The Nationwide/NACo Scholarship is just one of the services arising out of this partnership.



First job in D.C. was NACo temp

From TETON page 5

Her first job was temporary. The agency placed her in a three-month assignment — at NACo — where she filled in for an administrative assistant who was on maternity leave. From there, she landed a full-time job at the National Cable and Telecommunications Association.

Over the next several years, she worked for Rep. Les AuCoin (D-Ore.) as assistant press secretary, returned to Utah and the Sundance Institute, got a master's degree in public administration, came back to D.C. to work for Orton and returned to Utah after Orton lost a U.S. Senate race.

Her Washington experience convinced her that she wasn't done with politics, after all. Once back in the Beehive State, she eventually became the first woman ever to win a seat on County Council and served 2005–2010. In 2007, she ran unsuccessfully for mayor of Salt Lake City. Wilson left elected office for a time and headed up institutional advancement for the University of Utah's John A. Moran Eye Center. She ran for council again in 2013 and was elected to another six-year term.

If Lawson had his druthers, Wilson would be headed back to D.C. or across town in Salt Lake City to the State Capitol.

"My only question is how we figure out to get her to become governor or senator, and I'm quite serious about that," he said, "because the state of politics as it is — it's definitely rare to get someone of that quality to keep at it. She has incredible strength and resilience, and I would love for her to come back to Washington as a senator or for her to become governor out there."

Wilson texted County News her reaction: "Please remind Joel that I'm a Democrat in Utah!" **CN**

Career pathways program knocks down barriers to county jobs

By Charles Taylor
senior staff writer

One-hundred thousand, 32 percent and 2040.

Those are significant numbers for Hennepin County, Minn. and for employers in the Twin Cities region.

In the next five years, there will be 100,000 more jobs to fill than qualified candidates to hire. Thirty-two percent of county employees will be eligible to retire within five years. And by 2040, nearly all of the region's workforce growth is projected to comprise immigrants and people of color, according to county officials.

The county is being "intentional" about planning for that day and doing so with an eye towards social justice and economic prosperity through its Career Connections program.

Taking a multi-pronged approach, the county is eliminating "unnecessary" criteria from its job descriptions. Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin calls it "right-sizing" qualifications.

He cites one example of lifting the requirement that building operations technicians have a boiler operator's license. Of the 117 buildings the county owns, only six have boilers, according to John Thorson, the county's workforce development director.

"That's an archaic requirement that just gets in the way of moving people into these jobs," McLaughlin said. "They're not going to be less capable building operators because they don't have a boiler operator's license."

Hennepin isn't alone in re-vamping the requirements for various jobs. Multnomah County, Ore.'s human resources leaders have been reviewing minimum qualifications in their recruitment processes as part of a HR strategic plan, according to Travis Graves, hu-



Participants in Hennepin County, Minn.'s Career Connections program learn the "hard" and "soft" skills needed to prepare them for county jobs. Photo courtesy of Hennepin County, Minn.

man resources director.

The county values "diversity and equity," he said, adding that managers are "empowered" to think critically about which qualifications are essential before writing job descriptions — that they can consider transferable skills and growth potential, and not just degrees and years of experience when determining minimum qualifications.

Both Thorson and Graves balk at the notion that lifting some job requirements might be "dumbing down" the workforce. "What we're doing is we are having the job classifications actually reflect the work that's being done," Thorson said. Often job descriptions are so narrowly written that potential candidates "self-select" out of applying because they don't meet a particular criterion that might not be essential.

About 70 percent of the county's employees are represented by unions, and

they've had no problem with the workforce development initiative, said Thorson, who was an American Federation of County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) official for two decades before joining the county. "Wearing my union hat, this could be something that would have potential to go

workforce initiative at this time."

Reviewing job requirements is part of Hennepin County's broader strategy to reduce employment disparities among county residents. The Career Connections program trains county residents for jobs such as building operations techni-

the county, Thorson said.

Career Connections takes its approach from the federal Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOVA), he added. "We're working with community-based organizations to do recruiting of our candidates. They provide wraparound services and address barriers for folks as they're going through training, like child care issues, transportation issues."

The county and other employers worked with community and technical colleges to develop a nine-month "credit-bearing curriculum" that prepares participants for the type of work performed in various entry-level jobs with the county and private employers.

"We think we can approach this in a way that solves for the county its future workforce needs," Thorson said, "and can also solve for the workforce

In the next five years, there will be 100,000 more jobs to fill than qualified candidates to hire. Thirty-two percent of county employees will be eligible to retire within five years.

awry without the proper communication and engagement," he said, noting that the county and the unions have a "pretty mature relationship ... so it is constructive and there's a history of joint problem solving."

Jennifer Munt, public affairs director for AFSCME Minnesota Council 5, said the union "has no concerns about the

cians, health advocates, and information technology and administrative professionals — positions that all employers in the region, not just the county, need to hire.

