



**Harrison County, Miss. GIS Director Paul Barnes testifies on NACo's behalf before the Senate Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries and Coast Guard. Barnes said NOAA's Digital Coast is crucial for county governments. "Having gone through Hurricane Katrina, I am well aware of the challenges that local communities face to prepare, respond and recover from disaster. That is why my county, and others like mine, are using Digital Coast to strengthen resiliency at the local level."**

## Millennials: Top catch for counties

**By Mary Ann Barton**  
senior staff writer

Just outside of bustling Sterling, Ill., in Whiteside County,

which sits in the northwest corner of the Land of Lincoln, you'll find acres of soybeans and grazing cattle. County Councilman Kurt Glazier remembers visiting Sterling's downtown square as a child.

"When we came to Sterling it would be a treat to go to the Woolworth soda fountain and maybe get a hamburger and a shake," he said.

After Woolworth closed, the county, population 58,000, eventually acquired the building and established a few county offices there, he said. Last summer, a number of trendy apartments, Lawrence Lofts, opened above the offices.

"It's attractive to the younger folks who like to walk to work or want to live downtown," Glazier said. "We have a grocery store just a couple blocks

away." It's the first residential development for downtown Sterling. Rents range from \$215 to \$740 a month.

Affordable housing and walkability are on the checklists for the 80 million millennials across the country when they are figuring out where to work and settle down. *County News* looked at several counties — including Whiteside County as an example of a small rural county — that are retaining and attracting millennials.

Although Whiteside County is small and rural, its affordability is something that attracts millennials, Glazier said. For jobs that aren't within walking or biking distance, the county has a bus system that can whisk residents to

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## Martin takes reins as WIR president

**By Charlie Ban**  
senior staff writer

Fresh off an omnibus appropriations bill that boosted Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and reauthorized the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program, NACo's Western Interstate Region met in Blaine County, Idaho (Sun Valley) May 22-25 to chart a path forward for counties containing significant amounts of federally-managed land.

Gila County, Ariz. Supervisor Tommie Cline Martin took the reins as WIR president, with Mariposa County, Calif. Supervisor Kevin Cann took over as first vice president and Greg Chilcott, a Ravalli County, Mont. commissioner, was elected to second vice president. Joel Bousman, a Sublette County, Wyo. commissioner, is now the immediate past president.

Martin grew up on a public land ranch in Arizona, developing skepticism early about

federal rules regarding land management in the West.

"I always looked sideways at the rules about how we could ranch," she said soon after taking office. "If you follow their rules to the letter, you wind up doing everything you don't want to be doing — you end up overgrazing — but if you don't, you lose your permit."

That typified a disconnect she has seen her entire career, with the federal government hammering the square pegs of what she labels as geographically-biased academic policies into the round holes of reality on the land it manages.

Coming out of college in the '70s as the environmental movement was picking up, she became interested in holistic resource management and worked in resource management throughout the United States, Mexico, Canada and East Africa.

Working the land more effi-

**See WIR page 3**

## House OKs water resources bill

**By Julie Ufner**  
associate legislative director

The House of Representatives has overwhelmingly passed the Water Resources Development Act of 2018 (H.R. 8) in a 408 to 2 vote.

The popular water infrastructure bill reauthorizes the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which includes fed-

eral navigation, flood-control, storm damage projects and feasibility studies across the United States. Once enacted into law, WRDA provisions must be funded through the annual appropriations process.

In a statement released after the passage of the bill, June 6, Chairman Bill Shuster (R-

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# Senate likely to bring up its own water bill in next few weeks

From WATER page 1

Pa.) stated, “WRDA works because these are investments in the type of infrastructure that is vital to every American and every part of the country. Ranking Member Pete DeFazio (D-Ore.) added, “Today’s passage of the Water Resources Development Act of 2018 is a win for our nation’s coastal communities and those located on inland waterways.”

However, the bill did not include a provision on the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) that had been initially included.

The provision would have allowed the full use of HMTF for harbor maintenance purposes without the need of further congressional appropriations by FY 2029.

The HMTF provision was removed from the bill after the Congressional Budget Office reported it would increase annual deficits by more than \$5 billion over 10-years following its 2029 enactment date.

The HMTF is a tax levied against importers and domestic shippers using ports and harbors in coastal and Great Lakes areas.

Even though the HMTF has a large surplus, only a portion

of its total is appropriated by Congress every year for operations and maintenance in the nation’s harbors.

Additionally, the bill directs the National Academy of Sciences to consult with the Army Corps and other federal agencies to study the potential impacts of moving the Army Corps’ Civil Works division out from the Department of Defense and “to a new or existing agency or sub-agency of the federal government” to carry out authorized WRDA projects and studies.

The bipartisan bill was introduced by Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

Chairman Shuster, Ranking Member DeFazio, Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee Chairman Garret Graves (R-La.), and Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee Ranking Member Grace Napolitano (D-Calif.).


Across the capitol, the Senate has been working on its WRDA bill titled, *America’s Water Infrastructure Act of 2018* (S. 2800).

Like the House bill, the Senate version does not include HMTF.

The Senate bill advanced out of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works on May 22.


Senate leaders indicated that the chamber will likely bring up the bill within the next several weeks.

WRDA is historically passed every two years. However, in the past decade, it has only been enacted three times, in 2007, 2014 and 2016. WRDA currently has a backlog of nearly \$100 billion worth of projects that have been authorized but have not received appropriations.

If passed by Congress, the current WRDA legislation would add to the list of projects awaiting congressional appropriations. 

## SNAP/STATS

### TOP 10 MOST WILDFIRE PRONE STATES, 2017



	HOUSEHOLDS AT HIGH OR EXTREME RISK	PERCENTAGE HOUSEHOLDS AT HIGH OR EXTREME RISK
California.....	2,044,800	15%
Texas .....	715,300	7%
Colorado .....	366,200	17%
Arizona .....	234,600	8%
Idaho.....	171,200	26%

Source: Verisk Wildfire Risk Analysis

## EPA shifts gears on toxic chemicals

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a revision to the 2017 Risk Management Program (RMP) rule, May 30, which aims to improve emergency response planning in and around facilities that use hazardous chemicals.

Originally issued during the final days of the Obama Administration, the rule was scheduled to go into effect in March 2017, however, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt delayed its implementation for 20 months, setting a new final effective date of Feb. 19, 2019.

The proposed rule amends the current RMP, which was instituted in 1990, to prevent accidental chemical releases at facilities that manufacture, use or handle chlorine, ammonia and other flammable chemicals.

Under the final 2017 rule, approximately 12,500 facilities would have been impact-

ed, including 1,746 local government-owned water and wastewater systems, power plants and swimming pool facilities.

However, under the proposed rule, the EPA proposes to rescind requirements on water and wastewater treatment systems for third-party compliance audits, root-cause analysis and the safer technologies and alternatives analysis.


Additionally, EPA also proposes to modify several emergency planning provisions in the 2017 rule, which required all RMP facilities to plan annual tabletop and field exercises with emergency responders on the simulated accidental release of a regulated substance.

Under the proposed rule, RMP facilities would be required to undertake tabletop exercises at least once every three years and a field

exercise at least once every 10 years. Although the RMP facilities are still required to consult with local emergency response agencies, the proposed amendments do not require local responders to participate in any of these activities.

EPA is also accepting comments on whether to fully rescind the field and tabletop exercise provisions.

Public comments on the proposed rule will be taken until July 30.

Submit comments and additional materials, identified by docket EPA-HQ-OEM-2015-0725 to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submissions. 

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*Julie Ufner, associate legislative director, and Zachary George, legislative assistant, contributed to this report.*

CountyNews

**President**  
Roy Charles Brooks

**Publisher**  
Matthew Chase

**Public Affairs Director**  
Brian Namey

**Executive Editor**  
Beverly Anne Schlotterbeck

**Senior Staff Writer**  
Charlie Ban

**Senior Staff Writer**  
Mary Ann Barton

**Design Director**  
Leon Lawrence III

**ADVERTISING STAFF**

**Job Market/Classifieds representative**

**National Accounts representative**

Beverly Schlotterbeck  
202.393.6226  
FAX 866.752.1573

Published biweekly except August by:  
National Association of Counties  
Research Foundation, Inc.  
660 N. Capitol Street, N.W. STE. 400,  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
202.393.6226 | FAX 866.752.1573  
**E-mail** [cnews@naco.org](mailto:cnews@naco.org)  
**Online address** [www.countynews.org](http://www.countynews.org)


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

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

(USPS 704-620) n (ISSN: 0744-9798)  
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Research Foundation, Inc.

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# Instead of arguing about climate change, prepare for its effects, Martin says

From WIR page 1

ciently would be better for all, she argues.

"If we could, we could have not only economic wins but environmental wins and social wins that far exceed the pittance we receive from PILT. PILT and SRS has made me what I call 'gimme pigs.' We're quite happy to let them give us a little money to shut us up, have us quit looking at how things could be done better."

She doesn't see privatization of publicly-managed lands as the answer.

"In Texas, nearly all of the land is private and I've seen some of the worst managed land out there in the whole world, including Somalia," she said. "It's not a matter of who owns it, it's a matter of how it's being managed. And I don't care who owns it as long as they're bringing good management to it."

Martin said Western counties have to have a more proactive approach to climate change and its effect on the land.

"We're wasting time if we argue over what is causing it at the expense of preparing for its effects," she said. "Our climate is changing, our weather patterns are changing and our fire season is changing. Let's look at that and take a look at what we can do to mitigate whatever is going on here."

Garfield County, Colo. Commissioner John Martin received the Dale Sowards Award, in recognition of his service to public lands counties. John Martin served as WIR president in 2013-2014.

Programming at the conference ranged from affordable housing, rural poverty and the opioid epidemic to the use of drones in the West and disaster communications.

Mobile workshop tours took attendees to the College of Southern Idaho's Applied Technology Innovation Center — which offers a variety of job training programs crucial to the southern Idaho region,



**Muffy Davis, a Blaine County, Idaho native, shows off her three gold medals from the 2012 Paralympic Games.** Photos by Hugh Clarke

the Idaho National Laboratory — which remains an economic presence in eastern Idaho, and the sites of wildfire and riparian restoration in Blaine County.

Paralympian Muffy Davis, a Blaine County native, inspired the General Session audience with her story of tenacity and resilience as she coped with and grew beyond the paralysis she suffered while training as a top-tier junior skier. She went on to win three Gold Medals in para-cycling at the 2012 Summer Paralympics after winning several silver Paralympic medals in para-skiing.

## Rural development

With the Sept. 30 end of the federal fiscal year approaching, the Department of Agriculture's Rural Development state offices are trying to find a place for their allocated funding and California Director Kim Dolbow Vann promoted the Rural Development's 35 funding programs, suggesting that success in allocating that money was a kind of an audition for further funding.

"We just got our budgets two

**WIR Past President Joel Bousman (l) congratulates Dale Sowards Award honoree John Martin, a Garfield County, Colo. commissioner and past WIR president.**



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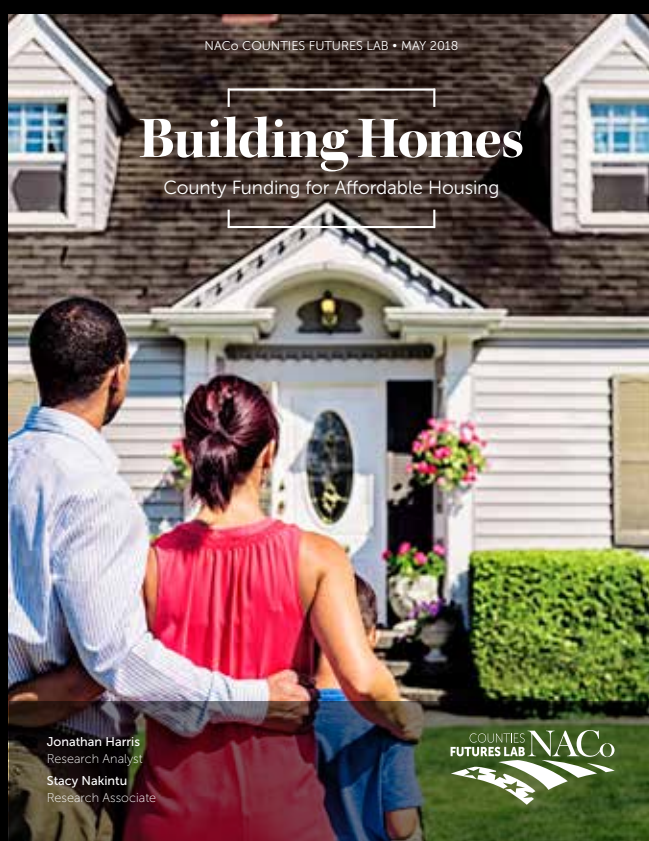
## REGISTER TODAY FOR THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING FORUM!

