

Broadband data disparities take center stage in 116th Congress

by **Arthur Scott**
and **Zach George**

Connectivity issues continue to plague counties across the United States. According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), approximately 19 million Americans — 6 percent of the population — lack access to even basic broadband services. Connectivity is imperative for economic competitiveness in the 21st century. From e-commerce and the gig economy to distance learning and telehealth facilities — county residents' daily lives are increasingly reliant on a certain level of connectivity. As demand for access to affordable high-speed internet grows, economic opportunities for the

unconnected continue to slip away. Counties lacking access to even basic broadband infrastructure are at a competitive disadvantage, exacerbating the economic divide between rural and urban areas.

The U.S. House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Communications and Technology recently held a hearing titled "Accountability and Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission." (Watch it here: <https://bit.ly/2VnzukW>.)

The hearing featured testimony from all five commissioners of the FCC, who took questions from members of Congress on a number of FCC activities. Two major county priorities were discussed throughout the hearing: Expanding rural broadband and correcting the FCC's broadband coverage maps.

During testimony, FCC Chairman Ajit Pai discussed actions the Commission is taking to close the digital divide. Specifically, Pai outlined his proposal to spend more than \$20.4 billion over 10 years to build and improve rural broadband networks. Pai called the initiative the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund, which would replace the Connect America Fund program (set to expire in early 2020).

The hearing also underscored the growing bipartisan concern over inaccuracies

See **BROADBAND** page 4



NACo First Vice President Mary Ann Borgeson congratulates new Western Interstate Region officers Kevin Cann, president; Greg Chilcott, first vice president and Mark Whitley, second vice president. The Western Interstate Region held its annual conference in Spokane County, Wash. Photo by Hugh Clarke

New WIR President Kevin Cann touts strong Western coalition

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

Upon taking the reins as president of NACo's Western Interstate Region (WIR), Mari-posa County Supervisor Kevin Cann voiced appreciation for

being let into the leadership tent as a Californian, and that feeling of inclusion resonated in his inaugural speech to the WIR General Session May 17 in Spokane County, Wash.

Beaver County, Utah Commissioner Mark Whitley was

elected second vice president, Ravalli County, Mont. Commissioner Greg Chilcott was elected first vice president and Gila County, Ariz. Supervisor Tommie Cline Martin became

See **WIR** page 7

Bergen County's collaborative model reduces homelessness

by **Rachel Looker**
staff writer

A New Jersey county has established a collaborative housing-first model that is making a difference in the fight to end homelessness.

Bergen County, N.J. was named the first community in the country to end, or reach

"functional zero," for chronic homelessness in 2017, according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). People who are chronically homeless have experienced homelessness for at least one year or repeatedly while struggling with a disabling condition, according to the National Alliance to End

Homelessness.

"Functional zero" occurs when the number of people who come into the system every month is equal to or less than the number of people who go out of the system every month, according to Julia Orlando, the director of the Ber-

See **HOMELESS** page 3

Clark County, Nev. at forefront of helping abused kids

The following was submitted by Clark County, Nev., host of the 2019 NACo Annual Conference, set for July 12-15.

One in five girls and one in 20 boys will be the victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation. The abuse these children endure can cause them to feel guilt, shame and to distrust adults.

If the children do not talk about the abuse they have suf-

fered, our community's ability to protect child victims and stop the cycle of abuse is greatly diminished.

Before the Southern Nevada Children's Advocacy Center (SNCAC) was established by Clark County, sexual abuse and exploitation investigations were handled in a way that made the process more challenging for these children because the children would go to

multiple locations, telling their story to various service providers including law enforcement, Child Protective Services and medical personnel. Children would have to repeat traumatic and embarrassing details over and over again to different strangers. This was not good for the children and not good for their cases.

The SNCAC seeks to make this process easier on the children and their families. The SNCAC houses a team including child protection workers, law enforcement officers, medical providers, prosecutors, family/victim advocates, forensic interviewers and mental health professionals. This team works collaboratively to provide a safe, child-friendly environment and to minimize the number of times the child

One in five girls and one in 20 boys will be the victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation.

must tell their story.

In 2017, in response to a growing national and local awareness around sex trafficking of children as a public health and safety concern, the SNCAC created a specialized team to meet this need.

The SNCAC took its expertise in preventing sexual abuse and exploitation intervention and fine-tuned its approach to better meet the needs of this

population.

Like child victims of sexual abuse, child victims of sex trafficking need to be made comfortable to tell their story so that they can be better protected and so that they can be connected with the service providers that can best help them overcome the trauma they have suffered.

The children need to tell their stories so that their abusers can be held accountable. As this sex trafficking victim response is an emerging field, the SNCAC is at the forefront of innovation as our community learns more and more about how to identify and respond to help these children. **CN**

To learn more about the center, visit the website: <https://bit.ly/30p6OeT>



SNAP/STATS

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

The United States is home to 22.2 million Asian-Americans and 1.6 million native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, the most rapidly growing ethnic group in the country, expected to increase to more than 40 million by 2055, surpassing Hispanics as the largest immigrant group. Their heritage is officially celebrated each May. Here are the top five states with the highest populations:

STATE	ASIAN/ NATIVE HAWAIIAN/ OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER POPULATION
California.....	7,165,099
New York.....	2,030,061
Texas	1,684,800
Washington	913,138
Illinois	837,410

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, July 1, 2017 (most recent statistics available);
Pew Research Center



Housing-first model works to end homelessness in Bergen County, N.J.

From HOMELESS page 1

gen County Housing, Health and Human Services Center.

Bergen County was also the first county in New Jersey to end veteran homelessness, according to HUD.

In 2008, the county received HUD funding and created a 10-year plan to end homelessness, Orlando explained. Part of the plan was to create a new homeless center. The idea for the center stemmed from interviews with 200 stakeholders who felt the county should consider a housing-first model and create a “one-stop” location where all services are offered in one building.

“Having a building where you can all work together and you’re not playing phone tag because you can do face to face and you can triage immediately, that’s a tremendous help,” Orlando said.

The housing-first model focuses on putting individuals into stable housing and providing them with services before requiring sobriety or mental health compliance, she said.

“That’s an important change over previous models because now you’re literally taking people off the street in whatever condition they’re in,” Orlando said.

The 27,000-square-foot Bergen County Housing, Health and Human Services Center opened in 2009. It is open 24 hours per day and owned by Bergen County, Orlando said, which has a shared services agreement with the Bergen County Housing Authority. The facility also has a drop-in center open twice per day, seven days per week that’s open to the public.

Orlando explained that the center is located in the county seat of Hackensack and provides for basic needs such as clothing, toiletries and food. It has 90 beds that can accommodate both males and females over the age of 18. In the winter, the center expands and



The Bergen County Housing, Health and Human Services Center is located in the county seat of Hackensack. The department has provided nearly 300,000 individuals with shelter since 2009.

can house 120 individuals.

The facility has provided nearly 300,000 people with shelter and has distributed over 675,000 meals since its opening.

Those who come to the shelter have access to a wide variety of services including a nutritional program that provides three meals per day. Medical services, veteran services and mail services are all located in the building.

“It gives them the services they may need to get themselves back on their feet and that is done in many different ways,” Bergen County Executive James Tedesco said. “To me, that’s the model that makes this completely different than many others that have tried different models.”

Other agencies, such as the Board of Social Services, help individuals enroll in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), obtain food stamps and deal with applying for welfare or Medicaid.

“People are obtaining their benefits much more rapidly here because they’re accessible right on site,” Orlando said.

The center provides services for document and ID recovery because many individuals experiencing homelessness have difficulties obtaining an ID or driver’s license, she said.

Tedesco said this approach is an “all-encompassing model.”

The Bergen County Housing, Health and Human Services Center has evolved over time with changing needs from the community. Orlando explained when the area experienced an uptick in heroin, the center received grant money to provide services for opioid addiction. Tedesco added that he thinks the mental health services and the addiction services are some of the most valuable services the center provides.

Since Tedesco took office, the county has tried to enhance the types of services to continue the “one-stop” approach.

“Even though we’re all different agencies and we all have different philosophies and different missions, we all agree on the one thing that’s consistently clear, which is our goal to house people,” Orlando said.

The county has been able to sustain the functional zero for chronic homelessness and for homeless veterans.

In an effort to maintain functional zero, officials hold at-risk meetings where they review a list of everyone who is homeless in the county to see who should be assigned housing based on their vulnerabilities, according to Orlando. Individuals can fill out a two-page form available at hospitals, jails and other locations in the community to get on the list.

On average, it takes around 64 days to connect a homeless

portive services, are used to place homeless individuals in housing, Orlando explained. Once an individual receives a housing placement, supportive services are provided.

Bergen County also uses a homelessness trust fund, which collects approximately \$250,000 per year, according to Su Nottingham of the Bergen County Department of Human Services. The fund was established in 2010 and authorizes the county clerk to collect a \$3 surcharge for documents like building permits or registrations for companies, among others.

For other counties hoping to create a similar model, Tedesco said the most important aspect is commitment. He added that bringing together county agencies and non-profit organizations has been helpful in reducing the number of individuals who identify as homeless.

“There’s many people out there that want to help, they just don’t know how or the way they’ve been asked to in the past just hasn’t been as effective,” he said.

Orlando advises counties to show the community the benefits of helping those who are homeless. After the center was built in Hackensack, the city went into a full-fledged revitalization and partnered with the center, Orlando said.

“Now, we have a community that embraces their services for the homeless,” she said.

The county plans to tackle youth homelessness next.

Tedesco established a Young Adult Task Force in September 2018. The task force includes a youth council which is headed by a young adult.