The program is free, and since the first cohort graduated in 2014, the county has hired 48 employees through the program, 42 of whom are still with

From CAREERS page 8

needs of other large public and private employers in our region. One over-arching goal is to do so in a way that addresses economic disparities, where they exist in the community — either by place, by ethnicity or by circumstance — and being explicit about that, he added.

“Disparities are a cost driver of the county in terms of human services spending and corrections spending,” he said, “and they’re also a drag on our regional economy, and in Minnesota there are persistent disparities that exist both by place and by race that are receiving a lot of attention and effort right now in public dialogue.”

McLaughlin has attended a couple of Career Connections graduation ceremonies and was “inspired” by the job trainees.

“Public employment has been kind of beaten up for a long time in the political realm, McLaughlin said.

“This is one of our efforts here to make Hennepin County an employer of choice for people who are in the labor market — for making it a supportive place to build a workforce for this 21st century that reflects the population of our county, reduces public assistance payments and gets people into a position where they’re supporting themselves and their families. And that’s a really good thing.” **CN**

WORD SEARCH

WESTMORELAND COUNTY, VA.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS FEATURED COUNTY IN 'WHAT'S IN A SEAL?'

Created By: Charles Taylor

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

- AGRICULTURE Mainstay of the local economy
- BATTLEFIELDS County has five Civil War battlefields
- COLONIAL BEACH Largest town and resort community
- ESSEX County to the southwest
- FIRST Virginia congressional district county lies in
- GEORGE WASHINGTON Slept here (born in the county)
- JAMES MONROE Fifth U.S. president was born here
- MARYLAND Dip your toe into the Potomac River from county land and you're in this neighboring state

- MONTROSS County seat
- NORTHERN NECK Region comprising peninsula between the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers
- NORTHUMBERLAND 'Parent' county
- POTOMAC River forming the county's northern border
- STRATFORD HALL Ancestral home of Robert E. Lee
- THIRTY-EIGHT Number of houses of worship in the county
- TOURISM Another local economic driver

75% OF U.S. COUNTIES NOW NACo MEMBERS

Welcome New Member Counties*

- Yuba County, Calif.
- Lucas County, Ohio
- Warren County, Ill.
- Greer County, Okla.
- Osceola County, Iowa
- Campbell County, Tenn.
- Ouachita Parish, La.
- Overton County, Tenn.
- Union Parish, La.

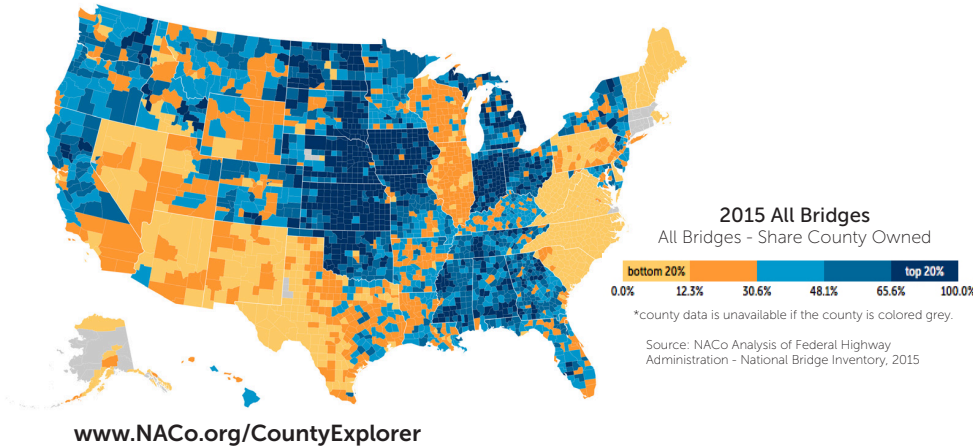
* New Members for the period 3.1.16 – 5.13.16

NEW IN MAY FROM NACo's

COUNTY EXPLORER

38% of all bridges are county-owned.

- 41% of county employees work in health, hospitals, justice and public safety.
- 61% of the total county jail population is supervised by the top 10 percent of counties by population.
- 15% of the county jail population is housed for state departments of corrections and federal agencies.



PROFILES IN SERVICE

JOHN O'GRADY

Vice Chair
LUCC Steering Committee
Commissioner
Franklin County, Ohio

Number of years active in NACo: 7

Years in public service: 16

Occupation: board president of the Franklin County Commissioners

Education: B.S., business administration, Ohio Dominican University

The hardest thing I've ever done: is surviving two open-heart surgeries followed by a month in a coma.

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Benjamin Franklin, John F. Kennedy and Bono

You'd be surprised to learn that I: am the youngest of 12 children.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: take a two-week trip to India.