Register today for the Affordable Housing Forum! At NACo's 2018 Annual Conference & Exposition, the NACo Counties Futures Lab will host the Forum on **Sunday, July 15, from 9:00AM to 3:30PM.** Please join us as we exchange ideas through keynote speakers, panel discussion, speed-networking and more! Register today at [www.NACo.org/Annual](http://www.NACo.org/Annual).

If you have already registered for NACo's Annual Conference, but would like to register for the Forum, please email [nacomeetings@naco.org](mailto:nacomeetings@naco.org).

For more information, please visit [www.NACo.org/AffordableHousingForum2018](http://www.NACo.org/AffordableHousingForum2018)

## Check out the NACo Lab's latest report!



*Building Homes: County Funding for Affordable Housing* presents an analysis of housing affordability at the county level and why counties are best-positioned to make a difference in this issue. Find out more from our three case studies, featuring: Nashville-Davidson County, Tenn.; the Texas Housing Foundation; and Hennepin County, Minn. Visit [www.NACo.org/BuildingHomes](http://www.NACo.org/BuildingHomes).

## Prepare for fire season: County Wildfire Playbook offers best practices

From WIR page 3

months ago, so we have a lot to get out in the next six months,” said Dolbow Vann, who previously served as a Colusa County supervisor. “We don’t want (the funds) to be re-pooled or rolled back over because the administration is focused on rural prosperity,” she said. “There’s going to be a bill in the fall for infrastructure.”

Rural Development funding distribution may determine how much money will go to rural areas in subsequent plans.

“If we can’t get this cash out through rural development, how are we going to show them that we can do this under an infrastructure program?” she asked.

USDA Rural Development priorities focus on broadband buildout, the opioid crisis and infrastructure, but Dolbow Vann said in the interest of being a proactive agency, state rural development offices were taking requests.

“Tell us what you need and let us make it work with our programs — not the other way around,” she said.

### Wildfires

The federal government spent nearly \$3 billion on wildfire suppression alone in 2017, the highest amount in over three decades.

“Our ability to accomplish (the Forest Service’s) goals has been compromised in recent years by the funding dilemma in which the agency has found itself,” said Nora Rasure, regional forester for the U.S. Forest Service Intermountain Region.

“As the cost of fighting fires has gone up, the funding for every other program has gone down,” she said. “We’d find ourselves in July or August needing to transfer funds from other programs — recreation, range timber — into fire.”

Routinely, the Forest Service borrows from prevention programs to fight wildland fires.

The “fire borrowing fix” in the omnibus bill, which will add \$2 billion to the U.S. Forest Service’s wildfire-fighting budget, should reduce the raiding of forest management coffers, she said. On the county side, officials gained a useful tool in their efforts to protect their citizens and communities. Katie Lighthall presented the County Wildfire Playbook, an interactive flowchart that offers best practices and communication and management strategies tailored for counties of different sizes, composition and familiarity with the threat of wildfire.

Developed by the Forest Western Regional Strategy Committee in consultation with NACo and county officials and the Forest Service, the playbook prompts users to identify the size of their county and extent to which they have fire readiness plans in place and generates recommendations for action and sample language with which to com-

municate with the public.

“We designed it to be intuitive and ‘copy and paste,’” Lighthall said.

Familiarize yourself with the playbook as wildfire season begins: <http://bit.ly/2xUfm3f>

### Getting a baseline

Western Governors’ Association Executive Director Jim Ogsbury outlined the ways the WGA and WIR have worked in tandem over the past few years, including successfully pushing back against a reorganization of the Department of Interior that would have carved apart states.

“When the counties and the governors stand together to present a united front, they are a powerful force,” he said.


Western policy network focused on strengthening relationships between the federal government and state and local officials. One of the organization’s projects in the coming year will be collecting socio-economic data from

which to establish a baseline for conditions in Western states. That data can then be used to analyze the effects of policy proposals to give feedback to the federal government, all based on a pilot analysis of six Wyoming counties by their state associations of counties.

“We live in an age where the amount of available data is staggering,” Ogsbury said. “The difficult questions now surround how to best compile, synthesize, store and use that information.”

“Accurate, complete and accessible information is essential to good policymaking and to the development of consensus around policy decisions,” he noted.

WGA is assembling an advisory committee to decide how to gather this data and how to incorporate it data into policy decisions and advocacy.

The 2019 WIR Conference will be held May 15–17 in Spokane County, Wash. 

## Counties have a chance to dent rural poverty rates

By **Charlie Ban**  
senior staff writer

Despite public and private intervention and the federal government’s War on Poverty, the proportion of rural poor has remained relatively unchanged since the 1960s.

The percentage of rural Americans living in poverty has held steady at 16 percent for decades, slightly higher than the urban poverty rate. Counties can make some changes to put a dent in the poverty rate, Jocelyn Richgels told WIR Conference attendees. The intermountain West has the second-leading U.S. concentration of persistent poverty, behind the South. Richgels is the director of national policy programs at the Rural Policy Research Institute.

Addressing poverty from the right perspective is a crucial approach for counties

in addition to their efforts to match people to jobs and attract employers. That includes meeting the needs of the labor force with the right human service programming.

“Having an emphasis on economic development is not enough for these families,” Richgels said. “You need to think about how you can support childcare, transportation, other services that will help support these families while they try to get work. Help them get out of poverty.”

That’s important because the dynamics of poverty are changing, with a fluid family structure. In rural areas, more children are being born out of wedlock, to younger parents and many are part of female-headed households, about one-third of which are in poverty and in conditions that can contribute to persistent, intergenerational poverty. Without those sup-

port services, Richgels said, available jobs will mean little to single-parent households.

Although poverty tends to be concentrated, human service delivery remains a challenge for rural counties. In many rural areas, schools are the prominent, if not the only, public institution that keeps communities together. That makes them the prime location for service delivery.

“Think about how they can deliver human services, healthcare, financial literacy programs,” she said. “If you are in a large county that has dispersed human service delivery, maybe you can bring some of that into the school system.” While migration can put a burden on social services, Richgels sees that population’s potential for revitalizing the local economy. She homed in the idea of hidden employment and informal economies — where people

are managing to make a living despite a lack of jobs. It’s particularly common in the emerging immigrant communities.

“They’ve come from developing areas in Latin America, this is how they make their life,” she said. “As county officials, you could think of programs to tap into that entrepreneurial spirit, those are entrepreneurial skills of people who are figuring out how to survive where there are no other options. Can you bring them out of the informal economy?”


Federal policy proposals to tie entitlement programs to work requirements would have a limited effect in rural areas, Richgels said, because so much of the poor rural population already is working.

“Traditional ways of measuring don’t capture the rural working poor, particularly

if there’s a single employer,” she said. “You’ll see that in places where there’s a single employer, or the community is dependent on resource extraction.”

Some rural counties have made the transition to metropolitan areas, but Richgels said there’s faint hope for their neighbors to expect the same fate.

“A gulf has emerged between counties that have made the transition to metropolitan areas and those that have retained their rural character,” she said. She encouraged counties to promote their quality of life to attract residents, particularly those who might be looking for a change from urban lifestyles.

“Think about how arts and culture and all of your western rural landscapes and amenities are things you could use to attract people,” she said. 



# Counties up ante to attract new residents

By Charlie Ban  
senior staff writer

Try living here, you'll like it. That's the approach a few counties have taken to attract new residents. By offering incentives to buy, rent or build houses, they are betting on the ripple effect of those new residents integrating into the community and building some population growth momentum.

Move to rural Grant County, Ind., midway between Indianapolis and Fort Wayne, with a college degree or certification, and \$5,000 will help you buy a house within your first six months. Lease, and the county's Economic Growth Council will pick up 20 percent of the monthly rent up to \$2,500 for the year.

It's part of a strategy formed in 2012 to meet the needs of employers trying to fill jobs that require degrees, and so far, it's been a success.

"We've maxed out every year," said Mikayla Marazzi, the council's marketing manager. "It's bringing a skilled and educated workforce into Grant County. The people who were commuting here for work but living elsewhere, they're moving here and becoming part of the community."

The council has hitched its wagon to the program, dedicating one-third of its \$300,000 budget each of the last six years. Most of the participants are buying, which means the program supports roughly 22 people a year, most of whom are buying their homes.

"It can be a full down payment," Marazzi said. "Property here is extremely affordable. This goes a long way for people."

The council also offers \$2,500 toward the purchase price if the new resident buys after six months but before

two years.

"The business community has really taken it up," Marazzi said. "A lot of them include the program in their recruiting materials."

There's no age component to the program, but most recipients are between 20-30 years old, but work in a wide variety of fields. The council has tweaked the program a little, limiting the rental allowance to encourage more home purchasing and tightening the language so spouses can't claim the same benefit.

"They're part of the community, they're paying local taxes," Marazzi said. "A lot of them are people who grew up here and came back after college."

"It's a direct return on investment, because you see the county population growing little by little."

Clarke County, Iowa doesn't have as many houses to fill. For years, the house built by the county's trade school students was the only one receiving a building permit.

"Our story has always been that there's no suitable housing," said Bill Trickey, executive director of the Clarke County Development Corporation. "The market rate for houses was staying flat, but the cost of building was continuing to escalate, so there was little room for error for the builders. If they sat on it for any length of time, the interest on their construction loan would eat up all their margin."

With roughly 4,600 non-farm jobs and an estimated 2,000 commuters coming into the county, there was room and a market for growth, once that financial landmine was cleared.

So the county will buy land in the county seat of Osceola for a committed resident and pay 12 months of the con-

struction loan interest for the homebuilder, in exchange for eliminating a property tax abatement for new home construction.

"When the house is sold, they won't get the tax abatement, but when the city collects the property taxes they'll funnel money back to us until we get money back on the lot," Trickey said. "The standard agreement is that they start building in 45 days and the house hits the market for at least \$180,000."

"We just move the tax abatement to the front end of the deal from that back end."


The lots are valued at roughly \$30,000 and the building loan interest averages \$7,000. The county has invested \$140,000 into what is a revolving-door fund and is considering adding to that.

An added bonus: The county's banks consider the free lot to be a down payment for a home purchase, helping new residents get mortgages. The program has built four houses in 2017, with five more in progress in 2018.

The program got some attention from Iowa Public Radio in 2017, which drew the interest in a mid-range building company that saw potential in the Clarke County real estate market, a half hour south of Des Moines.

"They saw a market for single family homes, and they broke ground on 40 of them this year," Trickey said.

"Then another developer started on 34 townhomes. Neither of them wanted to swap the tax abatement, but one way or another, we're getting new houses."

"Two years ago we approved two building permits. Now we're clearing almost 80." 

## PROFILES IN SERVICE

SCOTT HARNSBERGER

Board Member  
Treasurer  
Freemont County, Wyo.



