

ANALYSIS

Trump budget weighs in at \$4.1 trillion

President Trump's FY18 budget released May 23 outlines the administration's \$4.1 trillion spending proposal, with discretionary spending levels set at \$1.151 trillion and mandatory spending levels at \$2.943 trillion. The discretionary spending limits adhere to the budget caps set in the Budget Control Act (P.L. 112-25).

The \$1.151 trillion in discretionary spending includes \$54 billion in increased spending on national defense, with equal reductions in non-defense discretionary spending. The budget also includes several proposed changes that would reduce spending on mandatory items.

See **BUDGET** page 2



The Western Interstate Region's (WIR) executive team, elected May 26, takes center stage in Deschutes County, Ore., site of the 2017 WIR Annual Conference. Pictured (l-r): Second Vice President Kevin Cann, Mariposa County, Calif. supervisor; First Vice President Tommie Cline Martin, Gila County, Ariz. supervisor; President Joel Bousman, Sublette County, Wyo. commissioner; and Immediate Past President Gordon Cruickshank, Valley County, Idaho commissioner. Photo by Charlie Ban

More fronts open in the war against opioids

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

Counties are continuing to grapple with the widening scope of the opioid drug epidemic.

Another county has filed suit against a pharmaceutical company that marketed painkillers, while King County continues to search for locations for its safe injection sites. Meanwhile, a synthetic drug is raising the

See **LAWSUITS** page 3

Ryan launches new bipartisan Task Force on Intergovernmental Affairs

By Zachary George
legislative assistant

Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) have announced the creation of the bipartisan Task Force on Intergovernmental Affairs.

"The Task Force on Intergovernmental Affairs will study ways to restore the proper balance of power between the federal government and states, tribal and local governments, and eliminate unnecessary regulatory burdens facing communities across the nation," Ryan said.

The seven organizations that represent state and local gov-

ernments at the federal level (known as the Big 7) – the National Governors Association, National Association of Counties, National League of Cities, U.S. Conference of Mayors, International City/County Management Association, National Conference of State Legislatures and the Council of State Governments – will serve as an advisory council.

Six Republicans and six Democrats will serve on the task force chaired by Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah). Members are: Rep. Gary Palmer (R-Ala.); Rep. Luke Messer (R-Ind.); Rep. Mark Walker (R-N.C.); Rep. John Culberson (R-Texas); Rep. Lee Zeldin (R-N.Y.);

Rep. Jenniffer González-Colón (R-P.R.); Rep. Richard Neal (D-Mass.); Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.); Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-Va.); Rep. Norma Torres (D-Calif.); Rep. Anthony Brown (D-Md.); and Rep. Charlie Crist (D-Fla.). The task force is charged with:

- 1) Partnering with states, tribes and local governments to balance the interests of governments
- 2) Providing a forum for states, cities, and counties to showcase their innovation and creativity in solving public policy problems
- 3) Examining the effects of federal rules and regulations on state and local partners.

- 4) Developing proposals to partner with and empower states, tribes, local governments, private institutions, families and individuals; and

- 5) Examining the extent to which the burdens shared among states, tribes and local governments may be re-allocated to improve the quality of life in all communities.

The announcement came on the heels of Infrastructure Week, during which state and local leaders met with congressional lawmakers to highlight the importance of a strong federal-state-local partnership in addressing the nation's infrastructure needs. **CN**

Trump budget proposes realignment of federal spending

From **BUDGET** page 1

Among the most significant cuts made under the budget proposal is a major revision of the Medicaid program that would institute block grants or a per-capita cap on federal Medicaid expenditures. This proposal would reduce the federal government's contribution to the program by roughly \$600 billion over the next decade. The House's AHCA bill would also cut Medicaid by another \$800 billion.

Other reductions include major cuts to several federal agencies: the Environmental

Protection Agency (30 percent); Department of Agriculture (21 percent); the Department of Labor (20 percent); Department of Commerce (15 percent); Department of Transportation (17 percent); and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (12 percent cut).

County programs would be hit

Certain programs on which counties and their residents rely would also be reduced or eliminated. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), which helps counties improve economic development and small business growth, would be eliminated.

Likewise, the HOME Investment Program, which helps low-income individuals obtain housing, would be eliminated. Also eliminated are USDA grants to expand broadband access to rural areas, the TIGER transportation grant program, and programs to provide heating and energy assistance to low-income families.

Other programs that are priorities for counties would be reduced, including a \$68 million cut to the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program and reductions in multiple programs that provide grants for local law enforcement. The two largest drivers of America's debt, Medicare and Social Security, are left largely untouched in the budget request.

A few agencies would see funding increases in FY18 under the president's budget request: the Department of Defense (8 percent increase), the Department of Homeland

America's counties are concerned that this proposed budget largely abdicates the federal role in the federal-state-local intergovernmental partnership that is essential to addressing the nation's most pressing challenges.

Security (7 percent) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (6 percent).

The administration touts the proposal as one that will reduce deficits and lead to a balanced federal budget, projecting a small budget surplus by 2027. The White House banks on significant economic growth generated by several policy changes in the budget proposal, including the suggested reductions in discretionary federal spending.

In calculating the economic growth and revenue projections, the White House assumes comprehensive tax reform will be completed, the Affordable Care Act and its accompanying taxes and regulations will be repealed, and Congress and the administration will continue to roll back many other regulations from the Obama Administration. However, critics have pointed out that the administration's budget appears to "double count" the impact of

economic growth on the budget, claiming it will both offset lower tax rates and help pay down the deficit.

Governmental responsibilities are shared among federal, state and local partners, as they are the fundamental components of a broader national interest in serving the country's citizens. The nation's 3,069 counties play a key role in administering federal programs and services within their local communities, including building and maintaining public infrastructure, providing law enforcement and public safety services and protecting the public's health and well-being. While the policies and programs established by the federal government are intended to guide and coordinate efforts, counties often are the implementers, and even co-regulators, at the local level.

America's counties are concerned that this proposed budget largely abdicates the federal role in the federal-state-local intergovernmental partnership that is essential to addressing the nation's most pressing challenges. The scale of the proposed discretionary and mandatory cuts would far outpace the ability of state and local governments to backfill this funding and support local needs, which could force state and local governments to either raise taxes at an unprecedented level or simply turn their backs on those who truly require public assistance. That said, the president's annual budget is largely a statement of principles and an offering of ideas, and there is effectively no

chance Congress will pass it without significant revisions.

Each year, the president submits a budget proposal to Congress, which begins the annual appropriations process. Upon receiving this request, the House and Senate Budget Committees are charged with developing and reporting a budget resolution to set the total amount of money congressional Appropriations Committees may spend during the fiscal year. The committees must then complete 12 individual appropriations measures to allocate money to each federal agency and program, which, if passed, are signed by the president and enacted into law.

However, in recent years, as battles over federal spending have intensified, Congress has been unable to enact stand-alone appropriations bills through the regular appropriations process, instead relying on omnibus measures, which combine all 12 bills, or continuing resolutions that fund the government at prior-year levels. It remains to be seen if Congress will be forced to take the same approach this year, or if they will succeed in returning to "regular order" and passing each appropriations bill individually.

NACo will continue to work closely with appropriations leaders in both the House and Senate to ensure that the needs and interests of counties are reflected in the final FY 2018 appropriations measures, and we will continue driving home the importance of the federal-state-local partnership in serving our local communities. **CN**



SNAP/STATS

TOP PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Los Angeles County
King County, Wash.
Hamilton County, Ohio
Maricopa County, Ariz.
Cuyahoga County, Ohio

Source: American Library Association;
2014 rankings based on size of population served, size of library collection, circulation and number of visits to library.

Profiles in Service
will resume in the
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Orange County, N.Y. latest to file suit

From **LAWSUITS** page 1

stakes for users and first responders.

Orange County, N.Y. became the latest to take drug companies to task for misrepresenting the safety and efficacy of long-term use of opioid painkillers. Sitting on the New Jersey border, it's the fourth New York county to pursue compensatory and punitive damages from drug companies, this time Purdue Pharma, Teva Pharmaceutical, Cephalon, Johnson & Johnson and Endo Health Solutions. Suffolk, Broome and Erie counties have also filed similar suits.

"As a county, we are working with nonprofits and physicians to bring heightened awareness to the issue," County Executive Steven Neuhaus said when announcing the suit May 11. "At the same time, we want those responsible to compensate for the public funds the county has had to pay to address opioid addiction."

In 2015, 44 Orange County residents died from opioid overdoses, and the 943 opioid-related hospital admissions in 2014 was a 17.5 percent increase over 2010.

Outside of New York, three counties in West Virginia and one in Illinois have pursued action against drug companies.

A place to go

In February, King County, Wash. moved ahead to establish two Community Health Engagement Locations (CHEL), where addicts could take their drugs under supervision of medical staff, exchange used needles for sterile ones and access addiction recovery programming.

One CHEL was planned for Seattle and one for the rest of the county, but so far, site selection has held up the process.

