County News

National Association of Counties • Washington, D.C.

Vol. 31 No. 11 • June 7, 1999

Roger Chinn takes over as new WIR president

By Beverly A. Schlotterbeck
Editor

Delegates to the 1999 Western Interstate Region Conference in Contra Costa County, Calif., elected Roger Chinn, McKenzie County, N.D., as their new WIR president; Jim Regan, Churchill County, Nev., as first vice president and Ronald Baumgart, Hughes County, S.D., as WIR's new second vice president. The conference was held May 19–22.

WIR awarded its prestigious Dale Sowers Award to Cindy Bowen, commissioner from Montrose County, Colo. and former chair of NACo's Public Lands Steering Committee.

Speakers at the conference delved into the impact that urban growth in the West is having upon public lands counties. Workshops explored the evergreen topics of fire protection, rural health care delivery, small airports and helping dislocated natural resource workers find new skills and jobs, among other topics.

WIR and NACo's boards both met during the conference as well.

Photo by Bev Schlotterbeck

Delegates to the 1999 Western Interstate Region Conference elected Roger Chinn (l), McKenzie County, N.D. as their new president and Jim Regan (r), Churchill County, Nev. as first vice president. They are pictured here with Immediate Past President Louise Liston, Garfield County, Utah. Not pictured, but also elected to the WIR Executive Committee as second vice president, was Ronald Baumgart, Hughes County, S.D.

WIR Board action

At its Wednesday, May 19, meeting, the WIR Board selected the big island of Hawaii for its 2001 meeting, adopted a resolution supporting the ability of all telecommunications carriers to transport high bandwidth data traffic across all long distance boundaries and approved supporting the lobbying efforts of the School Board Coalition's safety net for timber receipts counties.

The board also discussed issues related to the Conservation Reinvestment Act. In particular, Jeff Arnold, NACo deputy director for legislative affairs, rebutted claims by private property rights advocates that the measure will expand the federal government's authority to purchase land.

Arnold also pointed out that all purchases on the federal side must be on a "willing buyer/willing seller" basis.

NACo Board meeting

At its meeting, the NACo Board approved three new Annual Conference sites, the elimination of the Intergovernmental Relations Steering Committee and the merger of the Employment and Labor and Employee Benefits steering committees, and passed along for general membership ratification, a proposed bylaws change.

Contingent upon the signing of final contracts, the Board approved Maricopa County (Phoenix), Ariz. as the site for the 2004 Annual Conference; the City and County of Honolulu, Hawaii in 2005 and Henrico County (Richmond), Va. in 2007.

The bylaws change, published on page 11 and presented by NACo's Audit Committee, would designate funds in the Building Options Fund solely for the purposes of renting or purchasing new office space, building and/or land for a new NACo headquarters.

A super majority (two-thirds) of the Board must approve any "emergency" use of the funds.

NACo anticipates moving into new headquarters by the year 2007. The proposed bylaw would also sunset at that time.

Supreme Court Allows Federal Jury Trials in Takings Cases

Implications for local land use laws will be published in the next issue of *County News*.

New bill would help foster care youth

By Marilina Sanz
Associate Legislative Director

The Foster Care Independence Act, H.R. 1802, which would provide additional transitional services for youth leaving foster care, is quickly making its way through the House of Representatives.

The bill was introduced on May 14 by Reps. Nancy Johnson (R-Conn.) and Ben Cardin (D-Md.), chair of the Ways and Means Committee's Human Resources Subcommittee. In less than two weeks, the bill has already gone through subcommittee and full committee mark-ups.

The bill presents a mixed bag for counties. On the one hand, it doubles the annual funding for the Foster Care Independent Living Program from $70 million to $140 million. Its purpose is to provide additional transitional services, such as housing and school-to-work opportunities, for youth ages 18 to 21 who have "aged out" of the foster care system. Counties that run foster care programs would therefore receive a substantial increase in funds.

On the other hand, its financing mechanism makes cuts in the federal contribution to child support enforcement. Many of the counties that run foster care, such as counties in North Carolina, also have child support enforcement responsibilities. These counties may not see a net increase in funding because what they gain in foster care they may lose in child support.

Even more troubling, however, is the fact that in some other states, such as Michigan, counties do not run the foster care program, but do finance child support enforcement. Counties in these states could suffer a net loss of funds.

NACo and several other groups, including the National Governors' Association and the American Public Human Services Association, objected to the financing mechanism.

The bill also gives states the option to provide them with Medicaid coverage. As originally introduced, the bill would have, in effect, mandated Medicaid coverage as a condition to receive Independent Living Program funds. NACo objected to this provision, and it was estimated at the subcommittee level.

Mandated Medicaid coverage, however, could reappear in the Senate's Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over both Medicaid and foster care. Mandated coverage is estimated to cost the federal government $400 million over five years.

Land use laws at risk in fast-moving House bill

By Diane S. Shea
Associate Legislative Director

A bill that would restrict local land use laws by providing religious institutions with preferential treatment for their structures and activities is ready to move to the House Judiciary Committee.

By voice vote, the Constitution Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee has approved H.R. 1691, the 1999 version of last year's "Religious Liberty Protection Act."

Under the measure, local zoning, health and safety ordinances would not apply to churches and other religious activities if the laws create a "substantial burden." To overcome the burden, the local government would need to prove that the laws advance a "compelling governmental interest" and their requirements are the "least restrictive means" of furthering that interest.

If adopted, the bill would, in effect, hold the county accountable for creating a "substantial burden" unless it could prove that requiring churches, for example, to comply with parking requirements or set-backs in residential neighborhoods would further a compelling government interest.

A local government could "alleviate the burdens on religious exercise" only by exempting the church or facility from the local ordinance or regula-

See HOUSE BILL, page 11

Ag appropriations bill stalled in House

By Ralph Tabor
Associate Legislative Director

The House started debate last month on the Agriculture and Rural Development appropriations bill but had to pull the measure from the floor after a number of amendments to cut funding were offered. More than 100 amendments were pending.

The agriculture funding bill is considered non-controversial and traditionally passes with little debate. This year, however, it was the first appropriations bill brought to the floor and it became the target of Republican members upset with the leadership's budget strategy.

The House Republican leadership agreed earlier this year to keep spending within the ceilings established in the 1997 Balanced Budget Act. The ceilings, however, are $20 billion below actual FY99 spending.

To avoid an immediate problem, the leadership decided to fund most of the 13 appropriations bills close to FY99 levels and to bring these bills to the floor in May and June.

The amounts allocated for two of the big domestic spending bills, Labor, HHS and Education and Veterans, HUD and Independent Agencies, were cut drastically. The plan was to hold these bills until September when revenue forecasts might be increased and to negotiate with the Administration on spending ceilings later this summer.

The plan was to hold these bills until September when revenue forecasts might be increased and to negotiate with the Administration on spending ceilings later this summer.

The plan went asunder when Republican renegades started offering amendments to the agriculture funding bill. The revolt, led by Rep. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.), was intended to make spending cuts now so that the 1997 spending ceilings would be met. The fear by some House members is that the spending caps would be abandoned in September.

The situation is complicated by the partisan stances taken by the Administration, and congressional Republicans and Democrats over who will be blamed for breaking the spending ceilings.

The spending caps were ignored last October when Congress and the Administration in the omnibus appropriations bill, agreed to more than $20 billion in "emergency spending." The spending caps also were ignored last month when Congress approved a $14.5 billion supplemental appropriations measure.

The strategy of the House leadership after the week-long Memorial Day recess is not clear. With only a five-vote margin, it is doubtful that the leadership can force a solution. It also is doubtful at this time that Republican House members will agree to increasing the 1997 spending caps.

The Senate has averted a similar stalemate for the moment. By cutting back on projected FY00 defense spending and finding creative revenue offsets, the Senate Appropriations Committee has allocated more funds for domestic programs.

The overall Senate strategy, however, is similar to that in the House. Funding for the Labor-HHS and Veterans-HUD bills would be cut drastically while other bills would be close to FY99 levels. The Senate strategy also looks to possible increased revenues and to negotiations on spending ceilings in September. Whether the Senate will go along with this strategy in June and July is not clear.

Congressional Democrats and the Administration remember what happened last October in negotiations with Republicans. President Clinton got most of what he wanted. As a result, their strategy is to stay on the sidelines during the next few months and let the Republicans work it out.

Hope hits horizon in Senate for Superfund/brownfields reform

Diane S. Shea
Associate Legislative Director

New hope for developing a bipartisan superfund bill was recently revived by Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman Sen. John Chafee (R-R.I.). He recently introduced a Superfund "lite" bill (S. 1090), which includes relief for counties from Superfund liability, but not for corporate contributors of hazardous waste.

NACo and other local government groups testified jointly on the Superfund reform before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee on May 25.

County-owned landfills that are listed on the Superfund list would have their liability capped to 10 or 20 percent of the cleanup, according to their population.

Counties that generated, transported or arranged for solid waste or sewage sludge to be delivered to a landfill now on the Superfund list would have their liability limited to $5.30 per ton.

All counties that settled with EPA for their limited share would be protected from third-party lawsuits by other contributors to the landfill.

The liability relief provisions in S. 1090 largely reflect a codification of the "municipal settlement policy" negotiated by NACo with the Environmental Protection Agency in 1997.

The policy, while successfully protecting counties that seek its protection, is under attack by industrial and chemical organizations. The groups have filed lawsuits to block its implementation. Codification of the policy in a federal law will end such legal challenges.

No Superfund taxes

The Chafee bill does not include reinstatement of the Superfund taxes that finance the EPA Superfund program, an issue that is drawing opposition from the Administration and environmental groups. Nor does the bill address the perennially controversial topics of cleanup remedies, natural resource damages, and reopening of already-settled consent decrees and EPA cleanup decisions.

Bill would pay for 'orphaned' liability

One of the significant changes from previous years' versions of the bill is the requirement that EPA expend funds from the Superfund trust fund to pay the "orphan share" of liability created by any exemptions from liability, rather than shifting the cost of the exemptions to the remaining industrial parties at the site.

The declining balance in the Superfund trust fund would be reserved for paying for the orphan share, while EPA's Superfund management program would be paid for out of general revenues.

Republicans have charged for years that EPA has been "raiding" the Superfund to pay for unrelated activities, at the expense of the corporate taxes that finance the trust fund.

Grants would be available for brownfields clean-up

The bill will also include a brownfields title similar to previous versions and will waive liability for purchasers of brownfields sites. Site investigations and remediation costs would be funded from general revenues and not the Superfund trust fund. A new remediation grants program for brownfields would be authorized. (Other brownfields/Superfund bills authorize only revolving loan funds.)

Expected also is a provision that will give governors a veto over listing new sites on the federal Superfund list and give states the final say on the adequacy of cleanup decisions at sites under state jurisdiction.

The bill represents a significant shift in the Republican strategy from previous years — away from providing liability relief to industrial polluters and reducing cleanup standards, resulting in a narrower, and presumably less controversial, bill.

There is some expectation that the bill's compromise between the liability caps and elimination of the Superfund taxes will garner support from most Republicans and enough Democrats to sustain a potential presidential veto.

Democrats on the Senate Environment Committee will introduce a bill to address the Administration's concerns, but the Democratic bill will include the same liability relief for counties and brownfields funding as S. 1090.

Policy resolutions due June 16

It is that time of year again ... proposed NACo policy resolutions for consideration at the Annual Conference in St. Louis are due in the Legislative Department no later than June 16. This is necessary to provide time to process the resolutions and assign them to the appropriate policy steering committees.

As a reminder, NACo has changed the format for policy resolutions to the "American County Platform" from the archaic form we have used in the past to a cleaner, more modern format. We have eliminated the use of "Whereas" and "Therefore be it resolved" clauses, and replaced them with the new format presented below. We ask that the resolutions be not more than one page in length.

Proposed Resolution on **(insert "title")**

Issue: **(A specific statement of the concern or matter before the steering committee.)**

Proposed Policy: **(What is the specific position of NACo on the issue? What do we want?)**

Background: **(A statement explaining why this matter is of interest to counties and NACo.)**

Sponsor: **(Who is submitting the resolution for consideration?)**

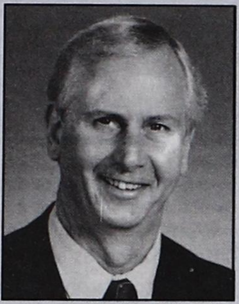
Resolutions can be sent to: Aster Eshete, NACo Legislative Department, 440 First Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001-2080. If you have questions, you can call Jeff Arnold, deputy legislative director, at 202/942-4286 or send e-mail to: *jarnold@naco.org*.