“I believe that the model we have if done correctly and replicated can be very successful with addressing this unfortunate problem,” Tedesco said. “We’re hopefully changing their lives, giving them a quality of life and giving them something to hope for in their life.” **CN**



Director of the Bergen County Housing, Health and Human Services Center Julia Orlando and Bergen County Executive James Tedesco visit the White House to receive recognition for achieving the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness.

individual with housing, Orlando explained. Specifically, for those who are chronically homeless and for veterans, the stay at the center is typically under 90 days.

When it comes to homelessness among veterans, Tedesco said the county works with developers and landlords to secure apartments and have available housing placements.

The county also works with support services such as Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) or Project of Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH). Additionally, subsidies or vouchers such as the HUD-VASH vouchers, which combines HUD housing vouchers with VA sup-

Congress introduces bills to address failures of FCC broadband maps

From BROADBAND page 1

with FCC's national broadband maps. Because these maps help the federal government make important broadband spending decisions, inaccurate and incomplete data shared by service providers causes Congress and the FCC to overlook the true demand for basic broadband infrastructure.

FCC commissioners acknowledged the data discrepancies during the hearing and discussed proposed actions to address the issue, including a new data collection and challenge process for mobile broadband coverage. Pai also highlighted a top-to-bottom review of the Form 477 process to ensure that broadband data was more accurate, granular and useful to the Commission and the public.

However, several members of the committee shared their frustration with the timeline

for correcting the data collection process and emphasized the need to collect new data from independent parties and consumers rather than service providers.

This urgency, however, is not limited to members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Several bipartisan bills have been introduced in the 116th Congress specifically addressing the failures of the FCC maps:

• **Improving Broadband Mapping Accuracy Act (S. 842):** Introduced by Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.V.), Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and John Hoeven (R-N.D.), this bill would direct the FCC to initiate a rulemaking to establish a process for using data reported by consumers and state, local and tribal government entities verifying coverage data reported by service providers.

• **Broadband Data Improvement Act of 2019:** In-

troduced by Senators Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), Brian Schatz (D-Hawai'i), Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) and Jon Tester (D-Mont.), this bill would require broadband providers to report service availability through GIS shapefiles, rather than larger census block level data. The GIS shapefiles would replace the current Form 477 process and provide a more accurate picture of connectivity at ground level. Additionally, this bill would establish a streamlined data validation process.

• **Save the Internet Act of 2019 (H.R. 1644):** The Save the Internet Act of 2019 recently passed the U.S. House of Representatives (232-190). Included in this package is an amendment written by Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-Va.) that would require the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to examine the accuracy of the FCC's broadband mapping. Additionally, the GAO report would provide

recommendations on how the FCC could produce more accurate maps.

• **Broadband Mapping After Public Scrutiny (MAPS) Act (H.R. 2643):** Introduced by Representatives Bob Latta (R-Ohio) and Peter Welch (D-Vt.), this bill would require the FCC to establish rules for data submitted to the FCC by private entities and state, local and tribal government entities to verify fixed and mobile broadband service coverage data reported to the FCC by fixed and mobile broadband service providers.

In October 2018, NACo began work on an initiative aimed at addressing the FCC's data disparities through a crowdsourcing platform. Partnering with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, the Rural Community Assistance Partnership, the National Association of Development Organizations and Farm Credit, NACo released "TestIT" — a

mobile app designed to identify areas with little or no connectivity. With TestIT, users can report their broadband speeds from anywhere with a simple click of a button. The data collected through this app will help identify areas where broadband service is overstated and underfunded by comparing the data to the FCC's National Broadband Map.

As NACo continues to work with Congress and the administration to bridge the digital divide, county leaders and constituents alike are encouraged to download the TestIT app and help shed light on the true state of connectivity in America. The app is free and available for both iOS and Android devices. **EN**

Arthur Scott is an associate legislative director and Zach George is a legislative assistant in NACo's Government Affairs department.

TEST YOUR BROADBAND SPEED TODAY

NACo has partnered with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, the Rural Community Assistance Partnership, the National Association of Development Organizations and Farm Credit to develop a free mobile app designed to identify areas with low or no connectivity to help ensure adequate funding for broadband infrastructure is provided across the country.

Get Started!

- Locate the iOS/Android App Store on your phone



- Search for "TestIT" in your mobile app store

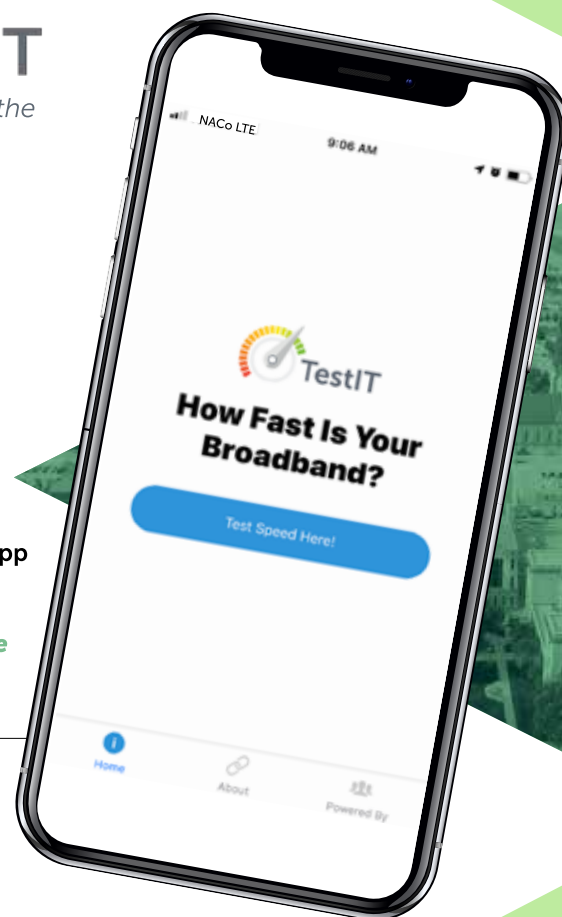


- Download TestIT mobile app

- Open TestIT mobile app and click: **Test Speed Here**

www.naco.org/TestIt

No personal information is collected through the app.



Bill would invest \$92 billion for affordable housing

by Daria Daniel

U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) recently introduced draft legislation to improve the quality and accessibility of affordable housing while providing new funding and program resources to counties. Waters chairs the U.S. House Financial Services Committee.

The Housing Is Infrastructure Act would repair the nation’s existing affordable housing stock, create new affordable housing units and establish a set-aside in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program to streamline the housing development process, among other measures.

The draft legislation proposes approximately \$92 billion in new funding for affordable housing. Specifically, the bill includes:

- \$70 billion to address the public housing capital backlog;
- \$10 billion for a CDBG set-aside to incentivize state and local governments to eliminate impact fees and to streamline the affordable

housing development process;

- \$5 billion to support mitigation efforts to protect communities from future disasters and reduce federal spending on disaster recovery; and
- \$5 billion for the Housing Trust Fund to develop new housing units that would be affordable to the lowest-income households.

Smaller funding streams included in the legislation would go toward meeting housing needs on tribal lands (\$1 billion) and helping low-income elderly individuals in rural areas age in place (\$100 million). These new federal funding resources would offer critical support to counties, which play a central role in the coordination and planning of housing development in our communities. Legislators have not yet identified potential budgetary offsets that would fund the proposals outlined in the draft bill.

Though the \$10 billion set-aside will run through CDBG, this new funding would be distributed through a different structure than the traditional CDBG program. Specifically,

the \$10 billion would be awarded on a competitive basis to states and localities, compared to the current program that awards funding to states and localities on a formula basis. In addition, the funding may only be used for the development and preservation of qualified affordable housing, including construction of housing, as well as any project or entity eligible for a discretionary grant under the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

To qualify for CDBG funding under the draft legislation, applicants would need to demonstrate that they meet the following criteria:

1. Responsibly streamlining the process for development of qualified affordable housing;
2. Eliminating or reducing impact fees except for purposes of developing affordable housing; and
3. Supplementing federal assistance provided with non-federal sources for costs of qualified affordable housing or infrastructure.

Going forward, the draft legislation must still be con-

sidered in the House Financial Services Committee. On the Senate side, senators are also proposing affordable housing legislation, such as Sen. Elizabeth Warren’s (D-Mass.) American Housing and Eco-

nomic Mobility Act. [CN](#)

Daria Daniel is an associate legislative director at NACo; Valerie Brankovic, legislative assistant, contributed to this article.

NACo releases analysis of DOL Overtime Pay Rule

by Daria Daniel

Have questions about overtime pay? NACo recently released a full analysis and chart comparing the current law and a new proposed overtime rule.

Over the last decade, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has made several attempts to increase the salary threshold for overtime pay for executive, administrative and professional employees. DOL released its latest Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in March to update the overtime pay threshold.

The proposal would increase the threshold for employees

meeting the job duties criteria for administrative, executive and professional employees from \$23,660 to \$35,308. To view NACo’s full analysis and a comparison chart between the current law, new proposed overtime rule and 2016 proposed rule, visit <https://bit.ly/2w0EMZ9>.

In May 2016, DOL finalized the previous proposed rule, but in November 2016, a U.S. District Court judge in Texas blocked DOL implementation of the rule, which had been slated to take effect Dec. 1, 2016.

Review the DOL’s proposed rule at <http://bit.ly/2U1dX0x>.

If finalized, the rule would impact county governments, as the nation’s 3,069 counties employ more than 3.6 million employees, while providing services to more than 316 million county residents. In 40 percent of counties, local governments do not meet the new salary threshold of \$35,308.

In 47 percent of counties in the South Census region, average wages in local government are less than the \$35,308 proposed threshold. Under the 2016 proposed rule, 85 percent of counties overall and 97 percent of counties in the region did not meet the salary threshold (\$47,476). [CN](#)

WORD SEARCH

HANCOCK COUNTY, MAINE

Created by: Mary Ann Barton

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

- ACADIA:** The county is home to 47,000 acre-Acadia National Park.

AIRPORT: The county owns the Hancock County-Bar Harbor Airport.