My favorite way to relax is: cooking for my friends and family.

I'm most proud of: my four children.

Every morning I read: *The Columbus Dispatch*.

My favorite meal is: fresh seafood when I am visiting the coast...any coast...and any seafood.



My pet peeve is: closed mindedness.

My motto is: It is what it is.

The last book I read was: *Wuthering Heights*.

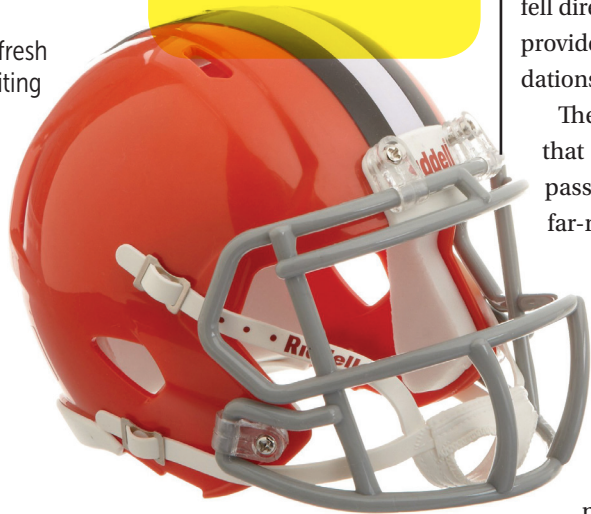
My favorite movie is: *The Godfather I and II*.

My favorite music is: alternative rock.

My favorite president is: Abraham Lincoln.

My county is a NACo member because: of the ability to share and exchange ideas with other counties nationwide.

A dream I have is to: see the **Cleveland Browns** become Super Bowl champions.



Survey: Pa. counties spent millions on services due to state budget impasse

As the General Assembly and governor begin to advance a budget plan for FY16-17, Pennsylvania counties are eyeing the calendar anxiously, recognizing that the start of the new commonwealth fiscal year is now less than two months away.

Their worries are well founded; a recent survey by the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) showed counties put up an average of \$12 million in local funds to weather the FY15-16 budget impasse.

Throughout that impasse, counties continued to provide critical services for residents, such as mental health, intellectual disabilities, and children and youth services, despite not receiving money owed to them from the state until well over six months into the fiscal year.

"The cost of the commonwealth's unprecedented delay fell squarely on the shoulders of our local property tax payers," said CCAP President and Franklin County Commissioner Bob Thomas.

"The administrative burden fell directly on our counties, our providers, our community foundations, and those we serve."

The CCAP survey showed that the impacts of the impasse were significant and far-reaching.

On average, each county had to find about \$12 million to keep services available for residents during the FY15-16 impasse — some 20 percent of their operating

budgets. Nearly three-quarters of counties drew down on their reserves — a few completely — and almost one-third had to borrow funds, incurring bank fees and interest payments.

Even with those measures, half of the counties also had to delay payments to providers and other vendors, and delay other expenditures and capital projects.

"The cost of the commonwealth's unprecedented delay fell squarely on the shoulders of our local property tax payers."

— Comm. Bob Thomas

"The difficult circumstances of the prolonged state budget impasse in FY15-16 brought counties to a crisis point" said Craig Lehman, CCAP board chair and Lancaster County commissioner. "Another impasse, or lack of sufficient funding, could create a more dire situation.

"It could trigger a compounding effect — counties with depleted reserves will have to borrow sooner, and most likely borrow larger amounts, incurring more fees and higher interest payments and at the same time negatively impacting the delivery of needed services."

CCAP First Vice President and Washington County Commissioner Harlan Shober stated, "Other contingency plans such as reducing services and staff, delaying or completely stopping provider payments,

or in extreme cases, shutting down some county operations to the bare necessities, become more and more likely the longer an impasse goes on.

"Clearly our residents are the ones paying the ultimate price of delays in state funding for these much-needed services."

As their top priority for 2016, counties are asking the General Assembly to approve an appropriately funded FY16-17 state budget, on a timely basis, that recognizes the critical importance of the services counties provide, so that counties and those they serve are not forced to bear the costs and burden of another impasse or of underfunded services.

"The commonwealth must restore funding for vital human services programs to levels that are appropriate to meet local need," Thomas said.

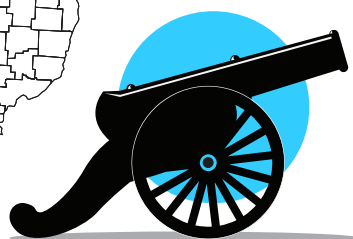
CCAP Executive Director Doug Hill added, "We owe a debt of gratitude to the many county employees, providers and residents who helped us weather the severe effects of the state budget impasse.

"But, equally important is addressing the historic pattern of underfunding across human services line items that counties provide on behalf of the state."

