



**MINNESOTA COUNTY
BECOMES OWN
BROADBAND ISP PG. 9**



**BRIGHT IDEA: DRESSED
TO ACE THE INTERVIEW
PG. 13**



**MORE WIR REPORTS
BEGIN ON PG. 5**

House leaders unveil new proposal to tackle poverty

By Jack Peterson
legislative assistant

On June 7, House Speaker Paul Ryan and the House Republican Task Force on Poverty, Opportunity and Upward Mobility unveiled a new plan to fight poverty across the country. Ryan appointed five different House committees to lead Task Force, which sought input from all members of the Republican caucus on ways to “strengthen America’s social safety net...and help welfare recipients enter, reenter and remain in the workforce.”

This report represents the first installment of six policy papers expected to be released this summer through Ryan’s A Better Way campaign, which

See POVERTY page 17



The 2016–2017 WIR Executive Team members, following their installation at the 2016 WIR Conference May 27 in Teton County (Jackson), Wyo. From left: Kevin Cann, a Mariposa County, Calif. supervisor who will serve as WIR second vice president after Jan. 3, 2017; Second Vice President Tommie Cline Martin, a Gila County, Ariz. supervisor who will serve as second vice president; First Vice President Joel Bausman, a Sublette County, Wyo. commissioner; President Doug Breidenthal, a Jackson County, Ore. commissioner and Past President Gordon Cruickshank, a Valley County, Idaho commissioner. Photo by Charlie Ban

Western Interstate Region members expand focus beyond public lands issues

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

Though public lands will always be at the core of NACo’s Western Interstate Region, WIR President Doug Breidenthal said the group has come to represent much more.

“WIR has shifted gears, we’re not just public lands,” he said at the WIR Conference May 24–27 in Teton County (Jackson), Wyo. “We’ve worked with transportation, we’ve worked with health care, we worked on economics that are special to our region.”

That said, he added, all of those result from the management, and mismanagement, of public lands in their counties.

Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead (R),

Bureau of Land Management Director Neil Kornze, Grand Teton National Park Superintendent David Vela, Deputy Secretary of the Interior Michael Connor, Colorado Transportation Secretary Shailen Bhatt and pollster Scott Tranter spoke about Western interests at the conference’s general sessions.

“I think the Western region is on the horizon, that the sun is just starting to come up on Western issues,” Breidenthal said. “I’m seeing legislation move in Congress right now on public lands, things we’ve been working on for decades. We can make the case that the rising health care costs in our counties can be directly tied to some of those fires and disasters we deal

with on public lands.”

Breidenthal, who lost in the Jackson County, Ore. Republican primary race for county commissioner May 17, will serve as WIR president until Jan. 3, 2017. First Vice President Joel Bousman, a Sublette County, Wyo. commissioner, will complete the remainder of Breidenthal’s term and take the leadership position in for a full term through May 2018.

Tommie Cline Martin, a Gila County, Ariz. supervisor and currently WIR second vice president, will move into the president’s slot in 2018. Kevin Cann, a Mariposa County, Calif. supervisor, will become WIR sec-

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Congress splits on Zika funding

By Brian Bowden
associate legislative director

As the official start of summer looms, a pesky mosquito continues to cause concern—dividing Congress and demanding the full focus of our nation’s public health infrastructure.

The Aedes species (*Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*) mosquito is the carrier of the Zika virus, which can bite pregnant women, infecting their fetuses and causing serious birth defects such as microcephaly.

These mosquitoes, which also spread dengue and chikungunya viruses, have already infected almost 200 pregnant women in the continental U.S., all of whom were bitten when they were outside the U.S.

The CDC warns that these

See ZIKA page 2



A popular and effective biological control method of mosquitos is the installation of Mosquito fish or Gambusia into the water body as seen here. This fish is the most widely stocked fish species on the planet.

CDC shifts prevention funds to Zika fight

From ZIKA page 1

imported cases could result in a local spread of the virus in parts of the U.S. where Aedes mosquitoes are known to exist. There is currently no vaccine for the Zika virus.

County-supported public health departments have been working with state and federal partners to fight the Zika virus despite uncertain funding.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently announced it would have to shift \$44.2 million from state and local public health emergency preparedness (PHEP) grants to pay for the Zika response. The majority of the nation's 2,800 local public health departments are coun-

LEARN MORE

For up-to-date information from the CDC about the Zika virus, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>

For NACo's policy brief on protecting funding for prevention and public health, visit <http://bit.ly/1UDFh0x>

To see what one N.J. county is doing to combat Zika, visit <https://youtu.be/WZWmPwNOjaw>

ty-supported, and have already lost almost 52,000 jobs since the Great Recession according to the National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO). A recent study by NACCHO indicated that half of local health depart-

ments expected a further decrease in staffing capacity as a result of the PHEP cuts.

Meanwhile in the nation's capital, Congress remains divided on how best to provide emergency funding to combat the Zika virus. Last month, the House and Senate each passed bills and must now work to reconcile extreme differences through a process known as a conference committee.

The Senate advanced a \$1.1 billion package of emergency spending, which would be in addition to \$589 million redirected from the Obama administration's last emergency funding request for the Ebola virus. The funding would last until the end of FY17, or Sept. 30, 2017.

The House, on the other hand, approved a Zika funding package at almost half this amount. Its \$622 million package would only last through the end of this fiscal year, or Sept. 30.

The House offset the spending by using unspent Ebola money, as well as unused administrative funding within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The White House has issued a veto threat on the House's Zika funding bill, which would provide only about one-third of the funding contained within the President Obama's \$1.9 billion request for Zika.

While Congress debates funding, counties continue to be on the front lines by supporting public health efforts to minimize the potential spread of the Zika virus through mosquito eradication aimed at the Aedes species and public education. In addition, counties are being encouraged to work with their state and local colleagues on emergency preparedness plans. **CN**

White House Rural Council seeks counties to combat rural childhood poverty

By Doug O'Brien
White House Rural Council

Last year, President Obama directed the White House Rural Council to focus on rural child poverty as a priority. The chair of the council, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, has taken this charge and driven a robust agenda focusing on issues such as telehealth, access to nutrition, and improved services to rural families.

"Federal agencies have been aggressive in using the programs they have to make sure every child has an opportunity to succeed. But the federal government cannot do it alone," said Secretary Vilsack. "We need



O'Brien

vast majority of food, energy, and environmental benefits for the rest of the country and is the source of nearly 90 percent of renewable water resources, while serving as home to important service sector and manufacturing hubs.

Despite this role in the nation's economy, 85 percent of the country's persistent poverty counties still remain in rural America.

The lack of opportunity for rural kids and families is often compounded by other challenges such as distance from health and early learning programs, lack of access to public transportation and higher rates of substance use disorders, among others.

The Rural Impact County Challenge tackles these issues by leveraging and bringing federal agencies, the private sector and philanthropic institutions' resources together.

Counties can find out more information and to sign up here at www.naco.org/RuralImpact.

For specific inquiries or questions, the White House Rural Council can be reached at ruralaffairs@who.eop.gov. **CN**

85 percent of the country's persistent poverty counties still remain in rural America.

to work with the county governments to make sure we are making the most significant impact."

As a part of this effort, the White House Rural Council partnered with the National Association of Counties to announce the Rural Impact County Challenge (RICC), a call for at least 100 counties by summer 2016 to pledge to create opportunity for kids in rural areas. That's 100 county leaders committed to ensuring that the future of their community and rural America is bright.

Rural America provides the

Sand Point, Aleutians East Borough, Alaska



SNAP/STATS

COUNTIES WITH THE LARGEST SHARE OF FOREIGN-BORN RESIDENTS

County	Share Foreign-Born Residents
Miami-Dade County, Fla.	51.5%
Aleutians East Borough, Alaska	49.5%
Hudson County, N.J.	41.7%
Garza County, Texas.....	40.4%
Santa Clara County, Calif.....	37.4%

Source: United States Election Project

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Dale Sowards Award goes to duo



Dale Sowards Award winners Ron Walter and Lesley Robinson pose with outgoing WIR President Gordon Cruickshank. Walter is a Chelan County, Wash. commissioner and Robinson is Phillips County, Mont. commissioner. Photos by Charlie Ban

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and vice president Jan. 3.

WIR bylaws did not prescribe a succession plan in event of an executive vacancy, according to parliamentarian Dan Chadwick, executive director of the Idaho Association of Counties, so the WIR membership elected two slates of candidates for the 2016-2017 term.

Chelan County, Wash. Commissioner Ron Walter, who is not running for reelection, and Phillips County, Mont. Commissioner Lesley Robinson, a candidate for Montana's lieutenant governor's office, were the Dale Sowards Award winners. The award recognizes WIR members who demonstrate outstanding service to public lands counties. Both served as WIR presidents.

While in Teton County, Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee members toured Vertical Harvest, a greenhouse due to open the following day, built on a 30 foot by 150 foot plot. The greenhouse uses a four-story glass wall on the southern side that can balance natural light with artificial light, cutting energy costs. The crops, fed by a hydroponic solution, are moved throughout the building by a carousel.

"They're the most pampered plants on the planet," said CEO Nona Yehia. "They live in perfect conditions."



Larry Schoen, a Blaine County, Idaho commissioner, points out to BLM Manager Neil Kornze how short-staffed field offices have affected the bureau's work with his county.

"I think the Western region is on the horizon, that the sun is just starting to come up on Western issues."

– D. Breidenthal

Those conditions will create a yield of 100,000 pounds of produce in a year; what would usually take 5 acres can be accomplished in half of an acre. And the greenhouse can be used all year, much longer than northwestern Wyoming's three-month growing season.

"I think people were expecting more of a traditional greenhouse structure that would add

a few weeks to the growing season," Yehia said.

The greenhouse grows tomatoes, several varieties lettuce, microgreens and basil, which is all sold to local businesses that were otherwise getting their produce outside of the Teton County area.

"We didn't want to displace local farmers, and if we took this produce to a farmer's market the demand would be too much," Yehia said.