Harnsberger

**Number of years involved in NACo:** 2

**Years in public service:** 30

**Occupation:** Freemont County treasurer

**Education:** B.S. in accounting from the University of Wyoming

**The hardest thing I've ever done:** Fire an employee.

**Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner are:** Abraham Lincoln, Alexander Hamilton and Jimmy Buffett.

**The most adventurous thing I've ever done is:** Climb Gannett Peak, Wyoming's highest.

**My favorite way to relax is to:** Fly-fish.

**I'm most proud of:** My public service and open communication with the public.

**Every morning I read:** Newsfeed on TD Ameritrade and Twitter.

**My favorite meal is:** Steak and French fries.

**My pet peeve is:** When people answer their phone while I am talking to them.

**My motto is:** "You can go a long way by continuing to put one foot in front of the other."

**The last book I read was:** *Off the Grid* by C.J. Box.

**My favorite movie is:** Any Jason Bourne flick.

**My favorite music is:** The Beatles and Jimmy Buffett.

**My favorite U.S. president is:** Abraham Lincoln.

**My county is a NACo member because:** 80 percent of what NACo pursues directly impacts Freemont County and its citizens.

**You'd be surprised to learn that I:**  
Heat my home with firewood that I block, split and stack myself.



# County policies drove Wash. drug take-back law

By Margaret Shield, Ph.D.

When the Washington State Legislature passed the Secure Drug Take-Back Act in March, it was a hard-won victory for health and safety advocates battling the opioid epidemic. It was also the culmination of years of policy work by counties to access safe drug take-back for their residents. The state law was modeled on local ordinances that are proof-of-concept for requiring the pharmaceutical industry to provide convenient take-back options for leftover and expired medicines.

Secure drug take-back for leftover medicines is a prevention strategy to help shut down the “drug dealer” in the medicine cabinet, the most common starting place for addiction to opioids and other medicines. It is also a strategy in preventing suicides, poisonings and overdoses from medicines in the home. Proper disposal keeps potentially harmful drugs out of unsecured trash cans and prevents waste medicines from adding to pharmaceutical pollution that is affecting aquatic ecosystems.

The ordinances passed in seven Washington counties, as well as the new state law, are pharmaceutical stewardship policies where medicine manufacturers are required to finance and operate a secure and convenient system of drop boxes and other collection methods, and conduct education about safe medicine storage and disposal. Pharmaceutical industry financing and coordination relieves burdens on local law enforcement and health agencies that have been struggling to provide programs and manage the large volumes of drugs returned by residents.

The local policy strategy that led to a success in the state Legislature came about after similar state bills were repeatedly blocked by pharmaceutical industry opposition. Proponents shifted their approach to encouraging their local Boards of Health to adopt the policy.

Boards of Health in Washington can enact county-wide legislation to protect public health. County councilmembers serve on the health boards, which may also include city-level elected officials and appointed health professionals. In California, similar ordinances have been enacted by the Boards of Supervisors in 10 counties. These local officials focused on addressing community needs in the face of the pharmaceutical industry’s challenges, which included unsuccessful lawsuits against Alameda County, Calif. and King County, Wash.

Work on the local ordinances caught the attention of Washington State Rep. Strom Peterson (D), a Snohomish County legislator who has led other initiatives to address the opioid crisis. Deciding it was time to try again at a statewide solution, Peterson championed the Washington Secure Drug Take-Back Act, House Bill 1047, with the support of a broad coalition including pharmacies, law enforcement, health professionals, public health, substance abuse prevention groups, mental health advocates, water agencies and environmental organizations. The bill passed with strong bipartisan support after the pharmaceutical industry’s opposition was largely neutralized through lobbying and negotiations.

## Manufacturer responsibility

Washington’s is the first state law that requires pharmaceutical manufacturers to provide for all costs of a convenient system for secure collection and safe disposal of unused medicines. This is not a tax and government-run program approach; instead the industry members directly finance the drug take-back services and coordinate program logistics. Drug manu-

“As our county does everything we can to fight the opioid epidemic, it just made sense to hold pharmaceutical manufacturers responsible for take-back of leftover drugs. We’re glad to have led the way towards making this a state law.”

– Brian Sullivan, Snohomish County council member and chair of the Board of Health when it passed a Secure Medicine Return Regulation in 2016.

facturers can work together or independently to design their program and form agreements with service providers to meet the law’s requirements.

In practice, more than 400 pharmaceutical companies have formed a stewardship organization called MED-Project LLC, which operates programs in response to the county laws. The estimated cost of the drug take-back program to the manufacturers is about 0.1 percent of annual medicines sales, or 1 penny from every \$10 in medicine sales. Advocates of the law see that as a smart investment in public safety, especially given

the huge societal costs of drug abuse. Drug manufacturers can internalize the costs or pass them along the pharmaceutical supply chain, but a point-of-sale charge is not allowed.

## Improved drug take-back services with industry financing

The pharmaceutical industry is providing DEA-compliant drug take-back programs under the local Secure Medicine Return ordinances in King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties, which make up about 56 percent of Washington’s population. Under similar laws, programs are in the works in Clallam, Whatcom and Skagit counties.

Services for residents have dramatically increased. More than 170 drop boxes are available to residents free-of-charge in the four counties. All drop boxes accept controlled substances like Oxycontin and Percocet along with other prescription and over-the-counter medicines. Industry funding has made it possible to expand collection sites from police stations to more convenient drug stores, clinics and hos-

pitals. Residents with limited mobility can request a prepaid return mailer through a website or a toll-free number.

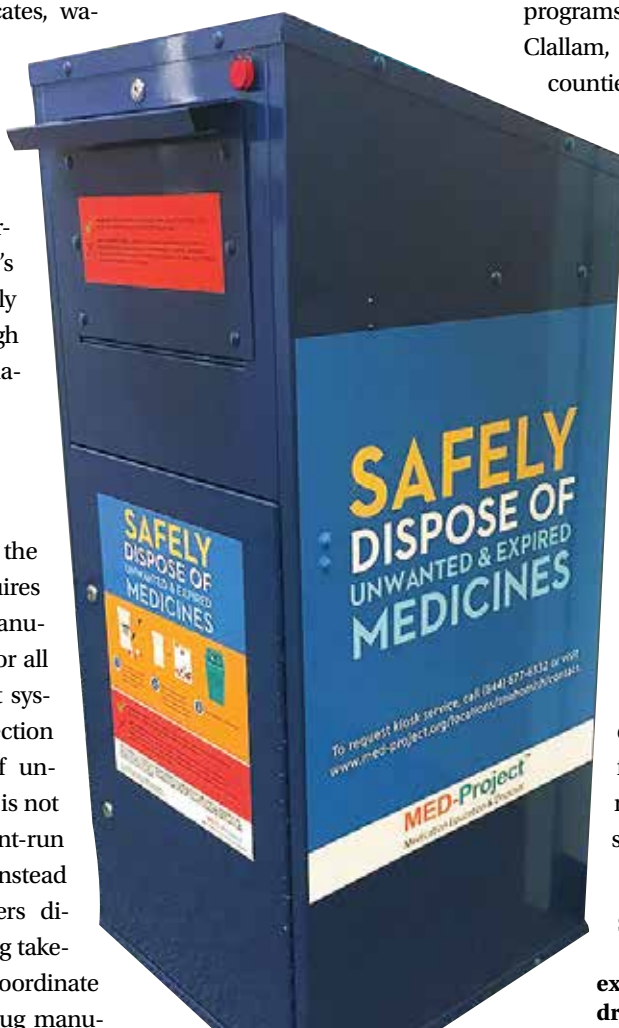
Pharmacies, hospitals, and other collectors provide in-kind support by hosting secure drop boxes and assisting with public education. Under the Washington policies, collectors participate voluntarily. Any qualified pharmacy, hospital or law enforcement agency that volunteers to host a secure drop box must be included in the collection system financed by drug manufacturers. Voluntary drug take-back programs, like those operated by chain stores such as Walgreens, are not impacted by the local or state laws.

## State law consistent with local policies

Rep. Peterson and proponents held a united front during legislative negotiations to ensure the state law had equivalent or better program standards than the successful local laws. Washington’s law prohibits new local mandates and eventually preempts the existing local ordinances, but the consistency of the policies should prevent loss of services won through county actions.

After the pharmaceutical industry begins operations of a drug take-back program approved by the state Department of Health, there will be a one-year transition where the county-level programs will merge into the statewide system. Implementation of the state law is underway and expected to result in more convenient drug take-back services across Washington by late 2020. **CN**

*Margaret Shield is a policy consultant working on public health and environmental health issues. She has contributed to the development of pharmaceutical stewardship policies in Washington as staff for county agencies and as a consultant. Resources about the drug take-back laws in Washington are available from her website: [www.cehstrategies.com](http://www.cehstrategies.com).*



**Snohomish County, Wash. drop box for expired or unwanted drugs.**



# Millennials ‘don’t live to work, they work to live’

From *MILLENNIALS* page 1

jobs outside the downtown area. Some of those jobs are at places such as Halo, a company that creates promotional products, which recently built a new headquarters just a few minutes outside of Sterling.

But a good job alone these days is probably not enough to lure those potential workers, ages 21 to 35, to a county.

## Working to live

Millennials “don’t live to work, they work to live,” said Pamela Sue Schallhorn, community and economic development educator for the University of Illinois Extension, who works with Washington, Jefferson, Marion, Clinton and Bond counties.

“That’s the difference,” she said. “That sums up a lot between millennials and baby boomers.” Counties — especially in rural communities — “are going to have some serious problems in the next five to 10 years if we don’t find a way to attract those millennials back.”

In addition to attracting millennials, Whiteside County is also working hard to retain the generation growing up in their communities. Knowing that young people are interested in starting their own businesses, the county’s Sauk Valley Area Chamber of Commerce is partnering with Midland State Bank on the CEO Program, said Kris Noble, the chamber’s executive director. The program teaches high school juniors and seniors about local entrepreneurship and is keeping track of those who have participated in the program.

A small business development center is also available to help new businesses get off the ground, through a community college.

“The critical piece is building relationships,” Noble said. “The majority are here to stay. If we are smart, we’ll listen to them.”



Residents enjoy a concert in Arlington County, Va., where one-third of the population is made up of millennials. Community amenities such as outdoor concerts and festivals rank high on millennials’ lifestyle lists. Photo courtesy of Rosslyn BID

## Branding your county’s livability on social media

If possible, county officials should engage in “intergenerational” communication too, especially if they find themselves with an all-baby boomer county board, Noble said. County governments can also help their communities attract millennials “with the quality of life piece, the cost of living piece,” she said. It’s not enough to build affordable housing and bike lanes. Counties also have to get the word out about how livable their communities are.

Some of the ways that a community is more livable? Adding coffee shops, outdoor music festivals, downtown loft apartments and micro-breweries is a start, said Schallhorn.

There are steps counties can take by offering incentives to businesses or just tweaking ordinances or zoning codes that are no longer workable, such as an ordinance that doesn’t

allow outdoor seating at cafes, she said.

When millennials are looking for a place to live, a lone apartment building won’t do. Creating a sense of place is essential. In Shelby County,

Tenn., a former Sears distribution center saw new life after it was revitalized and the \$200 million project now features apartments, a gym, an art gallery, restaurants, and amenities such as a juice bar, a coffee

shop and a nail salon.

Counties that are getting the word out about these types of amenities, and branding and marketing themselves on so-

See *MILLENNIALS* page 9

## MILLENNIALS RANK THEIR PRIORITIES

When she’s working with local governments, Pam Schallhorn, a community and economic development educator at the University of Illinois Extension, usually asks millennials to rank their priorities when it comes to what they’re looking for in a place to live. The surveys are based on research by Craig Schroeder, director of youth engagement, Center for Rural Entrepreneurship in Lancaster County, Neb.

Millennials chose among the following, ranking each answer as “very important, important, not important or no opinion.”