He continued, "Without appropriate funding from the state and federal government, counties will be faced with the difficult choice to either curtail vital services for the commonwealth's most vulnerable citizens or increase local property taxes, something no one wants to happen." **CN**

GET TO KNOW...

Lucas County, Ohio



Welcome, Lucas County, Ohio

Not many counties can say they were established in a trade of territory between two government bodies ready to go to war over them, but Lucas County, Ohio can. In the early 19th century, **war brewed between Ohio and the Michigan territorial government over Toledo, now the Lucas County seat.** Soldiers from Ohio were dispatched to defend Toledo, while Michigan had put out a call for volunteers to prevent the settlement's seizure by Ohio. Eventually, **Congress stepped in and settled the affair in 1836 — awarding the disputed territory to Ohio, which had already established Lucas County,** and compensating Michigan with 9,000 sq. miles, now known as the Upper Peninsula.

BRIGHT IDEAS | DURHAM COUNTY, N.C.

Durham Seed Library Sinks Roots into North Carolina County's Soil

PROBLEM: How to get more young adults engaged with public libraries.

SOLUTION: In a “foodie” community, start a seed-lending library so folks can grow their own.

By Charles Taylor
senior staff writer

Not going to Scarborough Fair? No problem, there's still a place where you can find parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme — or at least the seeds to grow your own.

At Durham County, N.C. libraries...

In April 2014, Durham County Public Library launched the Digging Durham Seed Library. The program allows residents — no library card needed — to “borrow” seeds from any of five branches and return harvested seeds after the growing season has ended. It was the first program of its kind in the state, according to county library officials.

“People will take home their free seed packets, plant the seeds, grow the vegetables, fruits or herbs of their choice,” said Jenny Levine, the adult programming librarian at the county's main library. “And if they want to save the seeds and bring them back, that kind of keeps the cycle going.”

Seeds can be donated at any county library, where staff and volunteers seal them in packets that can be “checked out” on the honor system from old-style, wooden card catalogue files. Seeds are available in the spring and fall, and the libraries hold seed-saving workshops for residents who want to learn how to get started.

Levine said seed libraries

help to develop seed stock that's well-suited to the local climate and promote biodiversity. “Maybe 10 years from now, we don't have to buy seeds, just get them from plants that were grown locally, and they'll be ... proven-in-Durham-soil plants,” she said.

Levine attended the International Seed Library Forum — yes there is one — in Tucson, Ariz. last summer. Worldwide, there are more than 500 seed lending libraries, according to seedlibraries.weebly.com, a website about seed libraries, including how to start one.

“I learned how lucky we are in North Carolina that we don't have laws preventing us from giving away seeds, because some places do have to deal with that,” Levine said.

An American Association of Seed Control Officials (AASCO) working group on seed libraries has been meeting over

the past several months, states *Cool Beans!* a seed libraries newsletter. Its goal is to develop uniform state seed law language for seed libraries. The group comprises seed-control officials, seed librarians, and American Seed Trade Association representatives. Its goal is to recommend uniform state seed law language for seed libraries.

Communities interested starting seed-lending libraries should contact their state's seed control official, which can be found on AASCO's website (seedcontrol.org), according to a January 2015 article in *American Libraries* magazine.

Levine said she has attended seed-saving workshops in Durham and that a growing number of younger adults, in their 20s and 30s, have been participating — helping to achieve the goal of getting that demographic group more in-

involved with public libraries. “They think it's pretty cool to (be able to) have an garden here in urban Durham, to be a part of a seed library program, even just learn about it.”

Another benefit of the seed library is that its patrons can save money on food, she added. Among the the seeds on “loan” are tomatoes, cucumbers, flowers, kale, dill, parsley, chives and cilantro. “I try to keep it stocked and keep an ear out for what people like,” she said.

Durham began its program with a \$3,050 grant from the Durham Library Foundation. This included \$1,800 for seed packets and other paper supplies, \$685 for three cabinets and installation hardware, \$290 for seeds to start the program, \$150 for seed-saving workshops and \$125 for refreshments for volunteers.

She said ongoing costs are about \$2,000 per year or lower

because of the durable items that have already been purchased.

Durham, the county seat, is a “foodie town,” and there's a lot of interest in locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs, Levine said. “A few seeds can grow a lot of plants for sharing.... There's going to be a food swap at one of our local breweries where people who have extra zucchini can trade with someone who has extra tomatoes. So it sounds like food is becoming a barter item.

“It's wonderful how it's been integrated in the community. It's hard to keep up with now, but it's a good problem to have.”

Resources for starting and maintaining a seed library can be found at diggingdurham.org and seedlibraries.org. **CN**

Bright Ideas features noteworthy and award-winning programs.