Vertical Harvest is a public-private partnership with the town of Jackson, which owns the building, but the business model is predicated on low profits. Fifteen of the 20 employees have some type of developmental disability, one of the primary tenets of the business. **CN**

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

By Sallie Clark

Conferences offer tools for better governance

Special thanks to the 500 county officials and state associations of counties who attended this year's Western Interstate Region (WIR) conference in Teton County (Jackson Hole), Wyo. last month. In partnership with Teton County and the Wyoming County Commissioners Association, the conference brought together nationally renowned experts, state and federal policy leaders and county officials from the 15 states in NACo's WIR.

With critical legislative and regulatory issues being debated in the nation's capital, we discussed issues particularly important to Western communities. These issues included:

- Ensuring certainty in federal county payments through the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools (SRS) programs,
- New regulations proposed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management that could substantially affect counties containing federal public lands, and
- Strengthening local infrastructure.

Each county — whether in the West or across the country — is unique, but we can learn from one another and shape key federal policies to help address the challenges we face every day.

We hope all counties, parishes and boroughs will join us at NACo's Annual Conference July 22-25 in Los Angeles County-Long Beach. In addition to helping us set our federal policy agenda for the year ahead, we have many educational workshops that offer second-to-none resources specifically for counties. Many of these opportunities fit within the theme of NACo's Safe and Secure Counties initiative, which focuses on protecting public safety, preserving pub-



lic health and well being, and promoting local economies.

One of these sessions is a lunch discussion on how county leaders are addressing the nation's opioid and heroin crisis. Boone County, Ky. Judge-Executive Gary Moore will discuss our National City-County Task Force on the Opioid Epidemic. Sam Quinones, a journalist and the author of *Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic*, will share his perspectives on the origins and future of the problem. And private sector partners will highlight tools counties use to stem the tide of the epidemic. Space is very limited, so RSVP now to secure your seat.

Another session will share lessons learned from a county that experienced an active shooter situation and how county officials collaborate with public and private sector partners to protect county residents and employees.

There are many other workshops designed to give you concrete tools to create safer, more secure communities across the country. From increasing local road safety to reducing the number of people with mental illnesses in jails, the Annual Conference will offer educational opportunities you can find nowhere else. Explore the full agenda and register today at www.NACo.org/Annual. **CN**

NACo bylaws changes go to a vote at Annual Business Meeting

As part of President Sallie Clark's promise to review and revise the NACo Bylaws and other policies, a professional parliamentarian was hired to review the NACo Bylaws this year. President Clark also appointed a Bylaws Review Committee to assess the parliamentarian's recommendations and consider other issues that have arisen recently regarding the bylaws.

Subsequently, the Bylaws Committee has developed a series of proposed changes that will be considered during NACo's Annual Business meeting, Monday, July 25 during the Annual Conference in Los Angeles County.

Among the proposals is a change to the voting formula. In 2015, the NACo Elections Review Committee recommended changing the formula for member counties at annual business meetings. This proposed change would update the weighted voting formula to account for changes in association dues as well as population growth over recent decades. It is meant to maintain a balance within and across the association. For a summary of what this voting formula change means see below.

For a summary of all proposed changes, bylaws edits and other information, go to www.naco.org/governance.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE NACo VOTING FORMULA FROM THE ELECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE

What Change is Being Proposed?

Each year during the NACo business meeting, member counties may vote for resolutions, bylaw changes and NACo officers. According to the NACo bylaws, member counties may cast one vote for every \$500 in dues paid by the county. Counties paying \$0-\$499 in dues have one vote, counties that pay \$500-\$999 in dues have two votes, and so on. Dues are capped at \$60,000, therefore a county's potential votes are also capped at 121.

Under the new, proposed formula, member counties would be eligible to cast **one vote for every \$1,200 in dues paid by the county**. Counties paying \$0-\$1,199 in annual dues would have one vote, counties paying \$1,200-\$2,399 in dues would have two votes, and so on. The maximum number of votes a county would receive (due to the dues cap of \$60,000) is 51.

The proposed bylaw amendment would NOT change the dues formula, but only the formula for weighting voting.

Why is this Change Being Proposed?

Based on recommendations by the NACo Election Review Task Force, the NACo board voted to recommend an update to the weighted vote formula during the 2015 NACo Legislative Conference. The main purposes of this proposal are to:

- Update the weighted voting formula to account for changes in the association's dues (including minimum and maximum levels) as well as the nation's population growth over recent decades
- Maintain a balance within and across the association

Overall, the proposed change would roughly restore the vote balance that existed in 1991, the earliest year for which we have dues records in our computer

system. Since 1991, the United States population has grown from 253 million to 320 million today.

Combined with the association raising the maximum dues from \$31,740 in 1991 to \$60,000 today, the addition of more than 65 million people across our counties has increased the county membership votes from 5,914 in 1991 to 9,772 today. The proposal would reduce the total membership votes to approximately 5,027 while adjusting vote totals for each member county.

The proposed amendment would make an adjustment to account for these shifts and to maintain balance across the organization. This is needed since adjustments were not made previously at the various times that dues were raised and/or adjusted in recent decades.

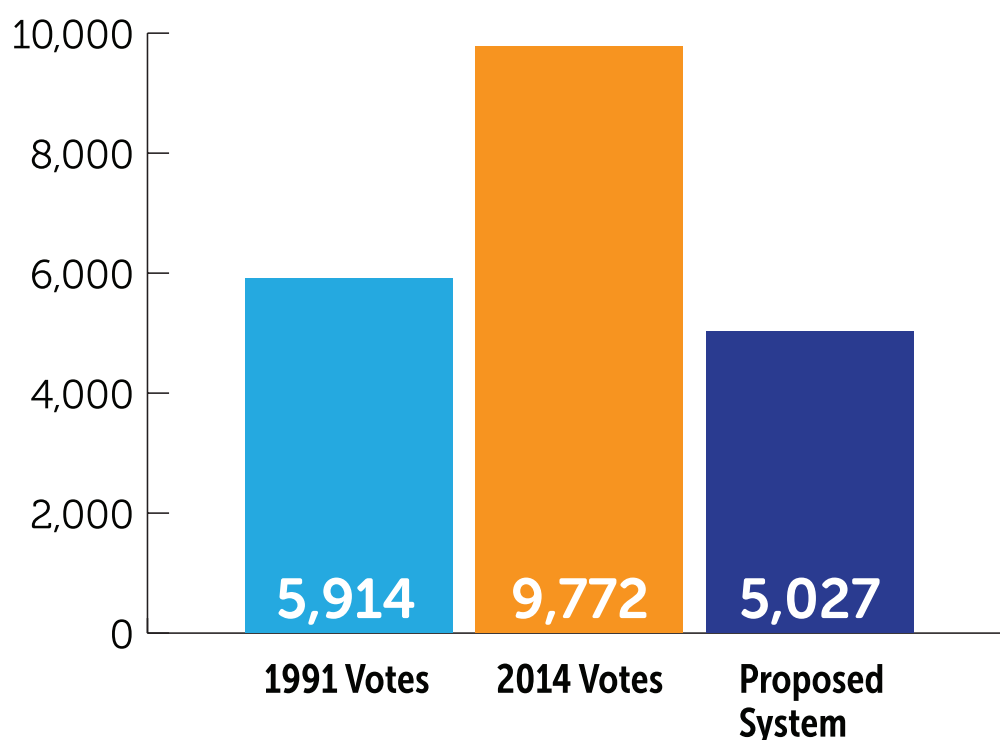
How Would This Affect My County's Vote?

This would be a shift for each county and each state. There would be fewer total votes, but each vote would have more of an impact. One vote under our current system is worth 0.01 percent of the total. Under the proposed system each vote would have almost twice as much of an impact, as each vote will be around 0.02 percent of the total. After the adjustment no county would see a change of more than 0.22 percent on the impact of their total votes.

How Would This Affect Votes for My State?

After the adjustment no state would see a change of more than 1.77 percent on the impact of their total votes in the state.

TOTAL VOTES OVER TIME



WIR speakers put Western values in a national context



Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead returned to his native county to address the WIR Opening General Session. Photos by Charlie Ban

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead (R) drew a direct connection between the negative tenor of the U.S. presidential race and the lack of Western influence in the race, and offered a path out of what could be an ugly general election campaign. That both presumptive major party candidates represent New York was not lost on him.

"The debate has been about body parts, who's ugly, what industry we're putting out of business," he said during the Opening General Session. "When you hear that debate, you think about Western issues. Why are we not talking more about multiple use; why are we not talking more about wildlife, challenges of health-



Shailen Bhatt, executive director of the Colorado Department of Transportation, explained how the state would prepare its roads and highways for the anticipated migration to the state.

care in rural areas, opiate abuse; why are we not talking about the strength of the national park system, what our forest means to us, what BLM means to use in the West?"

So his answer, both — to

bring civility back to the campaign and engage Western voters — was to actually address those issues at stake in many of the states in the Western Interstate Region.

Things weren't perfect, he

acknowledged, pointing out that too often states were redressing their grievances with the federal government through lawsuits, but even those measures seemed born from a lack of familiarity and common ground.

"Too often policy makers in Washington, D.C. don't have an appreciation for what the West is like," he said.

What Western county officials could do to help, he said, was to take that message to Washington.

"You can't imagine the impact you have going to Washington and testifying (in Congress)," he said. "It's one thing for me to do it, but it's more meaningful for a county commissioner to testify."

"That's the model for partnership with local govern-

ment. That's the partnership that shows the federal government the model for getting things done," he added.

Though most of the General Session speakers focused on the West, Scott Tranter, a partner at Optimus Consulting who worked on U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio's (R-Fla.) campaign explained to session attendees how voter-turnout analysis informs how presidential candidates allocate their campaigning time. They trawl through years of voting records for each state to determine an area's likely turnout rate and plan based around where a candidate's presence will likely have the greatest impact.

He also let Western officials know their states would even-

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Colo. transportation head taps technology to solve future road congestion

From SPEAKERS page 5

tually be getting more attention in national races, thanks to westward migration

“It makes those states more competitive as these people take their political attitudes with them and it affects turnout,” he said. Starting with this election cycle, “we are going to start seeing Colorado mentioned the same way we talk about Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania.”