"We're being pretty open-minded about where we place the first one," said King County Health Officer Jeff Duchin. "We'd love to open two simultaneously, but finding suitable sites makes that unlikely."

CN UPDATE

California's **Santa Clara** and **Orange** counties announced a settlement May 24 in a lawsuit against Cephalon and Teva over alleged deceptive marketing practices for their opioid painkillers. The settlement will provide \$1.6 million for substance abuse treatment and education in the two counties.

Duchin is a member of the King County Heroin and Opioid Task Force, which recently had several recommendations to lower barriers to opioid addiction treatment and health service operation included in a bill signed by Gov. Jay Inslee.

Although there has been some pushback, including from a state senator who represents part of King County and sponsored a bill in his chamber outlawing the CHELs, Duchin said the biggest impediment has been the process of finding the best location.

"We're looking for a place with a lot of need for what we offer," he said. "Somewhere where there is a concentrated population of users who are injecting in public and could benefit from the linkages to health services we could offer."

The county is looking for the greatest impact location, where it could reach as many addicts as possible.

"It would be premature to engage with any community at this point since we're so far away from finalizing a site," Duchin said.

But that could change quickly, he said, once they identify a site.

Gray Death

In January, police intelligence reports told the Warren County, Ohio Sheriff's Office that there was a new opioid drug on the market, a combination of three potent varieties

that could be deadly in small amounts.

In mid-May, the county northeast of Cincinnati was confirmed to be a home of "Gray Death," named for its resemblance to cement. It's a combination of heroin, fentanyl and carfentanil, each more potent than the last, and it has been detected in overdose deaths in Ohio, Georgia, Florida and Alabama.

"This is very new," said Warren County Chief Deputy Barry Reilly. "It's even more of a threat because it's so potent, and it can be absorbed through the skin or inhaled, so it's a hazard to a first responder answering a call or someone who finds a family member who has overdosed on it. They touch them and get it on their skin or inhale it if they kick it up into the air."

Still, despite the danger, Reilly said the Warren County Sheriff's Office has no plans to change its standard procedures out of fear.

"We're not going to not stop cars and we're not going to not make arrests," he said. "If it's a situation where we can plan ahead and wear gloves and respirators, we'll do that. Otherwise, everyone is equipped with naloxone, so if someone is having trouble, we administer that."

Clay Hammac, drug task force commander for the Shelby County, Ala. Sheriff's Office, said education was crucial to turning people away from increasingly potent drug cocktails.

"This isn't going to give you a casual relaxing high," he said. "If you ingest Gray Death, it will kill you. Regardless of how matter of fact we are about this, folks are flocking to it."

Fentanyl's lethal dose is the size of two grains of table salt, while carfentanil's dose is the size of one grain of salt.

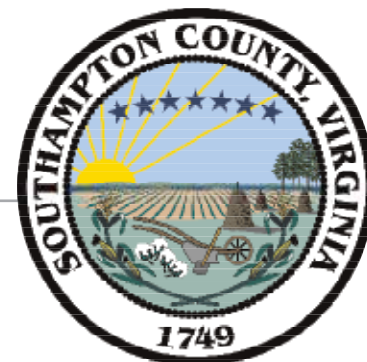
"We have to make the public aware that these are street level dealers, not pharmacists. They're not interested in the health and safety of the public, they're mixing this stuff up in their kitchen sinks." **CN**



SOUTHAMPTON COUNTY, VA.

Introduced in: 2000

Created by: Michael Long



The Southampton County seal identifies the date of the founding of the county — 1749.

On the eastern edge of Virginia's border with North Carolina, along with several other counties, Southampton County is contiguous with the independent city of Suffolk. Southampton County was settled soon after the establishment of Jamestown in 1607. Most of Southampton County was originally part of Warrosquyoake Shire, was renamed Isle of Wight County in 1637, and later was partitioned from Isle of Wight County to form Southampton.

The corn, peanuts, cotton and pine trees draw attention to the county's agricultural heritage.

The rising sun is symbolic of prosperity and the seven stars represent the seven political districts.

The farm implements are symbolic of the citizens' strong work ethic.

Would you like to see your county's seal featured? Contact Charlie Ban at cban@naco.org.

CN SPOTLIGHT



EPA POLICY IN DISCUSSION

Hamilton County, Ohio Commissioner Todd Portune testifies before a House subcommittee May 19 to discuss the EPA's integrated planning policy and counties' clean water responsibilities. Photo by Hugh Clark

NACo drives home message during Infrastructure Week

With the Trump administration and Congress promising a new infrastructure package, over 30 county leaders from across the country arrived in Washington last week to outline how the federal government can help support local infrastructure goals. As with past Infrastructure Week activities, NACo hosted events on and off Capitol Hill for county leaders to carry the message for increased and reliable local infrastructure in-

vestment to the doorstep of key policymakers.

NACo members focused their advocacy efforts on preserving the tax-free status of municipal bonds, dedicated funding for local infrastructure projects, project and regulatory streamlining, continued investment in water and wastewater infrastructure and expanding broadband development.

Kicking things off in conjunction with the United States

Conference of Mayors (USCM) and the National League of Cities (NLC), NACo hosted "Built to Last: A discussion on the importance of local infrastructure investment." Commissioner Bill Holen of Arapahoe County, Colo. represented NACo at a live-streamed event moderated by Eno Center for Transportation CEO Robert Puentes.

Later that day on Capitol Hill, NACo, along with the other "Big 7" local government associa-

tions (The National League of Cities (NLC); the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM); the National Governors Association (NGA); the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL); the Council of State Governments (CSG); and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA)), held a briefing on the future of infrastructure policy. Joined by Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) and Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo.), Ramsey

County, Minn. Commissioner Jim McDonough detailed county priorities and the need for direct funding should an infrastructure package be introduced by Congress this year. (See story below) Following the briefing, the entire NACo Infrastructure Week delegation joined the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Subcommittee on Intergovern-

See IFW page 5

Local leaders warn Congress, one size doesn't fit all in infrastructure spending

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

President Trump caught the attention of public works departments soon after he was elected, stressing the need for an investment in infrastructure during his victory speech in November.

"We're dealing with very little detail at this point, but P3s (public-private partnerships) are going to be a big part of it," Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo.) said at a Capitol Hill Infrastructure Week briefing May 17. "It's absolutely going to be a big part of it, because that's what the president

wants to see in his package.

"We're looking at an additional \$200 billion in general revenue, and P3s will be a big part of that."

Graves is chairman of the House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit. The administration's plan is due out by mid-June, and the House aims to tackle it in September or October, after the summer recess, and, he said, after addressing tax reform.

P3s could figure prominently in the \$1 trillion proposal President Trump has promised, but Ramsey County, Minn. Commissioner Jim McDonough pointed out that the tolls necessary for P3s' viability wouldn't

be sustainable, particularly in rural areas that counties govern.

"NACo endorses a user-pay approach, and public private partnerships are a key piece of that, but it's not one-size-fits all," he said. "There are large parts of our country where that will not work"

Cleveland, Ohio Councilman Matt Zone added to that sentiment.

"Over the last two decades, 93 percent of all projects that were done with tax-exempt municipal bonds would not have been eligible under the P3 model," he said. "One of the things that concerns me is that it's not going to be the

perfect model for all communities. It doesn't work in smaller, impoverished or rural areas."

Whatever the method, McDonough hammered home that losing the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds would render much of any new funding moot, because the increased cost of borrowing money would reduce the number of projects governments could perform. The tax-exempt status of municipal bonds has had a target on it since 2012 and is considered an option in tax reform discussions.

"You can't provide us with tools on one side and take away tools from the other side," McDonough said. "We need the federal government to be a partner with us."

Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett did his part to make sure Trump knew that methods were just as important as money when they met at the White House over the winter.

"I told him how important it was that we maintain the tax-free status of municipal bonds," Cornett said during a Capitol Hill Infrastructure Week briefing. "He assured me it was in his plan, but since I haven't heard that said since, I would love to hear some reassurance from the White House that they still feel that strongly."

Graves said "everything is on the table" in terms of figuring out a new funding mechanism

to feed the Highway Trust Fund, particularly as increased fuel efficiency is depressing gas tax revenue to the point where it's become regressive.

"We have vehicles on the road that simply aren't made for the gas tax; we have to move to a different mechanism," he said. "It could be vehicle miles traveled, it could be raising the gas tax. It could be a hybrid. If we do replace the gas tax, it will be a replacement, it won't be another layer on top of the existing tax."

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) said that last year's FAST Act surface transportation funding bill created a strong foundation from which Congress could approach further infrastructure spending, and reduced the pent-up pressure built over years of extensions.

"It gave a steady argument to state legislatures and governments across the country that we did our part and they should do theirs," she said. "I think it was a good move. We aren't struggling to make some deal to just make up for something that we hadn't paid for yet. We have the base money done and that gives us an exciting opportunity at a time when we shouldn't be governing by crisis."