Old-fashioned card catalogue files hold seed packets for Durham County, N.C.'s Seed Library Program. Photo courtesy of Durham County, N.C.

the HR DOCTOR

With Phil Rosenberg

Phil Rosenberg

Another Plague Another Hope

The Centers for Disease Control reports that in recent years approximately 34,000 people died in auto accidents annually. About 11,000 died because of firearms. There were approximately 43,000 suicides in the United States. Close to 600 military personnel perished in combat.

A recent report has added another terrible statistic to this pantheon of death. That is, about 28,000 persons died as a result of opioid drug overdoses — about the same number as we lost because of auto accidents. While these numbers, even combined, total far less than the three leading causes of U.S. deaths, cancer, heart disease and medical errors, nonetheless, the opioid death statistics constitute a plague.

Opioids such as OxyContin, heroin, Vicodin, Percocet, hydrocodone, fentanyl and oxycodone are famous or infamous in our culture and are widely available for pain relief. How ironic that these same drugs instrumentalities provide not “relief” but mourning, futures lost and great social and economic expense in tens of thousands of cases. Eighty percent of the world’s consumption of opioids occurs in America.

The surgeon general recently noted that in most countries, the use of opioid prescriptions is limited to acute hospitalization and trauma, such as burns, surgery, childbirth and end-of-life care, including patients with cancer and terminal illnesses. Not so in the USA where a pain pill prescription is apparently easy to get—and to abuse. Three-hundred million such prescriptions were written last year. Not the

area in which we should lead the world.

There are, of course, other drugs not in the opioid category on which many people have become dependent and have paid a huge price. Certainly at the top of the list we will find alcohol abuse and tobacco. Also, the high street costs of prescription opiates can lead addicts to a cheaper opiate form — heroin.

On a recent evening, the HR Doctor watched a couple of previously recorded television programs, overcoming my general sense that excessive television watching is harmful to our spirits and our bodies.

This time, however, my viewing wasn’t for the opportunity to witness numerous acts of violence and handguns being fired, but rather to consider the almost endless array of commercial interruptions.

During my two-hour marathon, I counted eight drug commercials. All of these touted how wonderful it is to use certain drugs and all the help and relief using these drugs offered. Of course, none of them are generic and are

likely only found in the most expensive tier of health insurance company drug formularies.

Interestingly, there were also an array of aggressive plaintiff lawyer ads describing how much harm and how many people have been hurt if not died as a result of taking such prescription drugs. We are urged to immediately contact this or that law firm for the purpose of suing someone or some corporation to recover a vast fortune.

The National Association of Counties is absolutely correct in creating a task force to explore the opioid epidemic terrors and to consider the harm done, not only to the drug users but also to the community and its local government taxpayers.

Drug abuse leads to prison terms for those that survive. It leads to lives ruined and it leads to a further clogging of the local criminal justice and social services systems. It adds considerably to the workloads of sheriffs and police departments, public prosecutors, public defenders, courts, health departments and many other agencies including nonprofit organizations.

It even leads to many dilemmas for human resources departments. As possible employers of drug abusers, we must consider the costs of health insurance treatment options, employee assistance programs, as well as consequences when some of these opioid-addicted persons fail to behave or fail to perform properly.

The costs of the opioid plague are only just beginning to be assessed. Like the horrors of tens of thousands of combat veterans returning from the Middle East and Central Asia, this form of plague will have caused generations of harm to families and individuals. It will create long-term destructive impacts likely similar to the drug abuse equivalent of military post-traumatic stress disorder.

Even though its impact mimics more recent widespread maladies, the opioid plague is not new to our country or to the world — despite the new publicity. It is very ancient. Ironically, have we not been spending huge amounts of our brave human and economic treasure in supporting chronically dysfunctional places leading the

world in heroin production, such as Afghanistan? Did not our British friends over a century and a half ago face Opium War challenges?

This plague is partly self-imposed and allowed to continue because of our own arrogance and failure to harness all of the forces available to us to reduce the trauma.

How wonderful it would be if this gigantic national chronic pain problem of opioid excess could be the subject of a national campaign of education for greater personal responsibility. As part of the effort, we need to be paying much more attention to what infects our children’s brains by tens of thousands of hours of television watching. Physicians cannot manage this problem alone. Occasional university studies and federal grants cannot. Neither can the private sector. The taxpayers will become increasingly restive over the effects on local government service quality and costs.

Perhaps NACo’s opioid task force can add a voice to what should be an extremely loud chorus of demands that every participant in the chain of events leading to this national horror stand up and step up to their personal and professional responsibilities to end it. **CN**





WESTMORELAND COUNTY, VA.

Created by: Harry Kirk Swann
Introduced in: 1971

Westmoreland County, Va. is not short on history. At the time of its 1653 establishment, it claimed all of Northern Virginia before being pared down to the Northern Neck. Presidents George Washington and James Monroe and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Bushrod Washington were born in the county. In 1766, county residents protested the Stamp Act in the Leedstown Resolutions.