County News *invites Letters to the Editor*

If you have a compliment, complaint or different point of view, let us know. Please include a phone number with your letter. Mail, fax or e-mail to: County News, *NACo, 440 First St., N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2080; 202/393-2630; cnews@naco.org.*

Publisher's Perspective

Celebrating and Saving CDBG



Larry Naake
NACo executive director

Late last month in the City and County of San Francisco, the U.S Conference of Mayors and NACo's Large Urban County Caucus kicked off the battle to save the 25 year-old Community Development Block Grant Program. It was both a celebration of the 25 years since the CDBG program was first enacted and a renewal of our commitment to continue this very effective program for another 25 years.

To celebrate CDBG's 25th anniversary, Mayor Willie Brown of the City and County of San Francisco hosted and presided over an awards program that recognized the many accomplishments that have been made because of this important program. Among the awards that were presented are those that recognized innovative programs in San Bernardino County, Calif.; Hennepin County, Minn.; and Fulton County, Ga.

In addition, NACo and the Conference of Mayors presented "Community Development Leadership Awards" to honor Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, City and County of San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, and NACo's own Associate Legislative Director Haron Battle. These individuals were honored for their many years of service and commitment to the Community Development Block Grant Program.

This event was just the first of many celebrations that will take place over the next six months.

The Conference of Mayors will highlight the Community Development Block Grant Program at its annual conference in New Orleans in June, as will NACo during our Annual Conference in St. Louis in July.

In September, Cook County (Ill.) President John Stroger and Chicago Mayor Richard Daley will honor innovative community development programs and individuals during a celebration in Chicago. And finally, we are beginning to plan a national celebration here in Washington, D.C. that will further highlight the importance of this 25-year program.

Campaign kickoff for CDBG fight

Just as importantly, this San Francisco event kicked off our battle to save the endangered Community Development Block Grant Program. The program is in danger because of the spending limits or so called "caps" that were agreed upon by Congress in 1997. These caps put statutory limits on all discretionary and domestic spending, including the Community Development Block Grant Program.

Cities and counties have used CDBG funds to promote economic growth and job creation, to maintain community facilities, to meet basic human services and to preserve affordable housing for low- and moderate-income people. The program creates a positive climate for business investment and generates jobs and tax revenues.

It is important to point out that between 1993 and 1996, an estimated 14 to 17 million households benefited from the CDBG program and nearly 115,000 jobs were created through economic development activities.

But perhaps the most compelling personal arguments for saving the Community Development Block Grant Program occurred with the presentation of local awards by Mayor Willie Brown to the specific and effective community programs in the City and County of San Francisco. The awards program, highlighted by video presentations, demonstrated the impact on people and neighborhoods in a real-life situation. It was quite impressive.

What we now need to do is convince our representatives in Congress that the CDBG program is an effective and critical tool for neighborhood revitalization and affordable housing. We need to make the case to fund the program at the increased level of $5 billion in fiscal year 2000.

Counties, officials honored by HUD for CDBG contributions and programs

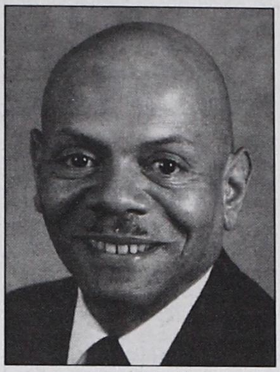
The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, NACo, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Community Development Association have honored Los Angeles County (Calif.) Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, City/County of San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown and NACo Associate Legislative Director Haron Battle as recipients of Community Development Achievement Awards.

The awards were given as part of the 25th anniversary of the CDBG program at a ceremony on May 26 in San Francisco, Calif.

Also honored with a National Community Development Innovation Award for their Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs were Hennepin County, Minn., Fulton County, Ga. and San Bernardino County, Calif.

Brown, Burke and Battle were honored for their longstanding contributions promoting CDBG and its goals of increasing affordable housing, providing neighborhood and human service needs, stimulating job creation and retention and promoting physical redevelopment.

The award-winning local CDBG programs were "Building with Care," Hennepin County; "Families First Program," Fulton County; and "Gang Intervention Program," San Bernardino County. Accepting the award for Hennepin County, Minn. was Commissioner Peter McLaughlin, for Fulton County, Ga., Commissioner Michael Hightower and for San Bernardino County, Calif., Supervisor Jerry Eaves.



Haron Battle

Yvonne Brathwaite Burke

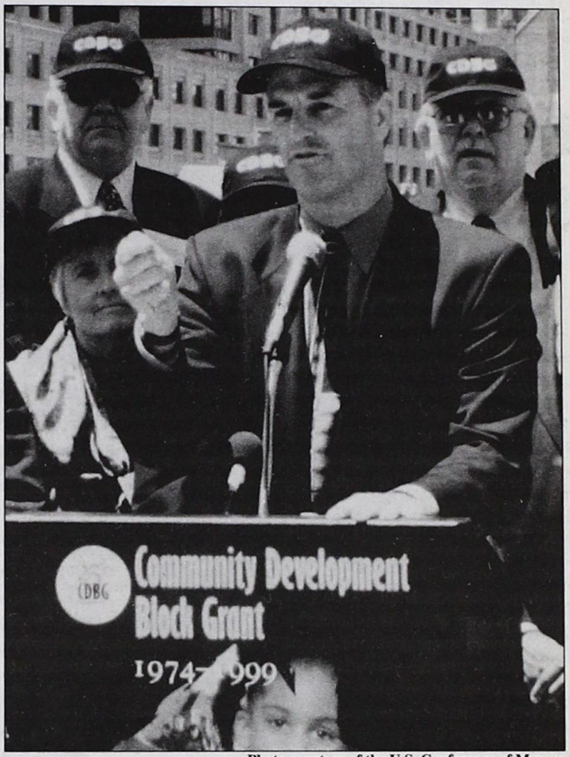


Photo courtesy of the U.S. Conference of Mayors

Hennepin County (Minn.) Commissioner Peter McLaughlin addresses members of the group touring CDBG projects in San Francisco during the 25th anniversary celebration of the enactment of Community Development Block Grant legislation.

Hennepin County, Minn.

"Building with Care" is a program developed with Hennepin County CDBG funds providing home accessibility modifications by Tree Trust, a nonprofit corporation that trains and employs special needs youth and adults by having them participate in meaningful community projects. Community health, veteran services rehabilitation services and housing programs all can access this resource.

Persons with disabilities often cannot remain at home or lead independent lives. The cost of institutional care far exceeds the cost of accessibility improvements, which can be made to a home. A wheelchair ramp or specially designed steps can greatly enhance quality of life, preserving affordable accessible housing and reducing public costs.

Fulton County, Ga.

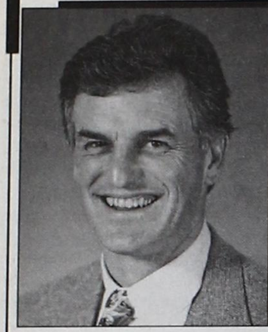
Fulton County used CDBG funds to support the "Families First Development Center." The center, a 14-unit efficiency apartment facility in College Park, Ga., offer homeless families, particularly young single mothers and their children, one year of stable subsidized housing as part of a self-help program.

Participants are required to pursue a program of education, vocational training, or work experience; undergo counseling and group classes on parenting, and abide by the center's resident guidelines for group living.

San Bernardino County, Calif.

Gang intervention programs, counseling and job training have proved successful in motivating individuals to detach themselves from their gang-affiliated identity. In an effort to increase job employment opportunities for ex-gang members, unwanted tattoos are removed utilizing laser surgery equipment through the San Bernardino program. The tattoo removal services are available to all eligible persons from low-and moderate-income households of San Bernardino County.

Profiles in service



Peter McLaughlin
Commissioner
Hennepin County, Minn.

Chair, NACo Large Urban County Caucus

Years as a NACo member: Nine.

Years in public office: I was a member of the Minnesota House of Representatives for six years and have been a county commissioner for nine years.

Education: B.A. from Princeton; master's from the School of Public Affairs, now the Humphrey Institute, at the University of Minnesota.

The hardest thing I've ever done: Resurrect the light rail system in the Twin Cities from the ashes, from being totally dead three years ago.

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Martin Luther King Jr., Jane Jacobs and Pablo Picasso.

A dream I have is to: Make American cities great places for people to live, work and go to school.

You'd be surprised to learn that: My favorite dessert is a cannoli. You can't get a good cannoli in Minnesota, but I go out of my way to get one when I'm in New Jersey (American People's Bakery in Trenton) or Boston (Modern Pastry Shop in the North End).

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: Take a summer internship after my sophomore year in college, where I worked with the Archdiocese of New York in a street project for young people and I lived in Spanish Harlem at 103rd and Lexington.

My favorite sport is: Basketball, but I substitute tennis and biking because of my bum knee.

I'm most proud of: When I was in the legislature, I was the author of the first parental leave law in the country that provided leave for new fathers as well as mothers.

Every morning I read: The Minneapolis *Star Tribune*.

My favorite meal is: Eggs Benedict and asparagus with very lemony hollandaise sauce, several strong cups of coffee and raspberries with cream.

My pet peeve is: Cynical people who get in the way of getting good things done.

My motto is: Community builder.

The last book I read was: *On the Lake of the Woods*, by Tim O'Brien.

My favorite movie is: "The Godfather."

My favorite music is: Modern jazz.

My favorite president is: Harry Truman.

Voinovich introduces early childhood programs bill

By Marilina Sanz
Associate Legislative Director

A bill that would provide $200 million per year in matching grants for local councils to coordinate early childhood development initiatives — a key NACo legislative priority — was introduced in the Senate late last month by George Voinovich (R-Ohio).

The Prenatal, Infant and Child Development Act of 1999, S. 1154, would apportion funds to states based on the number of young children and the number of children in poverty. In turn, states must reserve 85 percent of the funds for local governments. Funds would be distributed through the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG).

Originally, the bill required a 50 percent match. This rate was lowered to 25 percent after several groups, including NACo, pointed out that it was too high. The match can be in cash or in kind, and it can also include private sources of funding.

Another provision included in the bill at NACo's request would allow existing councils to receive the funds. As a result, boards such as those established through California's tobacco tax initiative and North Carolina's Smart Start program could be designated to receive these funds. The reason for this provision is that federal legislation often requires the creation of new local councils without taking into consideration existing entities that could serve the same functions. This situation lends itself to a lack of coordination, wasted staff time and additional administrative costs.

Another important provision of the bill for counties has to do with the transferability of funds to the Social Services Block Grant (Title XX).

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act of 1996 allows states to transfer up to 10 percent of their Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant (TANF) to Title XX. The Transportation Equity Act (TEA 21) reduced this transferability to 4.25 percent effective in FY01 in order to pay for additional transit funds. The president's proposed budget went further and proposed making this reduction effective in FY00.

The Title XX program is a capped entitlement to states that is distributed according to population. It is extremely flexible and many states in turn pass the money through to counties.

In recent years Title XX has been drastically reduced. As a result, many states where counties operate TANF and Title XX, such as New York, have been making the most of this transferability. Title XX funds can be used for a variety of purposes, including childcare, child welfare and adult protective services.

> States have come under criticism by some in Congress because of the unspent balances in their TANF accounts and some fear that these balances may be a target for budget cuts in the future.

The Voinovich bill would also allow states to transfer an additional 15 percent of their TANF funds to CCDBG. Current law permits states to transfer 20 percent of their TANF funds to the child care program. Two-thirds of the additional transfer funds must be dedicated to the local councils. The rest would be dedicated to childcare quality improvements.

States have come under criticism by some in Congress because of the unspent balances in their TANF accounts and some fear that these balances may be a target for budget cuts in the future. This new transfer authority would not only increase funding to counties, but would also make it easier to spend TANF funds, thereby allaying some of this criticism.

The bill also clarifies that the Maternal and Child Health Care Block Grant Program can be used for early childhood development programs, including parenting education. As originally drafted, the bill might have been interpreted as requiring a 10 percent set aside for this purpose. The language was changed when NACo and several other organizations pointed out that a mandate would create an administrative burden.

Some of the other provisions of the bill include $20 million per year for child care worker accreditation programs and $20 million per year for a satellite training program for Head Start and other early childhood education programs. Sens. Thad Cochran (R-Miss.), Bob Graham (D-Fla.) and Evan Bayh (D-Ind.) are cosponsors of the bipartisan bill.

County News

"THE WISDOM TO KNOW AND THE COURAGE TO DEFEND THE PUBLIC INTEREST"

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202/942-4256 • FAX 202/393-2630

Published biweekly except August by:
National Association of Counties Research Foundation, Inc.
440 First Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001-2080

202•393-6226 FAX **202• 393-2630**
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***POSTMASTER:** send address changes to County News, 440 First St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001-2080*
(USPS 704-620) • (ISSN: 0744-9798)

FCC boosts Internet subsidies for rural areas

Goal: Wire poor and rural schools, libraries, hospitals to narrow 'digital divide'

By Mary Ann Barton
Senior Staff Writer

The Federal Communications Commission voted May 27 to increase funding for the controversial "e-rate" — discounted Internet connections — for poor and rural healthcare facilities, schools and libraries in the second year of the program.