Graves expects repatriation of overseas assets to play a part in infrastructure funding. Klobuchar prefers a longer-term solution. **CN**

BROADBAND: A LINK TO THE FUTURE

Infrastructure means more than just roads and bridges, and Montgomery County, Md., Council Vice President Hans Reimer demonstrated that his county is taking that seriously. He participated in a panel discussion May 18, The Importance of Building Broadband in Smart Communities, held at the NACo/NLC Joint Conference Center.

"Broadband is essential. To me, it's like our responsibility for water, for roads and power," he said. "It's essential infrastructure, and to me it's essential because it's the gateway to opportunity to everything that's happening out there, all the benefits of technology and innovation rely

on super-high-speed internet."

Mesa, Ariz. Vice Mayor David Luna shared that sentiment.

"It's essential for business attraction," he said. "If we as communities want to bring industry, business leaders, large companies into our community, we have to have the infrastructure in place to attract them, so broadband is important to doing that."

Even in a large metropolitan county like Montgomery, there are barriers that remain to more thorough and competitive internet wiring. The county is considering a broadband-ready building code, which will prevent real estate developers from

signing exclusive agreements with service providers that can often leave secondary providers looking at a \$50,000 renovation to install.

"That doesn't work in anyone's interest," Reimer said. "Telephone attachments are also an issue (for spreading broadband infrastructure). The fact that it's so expensive to get on the telephone poles, makes it one of the single biggest barriers to competition in broadband delivery in our community."

"The notion that we would rent out our poles for \$50 a pop, I couldn't abide by that. There's a lot more value in our right-of-way than that."

Broadband need spotlighted

From IFW page 4

mental Affairs Chairman Gary Palmer (R-Ala.) for “Red Tape Roundtable: Infrastructure.”

With prepared remarks from Commissioner McDonough and Madison County, N.Y. Supervisor John Becker, NACo participants engaged Chairman Palmer in a robust discussion about solutions to the regulatory hurdles that some claim increase costs and delay the completion of local infrastructure.

To cap the week off, NACo and the National League of Cit-

ies hosted a program, The Importance of Building Broadband in highlighting the importance of broadband infrastructure in communities across the nation.

Jean Rice of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) moderated the discussion with leaders from local government, the telecommunications industry and academia on what local communities can do when investing in infrastructure improvements in the years to come. (See “Broadband: A Link to the Future,” page 4.)

WORD SEARCH

SOUTHAMPTON COUNTY, VA.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS FEATURED COUNTY IN 'BEHIND THE SEAL'

Created by: Mary Ann Barton

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- PEARL BAILEY** Singer and actress from the county.
- BLACKWATER RIVER** The county boundary to the east.
- JOHN BROWN** Fugitive slave from the county.
- COURTLAND** The county seat.
- EARL** County may have been named for Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton.
- EL RANCHERO** #1 ranked restaurant in the county on Yelp.
- ENGLAND** County may have been named for Southampton, England.
- MAHONE** Confederate Gen. William Mahone was a native son; later elected to U.S. Senate
- NOTTOWAY** Tribe of Native Americans, along with the Meherrin tribe, that settled in the area. Descen-

- dants still live in the county.
- ROCHELLE-PRINCE HOUSE** Built in the early 1800s by the Rochelle family; James Rochelle was the clerk of the county court during the trial of Nat Turner.
- DRED SCOTT** Namesake of landmark Supreme Court decision. Briefly lived in the county, which became the partial setting for Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Dred.
- SOLAR** Largest solar farm in Virginia is being built in the county.
- THOMAS** Birthplace of Union General George Henry Thomas.
- NAT TURNER** Slave lay minister who led violent uprising on Aug. 21, 1831.
- WARROSQUYOAKE** Most of the county was originally part of this “shire” in the 1600s.

Annual Conference to feature Opioid Townhall and Solutions Exhibit

At NACo’s 2017 Annual Conference in Franklin County, Ohio, county leaders will come together to assess the successes and challenges of the ongoing local response to the opioid epidemic. This special session will feature an expert panel discussion, including townhall-style input from attendees, as well as an exhibition of solutions available to counties struggling to contain rates of opioid-related overdoses in their communities. The session is set for Sunday, July 23, at 4 p.m.

In recent months, NACo has placed a heavy focus on this issue, frequently convening experts and leaders to explore the roots of the opioid epidemic and how counties can work to stem its tide.

At NACo’s 2016 Annual Conference in Long Beach, Calif., Sam Quinones, author of the critically acclaimed book *Dreamland*, traced the roots of the opioid crisis to faulty science, overzealous pharma-

ceutical practices and sophisticated trafficking operations.

Earlier this year, at NACo’s 2017 Legislative Conference, a townhall session brought together perspectives from around the country, highlighting successes —like the broad availability and successful administration of the overdose antidote Naloxone — and challenges such as facilitating a sustainable recovery for individuals saved by Naloxone.

These timely conversations will continue at NACo’s Annual Conference in Franklin County, and will be supplemented with an exhibition of effective and innovative solutions being used by counties to decrease rates of opioid dependence, overdose and fatalities in local communities. [CN](#)

NACo members are encouraged to propose items or initiatives to be exhibited during this session, and can do so by contacting Hadi Sedigh at hsedigh@naco.org.

New NACo Member

GET TO KNOW...

Midland County, Mich.

Welcome, Midland County, Mich.

Midland County houses the headquarters of the Dow Chemical Company, one of the world’s top multinational chemical corporations. The Dow family still resides in the county, running several foundations there to support the arts:

Dow Gardens, the Alden B. Dow Home and Studio and Dow Diamond, home of the minor-league baseball team, the Great Lakes Loons.



Ryan announces new bipartisan task force on intergovernmental affairs

Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) announced the creation of the bipartisan Task Force on Intergovernmental Affairs to address the needs and interests of federal, state and local governments.

NACo, NLC decry proposed cuts to White House drug czar office

In a letter to President Trump, NACo and the National League of Cities City-County Task Force on the Opioid Epidemic argued for the strengthening of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, not budget cuts.

NACo makes recommendations to EPA on regulatory reform efforts

As part of a regulatory review process initiated by executive order, NACo and other local government groups provided comments on how to provide greater flexibility within several key EPA programs and guidelines including the 2015 “Waters of the U.S.” rule, policies relating to stormwater and wastewater and the 2015 ozone rule.

NACo wraps up Infrastructure Week

On and off Capitol Hill, NACo members in Washington for Infrastructure Week brought the county perspective on the issue to lawmakers and the administration.



Is a delivery robot coming to a sidewalk near you?

A Starship Technologies delivery robot roams a sidewalk. Photo courtesy of Starship Technologies

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

Although flying drones have grabbed most of the headlines as the delivery service of the future, robots about the size of a beer cooler are beginning to roam sidewalks and cross streets in some urban areas, delivering everything from take-out tacos to office supplies to bouquets of flowers. Most of the deliveries are in test mode.

Some state and local lawmakers are exploring how to regulate these “last mile” delivery robots on their sidewalks and streets, as companies reach out to test the concept. Federal lawmakers are also interested in hearing more about how this new delivery service might impact their communities. On May 23, the House Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection held a hearing on Capitol Hill dubbed “Disruptor Series: Delivering to Consumers,” looking at regulatory challenges that exist at the federal, state and local level to deploy the new service.

“There are potential winners and losers,” said Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.), referring to the

possibility of delivery drivers losing their jobs and people with tech skills possibly gaining jobs.

Schakowsky said she was also concerned about safety, noting that one of her staffers was recently startled by a delivery robot on the sidewalk, while walking in Washington, D.C., where a robot delivery pilot program is underway.

The robots typically are being managed remotely and are equipped with sensors, cameras and two-way audio. Customers usually gain access to their delivered goods using a code texted to them that unlocks a compartment on the robot.

Robot ban in San Francisco?

A ban on robots proposed earlier this month by Supervisor Norman Yee of the City and County of San Francisco is in stark contrast to the open-armed welcome by Virginia and Idaho state lawmakers, who have passed legislation, initiated by robot manufacturer Starship Technologies, allowing the robot deliveries.

Members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors will

consider Yee’s proposal in June. “We met with different stakeholders and concluded that the best way to protect our public right-of-way is to prohibit the use of these automated delivery robots,” Yee said in a statement. “Our public spaces should not be commercialized.”

Yee said he is concerned about safety, especially for seniors, children and disabled people who might not be able to get out of a robot’s way. Companies say the robots have built-in sensors and would stop.

Privacy issues — the robots are loaded with cameras — the potential for people to lose delivery jobs and the possibility for a robot to be loaded with explosives were also concerns Yee has mentioned.

Dan Rogan, an attorney for the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners, said he foresees regulation of robot deliveries mainly in urban areas.

“I think it would most likely be a city thing, not a county thing,” he said. “...the Legislature could weigh in as well.