CADILLAC: Cadillac Mountain, at 1,530 feet, is the highest point along the North Atlantic seaboard. It was named after French explorer Antoine Laumet de La Mothe, Sieur de Cadillac.

COAST: Hancock County has the longest coastline of any county in the state.

COTTAGES: Wealthy industrialists including the Rockefellers, Vanderbilts and Roosevelts built estates they called “cottages” in the county during the Gilded Age.

COURTHOUSE: The county courthouse built in 1886 was destroyed by a fire in 1930. A new courthouse was built in 1931.

DOWNEAST: “Downeast” is most often defined in Maine as the eastern coastal region covering Hancock and Washington counties. The term started as a sailing direction in the 1800s.

ECONOMY: Fishing and tourism are the main industries in the county.
- ELLSWORTH:** The county seat of Hancock County, is named for Oliver Ellsworth, a chief justice of the Supreme Court thought to be the first to suggest the name “United States of America.”

GOVERNOR: The county is named for John Hancock, the first governor of Massachusetts who served nine terms; he was the first signer of the Declaration of Independence.

HORROR: The film Pet Sematary was filmed in parts of the county in 1988, based on Maine author Stephen King’s novel.

ISLAND: Part of the county includes Mount Desert Island, home to Bar Harbor and much of Acadia National Park.

LOBSTER: Visitors to Bar Harbor consume more than 5 million lobsters a year.

SUMMER: Bar Harbor, a seaside town in the county, is among the top summer getaways in the United States. It’s home to about 5,000 residents but more than 3 million tourists visit each year.

WHALES: Visitors can go on whale-watching tours off the coast; the best time to view whales is between mid-April and October.



Washington Sec. of State Kim Wyman discusses efforts to update the voting and elections system in her state to WIR members. Photo by Hugh Clarke

Evergreen State voting system updates pay off

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

Recent legislative changes regarding voting in Washington have come to pass just as Secretary of State Kim Wyman's six-year project comes to fruition, thanks to the participation of the state's 39 counties.

In 2018, the state Legislature passed five election-related bills, including same-day voter registration, automatic voter registration and a future voter program that pre-registers 16- and 17-year-olds to vote. While that makes it easier to vote, it raises the challenge of ensuring that all votes are valid.

"We need to instill confidence in our voters that our systems are secure and that we're ready for the 2020 election," she said. "Our job is to balance election security and access. If you go too far on either side, things fall out of

balance — if you make it too secure, people can't vote and if it's too wide open on access, people don't have confidence that those are legitimate votes being cast."

That is complicated by Washington's vote-by-mail policy.

"On Election Day, we have to prevent someone from starting in Seattle and working their way down I-5 and visiting each county and registering and getting a ballot and voting," she said.

It's something Wyman has been planning for.

In 2014, a year into her first term as secretary of state, 12 years after the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funding had helped counties modernize their voting systems, Wyman assembled election officials from all 39 counties. She knew none had a serious plan for replacing their systems.

"I asked them, knowing what you do now — with all

mandates and security concerns — would you build the voter registration and election management system we have today? Not a single hand went up," she said. "I knew I needed to update our system, but I knew I couldn't do it without the counties being involved."

With \$4 million in leftover HAVA money and \$6 million from the Legislature, the state developed new software that will integrate the statewide voter registration system and the county election management systems and show results in real time.

"This is groundbreaking," she said. "Up until now, they were separate systems that might talk to each other sometimes, but couldn't be used to cross-check each other instantly."

Wyman's staff was able to build the new system, VoteWA, with an eye to cybersecurity, a topic that had been on her mind since serving as the Thur-

ston County auditor starting in 2002. The two systems can only talk to each other with approved control — only people who have the authority to get into either system can get the systems to talk to each other.

The system that's public facing doesn't have a line of communication into things like a voter registration database.

Wyman recounted the confirmation she got in 2017 that Washington was one of 21 state election systems that Russians tried to hack a year before. She bragged about the skill of the Washington National Guard as a partner in cybersecurity.

"We have those part-time soldiers and airmen who in their day jobs work at Microsoft, Google and Amazon. Those are some of the people who are helping us with our cybersecurity needs in the state."

But she acknowledged the long odds.

"The frustrating thing is that

there's no finish line in cybersecurity," she said. "We have to get it right 24/7, 365 days a year. Every minute of every day of every year. They have to get it right one time. At the end, it's stacked in their favor and it's not a matter of if, but when."

On the other hand, she reminded the audience that the actual vote totals — the source material from which election results are drawn — were secure, and went as far as to pronounce that not a single vote had been hacked, altered, manipulated or changed. In large part because election computers are not accessible via the internet.

"The strength of our elections system is that it's decentralized," she said. "We have 9,000 independently elected officials... no single person or no single group has total control or can manipulate variables that could elect the outcome." **CN**

'Homegrown' Westerners an asset at Interior, official says

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

Alaska native Joe Balash is one of many rural Westerners in leadership positions at the Department of Interior.

As assistant secretary of land and minerals, his role there is part of a statement by the Trump Administration as to how the department will be run.

"It's more than just having people from a Western city who go out to the rural parts of their state for recreation, but having people (in DOI leadership) who have lived in, grown up in and understand the management of federal lands impacts the lives of everyday people," he told the WIR General Session audience May 17.

That placement of Interior personnel is chief among the department's priorities of restoring the trust of Western constituencies. Balash updated WIR members on the first two-plus years of the Department of Interior's operations.

In his own purview, he is stressing the need for an inventory of critical and strategic minerals and a way of making them accessible. That includes simplifying land use designations.

"There seems to be custom

descriptions of different land use designations in almost every single plan," he said. "The problem with that is that it creates a little bit of sleight of hand in understanding what exactly is being proposed."

Along those lines, streamlining the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is also a high priority, but with sensitivity for local input that could reach the state and even the county level.

"The current public comment time is 90 days, and as we try to streamline the NEPA process to get things done in one year, we've found that the comment period eats up a big part of that timeframe," he said, while acknowledging some states might want to allow more comment time. "Finding a way to make sure there's a state alternative but also a county alternative is something that makes a lot of sense."

The Department of Interior has taken a series of steps to encourage oil and gas drilling on public lands, which has cut application times by nearly two-thirds, down to roughly 100 days.

It maintains a standing task force to look at applications for permits to drill, increased the availability of information

technology and training to those charged with reviewing applications, using authorities, like categorical exclusions, already on the books and updating regional management plans for places where energy development is a high priority.

That includes renewable energy, such as siting solar power facilities on federal land.

"We're looking for 'all of the above'" for energy generation, he said, but noted concerns that regulations guiding certain renewable energy types were counterproductive and would need revision to be competitive with fossil fuel sources.

The dual administration of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) between the Interior and Commerce departments was causing confusion in the courts.

"We're attempting to bring them into alignment as best we can and using the same standard for when a species goes on the list or goes off the list," he said.

"Ultimately where we want to get to is a place where if a species needs to be listed, the actions we take are going to lead to preservation and restoration of that species' population, some outside groups use the ESA as a weapon to prevent

certain activity," without basis, he said, noting that he's hoping for clarification by the end of the summer.

Balash considers the Bureau of Land Management's handling of the sage grouse as the best example of how the Trump Administration has approached a difficult issue, by developing a state-by-state approach and bringing in widespread input as to what changes they would like to make to sage grouse management plans.

As for counties working more closely with the Department of Interior, Balash said the most important things they could do is be cognizant of the department's schedules and cycles and bringing as much accurate information to the department that they can.

"Sometimes we literally have to flip through books to find things," he said. But by using a geographic information system, a lot of that data could be better expressed electronically. **CN**

Cann sees 'new localism'

From WIR page 1

the immediate past president.

Valley County, Idaho Commissioner Gordon Cruickshank was named the Dale Sowards Award winner for his service to public lands counties. He served as WIR president from 2015-2016.

"We have rural suburban and urban counties from California represented here and I can't be more proud of the relationships that have developed here," Cann said. "I've overheard those same challenges from most of your Western states and it's one in which we as WIR really have to embrace wholeheartedly.

"If we isolate ourselves, we'll minimize our impact and our ability to influence state and federal statutes," he noted.

The conference was heavy on issues vital to Western counties with significant portions of federally owned and managed land. Speakers from the U.S. departments of Interior and Agriculture updated attendees on their programming and Washington state officials showed how things were done in the Evergreen State.

Attendees visited the Colville National Forest, the Grand Coulee Dam, Spokane's waste-to-energy plant and the fertile wheat and lentil fields of

the Palouse. The eclectic agenda mirrored the coalition WIR has built with like-minded organizations such as the Western Governors Association (WGA), the National Wildfire Leadership Council and the Endangered Species Act Coalition.

"I see these partnerships as essential if we're going to achieve our WIR goals."

Cann also reflected on the role of county government as a place to make meaningful contributions.

"I've seen a new localism evolving across the country and I've seen it in my state, and increasing number of state assembly and state senate members frankly fleeing the extreme partisanship of the state legislature to be elected as county officials, becoming the tip of the spear as public service goes," he said.

He echoed NACo Immediate Past President Roy Charles Books when he summed it all up.

"Our county commissioner and supervisor positions are not stepping stones, they are in fact, capstones. I fully believe that." **CN**

Cann's Mariposa County will play host to next year's WIR conference, May 13-15, and for this fall's WIR Board of Directors meeting Oct. 28-30.



WIR Past President Joel Bousman (left) interviews Joe Balash, the Department of the Interior's assistant secretary for land and minerals management May 17. Photo by Hugh Clarke

USDA undersecretary pitches collaborative vision for active forest management

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

Wildfires — both paying to fight them and attempting to prevent them — were on the mind of James Hubbard, undersecretary for natural resources and environment at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, when he addressed the Opening General Session at NACo's Western Interstate Region conference in Spokane County, Wash.

Doing nothing was not an option for improving outcomes that have seen fire damages and suppression costs rise in recent years.