"It's essential that rural areas not be bypassed by the telecommunications revolution," said Blue Earth County (Minn.) Commissioner Colleen Landkamer, who chairs NACo's Rural Action Caucus. "We're pleased by the FCC's action."

The FCC voted 3–2 along party lines (with two Republicans opposed) to fund schools and libraries at $2.25 billion, an increase from $1.7 billion last year. The Commission funded healthcare facilities at $12 million.

"Funding at this level is the only way in which we can reach those schools and libraries in rural America," said FCC Chairman William Kennard. "In fact, by funding the e-rate to its cap, we'll be able to connect one-third of public schools throughout rural America."

Kennard says 89 percent of public schools have some Internet access, with 51 percent of classrooms connected. In high-poverty areas, only 39 percent of classrooms are connected.

Before the e-rate, only 39 percent of classrooms in poor school districts in rural and urban America had any Internet connections compared to 62 percent of classrooms in wealthier districts. The on-ramps to the Information Superhighway were bypassing the communities that needed access to opportunity the most.

After one year, the FCC found that the digital divide was narrowing, Kennard noted in a statement, adding that more than 80,000 schools and libraries — and more than 38 million kids — have been helped by the e-rate program. Because of the e-rate, more than half of the unconnected classrooms will now be linked to the Internet, the bulk of which are found in schools where over half of the students live in poverty, he said.

The universal service program was created by the 1996 Telecommunications Act but has come under fire from some Republicans and Democrats who say the subsidy drives up long distance telephone rates for consumers.

Funding for the service is collected mainly from long distance telephone companies, which have passed on the cost to customers. The FCC estimates that the total portion of the average phone bill that goes toward funding the e-rate is about one-half of 1 percent.

The Universal Service Administration Company (USAC) estimated that demand for discounts in the second funding year of the schools and libraries universal service support mechanism will be $2.435 billion, up from $2.02 billion for the first funding year.

Counties may have long wait to access public safety airwaves

By Mary Ann Barton
Senior Staff Writer

It looks like it's going to be awhile before counties get a chance to access public safety airwaves made available last year by the Federal Communications Commission.

An advisory panel has been set up to make recommendations on interoperability standards to the agency by 2002. After that, it's up to the FCC to approve them. And an agency spokeswoman is reluctant to say when those recommendations may be approved.

Another hurdle public officials face: Waiting for the space to come available as the TV industry makes its transition to digital broadcasting, which could take until the end of 2006, with the possibility of extensions.

Advisory group

Bruce Blair, a police sergeant with the Montgomery County, Md. Police Department, had just given a talk in Denver on "interoperability" — in this case, the ability for public safety officials to communicate with each other by radio during an emergency, when a call came into the Denver Communications Center about shots and explosions at a school in Jefferson County. "That's an eerie thing to hear," said Blair.

Days later, Blair sat in a room in Washington, D.C. for the first meeting of the Public Safety National Coordination Committee (NCC), an advisory group to the FCC.

Fresh on his mind was the experience of law enforcement officers from Denver and surrounding counties, who went to the scene of the Littleton high school tragedy. "They had different frequencies and different bands and couldn't communicate with each other," Blair said.

'...The good guys can't talk to each other...'

"It's really kind of shocking that, at the end of the 20th century, the good guys can't talk to each other when they're trying to help people," said Kathleen Wallman, who chairs the group. "It's this odd, over-looked fact."

The FCC group she chairs is dealing with questions of interoperability, technology and implementation.

Although government officials are grateful for the additional public safety airwaves, it won't be available until the FCC has OK'd the rules and standards, based on recommendations from the group. An agency spokeswoman said the timeframe for any FCC action on the recommendations is uncertain.

Although the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International, Inc. is also working on setting standards, the FCC will wait

> "It's really kind of shocking that, at the end of the 20th century, the good guys can't talk to each other when they're trying to help people."
>
> Kathleen Wallman
> chair, Public Safety National Coordination Committee

for the recommendations from the advisory group to avoid political and economic infighting.

"I think the FCC was aware that decisions could be made at this stage that would lean more toward one manufacturer than another," Wallman said. "We want to get a broad consensus from the users so people won't be skeptical about the decision. It must be developed and supported by a broad group."

Anyone can join the NCC. If you are interested in becoming a member, contact Joy Alford or Solita Griffis of the FCC's Policy and Rules Branch, Public Safety and Wireless Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, at 202/418-0680; fax: 202/418-2643 or e-mail is *jalford@fcc.gov or sgriffis@fcc.gov.*

The next meeting of the group is June 18. Others are to be scheduled in September and November.

A free video on the issue, "Why Can't We Talk?" is available by calling 800/248-2742.

WIR conference tackles urban sprawl in the West

By Beverly A. Schlotterbeck
Editor

In the cover story for the June issue of *Smithsonian* magazine, writer Jim Doherty describes his experiences hiking in Utah's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

Apart from mentioning the uproar that accompanied President Clinton's designation of the Monument, not much space is devoted to the impact these newest public lands have had on the residents of the area.

But Louise Liston, outgoing WIR president and commissioner from the Monument's home county of Garfield knows. Her county, home to 4,000 permanent residents with a taxable land base of 2 percent, hosts three million visitors each year, now that the Grand Staircase is on the books as a national park. Like others before them, some visitors decide to stay, and Garfield County's land prices have increased 10 times since the monument's dedication in 1996.

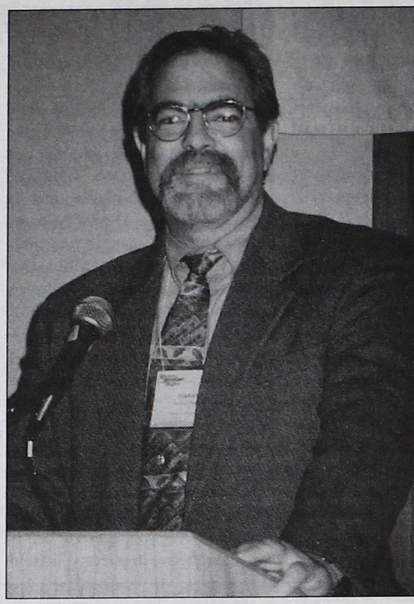
Garfield County is not alone in its newfound status as a so-called "gateway community." Dozens of them exist in the West; huddled close to some of the nation's most spectacular scenery and attracting, of all things, urban sprawl.

One of the pioneer gateway communities is Grand County, Utah.

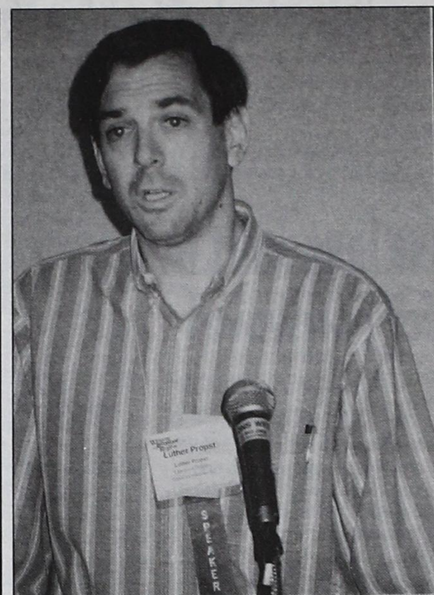
Over the past 20 years, the county's search and rescue costs have increased 40-fold. Property taxes have jumped 300 percent. There is 300 times more garbage and the county needed to add a new wing to its hospital, "for middle-aged men in spandex," said Luther Probst, executive director of the Sonoran Institute.

The challenges created in the face of increased growth around public lands shaped the theme of this year's Western Interstate Region (WIR) conference, held last month in Contra Costa County, Calif.

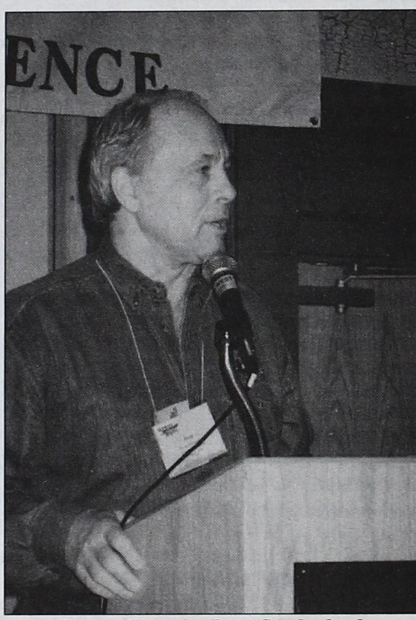
Speakers waded into the demographics of growth. They talked about water quality. If from a federal agency, like the Bureau of Land Management or the U.S. Forest Service, they promised to work more closely with local officials; and if from a private organization, such as the Sonoran Institute, they offered hands-on tools to begin the difficult job of shaping a transiting community's future.



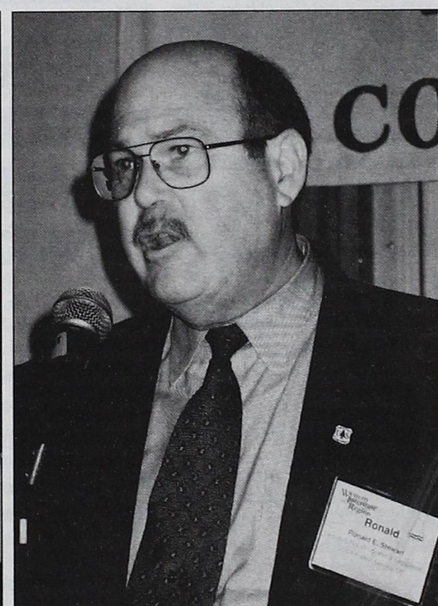
Supervisor Charles Willard
Tehama County, Calif.



Luther Probst, executive director
Sonoran Institute



County Executive Doug Southerland
Pierce County, Wash.



Ronald Stewart, deputy chief
U.S. Forest Service

All photos by Bev Schlotterbeck

Urban sprawl and BLM

Bureau of Land Management Acting Director Tom Fry told WIR delegates at the Opening General Session that the West's new urban sprawl presents significant challenges for his agency, particularly in the area of planning.

"So much of our planning efforts took place before anyone anticipated both the urban and rural growth explosion in the West … and often failed to anticipate new and dramatically increased demands for uses of the public lands, such as recreation," Fry said. As a result, BLM expects to soon release a new "planning guidance" that will take into account a number of planning trends, including:

- cooperation between developers and environmentalists
- increased focus on participatory planning
- expansion of open space networks and greenways
- the value inherent in regional cooperation.

Fry maintained that over the past several years BLM has "worked very hard at improving its cooperation and coordination with local communities." Nonetheless, he reminded the audience that while BLM remains committed to joint planning and shared decision-making, "we have to remember that some decisions are uniquely federal. We can't forget that we have a responsibility to all Americans and we should not apologize for it."

U.S. Forest Service and challenges for the new millennium

Like its sister land management agency BLM, the U.S. Forest Se vice is also engaged in examinin the impact of urban-type growth the rural West on its responsibilitie

Ron Stewart, deputy chief of th Forest Service, laid out a full table challenges before delegates at th second General Session — startin

> "So much of our planning efforts took place before anyone anticipated both the urban and rural growth explosion in the West ... and often failed to anticipate new and dramatically increased demands for uses of the public lands such as recreation."
>
> Tom Fry
> Acting Director
> Bureau of Land Management

with infrastructure.

For much of its history, the For Service did not have a very go idea of its assets, Stewart said. N it does, and the figures are imposin

- 383,000 miles of roads
- 133,000 trail miles
- 7,190 bridges
- 25,000+ buildings.

Equally imposing is the infrastru tures' deferred maintenance. So $6.7 billion is needed to bring those roads and bridges and bui ings up to standard, Stewart relat

With one-third of all national f est lands in the interior West, f vulnerability looms high on the F est Service's list of challeng Stewart has some imposing sta tics here, as well. Over the last cade, the average number of fo fires that burn 1,000 acres or m has risen from 23 to 80 per year. N surprisingly, fire-fighting costs h flamed from $134 million in 198 $335 million in 1994.

To adequately cope with fires the pests that attack forests and watersheds they protect, Stewart s the Service needs an additional $ billion.

Lest anyone doubt the impor role national forests play in nation's water supply, Stew pointed out that national forests the single largest source of nation's water, at 14 percent. attached a $3.7 billion value to natural resource.

There's little economic incent though, for protecting water a source. As an example, Stew

See **URBAN SPRAWL**, *page*

Coming soon to a county near your public lands ... the Amenity Boom

By Beverly A. Schlotterbeck
Editor

During his remarks at the Opening General Session, Luther Probst, Sonoran Institute executive director, detailed the impact of what he calls the "Amenity Boom" on the rural West and its outstanding characteristics:

- division of working ranches into ranchettes
- isolated rural subdivisions
- loss of access to public lands
- loss of sense of place
- housing that caters more to automobiles than people, and
- conflict between new and old residents.