Saying ‘yes’ to robots

In addition to Virginia and

Idaho giving their OK for robot deliveries, Wisconsin lawmakers recently passed legislation that awaits Gov. Scott Walker’s signature, and two Florida lawmakers are also exploring legislation looking at regulating ‘bots as well.

In Wisconsin, the legislation that passed allows robots to operate on sidewalks and crosswalks, sets an 80-pound limit on robots and a 10 MPH speed limit. A spokeswoman for the Wisconsin Counties Association said the group has not heard from its members on the issue.

In Virginia, delivery robots will be legal starting July 1.

Under the new law in Virginia, robots won’t be allowed to go any faster than 10 MPH or weigh more than 50 pounds and must stay in crosswalks when navigating streets.

Local governments may further regulate how robots operate in their jurisdictions if they want stricter measures, such as slower speed limits, timeframe restrictions or an outright ban.

County hoping for robot demo

“We are in a ‘wait and see’

mode,” said Pat Carroll, state liaison for Arlington County, Va., which counts several urban corridors that could be seen as ripe for robot deliveries.

Carroll said that the county Board members would like to arrange a demonstration of any robot delivery service before making any further decisions to tighten restrictions or ban them.

“I heard one of the robots in D.C. got surrounded by a big crowd on the sidewalk,” she said with a chuckle, referring to the pilot program in the nation’s capital that began in February.

Delivery robots will also become legal July 1 in Idaho. Like Virginia, Idaho’s county officials will also be able to further regulate or outright ban robots if they choose. Delivery robots can weigh up to 80 pounds in Idaho.

Rural counties, take note: Although most delivery robots are geared to urban areas, a Swiss company called Telere-tail AG, according to TechCrunch.com, has developed a robot to cover longer distances of up to 50 miles. **CN**

Foster Grandparents Program matches senior volunteers with at-risk children

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

In Alachua County, Fla., Kalamazoo County, Mich., and Sauk County, Wis., and dozens of other counties across the country, “family” for a foster care child may include a senior citizen who volunteers for the Foster Grandparents Program. Directors of the program say it’s a “win-win-win” for volunteers, children and communities, and they are getting the word out about it during May’s National Foster Care Month.

Part of Senior Corps, and its umbrella organization, the Corporation for National and Community Service, the program involves 25,000 volunteers, age 55 and older, who serve as role models, tutors and mentors to foster children and other at-risk children in the Foster Grandparents Program. They meet at schools, Head Start centers and other youth facilities, where volunteers help with reading, tutoring and just being a friend.

“Volunteers really enjoy helping out in the community, and some say it’s a reason to get up in the morning,” said Cindy Gehr-Deckert, who runs the program for the Southwestern Wisconsin Community Action Program in eight counties: Crawford, Grant, Green, Iowa, Lafayette, Richland, Sauk and Vernon. The program has seen success in several of those counties going back 40 years.

“When students do better in school, the community benefits,” Gehr-Deckert said. “Many educators find having an intergenerational volunteer enhances the classroom environment and offers increased opportunities for one-on-one.”

Karen Betley, who manages the program in Kalamazoo County, Mich., agrees. “If you can turn around one child, that is a huge difference to the community — and to the child,” she said.

One of the most challenging aspects

One of the misconceptions of the program, Gehr-Deckert said, is that people think the volunteers are older foster parents who open their homes to children.

“One of the most challenging aspects of working with the Foster Grandparents Program is the confusion with foster care,” said Gehr-Deckert. “The word ‘foster’ means ‘to promote the growth or development of.’ Foster care most frequently means that for a period of time, a child lives and is cared for by adults who are not their biological parents.

“On the other hand, Foster Grandparents do not care for children in their homes,” she said. “Foster Grandparents volunteer at approved sites.”

Another challenge is funding and management; while the programs receive federal funds they are usually coupled with local funding from the state, the county or other organizations. Across the country, local programs are run in a variety of ways, with help from various

county departments on aging or volunteers, state offices or sometimes involvement by groups such as United Way, Catholic Charities or Goodwill Community Services.

Alachua program started in the ‘70s

In Alachua County, Fla., the program has been sponsored by the Board of County Commissioners since 1973, with a total annual budget today of \$507,183, which is funded by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service (\$374,620) and the county (\$108,563), said Samantha Fleming, program coordinator. Local partners also kick in in-kind contributions of \$24,000. About half the budget is used to pay volunteers’ stipends and other benefits such as travel reimbursement and recognition programs.

In Alachua County, the program mainly focuses on children ages 2–6 years old. There is almost always a waiting list, Fleming said. Typically, teachers identify at least two children per classroom who could benefit from one-on-one help.

Younger volunteers

Betley said that since she’s been managing the program in Kalamazoo County, she’s seen younger and younger volunteers, due to the economy. “It used to be mostly people age 65 to 80 volunteering,” she said. “Now with our economic climate, we see 55-year-olds who still need a job.”

The stipend and transportation reimbursement are tax-free and most receive a meal from the school where they volunteer.

“It’s about \$212 a week,” she said. With the extra money, they can “buy healthier food or cover their prescriptions.” Her average volunteer has an annual income of \$9,000 and lives in subsidized housing.

Fleming said the most challenging part of the program is “finding volunteers that are a good fit.”

Vetting is very strict for those who wish to volunteer in the program, Gehr-Deckert said. Every volunteer has three background checks: National Sex Offender Public Registry, Department of Justice and FBI fingerprinting.

How to find great volunteers

“Our most successful recruitment efforts come by word of mouth from our current volunteers who serve as program ambassadors,” Fleming said. The county also participates in community outreach events and gets plenty of local media coverage. Currently, the program has a complement of 80–90 volunteers.

The program is popular, with most volunteers sticking with it for five years, she said. One volunteer has been in the program for 26 years and some volunteers are in their 90s. Alachua County provides a mandatory 40-hour pre-service training program. “Ultimately, volunteers must be patient and compassionate with a true desire to see children succeed,” said Fleming.

In Kalamazoo County, Betley said she has a volunteer who is almost 90 years old and volunteers 40 hours a week. When the program starts to run low on volunteers, they visit areas

See SENIORS page 9



A Foster Grandparents Program volunteer tutors a student. Photo courtesy of Corporation for National and Community Service

SPECIAL TO COUNTY NEWS

RegionSmart Summit in Tennessee explores importance of regional collaboration

By David E. McKinney

As counties, we are largely defined by political and geographical boundaries, yet the challenges that we face are rarely confined to these parameters. The robust economic development and transit system of a neighboring county or metropolitan area can yield positive dividends and opportunities for surrounding counties.

Conversely, an opioid epidemic, increased criminal activity, and poor health indicators in one county will yield consequences for others.

Regional collaboration is an essential tool in the growth and development of one's own community. In 2013, with this guiding principle, a cohort of county and municipal mayors, including NACo Board of Directors member and Shelby County, Tenn. Mayor Mark Luttrell founded the Mid-South Mayors' Council.

"In the first year of RegionSmart, we were attempting to do something bold and frankly unprecedented," said Mayor Luttrell.

"While our individual counties and municipalities have enjoyed some success over the past several years, we could be missing transformative opportunities if we don't begin to critically think, plan, and behave as one Mid-South region."

At the Second RegionSmart Summit, on April 27, more than 300 community leaders, government officials, and citizens from a three-state region gathered in Shelby County, to develop tangible strategies and further explore issues such as workforce development, transportation and land use that impact the region.

For RegionSmart's second year, we specifically explored concepts such as sustainable transportation planning, man-



Shelby County Mayor Mark Luttrell, Michael Randle, Christopher Masingill and Mayor Jeff Huffman take a camera break at the RegionSmart Summit held April 27 in Memphis, Tenn. Photo courtesy of Shelby County

ufacturing in the South and retrofitting suburbia.

Former Charleston, S.C. Mayor Joseph Riley served as keynote speaker. Drawing on his experience as a 10-term incumbent, who recently left office in 2016, he shared several illustrations and narratives related to buildings and structures that had been saved during his 39-year tenure.

Riley detailed his city's decision to buy housing slated for demolition, instead renovating them as affordable houses. "It's the public realm," he said of his policies. "It creates a sense of shared citizenship. It gives our citizens a sense of pride."

Peter Kageyama, author and co-founder of the Creative Cities Summit, explored the emotional engagement with places and why it's a good thing

for people to fall in love with their community. "When pets, plants — even objects — are loved, they thrive," Kageyama said. "So too with cities. We can argue about the degree, but I think people realize there is at least some value to that. Yes, things have a cost, but they also have a value beyond the purely financial. I'm trying to get people to recognize and be able to discuss that value."

At the end of RegionSmart, over a dozen mayors gathered on stage to issue a call to action in support of new and distinct regional efforts. Jeff Huffman, Tipton County executive, told the group that "Regionalism is not going to go away. We don't have a choice ... We've got a lot of work to do."

