

ELSA CASTS SHADOW OVER GRIM TASK IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

The complicated effort to recover the missing residents of a collapsed Miami-Dade County condominium building escalated in its second week, when Tropical Storm Elsa threatened to destabilize the remaining structure while search and rescue crews continued their work with more than 100 people still unaccounted for. As of July 6, the death toll was 32 deaths, with 26 of the dead identified.

A demolition team leveled the remaining structure July 4 without disturbing the recovery areas, eliminating the risk from high winds and rain and opening up new dimensions to search beneath the debris pile. County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said that although some recovery efforts paused for the safety of the search and rescue teams, the effort throughout would be constant, as would attempts to look elsewhere for residents who were not home at the 12-story Champlain Towers South building the morning of June 24. Those efforts have been stymied by incomplete

See **COLLAPSE** page 12



The Capital Wheel lights up at National Harbor, Prince George's County, Md., site of NACo's 86th Annual Conference. Photo by Hugh Clark

NACo's 86th Annual Conference gets underway in Prince George's County

by **Mary Ann Barton**
editor

The National Association of Counties 2021 Annual Conference got underway July 9-12 in Prince George's County, Md., just outside the nation's capital.

Some of the featured speakers this year include Vice President Kamala Harris, who will address NACo members Friday, July 9; Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi will take the stage Monday, July 12 and

HUD Secretary Marcia Fudge will address conference participants Saturday, July 10.

The conference is being held in person and virtually, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced the conference to go all-virtual in 2020.

"Safety is our top priority,"

said NACo President Gary Moore.

"We are reimagining the conference agenda and the format to reduce the overall number of sessions and maximize the use of our entire conference space to avoid overcrowding."

The conference is being held at the Gaylord Hotel & Conference Center, a 1,996-room space on the Potomac River at National Harbor in Prince George's County, Md. The hotel underwent a \$64 million

See **ANNUAL** page 2

NACo President Gary Moore looks back on an unprecedented year

Each year, *County News* publishes a Q&A with the outgoing president of NACo, who reflects on their year serving as president of the association. Boone County, Ky. Judge Executive Gary Moore became NACo president on July 20, 2020 and



Moore

will become immediate past president of the organization after the Annual Business Meeting at the 2021 NACo Annual Conference in Prince George's County, Md.

CN: How would you describe your year as

NACo president?

GM: This year as president has not been at all what I expected; however, it has been more rewarding than I could have ever imagined. When I was elected to serve you as NACo second VP, and eventual-

See **MOORE** page 2

2021 Annual Conference


From ANNUAL page 1

renovation while it was closed down during the pandemic. It just reopened to the public on July 1.

In addition to being a first-time large gathering of NACo members, the 2021 Annual Conference is also a celebration after facing the challenges of the pandemic year.

NACo members are now looking ahead and taking steps to get their communities back home back on their feet.

The conference is an opportunity to gain and share information about how they can do that with dozens of speakers, workshops and meetups scheduled.

County News will publish online coverage (at naco.org/news) of the conference as well as publish articles and photos about the conference in our July 26 and Aug. 9 issues. 

I have missed these personal interactions and fellowship

From MOORE page 1

ly president, no one could have foreseen a world pandemic or the other major events that our nation and our counties have faced. These events changed our world in many ways, but in the end, they have also provided NACo with new opportunities. The value that NACo provides to our nation’s counties, boroughs and parishes is at an all-time high. NACo staff and our elected leadership, working in concert, have made us a more responsive, efficient and higher functioning organization and my appreciation for each member of the NACo team, their talents and their relationships with other key leaders has grown immensely. It has been a truly amazing year!

CN: What was the most challenging part of your role?

GM: Adjusting from the traditional in-person state con-



The election that started his path to the NACo presidency: Boone County, Ky. Judge-Executive Gary Moore supporters watch the election at the 2018 NACo Annual Conference in Davidson County, Tenn. Moore is fourth from left. Photo by Jessica Yurinko

ferences, board meetings and other in-person opportunities to a virtual world was quite a challenge. I have missed these personal interactions and the fellowship with so many of you.

Converting my office to a recording studio for video productions and for virtual meetings was something I never expected to do. This virtual world was so very different than the in-person one that we had expected, and though hundreds of you have seen me “virtually,” I have not seen you. I look forward to seeing you “in-person” very soon.

CN: What did you find most interesting or exciting?

GM: One of this year’s most unique aspects has been the opportunity to serve during two U.S. presidential administrations. Both President Donald Trump and President Joseph Biden included NACo in many key discussions, multiple engagements and in a number of other creative ways. Being involved at the highest level of policy formation has been an amazing experience. This in-

tergovernmental engagement with NACo has reached an all-time high. I am so pleased that NACo is a trusted partner of our nation’s leaders.