- Being included in the commu-

nity development process

- Great high-speed internet
- A community that is supportive of its small businesses
- More focus and opportunity for young entrepreneurs to start small businesses
- Places for me to hang out with my friends like coffee shops and micro-breweries
- More jobs that fit my education level
- Better housing choices
- The people that live there now caring about their youth staying
- Better access to education

Most millennials, she said, rank these as their top three

priorities:

1. High speed internet (if an area already has high-speed internet, this will be ranked lower).
2. Invest in recreational opportunities for them to hang out, listen to music and talk with friends such as “third space” internet cafes and micro-breweries
3. Provide economic opportunities through entrepreneurship: More than 70 percent surveyed say they want to run their own business and want to live in a community that supports small businesses.



# Millennial priorities include high-speed internet, ‘third spaces,’ entrepreneurship

From **MILLENNIALS** page 8

cial media are going to have a better return on investment, Noble noted. “Your brand is not your logo, it’s who you are and what you stand for.”

## Affordable housing near larger cities

San Bernardino County, Calif., part of the “Inland Empire” with Riverside County, is getting the word out about its livability. San Bernardino County is “the only region in the state that is attracting millennials...” county Board Chair Robert Lovingood told an audience of more than 1,000 earlier this year at a summit on the economy.

“The strong tie to quality of life and lifestyle opportunities that exist in different pockets of the region gives a sense of community,” he said last week. “It is that community feel that drives the development process.”

Another reason millennials are flocking to the area is its proximity to Los Angeles (35 miles east) without L.A.’s skyrocketing real estate prices. “As young people look at settling down to raise their family and buy a house, we begin to see a transition to suburban areas,” Lovingood said.

“San Bernardino County would be considered a suburb of Los Angeles and Orange counties,” he said, “so there is a natural progression that takes place toward our region.”

New Haven, a new 8,200-acre housing community in San Bernardino County, counts 53 percent of its home buyers last year as millennials (The national average is 36 percent).

Like Whiteside County, San Bernardino County is also working on retaining its young people. That’s thanks in part to programs like Kids That Code, which helps students learn tech skills for computer jobs. A local high school’s medical and health science academy also helps retain young adults by helping students acquire

industry certifications and internships.

## Competing for millennials

For those counties that don’t have enough workers to retain, the competition for bringing millennials to their communities is on. Wisconsin is buying ads in Cook County, Ill., placing them on commuter trains, gyms and bars.

The ads ask millennials to ditch the traffic and cost of living in the big city for more living space and easier commutes.

One Wisconsin county that could likely benefit from the campaign? Racine County, which is expecting to welcome new jobs — 3,000 initially and potentially up to 13,000 in coming years — with the opening of a \$10 billion display screen plant, Foxconn Technology Group.

And in North Carolina, Cleveland County, just outside of Charlotte, has created a “talent attraction” campaign, touting itself as “Charlotte’s Backyard” with a video campaign aimed straight at millennials.

Since 2008, more than 75 companies have either relocated or expanded operations there, bringing 4,000 new jobs to the county.

“The development of this campaign was something we became convinced that we needed in order to position our community in a way that would strategically connect millennial talent to the manufacturing careers in our community,” said Kristin Reese, executive director of the Cleveland County Economic Development Partnership.

Another area experiencing significant growth is Hancock County, Ohio, ranked the No. 1 “micropolitan” area last year by *Site Selection Magazine*, attracting the most, at \$127 million, in business investments and expansions in 2016. The county seat of Findlay has updated its bike paths and street-scaping as well as added a new \$18 million performing arts

center. A \$9 million, 46-unit apartment complex is scheduled to open next year.

## Communicating with millennials

One way to attract or retain millennials is to find out what’s important to them.

In the Washington, D.C. suburb of Arlington County, Va., millennials are attracted to its green spaces, pedestrian friendliness and trendy neighborhoods.

The county wants to keep millennials, who comprise one-third of its population, happy. The county made a push last year to get more millennials involved in a forum on its “Engage Arlington” website.

A survey showed their top priority was transportation — as in getting rid of parking spaces for cars and adding


more crosswalks, widening sidewalks, beefing up bike lanes and adding more bus service.

The county saw more than 1,000 complete a survey about bicycling and has continued to hold pop-up meetings about its Bike Plan at area farmer’s markets. The county also engaged millennials by partnering with a local business improvement district, hosting a happy hour with County Board Chair Katie Cristol, who is a millennial herself. The conversation ranged from affordable housing to exotic pets to transportation. The push to engage younger residents was started by the previous County Board Chair Libby Garvey, who has advocated for opening the board’s meetings to public comments from those watching online.

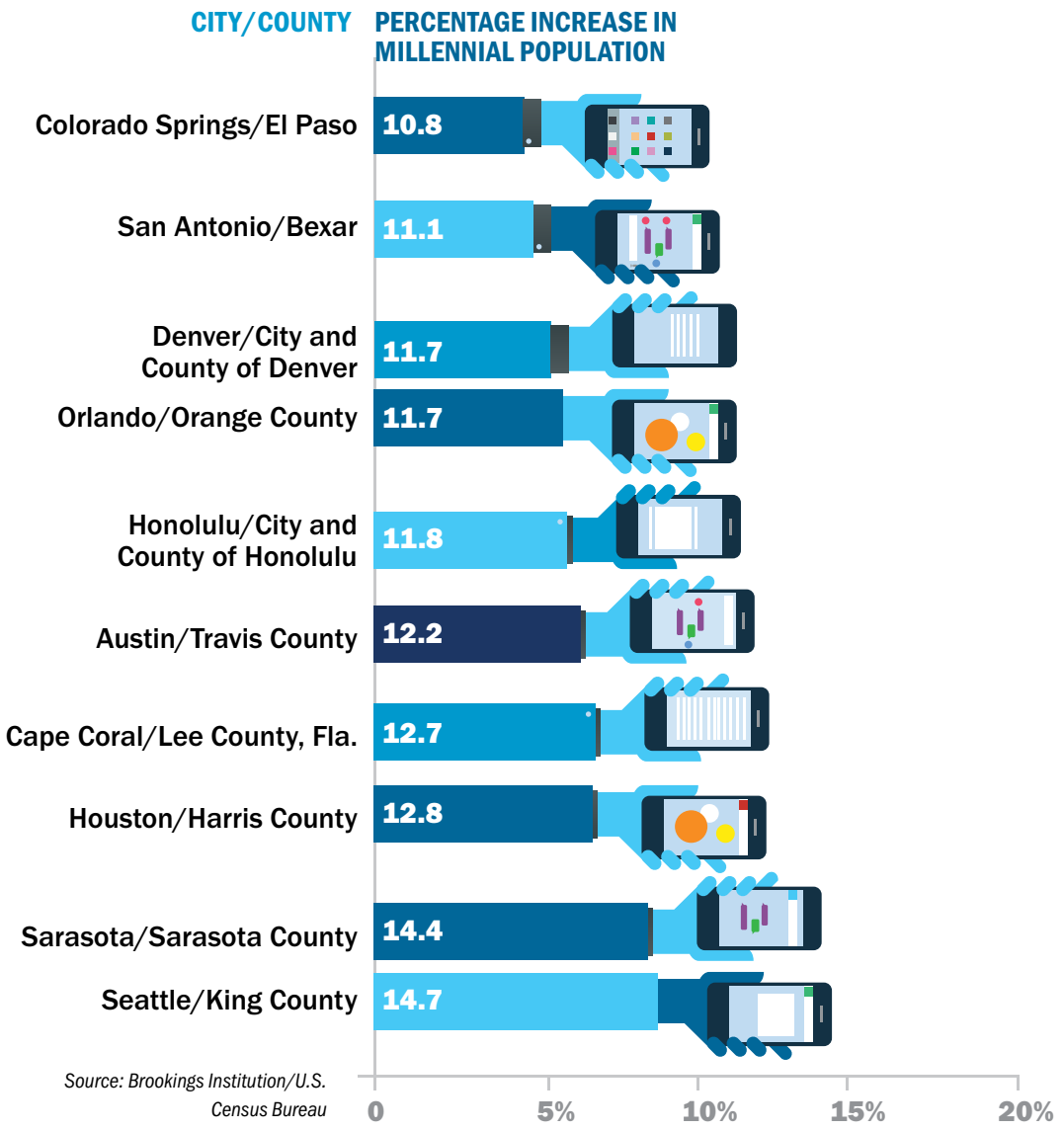
## Transition

“The hardest part I run into — the more traditional of a power structure a community has, the more difficult it is to bring in any new ideas,” Schallhorn said. “They can see the depopulation, they can see everyone growing older, but they really don’t understand or they don’t want to change.”

For example, a Rotary Club member in his 80s told her he had worked hard to become a community leader and wasn’t interested in giving that up. “I have to remind them that we all have to give it up, because we’re not going to live forever.”

If your county can be progressive and look at the future of your community, she said, then you have a better chance. 

# Cities with Highest Growth in Millennial Population, 2010-2015





# County digs out after second ‘1,000-year flood’

By Mary Ann Barton  
senior staff writer

Just days after suffering devastating flash flooding, Howard County, Md. officials were casting a wary eye at the skies again, bracing for another round of rain. The county was hit with severe flooding May 27, Memorial Day weekend, on the same scale as July 30, 2016, when record floods hit.

More than 8 inches of rain fell May 27 — an amount equal to “two months of rain in two hours,” according to AccuWeather. Video posted on social media showed cars in the county seat of Ellicott City careening down Main Street, being swept away by a wall of ravaging floodwaters.

Very preliminary infrastructure damage estimates from the latest flash flood roll in at \$15 million, according to the county.

An analysis of the 2016 flood by the University of Baltimore put damages at \$42 million in lost economic activity and \$18 million in lost wages. Infrastructure damage and repairs stood at \$22.4 million; the county requested \$12 million in aid from the federal government.

## County takes action during, after disaster

From the time the flooding began, the county went on high alert. Here are some of the actions the county took the day of the flooding and in the recovery phase:

- The county police department and the county fire and rescue services department assisted approximately 300 residents and 30 of those were water rescues, County Fire Chief John Butler said. The county’s 911 center fielded 1,122 phone calls during a seven-hour window. The county posted recordings of some of the calls on its Facebook page.
- County police patrolled Main Street around the clock to keep people safe and prevent looting. Police also re-



**Flooded cars litter the Fells Lane Community in Howard County, Md. after the May 27 flood.** Photo courtesy of Howard County, Md.

leased drone footage of devastated areas.

- County police also coordinated the pickup of 188 cars that were towed from the flooded area.
- The county Office of Consumer Protection offered ways to assess and address damage to a car if it was immersed in water. That office also released information on how to avoid home repair scams.
- Crews from the Howard County Public Works Department were busy making critical repairs to Ellicott City’s Main Street in the aftermath of the storm. A video of the crews at work was posted to the county’s YouTube channel.
- Howard County Fire and Rescue offered safety tips to those using generators.
- County emergency personnel searched flooded properties.
- The county opened a disaster assistance center at the County Department of Community Resources and Services where housing, food and water and other supplies were made available. The center featured 16 various county departments and state agencies.
- The county Health Depart-

ment released a list of safety tips for those venturing into areas devastated by the flooding.

- The directors of several county departments, including the Housing and Community Development Department, took part in an information session May 30 at a local high school for residents, business owners and property owners directly affected by the flooding.
- The county extended hours at the local landfill to allow residents more time to throw out storm-related debris.
- The county set up a special page on its website with continuous updates with information on how to volunteer, a hotline phone number and where people could find cars swept away by the flood currents. Information was also available on storm debris removal, counseling for residents and information about the disaster assistance center.
- County Executive Allan Kittleman held his first news conference along with Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan (R) the same day of the flood. Kittleman’s daily news conferences were aired live on the county’s Facebook page and archived there;



**Howard County, Md. Executive Allan Kittleman (right) surveys damage from the flood.** Photo courtesy of Howard County, Md.

the press conference May 28 saw 12,000 views and received nearly 300 comments.