Mayor Luttrell added that "Today's workforce and major employers are confined to the

same boundary constraints of generations past. As government and community leaders, we should strive to gain a more comprehensive understanding and sense of awareness of those efforts impacting the region. Our effectiveness is severely curtailed if we operate in silos. As county mayor, in large part, your success will depend on your ability to work with the city mayors."

As county budgets are tightened and projects delayed, collaborating and coordinating resources and services become increasingly important.

Benefits ranging from regional thought and leaner approaches to comprehensive infrastructure planning must be leveraged, but the results are significant. Long-term, region-wide planning is necessary for us to maintain

existing services and become absolutely critical as we look to enhancing those services in the future.

Regional entities are ideal vehicles for discussing, debating, and strategically addressing area-wide solutions. County leadership is better than any other government actor to create regional-focused leadership efforts because we are best poised to account for the local cultural, political, and economic factors that make each of our communities unique. It's a new way of doing business, but the results can be powerful — and the need cannot be understated. **CN**

David E. McKinney is Shelby County director of legislative affairs and assistant county attorney.

Retreats foster grandparents program

From SENIORS page 7

where low-income seniors might gather including commodity distribution centers, where they bring a volunteer or two who can talk to potential volunteers. “We have a captive audience there,” said Betley. They also put up flyers at laundromats and distribute paper placemats to local fast-casual restaurants at the beginning of the month when Social Security payments are made.

Betley said they hold annual events to recognize volunteers, which is one of the benefits of the program. “We always have a theme,” she said. Past events have included “Volunteers Make Magic,” a red carpet with paparazzi and a baseball theme. “The volunteers love it,” she said. “It’s a lot of work, but we like it too.”

A three-time president of the Association of Michigan Association of Foster Grandparents and Senior Campaign, Betley said holding retreats is extremely helpful. “We share best practices and talk to other people facing similar challenges,” she said. “It’s nice to meet someone and know you have someone to call.” She advises that counties considering starting a program need to plan well, get familiar with regulations, reach out to other counties that have a program and join the National Association of Foster Grandparent Program Directors.

“This program is such a great opportunity for any community,” Fleming said. “The design of this program provides a dual benefit to two of our most vulnerable populations: senior citizens and children. The intergenerational dynamics that occur during this relationship are monumental.”

Gehr-Deckert echoes those sentiments. “Despite having ‘been around’ for the past 50 years nationwide,” she said, “the Foster Grandparents Program is a hidden gem.” **CN**

Ransomware — Both Terrible and Preventable

Alan Shark, PhD
executive director
Public Technology Institute (PTI)

American companies, counties and cities are breathing a sigh of relief that there was minimum impact from one of the most wide-spread ransomware schemes in recent memory. WannaCry, as it was dubbed, infected hundreds of thousands of computers in more than 150 countries in mid-May.

Ransomware is a type of malicious software that infects a computer and restricts users’ access to it until a ransom is paid to unlock it. Old versions of Microsoft Windows operating systems that had not been updated were the ones at risk for this particular attack.

It would be easy to sit back and move on without using this incident as an important wake-up call. But the continuous threat of ransomware and other forms of malware exists at all times. And while 2015 was a bad year for ransomware attacks IBM reports that it increased 6,000 percent in 2016.

Most alarming is the fact that malware enters systems by someone opening an attachment or link that usually looks authentic. In the government sphere, most at risk are usually small counties and cities — including local police and hospitals.

That said: It appears that most local governments have been quite good at updating and protecting their operating systems. However, the risk is al-

ways present and the bad guys are constantly perfecting their craft. Some localities have held off updating their operating systems because of concerns that the newer systems were viewed as being incompatible with some major legacy software.

Organizations that have received ransomware threats were notified that all files will become encrypted and will be destroyed unless a payment is made — often in Bitcoins — not credit cards. This ransomware threat is also impacting personal PCs — some connected to public sector information systems. Most entities wind up paying the ransom as it often is relatively cheap compared with the time and cost of restoring systems.

But as bad as this threat is, it is highly preventable. Here’s what an IT staff can do, and keep in mind the following is generalized for county as well as personal computers:

- Make sure that whatever operating system you have - all recommended updates are current.
- All data must be backed up. While county IT staff do this religiously, many mobile and personal devices often get missed. A good practice is to use offline (not network connected) external drives or subscribe to the many online backup services that do this automatically.
- Use reputable security software and of course, make sure that it is set for updates.
- Train all county staff on the



COOK COUNTY HIT BY ‘WANNACRY’ MALWARE ATTACK

Computers in Cook County, Ill., were hit May 12 by the “WannaCry” malware, a global cyberattack that took computer files in at least 150 countries hostage with ransomware. The WannaCry malware was tentatively linked to hackers in North Korea, the Associated Press and others reported.

“I can confirm that a small number of Cook County systems were impacted by the WannaCry malware attack last Friday,” said Frank Shuftan, a spokesman for Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. “We initiated our standard security procedures to address the issue.”

No major county operations in Preckwinkle’s offices were impacted, he said. On Tuesday, the county was working to finish up restoring its computer systems that were hit with the malware.

There have been no reports of other U.S. counties being infected with the malware.

importance of being ever so careful in opening attachments or clicking on links.

• Encourage staff to quickly come forward when something doesn’t look right or they clicked on something they realized a moment later they should not have. Early reporting is far better than any short-sighted punishment.

Cybersecurity and protecting government systems and information consistently rank as the number 1 priority for lo-

cal government IT executives.

This most recent attack shows just how vulnerable IT systems can be. And with the notoriety it has caused, WannaCry serves as a reminder that cybersecurity is no longer just for IT professionals. Being “security aware” involves everyone within the organization. This most recent scare should be viewed as an opportunity for local government officials to re-examine policies and procedures to protect government networks. When was the last time your security policies were reviewed? **CN**

For additional resources, visit the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC), a division of the Center for Internet Security: <https://www.cisecurity.org/ms-isac/>

PTI RECOMMENDS YOUR CYBER-SECURITY PLAN ADDRESS EACH OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS

- | | | |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| • Physical-Facility Security | • Data Security | • Disaster Recovery, and |
| • Personnel (qualifications, access, certifications) | • Network Security | • Employee Awareness and Training. |
| • Password and Account Management | • Incident Response Policies | |
| | • Communicating with the Public and Other Key Stakeholders | |

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CONFERENCE SCHEDULE (FULL SCHEDULE AVAILABLE ONLINE)

THURSDAY, JULY 20

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Mobile Workshops

FRIDAY, JULY 21

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

CIO Mobile Forum

9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Policy Steering Committee Meetings

11:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Mobile Workshops

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Exhibit Hall Reception

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

NACo Opening Reception

7:15 p.m.

NACo Night at the Ballpark –
Clippers vs. Syracuse

SATURDAY, JULY 22

8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Standing, Ad Hoc, Advisory
and Task Force Meetings

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Exhibit Hall Open

11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Tech Town Hall

1:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

NACo Board Forum

3:15 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

General Session

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Open for State Association
and Affiliate Meetings

SUNDAY, JULY 23

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

Non-Denominational Worship
Service

9:00 a.m. – noon

NACo Board of Directors and
Resolutions Committee Meetings

9:00 a.m. – noon

Exhibit Hall Open

9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Educational Workshops

Noon – 1:45 p.m.

NACo Achievement Awards Luncheon

5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

“Brilliant Ideas at Work” Awards
Reception (*invitation only*)

5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Open for State Association and
Affiliate Meetings

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

LUCC/RAC Reception (*invitation only*)

MONDAY, JULY 24

8:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

Educational Workshops

9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

NACo Annual Business Meeting and
Election

11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Regional Caucus Meetings

12:45 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

NACo New Board of Directors
Organizational Meeting

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

General Session

4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Open for State Association and
Affiliate Meetings

6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Conference-wide Celebration Event

BRIGHT IDEAS | ADA COUNTY, Idaho

Serving Up Ballots with 'Food Truck Voting'

PROBLEM:

Residents waiting in long lines on Election Day.

SOLUTION:

Bring early voting to street corners around town, using mobile 'food truck voting.'

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

Long lines, no parking, no time. Some of the most common excuses for not voting were taken out of the equation last fall when Ada County, Idaho introduced "food truck voting," making voting as easy as ordering lunch.

In last November's election, the county tried out mobile voting using a converted food truck, with much success. Although the county offers four locations for early voting, the converted food trailer-turned-voting center could be moved all around the 1,060-square mile county to hit highly populated areas in the weeks before the presiden-

tial election. With more than 425,000 residents, the county is Idaho's most heavily populated.

County election workers used previous voting data to determine the best locations — where the longest lines had been in past elections — to park and attract a high concentration of voters, including spots near some of the county's largest employers and hospitals. The trailer was available on Election Day for backup, in case any polling places had any emergencies, but wasn't need that day.

In 2016, 47,740 voted early, with an overall turnout of 75 percent. Of those early voters, 5,456 voted at the food truck voting trailer.