"Western forest conditions haven't changed much," he said. "In many places, it was a forest that was created by disturbance and in its life cycle it is regenerated by disturbance — either large fire or insect disease.

"This isn't going away, this is going to be with us for a while," he said.

The costs of fire suppression, Hubbard said, are determined by the decisions made early on, reinforcing the need for planning before fire season.

"I often hear 'If we had just sent two air tankers, we'd have had this thing out and it'd cost



USDA's James Hubbard speaks to the WIR Opening General Session May 16. Photo by Hugh Clarke

\$500,000. Instead three weeks later we've spent \$50 million."

The answer?

"Catch it as quick as you can, as soon as you can," he said, "If there's any hesitation in the response, in these conditions, you're going to have a big fire."

That means working with the U.S. Forest Service, something that has been made easier by the advent of Shared Stewardship and Good Neighbor Authority, both tools for active forest management.

"We've learned in the West that without collaboration, the work doesn't get done," he said.

A few days after the fire fix passed in the 2018 omnibus bill, Congress wanted USDA's plan to treat the 8 million acres of national forest at highest risk of wildfire.

It was a static plan for a dynamic problem.

"What we came up with was an approach — Shared Stewardship — those national forests are hosted by states and therefore, there ought to be a sharing of decision space," Hubbard said. "The Forest Service can come to the table with all of its priorities, back it up with all kinds of analysis, back it up

with forest plans that have been through processes and that establishes the lay of the land."

What's important to Hubbard is making sure the agreements are worth the time put into them.

"They're mutual priorities, but we'd like to see it at some scale," he said. "We've been doing a lot of projects but they might not be large enough to produce the outcome that we're after to make that kind of difference."

Good Neighbor Authority allows the Forest Service to work with state forestry agencies, and

the 2018 Farm Bill expanded it to include agreements with counties and tribes. So far, that has resulted in more than 200 agreements with 37 states, and the Farm Bill included an incentive program that allows participating government bodies to reinvest timber receipts.

"That helps people become more interested in getting these agreements done. You can get the work done and you can get some revenue that helps you get more work done."

Fixing remaining glitches in Good Neighbor Authority, though, is going to be harder given how much attention it has attracted.

"What we are finding is now that Good Neighbor Authority has this much attention, more people will want to look at what you're doing, and with more people at the table, changing it won't be as simple as it once was."

Hubbard also noted that the White House grants Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue wide latitude to establish a natural resource agenda and carry it out.

"His focus is clearly more active management on the national forests, he's not going to loosen that focus," he said. **CN**

Aging infrastructure, aging workforce concern Washington

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

Volcanoes, fjords and everything in between.

That's the landscape in Washington state, on which Roger Millar, as state secretary of transportation, is responsible for keeping things moving.

"Because we have clean energy in Washington, most of our greenhouse gases come from transportation," he said. "We complain about congestion, but it's a symptom of a problem. The problem is that we don't give the citizens we serve affordable

housing and transportation choices near where they work and go to school."

He dwells on the transportation system failing people, to the tune of 540 deaths and 2,200 serious injuries on Evergreen State roads in 2018. To make it even worse, those accidents account for \$8.5 billion in lost economic activity for the state.

"Safety is a public health issue and it's an economic issue."

He also noted that transportation is access to opportunity, and that access tapers the further down you go on the economic ladder. The working poor

spend almost twice the proportion of a wealthier family's budget on car maintenance and fueling, he said, and that makes a difference.

"That's money that is not being spent on healthcare and education and retirement, so providing public transportation matters, and providing walking access matters, too," he said. "If we could provide that service, maybe you could get by with one car, instead of two."

Millar won't be able to get by with fewer employees. The department of transportation employs roughly 7,200 people,

but a large chunk of them could be gone in short order. Of the state's maintenance crews, 30 percent are eligible to retire. Of the state's engineering crews, 40 percent. Nearly three-quarters of the ferry operators can retire at any time.

"People are not coming in the public workforce to replace them," he said. "They're going to Amazon, Microsoft, Boeing."

Maintenance weighs on him, particularly because his upkeep budget is about half of what he needs to preserve everything.

"We need to get better at maintaining what we have," he

said about the state's infrastructure. "The vast majority of what we're using for the next 20 years has already been built," and all the state builds in the next 20 years will only account for 5 percent of the state's total transportation system.

"We look at (our infrastructure) and call them assets, but I think of them as liabilities," he said. "We have to maintain them and preserve them."

The biggest advice he can give on maintaining a good transportation system?

"Don't do stupid stuff on the land use side." **CN**

Infrastructure Week 2019 kicks off in Washington D.C.

by Rachel Looker
staff writer

The current and future state of America's infrastructure was front and center during Infrastructure Week 2019.

It began Monday, May 13 with a kickoff event in Washington D.C.

Little Rock, Ark. Mayor Frank Scott, who spoke on the "Infrastructure: Building Opportunity, Breaking Down Barriers" panel, shared his thoughts on infrastructure, explaining that it is not only the foundation for economic development, but for mobility and livability.

"We have to understand that infrastructure truly is a root of many issues," Scott said.

Randy Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, who also spoke on the panel, said she believes infrastructure creates middle-class jobs, fills the needs of community members and creates a sense of dignity and safety about the future.

As a former teacher, she added that infrastructure impacts school systems by affecting their water, sanitary conditions and safety conditions.

Anthony Foxx, former U.S. Secretary of Transportation and chief policy officer of Lyft, who was also the former mayor of Charlotte, N.C., said Lyft has used technology to help close gaps in transportation infrastructure by providing door-to-door service to transit systems.

"Infrastructure by its nature has the capacity to unleash all of its forces and the might of our economy, our capital, our people to serve a much higher purpose," he said.

The second panel, "Where the Rubber Meets the Road: Leadership from America's Cities and Counties," highlighted the role of cities and counties when it comes to innovative infrastructure.

Boone County, Ky. Judge-Executive Gary Moore, NACo second vice president, said 78 percent of the nation's transit systems are owned by counties.

"It's a huge demand on our



(L-r): Gary Moore, judge-executive in Boone County, Ky. and NACo second vice president and Karen Freeman-Wilson, mayor of Gary, Ind. and president of the NLC, discuss infrastructure issues from local governments' perspectives with moderator Brookings fellow Adie Tomer. Photo by Rachel Looker

budget and that demand is competing with the other things that counties do," Moore said.

He added that cities and counties need to work together on a regional basis and emphasized how private-public partnerships help invest in infrastructure.

"We have to continue to think outside the box with partnerships, public-private, and those other investments that may help us to be able to accomplish this because we know that public funding is scarce," he said.

Karen Freeman-Wilson, mayor of Gary, Ind., and president of the National League of Cities, said for counties, "necessity is the mother of innovation."

She explained that when there's a need, such as inequities in terms of access to broadband in local school systems, local officials want to do something about it to provide the best service to residents.

"Lack of connectivity has an adverse impact whether you're in rural America or urban America, where the connectivity just doesn't exist consistently," she said.

Moore discussed NACo's TestIT App, which can be used to test the speed of broadband in different areas.

"We're being innovative be-

cause we have to," he said.

Steve Demetrious, chair and CEO of Jacobs Engineering and a member of the Business Roundtable Infrastructure Committee, highlighted the *Delivering for America — Infrastructure Driving America's Economy* report.

He said the current inadequate infrastructure costs businesses unnecessary money, adding that modernizing infrastructure will bring big returns such as new jobs, higher wages and higher incomes.

"In the case of American infrastructure, we need to take action now," he said. "We must get America back in the business of investing in efficient, modern and productive infrastructure."

In a panel titled "Upgrading America's Infrastructure for the 21st Century," business leaders discussed the future of infrastructure.

CEO of Siemens USA Barbara Humpton said that the country is at the front end of bringing digitization to infrastructure.

President and CEO of Vermeer Industries Jason Andringa said he foresees the ability to monitor how infrastructure is aging and then performing proper maintenance as a common occurrence in the future.

President and CEO of Eno Center for Transportation Rob-

ert Puentes said he believes the country does a good job building new things, but does not do a good job maintaining it.

"We're already starting to move away from the ribbon-cutting as being the coolest thing and recognizing that there's technological upgrades, there's way to integrate things, so the conversation on infrastructure is changing," Puentes said.

Later in the afternoon, speakers discussed ways to find a bipartisan path for a national infrastructure agenda at the "United by Infrastructure: Business, Labor & the Urgency to Act" fireside chat.

Neil Bradley, executive vice president and chief policy officer at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Sean McGarvey, president of North America's Building Trade Unions, said they are working together to create an atmosphere that makes action possible by policymakers.

"Once you begin building momentum, I'm confident that we can find ways to finance airports, finance water systems, finance railroads in a way that everyone can come together and agree," Bradley said.

McGarvey added that the country needs a massive infusion by the federal government

to lead the way to work with partners, counties, states and cities to do a massive infrastructure build. State and local district councils and local unions are interconnected and have been more effective in moving policy makers and getting legislation done to provide resources to invest in infrastructure, he said.

To conclude the kickoff event, Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), majority leader of the U.S. House of Representatives, discussed congressional leadership on infrastructure in the 116th Congress.

"I want you to be focused on infrastructure month, infrastructure year and infrastructure every year until we get to the point where we need to be," Hoyer said.

He told attendees that the American Society of Civil Engineers rated American infrastructure at a D+.


"It won't be great if we do not have, at worst, an A- on infrastructure over the next 25 years," he said.

For the United States to be competitive in this century and in a competitive global economy, the country needs to invest \$4.5 trillion, according to Hoyer.

Hoyer went to the White House with Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and other House leaders to talk to President Trump about a bipartisan investment for infrastructure. After the meeting, both parties agreed on a \$2 trillion infrastructure deal.

"Investment in infrastructure will yield benefits in the near term and perhaps more importantly, in the long term," he said.

Hoyer said attendees at the kickoff event have the ability to spread the word about the importance of infrastructure.