The county posted information beforehand so residents could tune in to watch it live on Facebook. The county also posted useful information from local utilities, phone and cable TV companies.

- Howard County Police announced three days after the flood that a body was discovered in the Patapsco River; the man was attempting to help a woman when he was swept away by flood waters, authorities said. The county lowered its flags to half-staff to honor Sgt. Eddison Hermond of the Maryland National Guard.

For those wanting to make

donations, the county is sending people to the Community Foundation of Howard County website.

## What’s next

“It’s devastating for all of us, it’s a difficult scene down there,” Kittleman said May 28 during a news conference. Local business owners, he noted, “have gone through hell to get where they are today. We told them we’re there for them in any way possible.”

Kittleman faced questions about what the county did after the devastating flood in 2016. It took time, he said, to recover, complete studies on

See FLOOD page 11



# Two floods in two years: 'A real game changer'

From FLOOD page 10

how best to tackle mitigation efforts and start on the engineering and design. "I think we're going very quickly, trying to get things done. You have to realize that Frederick (Md.) for example, over decades, has been working on it, and that was a federal, state and local partnership. We'll

be looking at our federal colleagues to get more funding to help us with mitigation. We're basically doing what that study had recommended to do and some of the bigger projects are going to take longer to consider."

"To have two of these in two years is a real game-changer, and we've got to figure out what's the best way to move

forward," he said.

Local businesses were just getting back on their feet after the flood that hit two years ago; most of the businesses had returned and the area saw 20 new businesses open.

"My heart breaks for them," Kittleman said. "They are going to have to make a tough decision. I will support whatever decision they make."

The Federal Emergency Management Agency awarded the county \$1 million last month for flood mitigation efforts following the flooding from 2016 that left two people dead.

The funds were expected to be used, along with \$400,000 from the county, to improve a culvert in a residential area on Ellicott City's west end. FEMA

also provided more than \$5 million in public assistance grant funding.

After the 2016 flooding, the county set up a website, The Path to Recovery, that shows plans and progress for flood mitigation. [CN](#)

Watch a video from Howard County of the May 27 aftermath here: <https://bit.ly/2smWrZ4>

## Self-assessment tool for election cyber-security in pilot phase

By Mary Ann Barton  
senior staff writer

A self-assessment tool for checking election cybersecurity came out in pilot phase June 4, according to Mike Garcia, primary author of *A Handbook for Elections Infrastructure Security*, published by the Center for Internet Security or CIS.

Garcia alerted participants about the new tool May 23 at the National Symposium on Cybersecurity & Local Government presented by Public Technology Institute (PTI) and NACo.

The self-assessment tool presents a simple set of questions about security practices, Garcia said. Once answered, local election officials will be able to see a dashboard showing their system's strengths and areas needing improvement.

"We're hopeful it provides state and location elections officials with a better ability to prioritize and manage their approach to cybersecurity," he said, "in addition to helping determine how they might best spend any grant funding they receive through the EAC [Election Assistance Commission]."

CIS is the umbrella organization for the Elections Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center or EI-ISAC, a free service that offers the self-assessment tool among other ways to help governments with elections cybersecurity. Since EI-ISAC's formation was announced in March, the center has gained



PTI Executive Director Alan Shark is at the podium May 23 at a PTI and NACo symposium on cybersecurity. To his left are (l-r) Michael Dent, CISO, Fairfax County, Va.; Wendy Wickens, CIO, Loudoun County, Va.; Mark L. Foster, assistant county manager, Mecklenburg County, N.C.; Andrew Dolan, Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC); Valecia Stocchetti, MS-ISAC and Donald Parente, AT&T Business. Photo by Emily Gaines/PTI

more than 600 registered members, including nearly 550 local elections offices.

Anyone hacking into an election is "not just trying to change votes — it's about undermining the reputation of democracy," Garcia said.

An attack on elections infrastructure is different than a cyberattack on say, the Department of Motor Vehicles, "because there's no backup for Election Day," he said.

Attackers' goals, he noted, include information theft, espionage, sabotage, defamation or blackmail of targets. In addition to damaging the country's reputation, their motivation can also be to change votes.

The 2016 presidential election was the "shot across the bow," from hackers, and election officials today need to prepare, Garcia said.

The most substantial risks are to components that have network connections.

Training for independent assessors is in early develop-

ment with training to possibly begin this fall, he said.

"We hope to have training for independent assessors up and running before the fall, but most likely it won't have a substantial impact on elections operations until after 2018," Garcia said. "Our hope is that elections organizations do a self-assessment as an immediate measure, with both self- and independent assessments occurring regularly going forward."

"We will be ready to train both private and public organizations that wish to conduct these assessments; we simply want to see a greater availability for elections organizations, as well as a more standardized approach to the assessments themselves. We think there are many organization that are or could be qualified to conduct assessments, but it can be hard to shop around when there isn't a strong standard of what the assessments should look like." To find out more visit <https://bit.ly/2J8lg1K>.

States are receiving notification of \$380 million from the federal government to shore up election security, according to the Silver Spring, Md.-based U.S. Election Assistance Commission, which is disbursing the funds. To find out if your state has requested funds, visit <https://bit.ly/2H8A7aH>.

Counties administer and fund elections at the local level, overseeing more than 109,000 polling places and coordinating more than 694,000 poll workers. [CN](#)

### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT HACKERS

CIS recommends that election officials prioritize what they can do to prevent hackers from interrupting their elections. Those priorities are:

- Join the EI-ISAC.
- Conduct security assessments (self and independent).
- Install network sensors.
- Conduct risk assessments.
- Prepare and exercise incident response plans.
- Review and update procurements.
- Conduct awareness training for all employees.
- Develop and review plans for post-election audits.
- Transition to voting machines with paper-based records.
- Replace outdated election equipment.

## SOLUTIONS SPOTLIGHT

# Tattoos help public safety officials identify bodies

By Dana Rasmussen

In early spring of 2016, a body was discovered in the Kankakee River by a fisherman.

When law enforcement officers from the Kankakee County, Ill. Sheriff's Office arrived on the scene, they removed the body from the water to begin their initial attempt at identification.

At that time, all officers could determine was that the body was that of a badly decomposed white male who had been in the water up to 10 days. Because of this level of decomposition, officers were unable to get fingerprints for identification, which made the identification process even more challenging.

Using this basic information, authorities searched through a national missing person's da-

tabase in an attempt to identify the man, but found no matching results.

### Looking for answers

According to Robert Gessner, the Kankakee County coroner, when the body was brought into the morgue, it was discovered that the body was actually that of a black male and not a white male as officers originally thought. This generated more questions regarding the identity of the body.

"Whenever we have an unidentified body we immediately begin to think of questions regarding how and why the person died," Gessner said. "In this case, we wanted to know where he was from, why he was unclothed and what had he been doing prior to ending up in the river."

During examination, Gessner discovered a rose tattoo on the man's neck. Using that information, he contacted Sgt. Trent Bukowski, IT director for the Kankakee County Sheriff's Office, and had him search through his public safety software database to see if any records matched this information. Within minutes, Bukowski had a match.

Using the scars, marks and tattoos module inside the corrections system, Bukowski generated a list of 68 current and former inmates who had neck tattoos. Based on the location of the tattoo on the unidentified man's body, the list of possible matches was brought down to eight. By examining the photos of these eight individuals with neck tattoos, investigators were able to match the unidentified

man's tattoo to his booking photo found in the corrections system.

With this information, a positive identification was made and the deceased man's family was contacted.

### A positive match

Gessner said without the information in the corrections software that was used to search for the rose tattoo, identifying the body could have taken up to nine months. In situations where a body cannot be identified, programs are used to search nationwide databases such as Forensic Filer and TLOxp Transunion in hopes of finding a hit. This is not only costly, but can take months and doesn't always lead to a positive identification.

"There's no way we would

have found out who this man was without our public safety software," Gessner said.

Drowning was the official cause of death for the man found in the river, and drugs were also found in his system. It is still unknown as to how the man entered the river.

### Tattoo leads to identification

Later that same year, officials with the Kankakee County Sheriff's Office also used their public safety software to identify a body found in a tent.

In this incident, a man was found alone in a tent with no identification. The only thing with him was a newspaper, which helped determine how long the man had been deceased based on the date on the newspaper.

Like the body found in the river, law enforcement officers throughout the county were made aware of the unidentified body that was found. However, no one had any reports of an individual missing who matched the man's description.

A breakthrough in identifying the body came once it was examined at the morgue. During this time, the coroner noted a green shamrock tattoo on the man.

Gessner made a call to the Kankakee County Sheriff's Office to see if they had any information in their records' system that could help identify the body. In fewer than 15 minutes, Bukowski had searched through his public safety records and corrections software and had a positive hit.

"It was the fastest we have ever been able to identify a body," Gessner said. "It wouldn't be possible without the records software." **CN**

*For more information on this story, contact: Sgt. Trent Bukowski, IT director Kankakee County Sheriff's Office: 815.802.7100, tjbukowski@k3county.net*

## CN SPOTLIGHT



### U.S. Communities Foundation donates \$50,000 to American Red Cross

Linda Mathes, chief executive officer of the American Red Cross in the National Capital Region (I), and Carolyn Coleman, executive director, League of California Cities, show off the \$50,000 check donated to the Red Cross from the U.S. Communities Foundation.

The U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance (U.S. Communities) presented the check May 31. The donation, in the form of Home Depot gift cards, will support disaster response and preparedness work.

The check was presented by members and representatives of the U.S. Communities Foundation Board of Directors, comprising leaders from the Association of School Business Officials International, California State Association of Counties, League of California Cities, National Association of Counties, National Governors Association, National League of Cities and U.S. Conference of Mayors. In addition to providing oversight of the U.S. Communities program, the foundation board members determine funding of charitable activities that directly benefit the public sector organizations served by the U.S. Communities program. Photo by Hugh Clarke



# New population estimates show growth in majority of counties

By **Stacey Nakintu**  
research associate

The U.S. Census Bureau 2017 population estimates released in March show considerable population growth in counties across the nation. The majority (57 percent) of the nation's 3,069 counties with county governments saw population increases in 2017.

Between July 1, 2016 and July 1, 2017, 53 counties gained 10,000 residents or more, with six of the top 10 largest-gaining counties from Texas.

Large counties — those with a population greater than 500,000 — continued to experience high population growth.

Maricopa County, Ariz. led the large counties with an annual population increase of nearly 74,000 residents.

This trend is consistent with the previous year, when Maricopa County added nearly 80,000 residents, overtaking Harris County as the fastest-growing large county in 2016.

In 2017, the number of large counties increased to 131 with the addition of three counties: Adams County, Colo., Greenville County, S.C. and Spokane County, Wash.

In total, they account for 50 percent of all county residents. The number of small counties, counties with populations of

## SPEEDREAD

**Adams County, Colo., Greenville County, S.C. and Spokane County, Wash. passed the 500,000 population threshold.**

fewer than 50,000, dropped to a total of 2,117 in 2017 from 2,120 in 2016.

Not surprisingly, large counties were the most likely to experience population growth in 2017.

Among counties with more than 500,000 residents, 89 percent gained population in 2017. About 73 percent of me-

dium-sized counties saw their population levels increase between 2016 and 2017. Among small counties, 48 percent of them gained population over the same period.

Population expansion continued to cluster in the South and the West. Southern and Western counties added the most residents, with Texas counties gaining nearly 400,000 residents in 2017. Florida counties and California counties added more than 320,000 and 240,000 residents respectively.

The top five fastest-growing states — Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Washington and Florida — added over 600,000 residents

total in 2017. Overall, 56 percent of Southern counties and 72 percent of Western counties gained population.

In contrast, 50 percent or more of Midwestern and Northeastern counties lost population. Most of these counties — about 568 — lost population in 2017.