The idea for the mobile voting unit first came about as "an idea for how we could respond in an emergency," said Phil McGrane, chief deputy clerk, Ada County Clerk's Office, who oversees elections in the county. "We had a school that was a polling place go on lockdown once. We realized then that we needed to be able to respond

quickly in an emergency."

And the food truck idea? "This will sound odd, but the concept came from my hobby of competitive barbecue," McGrane said. "We use a similar trailer-tent setup when we compete. The design makes it both cost-effective and easy to move around. We can set up or tear down in 20 minutes. It makes it very mobile."

The county purchased the trailer from a local company that builds food trucks and vending trailers.

"They put the windows in and counters to fit our needs," McGrane said, noting that the windows are a little lower in their truck compared to most food trucks, so that election workers can sit down and be eye-to-eye with voters.

The trailer alone cost the county just over \$20,000. The tents where voting booths are located adjacent to the trailer and graphics accounted for another \$13,000. With all the computers and other equipment needed inside, the county spent between \$50,000 to \$60,000.

To get the word out about the early voting and let people know where the truck would be, the county sent out press releases, posted to social media and on the county web site. "The places we worked with also helped spread the word in the region," McGrane said. That included large employers like Hewlett Packard and Idaho Power. "Also, a big thing was our graphics," he said. "They stand out. This was intentional and helped attract voters who were walking or driving by."

When voters stepped up to the food truck, they could give their name, with election workers finding it on a computerized voter roll, and printing out a ballot. Voters could step over to cardboard voting booths set up in the tent adjacent to the food truck. As they exited, they slipped their ballots into a box with an optical scanner. The county hired a cybersecurity firm to ensure the mobile voting process was secure, McGrane said.

One of the biggest challenges for Ada County's mobile voting

was electricity. "We may end up paying a little more to add a battery system," McGrane said. "That will free us up from using a generator. We initially tried to plug in where we went, but our power needs were too demanding." The generator also proved to be loud, he noted.

Other things the county would reconsider include ordering a longer trailer. "We had some serious demand at some of the locations," he said. "The concept proved to be extremely popular, which may have been our biggest challenge of all."

Ada County uses the truck for other elections (they have about four a year) and for registering voters throughout the year.

Advice for other counties considering a similar concept? "Do it," McGrane said. "If a county has a number of smaller towns spread out, it may be too expensive to set up in each town, but with this, you can easily travel between them and vote people on different days. I think this really helped provide greater access to some people." **CN**



Voters in Ada County, Idaho line up for early voting at the county's new mobile voting unit, a converted food truck. Photo courtesy of Ada County

LEADERSHIP EDGE

Study Finds Weak Employee Engagement



By Robert Lavigna

These are tough times for government. Across the nation, local governments are under enormous pressure to maintain and improve performance, while at the same time doing more with less.

One proven response to this leadership challenge is to improve the level of employee engagement. After all, the primary resource we have in government is talent. If our people are engaged and perform well, government will also perform well.

Decades of research have shown that improving employee engagement can be a key to improving organizational performance, including in local government.

As I detail in my book, *Engaging Government Employees*, engagement is linked to outcomes that are important in government such as achieving strategic goals, delivering responsive customer service, promoting innovation, retaining good employees, driving high attendance, and keeping workplaces safe.

The “engagement value chain” shown in Figure 1 illustrates why engagement matters in local government:

As this cycle shows, measuring and improving engagement is not just a touchy-feely activity or exclusively the domain of the human resources department. Instead, creating a culture of employee engagement — the ultimate goal — re-

quires commitment and action across the entire organization.

Engagement is low

Despite the link between employee engagement and performance, the results from a national poll reveal that the level of employee engagement is low across the U.S. economy, including in local government.

The poll, conducted by my organization, the CPS HR Institute for Public Sector Employee Engagement, included re-

sponses from 1,946 public and private-sector employees. The results are nationally representative of the private and public sectors, as well as the three levels of government.

The results, shown in Figure 2, and soon to be released in a more detailed institute report, revealed that 44 percent of private sector employees are fully

engaged compared to 38 percent of public sector employees overall. This difference is statistically significant.

In the public sector, we also found variability across the levels of government. Employee engagement in local government, which includes counties, is higher than in the other levels of government, and is also on par with the private sector. However, the level of fully engaged employees in local government is 47 percent. In other words, less than

50 percent of local government employees are fully engaged.

What drives engagement in local government?

In addition to assessing overall engagement levels, our goal was also to understand the factors that have the biggest impact on employee engagement — the key drivers of engagement, statistically. In other words, which workplace factors will generate the highest return on an investment in improving engagement?

Based on previous research, we analyzed potential drivers such as leadership, supervision, training, appreciation and inclusion.

In local government, we found that the top workplace drivers are:

- Leadership and managing change
- My supervisor
- Training and development
- Employee recognition
- The opportunity to come up with new and better ways of doing things.

In other words, these are the areas that, in general, local government employees feel most strongly about.

How did local government score?

The rest of this story involves the actual local government scores for these engagement drivers. We found that the score for local government is significantly lower than the private sector for the top driver, leadership and managing change. In business, 65 percent of respondents are positive about leadership and change management in their companies, compared to 59 percent in local government.

For the next two local government drivers, supervision and training/development, the lo-

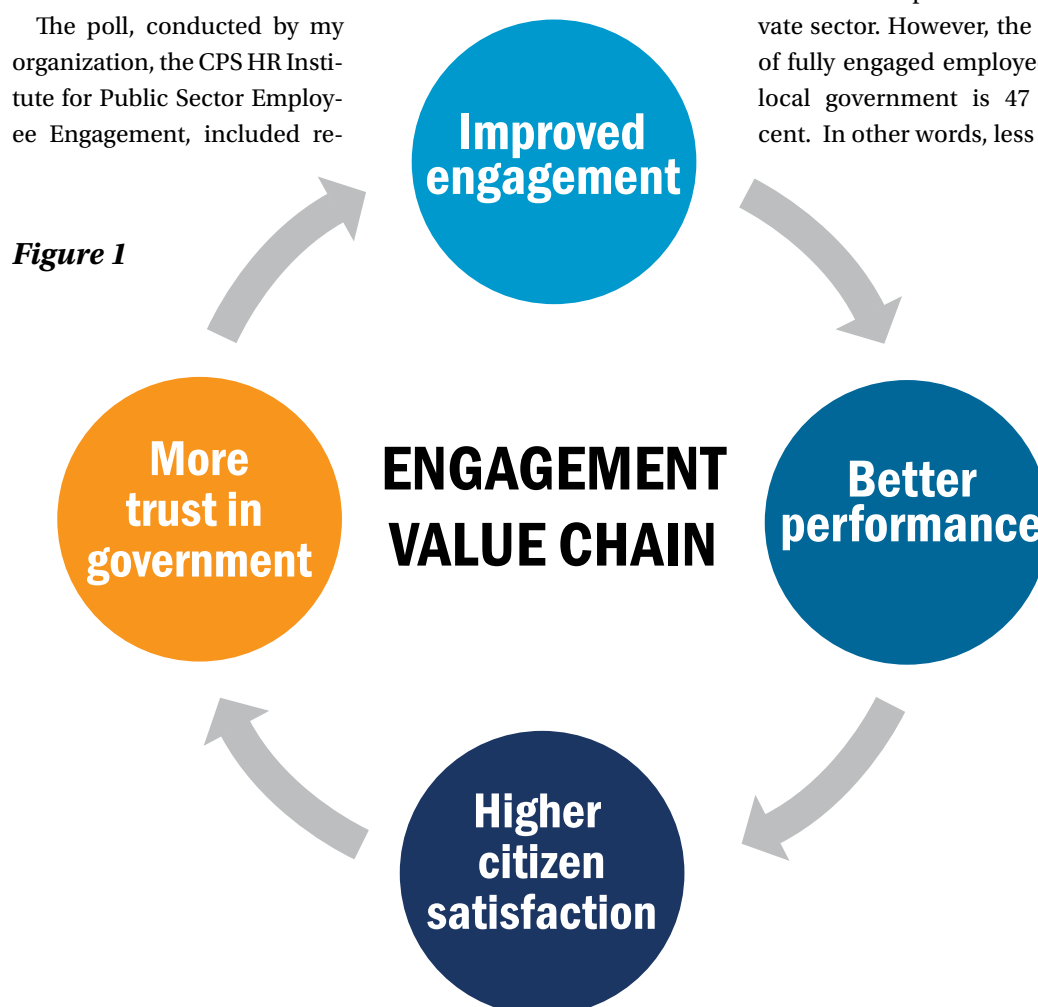
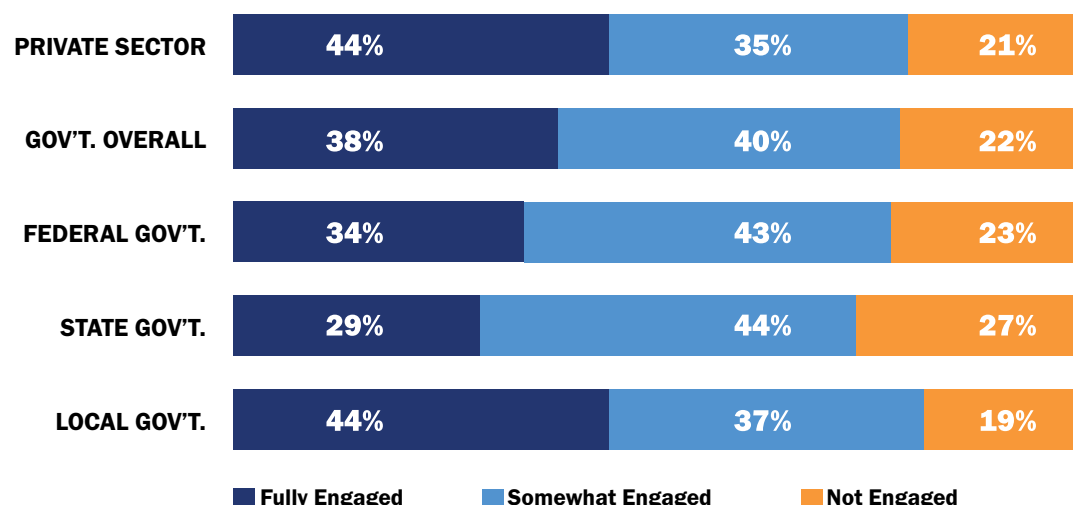