Bearing the motto "architects of the republic" the seal symbolizes the virtues and accomplishments of the past, and the promise of the future of Westmoreland County, including:

A quill, representing the signers of the Leedstown Resolutions and the Declaration of Independence who were sons of Westmoreland.

A scroll, representing the Leedstown Resolutions, adopted and signed in Westmoreland County.

The compass, used by architects and navigators, represents those architects and leaders of the Republic who were sons of Westmoreland; it is also symbolic of the maritime commerce of Westmoreland County.

A shock of grain, recognizing the importance of agriculture to the county economy.

Oysters, recognizing the significance of the seafood industry.

(If you would like your county's seal featured in "Behind the Seal," contact Charlie Ban, senior staff writer: 202.942.4249 or cban@naco.org.)

MONEYMATTERS

Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 Impacts 'File and Suspend' Social Security Strategies

On Nov. 2, 2015, President Obama signed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015. The act makes important changes to rules governing Social Security claims for retirees concerning the Restricted Application and the Voluntary Suspension. The changes will have a significant impact on the options retirees have as they consider how and when to file for Social Security benefits.

How the Rules Are Changing

Restricted Application: Section 831(a) of the new law phases out so-called "restricted applications." Previously, an individual eligible for a spousal benefit could elect to receive that benefit while allowing his or her own retirement benefit to grow, then switching to that retirement benefit once it is maximized. As the law is phased in, restricted applications will no longer be available. Whenever an individual files, they are claiming all benefits he or she is eligible for, with no opportunity for delayed retirement credits post-filing. This is termed "deemed" filing.

Voluntary Suspension: Prior to Section 831(b) of the new law, an individual could file for benefits, then suspend receipt of benefits, allowing their benefit to grow while a spouse could claim benefits based on his or her work record. The new law stipulates that a voluntary suspension stops all benefits payable under the earnings record of the person whose benefit was suspended. In other words, the spouse will no longer be able to

collect a spousal benefit during the time in which the wage earner's benefit is suspended.

Filing strategy impact: As the new law is phased in, "File and Suspend" claiming strategies, which combine restricted application and voluntary suspension, will have limited availability to some individuals, and no availability to others. These strategies had created opportunities for retirees to maximize the value of their own retirement benefits, while generating Social Security cash flow earlier on in retirement.

How the Rule Change Will Be Implemented, and Who Will Be Affected

Married: The impact on planning for couples is nuanced. With the rules being phased in, there are now three sets of individuals who will be impacted differently, depending upon their birth dates. In addition, with a married couple, each spouse could fall under a different set of rules, depending upon birth date.

Widow: Notably all of these changes concern the interaction between retirement and spousal benefits, and do not include widow benefits. So, widows will continue to have the opportunity to restrict an application to only widow or only retirement benefits and later switch to the other benefit.

Divorced: The impact on divorced cases is very similar to married. The important situations to consider are for those born on or before Jan. 1, 1954, who still have access to the re-

stricted application, and related spousal benefits, and those born after, who do not.

Plan Sponsors and participants with questions should call Nationwide's Participant Solutions Center at 1.866.975.6363.

Provided by Nationwide Retirement Institute. Nationwide Retirement Institute provides practical thought leadership through timely insights and education, tools and consultative support. CN

ON THE MOVE

NACo STAFF

Matt Chase, executive director, and **David Thompson**, FSC managing director, were among the speakers featured at the Conference of Southern Counties Association in Anne Arundel County (Annapolis), Md., May 4-6.

Emilia Istrate, research director, was a panelist at a discussion on the realities of rural America, May 10, during a forum — The Future of Rural Communities: Implications for Housing — hosted by the Federal Reserve Board and USDA. Also on May 10, Istrate participated in an invitation-only workshop at the Brookings Institution on public asset management in counties and cities.

• **Jessica Monahan**, asso-



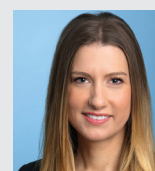
Chase



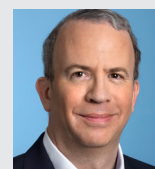
Thompson



Istrate



Cox



Goldschmidt

ciate legislative director, represented NACo at the Alabama County Engineers Association Conference and the Alabama County Administrators Association Conference in Baldwin County (Orange Beach), Ala. May 11.

• **Deborah Cox**, legislative director, was also on the road during the week of May 8. She spoke at the Washington State Association of Counties Spring Board Meeting and Legislative Conference in Chelan County (Lake Chelan), May 11-13.

COMING UP

Andrew Goldschmidt, membership-marketing director, will represent NACo at the New Jersey Association of Counties conference in Atlantic County (Atlantic City), N.J. May 18-20.