Check out NACo's County Explorer benchmarking tool to find out more and compare your county across several indicators, including 2017 population with other counties, your state, similarly sized counties or the median for the 3,069 counties.

Visit [www.NACo.org/CountyExplorer](http://www.NACo.org/CountyExplorer). **CN**

# NACE and NACo, together moving America forward

The National Association of County Engineers (NACE) has had a busy month of May, concentrating its efforts on how best to complement NACo as a resource for federal advocacy and policy. From electing a new national president and executive committee to installing a new executive director, NACE has been hard at work in strengthening its contributions to the nation's 3,069 counties, boroughs and parishes.

In early May, the nation's county road professionals convened in the Wisconsin Dells to hold their 57th Annual Meeting and Technical Conference. At the conference, a new executive committee was installed with Polk County, Minn. County Engineer Richard Sanders serving as the organization's national president. Sanders is joined by Genesee County, N.Y. Highway Superintendent Timothy Hens and Santa Barbara County, Calif. Public Works Director Scott McGolpin as president-elect and secretary-treasurer, respectively. Together with eight other representatives, they form NACE's executive committee.

With an eye for enhanced collaboration with NACo, NACE also brought on a new



**Kevan Stone**  
NACE executive director

executive director, Kevan Stone. Stone, formerly NACo's associate legislative director for transportation, began May 14.

NACE continues to be a national leader in local road safety and supports national efforts to eliminate deaths on all public roads. Through its continued work with the National Local Technical Assistance Program Association, the U.S. Federal Highway Administration and the National Center for Rural Road Safety, NACE will continue to work towards every county's possessing a County Road Safety Plan.

Currently, NACE in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration, is working with 25 counties in California, Colorado, Florida, Nevada, Ohio and Wisconsin to develop

County Road Safety Plans. This work is being funded through the Federal Highway Administration's Everyday Counts Program. NACE encourages counties and states to develop these plans and offers assistance in their formation, which statistics show have directly resulted in increased local road safety.

The new executive commit-

tee and executive director have made membership growth a primary goal. NACE's professional and educational development, coupled with its opportunities through NACo to influence policy, plans for greater outreach.

As one of NACo's most active affiliates, NACE has a long tradition of working together

with NACo on transportation and infrastructure issues. Since counties own 46 percent of the nation's roads and 38 percent of its bridges, county road professionals maintain more infrastructure than any other government entity. **CN**

Visit NACE at [www.countyengineers.org](http://www.countyengineers.org).

**New Member Benefit:**  
**PRE-DISASTER SERVICE CONTRACTS**

NACo has partnered with IBTS to help counties prepare for disasters. To learn more, contact **Dana Johnston** with IBTS at [djohnston@ibts.org](mailto:djohnston@ibts.org) or **571-305-3463**

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES **NACo**

LEADERSHIP EDGE

# County News interviews Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo.)

## Chair, U.S. House Transportation Subcommittee on Highways and Transit

**What is the federal government's role or responsibility as it pertains to local infrastructure?**

I believe infrastructure is something all levels of government should do, and should do well. The federal government, states and localities are partners and we rely on each other to build and maintain our vast infrastructure network. I believe in a strong federal role and I look forward to engaging with states and local governments on how we can improve our partnership as the committee considers the next surface transportation reauthorization bill in the coming years.

**As a licensed pilot, you know the importance of aviation infrastructure. Local governments own or operate over one-third of the nation's airports, including both commercial and general aviation facilities. How can county governments ensure the FAA bill is one that addresses the needs of these airport facilities, many of which are in need of repair, renovation and rehabilitation?**

One of the key programs for investing in our airports is the "airport improvement program" or AIP. This program is something I have worked vigorously to get increases in funding for. The funding has remained stagnant for a number of years, and I hope to see more robust support for our rural airports when the FAA bill is signed into law. As part of FAA, which passed the House in April, we were able to authorize for five years a \$1 billion per-year grant program for small and medium-sized airports. That's an additional \$5 billion in airport investment we have made available to help meet the needs of our nation's airports. I will continue

to work with my colleagues in Congress to find more opportunities to provide new, robust funding options for airports big and small.

**Rural roads are some of the most important stretches of concrete in the country, ensuring goods get to market in a timely manner. Your district has large swaths of rural roads; what can be done to ensure these vital arterials are addressed in any infrastructure legislation?**

As chairman of the Highways and Transit Subcommittee, I have made it a priority to invest and modernize the way we move people, goods and ideas. One of the best ways we can do that is to find a long-term funding solution for the Highway Trust Fund. Without an adequate funding source, we will never reach the level of investment needed to bring our rural infrastructure into the 21st century.



Graves

In addition, this administration has prioritized investing in rural infrastructure; whether that is the 30 percent set-aside for rural projects as part of the BUILD grant program, opportunities to apply for no-match federal grants or the additional investments in rural broadband. Congress and the Trump Administration are investing in rural America, and we will continue to work with our local partners to identify

ways to address the needs of these communities.

**You were formerly the chairman of the House Small Business Committee. What are your thoughts on economic development as it correlates to infrastructure investment and development?**

Everything in this country moves. So, a safe and efficient transportation network is vital to our economic well-being. We all rely on the diverse transportation options — rail and transit, cars, and planes — to get us to where we are going. Whether you are a big business or small business, we need to have a strong infrastructure system to give all our companies the opportunity to compete in the global economy.

**The president's infrastructure plan called on localities to raise more money, whether it be through a private partner or other revenue generation.**

**County budgets are stretched thin but still invest over \$120 billion a year on infrastructure. Do you feel localities should be bringing more to the table?**

The president's proposal did call for more local and private sector investment when it came to newly proposed or existing competitive federal funding. However, it also proposed no-match federal grants for rural transportation and made no recommendations for changes to the existing federal matching requirements for formula-funded highway projects.

With that said, the president's proposal is just a starting point. Congress has not discussed any serious changes to these requirements with regard to traditional infrastructure funding programs. Local governments can continue to count on the anticipated match requirements for all federal formula funds.

WORD SEARCH

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, Calif.  
Created By: Mary Ann Barton

**ARNASON:** Judge Richard Arnason was the longest-serving judge in the county, for 49 years. He presided over the Angela Davis trial in 1972, one of the most significant cases of the era.

**BOCCE:** The county seat is the bocce ball capital of the country with hundreds of residents playing in local leagues.

**DIABLO:** The most notable natural landmark in the county is Mount Diablo, at 3,849 feet high.

**DIMAGGIO:** The county seat is the birthplace of famous New York Yankee slugger Joe DiMaggio.

**DOG:** The county's Point Isabel Regional Shoreline is touted as the largest dog park in the country.

**FAIR:** The Contra Costa County Fair, held earlier this month, has been a tradition for more than 75 years.

**HANKS:** Actor Tom Hanks is from the county.

**MARTINEZ:** The county seat.

**MARTINI:** The famous cocktail was first invented and poured in Martinez, the county seat, in 1874.

**ORIGINAL:** The county was one of the original 27 counties in California. Today the state has 58 counties.

**PLAYWRIGHT:** The Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site is located in the county.

**POPULATION:** The population of the county is 1,147,439, according to the U.S. Census.

**ROSIE:** The county is home to the Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park.

**SPANISH:** The name of the county, Contra Costa, is Spanish for "the opposite coast," a reference to its position on the other side of the bay from San Francisco.

**WATER:** The county is surrounded on three sides by water including the Suisun Bay, San Pablo Bay and the San Joaquin River among other bodies of water.



## BRIGHT IDEAS | ST. LUCIE COUNTY, Fla.

# Inmates learn financial basics

### PROBLEM:

Inmates find it difficult to successfully integrate into society after being released from jail and often end up returning.

### SOLUTION:

St. Lucie County, Fla. initiated a financial workshop series to help inmates reach their financial goals after they are released.

**By Mary Ann Barton**  
senior staff writer

How can your county keep the same folks from turning up in your jail time after time? You might try a program underway in St. Lucie County, Fla., where inmates are being taught financial basics designed to help them create a strategy for success after they're released.

The 16-part series, "Your Game Plan for Building Wealth," is a Financial Life Skills Extension program focused on proactive money management and designed to raise awareness of the financial pitfalls inmates may face after their release from the St. Lucie County jail.

"From my experience as a program specialist and working with them, I've gotten a lot of feedback and a lot of them don't have an opportunity to learn about financial topics," said Carol Alberts, an agent with the University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, who teaches the courses.

The series began when Alberts was a program specialist for Extension, she said. "I started with eight lessons, taught once a week with the men's group, then would transition to the women's dorm. The topics expanded based on comments from the inmates, stories they'd share about one financial pitfall or another that helped me recognize educational gaps to fill."

For example, she created the "Rights and Responsibilities of Renters" segment after hearing the women share stories about finding their landlord standing in their apartment unexpectedly, she said. "Most of them didn't know that was not OK! So, my program grew and so did my territory — St. Lucie, Indian River and Okeechobee counties had me coming to teach regularly for three years." Then the financial crisis hit Florida and counties had to reduce personnel to balance the budget. Her position was eliminated in 2010.

She rejoined the Extension service last year and immediately contacted the St. Lucie County Public Defenders office to establish her program. "I made contact with the Public Defender's Office and again offered my services," she said. "That gave me the opportunity to update the programs and get comfortable in front of an audience again."

Today, Alberts goes into the jail dorm to teach the courses. She uses a large binder filled with information since electronic equipment isn't allowed. Each workshop lasts an hour to 90 minutes, she said.

She begins her sessions with the main theme: What are the four steps to building wealth? "Every one of the 16 segments goes back somehow to one of those four steps," she said. She gives the inmates local resources in the county where they can get help maneuvering the steps.

"...we end up with a lot of time for them to share stories, listen to each other and kind of learn from each other," she said.

One of the most popular courses, Alberts said, is dealing with debt collectors: "What you should say, what you shouldn't say."

Working with the St. Lucie County Jail's chaplain and the UF/IFAS Extension, St. Lucie

County adopted the program after learning from a Florida Department of Corrections study that recidivism rates are significantly lower for inmates who complete academic, vocational and substance abuse programs.

Program objectives include improving inmate job readiness, entrepreneurship, budgeting, banking, saving, credit management, consumer awareness, communication skills and loss mitigation. Special attention is paid to educate participants about the community resources available to them upon release, Alberts said.

Program partners include the jail, Public Defender's Office and the UF/IFAS Extension with the St. Lucie Community Resource Development (CRD) agent serving as the program's facilitator. Since its inception in July 2017, participating inmates consistently report increased knowledge of how to set specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time sensitive (SMART) goals.

Some of the program steps are:

- **A game plan for building wealth:** "We go over the four steps of building wealth," Alberts said. "I have a big Post-it easel and I have them tell me ways to accomplish each step — it gets them thinking."

- **Applying and interviewing for a job:** Inmates practice responses to interview questions, learn how to present the Federal Bonding Program to an employer, identify how certain strengths and personality traits lend themselves to different types of jobs, provide encouragement to keep applying ("every no is that much closer to a yes").

The Federal Bonding Program issues fidelity bonds, which are business insurance policies that protect employers in case of theft, forgery, larceny, or embezzlement of money or

property by an employee who is covered by the bond. The bond coverage is usually \$5,000 with no deductible amount of liability for the employer.

- **Is owning a business a good fit for you?** Understanding myths and realities of business ownership, evaluating skills for entrepreneurship and learning basic business terms.


- **Creating a usable spending plan:** Calculating income, tracking expenses, setting SMART goals and including the money for those goals in the budget, and looking at ways to save or increase income so the budget balances.

- **Banking basics:** Learning financial terms, comparing accounts and financial institutions, understanding how overdraft protection works, practicing writing a check and deposit slip, then reconciling an account.

- **Ways to save:** A big focus on creating an emergency fund, identifying cost-saving behaviors, locating and repairing "leaks" in spending and learning about the time value of money (why "interest" exists).