"I urge you to use your platforms... to continue sending the message that infrastructure is the key to a stronger economic future for America," Hoyer said. 

Watch Infrastructure Week panels at <https://www.naco.org/events/infrastructure-week-2019>.

Infrastructure Week highlights smart infrastructure and security

by Rachel Looker
staff writer

Smart Infrastructure was the main topic of discussion at the “Smart Infrastructure Summit: Building Tomorrow’s Infrastructure at the Local Level” during the second day of Infrastructure Week 2019.

NACo co-hosted the event with the National League of Cities (NLC) and Smart City Works, which works to migrate infrastructure to the digital world.

Panelists and presenters shared ideas on adding digital infrastructure to physical infrastructure to improve transportation, water and energy systems.

Fremont, Calif. Mayor Lily Mei and Carver County (Minn.) Commissioner Randy Maluchnik, who chairs NACo’s Transportation Steering Committee, discussed local leadership and smart technology.

Maluchnik explained the importance of planning and establishing a dedicated county safety plan and a dedicated maintenance plan based on evidence-based decisions to establish smart technology.

“You have to be creative to get your modernization done and you have to stick to your maintenance plan,” he said.

Carver County is pioneering safer road design along roads and is working with farmers to come up with a plan to prevent cars from rolling into farmers’ fields during accidents.

Maluchnik said the county has taken the lead to attract state and federal money.

“Local government has to get involved if they want to move forward with expansion and modernization of the roads,” he said.

Mei explained how Fremont is facing rapid changes and is finding ways to be innovative when using technologies and building partnerships.

She said the city has created a smart mobility task force “to come up with solutions where we bring people together to come up with these innovative



(L-r): Carver County, Minn. Commissioner Randy Maluchnik discusses the role of local leadership in smart technology on the second day of Infrastructure Week 2019, in Washington, D.C. Maluchnik, who chairs NACo’s Transportation Steering Committee, is joined on the panel by Fremont, Calif. Mayor Lily Mei and moderator Zachary Schafer, CEO of Infrastructure Week. Photo by Chris Wathen

ideas.”

“It’s an interesting time to transition from our city planning for that infrastructure and building that in and also looking at the future and how do we encourage and foster the technology adoption,” Mei said.

Don DeLoach, CEO of Rocket Wagon Venture Studios and IoT thought leader, and Christopher Rezendez, founder of IoT Impact Labs presented “Resilience and the Cyber-Physical World.”

DeLoach discussed IoT, or the internet of things, and its relation to infrastructure. He said many IoT manufacturers have added sensors to monitor different infrastructure systems.

“Data is going to be the biggest, the most important resource that we’re going to have to deal with,” DeLoach said.

Rezendez said the country needs to stop focusing on productivity and profit in private businesses while ignoring the needs of infrastructure, adding that successful private businesses cannot exist without supportive infrastructure.

“Trusted data is the oxygen of the successful enterprise in the coming century,” he said.

Speakers for other presentations defined smart infrastructure and gave examples of how smart infrastructure systems have been implemented throughout different communities.

Denise Turner Roth, chief development officer at WSP and the former general services administrator, explained the importance of bringing new innovation happening in the private sector to state processes.

“Technology will continue to exist and will continue to get better and we will get smarter and we will get faster, but what we have to be committed to is identifying where our challenges are, being honest about them and continuing to pursue the solutions,” she said.

She said there are five keys to successfully making innovation sustainable in government which include:

- Choosing projects that have the greatest possibility of success
- Keeping goals and messaging simple
- Creating a physical, virtual and spiritual incubation space
- Creating small, talented, multidisciplinary teams even when the challenges call for big change and
- Pitching a tent for stakeholders.

Kris Carter, co-head of the Office of New Urban Mechanics in Boston, explained how Boston is using an app to combat bad drivers. The app provides data on drivers’ speeds and time distracted by a cell phone.

Biju George, executive vice president of operations and

engineering at DC Water discussed smart water initiatives and explained how DC Water uses an IoT sensor network to monitor water pressure, quality and sewer level and flow.

DC Water also created a smart drinking water fountain for public schools to ensure the drinking water is safe and reliable.

Lidija Sekaric, senior director of marketing and strategy with the U.S. Center of Competence in Distributed Energy Systems at Siemens, explained how 10 billion people will live on the planet by 2050 and 70 percent of those people will live in cities.

She discussed the emergence of a new energy system that supports local communities and a centralized grid, adding that communities can save on utility bills and reduce their carbon footprints with the help of the grid.

“The power grid of the 20th century was probably the greatest enabler in development in improving the quality of life in the U.S. and around the world,” Sekaric said. “Looking at the power grid of today and tomorrow, it still has that role, but it is transforming. It has to become cleaner and it has to become more resilient and flexible.”

Lisa Brown, national senior director of the Local Government and Municipal Infrastructure at Johnson Controls,

shared the research her company is doing to create smarter communities and explained the trends are moving more toward smart neighborhoods, smart innovation corridors and smart communities.

To support these smart infrastructure initiatives, City Manager Robert Stalzer from Fairfax, Va., and Senior Vice President at Hannon Armstrong Robert Johnson shared with attendees ways to fund or finance digital infrastructure at the local level.

Stalzer said Fairfax County has used bonds for smart infrastructure, but for other communities, it depends on the governing body to decide how to fund smart infrastructure.

According to Stalzer, funds that work the easiest are the economic development authority bonds, but they require a project to meet certain criteria. Johnson explained one of the barriers for securing financing for infrastructure projects is the technology obsolescence process.

“It’s very important to be intentional and to make sure that not only the governing body... but your community is investing in your policy decision,” Stalzer said. “The policy piece of it becomes your foundation for future success.”

The last two panels of the afternoon focused on technology-rich regions and protecting the data and cybersecurity of smart infrastructure.

Brooks Rainwater from NLC’s Center for City Solutions said many smaller areas want to welcome tech companies, but may not understand how the technology might impact their community.

When it comes to keeping both physical and cyber systems involving smart infrastructure secure, Joe Langill, director of Industrial Security Service at AECOM, said most people view security as someone else’s problem. **CN**

Watch recordings of the panels at <https://www.naco.org/events/infrastructure-week-2019>.



(L-r): Moderator Christopher Ali, University of Virginia; Craig Eccher, Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.; Corina Lopez, San Leandro, Calif. and Randy Maluchnik, Carver County, Minn. discuss challenges of building out broadband. Photo by Chris Wathen

HOUSE VOTES TO EXTEND FLOOD INSURANCE

by Brett Mattson

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a \$19.1 billion disaster aid bill May 10 that would provide additional funding for projects stemming from 2018 disasters, as well as recent flooding in the Midwest, on a bipartisan vote of 257-150.

Lawmakers included an extension of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in the bill through Sept. 30. The program is currently set to expire May 31.

This extension would provide lawmakers additional time to work toward a long-term reauthorization.

The bill now heads to the Senate, where lawmakers have been negotiating a separate disaster aid package over recent weeks but have failed to reach bipartisan consensus on some key issues, including additional recovery funding for Puerto Rico and \$4.5 billion in additional border security resources.

Counties serve as the main driver for recovery and mitigation following a disaster.

It is unclear whether an extension of the NFIP will be included in the final Senate version.

Counties serve as the main driver for recovery and mitigation following a disaster.

With 815 counties in 2017 and 570 counties in 2018 experiencing at least one federally declared major disaster, any delays in federal assistance directly impact the ability of counties and residents to begin recovery efforts. **CN**

To read the bill, H.R. 2157, visit: <https://bit.ly/2VF9u9u>.

Brett Mattson is a legislative assistant in NACo's Government Affairs department.

COLLABORATION KEY TO ADDING BROADBAND

by Mary Ann Barton
editor

The key to getting broadband to rural areas — and to people who can't afford it even if they have access — is collaboration, a panel of speakers said May 15, during Infrastructure Week.

That means collaboration between local, state and federal government, as well as private companies and others, panelists said during a discussion of "Using Broadband to Close the Urban-Rural Divide" co-hosted by NACo, the National League of Cities and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

In 2009, Carver County, Minn. received a USDA grant for \$7 million and the county kicked in \$4 million, said panelist Randy Maluchnik, who chairs the board of commissioners.

Working with a small private telecom firm that was successful in the bidding process, the county was able to add a fiber optic ring around the county. It helped that the telecom company owner had a history of working to bring

broadband to rural areas and was excited about the project. "He was on the backhoe — there's nothing like a passionate person," Maluchnik said.

Another piece of the broadband puzzle was getting public buy-in on spending \$4 million from the county budget. "We had a lot of political upheaval ... it was one of my tough votes," Maluchnik said. But it paid off. "We were able to get a return on investment in under six years."

In addition to hooking up its own offices to the network, other cities and towns and schools in the county were also a part of it, and formed a cooperative to purchase software needed from a private provider, he said.

Building partnerships also figured in an electric co-op building out a broadband network in Pennsylvania. Panelist Craig Eccher, president and CEO of Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc. in Mansfield, Pa., said the co-op is helping itself and its members and seeing private firms step up to the plate.

"What I found interesting, once we launched this project

three years ago, is that private companies upped their game," he said.

There continues to be another challenge, though, which is the issue of affordability, he noted. "Some of the issues we see without broadband — the sad part, is that the education issues, 50-60 percent of students receive federally supported breakfasts," he said. "How do you afford it even when it's built out?"

"These kids have great infrastructure when they go to school," he noted, "but when they go home, they don't have any connectivity. You have that in urban and suburban areas but not in rural areas."

Corina Lopez, vice mayor of San Leandro, Calif., said residents in her city also have issues with affordability. But the city is making inroads by offering free wifi at eight public parks, starting last fall.

In some cases, the wifi is also available to homes in surrounding neighborhoods, so residents can use the free wifi, she noted. The city also partnered with Tech Exchange, an organization that refurbishes old computers and gives them

away to low-income residents and helps them sign up for \$10 per month internet service. The city library hosted Tech Exchange to get the word out to residents.