Probst, whose organization, along with NACo, is sponsoring training for a select group of Western counties, attributes the rapid change to simple demographics — the Baby Boomers and their ample salaries and stock market earnings are in search of recreational homes or better living conditions.

However, the growth brought by the Boomers usually fails to help the economy of the local community, Probst says. "Unplanned growth can challenge the very social fabric of a community."

Smart communities, though, can take the edge off rapid growth IF they plan.

First, Probst says, they need a clear and popular vision of how they want the community to grow. Next, they need to identify their area's special assets. These could take the form of historical distinctions, wildlife habitat or an agriculturally based economy.

> "There is a magic in getting people together. I know it sounds hokey, but if you can get people to check their hostility at the door, determine what they really value in their community and decide what they want to do in the future, there is magic."
>
> Luther Probst
> executive director
> Sonoran Institute

And finally, they need to recognize that protecting local beauty does as much to preserve jobs as unbridled development does.

There are several tools that can help communities get on the right path. Land use regulations that go beyond merely preventing the worst kind of development, but rather keep development close into cities, thereby preserving downtowns and mitigating the strain on infrastructure is one.

Non-profit land trusts and conservation easements can be critical, Probst says, as alternatives to public ownership or scattered development.

Smart communities should also develop a current profile of their economy and demographics and a cost-of-services study, which takes different scenarios and accounts for how much or how little county service costs would increase in the differing circumstances. (Hint: Scattered development costs the most.)

And finally — perhaps the most important tool of all — "There is a magic in getting people together," Probst says. "I know it sounds hokey, but if you can get people to check their hostility at the door, determine what they really value in their community and decide what they want to do in the future, there is magic."

(For more information on the Sonoran Institute and the services it offers, including its downloadable socio-economic profile tool, go to www.sonoran.org.)

Photo by Bev Schlotterbeck

Outgoing WIR President Louise Liston presides at the WIR Board meeting.

URBAN SPRAWL from page 6

pointed to Plumas County, Calif. and its Feather River, which quenches the thirst of southern Californians. Heavily dependent on the logging industry, "Plumas County would reap no benefit if timber production were cut back to protect the [Feather River] watershed."

"We must manage watersheds together or they will manage us," Stewart warned.

The Forest Service is also aware that changing demographics are significantly affecting its business. Not only are urban areas creeping closer to national forests, but changes in household structure, economics and education will affect forest service programming.

Hunting and fishing, for instance, are likely to continue declining as newer Americans, with different cultural backgrounds, fail to embrace these activities in the numbers that European immigrants did. The shift in the nation's immigration patterns may also herald a conflict over the use of natural resources. "Eighty percent of today's immigrants come from non-European countries. They may not have shared values regarding natural resources," he said.

Other speakers at the second General Session included Carol Sampson, from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Tehama County (Calif.) Supervisor Charles Willard and Pierce County (Wash.) Executive Doug Southerland.

Sampson addressed hydropower plant re-licensing and the need for local governments to make certain that their plans for watershed protection are reflected in the re-licensing process. More than 220 hydropower plants will need to renew their licenses over the next 10 years.

Willard offered a spirited critique of the increasingly popular consensus-model of decision making. From his vantage as a three-and-a-half year (and still counting) veteran of the Cal-Fed committee, which is working on water quality issues in the San Francisco Bay area, Willard advised that "if you're invited to join one of these groups, first ask who the elected officials are and what their time commitment is." In his more cynical moments, Willard is convinced that consensus building is a process that guarantees gridlock on any issue. That's why having elected officials with the authority to make decisions is so critical to keeping issue gridlock from happening, he advised.

Southerland briefed delegates on the impact that an endangered species listing has on a major metropolitan area as is the case with Pierce County (Tacoma), Wash. and the recent ESA listing of the Coho and Chinook salmon.

Safety net for timber counties, not a new idea

By Tom Mainwaring
U.S. Forest Service

(Ed. Note: Among the more important issues discussed at the WIR Conference is the so-called "safety net" proposal for timber receipt dependent counties. The following report outlines the issue and details the proposals being offered.)

Rural counties, nestled in Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management ownership, have long been dependent on the flow of natural resources from these lands to support local economies.

Recent land use policies, court decisions and national public opinion have reduced the flow of these resources such as timber and grazing from public lands — resources that historically have been vital for support of local industries.

Counties also receive 25 percent of the value of all receipts earned from the sale of these resources from federal lands. The funds are set aside for county roads and schools.

In the late 1980s, the 25 percent fund for counties in the Pacific Northwest was severely reduced by falling timber sale levels on public lands. Reductions were necessary to accommodate spotted owl habitat protection as required by the Endangered Species Act. Congress enacted a 25 percent "safety net" payment for the Pacific Northwest spotted owl counties in 1990.

A five-year average for receipts was calculated for 1985 to 1990. The average served as a safety net payment for 1990 to 1993. In 1994, 85 percent of the average was paid, with a 3 percent reduction each year. The safety net payment was scheduled to end in 2003.

A coalition of forest industry and school administrators are advocating a new safety net proposal for the 25 percent fund. The Forest Service is also proposing a new safety net concept. There are differences between the two proposals.

Both support averaging the high three-year receipt values from an index period of 1986 to 1995. The coalition payment proposal is 100 percent of the average with a sunset date of 2005 and the Forest Service proposal is a permanent 76 percent of the average three-year payment.

The coalition supports the "either/or" concept. Each year the safety net payment would be compared with the actual 25 percent payment value. The counties would be able to select payment from the greater of the two. The "either/or" choice is not a current option in the Forest Service proposal. The final difference is that the coalition's proposal has an index for inflation while the Forest Service proposal does not.

Congress will need to pass legislation to enact a new safety net concept. Although Congress and the Administration both support the concept of a safety net payment for counties, there are differences in the proposals. A compromise proposal will need to be reached.

Photo courtesy of Churchill County Museum & Archive[s]

Churchill County (Nev.) Telephone & Telegraph operators Gladys Allison (left) and Cora Stewart work th[e] switchboard in July 1925. Operators were also responsible for watching the water pressure gauge (uppe[r] left corner) for the city of Fallon and reporting a drop in pressure to the city engineer. They also dispatche[d] the fire department and ambulances.

110 years later, $975 telegraph lines are a full-blown county phone company

By Kevin Wilcox
Senior Staff Writer

In the fall of 1889, skeptical eyes were cast on the county commissioners of Churchill County, Nev. They had just voted to buy the old overland telegraph lines from Western Union Telegraph for the astronomical price of $975.

Almost 110 years later, those old telegraph lines have evolved into CC Communications, a county-owned phone system worth about $42 million, complete with solar-powered pay phones, a $2 million digital switching system, 14,000 individual lines and 4,000 cell phone customers.

"It was money well spent," said Commissioner Jim Regan. "Probably at the time, people didn't think it was. That was quite a lot of money in those days."

Churchill County is a typical rural area in Nevada: a population center surrounded by desert. Regan said about 96 percent of the 26,000 people who live in the county are within eight miles of the courthouse.

It's home to a naval air station where pilots train. Farmers grow alfalfa along the river and in irrigated areas. And people from even more rural areas come for services such as medical care.

In 1889, the county had its share of gold and silver miners and those who farmed along the river. The railroad and the telegraph were pulling out of the area, though. Commissioners knew how vital the telegraph was and took steps to buy the lines and expand the system.

"I've heard that the people thought the commissioners made a big mistake," Regan said.

In 1896 the county embraced a newfangled device called the telephone. They sent away for 10 telephones from an electric company in San Francisco. The first boxes were put in houses around the county. The homeowners then became agents of the county and were expected to see to it that no profanity traveled the lines.

By 1907, the system had grown to the point the county published its first rate schedule. An individual line cost $4 a month. Six people sharing a party line paid $2.

"Party lines lasted quite a while," Regan said. "When we moved here in 1959, they still had six-party lines in some places."

Today, the system is all digital, cellular and even solar.

"One of the big advantages of a county-owned system is that although we have to operate in the black, it's not like a stockholder-owned company trying to build profits," Regan said. "We've gone out into rural areas where it would have cost $40,000 to $50,000 for a phone. We've gone in and provided cellular service."

Another example of profit-free phone service can be found at San[d] Mountain, a desert recreation are[a] that draws hundreds of dune bugg[y] drivers and dirt bike riders on th[e] weekends. It's accident-prone an[d] miles from nowhere.

"We put a solar-powered co[in] phone out there," Regan said. "Th[at] cost $13,000. We'll never get mone[y] out of it, but if we save a few live[s] it'll be worth it. A normal pho[ne] company would look at that and sa[y] 'no way.' "

The phone company and th[e] county are like Siamese twins joine[d] at the earlobe. They operate large[ly] independently. The phone compa[ny] spends and earns county mone[y] but they are audited separately a[nd] are run as an enterprise fund, Reg[an] said. The company has it's o[wn] managers and consultants. It h[as] an annual budget of about $9 mi[l]lion and brings in enough mon[ey] to save county taxpayers the equiv[a]lent of $.25 in the ad valorem t[ax] rate.

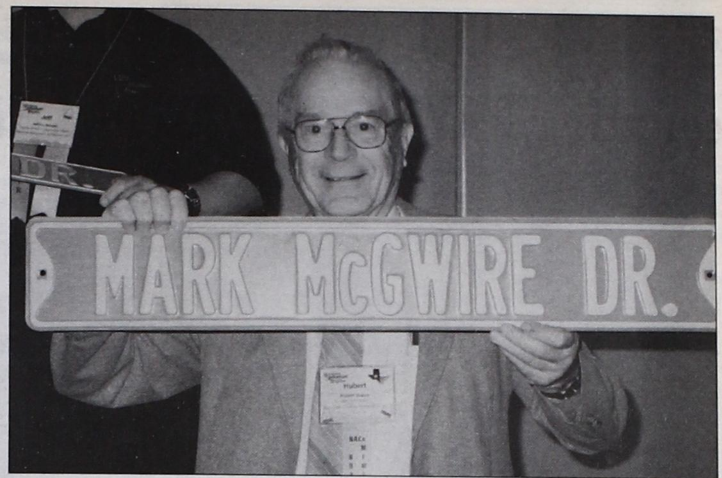
"It's a full-blown phone compa[ny] just like any other phone compan[y]" Regan said. "Except that it's own[ed] by citizens instead of stockholders."

As the system moves into i[ts] second century, the citizens are g[et]ting comfortable with that idea, t[oo]. A few years ago there was a ball[ot] measure to sell Churchill Comm[u]nications. The voters decided th[at] the $975 was well spent after a[ll] and voted to keep the phone co[m]pany.

Revisiting WIR

Workers at the Cecchini packing plant and farm in Contra Costa County, Calif. load freshly picked asparagus onto the conveyor belt. The Cecchini farm was one of the stops on a tour of Contra Costa County's agricultural industry. The office of Contra Costa County Supervisor Joseph Canciamilla arranged the tour.

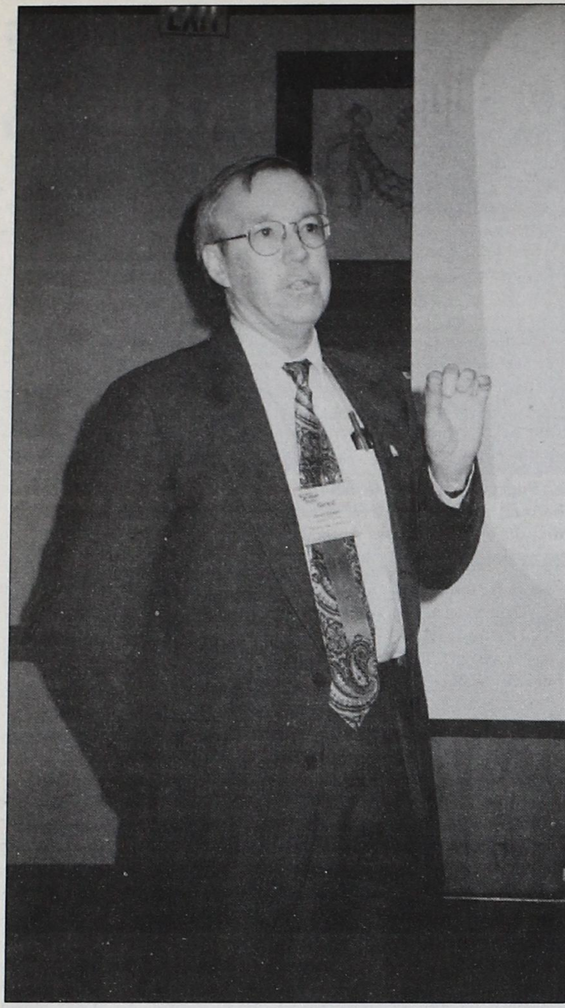
All photos by Bev Schlotterbeck



Racine County (Wis.) Supervisor Hubert Braun (top) and Owen County (Ind.) Recorder Margaret Tucker (bottom) show off the street signs they won in a drawing sponsored by St. Louis County, Mo., site of NACo's 1999 Annual Conference.