And he offered some insight into the general election to county officials who might not spend their mornings watching cable news discussions.

“Look at state polls,” he said. “I look at Florida, Nevada, Arizona, a little in Ohio and Iowa. Those are the polls that are going to tell me where this is go-

ing to go.”

And he diagnosed the turnout magic ascribed to presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump.

“We’re not necessarily thinking that Trump is creating a lot of new voters, but he is motivating voters who voted in ’08 but forgot to in ’12,” he said.

From just north of Teton County’s seat in Jackson, David Vela, superintendent of Grand Teton National Park, stressed the value of cooperation among several levels of government. In particular, he mentioned the park’s work with Teton County, the Jackson Town Council and Wyoming governor’s office to develop the Moose-Wilson Corridor Comprehensive Management Plan for the southwest corner of the park. In addition to

structured meetings, though, he recommended holding meetings with no set agenda to encourage more discussion and bonding among the participating groups.

Michael Connor, deputy secretary of the interior, reiterated the Obama Administration’s support for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program and a commitment to look for ways to create certainty and steadiness with respect to PILT payments, with a target payment date of July 1, 2016. Taking PILT out of the appropriations process, he said, would not only be good for counties with federally owned land, but it would simplify internal budgeting for the Department of the Interior.

“Counties should ensure that their System for Award

Management account is active and banking information is up to date,” he said.

Shailen Bhatt, executive director of the Colorado Department of Transportation, acknowledged a transportation system rivalry with the state of Utah. He appreciated Utahans’ willingness to twice raise their gas tax and once raise the sales tax to fund transportation, suggestions that conservative Coloradans resist.

“That might fly in Boulder, they’ve never met a tax increase they don’t like, but here, that dog won’t hunt,” he said, summarizing responses.

He’s looking down the barrel of a population explosion, with a projected 2 million people moving into the Centennial State in the next 20 years, and driving on a highway system

that serves nearly twice as many drivers than it was designed to carry.

“And it’s not just the population, these people are going to want to buy things, and the amount of freight is going to go through the roof,” he said.

That’s motivating Colorado’s RoadX plan to integrate technology into the transportation department, whether it’s using data to analyze transportation patterns and planning accordingly or using autonomous vehicle technology to make driving safer and more efficient.

His hope is to take some of the onus off of drivers, given the overwhelming influence human error has in causing crashes, and set up Colorado’s state roads and highways to be ready for self-driving vehicles. **CN**

FEEDING WILD HORSES HURTS BLM STAFFING BUDGET

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

Bureau of Land Management Director Neil Kornze, now in his third year in the role, drew particular interest from the Opening General Session attendees.

To him, challenges presented by two variables in BLM’s purview — wells and animals — are compounded by staffing shortages.

“Despite having a record budget for the agency, we do not have a record number of bodies to work with,” he said. “We’ve lost 12 percent of our BLM team over the last few years, and much of that is because we’re spending money feeding horses.”

BLM spends \$50,000 on feeding and care over wild horses’ and burros’ lifetimes, which now number more than 67,000, compared to the bureau’s target of 27,000.

“In the early 2000s, we were averaging 8,000 adoptions a year, now we struggle to put 2,000 a year into good homes,” he said. “We’ve gone from spending \$40 million to feed them to \$80 million, and that’s a substantial part of our budget.”

BLM is researching a fertility control methods for horses, including PZP immunocontraception, but was also launching an \$11 million spay and neuter project in southeastern Oregon.

“Most people are used to saying spay and neuter about a dog or cat, but like our pets, these horses are also animals we care a great deal about, and we need to talk about this in a way that most Americans can get their arms around it,” Kornze said.

“Most Americans have never seen a wild horse, most Americans have never been out in the country where this is an issue,” he added.

Kornze said there was hope for some use of wild horses and burros by the U.S. Border Patrol; 300 have been adopted for that use in the past decade. But BLM doesn’t have legal authority to transfer control of the animals, something Kornze would like to change. Border patrol personnel have adopted the animals personally.

Kornze is also concerned about whether orphan oil and gas wells are being responsibly plugged, and BLM has developed a check-

list to assess actual risk from the wells.

Chief among his concerns is that the bonding values for wells have not increased since they were set during the Eisenhower Administration. The current bonding rates for a drilling company are \$10,000 for one well, \$25,000 for all of its wells in a state and \$150,000 for all of a company’s wells in the United States.

He would like to establish a BLM Foundation to manage communication and fundraising, on par with the National Park Foundation, National Forest Foundation and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Kornze also expressed his hope that the new, maligned-by-counties Planning 2.0 process would expedite the BLM planning regulation processes by breaking them up into smaller chunks.

“It seems like we take information from the scoping process and go off into a corner and come back with a plan five years later, and that thousand-page document is not particularly useful, you have a lot of problems in your county to deal with on top of sifting through



BLM Manager Neil Kornze speaks at the Opening General Session. Photo by Charlie Ban

the drafts.”

By releasing a 20–30-page outline, between the scoping process and the draft release, Kornze hopes to make the process more transparent to the public and open to revision.

“We’ll put in front of you the basic concepts we will be exploring,” he said.

“Too often we have to go back and start over,” he said, when new information would come to light. A planning process that was aimed to be five or six years ends up being a nine-, 10-, 11-year process.”

BLM staffers later held a several-hour listening session with conference attendees to get feedback on Planning 2.0.

Planning for crises tops WIR workshop advice



Teton County, Wyo, Sheriff Jim Whalen discussed how his rural county prepares for the possibly for an active shooter situation. Photos by Charlie Ban

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

Idyllic Jackson, Wyo. seemed far from the crises that WIR conference workshops addressed, but the setting reinforced that it's never too early to plan.

"We've spent billions of dollars in infrastructure to mitigate risk of fire deaths, but we haven't done that preparation for mass violence," said Darryl Stacy, a Cleveland County, Okla. commissioner. "But when you prepare for these things, there are transferrable skills."

Stacy acknowledged that

violence capable of causing mass casualties was unlikely in his rural home county, but by the same token it would transform the area.

"When an incident like that does occur, it can absolutely define your entire community, your government, your time in office," he said, after Teton County Emergency Management Coordinator Rich Ochs, pointed out that Columbine High School in Colorado and Sandy Hook, Conn. were not household names before their mass shootings.

To prepare, a sheriff needs good risk management skills, common sense and the ability

to get along with other elected officials.

"One of the things that drives me nuts is when a sheriff says he doesn't get along with his commissioners," said Teton County Sheriff Jim Whalen. "You gotta work through that. It's too important and too big to have personalities and things get in the way of protecting the people of your community."

He added that it was crucial for county government to have personnel policies to reflect the possibility of tension among employees, which

See **WORKSHOPS** page 8



The conference-wide event, held at the Jackson Mountain Resort, gave attendees a look at birds from the Teton Raptor Center, including Gus the Golden Eagle.

Good crisis communication takes training, practice



Anthony LaFauce, a communications consultant from Porter Novelli, recommended giving some kind of media training to a variety of county officials and anyone who might be on the ground during a crisis, including law enforcement officers. Photos by Charlie Ban

From WORKSHOPS page 7

could escalate into violence.

Stacy said there is an imbalance in preparation for an active shooter situation.

"We've done a great job of training law enforcement for something like this. What we haven't done is train our citizens," he said. Stacy, a retired SWAT commander, is a principal in the Centurion Consulting Group, which trains civilians to react in active shooter situations.

Porter Novelli communications consultant Anthony LaFauce put crisis communications in a somewhat cynical perspective in another workshop.

"You need to face that everything you do, every word that you say is going to be put into the adversarial news cycle meant to sell ads," he said.

He put crisis communications in the context of overall crisis management and ham-

pered home that planning ahead, training a variety of people to speak in an official capacity and internally framing events properly are all crucial to good crisis communications.

As is setting appropriate expectations.

"No matter how well you're prepared (for a crisis), it won't go that well," he said. "Something will go wrong, someone will be on vacation, but the way you handle your crisis will affect what you're able to do later on, when it's time to fix the problem."

Having a checklist that helps determine if something is a crisis can guide a response and help prevent overkill.

Selecting designated spokesmen and spokeswoman is important, but so is getting basic media training to anyone who may be called upon to serve in

that capacity.

"Face it, a lot of you people won't be there when a train derailed," LaFauce said. "It's going to probably be an emergency worker, a deputy, a police officer, and they probably don't care about the statement they make as much as doing their job and making sure people are safe."

And, when traditional media can be circumvented to get a message directly to people, be sure digital media is accurate and ready to push out publically.

In another workshop, NACo Research Director Emilia Istrate presented post-recession analysis of Western county economies. In the West, as nationally, only 55 percent of county economies had recovered, based on GDP, by 2015, but only 7 percent of Western county economies had recovered on all four indicators that were measured. **CN**



Rachel Richards, a Pitkin County, Colo. commissioner, asks Scott Tranter whether voters' distastes for their parties' nominees tended to hold up when votes are cast.

County becomes own broadband provider

By Charles Taylor
senior staff writer

One Lake County, Minn. woman no longer has to wait until Super Bowl Sunday to e-file her income tax return — since that was when most people were watching the game and weren’t online.

And peace has been restored to county Commissioner Rick Goutermont’s household. “Me and my daughter used to arm wrestle over if she was going to be watching Netflix, I couldn’t go on the computer. Now she’s streaming on her phone and ... on the TV and I’m on my computer, and there’s never any conflict at all.”

Those are two examples county officials give of life after Lake Connections, a county-owned, privately operated company that has buried or strung 1,200 miles of fiber-optic cable throughout this rural northern Minnesota county. It’s given the county some of the fastest, most reliable internet access in the state, perhaps the nation, according to Commission Chairman Rich Sve.

“It gets to the point of what counties do,” he said of getting into the telecommunications business. “What is the need of our people? And this is a perfect example, because for me it’s not that you are able to get on your Facebook or you’re able to play a game. It’s what the future’s going to hold, it’s about health care. We talk about elderly people being able to stay in their homes longer because of these real-time connections that are coming.”