In addition, Alberts also focuses on credit reports, background screening reports, credit wisdom, dealing with debt, saving and investing strategies, buying and insuring a car, landlord tenant laws and renter's insurance, home and personal property maintenance, estate planning and life insurance and love and money.

Other topics Alberts said might be added in the future include how to fund your higher education and what to know before you own a home.

"They're so excited to learn these things and grateful," she said. "They get so enthusiastic. They say 'I can't wait to go out and do it right this time.'" 

*If you'd like to find out more about the program, contact Alberts at: [cagator@ufl.edu](mailto:cagator@ufl.edu).*

## ON THE MOVE

### NACo STAFF



**Mattson**

- **Brett Mattson** has joined NACo's Legislative Affairs Department as a legislative assistant. Before joining NACo, Brett worked as a legislative intern for Nebraska State Sen. Pansing Brooks (D), and also as a research intern with the Southeast Nebraska Development District and an event manager with the Nebraska Wesleyan University.



**Hopper**

- **Lynn Hopper** is NACo's new human resources manager. She will assist the human resources director in recruiting, policy development, documentation, performance management, needs assessment, talent management and training. Before joining NACo, Lynn worked as a recruiter manager with East West Bank, and as human resources director with Outlook Amusements, Inc.

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# NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

## ALABAMA

**JEFFERSON COUNTY** is in negotiations with **Amazon** to build an 855,000-square foot distribution center on 133 acres that could bring up to 3,000 jobs to the county, according to *The Birmingham News*. County commissioners will vote soon on incentive proposals, possibly providing up to or reimbursing \$3.3 million for road and infrastructure improvements, as well as property tax abatements, and sales and use tax abatements. The City of Bessemer may agree to offer recruitment, screening and training services for new employees, the newspaper reported. The state is also expected to kick in incentives.

## FLORIDA

• Mandatory and voluntary evacuation orders were issued May 28 in Florida's **FRANKLIN, GULF and WALTON**

counties after the hurricane season's first storm, Subtropical Storm Alberto, made landfall with winds of about 45 mph. Officials were worried about severe flooding and closed area beaches due to high surf and strong rip currents. Gov. Rick Scott (R) visited areas that were prepped for the storm, including the Walton County Emergency Operations Center. The storm continued its soggy path northward and eventually to the Midwest the next few days, creating flash flood-



## VIRGINIA

After a Department of Environmental Services worker found a plush bunny during trash collection following an event, **ARLINGTON COUNTY** has been using social media to find its owner. In late May into June, the department tweeted out a series of photos featuring the lost bunny visiting various DES locations, dressed in departmental garb. The state department of transportation has taken the cause through its social media channels, and local media including WTOP and *The Washington Post* have reported on the "found bunny." At press time he had not yet been claimed.

ing in some areas. The next named storm on the 2018 list of storm names? Beryl. Read more about this year's hurricane season in *County News*: <https://bit.ly/2kxRpoU>

• Thought to be the first of its kind in the country, **HILLBOROUGH COUNTY** commissioners recently passed, on a 5-2 vote, a Truth in Training ordinance designed to regulate dog training. The new ordinance requires trainers to obtain a license and agree to training plans with pet owners before beginning instruction, according to the *Tampa Bay Times*. Under the ordinance, trainers would have to provide their credentials to the county for publication and have liability insurance of at least \$100,000. The ordinance also requires trainers to undergo local and federal background checks; anyone convicted of animal cruelty would also be barred from working as a trainer in the county.

• **OSCEOLA COUNTY** has

created a \$1 million incentive fund for developers considering purchasing land in order to encourage the development of affordable housing. The new incentive program was unanimously approved recently by county commissioners. The funds can also be used to pay down "mobility fees," the fees developers pay to improve roads and transit systems impacted by new private construction projects. The county voted to more than double the fees in January due to the increasing costs of construction. "The shortage of affordable housing is at a crisis level, so this board had to be creative and come up with a solution for our citizens," said Commission Vice Chairwoman Cheryl Grieb. "By budgeting \$1 million we are signaling our desire to address this issue in a way that creates both single-family and multi-family opportunities in the areas of greatest need in the county."

## MISSOURI

Stealing black walnut trees

for drug money? It's happening in **FRANKLIN COUNTY**. Drug addicts first steal tow trucks in order to load up on the lumber to sell for drug money, according to a report by FOX2Now. Wood from walnut trees brings high prices — up to \$10,000 for a walnut log; the logs are sold to saw mills. High-quality, 2-inch thick black walnut lumber sells for \$11 per board foot, according to *butcherblockco.com*. Black walnut trees are found throughout the central and eastern United States; it takes almost a century for a black walnut tree to fully mature.

## MONTANA

**MISSOULA COUNTY** commissioners are citing concerns to the state and federal government about pollution at a former paper and pulp mill site near Clark Fork River, radio station KGVO reported. When the mill closed in 2010 it included 900 acres of settling, sludge and wastewater ponds, according to the Clark Fork Coalition. In a letter to the En-



## COLORADO

**MESA COUNTY** commissioners recently passed a resolution urging the federal government to oppose reintroduction of the gray wolf to Colorado. The commissioners urged the feds to follow the recommendation of the Colorado Wildlife Commission which also opposes bringing the wolves back to the state. Commissioners and others say wolves would hurt the moose population and threaten sheep and cattle. The Sierra Club is seeking to reintroduce wolves to Colorado; one of its arguments is that wolves would improve biodiversity.



Environmental Protection Agency and the state Department of Environmental Quality, they say that potential floodwaters could breach protective berms where collected waste is buried. The county is asking to “hold the polluter responsible for the financial and environmental liabilities at the site.”

## NEVADA

After a real estate developer promised a park as part of a new 7,000-home community, **CLARK COUNTY** decided to hold the company to that promise. The county will **stop issuing residential building permits** for the Southern Highlands development until the park is completed. The deadline had been May 31, though its initial target date was in 2008. The *Las Vegas Review-Journal* reported a number of delays in the process, including the recession.

The park was part of an agreement that would allow the developer to avoid paying a special construction tax of up to \$1,000 a home.



## NEW JERSEY

• **NASSAU COUNTY** and the state department of transportation’s effort to beef up a 12-year-old safety program has paid off this prom season, issuing 30 citations for drivers hired for three dances.

The **prom check program** performs checks of hired drivers for valid licensing and registration and safety checks of vehicles during the dances. No students were left without transportation after the proms, since the limo companies provided replacement drivers or vehicles for those cited.

In the case of Uber and Lyft, county Consumer Affairs investigators fine drivers who are driving vehicles that are different from those they have registered with the ride-sharing companies. A staffing increase by the DOT helped wid-

en the scope of the program’s screening this year. One driver was cited for driving a “prom bus” with a suspended license. The prom citations carry civil penalties from \$250 to \$1,500, *Newsday* reported.

## NEW YORK

County Executive George Latimer wants to ban health professionals in **WESTCHESTER COUNTY** from performing therapies aimed at changing a person’s **sexual orientation or gender identity** if the patient is under 18.

The process has been largely discredited by a number of medical and mental health organizations, and within the state has already been banned in Albany and New York City. In May, Maryland’s and Hawai’i’s governors signed statewide bans into law, along with nine other states.

The law as written would define therapies as anything provided to consumers for a fee. Anyone breaking the law would face a misdemeanor punishable by a \$1,000 fine or up to a year in jail, *The Journal News* reported.

## OHIO

A \$100,000 grant from the Ohio Supreme Court’s Ohio Courts Technology Initiative will help **BUTLER COUNTY** create an **electronic court record system**, which will save personnel from scanning nearly 800,000 documents annually.

The county’s savings from the project will take several years to calculate, but Clerk of Courts Mary Swain said the digitization will allow the county to reduce staff through attrition, *The Journal-News* reported.

## OREGON

A push for **term limits** in **DOUGLAS COUNTY** hit a wall when the Oregon State Court of Appeals ruled a ballot measure in their favor was unconstitutional.

Voters cast nearly 70 percent of their votes behind the



## FLORIDA

• Seeking solutions to school violence, **LEON COUNTY** schools **banned backpacks** the last week of school, after the county sheriff deemed it a “best practice.” **MANATEE, ORANGE, POLK and SEMINOLE counties** also decided to ban backpacks or already had such policies in place, according to the *Orlando Sentinel*. Other schools in Ohio and Illinois have banned backpacks, according to news reports. Some companies are also selling bullet-proof backpacks.

2014 ballot measure, which was struck down in 2016 by the Douglas County Circuit Court. Before that, though, former county commissioner Susan Morgan was barred from running for reelection in 2016. She brought the suit against the measure in 2015, *The News-Review* reported. Presiding Judge Rex Armstrong said counties don’t have the power to add qualifications, including term limits, for positions other than county assessor, sheriff, coroner and surveyor.

The decision will reverse a three-term limit set in 1996 for **YAMHILL COUNTY** commissioners.

## WASHINGTON

**PIERCE COUNTY** is offering a one-time benefit to companies that relocate within the county.

That benefit will be worth **\$275 for every employee** earning \$65,000 or more for companies with at least five staffers earning that much. The incentive would take different forms in different cities,

including permit discounts or business-and-occupation tax credits, *The News Tribune* reported.

## WISCONSIN

The **RACINE COUNTY** court system has its first full-time **Spanish court interpreter**, interpreting Spanish to English and English to Spanish in family, civil and criminal court cases.

Racine County is only the second Wisconsin county to have a full-time interpreter, along with **MILWAUKEE COUNTY**. Madison splits the role between two people.

Prior to interpreter’s hiring, the common practice for cases needing an interpreter for Spanish or any other language was to contract with independent freelancers for a set amount of time.

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



## NEW JERSEY

A 25-acre park in **OCEAN CITY** is up and running nearly six years after Hurricane Sandy washed it away.

Berkeley Island Park reopened with the amenities residents were used to, along with new features, including a new playground. The project cost \$8 million and the shallow swimming beach was not restored, the county instead opting for a fountain-like “splash pad” that doesn’t require a lifeguard.

The county had to secure permits from the state Department of Environmental Protection to dredge and redeposit sand that had been washed away to restore the park to its original size.

## the HR DOCTOR

with Philpot & Winkler

**G**abe has been with the county two years and is an engaged employee. A few months ago, he started having some medical issues at work. He got migraines and felt ill, needing to go home unexpectedly and often. Some days were better than others, so Gabe and his supervisor tried to identify the commonalities. Employees were asked to assist and they did so, happy to help a well-liked colleague.

Did Gabe have a food allergy? Employees made certain to not have any snacks at their desks. Supervisors and managers stopped bringing homemade treats to staff meetings. Was Gabe sensitive to smells? Co-workers stopped reheating more pungent foods in the microwave in the break room, stopped using scented hand lotion in the office and the co-worker with a desk nearest Gabe stopped wearing perfume.

Still, the episodes continued. Light seemed to bother Gabe, so some of the fluorescent lights were turned off in the office. One employee, Veronica, told other staff she was certain Gabe had the same diagnosis as her brother, and this rumor about a specific condition spread throughout the office. Since Gabe was suffering from migraines, he told his supervisor he did not feel comfortable driving a county vehicle, but Gabe's job required driving responsibilities. Thus Abby took on the driving responsibilities of Gabe's workload.

Meanwhile, Gabe ran out of sick time. The supervisor allowed Gabe to work a flex schedule, piecing the schedule together whenever Gabe was able to come to work. Gabe would come in at 6:30 a.m. some days, come in at noon on other days, and often have

# Patience vs. Process



Friday and Monday off. After a few months, just as the department head asked the Facilities Department to provide a list of the chemicals used to clean the carpet, morale in the office waned and co-workers started to complain.