Bill Hansell, commissioner, Umatilla County, Ore. and chair, NACo's Agriculture and Rural Affairs Steering Committee, holds a rose developed by the owner of the France Aebi Nursery. The nursery was another stop on the tour of Contra Costa's agricultural community.

Revisiting WIR



Gerald Doeksen, Oklahoma State University, Okla. explains the often-overlooked role that health care services play in a rural economy during a workshop on rural health care delivery.

Outgoing WIR President Louise Liston receives a token of appreciation from outgoing WIR Immedia Past President Dennis Brinker.

All photos by Bev Schlotterbeck

NACo President Betty Lou Ward (l) congratulates WIR President Louise Liston on a job well done during her year in office.

Plumas County (Calif.) Supervisor Fran Roudebush is the lucky winner of a hospitality basket from Idaho Association of Counties, presented to her by Dan Chadwick, IAC executive director. Ada Cou (Boise), Idaho is the site of next year's WIR Conference.

NACo Building Fund Proposed Bylaws Amendment

In March 1999, the Audit Committee and Finance Committee recommended a resolution to the NACo Bylaws that would require a super majority vote by the NACo Board in order to spend funds from the Board Designated Building Fund.

The resolution is intended to insure that the Building Fund will not be used for anything other than those activities associated with the purchase or rental of future NACo office space. This resolution will be presented at the July 1999 membership meeting.

The draft of that resolution is presented below. (*Underscored text indicates changes or additions.*)

Recommend that Article VI, Section 6 of the NACo Bylaws be amended to read as follows:

Section 6. Procedures

A. Fifty (50) directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The vote of the majority of the directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the board of directors unless the articles of incorporation or these bylaws require a vote of a greater number. The board of directors may transact business by mail ballot by voting upon specific proposals mailed to them with the approval of the president. Under such circumstances, the affirmative response of a majority of the directors shall be required for adoption.

B.1. Except as provided in subsection B.2. of this section, funds contained in the Board Designated Building Options Fund, created on February 28, 1998, may be used only for the following purposes:

a. the rental or purchase of office space, building or land;

b. securing a loan for the purchase of land or a building;

c. consultants, counsel or real estate professionals engaged to provide advice or assistance to the association regarding the relocation of the association's headquarters offices; or

d. other expenses directly associated with the same.

B.2. Funds contained in the Board Designated Building Options Fund, created on February 28, 1998, may be used for any purpose other than those stated in subsection B.1. of this section, if authorized by resolution of the Board of Directors. Such a resolution must declare an emergency, and must specifically state the purpose or purposes for which the funds are to be used. The affirmative vote of two-thirds of the directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present is required to adopt such a resolution. If such a resolution is put to the Board of Directors by mail ballot, the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the directors shall be required for adoption.

B.3. Subsection B. of this section expires on December 31, 2007.

(This proposed bylaws amendment was submitted by Jake Klein, Otero County, Colo.; Bruce Elwell, Major County, Okla.; Terry Green, Jefferson County, Colo.; Paul McCarron, Anoka County, Minn.; Ronald Morrison, Santa Cruz County, Ariz.; Jim Roth, Oklahoma County, Okla.; Bob Patterson, Shelby County, Tenn.; Carolyn Meline, Bannock County, Idaho; Kenneth Mayfield, Harris County, Texas; Dennis Brinker, Jackson County, Colo.; Donald Davis, Rio Blanco County, Colo.; Javier Gonzales, Santa Fe County, N.M.; C. Vernon Gray, Howard County, Md.; and Gerry Hyland, Fairfax County, Va.)

New roundtable sessions at Annual Conference will focus on violence

BY LOIS KAMPINSKY
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND TRAINING DIRECTOR

How many times have you been tirred by a speaker or a topic and wanted to debate the topic yourself? Now, starting at NACo's 1999 Annual Conference, you can be part of the action.

A new type of educational session will provide officials with a unique venue for feedback and ideas.

Called "Topic One," the session consists of a short overview of a general interest topic followed by an hour's worth of educational roundtables at which you add ideas and comments for solving topic-related problems.

The first "Topic One" will be "County Roles in Dealing with Violence." It takes place Monday, July 19, from 3:30–5 p.m. at the St. Louis Convention Center. Sponsored by NACo's Training Division, "Topic One" draws staff from all NACo departments and is expected to become a continuing event at all NACo conferences.

To begin, a moderator will briefly characterize counties' roles in dealing with the issue of violence, then outline specific subtopics for each table to tackle. Participants will receive a folder of background materials and references for all subtopics.

TOPIC One ROUNDTABLES

As participants move to one of 10 tables, they will be greeted by a table facilitator, a reporter and a copy of a successful community model. The model will provide the context for the first half-hour of facilitator-lead, participant-driven discussion and debate. After the first discussion, participants switch to another table for another "round" on a different subtopic.

Roundtable sub-issues include:

- Violence response systems — sheriff's offices, jails, hospitals
- Gang violence
- Child abuse and neglect
- School violence countermeasures
- Internet and other media as carriers of violence
- Animal control and abuse
- Workplace violence
- Family support
- Road rage

Finally, the moderator will guide a wrap-up by each table's facilitator, based on the reporter's notes from each table. Participants will take home with them many models from communities that have tracked aspects of the topic, extensive reference lists and memories of their exchanges with fellow officials.

This first "Topic One" session is designed to complement and follow up on several general session and workshop presentations at the conference.

It should also provide officials with a place to test the validity of their ideas and persuasive powers.

Finally, it should give officials a window on solutions to the problems of violence in their community. For more information on the session, contact NACo's Training Division at 202/942-4267.

Herman urges NACo leaders to support WtW extension

BY GARY GORTENBURG
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Labor Secretary Alexis Herman spent nearly an hour on the phone with NACo leaders, May 14, discussing legislation to extend and improve the Welfare-to-Work Program.

Herman described key provisions of legislation introduced by Rep. Benjamin L. Cardin (D-Md.) that would streamline reporting requirements, extend the length and funding of the program, simplify eligibility, add new categories of eligibility, increase support for native Americans, provide additional technical assistance and increase competitive grant awards in states not participating in the formula grant.

In seeking NACo's support for the legislation (H.R. 1482), Herman also indicated the Labor Department's intent to modify welfare-to-work match requirements, changing the 50/50 language to 75/25. According to Herman, this change could be accomplished through the regulatory process and made effective for the current funding cycle.

Representing NACo on the conference call were NACo President-elect C. Vernon Gray; Second Vice President Javier Gonzales; Employment Steering Committee members, Penny Cameron, Peter McLaughlin and Jane Campbell; NACo Executive Director Larry Naake; Legislative Director Ed Rosado and Workforce Development Director Gary Gortenburg.

NACo leaders expressed appreciation that the Administration had been responsive to county concerns about the Welfare-to-Work Program.

They also indicated that counties were on record in support of legislation to extend the Welfare-to-Work Program, simplify eligibility, and reduce the match.

HOUSE BILL from page 1

tion. Further, the bill states that no local government may unreasonably limit assemblies or institutions principally devoted to religious exercise. Given this language, a church could argue that the law allows construction within areas that counties have designated for open space or a greenbelt.

Other implications of the bill might involve childcare requirements, jail inmate privileges, alcohol and drug enforcement and employee work rules.

NACo believes that H.R. 1691 is contrary to principles of federalism. Siting of religious institutions, as well as land use requirements such as parking lot size, set-backs, buffer zones and lighting are properly issues of local concern.

Congress should not confer special privileges on religious facilities or exempt churches from the same requirements imposed on facilities with similar affects on the community.

Counties are urged to contact their representatives immediately to ask that H.R. 1691 not be reported out of the House Judiciary Committee or brought to the House floor. Congressional offices can be accessed on the Internet at *http://congress.nw.dc.us/naco/congdir.html* or via NACo's toll-free Legislative Action Hot line, 888/534-6226.

For more information, contact Diane Shea: 202/942-4269, or *dshea@naco.org*.

PRDP releases liability claims data standard

The Public Risk Database Project (PRDP) has released its proposed public sector Liability Claims Data Standard and announced that there will be a review period.

The standard was released in a proposed format to solicit comments and recommendations from key stakeholders, including public sector risk managers, risk management information system (RMIS) vendors, third-party administrators, representatives of the insurance industry and other interested parties.

The PRDP Data Standard is a voluntary system for coding and collecting liability claims data in a common format that PRDP hopes will be adopted by all public entities, intergovernmental risk pools and their service providers.

The review period will end on July 30. At its close, PRDP will revise the standard based on feedback received.

The complete Proposed Liability Claims Data Standard and Overview is available on PRDP's Web site at *www.prdp.org*. The primary purposes of the standard are to:

- identify data elements that public entities should collect to enable them to manage their liability claims effectively and efficiently,
- facilitate the capture and transmission of data into PRDP's data ware-house to facilitate benchmarking and other analyses,
- reduce data conversion costs,
- serve as a model for RMIS vendors and other data managers, and
- provide a starting point for expansion to other industry groups and risk coverage areas.

PRDP is seeking widespread support for the data standard from public entities, intergovernmental risk pools and organizations representing public officials as well as private firms. For this reason, PRDP has developed sample resolutions for nonprofit and for profit organizations and public entities and risk pools to endorse the standard.

The sample resolutions are available on PRDP's Web site. Public and private organizations endorsing the standard are encouraged to register their support with PRDP so that a listing can be maintained on the PRDP Web site.

PRDP's Liability Claims Data Standard has already been endorsed by the Association of Governmental Risk Pools (AGRIP), which is the successor to the Public Risk Management Association's (PRIMA) Pooling Section. AGRIP represents more the 90 intergovernmental risk pools throughout the United States.

To promote the implementation of the data standard, PRDP has also developed model RFP language for public entities and risk pools to use in the acquisition of new risk and claims services. The model RFP language is also available on PRDP's Web site.

PRDP is a nonprofit organization created to collect, compile and disseminate liability claims and exposure information from state and local governments and other public entities, including school districts and intergovernmental risk pools.

The organization's primary objective is to create a self-supporting national data warehouse to help public officials improve the performance of their risk management programs, make better policy decisions, and control risk financing costs.

For more information about PRDP's Liability Claims Data Standard, please visit *www.prdp.org* o[r] contact PRDP, 7172 Columbia Gateway Drive, Suite E, Columbia, M[D] 21046, Phone: 410/312-0880; Fax: 410/312-0993, e-mail: *info@prdp.org*.

Call for Sustainable Codes and Ordinances

Has your county passed a referendum that preserves open spaces in the past year? Has your board of commissioners approved a 10-year concurrency management ordinance? The Joint Center for Sustainable Communities is seeking these and other 1998–99 county legislation on sustainable initiatives to add to our database of more than 80 codes and ordinances.

The Joint Center collects ordinances on issues including zoning and land use, recycling, pollution prevention and brownfields.

The center also catalogues partnership resolutions and agreements, resolutions of sustainable values, public participation guides and sustainable development plans.

Please send a disk or hard copy to the Joint Center for Sustainable Communities, NACo, 440 First St. N.W.; Washington, DC 20001 or send via e-mail to *nkeller@naco.org*.

Our current listing of codes and ordinances, as well as other information resources, is available through the Joint Center hotline 800/696-1667, or on the Joint Center Web site at *www.naco.org/programs/comm_dev/center*.

Hats off to ... *Juvenile Justice*

CleanSWEEP
San Bernardino County, Calif.

Operation CleanSWEEP is a law enforcement/education/probation partnership designed to reduce incidents of crime and violence on high school campuses in San Bernardino County, Calif. The program, designed by the county sheriff's department, uses an innovative mix of approaches to the problem of violence on high school campuses.

In the program's first phase, the sheriff's department trains school staff to recognize specific penal code violations and teaches them to fill out notices to appear. Deputies collect the notices and route them into the juvenile court system.

The offending student and his or her parents are then required to appear in court where the student must agree to improve his or her behavior and performance in school in lieu of paying a fine.

In addition to training school staff, deputies are trained to perceive all crimes on school campuses not as nuisances, but as serious criminal incidences.

The second phase of the program involves a security assessment of the school facilities. Specifically, the assessment looks at physical security, crisis response and disaster preparedness plans, agency relationships and reporting procedures/discipline policies, social and cultural observations, and staff development. In addition, questionnaires are provided to a cross- section of school staff and students.