The FCC defines broadband as a minimum data transfer rate of 25 megabits per second downstream and 3 Mbps upstream. For home internet, Lake Connections’ basic internet-only service is \$60 a month for 30 down, 10 up. Bundles that include telephone and video cost more.



A contract employee in Lake County, Minn. attaches fiber-optic cable that comprises the above-ground portion of Lake Connections, a county-owned broadband provider. The majority of the system is underground. Photo courtesy of Lake County, Minn.

Lake Connections was made possible by federal stimulus funds, awarded in 2010, from USDA’s Rural Utilities Service under its \$3.5 billion Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP). The county received a \$10 million grant and \$56.5 million in low-interest loans, and invested \$3.5 million taxpayer dollars in the project.

In addition to local governments, BIP funding was available to existing internet providers, nonprofits and various partnerships, but there were no takers, county officials said.

“We have a really rural, small population,” said County Administrator Matt Huddleston. “It’s unserved and underserved.... That’s why we stepped up, not because we feel that municipalities necessarily should or shouldn’t be

doing this, but in our area we felt that was the only we were going to get this service.”

The county, population 11,000, lies between Lake Superior and the Canadian border, and north of Duluth. It has a population density of five people per square mile.

While getting the money for the project wasn’t exactly easy — it took two tries to make a successful application — it turned out to be easier than getting the system to where it is today. The county’s application eventually was accepted after the project was expanded to include parts of neighboring St. Louis County.

There were complications along the way that both increased costs and threatened

See BROADBAND page 14

GET TO KNOW...

Fresno County, Calif.



Welcome, Fresno County, Calif.

The world is divided into two groups: Those that picked the raisins out of the cereal their mom offered for breakfast; and those who added raisins to their peanut butter sandwiches or oatmeal. For the latter, Fresno County is a puckered paradise. Well known for its agriculture, the county — in California’s Central Valley — lays title to the **‘Raisin Capital of the World.’** It has more than **3,000 raisin growers and produces about 350,000 tons of raisins each year.**

WORD SEARCH

GLOUCESTER COUNTY, N.J.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS FEATURED COUNTY IN ‘BEHIND THE SEAL’

Created By: Charles Taylor

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

- BATTLE OF RED BANK** Revolutionary War battle fought in the county
- DELAWARE RIVER** Forms county’s northwest border
- FARMING** More than 200 farms within 17 county municipalities
- FREEHOLDERS** Local governing body
- GLASSBORO** Borough named for its glass-making industry
- GLOUCESTERSHIRE** British county, home to N.J. county’s namesake city
- HOLLYBUSH** Mansion that hosted 1967 summit between President Lyndon Johnson and Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin
- NATIONAL PARK** Name of one-square-mile borough in county
- PATTI SMITH** Punk-rocker who grew up here
- PHILADELPHIA** City to the north
- ROWAN UNIVERSITY** Public university, formerly Glassboro State College
- SALEM COUNTY** Adjacent southwest county
- SWEDESBORO** Borough and one of the first European settlements in state
- THIRD** New Jersey was the third state admitted to the Union
- WOODBURY** County seat

PROFILES IN SERVICE

JESSICA A. BEYER

NACo Board of Directors
Communications Manager
and Business Analyst
Blue Earth County, Minn.

Years affiliated with NACo: 10

Years in public service: 10

Occupation:

I manage public information functions including community-media relations, marketing and both internal and external communications.

Education: Undergraduate degrees in mass communications and business; master's degree in business administration with an emphasis in organizational leadership, Minnesota State University, Mankato

The hardest thing I've ever done:

Saying goodbye to family members and friends along life's journey

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner:

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Theodore Roosevelt and my great-great grandmother who immigrated to the United States through Ellis Island.

A dream I have is to: To enjoy property on a lake or in the mountains someday and to have the opportunity to travel more extensively both internationally and by visiting each of the 50 states.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is:

Going elk hunting in the mountains on horseback with my Dad. We have been traveling to the mountains together over the span of 15 years, and every hunting trip offers new adventures.



My favorite way to relax is:

Being surrounded by nature on a walk or hike with my husband, daughter and yellow Labrador. I love spending time in the outdoors.

I'm most proud of:

My family, especially my six-month old daughter.

Every morning I read: Emails and social media.

My favorite meal is: My Mom's homemade tater-tot hot dish and caramel bars.

My pet peeve is: Unwillingness to compromise.

My motto is: "Be the change you wish to see in the world."

The last book I read was: *Daring Greatly* by Brené Brown.

My favorite movie is: *A League of Their Own*.

My favorite music is: Rock and Country.

My favorite president is: John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

My county is a member of NACo because: It is important for Blue Earth County's voice to be heard regarding legislative issues, to build relationships and learn best practices from others across the nation. Our county is also proud to have former Commissioner Colleen Landkamer as a past president of NACo.

You'd be surprised to learn that I:
Was homecoming queen.

U.S. Communities contract discounts specialized vehicles

Specialized mobile units at discounted prices are now available through a new contract with Farber Specialty Vehicles awarded by U.S. Communities, NACo's cooperative purchasing program.

Through the contract, counties will have access to a fleet of specialized vehicles ranging from police and fire command centers to medical, dental, mammography, audiology and health screening units. The contract also provides access to top-notch engineering and fabrication personnel who can custom design and produce a mobile vehicle to a county's specs.

The vehicles made by Farber address community health screening needs, police and emergency demands, even facility expansion for schools and libraries with the company's mobile classrooms, STEM and computer labs, and book mobiles.

"Counties are responsible for so much within a community, and are often expected to do more each year with a smaller



Mobile vehicles like this health care van can be customized to a county's specifications under the new U.S. Communities contract with Farber Specialty Vehicles.

budget. Keeping citizens safe and informed, providing key county services, conducting preventative health screenings in multiple locations, and providing truly accessible educational technologies can be challenging. Farber is such a good fit for U.S. Communities because it provides innovative vehicles that counties can customize for use in all of those areas," said Sharon Russell, senior program director, NACo FSC.

The contract was awarded by lead public agency, Port of Portland, Ore, through a com-

petitive solicitation process that awards the contract to companies that can provide tangible solutions so counties can do more with less. Farber joins a group of more than 30 additional suppliers offering goods and services through the U.S. Communities program to help counties manage community needs. **CN**

For more information, please visit www.uscommunities.org, or call Sarah Lindsay, FSC program manager, 202.942.4228, or Sharon Russell, FSC senior program director, 202.942.4222.

CN SPOTLIGHT



2016 COUNTY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE GRADUATES

Members of the Class of 2016 at NACo's 13th Annual County Leadership Institute (CLI) pose for their official portrait last week as they wrapped up several days of vigorous and demanding leadership exercises. Held this year June 5-9 in Washington, D.C., the institute is designed to help county leaders further develop their approaches toward solving complex challenges. Since its inception, more than 300 leaders from 172 counties across 45 states have graduated from CLI. CLI is a rigorous program developed by NACo and the Cambridge Leadership Associates. Photo by David Hathcox



ANALYSIS

Opioid crisis presents tough questions for local leaders

By Hadi Sedigh
associate legislative director

Shortly after Prince died in April, rumors began circulating that he had succumbed to an opioid addiction.

These rumors were validated in early June, when toxicology reports revealed that an overdose of fentanyl had caused the legendary musician's death.

Fentanyl is a painkiller prescribed primarily to cancer patients and is said to be up to 100 times stronger than morphine. It is also produced illegally in synthetic form; in March, deputies in Bartow County, Ga. seized 40 kilograms of the drug during a

traffic stop. At the April meeting of the National City-County Task Force on the Opioid Epidemic, county and city officials labeled the drug as a "deadlier and cheaper cousin of heroin," and warned that its increasing prevalence represents a new and more deadly wave of the opioid crisis.

As the crisis has escalated over the last several years, national lawmakers and local officials have faced difficult, and sometimes contentious, decisions in determining how best to reduce rates of opioid abuse.

The rising rates of deaths caused by fentanyl, for example, have prompted Sen. Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.) to introduce legislation



that would significantly reduce the amount of fentanyl required to trigger five-year mandatory minimum sentences for individuals caught in possession of the drug. Under amendments submitted by Ayotte to a defense

authorization bill, S. 2943, the threshold for such mandatory minimums would drop from possession of 10 grams of fentanyl to as little as half a gram.

The enforcement approach proposed by Ayotte's amend-

ment contrasts with the "harm-reduction" approach taken by King County, Wash. and its Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion, or LEAD Program.

LEAD is a collaborative program between King County and Seattle and was — as its website states — "motivated by a shared dissatisfaction with the outcomes and costs of traditional drug law enforcement." The program allows officers to divert low-level drug users into community-based treatment and support services rather than booking them into local jails. A PBS Frontline documentary

See OPIOIDS page 12



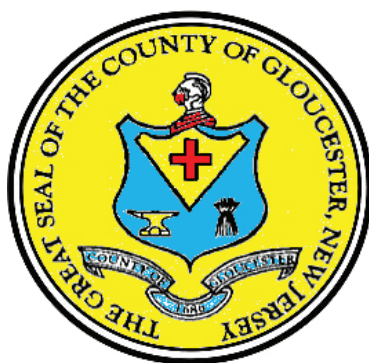
**GLOUCESTER
COUNTY, N.J.**
Introduced in: 1960

Painfully aware of the lack of a seal or flag in 1960, the Board of Freeholders sponsored a contest to develop ideas for designs for those emblems. After the winning designs had been established by a special committee of the Gloucester County Historical Society, the committee consulted with authorities on heraldry, expert designers and officials of Gloucestershire, England, from which area this county took its name.

If you would like to see your county seal featured in County News, please contact Charlie Ban at cban@naco.org.

The helmet, representing sovereignty, borrows an element from the state flag, which includes one in gold. Choosing silver illustrates the county's position relative to the state.

The red St. George Cross is one of the principle symbols in the coat of arms of the Duke of Gloucester — that section of England from which the county took its name. It establishes the relationship between the counties in Gloucester in New Jersey and England and represents morality.