All of the panelists said they can help the Federal Communications Commission identify spots where broadband is needed.

"We really do know what's going on at the local level," said Lopez. "We know our neighbors, we know what their needs are."

"I'm looking for leadership from the federal government," Maluchnik said.

"I'm a big fan of the TestIT app," said moderator Christopher Ali, a media professor at the University of Virginia, referring to an app that helps measure broadband speeds. NACo has partnered with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation and the Rural Community Assistance Partnership on the app, to identify areas with low or no connectivity to help ensure adequate funding for broadband infrastructure. Find out more about the app at naco.org/testit. **CN**

Capitol Hill briefing wraps up Infrastructure Week 2019

by **Rachel Looker**
staff writer

A Capitol Hill briefing concluded Infrastructure Week 2019 by focusing on ways to engage local governments as Congress works to reauthorize the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, which provides funding for surface transportation infrastructure.

NACo and the National League of Cities hosted the briefing titled "Transportation's Hometown Impact: Rebuilding with Local Government in the 116th Congress."

NACo Transportation Chair and Carver County, Minn. Commissioner Randy Maluchnik moderated the panel which featured Vice-Mayor of San Leandro, Calif. Corina Lopez; President of the National



Carver County (Minn.) Commissioner Randy Maluchnik, at the podium, listens to a question from an audience member at a Capitol Hill briefing on infrastructure. Photo by Chris Wathen

Association of County Engineers Tim Hens; Mayor of Miami-Dade County, Fla. Carlos Giménez and Councilmember James McDonald from Pinecrest, Fla.

Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environ-

ment and Public Works Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.) provided remarks during the panel and spoke to attendees about the importance of transportation in communities.

The panelists discussed how they pay for infrastructure in

their counties and the challenges they face completing infrastructure-related projects.

"We're working every day, each and every one of us, to make it better for our citizens that we represent," Maluchnik said. **CN**

PROFILES IN SERVICE

MELISSA MCKINLAY

Board Member
County Commissioner
Palm Beach County, Fla.



McKinlay

Number of years involved in NACo: I was elected to the County Commission in 2014 and immediately engaged in NACo activities. However, I was employed by Palm Beach County's Legislative Affairs Office prior to being elected and worked with NACo in that role as well.

Years in public service: Off and on since 1992

Occupation: Full-time commissioner and mom

Education: Bachelor's degree from Florida State University

The hardest thing I've ever done is: Become a single parent

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: My mom (passed away in 2017), the Roosevelts and Pope Francis.

A dream I have is to: Win the lottery, use the proceeds to form a foundation and give away grants for the rest of my life!

You'd be surprised to learn: I was the team manager for my high school baseball team, did all of the scoring, hitting and pitching charts and went on to be a batgirl for the Florida State Seminoles' baseball team.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: It would definitely be a toss-up between driving a combine harvester or putting on full firefighter gear and going into the burn building with 450-degree flames burning in front of me.

My favorite way to relax is to: Spend a day in PJs binge-watching Netflix



I'm most proud of: My three fantastic kids (Brady, 21; Macey, 19 and Annika, 17)

Every morning I read: Sayfie Review (it's a Florida thing) and my Twitter feed

My favorite meal is: Ice cream

My pet peeve is: Mean women, the kind that always tear down other women.

My motto is: Never forget where you came from, ever.

The last book I read was: *Last Train to Paradise* (the story of Henry Flagler)

My favorite movie is: *Steel Magnolias*

My favorite music: Depends on the day!

My favorite U.S. president: Abraham Lincoln for ending the Civil War and slavery.

My county is a NACo member because: Local government is under constant attack across our country from preemptions to unfunded mandates. The relationships, the teamwork and the learning opportunities provided by NACo to counter these attacks are second to none. That and we just think Matt Chase is a cool guy!

BEHIND
THE
SEAL

CANADIAN COUNTY, OKLA.

Canadian County is located in central Oklahoma and is the fastest-growing county in the state. The county seal incorporates elements that influenced its formation.



In the center of the seal, an Indian head represents the county's history with several tribes who were re-located to the area before Oklahoma became a state.

The Chisholm Trail, where Texas cattle were driven to Kansas railroads and markets, extended through Canadian County. The cattle are represented by the longhorn steer in the center of the seal.

The oil well represents how the county is one of the highest-producing areas of natural gas and crude oil in the state.

The county, which has agriculture in its heritage, incorporated wheat into the seal, representing the prevailing crop grown in the county.

On the right side of the seal, an outline of the state incorporates an "OK" for Oklahoma.

The date "1890" on the left side of the seal represents when the county was organized.

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

BRIGHT IDEAS | CLACKAMAS COUNTY, Ore.

'Drive with a Cop' Teaches Safe Driving

PROBLEM:

Teen drivers are more likely to be involved in fatal car crashes.

SOLUTION:

Hold an annual event to teach teenagers the importance of safe driving.

by **Rachel Looker**
staff writer

In Clackamas County, Ore., teens are riding along with police officers — but the officers aren't the ones doing the driving.

Sheriff's deputies take the passenger seat for the annual "Drive with a Cop" event. The program puts teens behind the wheel and allows deputies who are certified driving instructors to teach teens safe driving techniques as well as the dangers of driving while distracted.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teens in the United States, specifically with drivers between the ages of 16 and 19, who are three times more likely than drivers over the age of 20 to be in a fatal car crash, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The "Drive with a Cop" event is held at the Portland International Raceway and is free and open to the first 100 teens with driver's licenses who register.

At the event, teens rotate through different stations, complete distracted driving activities and listen to speakers. One station allows teens to wear impaired goggles to give them an idea of what it would be like to drive under the influence.

Carrie Higgins, who lost her 17-year-old daughter Maddi in a fatal car crash, has spoken at the event and shared with teens and their parents what life is like after losing someone



A teenager drives with a deputy from the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office at the Portland International Raceway in Clackamas County, Ore. Photo courtesy of Clackamas County Sheriff's Office

in a car crash. Higgins partnered with the "Drive with a Cop" program to tell her story.

A doctor has also talked with teens and parents to discuss brain development in adolescents to try to explain why some teens make decisions to drive distracted or impaired.

After hearing from speakers and rotating through the stations, county deputies drive with teens and teach them tips and tricks for safe driving.

Clackamas County Sheriff Craig Roberts was a driving instructor before becoming sheriff. Throughout his career, he has had to respond to multiple fatal crashes involving teens.

"I think if you talk to any law enforcement officer who has responded, you don't forget those tragedies," Roberts said.

Like Higgins, Roberts wanted to find a way to help minimize or reduce fatal crashes involving teens.

He explained that there are certain exercises those who are training to become law enforcement officers com-

"If we can teach them important skills early on, they are less likely to die in a car crash."

plete to avoid crashes when driving a police car. He said he believed this training could also be helpful and applicable to young drivers. For example, law enforcement officers conduct collision avoidance training reviews for situations where someone unexpectedly runs in front of a car, Roberts said.

He added that another aspect of the program is to engage youth with law enforcement officers.

"I've seen a number of kids go through it and they start out a little bit nervous getting in the car with a police officer, but by the end of the day, there is a positive relationship built between officers and youth," he said.

Kimberly Lippert, the community relations specialist with the Sheriff's Office and the event coordinator for "Drive with a Cop," said the driving portion of the day teaches teens how to safely brake, make safe turns and how to handle their vehicle in different types of situations.

"Those are things that you don't necessarily know that you need to know until you've encountered it on your own before," Lippert said.

Part of the reason for requiring teens to have their driver's licenses to register for the program is because once they have some experience, they are more likely to understand that mistakes are easy to make, Lippert said.

"If we can teach them important skills early on, they are less likely to die in a car crash," she said. "That early driving training pays huge dividends down the road."

Lippert added that in addition to learning about driving safely, teenagers are having positive interactions with law

enforcement.

"By the end of the day, they realize that this person is just another safe person in their community that they can build a relationship with," Lippert said.

Roberts said other law enforcement agencies throughout the state of Oregon have created their own "Drive with a Cop" programs mirrored after the one in Clackamas County.

"It's been amazing to work with parents and teens and learn so much from them and be able to help them out as they begin their journey as new drivers," Lippert said. "If we can save one life, it will have all been worthwhile."

Roberts added, "Our ultimate goal is to save lives and really build a strong relationship between youth and law enforcement." **CN**

Drive with a Cop won a 2018 NACo Achievement Award in the justice and public safety category. See more award-winning county programs at www.naco.org/topics/awards-programs.

Congratulations to the

LATEST NACo HIGH PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CLASS!



Some 112 county employees took part in NACo’s second High Performance Leadership Academy. The 12-week online program empowers front-line county government employees with fundamental leadership skills. The curriculum is developed by the Professional Development Academy in partnership with Fortune 1000 executives, public sector leaders, academics and thought leaders including Gen. Colin Powell and executive coach and author Marshall Goldsmith. To learn more about the academy, visit the NACo website: naco.org/skills

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Supreme Court looking at Maui County groundwater case

by **Lisa Soronen**

In *County of Maui, Hawaii v. Hawaii Wildlife Fund* the Supreme Court will decide whether groundwater is subject to National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting requirements under the Clean Water Act (CWA).

The State and Local Legal Center (SLLC) filed an *amicus curie* brief arguing that it shouldn't be.

Maui County injects treated wastewater from wells into the groundwater. Some of the treated wastewater reaches the Pacific Ocean. The Hawaii Wildlife Fund sued the county arguing it was required to obtain an NPDES permit for these discharges.

Per the CWA, a party must obtain an NPDES permit if it discharges a pollutant from a point source to a navigable water. Wells are point sources and the Pacific Ocean is a navigable water. But the treated wastewater in this case doesn't



go directly from the well to the ocean. It is conveyed through groundwater. The Ninth Circuit assumed without deciding groundwater isn't a point source or navigable waters.