The questionnaires gather information on safety-related issues and provide a snapshot of the school's general attitude on the subject of school security. The results of this assessment are then presented to the school principal for discussion. It is then determined what measures may be taken to address problems, such as improper lighting, procedures for handling bomb threats, or limiting loitering spots.

The final phase is a public awareness campaign. CleanSWEEP is publicized throughout the community and conducts information programs for students. School presentations range from anti-DUI and date rape awareness presentations, to personal safety assemblies.

The program has been highly effective with many schools seeing dramatic decreases in student fights and other criminal acts. Students have become aware of the stiff fines they face should they receive a citation to appear in court. The program is financed out of asset-seizure funds directed to the county sheriff's department. The program is budgeted at $90,000 per year.

Juvenile Drug Court
Hillsborough County, Fla.

The Juvenile Drug Court Program was developed to provide an early drug intervention program for nonviolent juvenile offenders. It is a nine to 12-month program for juvenile offenders with substance abuse problems who are referred from the county's juvenile assessment center.

Juvenile Drug Court is comprised of two phases: Treatment and judicial eligible youth must have one or two arrests for a drug-related nonviolent offense. Those youth who successfully complete the drug court program have criminal charges dismissed.

The treatment phase involves an evaluation to determine the extent of addiction, detoxification, individual, group, and family counseling and random drug testing. Counseling sessions are designed to enhance self esteem, improve family communications, improve decision-making skills. Sessions also center on educational/vocational issues. A local nonprofit agency is responsible for providing treatment through a contract with the county.

The judicial component involves the youth and parents appearing before the juvenile drug court at various stages of treatment so the court is made aware of the youth's progress.

To be successfully discharged from the program, youth must have completed outpatient or residential treatment, have negative drug tests for six consecutive months, successfully pursued academic or vocational goals, and must have completed all court sanctions which could include restitution, community service, or payment of court costs. All successful completions are tracked for one year following termination.

Youth not completing the program are returned to the originat[ing] court division for sentencin[g] or arraignment.

A combination of county, state, federal and private funds suppor[t] the Juvenile Drug Court Program. The total program costs ar[e] $918,000. In its first year of op[e]ration, the program served 22[?] youths. The program has had [a] success rate of 95 percent.

Three Fires Council, BSA Juvenile Diversion Program
DuPage County, Ill.

The Three Fires Council, BSA Juvenile Diversion Program is [a] partnership between the DuPag[e] County Circuit Court, the DuPag[e] County Board, and the local Bo[y] Scouts of America, which offer[s] an alternative to prosecution o[f] youthful offenders. The program not only diverts youth from th[e] court system but it also reduces th[e] recidivism rate among the partici[pants].

The program, which serves bot[h] boys and girls, operates on a six month cycle. During the six months the youth attend two meetings pe[r] month and complete 40 hours o[f] volunteer service for a nonprofit or ganization in the community. Th[e] group meetings are led by adult vol unteers, who are attorneys with th[e] DuPage County Bar Association. Th[e] group meetings and activities ad dress issues such as the legal system, law enforcement, alcohol and dru[g] education, volunteerism, career[s], personal awareness, health and fi[t]ness and current community issue[s].

Additionally, the youth attend [a] tour of the county jail and count[y] coroner's office. Each participa[nt] must obtain 1,000 points to graduat[e] from the program. These points ar[e] earned through punctual attendanc[e] at meetings, volunteer service, par ticipation in group activities, an[d] performing leadership roles withi[n] the group. If a juvenile is dismisse[d] from the program, he or she is re ferred to juvenile court.

The program has been highl[y] successful. None of its graduate[s] have returned to the court system. The total cost of the program i[s] $65,000 per year. Much of the op erating costs are funded by foun dations through the Boy Scouts o[f] America.

THE H.R. DOCTOR IS IN

Godzilla the Manager

One of the problems of being a human resources professional is that even going to the movies or reading the newspaper is influenced by the experiences of what goes on in the workplace.

When the HR director reads the sports section, he or she hardly sees any sports. Instead, the sports section is full of reports about what coach gets hired or fired, what athlete fails a drug test or commits assault or sexual battery, what school or team is on probation, who is not showing for work or a training camp, etc. So, the sports section is full of HR news. If that is true of the sports section, imagine what can be found in the business section or the local section.

The same is true of movies. Godzilla, for example, was a brutish beast who destroyed property and lives to survive, feed and reproduce. The monster's behavior was not influenced by rules or standards, and the human beings left in his wake were injured and traumatized.

The movie Godzilla displayed many of the characteristics of a toxic workplace environment. In this environment, a manager — an elected or appointed manager—displays behaviors that cause serious problems at work. The manager may not even realize what she or he is doing or the impact of actions on others. The toxic manager is arrogant, criticizes or belittles staff members in public, rarely says "thank you" or recognizes achievement and is a very poor role model for others.

These toxic behaviors lead directly to illegal behaviors such as unlawful race or gender discrimination and sexual harassment. They also provoke responses that can hurt the organization in many ways, not the least of which can be an increased likelihood of workplace violence.

There are other costs that can be directly measured, such as increased absenteeism, an increase in grievances or discrimination complaints and higher turnover. Just as Godzilla in the movie bashed people, so too does Godzilla the manager engage in demeaning and insulting behavior that can affect the morale of the staff and their productivity.

An agency has an obligation to take steps to root out and eliminate toxic behavior in the workplace. The Godzilla style of management gets in the way of public service and has no place in a public agency.

The damage done is as destructive within the context of the workplace as the movie monster's damage is to the city. Top management must intervene quickly and decisively to stop, interrupt and correct the behavior of the Godzilla manager. If allowed to spread, the toxic management atmosphere will grow and things will degenerate faster.

The good news is that the style of management can be identified and stopped. Taking good faith employee complaints seriously and investigating the complaints promptly and effectively is one important tool. So, too, is a strong employee assistance program that can serve as an environmental scanning tool to identify problem areas that need corrective actions.

Strong agency policies and effective ongoing training for all employees is another important tool, as is holding managers accountable for proper workplace behavior.

Perhaps the most important anti-Godzilla tactic is one of the simplest — be a positive role model as a top manager.

It is particularly sad when the Godzilla manager is the head of the organization or even an elected official. The damage such a person can do is far greater than even first-line supervisors displaying toxic behavior.

Sometimes, all it takes is for a manager to be counseled by a peer, or an HR professional, who, in effect, holds a mirror up to the manager to look at her or his own conduct the way others see it. EAP can be a great resource to help with this mirror technique. Unfortunately, sometimes that won't work and corrective action is necessary. These and other techniques can change the behavior of the manager or cause the manager to leave the organization. Whatever is done, Godzilla must not be allowed to multiply.

Don't hesitate to contact the HR Doctor if you have a question or need help in the capture of Godzilla the manager. Best wishes.

Phil Rosenberg,
The HR Doctor
philrosenberg@prodigy.net

RESEARCH NEWS

Celebrating Fatherhood

The first Father's Day was observed in June 1910 in Spokane, Wash. In 1924, President Calvin Coolidge supported the idea of a national Father's Day. In 1966, President Lyndon Johnson signed a presidential proclamation declaring the third Sunday of June as Father's Day.

Traditionally, women have always been seen as the caretaker of the children. In recent times, however, more men are caring for their children. According to the latest figures from the Census Bureau, in 1993, there were 6.3 million married couple families with preschoolers where the mother worked.

Of these families, 25 percent of the fathers cared for the children during the mother's working hours. Additionally, about one in five fathers cared for their preschoolers during more of the mothers' working hours than any other care provider.

The number of single fathers in the United States has grown significantly. There were two million in 1997, which is 50 percent more than in 1990 and triple the number in 1980. Single-father families represented 5 percent of all parent-child families in 1997, up from 2 percent in 1980. In 1997, 61 percent of single fathers were raising one child, while 10 percent were raising three or more.

In 1997, 46 percent of the nation's single fathers were divorced, while 32 percent were never married, 13 percent were separated and 5 percent were widowed. Three-quarters of the nation's single fathers in 1997 were white, while 19 percent were African American, and 12 percent were Hispanic.

In a recent article, "Good Old Dad: Middle-aged men are changing the rules about fatherhood and their future plans," in *American Demographics*, author Joanne Cleaver states that there is also evidence, based on federal statistics, that the number of older, second-generation dads is growing.

Statistics she cites include the increase in the percentage of marriages between never-married women and divorced men between 1970 and 1990, 6.9 percent to 10.9 percent, as well as the increasing number of men remarrying in their 40s and 50s. In 1990, 10.5 percent of men ages 45 to 49 and 6.5 percent of men ages 50 to 54 remarried, compared with 7.4 percent and 5.2 percent in 1970.

Birth rates tracked by age of father also are indicative of this trend. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, in 1980, the number of live births per 1,000 men, broken into age groups, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55+, were 17.1, 6.1, 2.2, and .3 respectively. In 1990, these figures had risen to 21, 7.5, 2.8, and .4, respectively.

In recent years, with the number of single-parent families increasing, there has been greater emphasis on the roles of fathers.

In 1996, in conjunction with a presidential initiative, federal agencies came together in a conference hosted by Vice President Gore, to share innovative ideas and lessons learned about involving fathers.

Two years later, in June 1998, Gore released a report titled, *Nurturing Fatherhood: Improving Data and Research on Male Fertility, Family Formation and Fatherhood.* This report, which was issued by the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, was the result of a three-year effort to identify what is known about fatherhood and what additional research could be done to increase the understanding of how fathering and family structure affect children and adults.

To read more about the report and the forum's findings and recommendations, go to *http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/fathers/cfsforum/front.htm.*

(In the April 26 edition of Research News, we asked counties to send us their policy manuals. Any county that sent NACo its policy manual received a thank-you gift and was entered in a random drawing to win a NACo goody bag. We wish to thank those 12 counties who responded to our request and are pleased to announce that Kit Carson County, Colo. is the recipient of the NACo goody bag.)

(Research News was written by Peggy Beardslee, research associate.)

Web Watch

If you're a NACo affiliate and need a Web site, read this

NACo affiliates have a chance to attend a Web Site Development Policy Review and Discussion Session at the NACo Annual Conference in St. Louis in July.

The workshop will cover the various options NACo offers to its affiliates for the design, development and hosting of a Web site.

The workshop is Saturday, July 17 from 10–11 a.m. Contact Holly Moskerintz, NACo Web manager, for more information, at *hmoskeri@naco.org* or call 202/942-4284.

NACIO hands out Awards of Excellence for Web sites

The Best of Class award in the Computer Media category of NACIO's Awards of Excellence recently went to the Charleston County (S.C.) Web site, *http://www.charlestoncounty.org/.*

The site's homepage is a beautiful photo of an egret. The site is smart too. Click on "Public Records" and you'll be welcomed to Charleston County's Public Records ONLINE, "an interactive opportunity to access information available within the county's databases."

Volusia County, Fla., at *http://volusia.org*, took home the Superior award.

Man sues Spokane County, Wash. to obtain e-mail

According to a recent article in *The Spokesman-Review*, a businessman is suing Spokane County, Wash. to obtain copies of e-mail regarding urban growth boundaries. The county says its e-mail is stored on electronic tapes that are recycled every five days. The man's lawyer says the county should be able to retrieve its e-mail.

The man who is suing was among a group of businessmen who sued the county previously, saying interim urban boundaries drawn in 1997 leave too little room for growth.

Initiative and Referendum Institute conference available online

Couldn't make the recent Initiative and Referendum Institute conference in Washington, D.C.? Just head to *www.iandrinstitute.org.* Once you're there, click on "Conference '99" and that will take you directly to the archived Webcast at DCOrbit. Next, click on the panel you would like to view. You might have to download RealPlayer in order to view the file, which is available through DCOrbit's Web site.

Green County, Ohio's land parcels on-line

Green County, Ohio's Map Server has been in operation for about 16 months. The county Web site provides access to all types of information regarding land parcels in the county. Head to *http://www.co.greene.oh.us/gismapserver.htm* for a look.

(Web Watch is compiled by Mary Ann Barton, senior staff writer. Got some news? Send it to* mbarton@naco.org.*)

News From the Nation's Counties

ALABAMA

• The story of **JEFFERSON COUNTY's** occupational tax has more twists and turns than an episode of Melrose Place. The county charges a 0.5 percent tax to everyone employed in the county, except for professionals such as doctors and lawyers, who need a permit and pay for that instead.

That was struck down in court as being unconstitutional because the tax wasn't applied to everyone. So the county; went to the state legislature and got a bill drafted to make the tax apply to everyone and to lower it a bit.

That will mean more money for the county, but state legislators have stepped in, substituted the bill for another that puts a cap on the amount the county can spend, and are making plans to spend the surplus on pet projects.