Beneath the triangle, enclosing the cross, the anvil represents labor and industry, and a shock of wheat or corn represents prosperity and agriculture.

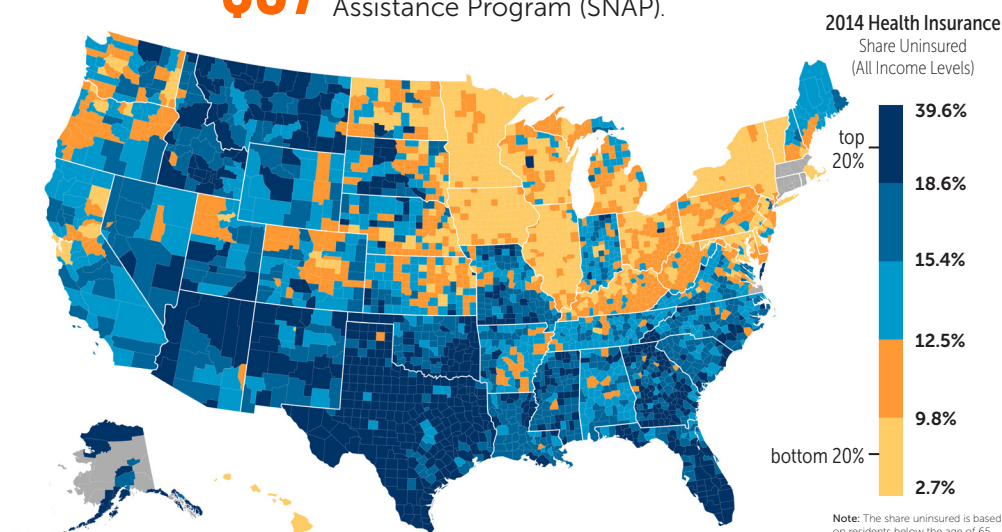
NEW FROM NACO'S

COUNTY EXPLORER

43% of counties had 15 percent or more of their residents below the age of 65 **without health insurance.**

322 counties had populations which included more than 10 percent foreign-born.

\$67 billion provided to county residents through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).



www.NACO.org/CountyExplorer

MONEYMATTERS

Retirement Planning Needs to Consider the Challenge of Health Care Expenses

By Kevin McGarry

Nationwide Retirement Institute

Health care costs are a critical element of retirement planning. Unfortunately, many Americans aren't thinking about — much less planning for — their health care costs in retirement. Too many assume their employers will continue to pay their premiums during retirement or believe erroneously that Medicare will cover their health care expenses.

The fact is that fewer companies are offering health care to retirees. According to a 2013 Mercer study, not even one in five companies with 500 or more employees offer health insurance to Medicare-eligible retirees.

Health care costs continue to rise, which means that paying for health care should now be taken into even greater consideration when planning for retirement. Primary to that consideration is an understanding of Medicare and what benefits it provides.

Understanding Medicare

Medicare provides health coverage to 49 million senior or disabled Americans, but there are several common misconceptions about what it does and doesn't cover. While it covers preventive care, you will still have to pay premiums, co-pays,

deductibles and co-insurance in Medicare part B and D. If you are single and earn more than \$85,000, or if you're a couple earning more than \$170,000, you can expect to pay higher premiums as well.

Americans also need to know that Medicare doesn't cover routine dental care, eyeglasses or hearing aids. It also may not cover some medical services you might need while traveling outside the United States. In fact, Medicare covers only about 62 percent of the expenses associated with health care services.

For example: according to the official U.S. Government site for Medicare, patients with Medicare part A needing an in-hospital stay in 2015 ranging from a day to two months have to pay a \$1,260 deductible. After 60 days, they have to pay \$315 per day in co-payments. After 90 days, it jumps to \$630 per day in co-payments, and patients must pay all costs associated with a stay of over 150 days.

Another common misconception is that Medicare covers long-term care: It does not.

How Much Is Enough?

Health care is likely to be among the greatest expenses in retirement — second only to housing — and among your greatest concerns. In fact, 62 percent of pre-retirees now say they are “terrified” of what

health care costs may do to their retirement plans.

Consumers want help, but unfortunately some financial advisors are reluctant to have these difficult conversations on planning for health care costs in retirement because they don't know how to address the issue. According to a 2013 study, fewer than one in five advisors say they are well equipped to discuss health care issues with their clients.

And a 2012 LIMRA study shows that retirees and advisors have different priorities in regards to retirement income challenges. Retirees said health care was only their number four concern. On the other hand, advisors realize that health care is potentially the largest concern for retirees. Other concerns include longevity, concerns about public policy and inflation.

Often advisors will use a broad-based approach to address health care costs in retirement. They might encourage you to set aside \$255,000 to \$360,000 to fund these expenses based on anticipated costs of an average retired couple. But a cookie cutter approach doesn't work for everyone and can sometimes lead to sticker shock and a lack of required action.

Personalized Assessment

To better assist advisors in

helping clients plan for retirement spending on health care, Nationwide launched the Personalized Health Care Cost Assessment for advisors to help estimate their clients' health care expenses in retirement.

Developed by leading physicians and experienced actuaries, the Health Care Cost Assessment uses proprietary health risk analysis and up-to-date actuarial cost data, such as personal health and lifestyle information, health care costs and medical coverage.

The assessment starts with a brief questionnaire on your health history, lifestyle and family history of medical conditions. The data are analyzed to predict a meaningful personalized estimate of out-of-pocket health care costs based on those risks and your estimated life expectancy. You then get a report that helps you and your financial advisor plan for future medical expenses.


The program also uses tools that allow for “what-if” scenarios. For example, how will changing the year you retire affect your out-of-pocket health care costs?

Education Before and After Retirement

Retirees must plan for many decisions, most of them guided by law, between the ages of

55 and 70½. These decisions may largely influence retirement behaviors as well as long-term financial adequacy — how and when you withdraw, and how to get the most from your retirement benefits like Social Security and Medicare. This means that you need to develop a strong professional and personal relationship with your financial advisor so you can be educated before and after retirement to make decisions at these key ages.

Getting your Personal Health Care Assessment is an important first step and a great way to start building these important relationships.

To get a Personalized Health Care Cost Assessment, call the Income Planning Team at 877.975.6363. 

The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual. To determine which product(s)/investment(s) may be appropriate for you, consult your financial advisor prior to purchasing/investing.

The information collected on the Personal Health Care Assessment will be kept confidential and used to provide an estimate of a client's potential health care costs in retirement. The estimate is based on a client's specific financial situation and goals, as well as their current overall health condition. The client's financial situation and health conditions may change over time and that may affect his or her future changes. Please keep in mind that the estimates resulting from this fact finder are for hypothetical purposes only and are not guaranteed.

Harm-reduction approach remains controversial in some areas

From OPIOIDS page 11

titled *Chasing Heroin* recently highlighted the program and described it as “stopping just short of decriminalizing drug use.” A final evaluation report on the LEAD program is set to be released later this summer.

The harm-reduction approach

taken in the LEAD program is perhaps most commonly associated with often-controversial needle exchanges that allow individuals who inject drugs with syringes to exchange used needles for new ones. The objective of these programs is to reduce the risk of such individuals contracting HIV or hepatitis through the use of

shared or contaminated needles.

Needle exchanges received much national attention following a 2015 opioid-related HIV outbreak in Scott County, Ind. that resulted in 190 HIV cases in a town with a population of roughly 4,000. Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, who had previously been opposed to needle exchanges, is

sued a public health emergency declaration that allowed an exchange to be established in Scott County. The outbreak of HIV was contained, although Scott County still saw more than a dozen new HIV cases after the emergency declaration.

Despite the evident effectiveness of needle exchanges in

preventing HIV and hepatitis outbreaks in communities struggling with opioid abuse — and the support of the Centers for Disease Control and the American Medical Association about these programs — there remains a widely-held perception that

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Opioids

From OPIOIDS page 12

these programs simply enable drug addiction. Last month, in Boone County, Ky., a resolution that would have allowed needle exchanges in the county failed to receive enough support. Gary Moore, the county's judge-executive and co-chair of the National City-County Task Force on the Opioid Epidemic, was among those who spoke in favor of needle exchanges as a means of preventing the spread of HIV and hepatitis.

Others spoke in opposition, and a cartoon was circulated in Northern Kentucky that showed county officials from nearby Campbell County — which had recently approved a needle exchange — thrusting a large needle into the arm of a man as a young child looked on. In the background, the Campbell County Fiscal Court had been renamed "Needle Paraphernalia Supply." Although the needle exchange resolution failed, Boone County approved other resolutions that aim to reduce the impact of the opioid crisis on their communities. A measure to divert tax funds to set up a regional helpline was unanimously approved, as was another measure supporting a comprehensive education and prevention initiative.

Judge Moore and the other members of the National City-County Task Force on the Opioid Epidemic will reconvene in Northern Kentucky this August to work towards finalizing a report that will feature policy recommendations and best practices to help local leaders address the opioid crisis. The report will feature recommendations related to law enforcement approaches and needle exchange programs, as well as other difficult questions that local leaders face in this crisis. The report will be released in mid-October.

NACo is also hosting a series of Virtual Town Halls on the opioid crisis in June to discuss various aspects of the local response to drug abuse; you can find more information on these town halls at www.naco.org/opioidtownhalls. **CN**

BRIGHT IDEAS | SUFFOLK COUNTY, N.Y.

Career Couture Boutique Suits Jobseekers Just Fine

PROBLEM: It can be tough enough to find a job when you're unemployed, tougher still if you don't have the right wardrobe for the job you want.

SOLUTION: Provide free, donated business attire to jobseekers who need it, in the same building as the county's one-stop career center.

By Charles Taylor
senior staff writer

One sure way to get a ticket on the way to a job interview — at least from the fashion police — is to dress inappropriately for the job.

To make sure that doesn't happen, Suffolk County, N.Y. Executive Steve Bellone launched a Career Couture Boutique, located inside the county's one-stop career center.

"There's nothing more important than for us here in the county to work with those who need employment, to help grow our economy and to help support families," Bellone said on launch day in May 2014, "and that's what it's all about."