The Ninth Circuit held that the CWA requires Maui to get an NPDES permit in this case. It concluded that the discharg-

es in groundwater are point source discharges because "nonpoint source pollution" excludes, for example, roadway runoff that isn't "collected, channeled, and discharged through a point source." Here the pollutants are collected in wells. According to the lower court, they are also "fairly trace-

able" from the point source to the navigable water and reach the navigable water at "more than de minimis levels."

The SLLC *amicus* brief provides a number of examples of discharges from water supply, sanitation and flood control services which will require NPDES permits under the

Ninth Circuit's theory. Obtaining such permits will be costly and unnecessary. The brief explains how the NPDES permitting process is a poor match for regulating groundwater because it is designed to regulate surface water only. Finally, the brief argues that the "text, structure, and legislative history of the Clean Water Act demonstrate Congress's intent to leave the regulation of groundwater to the states."

J.G. Andre Monette, Shawn Hagerty and Rebecca Andrews of Best Best & Krieger, wrote the SLLC *amicus* brief which the following national organizations joined: National Association of State Legislatures, National Association of Counties, National League of Cities, International City/County Management Association, and the International Municipal Lawyers Association. 

Lisa Soronen is the Executive Director of the State and Local Legal Center.

LEADERSHIP EDGE

Don't Let Yesterday's Frustrations Hijack Today's Successes

by Tim Rahschulte

Along any journey, we'll make mistakes. We'll make improper decisions and have illogical actions. It's been said that these missteps in our past — our past actions — cannot be erased. That's true and simply means that the consequences of your actions never leave you. They're part of your path, journey and story. Past actions, however, aren't there to haunt us, taunt us or keep us from achieving our goals, dreams, aspirations and visions of future states — although they may seem to do so from time to time. It's best to keep in mind that our past actions have occurred; therefore, they're in the past — not the present and not the future.

You're probably familiar with some of the more remarkable stories of individuals who have turned life's missteps and setbacks into amazing success stories. Here are a few classic examples that you may have already heard: Steve Jobs was fired from his position at Apple; Bill Gates' first company went under; Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team; Abraham Lincoln lost eight elections and experienced a nervous breakdown;

J. K. Rowling at one point was unemployed and described herself as a big failure; Oprah Winfrey was fired from her first television position and even Henry Ford failed multiple times, which resulted in personal bankruptcies. There are many other stories, and you likely have your own, where actions and circumstances caused negative outcomes and missteps along a journey that likely was well-intentioned, properly prepared and void of any challenge or setback.

You're likely thinking that it's easy to be inspired by others who have turned failure into success, but it can be much more difficult to move past our own failures and frustrations. We're inspired by such stories because we get to see the end. We know and remember the successes of others because of their success. We don't always remember the struggles they faced, the fear they had to overcome and their actions that followed a downfall. However, when it comes to our own frustrations, setbacks and missteps, we can easily allow them to hijack future success because we lack the ability to see a positive outcome that awaits us.

To prevent the past from hi-

jacking the present, we need to realize where it is — it's behind us! If you need to start over, start now. Experiences from the past can fuel us to succeed today ... but only if we can cope with any past setback rather than having it devalue our self-efficacy, damage our self-determination, prevent us from reaching our planned achievements and consume us with fear to the point of inaction. Cope with setbacks from the past, deal with them and learn from them. Then let them go and focus on action. Focus on your immediate next step along your journey. Remember, success isn't limited to a select few. It's available to anyone willing to have a vision, prepare properly, follow through with actions, and overcome hurdles, missteps and setbacks.

Our experiences are all in the past. They shape who we are, but they don't determine who we will be. They illustrate what we've accomplished but not our vision of what's next. They harbor the consequences of our missteps but not our potential. Only from present activities do we determine who we are and who we will become, what we are willing to do and what we will achieve.

So even if you've had some bad experiences or missed achieving a goal (or many goals), it's OK. Get better today. And then get even better tomorrow. And then repeat. Err on the side of action or risk having yesterday's frustrations hijack your

potential for success today. **CN**

Tim Rahschulte is the CEO of the Professional Development Academy and chief architect of the NACo High Performance Leadership Program (naco.org/skills).

GET TO KNOW...



Ontario County, N.Y.

Welcome, Ontario County, N.Y.

Ontario County is located in upstate New York near Rochester. The county seat was founded in 1789. More than 100,000 people currently reside in the county.

In its early years, Ontario County was a cultural center where booksellers thrived and six private schools were created. **The oldest continuously published newspaper west of the Hudson River, the Daily Messenger, is still printed in the county.** Its beginnings date back to 1796.

Visitors can go to three of the Finger Lakes — Canandaigua Lake, Honeoye Lake and Canadice Lake

— within the county or see Seneca Lake and Hemlock Lake, which border the county. In addition to the tourism industry, the county sees production in enamelware, farm machinery, office supplies, sporting goods, chemical products, ceramics, cereal and metal products.



the HR DOCTOR

with Philpot & Winkler

Say Cheese! The Tightrope of Public Accessibility

For many public employees, their work is indistinguishable from work in the private sector. Working at the county health clinic, at the IT service desk or as a legal assistant in the county attorney's office may seem indistinguishable from doing the same work in the private sector. Even in departments that may not have a private sector analog, the employees may not consider the "public" nature of their work; they have customers just as any other business and an interest in providing high quality service. But we all must understand one of the unique aspects of work in the public sector: Public accessibility to our work.

When we first consider public accessibility, we may think open meetings and public record requests. Fortunately, employees involved in ensuring public meetings are open or responding to public records requests are trained on those aspects of their jobs, and they generally can get help from a supervisor, colleague or legal counsel when concerns arise.

But through the development of social media as a political tool, counties are becoming familiar with another aspect of public accessibility: When their officials or employees are on the other end of the cell phone camera.

Such a situation can come in any number of ways. On a national level, we see this most often in the form of cell phone videos by bystanders witnessing law enforcement encounters or sheriff's deputies' own dashboard or body cameras. Also, private citizens often record public events or recognitions, sharing county news. And counties themselves are taking advantage of the op-



portunities provided by social media video to broadcast legislative news, success stories and public events. But there are other individuals who aren't looking to promote county business and aren't waiting to unexpectedly happen upon a problematic law enforcement interaction.

Rather, these individuals step into public offices, equipped with a camera, a YouTube channel and a point of view, seeking to record any public employee in the performance of their work or preferably, to record a public employee reacting very poorly to their video camera.

Generally, these recordings are not just legal, but are protected First Amendment speech. County officials cannot ban recording devices or require prior authorization to film in spaces that are open to the public.

The First Amendment protects filming matters of public interest, including government employees in public buildings. That First Amendment right is not entirely unlimited; after all, the right to film does not come with the right to violate the law

or the right to interfere with public work or disrupt customers seeking assistance. Counties can place content neutral, "time, place and manner" limitations on filming in public buildings. These limitations must serve a sufficiently important governmental interest.

The need for and the reasonableness of any limitations are going to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Thus, a blanket rule applying to all county buildings and spaces, even if the rule is content-neutral and limits only time, place or manner, is likely to be too restrictive. Consider the potential governmental interest of preventing disruption or interference with public employees' work. Your county may have many different buildings that house the varied services it provides. Maybe one of your buildings is home to multiple departments, has a large lobby with a lot of through traffic to the upper floors, and is where people often meet in small groups to walk together to lunch or chat briefly before heading to separate offices. What could constitute disruption in that space is

going to be different than what constitutes disruption in the public lobby of your public fiduciary's office, which may be much smaller, hosts no other offices and often has individuals for whom a camera's presence may prevent them from seeking services they need.

Ultimately, given the First Amendment implications and the potential for litigation, counties should speak with their legal counsel before implementing filming limitations.

Some elected officials and other highly experienced government administrators may be aware of the public's right to record in public spaces, but how aware are your front-line employees?

The very employees who interact with the public the most. What does your receptionist do when a citizen walks into the lobby and approaches them with a cell phone camera? There isn't time to ask a supervisor for advice — the camera is recording. What if the citizen starts trying to open doors in the lobby that lead to offices? What if there is a client in your lobby? What if the

receptionist is a temporary employee or paid intern? Will they have the skills to navigate a quickly escalating conversation while being filmed?

Without training, we cannot expect staff to know what the rules are and how to respond, especially if the citizen is confrontational. Even if the employee is performing work in a routine, appropriate manner, it is not unexpected that they suddenly might feel uncomfortable and defensive once put under the scrutiny of a video camera.

Thus, it is imperative that all our employees understand the extent of the public's right to record, the behavior expected of them in such a situation and how to recognize when filming becomes disruptive or interferes with other governmental functions.

In addition to training, a county may consider creating a communication plan that discusses the public's rights, any limitations the county decides to implement and any other state or federal laws that may further define the contours of the public's right, such as privacy rights of crime victims present in the courthouse or a statutory right to observe certain stages of ballot processing during elections.

This is the tightrope that public entities must often walk: Balancing the values of access and transparency with the obligations of confidentiality and discretion. With training and planning, counties can turn unpredictable, potentially challenging situations into an opportunity to show off their good work and excellent customer service. **CN**

Erika Philpot is the human resources director and Rose Winkler is the deputy county attorney for Coconino County, Ariz.

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

ALABAMA

JEFFERSON COUNTY is ending arrests for nonviolent misdemeanor offenses including the possession of marijuana, *The Tuscaloosa News* reported. Police will issue tickets for misdemeanor offenses instead of making arrests, however, individuals may still end up in jail if the misdemeanor offenses are related to more serious crimes. The change saves jail space and allows officers to focus on more serious offenses.