So now the county is trying to get the bill killed, rather than set the precedent of state officials spending county money. If they're successful, and an appeal of the decision striking down the tax is unsuccessful, the county could lose the more than $40 million a year from the tax altogether, according to the *Birmingham Post-Herald.*

CALIFORNIA

• **SAN MATEO** and **ALAMEDA** counties joined a lawsuit filed by the city and county of **SAN FRANCISCO** against gun manufacturers seeking reimbursement for police and medical costs from gun violence.

The counties and six cities filed the suits in state court, arguing that gun manufacturers aren't incorporating safety devices into their products and create a public nuisance.

A key bone of contention is that contracts with distributors don't require them to do background checks, which would screen out illegal gun dealers.

The suits ask the court to force manufacturers to change marketing practices and to be fined as much as $2,500 for each gun illegally marketed. That could add up to millions of dollars, officials said.

LOS ANGELES county recently voted to also file suit but had not yet done so.

• Get out your laser pointer ban scorecards and add **ALAMEDA COUNTY** to the list. The Board of Supervisors passed an ordinance on May 25 that makes it illegal for minors to possess or use a laser device unless being supervised by a parent or guardian.

Parents and guardians can get themselves into trouble if they point a laser into a moving car or into another person's eyes. The ordinance takes effect in late June.

• From the "Who Says City Councils Get the Glory? Department"... A **KERN COUNTY** citizens' task force with Y2K concerns recommended to the Bakersfield City Council that they change zoning regulations so that people can raise chickens and rabbits within city limits.

The task force contends the world will come unglued when Jan. 1, 2000 rolls around. Given the prolonged power outages and fuel shortages that the group sees on the horizon, it's only fair that the city allow people to fill their backyards with chickens they can kill and eat.

The city is going to advise people to stock up food supplies as if they were expecting an earthquake, but decided to stop short of encouraging urban dwellers to try their hand at livestock farming.

FLORIDA

• Counties are stepping in to stop title-loan businesses from charging triple-digit interest rates for loans. The companies give loans with the title of the applicant's car as collateral. Some of the businesses charge more than 100 percent interest a year.

The state took up the issue earlier in the year, but legislators were unable to work out a bill. Since then, **ORANGE, SEMINOLE, DUVAL, MIAMI-DADE** and **PALM BEACH** counties have moved to place a lower cap on interest rates.

Representatives from the businesses told county officials they can't make a profit with a 30 percent interest rate cap because of the risky nature of title loans. Others said they will call in thousands of loans and if customers can't pay them off, they will take the cars.

Some counties are postponing the rate cap into the fall to give customers the chance to pay off the loans before the businesses take action.

• The **MIAMI-DADE COUNTY** Community Relations Board is one of the hottest tickets in town. The Christian Coalition and the Asian-American Federation are the latest two groups to get a seat at the table.

The table is swelling, however. The board had 15 members when the county commission started to restructure it. There are now 32 proposed slots.

There also could be some food fights at the table. The seating chart now includes both the group that championed an ordinance last year to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation and the group that fought the ordinance every step of the way.

So many groups are lining up to be included on the board that the commission had to defer the issue at a recent meeting.

MICHIGAN

• OK. We can finally stop the "Whose county airport has the best snow and ice removal?" debate that has divided the nation for far too long. The winner, according to the Northeast Chapter of the American Association of Airport Executives, is **OAKLAND COUNTY** International Airport.

The association has had its eye on the airport for sometime, now. The airport has been nominated for the award every year since 1977–78. It's even won honorable mention several times.

Apparently what tipped the scales this year was a ton of snow. The county had more than 90 inches this year, compared to 30–35 inches in a normal season. All that snow and the county didn't have a single flight interruption.

NEBRASKA

• Flapjacks are helping save Lady Justice, Lady Freedom and Lady Equality in **JEFFERSON COUNTY**. As part of a courthouse restoration project, the three statues required about $15,000 that was unavailable.

So spatula-wielding Commissioners Dick Niemeier, Jim Weichel and Michael Dux, along with several former county officials, took turns flipping pancakes during a public fund-raiser at the fairgrounds.

More than $1,600 was collected. After expenses and a donation, the county netted $1,900. The statue restoration fund now stands at $4,000. The county is considering additional fund-raisers.

NEVADA

• **WASHOE COUNTY** commissioners recently adopted a vision statement for the county: "To meet or exceed the expectations of our citizens that Washoe County will remain a compelling place in which to live, work, visit and invest because we provide: excellent regional services; open, informed decision-making; quality, sustainable facilities and infrastructure; responsible growth management.

The commissioners also established a number of top priorities for 1999–2000 to drive and direct the county's vision. The priorities are to: complete juvenile justice facility plan; establish service plans for all unincorporated communities; implement strategic financial plan; complete planning for public safety projects, and resolve fire consolidation issue.

NEW YORK

• Four-wheel drive trucks, all-terrain vehicles and even snowmobiles will soon be part of the traffic pattern at the **OSWEGO COUNTY** Airport, when the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) begins using a new emergency vehicles operations course being built at the county airport.

The DEC is working with the county and the state Department of Transportation to develop a straight low-speed track for training DEC conservation officers and other law enforcement officers. DEC officers were set to begin using it this month.

NORTH CAROLINA

• **MECKLENBURG COUNTY** Family Court recently opened for business, kicking off with a celebration at a park across the street from the Civil Courts Building. The county was one of three judicial districts in the state to receive funding via the general assembly to establish a family court.

The court's mission is to help families resolve their legal disputes through the combined efforts of family members, the court and community agencies in ways that are accessible, efficient, non-adversarial and minimally intrusive.

VIRGINIA

• An offer from the **FAIRFAX COUNTY** Animal Shelter is really the cat's pajamas. Anyone adopting a furry feline during the month of June gets a complimentary kit containing a booklet on cat care, a free sample of cat food and cat food coupons. The kit also includes a certificate for a free exam of the cat at one of the shelter's participating veterinary hospitals as well as access to the shelter's low-cost spay/neuter program.

WASHINGTON

• Third-grader Mitchell Gould had something to say about **PIERCE COUNTY's** choice of a slogan to help celebrate the 100th anniversary of Mount Ranier. "I am a third grader who is doing my best to use good gramar (sic)...I think you can think of a good one with good grammar too!"

The offending slogan? "Pierce County...Is Where It's At." The problem? Using a phrase that ends with a preposition.

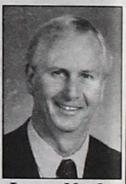
The criticism sent the county back to the drawing board. The new slogan: "Majestic Pierce County: Window to Northwest Grandeur."

(News From the Nation's Counties is compiled by Mary Ann Barton and Kevin Wilcox, senior staff writers. Got some news? Send it to mbarton @naco.org or kwilcox@naco. org.)

NACo on the Move

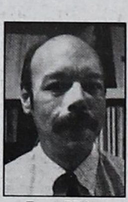
NACo STAFF

◆ On June 2, NACo Executive Director **Larry Naake** represented NACo in the City and County of Denver at the request of Mayor Wellington Webb as part of a group Webb invited to help set his priorities for his year as the president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, which begins this month. Webb has said his emphasis will be on city-county cooperation and urban revitalization.



Larry Naake

Pam Zarbatany



Lou Witt

◆ **Pam Zarbatany**, environmental associate, and **Lou Witt**, senior project manager, conducted a daylong workshop in Chesterfield County, Va. on May 20 on how counties can improve school air quality.

◆ On May 16, **Jacqueline Byers**, NACo director of research, represented NACo at the Southeast Regional Directors Institute at their 12th Annual Conference in Biloxi, Miss. Byers gave a presentation on Census 2000 and its importance to local governments. She also discussed how the regional councils and development centers can assist governments with various census-related activities such as address and map updates, promotion, outreach and the formation of complete count committees.

Jacqueline Byers

(On the Move is compiled by Kevin Wilcox, senior staff writer.)

Neal Peirce Commentary

Parks in America's Cities: A Time To Act

By Neal R. Peirce
Washington Writers Group

(Neal Peirce is a syndicated columnist who writes about local government issues. His columns do not reflect the opinions of County News or NACo.)

The late '90s economic surge in America's great cities is triggering intense competition for open parcels of land — especially ones that could be kept or turned into green for vistas, flowers, food or fun.

Significant center-city park projects are moving forward at this moment in Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Phoenix, Denver and Minneapolis.

But the two most interesting park issues of 1999 have surfaced in New York and Seattle.

The pro-green legions just scored a big victory in New York's boroughs, saving 115 city-owned parcels that Mayor Rudolph Giuliani was ready to auction off to the highest bidder.

These lots were once trash-strewn. But neighborhood groups took them over, converting them to gardens and pocket parks for residents to enjoy. Giuliani was ready to sell them, saying the city needed the revenue. But a judge ruled an environmental review would have to come first, and His Honor relented.

Then a fresh offer of cash appeared. The major source: The Trust For Public Land, a premier land conservation group. The TPL has been active in New York since the city's darkest days of the '70s, helping local citizens start gardens on abandoned land parcels.

The trust agreed to pay $3 million for the imperiled gardens. Singer-comedian Bette Midler, through personal funds and her New York Restoration Project, contributed $1.2 million more. Now these gardens will be preserved in perpetuity.

In Seattle, the suspense is over a coveted six-acre tract of land on the Bay, directly north of the city's fabled, redeveloped downtown piers.

The site is a recovered brownfield, used for decades for oil storage tanks and distribution. But now the owner, Unocal, a California-based fuel company, after spending millions cleaning it up wants to sell.

The view is dazzling: across Puget Sound, with its islands and busy ferry traffic, to the snow-capped peaks of the Olympic Peninsula.

Seattle's real estate market is so hot that developers would happily pay the appraised price — $24 million — to turn the land into hundreds of units of housing, office and retail space.

But again, the Trust for Public Land stepped in, creating a partnership with the Seattle Art Museum to buy the site. They want to transform it into a waterfront sculpture park, replete with famed works, enriched with a landscaping of madroñas, Douglas firs and cedars. Seattle would have a counterpart to the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden and the two distinguished sculpture gardens on the Mall in Washington, D.C.

"To miss this opportunity would be a tragedy for which our children would never forgive us," Mayor Paul Schell told the local press. "It is our last chance to acquire public open space on the downtown waterfront."

There's no assurance, though, that the financing will work. Unocal is willing to sell the parcel for public use at $16.5 million — a massive $8 million discount — but only if the cash is produced by July 9.

The TPL and the Seattle Art Museum are scurrying to gather the money. There's no guarantee they'll succeed. At last report, only $5.25 million had been raised for the land (plus a local donor's guarantee of $5 million for permanent maintenance of the site).

We all ought to think about the incredible value that park projects, great and small, can add. Cities are never "filled up;" in fact they're in constant flux; there are always fresh opportunities. With the wealth our society is accumulating today, this should be an historic era of new parks, great and small, across urban America.

County Services News

Putting a Face to Sustainability

So often, when the word "sustainability" is mentioned, it is met with puzzled looks and any number of questions: What exactly is a sustainable initiative? Does anybody really do it?

The answer is a resounding yes. Sustainability is an issue of growing national interest that has taken shape through concrete plans, partnerships, and technological innovations. And in its most recent publication, NACo's Joint Center for Sustainable Communities is putting a face to the sustainability efforts that are taking root across the nation.

Profiles on Sustainability highlights the most recent activities of the Sustainability Leadership Team (SLT), a committee of 38 county officials who serve as NACo's leaders on the sustainability agenda.

The SLT is chaired by Wayne County (Mich.) Commissioner Edna Bell. *Profiles* is a directory of sustainability programs and the county officials who planned and implemented them. These are real people who are involved in real projects and partnerships. In their pursuit to serve as resources on sustainability to all members of NACo, these county officials offer a brief synopsis of the sustainability activities in their counties and invite you to contact them for more information. The Joint Center promotes this type of open dialogue because we have found that county officials learn best from the experiences of their counterparts.

The initiatives that SLT members have launched in their own counties involve issues such as smart growth, urban redevelopment and non-partisan collaboration.

In Bell's home county, for example, a partnership among city, county and state officials as well as private-sector stakeholders and environmental groups formed the Detroit/Wayne County Roundtable on Sustainable Development. This coalition has identified barriers to brownfield site redevelopment and recommended solutions to overcome them.

Terry Kauffman, chairman of the SLT's Subcommittee on Smart Growth and commissioner of Lancaster County, Pa., has been a strong advocate of the Lancaster Board of Commissioners' Growth Management Strategy, a comprehensive plan designed to curb urban sprawl in the county.

Lancaster County has also established the state's first system of Urban Growth Boundaries and instituted a county grant program that supports inter-governmental cooperative projects.

The report also underscores the 1999 priorities of the Sustainability Leadership Team, reflecting both the scope of members' concerns — rural and urban communities alike — and their responses to ongoing issues including developing benchmarks, promoting regional collaboration, and advocating responsible land use.

The initiatives in *Profiles on Sustainability* emphasize the role of county officials in promoting partnerships with citizens to create long-term plans that both protect the environment and encourage economic development.