Figure 2 ENGAGEMENT LEVELS



MONEYMATTERS

Bitcoins: Some Basics about the Cryptocurrency

By Tadas Pack
research assistant

New ransomware called “WannaCry” recently crippled computers worldwide. The attack seizes up computers, preventing users from accessing files.

It demands a payment if you ever want to see your files again. Malicious groups who create such malware have taken a liking to Bitcoin to receive those payments.

So, what exactly is Bitcoin? At its heart, it is a currency like the dollar and euro. It has value because people accept it as payment, as currency.

But unlike those currencies, Bitcoin has many quirky features which enable it to work and makes it a popular choice to pay for goods and services ... or ransoms.

For starters, there are no physical Bitcoins – they exist entirely online. Bitcoin can be compared

loosely to e-mail. Bitcoin “wallets” consist of a public address (think e-mail address) and a private key (like the password to your e-mail account).

One can only spend money from an address if they have the private key.

Another strange feature of Bitcoin, lies in how it is controlled. It does not have any central authority like the Federal Reserve.

Rather, it is governed by a democratic system of computers. The computers (called nodes) form a network that is collectively the structure Bitcoin operates on.

These nodes are the backbone of Bitcoin, keeping a public ledger of payments called the blockchain. Nodes also perform many other critical functions behind the scenes, which allow Bitcoin to stay secure and decentralized.

The final piece of the puzzle for creators of ransomware is anonymity — transactions can

be completely anonymous. This means Bitcoin users can easily receive their spoils, without having to worry about a paper trail or law enforcement.

In the case of WannaCry, there have already been tens of thousands of equivalent USD in payments, which by themselves are easily traceable.

But there is simply no way to identify who owns that Bitcoin wallet, until they are spent in some way.

Even then, mixing services exist. These can be likened to pooling money together in a pot and drawing your share back out. The “clean” money drawn out cannot be traced back to any specific owner.

Although Bitcoin is the payment of choice for online criminals, Bitcoin can be used for both nefarious and positive purposes, just like any other currency.

Adoption is ever-increasing even on Wall Street, and it is

gradually being folded into our current financial system.

Many companies already accept Bitcoin as a payment method. We are even seeing attempts to create new financial instruments with a more traditional structure that closely follows Bitcoin’s value. Like any currency, Bitcoin’s value is determined by market forces.

The supply and demand at any moment will dictate which direction the price moves, and by how much.

However, Bitcoin’s similarities as a currency end there. Unlike fiat currencies, Bitcoin does not have a central bank to enact monetary policies. It is laissez faire, and ultimately decided as a collective by those that participate in the Bitcoin network.

Bitcoin’s future certainly holds more growing pains. Although it is not quite as volatile as it used to be, it is still subject to extreme price swings when

compared to conventional assets. As usage increases, bottlenecks are starting to occur in transaction speed.

There have even been attempts to regulate the network. Because Bitcoin is decentralized and largely esoteric, these attempts have failed outright.

But developers have been hard at work to solve the issues facing Bitcoin today.

Both scholars and hackers alike are continuously studying and improving the system infrastructure.

Like any new technology, it will take fine tuning over years to come before it reaches maturity. And with so many hands on-deck, the future of blockchain technology looks brighter than ever.

P.S. On May 25, the value of 1 Bitcoin in USD was \$2,263.72 **CN**

Pack is a research assistant with NACo’s Counties Futures Lab and a former Bitcoin trader.

ON THE MOVE

NACo STAFF

• **Joe Schultz** has joined NACo as a senior IT engineer. Joe will be responsible for NACo’s network environment including servers, Wi-Fi, firewall security, system backups and disaster recovery. Prior to joining NACo, he worked for Accenture Federal Services in various capacities. He holds certifications in data communications systems and information systems security from Potomac



Schultz



Langston



Moran

College (now University of the Potomac) in Washington, D.C.

• **Linda Langston**, strategic relations director, represented NACo at the FEMA National Advisory Council meeting May 22–25 in Hillsborough County, Fla.

• **Jenna Moran**, program manager, spoke at a peer exchange and training for local planners on Improving Community Resilience through Risk Modeling in San Luis Obispo County, Calif. on May 22.

What drives workplace engagement?

From LEADERSHIP page 12

cal government scores (68 and 66 percent positive, respectively) are on par with the private sector.

However, these scores still show that about one-third of local government employees responded negatively to the questions in these categories.

In response to the question, “I feel valued for the work I do,” 68 percent of local government employees agreed, compared to 72 percent of private-sector respondents.

The final driver we found is “I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things.”

Despite the importance of this factor across sectors, only 68 percent of local government respondents agree with this statement, almost equal to the

private sector score (70 percent).

Applying the results

So what do we conclude, and what is actionable, from our research?

• Engagement in the public sector is lower than in the private sector

• Local government employees have a higher level of engagement than employees in federal and state government

Priority areas to improve engagement in local government include:

- Leadership and managing change
- Supervision
- Training and development
- Appreciation/recognition
- The opportunity to identify better ways to operate

While our results are useful and revealing, there isn’t a

one-size-fits-all solution to improving engagement in government, especially since there are more than 90,000 government jurisdictions just in the U.S.

Instead, each county should survey its own employees to identify where it is succeeding and where it can improve. Then, the organization needs to take action to build a culture of engagement. **CN**

Lavigna is currently the director of the CPS HR Institute for Public Sector Employee Engagement. The institute is dedicated to helping public sector and nonprofit organizations measure and improve employee engagement.

Before joining CPS HR, he was assistant vice chancellor and director of human resources for the University of Wisconsin. You can reach him at: rlavigna@cpshr.us

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

CALIFORNIA

After residents voted by nearly a 70 percent margin in March to raise the sales tax by a quarter cent to **fund programs to help the homeless**, **LOS ANGELES COUNTY** is now deciding how to spend an estimated \$3.5 billion over the next decade. A citizen panel largely endorsed recommendations made by county agencies, including providing short-term rental subsidies and services (such as job training, substance abuse counseling and mental health treatment), more shelters and expanding interim housing. "Bridge housing" will provide in-house services to ensure the homeless are ready to move on to permanent housing. The sales tax rate in the county will climb to 9.5 percent in July.



FLORIDA

Play ball! The **SARASOTA COUNTY** Board of Commissioners recently voted unanimously to approve its portion of **financing a 9,000-seat spring training complex** for the Atlanta Braves baseball team. Commissioners voted to reallocate some revenue from an existing local tourism tax, collected from hotel guests, to cover annual debt service on bonds that will be issued to cover the county's \$21.3 million share of construction costs. The rest of the funding is expected to come from the state, the developer, the City of North Port and the Braves themselves. If all goes according to plan, the facility is slated to open in 2019.

ILLINOIS

There's nothing like a slice of your favorite pizza when you're hungry. And that's an option



Chickens like this one hanging out in New York could soon be more plentiful in **ST. JOSEPH COUNTY, Ind.**, which recently loosened regulations on backyard chickens and other animals. Photo courtesy of Kathy Shea Mormino

these days for **COOK COUNTY** inmates, who can order piping-hot pizza delivered straight to their jail cells. But it's not what you think — they don't have Domino's on speed dial. Six different kinds of pizzas are made on the premises by fellow inmates, and pre-trial detainees fork over their commissary cash for pizzas ranging from \$5 to \$7.

Revenue generated from pizza sales support the jail's "**Recipe for Change**" program run by local chef Bruno Abate, who

teaches inmates skills they can use when they're released and looking for work. Abate told the *Chicago Tribune* that his main goal is to improve inmates' self-esteem and love of food.