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NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION



ARIZONA

● **MARICOPA COUNTY's** Clean Start program will graduate its first cohort next month. The program, part of the county's **smart justice initiative**, aims to keep former inmates from returning to jail.

The county's Adult Probation Department recommends up to 30 female probationers to work in the jail laundry for 13 weeks. They're paid for 40 hours a week while learning occupational skills, receiving cognitive behavioral change training, career guidance and job placement services.

"We're providing an opportunity for these women to straighten out their lives, to work hard and to gain the skills and attitude necessary to hold down employment," said Maricopa County Board of Supervisors Chairman Clint Hickman. "And we all benefit when we reduce recidivism costs."

Participants also learn "soft skills" such as how to show up on time and getting along with other coworkers. The county's Human Services Department provides resume assistance and job interviewing skills to help participants find permanent jobs.

● Mexican cartels have been using underage **teens as drug mules** for decades to cross the border into **COCHISE COUNTY**. But a new law enforcement program called Operation Immediate Consequences was designed to stem the flow.

Under the program, prosecutors have charged 51 juveniles as adults for drug trafficking since May 2015, one as young as age 14. Previously, Border Patrol agents would simply confiscate the drugs and send the kids back to Mexico, but then see them return soon thereafter, according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

By charging the teens as adults, the county can now detain them instead of releasing them on probation as they do with other juveniles.

County prosecutors had stopped handling such cases in 1973 due to a lack of local resources. This is still true in most Arizona border counties.

CALIFORNIA

Voters in **MENDOCINO COUNTY** will choose more than presidential candidates on June 7. Also on the ballot is a measure that would end the timber-harvesting practice of **poisoning unwanted trees** and leaving them to die and rot, *The Press Democrat* reported.

If passed, Measure V would create a county ordinance declaring trees that are killed and left standing for more than 90 days are a nuisance and fire hazard.

Timber companies that vi-

olated the ordinance would liable for any damage to structures, water sources and telecommunication lines within about 1,000 yards of the trees.

The ordinance is unclear as to who would determine fault.

FLORIDA

SEMINOLE COUNTY plans to buy a closed golf course and **turn it into a county park**. The Rolling Hills Golf Club shut down two years ago, after being purchased by a developer who wanted to build homes on the land. The county sought another use after residents near the property complained.

The property comprises nearly 100 acres and has a market value of \$6 million, according to county officials. Negotiations are underway with the property owner, the *Orlando Sentinel* reported.

To help pay for the purchase, Seminole is looking to sell 46

vacant acres it purchased about 10 years ago to build a sports complex. The project never materialized.

Before selling that land, the county needs approval from the state because the acreage was purchased with a \$1.7 million state grant.

IOWA

The minimum wage in **JOHNSON COUNTY** has increased for the second time in six months. After a 95-cent bump to \$8.20 per hour last November, the rate rose to \$9.25 on May 1.

Johnson County supervisors voted in September 2015 to **hike the minimum wage** in three increments. The next increase will be to an hourly rate of \$10.10 in January 2017, *The Gazette* reported. The Iowa and federal minimum wage is \$7.25.

While the ordinance is county-

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Photo courtesy of Baltimore County, M.D.

MARYLAND

A **MONTGOMERY COUNTY** police officer, two **HARFORD COUNTY** sheriff's deputies and a **PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY** police detective were among those honored at a recent ceremony marking Fallen Heroes Day in Maryland. All four died in the line of duty since last year's observance.

"This is a mournful day," said Baltimore County Executive Kevin Kamenetz. "Our hearts ache especially for the families and friends of the newly fallen, whose pride today mingles with pain.

"But there is solace, too. There is comfort in the knowledge that the extraordinary deeds of extraordinary people are valued and will be remembered — not just by loved ones but by people they never even knew."

The annual observance salutes the broad public safety community, including correctional officers, firefighters, and emergency medical and rescue personnel.

May 15 marked the start of national Police Memorial Week.



MINNESOTA

CARVER COUNTY received the 2016 Outstanding Community Partner Award from the Educational Partnership for Innovation in Communities Network for its **Resilient Communities Project** (RCP), a partnership with the University of Minnesota.

The RCP is a program of the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, which organizes yearlong partnerships to match community-identified project needs with student courses.

County officials said the program is a cost-effective way to "increase capacity and bring in new ideas and creativity to work on needed projects. For students, it's a chance to delve into real-world issues and come up with solutions communities can use."

This year, Carver County worked with university students on 30 projects related to housing, alternative transportation, community engagement and education, building community identity, effective administration, environmental stewardship and human services.

Accepting the EPIC Network's Outstanding Community Partner Award for the Resilient Communities Projects are (l-r): Carver County Commissioners Randy Maluchnik, Jim Ische and Tim Lynch; Planner Nate Kabat; and Commissioners Tom Workman and Gayle Degler.