ARIZONA

- A **youth employment program** in **COCONINO COUNTY** is introducing teenagers to public service careers through paid summer jobs, the *Arizona Daily Sun* reported. Coconino County Careers for Youth reworked a pilot program from last year into the Success, Opportunity and Readiness - "SOAR" program. Participants between the ages of 16 and 18 will work 12 hours per week at weekly trainings for an assigned organization.

- Administrators in **PIMA COUNTY** are spending \$1.5 million for a pilot program aimed at **helping those who are homeless**, according to KVOA. "Housing First" will house 150 individuals and provide medical and mental health assistance. Those who are currently homeless, have a substance use or mental health issue or who have been in the county jail twice in the last year are eligible for the program.

CALIFORNIA

- The District Attorney's Office in **CONTRA COSTA COUNTY** is implementing a restorative **justice diversion program for youth**, *The Richmond Standard* reported. Through

the program, the district attorney will refer young people involved in serious misdemeanors to facilitated meetings with the person they've harmed. The meetings will be in place of the individual going through criminal prosecution. Other counties in California are implementing similar programs.

- Officials in **LOS ANGELES COUNTY** approved \$460 million in Measure H spending toward **initiatives for the homeless**, according to NBC4 Los Angeles. Measure H increased the sales tax by one-quarter of a cent in the county and uses the money from the tax to provide services for the homeless. The money will go to the shelter system, rapid re-housing, rental subsidies and staffing to provide support to homeless individuals.

- **Goats** have been put to work in **VENTURA COUNTY**, *Bloomberg* reported. Firefighters from the Ventura County Fire Department are releasing the animals throughout the county to eat dead brush that can lead to wildfires. The county has been using goats for the last five years to maintain the vegetation.

FLORIDA

- Utility poles in **MIAMI-DADE COUNTY** will soon provide space for **fifth-generation (5G) wireless technology**, *Miami Today* reported. County lawmakers gave the approval for three telecom companies to install "small cell" antennas that will bring 5G to the area by the next Super Bowl. Residents in the area may also see an abundance of new poles if



Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) signs a state measure that will eliminate local control over the location and number of poles in an area. Counties would still have control over "some limited aesthetics."

ILLINOIS

Residents in **MCHEMRY COUNTY** will have a new way to get around this summer with the creation of a **bike-sharing pilot program**, according to the *Northwest Herald*.

The McHenry County Convention and Visitors Bureau is working with Zagster, a company that provides micro-mobility options. It will cost \$14,000 for the two-year pilot program. Residents in the county must become a member of Zagster for \$25 per year to have access to the bikes.



KANSAS

A pilot program in **JOHNSON COUNTY** is helping parents with **children who are more likely to develop emotional or behavioral problems**, according to FOX 4. The program, Attachment and Biobehavioral Catchup, is free for county residents with children between the ages of six months and two years old.

It specifically targets families who are experiencing poverty or dealing with domestic violence or for mothers who have premature births or postpartum depression. Through the program, a clinician visits parents and children in their homes.

MARYLAND

- A program in **MONTGOMERY COUNTY** is helping **support small businesses**, according to *Bethesda Magazine*. The Business Connect program will offer free training, workshops and individual counseling sessions. County Executive Marc Elrich announced the program as part of an effort to diversify the economic development in the county.

- **PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY** is looking at a new way to **collect trash** after the county shifted from trash collection twice per week to once per week, *The Washington Post* reported. County Executive Angela Alsobrooks considered returning to twice per week trash collection, but it would cost between \$7 million and \$10 million. Instead, Alsobrooks is proposing the expansion of a composting pickup program which currently serves 200 houses. The program will include 3,000 homes next year and eventually include all households that want to participate. The county council must approve the \$200,000 program by June 1.



Beach photo courtesy of Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium; turtle photo courtesy of Oceana

FLORIDA

- A **leatherback sea turtle nest** has been found in **SARASOTA COUNTY** for the second time in the county's history, *The Herald-Tribune* reported. Turtle patrollers have staked off the nest, which is the width of a car, for protection. The number of leatherback sea turtles has declined in the last few years and a successful hatch may mean possible expansion. The last nest was found in 2001, but it did not hatch.



NEVADA

An agreement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement to **house immigration detainees** will allow **NYE COUNTY** to reopen its detention center and the Tonopah Jail, which has been closed for more than four years. The county board's approval paves the way for a single year of detainee housing and transport. The county's expenses to reopen the buildings will roughly match the income from the contract, the Associated Press reported, but officials hope to make money in subsequent years if the deal is extended.

NEW YORK

- The parking lot at the **JEFFERSON COUNTY** administrative offices will soon have an **electric vehicle charger**, which will take about two hours to fully charge a vehicle. The county is applying for a Clean Energy Community certification through New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, which could mean \$250,000 in grant money for further improvements. To be eligible, the county has to have completed four of 10 possible actions and it chose the charging station, energy code training for county employees, a unified solar permitting application and a building energy benchmark program.

- The **SCHUYLER COUNTY** Legislature will allow former owners who lost their properties in this year's **foreclosure** a chance to buy back



the property before it goes to auction. In order to buy back property, former owners' offers must be accompanied by payment of the full amount of taxes, penalties, interest and other county expenses involved with the property, and can be accepted up to two weeks prior to the auction.

OREGON

A camera pointed at Mount Pisgah will give visitors a sneak peak of the conditions at the popular hiking destination. The **LANE COUNTY** Parks Department's **webcam** will refresh every 10 minutes and store photos taken over the previous eight hours.

UTAH

- SALT LAKE COUNTY**'s prosecutor has said he will **not enforce the state's ban** on abortions after 18 weeks. District Attorney Sim Gill said the Utah ban appears unconstitutional, so filing felony charges against doctors who perform them as the court challenge plays out could violate their rights, *The Salt Lake Tribune* reported. "I think that's the only legal and ethical thing for me to do, which is not use the power of my office to violate the constitutional rights of my citizens when there is well-established precedent that says it is unconstitutional," he said. Gill secured a federal order

OHIO

When a **MIAMI COUNTY** inspector visited a woman's 1916 house for a routine gas line inspection, he noted it badly needed repairs. The county's Community Housing Impact and Preservation program and additional sources contributed \$60,000 for repairs. But on top of that, Chief Building Official Rob England rallied other available inspectors in his office to **rewire the entire home** in the evenings and on weekends, the *Dayton Daily News* reported.

confirming his office won't have to enforce the measure as the court challenge plays out, but if the law is eventually upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, Gill said, he likely would have to enforce it.

- WEBER COUNTY** officials are creating a new high-level post to coordinate the county's effort to end **intergenerational poverty**. The new official would answer to commissioners and the executive directors of the Weber-Morgan Health Department and Weber Human Services, which are both publicly funded. Around 10 percent of Weber County kids are living in intergenerational poverty and another 24 percent of kids here are at risk of staying in poverty as adults. The county initially contracted with a series of private entities and consultants to help in addressing economic and social issues. *The Standard-Examiner* reported that the new official could help in lobbying for state funding from the Utah Legislature and would ideally be a self-sustaining position, funded by public and private grants.



VIRGINIA

Faced with resistance from the General Assembly, **ARLINGTON COUNTY** won approval from the Commonwealth Transportation Board to **re-name a major road** named after Confederate President Jefferson Davis. *The Washington Post* reported that business owners told the board that customers blanched at the address on Jefferson Davis Highway, and other potential tenants have refused to rent space in buildings that would carry that address.

WISCONSIN

The Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that county officials can order a town to **re-name more than a quarter of its roads**. A state law allows counties to establish a rural naming or number system in towns to help emergency responders find locations, the Associated Press reported. The case resulted from **MARATHON COUNTY**'s attempt to follow the law and prompt the Town of Rib Mountain to re-name 61 of its 202 roads. The town sued, claiming the law applied only to rural areas, but the Supreme Court's ruling said the specific terminology doesn't limit counties' authority.

News From Across the Nation is compiled by Charlie Ban and Rachel Looker. Do you have an item for us to include? Contact us at cban@naco.org and rlooker@naco.org.

NEW YORK

- Drone flights are generally restricted, but operators will have a chance to **race their unmanned aerial vehicles** at the **ERIE COUNTY** Fair, which will play host to the North America Drone Masters Races. One of three of the races will take place at the county fairgrounds.



DEADLINE JUNE 28 TO RETURN NACo ELECTION CREDENTIALS

by **Lauren Wilson**

Please return your county's completed credentials form to NACo by Friday, June 28, if your county intends to participate in the election at the business meeting on Monday, July 15 at the Annual Conference in Clark County, Nev.

Voting credentials verify a county's eligibility to vote and the number of votes they have for NACo elections. NACo validates this information and other voting details through the credentials form.


In mid-May, every member county's chief elected official and clerk received a credentials packet in the mail including: Overview memo, credentials form, voting checklist and frequently asked questions.

In order to be eligible to vote, each member county must:



Ramsey County, Minn. Commissioner Toni Carter steps up to the microphone at the 2016 Annual Conference. Photo by David Hathcox

- return their credentials form signed by the chief elected official to NACo by Friday, June 28
- have paid their dues for 2019 before the voting occurs, and
- have at least one representative registered and paid for the 2019 Annual Conference

Credentials information and the voting form can be accessed online at www.naco.org/governance. 

If you have any questions, please contact Lauren Wilson, Membership Associate, at credentials@naco.org or 888.407.NACo (6226).

ON THE MOVE

NACo OFFICERS

- The NACo Board of Directors assembled for its spring meeting in Spokane County, Wash. May 16 during the Western Interstate Region Conference and heard legislative and operational updates.

NACo STAFF



- Associate Program Director **Kathy Rowings** spoke about the Stepping Up Initiative at an event May 14 to recognize Douglas County, Kan.'s efforts to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in its jail.
- Rowings also discussed strategies for treating people with behavioral health needs in rural jails at the American Jail Association Conference May 22 in Louisville/Jefferson County, Ky.



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- Municipal drinking water
- Groundwater remediation
- Industrial wastewater
- Small community water systems