In addition to developing publications like *Profiles on Sustainability*, the Joint Center for Sustainable Communities provides technical assistance to county/city partnerships, sponsors workshops at regional and national conferences, and maintains an information clearinghouse.

Created in 1996 at the recommendation of the President's Council on Sustainable Development, the Joint Center is a unique partnership between NACo and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Its mission is to promote economic development, environmental stewardship, and social well-being through county/city collaborations and to help counties find local solutions to local problems.

To receive a copy of *Profiles on Sustainability* or information on other Joint Center activities, call 800/696-1667.

(County Services News was written by Stacey Nolish, sustainability intern.)

Financial Services News

Electronic Compliance Saves Counties Time and Money

The NACo Financial Services Center introduced the InvestSafe™ program about one year ago. The InvestSafe program is designed to provide counties with powerful yet affordable software tools that make managing investment portfolios easier. Since the program was launched, 20 state associations of counties have endorsed the program and formal program rollouts have begun in 12 of these states.

The cornerstone of the InvestSafe program, Evare Desktop Portfolio management software, provides counties with a sophisticated yet easy to use system for meeting compliance requirements and generating reports for county officials.

NACo's FSC formed the InvestSafe program after an 18-month competitive bid process. Financial disasters resulting from inadequate policy compliance monitoring and the need for an affordable tool to provide GASB 31 compliance were important factors in the development of InvestSafe.

The InvestSafe program recognizes that county treasurers often don't have access to the tools they need to manage their investment portfolios effectively. Many county finance officers and treasurers are forced to use multiple spreadsheets to keep track of their investments. They often must use time-consuming methods to track the investment policy compliance of their portfolios.

Many different types of investments exist in county government. Accurately accounting for each type is very challenging when using spreadsheets. Spreadsheets aren't designed to allow for the variety of reports needed by a typical local government.

Evare Desktop handles any kind of fixed-income security, automatically accounts for investments across multiple funds at the time of purchase or sale, and can create virtually any kind of report needed by the treasurer or other fiduciary of the government.

Treasurers have also indicated that Evare Desktop has made it easier to maintain and monitor county compliance with investment policies at the national, state and local levels.

Many counties have known for years what some are just discovering — that Evare Desktop is proven portfolio management software that has been serving public institutional investors since 1985.

One of the most exciting aspects of the InvestSafe program is that it is designed to meet the needs of counties of all shapes and sizes. Not only large counties like Oklahoma County, Okla. and Fulton County, Ga. have found that Evare Desktop meets their needs. Smaller counties like Becker County, Minn. have found that Evare Desktop is designed for their needs as well.

FSC and state associations have been distributing start-up kits for the InvestSafe program. The kit includes an interactive CD-ROM that gives county treasurers all the information they need to learn about InvestSafe and test its functionality.

If you would like to receive an InvestSafe program start-up kit or would just like more information about this new program, contact Steve Swendiman at 202/942-4282.

(Financial Services News was written by Steve Swendiman, FSC's managing director.)

JOB MARKET

ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR—DAKOTA COUNTY, MINN.: When it comes to changing the way government works, Dakota County is respected as an innovative leader. That's why we're seeking a motivated, enthusiastic and professional Assistant County Administrator to continue this tradition of positive change by assisting in planning, organizing and directing county-wide policies, activities and services.

This position will act and speak on behalf of the County Administrator and will provide consultation to departments regarding county policies and issues. Additional responsibilities include executing directives of the County Board and the County Administrator, conducting analysis and research, leading special projects and monitoring county-wide performance.

To qualify, you must have a Bachelor's degree in Public Administration, Business Administration, or a related field, PLUS a minimum of 5 years of progressively responsible administrative experience which includes 2 years of government experience. Outstanding analytical, communication, relationship building and leadership skills are necessary. A Master's degree in a related field is preferred.

We offer a comprehensive salary and benefits package along with the potential for outstanding career advancement as our county continues to grow and flourish.

Applications materials may be obtained by calling 651.438-4280 or TDD 651.438-4618 (for hearing impaired.) Send completed application materials by the close of business on Wednesday, June 30, 1999 to: Dakota County Employee Relations Department, 1590 Highway 55, Hastings, MN 55033. EOE. Smoke-Free Environment

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, McCLEAN COMMUNITY CENTER Job#99-9050 — FAIRFAX COUNTY, VA.: Fairfax County (Va.) Government and the Governing Board of the McLean Community Center are seeking a dynamic leader with vision and skills to direct a multi-purpose operation which provides diversified cultural, civic, recreational and social programs for a special district in northern Virginia serving a community of about 50,000. The Executive Director presides over a broad range of programs and activities including performing arts, youth activities, classes, special events, and visual arts. Facilities include a 424-seat theater. The Executive Director administers an annual operating budget of more than $2 million, supervises 29 regular staff positions and reports directly to an elected Board. **Prefers:** Bachelor's or master's degree in arts administration, recreation administration, business administration or a related field. Experience should include a proven record of strategic planning, administrative leadership, supervision of diversified recreational or cultural programs, fiscal and facilities management, and positive interactions with staff, boards, officials and the public. An ability to balance the demands of reporting to both local and county governing boards; ability to work with citizen groups, county agencies and the general public; ability to plan and implement a long-range financial resource system; and effective oral and written communication skills are strongly preferred. **Note:** The salary for this position is negotiable within the established range of $53,856 – $83,072. Full Fairfax County benefits apply. **Note:** The Executive Director position is in the county's exempt service, and as such, serves at the pleasure of the Governing Board and the County Executive. **To Apply:** Submit a resume and resume attachment form by July 15, 1999 to: Executive Director McLean Community Center Search, Department of Human Resources Application Center, 12000 Government Center Pkwy., #170, Fairfax, VA 22035. For a resume attachment form or further information, call 703/222-5872 or TTY 703/222-7314. EEO/Reasonable Accommodation.

FINANCE DIRECTOR, Job #99-9054 (Grade S36) — FAIRFAX COUNTY, VA.: Fairfax County (Va.) seeks a dynamic professional to lead the Department of Finance which oversees various functions including Accounting and Reporting, Procedures and Controls, Investment and Cash Management, supervision of department operations, Risk Management, preparation of CAFR and compliance with GAAP, GFOA and GASB principles. The individual selected to lead the Department must be an effective manager, strategic thinker, customer service focused and have strong communication, organizational development and team building skills. Maintaining the fiscal integrity and financial solvency of the County is essential while being an advocate of collaborative solutions and developing a balance between the enforcement of regulations versus the facilitation of acceptable practices. The Director of Finance reports to the Chief Financial Officer and will be responsible for an agency budget of $4.9 million with 83 regular employees supplemented with a number of limited term employees. **Note:** This position is assigned to the County's exempt service. The Finance Director serves at the pleasure of the County Executive and the Board of Supervisors. Salary for this position is negotiable within an established range. **Prefers:** A Master's Degree in Accounting, Business Administration or Public Administration, plus five years of experience in municipal finance. The candidate should be a proven manager and possess knowledge of governmental accounting, investments and cash management, debt financing, management of financial information systems, risk management, dealing with external auditors and preparation of CAFR. Candidate should also have proven interpersonal, leadership and change management skills preferably working in a medium to large municipal government or private sector organization dealing with municipal finance. **To Apply:** Submit a resume and resume attachment form by June 25, 1999 to: Fairfax County Application Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, #170, Fairfax, VA 22035. For further information, or to obtain a resume attachment form, call 703/222-5872 or TTY 703/222-7314, or visit our web site at www.co.fairfax.va.us/jobs. EEO/Reasonable Accommodation.

MENTAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATOR — LANCASTER COUNTY, NEB.: The Lancaster County Commissioners are seeking a qualified individual for the position of Administrator for the Community Mental Health Center of Lancaster County. The Mental Health Center is located in Lincoln, Nebraska, a growing community of over 200,000 people. The Administrator oversees a comprehensive mental health program which includes strong psycho-social rehabilitation services, 24-hour emergency service with an inpatient crisis facility, residential and outpatient programs and partial hospitalization. The Mental Health Center is accredited by the Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Health Organizations. Service is provided primarily to residents of Lancaster County, with some service to residents of other counties through interlocal agreements.

Candidates should have: a strong background in human services, public or hospital administration; demonstrated record of working successfully with boards, funding sources and consumers; ability to manage a large budget; and educational/management skills in a supervisory capacity. Masters degree in business or public administration, human services or a related field is required. Knowledge of behavioral health is desirable. Salary is negotiable.

TO APPLY: Contact the City-County Employment Office, 555 So. 10th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508; (402) 441-7596 (voice mail box); or e-mail to bboggs@email.ci.lincoln.ne.us.

Application and supplemental questionnaire must be completed and returned or postmarked on or before Wednesday, June 30, 1999.

Job Market - Classified Rate Schedule

- ***Line Rates:*** *$7 per line, NACo member counties; $10 per line, others.*
- ***Display Classified:*** *$50 per column inch, NACo member counties; $70 per column inch, others.*
- ***Billing:*** *Invoices will be sent after publication.*
- ***Mail advertising copy to:*** *Job Market,* County News, *440 First St., N.W., Washington, DC 20001.*
- ***FAX advertising copy to:*** *Job Market,* County News, *202/393-2630.*
- *Be sure to include billing information along with copy.*
- *Estimates given prior to publication are approximations only, and do not necessarily reflect final cost.*

*For more information, call **Victoria Vickers**,* County News, *National Association of Counties, 202/942-4256.*

NOTICE

CONFERENCES

■ Plan now to attend *"Unifying Urban Wet Weather Programs,"* July 20–23 in Philadelphia, Pa. The conference will offer discussion on current wet weather needs and the possibility of unifying combined sewer overflow, sanitary overflow and stormwater management programs. Speakers will analyze the regulatory and statutory barriers wastewater agencies face when integrating wet weather programs.

For more information, contact AMSA, 1000 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 410, Washington, DC 20036-5302; fax: 202/833-4657 or register online: *http://www.amsa-cleanwater.org.*

■ The **Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System** will sponsor *"Focus on the Future: Designing Consumer-Driven Services to Meet the Demographic Revolution"* Oct. 31–Nov. 2 in Scottsdale, Ariz. The three-day conference will offer ideas and strategies designed to put the client first when developing policy and managing health care.

For registration information, call or e-mail Cheri Tomlinson, 602/256-6756, *cktomlinson@ahcccs.state.az.us*

■ Join the **Urban and Regional Information Systems Association** (URISA) in Chicago for its annual conference for managers, executives and elected officials, August 21–25. The conference includes a two-day technical training seminar for GIS technicians, analysts, data processing and IT staff. Attendees will learn from experts and peers at the educational sessions and workshops.

For more information contact URISA, 1460 Renaissance Drive, Suite 305, Park Ridge, IL 60068; phone: 847/824-6300; fax: 847/824-6363; e-mail: *info@urisa.org*; Internet: *http://www.urisa.org.*

PUBLICATIONS

■ *"The Home Front: Implications of Welfare Reform for Housing Policy"* makes the case for including the housing sector in the continuing development of welfare reform policies.

Copies of this publication are available from the Urban Institute Press for $19.50. To order (ISBN 685-7), call 202/261-5687 or 800/462-6420.

■ A new directory that lists firm that provide geoprofessional, environ mental, and civil engineering service including brownfield services, is no available from ASFE (formerly the As sociation of Soil Foundation Engi neers). The directory is $5 and prepay ment is required.

To order, call 301/565-2733, e-mail *info@asfe.org* or visit ASFE's Web site *www.asge.org.*

■ The *"Initiative Cookbook"* is a analysis of California initiative poli tics, stretching across two decades o battles over issues from health care t civil rights. The book is a practica "how-to" guide drawn from interview with more than three dozen campaig leaders, journalists, consultants and ac tivists. Preview the cookbook at *www democracyctr.org*. The cost is $25 o $10 if you qualify for the low-incom discount.

■ The **Trust for Public Lands** newly released publication *"The Eco nomic Benefits of Parks and Ope Space: How Land Conservation Help Communities Grow Smart and Prote the Bottom Line,"* is a tool for citize activists and local governments de signed to help build a case for protec ing the valuable open spaces that ar threatened by sprawl. Download th full text of the report online a *www.tpl.org/newsroom* or request printed copy by calling 800/714-LAN or e-mail: *publications@tpl.org.*

■ *"Drug Treatment: The Case fo Coercion"* is a review of major dru treatment studies conducted over man years. It suggests strategies for manag ing incentives and sanctions to hel hard-core drug abusers lead more pro ductive lives. The 88-page paperbac is available for $9.95 from the Ameri **can Enterprise Institute for Publi Policy Research**, 1150 17th Stree N.W., Washington, DC 20036; phon 202/862-5800; fax: 202/862-717 Web: *http://www.aei.org.*

(Notices is compiled by Victor Vickers, editorial assistant.)