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wide, individual local governments can opt out and stick with the prevailing rate.

MAINE

State lawmakers voted unanimously to override Gov. Paul LePage's (R) veto of \$2.4 million for county jails, the *Bangor Daily News* reported.

The money **fills the gap** between funding the state has already approved for jails (\$12.2 million) and the amount sheriffs say they need (\$14.6 million).

MARYLAND

● For three Saturdays in May, **BALTIMORE COUNTY** police officers are hosting youth basketball clinics to help kids sharpen their hoops skills while interacting with police in a positive setting. It's called **Operation Connect**.

Members of the police department are reaching out through activities like Bike with a Cop, community cleanups, meetings with religious leaders and participation in community barbecues, among other events.

NEW YORK

The **ONODAGA COUNTY** Legislature wants **ride-hailing services** like Uber and Lyft in Upstate New York. The body passed a resolution to that effect, urging the state to reverse the ban on such services.

The services are permitted in **BRONX, KINGS, NEW YORK, RICHMOND** and **QUEENS counties** — the five boroughs of New York City. The state Legislature is expected to consider allowing the services in

Upstate sometime this year, the *Post-Standard* reported.

OHIO

● **FRANKLIN COUNTY's** health insurance plan will now cover employees' **sex-reassignment surgeries**. About 5 percent of private companies and government entities in the United States offer insurance coverage that includes gender reassignment surgery, according to the Society for Human Resources Management. That includes **DENVER** and **SUMMIT counties** in Colorado and **SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY** in California.

The additional coverage will increase the county's cost for its health plan by about 0.02 percent, though that could change based on claims, county Benefits Director Maggie Snow told the *Columbus Dispatch*.

● A network of bicycle paths in **MEDINA COUNTY** is about to become a system, pending the passage of a resolution making the newly **revised bike path map** "official." That would help the county secure grant funding from Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency for the signs

The existing network of trails, about 20 bike paths crisscrossing the county and connecting to routes in **CUYAHOGA, SUMMIT** and **WAYNE counties**, is confusing without signage, the *Medina Gazette* reported.

TEXAS

Habitually absent students will be handled by the **HIDALGO COUNTY** school system rather than courts, in most cases, after county commissioners approved

a new **uniform truancy policy**.

It will be harder for students to be referred to truancy courts, after Gov. Greg Abbott (R) signed House Bill 2398 into law, essentially decriminalizing truancy and gave the county judge and a designated mayor the power to create a committee that ultimately had to come up with new avenues to deal with school absenteeism, *The Monitor* reported. Before the law was passed, Texas was one of two states that still criminalized truancy.

UTAH

WEBER COUNTY got off the line fast with an effort to rescue thousands of children in Weber County from **intergenerational poverty**, ahead of a statewide initiative.

The commissioners have brought together a wide array of partners to develop strategies to address the problem, including educators, human services officials, juvenile court representatives, nonprofit organizations, faith-based groups, health officials and others.

After nearly five years of study and collecting data, a commission of state department heads is asking local leaders of 10 counties to review aggregate data about children and families in their communities and develop local strategies intended to lift them out of poverty, the *Deseret News* reported.

The state will provide participating counties with small grants to support their local efforts.

WASHINGTON

Frustrated by long waits for the state law enforcement agency, the **CLARK COUNTY** sheriff

is looking into starting his own **officer-training academy**.

Sheriff Chuck Atkins has formed a committee to find out what it would take to start a local police academy, *The Columbian* reported, with an aim to open by the end of 2016.

Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission officials say its academy is only funded enough to satisfy a little more than half of the statewide demand for trainees. The cur-

rent contract guarantees the **KING COUNTY** Sheriff's Office five spots in each class and Seattle Police Department seven spots. That leaves the state's 18 other police agencies 18 spots each month to share.

News From the Across the Nation is compiled by Charles Taylor and Charlie Ban, senior staff writers. If you have an item for News From, please email ctaylor@naco.org or cban@naco.org.



Selena Martinez, a tech assistant with BiblioTech, high-fives Dan Curry, director of facilities management, and Manuel Leal, government relations manager. Photo courtesy of Bexar County, Texas

TEXAS

Remembering that the inaugural **City-County Classic softball game** was meant to promote cooperation between local governments, the Big Bad Bexars of **BEXAR COUNTY** eased up on the San Antonio City Hall of Famers, after leading 9-1 in the first inning. The city's team prevailed in the end, 11-10. Both sides claimed

victory.

County Judge Nelson Wolff told KSAT News: "First you have to have friendships. You have to be civil to each other if you're going to accomplish anything," he said.

"We've got a great relationship with the city, but it is built on friendships and trust and loyalty and this is a big part of it."



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