Anyone registered with the center who has a job interview or job fair coming up, but doesn't have business attire, can find an outfit at the boutique, free of charge. "We also cater to veterans — that's very important to us — shelters, nonprofit organizations," added June Kirby, who runs the boutique.



Two unidentified patrons (above) of Suffolk County, N.Y.'s Career Couture Boutique are "interview-ready" in business attire that the boutique provides free to clients of the county's one-stop career center with upcoming interviews or job fairs. Photo courtesy of Suffolk County, N.Y.

The shop accepts donations of "gently worn" items, including men's and women's suits, shirts and neckties, dresses, purses, shoes — even costume jewelry.

"It has exceeded expectations in being successful," Kirby said. "These people, sometimes it looks like [the clothes] are tailored to them. It's amazing."

The Career Couture Boutique is run out of a room at the county's Department of Labor, Licensing and Consumer Affairs. It's open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Kirby has been employed by the county in various capacities for 20 years, so the program had no additional salary cost. Display racks and shelves were donated, and the space where the boutique space was empty prior to its conversion. The program won a best-in-category NACo Achievement Award

in 2015.

She estimates that she's "suited" more than 1,000 jobseekers over the past two years. The clothing and accessories are donated by individuals and retailers, and a local nonprofit, EAC Network, helps to collect the clothing.

"Somebody's always walking out with something and very happy. It makes a big difference," Kirby said. In case a person can't find their size, Kirby takes their number and will give them a call when something comes in. But she said it's rare that there's nothing suitable in stock. Some donated items have never been worn.

"I do get some really wonderful stuff; some of it still has tags on it," she said, adding that donors are generous because they know their clothes are going to someone who needs it, and not to "an organization that's going to turn around and sell it."

And while the boutique doesn't sell anything, it does pay its good fortune forward on occasion: If Kirby receives items that aren't appropriate, she'll donate them to other nonprofits.

One of the most gratifying parts of her job as Career Couture advisor is hearing back from people she's helped. The jobseekers are grateful, not just for the clothing but for the care and concern that Kirby shows them (for privacy reasons, she asked that last names not be revealed).

"Everything looked nice and fit very well," Neil wrote in thank-you note. "Also, thank you for your kind words which gave me a confidence boost."

Another recent "customer," Lisa, wrote, "Because of your kindness, I am confident that my physical appearance will help me get respect and give me the peace of mind that I have made or will make a well-put-together professional appearance."

"It's very rewarding," Kirby said. "People come in there in a situation where they can't go out and spend the money on the interview attire, and I suit them."

"It's amazing from when they walk in the door how they feel about themselves and when they walk out they feel wonderful, and it's very gratifying." **CN**

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or email us at info@historicalarmory.com.

Rural broadband boosts county's economic development odds

From BROADBAND page 9

funding. There was some opposition from private providers, county officials said. And then, there was northern Minnesota's brutal winter weather, which effectively makes for a six-month construction season. At one point, the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) cut off the project's funding because the project was behind schedule.

From Aerial to Burial

The biggest challenge was morphing from a system that was intended to mostly hung on utility poles to one that's about three-quarters buried. As originally planned, fiber optic cable would be attached to 30,000 poles, said Jeff Roiland, Lake Connections general manager. The current system uses 5,000.

"Poles are a challenge in our area," he added. Obtaining

rights or permissions to use other utilities' poles proved daunting, time-consuming and expensive, and the BIP program came with deadlines to meet.

Some have been critical of the broadband stimulus program — a 2014 U.S. Government Accountability Office report found that RUS has reported "limited information" on BIP's impact since funds were awarded. But Sve says "RUS has been a good partner."

Christopher Mitchell directs the Community Broadband Networks Initiative at the Institute for Local Self-Reliance. "I think most of the stimulus projects have resulted in positive gains. I have not seen a lot of places in which counties have been very active in this," he said, adding that 20 states have created "bans or barriers" to municipal broadband projects.

County leaders hope the fast-fiber broadband system spurs new and expanded business development.

He thinks Lake County took the right approach in building its system countywide, including in some communities where commercial providers were already offering inadequate, expensive or unreliable service, not just in areas with no service at all.

"I think that's a credit to them," Mitchell said. "Because what we've seen elsewhere is when a county builds to areas that don't have any access and they build a modern network, the result is that you gut those few population centers that

you have."

Two Harbors, the county seat, and Silver Bay are two such cities. Because Lake Connections is available there, he said, there's little risk of people moving elsewhere in the county for better internet, which could harm those cities' economies. "You want to make sure that people, particularly businesses are locating inside the existing population centers, and you don't want to create basically a doughnut-hole problem."

In fact, county leaders hope the fast-fiber broadband system spurs new and expanded business development. The county has partnered with a local electrical cooperative and is "courting" a data center. Together, they're trying to market a 320-acre site for a server farm.

Lake Connections is already benefiting the economy on a

smaller scale. The company interviewed several customers, commercial and residential, and their testimonials are on the website.

Dave Johnson, an accounts manager for Granite Gear, a backpack and outdoor gear company based in Two Harbors, said access to broadband has increased productivity. "Our art director is able to work days again," he said. "Without high-speed internet there was no way he could get his work done during the day. He would have to wait until late at night, when no one else was in the office, to have enough bandwidth to get his work done."

Jim Linscheid has the phone-internet-video bundle at his home. Before Lake Connections, his family had dial-up internet access since the year 2000. "Lake Connections wows me," he said, "and we're very, very happy with that." **CN**

SAVE *the* DATE

PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY:

A Local Officials Reception at the 2016 Democratic National Convention

TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2016
2:30 P.M. — 4:30 P.M. EDT

McCormick and Schmicks
2nd Floor (across from City Hall)
1 South Broad St.
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Please join local elected officials from across America for a reception honoring our nation's intergovernmental partnership. Reception will include special guest speakers, live music, open bar and hors d'oeuvres.

To RSVP, please visit www.NACo.org/CountiesConnect

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of CITIES



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DEMOCRATIC
MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

LEADERSHIP EDGE

Contentious Meetings: Preventing and Managing

By Laree Kiely, Ph.D.
The Kiely Group

If we are expected to participate or facilitate gatherings of people who might have differing opinions, there are three ideals we need to challenge in order to be most effective.

The first ideal is that people in face-to-face meetings will naturally arrive at optimal outcomes based on healthy debate and disagreement. The second ideal is that public meetings bring out the more noble behaviors in people like civility,

critical thinking and logical rigor. The third ideal is that diversity of thought is an asset toward reaching optimal outcomes. These ideals might all be true, but let's be realistic here.

Reality No. 1: Debate and disagreement in today's world is often contentious and back-filled with anger, often driving irrational escalation and leaving damaged relationships in the wake. The damaged relationship then becomes the driver of our choices the next time we meet rather than the topic at hand.

Reality No. 2: Public meetings often bring out our most self-protective behavior rather than our most noble. In fact, multiple social experiments show that the more public we are, the more psychological we are with a slight emphasis on the "psycho."

Reality No. 3: It's 2016 and we still don't know how to interact when we have differing opinions. All too often, disagreement



Kiely

turns into conflict, which turns into anger, which brings out our less noble behaviors and then we are off and running.

So what do we do when we realize that the ideals are not necessarily the realities? One place to start is to understand how people create their realities in the first place.

Harvard professor Chris Argyris has created a helpful metaphor called "The Ladder of Inference." Simply stated, everybody has a set of rungs

they climb to make sense out of their world. At the base of our "ladders" lay all of the objective facts and the data. At step number 1, people select some pieces to pay attention to and then ignore the rest, observing different things from one another. Step number 2, they interpret the data they selected out from the noise—now it is becoming subjective because everyone's interpretations are created from their own past experience. Step number 3, people form individual conclusions and these almost always reflect self-interest.

So, if people are not coming from the same starting place, they are very likely to disagree. Even worse, if they have stated a public position, they're now entrenched. Opinion has now taken root and it is a taproot. Now we are in a "somebody has to be right and somebody has to be wrong" situation, which will no doubt affect the value of our outcome as well as our relationships.

In order to be able to anticipate and possibly preempt harmful conflict, here are some starting suggestions:

- Climb up other people's ladders first. See if entering into their mindset can help you understand and perhaps find some common ground. Common ground is golden.

- Have the conversation at the bottom of the ladders at the level of fact and data and objectivity. If you disagree and have the discussion at the top of the ladder, that's where righteousness resides. Disagreeing at the level of righteousness rarely turns out well.

- Get people to delay stating their opinions publicly, so they can listen with an open mind and rational thought.

For a few more tips and tools to use and traps to avoid, please join us for the workshop on Preparing for and Managing Conflict and Contentious Meetings at NACo's Annual Conference, Sunday, July 24, 4 p.m. **CN**

SAVE *the* DATE

PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY:

A Local Officials Reception at the 2016 Republican National Convention

TUESDAY, JULY 19, 2016 • 5:00 P.M. – 6:30 P.M. EDT
CLEVELAND CITY HALL (ROTUNDA) • 601 LAKESIDE AVENUE • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44114

Please join local elected officials from across America for a reception honoring our nation's intergovernmental partnership. Reception will include special guest speakers, live music, open bar and hors d'oeuvres.

To RSVP, please visit
www.NACo.org/CountiesConnect

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'It was Twenty Years Ago Today...'

This is the season for anniversaries. With a little help from the Beatles, as well as my editing, I get to say: "It was 20 years ago today that the HR Doctor began to play" — at least in the NACo *County News*. Starting in the summer of 1996 the first of about 500 HR Doctor columns was delivered by a large stork to the office of *County News* Editor Bev Schlotterbeck. How fast 20 years have passed. "Twenty" isn't a very big sounding number, but how about 240 months... 960 weeks... 6,720 days... 161,280 hours... 9,676,800 minutes ... scary!

NACo and I agreed long ago to highlight how inextricably linked success of county governments is with the practice of proactive and strong human resources management. Great HR was and definitely still is a "ticket to ride" the success train for every government department and government official. Each individual manager's success is a direct factor of their HR skills and knowledge.