Brian had been taking on extra tasks to keep Gabe's workload current, but summer was coming and he wanted to take some time off with his family. Jill's eyes were bothering her from the low light at her desk. Abe requested an alternative schedule for himself. Some staff missed the supervisor's homemade banana nut cake at staff meetings. One valued staff member transferred to another department. The department head went to Human Resources and asked "Can we terminate Gabe? I have an office to run. I've been patient."

Gabe's illnesses may fall under Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or it may fall under Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) or both. It is important to refer to your county's policies and processes for each.

Gabe should have been provided FMLA paperwork when

---

**If the request made by the employee poses an undue hardship, the employer must propose an alternative accommodation that does not pose such a hardship.**

---

he experienced multiple absences for illnesses, long before he ran out of sick time. Depending on the documentation provided by his physician, his illnesses may have been protected by FMLA as intermittent leave if it met the definition of a "serious health condition." Retroactively designating FMLA for an illness that is not an emergency can be difficult and will rely heavily on the doctor's documentation, your policy and your consistent practice.

Gabe's doctor, when presented with the FMLA paperwork, may tell Gabe that his condition qualifies under the ADA. However, many doctors may

not be that proactive. To qualify as a disability under the ADA, Gabe's condition would need to substantially limit one or more major life activities.

It is possible that Gabe's FMLA paperwork as completed by the doctor could provide enough information to indicate that his condition qualifies as a disability, and the employer then will need to begin an interactive process without asking for additional forms. Repeatedly asking for additional documentation can be viewed as delaying the process or creating barriers for the employee. But FMLA paperwork is not designed to also qualify an employee for the ADA. Thus, the additional form and the information it collects may be necessary. Further, if an employee is seeing multiple doctors to diagnose a problem or for symptoms related to a more complex issue, the documentation may be more complicated. Medical certifications and documentations should be handled by Human Resources staff. Supervisors need to know the restrictions to the work and dates of appointments for absences, but not a medical diag-

nosis.

Through the interactive process, Gabe may request additional leave as an accommodation or he may request a variety of accommodations including a change in how work is completed (such as the lights), a change in his workspace or an exception to a policy.

The purpose for the interactive process will be for the employer and Gabe to agree upon a "reasonable accommodation," or changes in Gabe's working conditions, that will enable Gabe to perform the necessary functions of his job despite having a disability. This accommodation must be provided unless doing so would pose an "undue hardship" on the employer. Unlike FMLA with the 12 weeks of leave, there is no set amount of time for an accommodation under the ADA, so the accommodation could be ongoing. The employer must consider what it can sustain for the long term and what it could reasonably provide if another employee made a similar request, although all accommodations need to be reviewed independently.

A guiding document in this process will be the essential functions as listed in the job description or job posting. An accommodation must allow an employee to continue performing the essential functions of his job; removing an essential function from the job description is not a "reasonable" accommodation.

When Gabe's job was posted, the essential functions list stated: working with and around others; hearing and speech to communicate with others; and finger dexterity for writing, computer work and phones. Driving was not listed as an essential function.

Additionally, since the employer has been providing accommodations to Gabe for several months, it may be difficult for the department to argue that



## Cases of FMLA, ADA should be handled with care, equity

From HR DOCTOR page 18

the accommodations that have been provided are creating an undue hardship. Undue hardship is defined as a significant difficulty or expense; it is determined on a case by case basis and it varies based on the size of the employer, the resources the employer has to meet the request and the disruption to the work.

If the request made by the employee poses an undue hardship, the employer must propose an alternative accommodation that does not pose such a hardship.

It is important to remember the accommodation must arise out of a discussion that involves the employee, employer and the employee's department with a focus on returning the employee to work. Employers may not dictate what is best for the employee in an interactive process; similarly, an employee cannot impose a particular accommodation on his employer if another one would be sufficient.

Accommodations under the ADA should provide an environment in which the employee can perform work, so leave or time off should be the last option considered.

Here is a rule of thumb to assist in generally separating FMLA and ADA laws: FMLA gives an employee with a serious medical condition the ability to take leave to heal and return to work.

ADA gives an employee with a disability a way to remain at work and perform the breadth of her job.

Admittedly, this is a bit of an over simplification, as situations can get complicated and FMLA and ADA can and do intersect with some conditions falling under both laws.

Here are some dos and don'ts for such issues:

- Do contact Human Resources early in the process
- Do send the employee FMLA paperwork, in accordance with your policy, if they have multiple absences due to

illness or an ill family member.

- Do familiarize yourself and all supervisors and managers with FMLA and ADA law and policy.
- Do have essential functions listed in your job descriptions or job postings and regularly review those descriptions.
- Do engage in the interactive process if the issue falls under the ADA.
- Do not impose accommodations on an employee without an interactive process.
- Do document each meeting concerning an interactive process.
- Do not diagnose the employee or regard them as having a disability. If an individual is regarded as having a disability, they are protected by the ADA, even if no disability exists.
- Do apply your policies and practices consistently as failing to do so could be discrimination, subject to enforcement by the EEOC and Department of Justice.
- Do contact an attorney if the case becomes complicated, possibly involving intermittent leave, retroactively designating leave, or a challenge in finding a reasonable and effective accommodation.

It is important to remember that in most cases, employees are not abusing the leave. They are legitimately ill or have a documented disability. Providing them the time they need to recover from illness or providing them an accommodation that allows them to positively contribute their knowledge, skills and abilities to a team benefits not only the individual, but the organization and fulfills the purposes of these laws.

Cases of FMLA and ADA should be handled with care, equity and compassion. The processes outlined by law, policy and documentation must be followed and allowed to work, which can require patience.

In public service, we take care of our most vulnerable community members. That embrace must also extend to our colleagues. **CN**



### CASSIA COUNTY, Idaho

Designed by: Janet Burch  
Introduced in: 1987

**A**dapted from a colored pencil design drawn by contest winner Janet Burch, the Cassia County seal reflects the county's character and physical attributes.



Front and center, the Snake River irrigates over one million acres of rich farm land and generates electricity for private and industrial users. The irrigation makes the surrounding lands highly productive. Since the beginning of the irrigation projects.

The dairy industry has been an important part of the economy, at one time being so prevalent that cans lined country roads, waiting to be transported to the creamery.

The cow is one of 125,000 head that graze on the state- and federally-owned land within the county.

Agriculturally, the area was known as "The Potato Processing Capital of the World," and the seal includes a spud, a carrot and wheat.

Sixty percent of the land in Cassia County is state and federally owned and is used primarily for grazing 125,000 head of cattle.

The mountains, clouds and shining sun represent Cassia County's natural beauty.

Would you like to see your county's seal featured? Contact Charlie Ban at [cban@naco.org](mailto:cban@naco.org).

NEW IN JUNE FROM NACo's

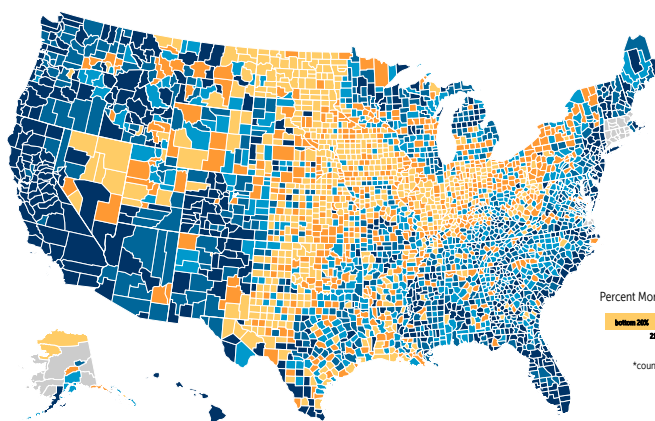
# COUNTY EXPLORER

**36%** of homeowners with a mortgage **pay more than 30 percent** of their household income on monthly housing costs.

**\$15.5 BILLION**  
**12.2 MILLION**

or more of federal dollars were invested by 1,421 counties for housing and community development during FY2014-2016.

jobs were supported by international exports in counties across the nation in 2017.



2016 Housing Costs  
Percent Mortgaged Housing Above Affordability Threshold

Bottom 20%	20.0%	25.0%	30.0%	Top 20%
21.0%	25.0%	30.0%	35.0%	

\*county data is unavailable if the county is colored grey

Source: NACo Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau - American Community Survey (ACS) 5 year estimates, 2016

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# NACo ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION

DAVIDSON COUNTY /  
NASHVILLE,  
TENNESSEE  
JULY 13-16, 2018

GAYLORD OPRYLAND RESORT & CONVENTION CENTER

## AMERICA'S LARGEST MEETING OF COUNTY OFFICIALS!

### CONFERENCE SCHEDULE HIGHLIGHTS

(schedule subject to change)

#### THURSDAY, JULY 12

- 8:30 a.m.** CIO and Technology Leadership Forum
- 1:00 p.m.** Smarter Counties Summit: Technology Driving Innovation, Day 1
- 2:00 p.m.\*** **Mobile Workshops** – choose from:
- Cumberland River Compact
  - Nashville's Barnes Fund and Housing Incentive Pilot Program (HIPP)
  - Resilience & Disaster Tour
  - Oasis Center Tour on Youth Resiliency
- \*approximate start time*
- 4:00 p.m.** Documentary Screening and Discussion: Heroin(e)
- 5:30 p.m.** Smarter Counties Summit: Technology Driving Innovation – Reception

#### FRIDAY, JULY 13

- 7:30 a.m.** First-Time Attendees Orientation
- 9:00 a.m.** Policy Steering Committee Meetings (*open to all conference attendees*)
- 12:00 p.m.** Healthy Counties Roundtable  
NextGen Community Service Project – Oasis Center  
Smarter Counties Summit: Technology Driving Innovation, Day 2
- 4:00 p.m.** Exhibit Hall Reception
- 6:00 p.m.** NACo Opening Reception – a **"Taste of Tennessee"** event you won't want to miss!

#### SATURDAY, JULY 14

- 8:30 a.m.** Standing, Ad Hoc, Advisory and Task Force Meetings
- 9:00 a.m.** Exhibit Hall Open
- 10:00 a.m.** Crisis Communication Strategies for County Officials (*separate RSVP and fee required*)
- 12:00 p.m.** Resilient Counties: Leveraging New Technologies to Build More Resilient & Sustainable Communities
- 1:45 p.m.** NACo Board Forum
- 2:00 p.m.** Engaging Artists, Building Community: A Meeting of the NACo Arts & Culture Commission
- 3:15 p.m.** General Session

#### SUNDAY, JULY 15

- 9:00 a.m.** Affordable Housing Forum (*separate RSVP required*)  
Exhibit Hall Open  
Educational Workshops  
NACo Board of Directors and Resolutions Committee Meeting
- 10:30 a.m.** Educational Workshops
- 12:00 p.m.** NACo Achievement Awards Luncheon sponsored by Aetna
- 2:15 p.m.** Educational Workshops  
Essential Practices in Technology Leadership for County Officials  
(*separate RSVP and fee required*)
- 3:45 p.m.** Educational Workshops
- 5:30 p.m.** A Night in Downtown Nashville  
*Experience the heart of Nashville! NACo will provide looping roundtrip transportation for all conference attendees from the Gaylord Opryland to downtown Nashville for you to explore on your own.*
- 7:00 p.m.** LUCC/RAC Reception (*invitation only*)

#### MONDAY, JULY 16

- 8:00 a.m.** Educational Workshops
- 9:30 a.m.** NACo Annual Business Meeting and Election
- 11:45 a.m.** Regional Caucus Meetings
- 1:30 p.m.** General Session
- 3:45 p.m.** NACo New Board of Directors Organizational Meeting
- 6:30 p.m.** NACo Closing Celebration Event

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

**Marian Wright Edelman**  
Founder and President,  
Children's Defense Fund



**Eddie George**  
NFL Legend, Entrepreneur  
and Renaissance Man



Full schedule of events now available at [www.NACo.org/Annual](http://www.NACo.org/Annual)