INDIANA

• After first responders made 600 overdose runs in February and March, officials in **MARI-ON COUNTY** are hoping they can turn things around with a new prescription drug, according to a report by FOX59.

They are the latest county in the state to launch a program using Vivitrol to **combat opioid addiction**. The non-addictive, non-opioid drug, given in a monthly shot, prevents opioid users from getting high and has also been used in **MADISON, HANCOCK, SHELBY, JOHN-SON, HAMILTON** and **BOONE** counties. Marion County received a \$200,000 grant awarded by the Indiana Department of Correction Community Corrections Grant.

IOWA

Will there be a showdown over a new gun law in Iowa? Gov. Terry Branstad signed a law in April that gives gun owners the ability to **sue local governments** if they have been "adversely affected" by a firearm ban, such as those at several county courthouses. But Carroll Edmonson, administrator with the state's 6th Judicial District, which includes **LINN** and **JOHNSON counties**, said he expects existing bans to remain at both county courthouses. "My understanding is we will continue things the way they are," he recently told the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*. "There's an attorney general's opinion out there that allows us to maintain security in the courthouse the way we have before, which means we can restrict people from carrying guns in the courthouse."

MINNESOTA

Most of a group of 60 Somali-Americans who recently came down with the **measles in Min-nesota** were not vaccinated, according to the state Department of Health. Cases have been reported in **CROW WING, HEN-**



A local chef in **COOK COUNTY** pauses for a photo with inmates participating in the "**Recipe for Change**" program. Photo courtesy of Recipe for Change

NEPIN, LESEUR and RAMSEY counties. All but three cases were people who were not vaccinated. Health officials in the state have had to work to counter misinformation about a debunked link between the MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) vaccine and autism, the *Pioneer Press* reported. The measles outbreak is the worst the state has seen since 1990.

NEW JERSEY

BERGEN COUNTY is trying out **OCEAN COUNTY's** heroin addict amnesty program. Addicts can turn themselves and their drugs into three municipalities' police stations and they will be assisted in enrolling in rehabilitation programs without the threat of arrest for possession.

"The concept is to get them in the door, get them introduced to the counseling and that really is the key to solving the problem. It's not going to be done through the courts," Mahwah Police Chief James Batelli told NJTV News.

If they have warrants issued for other offenses, the depart-

ments will work with the relevant agencies to defer adjudication in favor of relieving stress during rehab.

"It's not a get out of jail free card, we're not going to dismiss the warrant," Batelli said. "And if it's a serious violation, they may have to address it before going to rehab. But a lot of these offenders have low level failure to appear, minor possession charges. Those we can work with."

OHIO

The state budget bill may no longer include a proposal to **consolidate municipal and county clerk of courts offices**, but the **CLARK COUNTY** Criminal Justice Council will still pursue the idea. The two offices are budgeted to spend \$3.2 million to operate in 2017, but Rep. Kyle Koehler told the *Springfield News-Sun* they could save up to \$400,000 if they combine their offices.

- Drug overdose deaths in the **MIAMI COUNTY** jail have prompted the Sheriff's Office to consider buying a **body scan-**

ner. Inmates have smuggled in heroin and fentanyl into the jail in body cavities and clothing, *The Daily Call* reported.

OREGON

After five failed attempts at the ballot box, a **levy to fund public safety services** passed in **JOSEPHINE COUNTY**. Declining federal timber subsidies forced cutbacks to sheriff's patrols and closed the juvenile detention center. Both will be reversed with a 93 cents per \$1,000 assessed property tax rate hike. County Commissioner Simon Hare told *The Oregonian* that asking for money specifically for the juvenile detention center and more jail beds and keeping the levy under \$1 largely contributed to its success.

PENNSYLVANIA

After more than 18 years, "**I voted**" stickers are coming back to **NORTHAMPTON COUNTY** polling places for the General Election.

The County Council requested they make a comeback after a

Morning Call article pointed out their absence and several community members followed up on that. County officials believe the stickers were discontinued during a budget cut, but could not find any corroboration, going as far as to ask the 95-year-old registrar who had retired in 1998.

WISCONSIN

If a **state has passed legislation discriminating** against people based on sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, **DANE COUNTY** personnel probably won't be there on official business.

The County Board passed an amendment that forbids reimbursement of expenses for travel to such a state. Elected officials and employees will also not be required to travel to any such state. There are exemptions for travel the sheriff deems necessary and for juvenile residential treatment placement, the *Wisconsin State Journal* reported.

County Executive Joe Parisi barred nonessential county

travel to North Carolina and Mississippi on the grounds that they had enacted legislation that discriminates.

- An agreement with **MILWAUKEE COUNTY** will give Milwaukee city police officers real-time access to location data from juveniles wearing **GPS monitoring devices**.

Under the new agreement, the Police Department's Intelligence Fusion Center and dispatch center can access the information if a youth has an "unauthorized violation," or is found to have broken rules of their supervision by going outside a designated area. Police can also access the information if they have probable cause to arrest the youth for a new crime, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported.

News from Across the Nation is compiled by Charlie Ban and Mary Ann Barton, senior staff writers. If you have an item for News From, please email cban@naco.org or mbarton@naco.org.

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Email us at cnews@naco.org.
We'll be in touch.

{ Looking forward to hearing from you,
Bev, Charlie, Mary Ann



the HR DOCTOR

With Phil Rosenberg



Hiring a New Knee

This is a sequel to a recent HR Doctor article which explored the ironic similarities between my recent experience with a total knee replacement and the very tough HR decision to fire an employee. That article looked at essential elements to pay attention to when firing an employee or, in my recent case, “terminating” my lifelong relationship with my right knee.

A core part of both the biological issue and the employment issue is the need to focus on performance and behavior in making tough decisions like discipline or termination. Performance and behavior in relation to the job description is a strong indicator that the decisions were job-related.

That job-relatedness concept, in turn, is a prime defense against charges of unlawful employment practices such as race or gender discrimination.

I spent a great amount of time working with my former knee trying to get his behavior corrected and improved. I provided coaching in terms of exercising, and considered other lesser actions such as just living with the poor behavior and performance or cortisone injections — all less drastic than a knee replacement. Finally, despite my best efforts, the poor behavior and performance continued and I decided to move ahead with “termination.”

This was done after consulting with experts including several orthopedic surgeons and my own personal physician, Dr. Daughter Rachel. The employment parallel would be consultation with your friendly neighborhood HR director of your organization.

So, the decision was made. After pre-operation prepa-



rations were undertaken, a couple of meetings held with the caring and very competent orthopedic surgeon Dr. Jim Duke, and seeking permission from the all-powerful insurance company, the surgery occurred. It lasted for 40 minutes and I'm happy to report that I awoke from the anesthesia!

The process involved super gluing the incision and beginning a monthlong series of home-nursing visits, checking vital signs, inspecting the incision area and making sure any questions I had were addressed promptly.

There was also the most

pleasant experience of a month of physical therapy involving three home visits a week. All of my friends who have shared their own knee experiences tell me that I had better pay close attention and follow through with all recommendations. If I didn't, recovery would be delayed and much more painful. I was also reminded about the high-tech medieval instrument called “the rack.”

Writing this a month after surgery allows me to now look back and realize that I'm regaining a lot of mobility, I'm walking without assistive devices like a walker or a cane.

I hope to resume driving next week and to resume that wonderful concept of sleep in the very near future as well.

Deciding and acting on terminations in a civil service world is something which really requires the same kind of expert consultation as does the decision to adopt a new knee.

The orthopedic surgeon is the equivalent of the HR director in these cases, complete with the fact that often executives will seek the active involvement of the HR staff, including possibly offering a free lunch in trade for HR actually meeting with the employee to tell them of their ter-

mination. Here the similarity ends since I was not offered the opportunity to perform my own surgery.

The same care and consultation with experts is also necessary when it comes to an agency recovering from the difficulties which virtually always result after a position is vacated. Whether the new vacancy resulted from a termination, retirement or even a basic resignation, the questions inevitably arise about how we replace the former employee and what we have to care about in making that decision.

In fact, executives should not be allowed to simply go about terminating someone and then move on to the next difficult decision without carefully including thoughtful considerations about some of the same considerations that I have recently experienced in dealing with my knee.

After firing anyone, whether it is an FBI director or an entry level worker, executives need to look back at what they've done and consider how the next decisions could be better made or better implemented. That certainly includes several chats at least with HR to make sure that the actions were well-documented and defensible.

These executives need to practice their HR skills to see that they strengthen them and that the study and practice necessary to do great HR is faithfully followed.

If not, the organizational “physical therapy” will be prolonged, much more painful, and likely very much more expensive.

I have named my new knee “Rod-Knee.” I sincerely welcome my new titanium friend into my body. Rod-Knee let me know what I can do to help you help me become better, more thoughtful and stronger than before. Think of Rod-Knee as you make your own tough decisions! **CN**