That first article was about sexual harassment. There followed articles ranged from joyful news, like successful achievements by coworkers and the connection between family success and work success, as well as unfortunate events. On the joyful side was HR Daughter Elyse's master's degree and subsequent management success in her local government career. Likewise has been the case with Dr. Daughter Rachel's milestones such as graduating from medical school, creating a beautiful granddaughter, Evie, and meeting challenges such as serving as a County Medical Examiner, doing a rotation in a State Prison and dealing with many issues of health and community engagement. Wonderful HR Spouse Charlotte provided

material for many articles by the way she goes about her daily activities with dedication, caring and searching for better ways to do things. As with all things in life, there are also difficult or sad events to discuss. The death of a colleague, disaster management practices, budget problems, workplace violence, opioid abuse, unlawful discrimination and other poor behaviors by employees or citizens, or officials. These all reflect examples of the "dark side" of the HR Force.

These HR Doctor columns have been a source of great fun, joy and honor for me to write. So have the many seminars and conference presentations I have been able to do for NACo and individual counties, cities and even other countries over the years. My hope is that they have provided tens of thousands of County officials with reasons to smile or to shake their heads, all the while taking note of how to act on risk mitigation and ways to innovate in their personal and their official roles.

Some common threads looking over the long list of these articles are below. They are a reflection of the importance of HR to government agency success. That importance has only grown over these 20 years as growing liabilities, challenges and fears have also grown. Of course, there is also the rather scary fact that America has 5 percent of the world's population, but 70 percent of the world's lawyers.

Among them are plaintiff attorneys complete with advertising billboards that orbit regularly around government building. They have particular interests in how public officials behave or fail to behave, and how the agencies respond to poor behavior. Helping agencies understand how to get in front of risks before they create

horror has been a mission for The HR Doctor over the years.

Here are some persistent article themes:

- The IMPORTANCE of local government to our country and the world tops the list. It is local governments, which have the closest ties to what happens in our lives, the lives of our children, and the lives of generations not yet born. The heart of America does not lie in whatever goes on in Washington D.C., but in what happens in the local communities. I have written about adventures in local government in Africa, the U.K., Ireland and Northern Ireland as well as in Iowa, California, Florida and many other places. The growing need to nurture local government capabilities is a cross-cultural imperative.

- RESPECT is the fundamental link in a democracy to solving rather than creating problems. We may disagree. We may feel very strongly about this or that issue. However, without the ability to listen to one another, to fairly consider someone else's

opinions, and to compromise when appropriate, we are all in big trouble. We will look to "solutions" which may be simple, immediate — and wrong.

In a powerful superpower, some of those solutions will inevitably involve violence. They may involve poor decisions about use of the military, about putting off action when action is very much needed, or simply "walking by something wrong!" They may involve the denial of the rights of others. These are the conditions, which create great loss, grief and costs. They make local government fail to sense opportunities and seize them. They retard our ability to prevent trouble. This poor kind of local government decision-making is a form of malpractice, which adds to our liabilities. HR can often be the agent to prevent this poor approach to governance, if we allow excellence to flourish.

- SECURITY is a constant need and constant worry in our world. Every day features the latest "breaking news" about a mass shooting, a terrorist or

criminal horror, or about some other serious crime. In the ways we allow community infrastructure to decay, in the ways we allow individuals to lose hope and turn to violence or evil paths like extremism, in the ways we create "heroes" who lead by poor example, we are making the future a more difficult place to enter. Government has a strong part to play in resisting this version of the future.

First, by acting properly itself, as a role model for respectful behavior. Then by listening to needs, opportunities, and dangers. As individuals we can be transformers of the future for the good. We can celebrate innovation and show the courage every day to lead with honor and a sense of service. The responsibility for security does not at all rest with law enforcement officers alone. In that sense we are all part of the "blue team." Every one of us is a security agent. Our agencies, however, must be better prepared than they have been in the past to prevent, mitigate and meet head-on the threats that we face.

Local governments are the leaders in our security. It is the fundamental government function. HR is becoming the "security HQ" more than ever before as it scans the behavioral horizon looking for signs of trouble in employee conduct and the physical security of offices. Take it from a former intelligence officer; there is much that can be done to bring about security improvement and confidence. Allowing arrogance and obliviousness to danger to rule our thinking are definitely not two of them.

- TECHNOLOGY in our work and personal lives has only increased and will continue to do



See HR DOCTOR next page

HR DOCTOR from page 16

so. That can be incredibly wonderful and fun but it must be implemented with great care and concern. Technology can make our lives easier but it can drain us of basic humanity. None of us like standing in lines when perhaps we could engage government online, but it's often hard to substitute an error message for being able to chat in person with a concerned fellow human about a problem and get it resolved right there in the office.

A very important and disturbing trend in this author's opinion (and experience) is a sense of declining civility in our world as well as the reduced ability of leaders to look beyond what they first see as they react to a problem. We are all much better served by dynamic leadership, which is forward-thinking, respectful and strategic.

Maintaining a central place for civil discourse is the key to great outcomes in a democracy.

The current presidential campaign, lasting for what seems like decades instead of weeks

or months is a prime example. The decay in civility in interpersonal relationships, between candidates, in Congress, on the streets with law enforcement and citizens, between people on TV, in politics, at school... in general... is a much-underestimated threat to the viability of our country.

Another decline in values is a loss of patriotism. That means a loss of respect for how the sacrifices of our parents and generations of parents in working hard, fighting hard, innovating and creating have led us to all we

have today.

A nation substituting personal entitlement for patriotism and a spirit of sacrifice will decline and eventually pass away. The slogan that we must "make America great again" is unfortunate.

America is, has been, and has all the potential to remain great. It is, however, a slogan that captures a sentiment, which has increased in past years that sacrifice and service to others has become less important than the personal acquisition of toys and an avoidance of responsibility.

Twenty years has been a long

time to associate with people as wonderful as past NACo leaders, Larry Naake, Steve Swendiman, the late David Davenport, as well as current leaders like Matt Chase. They have been and are NACo's positive and effective voice for county governments.

I hope to continue these articles and look forward to visiting with many of you at conferences, training seminars, or as you call for help in specific HR needs — even if in the future some of our work together may be streamed live from my assisted-living facility. **CN**

Proposals could change SNAP, TANF

From POVERTY page 1

he calls "a full slate of ideas to address some of the biggest challenges of our time."

The poverty report includes a variety of reforms and proposals aimed at updating federal welfare and support programs. While the paper does not take the form of actual legislation, it does contain a number of proposals that could be beneficial to counties.

The task force recognizes the value of enhancing state and local flexibility throughout the report, especially on issues related to early childhood development and job-training

programs. It also focuses on the dividends of early investments in early education programs and supports federal investments to improve the technology local governments use to deliver and track benefits.

However, the report also contains a number of proposals that, while light on details, are concerning to local governments.

For example, the report proposes consolidating a number of federal funding streams, including those for housing and rental assistance, and early childhood development, into single, simplified options. While specific programs or

block grants were not mentioned, NACo remains cautious about the potential reduction in resources and flexibility.

Additionally, proposals in the report could alter the way counties administer the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) welfare program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistant Program (SNAP) benefits, and housing and rental assistance by increasing administrative burdens on counties without increasing financial support.

Broadly, the task force's report represents the first step in a conversation about strengthening America's commitment to helping those in poverty. Counties play an integral role in funding and delivering many of these services, and are significant intergovernmental partners in these conversations.

To further explain the county role in serving those in poverty, NACo is releasing a new report: *Counties Addressing Poverty: Serving the Underserved*.

NACo will continue to hold discussions with lawmakers as they consider future legislative proposals and reforms, and work to identify potential specific changes to many of the programs mentioned above. House Republicans are expected to release additional policy papers throughout the summer. **CN**

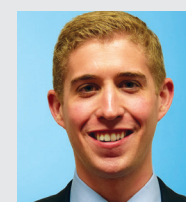
Check out NACo's new presentation: *Counties Addressing Poverty, Serving the Underserved* at www.naco.org.

ON THE MOVE➔

NACo OFFICERS, COUNTY OFFICIALS

● **Sally Clark**, president, addressed attendees at the Association of Oregon Counties Spring Conference in Umatilla County (Pendleton), Ore. on June 12.

● **Bryan Desloge**, first vice president, presented a U.S. Communities Customer Appreciation Award to Palm Beach County, Fla., on June 7.

**Rowings****Belarmino****George****Greene**

cussed The Politics of Pensions, May 23, as a panelist at the Government Finance Officers Association's Annual Conference in Toronto, Canada.

● **Linda Langston**, strategic relations director, spoke on collaboration and nature-based solutions to floods at the North American Water Learning Exchange in Maricopa County (Phoenix), Ariz. May 16–18.

COMING UP

● **Andrew Goldschmidt**, membership marketing director, will represent NACo at the South Texas Judges and Commissioners Annual Conference in Hays County (San Marcos), June

13–16.

● **Zach George**, membership associate, and **Carlos Greene**, FSC senior program director, will attend the Mississippi Association of Supervisors Annual Convention in Harrison County (Biloxi), June 13–16. Mississippi is the newest state to endorse the NACo-Nationwide Deferred Compensation Plan.

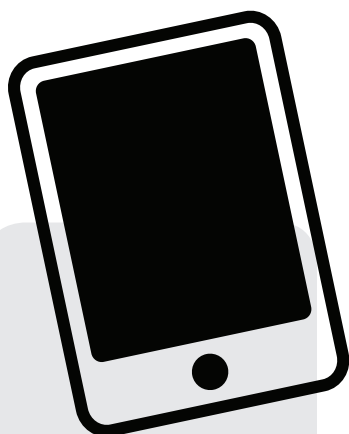
CN SPOTLIGHT



LEINBACH TESTIFIES

NACo Northeast regional representative Christian Leinbach testifies before the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Superfund, Waste Management and Regulatory Affairs June 7 at its hearing, *Oversight of EPA Unfunded Mandates on State, Local and Tribal Governments*. Leinbach, a commissioner in Berks County, Pa., argued that greater consultation with county governments during the environmental rule-making process would create greater clarity and increase the effectiveness of federal regulations. Photo by Alix Kashdan

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION



ARIZONA

About 2,000 **PIMA COUNTY** Jail inmates are receiving electronic tablets — no they're not iPads or anything like it. And they won't be able to access the internet or take photos.

The devices have limited features and are made specifically for correctional institutions. The roll out comes after a six-month pilot program.

Jail officials say inmates will be able to use the tablets for things like playing approved games, reading books and making monitored phone calls that cost 20 cents per minute.

The tablets do not cost taxpayers. The jail's phone services vendor has invested about \$3 million in the tablet program. It will recoup its investment from services inmates have to pay for such as streaming music, which could cost roughly \$19 a month, and phone calls.

If inmates misbehave or break the tablets, they will be taken away, officials said.

DELAWARE

NEW CASTLE COUNTY and state officials unveiled a new program to assess and treat rather than arrest eligible drug addicts. It's called **HERO HELP**.



TEXAS

During the height of flooding in Fort Bend County, Texas, rescues like this one were a typical scene. Eight inches to 20 inches of rain fell on parts of the state over Memorial Day weekend, causing the Brazos River to rise above 54 feet; major flood stage is 50 feet. Floodwaters affected 148 square miles and 50,000 people, according to the county's Office of Emergency Management.

No deaths or serious injuries were reported, however about 800 rescues were conducted, and more than 4,000 homes were flooded, 400 of which sustained confirmed damage. Gov. Greg Abbott (R) declared a state of disaster for about 30 counties and requested federal disaster relief on June 9. Photo courtesy of Fort Bend County, Texas OEM

County Executive Thomas P. Gordon said drug overdoses are now the number one cause of accidental deaths in the county.

Participants who enter the program voluntarily must agree to work with a substance abuse counselor, undergo a review of past and present criminal charges and enter a rehabilitation facility.

HERO HELP isn't open to violent criminals, gang members, drug dealers, weapon offenders, or anyone with a long criminal record, current or pending domestic violence charges or violence against law enforcement officers.

IDAHO

This year makes it a "three-peat" for **ADA COUNTY** Paramedics (ACP). For a third year, the American Heart Association has honored ACP with its **Mission: Lifeline Quality Achievement Award**. This year

and in 2015, Ada paramedics received gold awards, the highest level. In 2014, ACP obtained silver recognition, according to the *Journal of Emergency Medical Services*.

The gold award recognizes

achievements in improving outcomes for victims of one of the severest types of heart attack, known as "ST Segment Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI)."

"When Ada County Para-

medics identify a STEMI heart attack, we're able to quickly alert the hospital cardiologist and often bypass the Emergency Department altogether, taking the patient directly to the 'cardiac cath' lab for immediate treatment — which can save precious minutes," said Hadley Mayes, public information officer, Ada County Paramedics.

FLORIDA

LAKE COUNTY commissioners are looking for ways to keep **Habitat for Humanity** operating in the county. Because of rising impact fees, the nonprofit is planning to move to neighboring **SUMTER COUNTY**, where the fees are lower.

The county raised impact fees last year at the behest of the school district to cover education costs, county Commissioner Sean Parks said.

Habitat for Humanity officials said a home built in

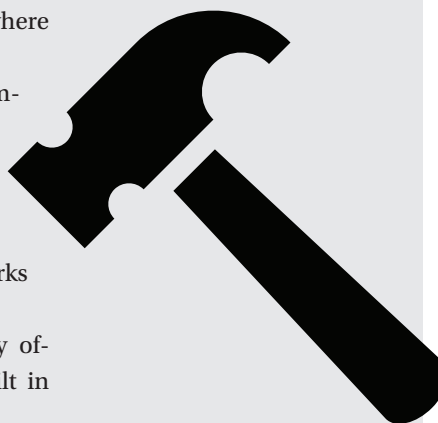
Lake County could cost up to \$14,000 more than one built in Sumter County. The county is seeking state funding to help offset Habitat's costs, WFTV 9 News reported.

INDIANA

The state health department has declared a public health emergency in **WAYNE COUNTY**, paving the way for the county to establish a needle-exchange program.

Health Commissioner Jerome Adams said it's part of an effort to stem the spread of hepatitis C, which can be an indicator of injection drug use, Fox 59 News reported.

Public health emergencies have previously been declared in **MADISON, MONROE, FAYETTE** and **SCOTT** counties.



MISSOURI

ST. CHARLES COUNTY Council members are considering skipping the state's August **back-to-school sales tax holiday** this year. Instead, some of the tax revenue would be used to hire two narcotics investigators to fight growing heroin and opioid drug abuse.

County officials say the county's share of the tax would generate \$384,000 in revenue. About \$172,000 of that amount could fund two detective positions, including the cost of police cars and other equipment, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported.

"You've got a drug epidemic in this county and the neighboring counties," said County Councilman Joe Brazil, a proponent of the opt-out idea. "It's something that has to be addressed."

The county is part of the St. Louis region, where officials say deaths from heroin and prescription painkiller abuse tripled during a seven-year period ending in 2014.

NEW JERSEY

The new Digital Health Department system will let anyone review inspection reports for 1,300 **GLOUCESTER COUNTY** restaurants, but soon, the county plans to add **inspection reports** for kennels and pet stores, public swimming pools, youth camps and body art shops.

Residents previously had to file Open Public Records Act requests to obtain paper copies of these reports, the *South Jersey Times* reported.

NEW YORK

● Counties may be relieved of their funding responsibilities for **indigent defense**. The state Assembly has passed legislation to gradually transfer responsibility to fund public defenders from the counties to the state.

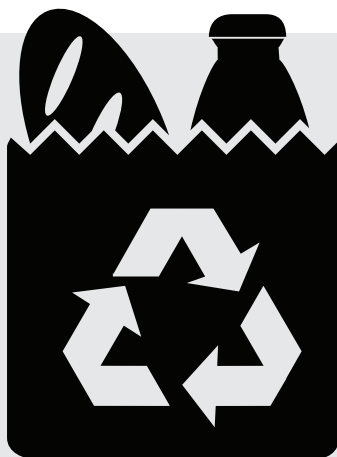
The bill follows a 2014 settlement between Gov. Andrew Cuomo's (D) administration and the New York Civil Liberties Union requiring better indigent defense services in

MICHIGAN

The **WASHTENAW COUNTY** Board of Commissioners has approved a 10-cent-per-bag **fee on all grocery store paper and plastic bags**. But the program may never take effect, according to michiganradio.org.

At the state Legislature, the House is currently considering a measure already passed by the Senate that would preempt such local ordinances statewide.

The fee is intended to reduce waste — which advocates say would lower the \$219,000 annual cost of processing plastic bags at recycling facilities.



SUFFOLK, WASHINGTON, ONTARIO, ONONDAGA and SCHUYLER counties. A companion bill with 20 co-sponsors has been introduced in the Senate, the Associated Press reported.

NORTH DAKOTA

The **GRAND FORKS COUNTY** Sheriff's Office has released a mobile app — GFSO tip411 — that will help residents find information, **view alerts and submit tips**.

The app and text-a-tip function are both anonymous. It allows sheriff's office staff to respond back and create a two-way conversation, but there is no way to identify the sender.

OKLAHOMA

A total of \$51 million could be **diverted away from county programs** in the new state budget.

If the governor signs the budget, \$50 million would be cut from a dedicated fund for county road and bridge improvements, and \$1 million would be removed from the county equipment revolving fund.

OREGON

Nine counties are suing the state of Oregon, claiming its new paid sick-leave law is an **unfunded government mandate**.

LINN COUNTY commissioners filed the suit in Linn County Circuit Court on behalf of **DOUGLAS, JEFFERSON, MORROW, MALHEUR, POLK, SHERMAN, WALLOWA and YAMHILL counties**.

Since January, Oregon law requires employers with at least 10 employees to provide paid sick leave. Employers must provide one hour of sick time for every 30 hours an employee works, or 80 minutes for every 40 hours worked. The law would apply to part-time employees as well as

full time.

The counties are asking the state court for its interpretation of Oregon's constitution, which says that counties may refuse to comply with any new state program if they aren't given funding from the state to offset those costs.

Linn County argued that the state had not provided adequate funds to operate the program, *The Chieftain* reported.

PENNSYLVANIA

The **NORTHAMPTON COUNTY** controller has proposed going after an estimated \$100,000-plus annually the county has missed by not collecting **hotel tax** on short-term private lodging rentals arranged online such as Airbnb, HomeAway, TripAdvisor and FlipKey.

"A hotel room in Northampton County is any space that has four walls and a bed that is for rent," Controller Stephen Barron wrote in a memo to other county officials.

Airbnb reached an agreement last month with **MONTGOMERY COUNTY**, Md., to collect the tax from its network of homeowners and remit the revenue to the county, the Asso-

ciated Press reported.

Barron said he found more than 300 short-term rentals advertised on the sites in Northampton County.

WASHINGTON

BENTON COUNTY will no longer issue warrants over **unpaid fines**; judges will inquire about a person's ability to pay; defendants can seek reductions in the amount they owe; and public defenders and prosecutors will receive training on constitutional practices for imposing and collecting court fines and fees.

The American Civil Liberties Union said it settled a lawsuit it filed last fall against the county. In 2010, the organization investigated the way courts impose fines in several states, noting that the penalties often compounded with interest or late fees, contribute to the impoverishment of some defendants.

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



NEW YORK

The state agriculture commissioner lifted the ban on all **live fowl competitions** and displays at the State Fair all county fairs and youth fairs.

Fear of "highly pathogenic avian influenza," which killed millions of birds across the country in 2014 and 2015, prompted the May 2015 ban. The ban also forced a one-year hiatus in the exhibition of baby animals. The department continues to routinely test poultry in live-bird markets for avian flu.



LIGHTS,
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champion, author,
filmmaker and
columnist



KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR

Record-breaking
athlete, sports
broadcaster and
author



DIANA NYAD

Presidential
historian and
Pulitzer Prize
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JON MEACHAM

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