CN: What are you most proud of?

GM: I am so proud that we have reached a record high in paid county membership. Almost 2,500 of our nation’s 3,069 counties are now members. In addition, we have reached an all-time high in county participation rates in webinars and virtual interactions, thus reaching hundreds of additional county officials and their staffs. More than ever before! NACo is our organization and I am so very proud of what we have accomplished together.

CN: What advice would you give your successor?


GM: My advice would be to always remember that the things that might divide us ... party politics, political beliefs, race or ethnicity, rural or urban and our geography are actually our strengths. When we come together as counties and use

this diversity as our strength, we are a stronger organization. We, as counties, have the potential to bring about much greater and positive change for our residents!

CN: What’s next for you?

GM: I plan to use these experiences and everything that I have learned from serving as NACo president to better serve the residents of Boone County thus making my home county stronger. I will be a candidate for Boone County Judge Executive in 2022 and hopefully serve Boone County in my seventh term which would conclude in December of 2026. And of course, I will continue to be a resource to NACo whenever and wherever needed.

CN: Final thoughts?

GM: Serving as president of NACo has been an extreme honor and a privilege that I will never forget. What an amazing blessing it has been. Thank you for giving me this opportunity and for contributing to our many accomplishments and overall success. We are NACo! 

SNAP/STATS

YEAR	LOCATION
2020	Virtual Annual Business Meeting (due to COVID-19 pandemic)
2019	Clark County (Las Vegas), Nev.
2018.....	Davidson County (Nashville), Tenn.
2017	Franklin County (Columbus), Ohio
2016.....	Los Angeles County, Calif.

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NACo

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CDC extends eviction moratorium to July 31

by Daria Daniel
and Sarah Gimont

On June 24, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) extended the federal eviction moratorium from June 30 to July 31, 2021. The CDC also announced that this would be the final extension of the moratorium, originally put in place on Sept. 4, 2020. The moratorium is intended to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by preventing evictions and keeping individuals in their homes and out of crowded or congregate settings, including homeless shelters and other areas. Counties welcome the extension of the federal eviction

moratorium as they work at the local level to provide for their residents' health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the pre-existing housing affordability and insecurity crisis. As of May 24, over 7 million people were behind on rent and 4.6 million people had no confidence they could make their next rental payment, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau. The federal eviction moratorium will help to prevent a wave of evictions stemming from nonpayment of rent and ensure that individuals will be able to remain stably

housed through the pandemic. The moratorium further helps to alleviate the burden on already strained county budgets arising from an increased need for social, supportive and housing services due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The extension of the CDC's eviction moratorium will also provide counties time to distribute the funding they received through the federal Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program and perform outreach to ensure that individuals in need of help are aware of the assistance available. The U.S. Treasury Department, which is responsible for administering

the program, has now distributed the \$25 billion provided by Congress for the first round of the program and \$6.1 billion of the \$21.6 billion provided for the second round of the program.

Also, on June 24, the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) separately announced that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac (the Enterprises) would extend the foreclosure and real estate owned (REO) eviction moratoriums from June 30 to July 31, 2021. The foreclosure mor-

atorium applies to only Enterprise-backed mortgages, while the REO eviction moratorium applies to properties that have been acquired by an Enterprise through foreclosure or deed-in-lieu of foreclosure transactions. Like the CDC eviction moratorium, the FHFA announcement is applauded by counties as they work to keep residents stably housed as the nation pivots towards recovery from the

See **EVICTIONS** page 8

Origin of the Hawaiian leis at NACo Annual Conferences



From 2014 (l-r) Bryan Desloge, Sallie Clark, Riki Hokama, Linda Langston and Matt Chase.

by Rachel Looker
staff writer

If you were ever a new face at the NACo Annual Conference, you may have noticed NACo officers wearing colorful flower leis on stage during the Annual Business meeting.

The leis bring a little "Hawaiian touch" to the festivities, according to former NACo president Riki Hokama, a former Maui County council member. Hokama served as NACo president from 2014 to 2015.

The tradition dates back to former board member Ron Kouchi, who now serves as a Hawaii state senator and previously served as a Kaua'i County

council member.

According to Hokama, Kouchi would make gift bags of Hawaiian specialty snacks to hand out to NACo officers.

"We have certain cultural practices," Hokama said. "One is when we go to peoples' homes, we always bring a gift and in Hawaii, it's usually flowers or a lei."

When Hokama was running for NACo second vice president, he always added the extra accessory of a lei to his attire for formal occasions at NACo conferences.

"My association always made sure I had a lei since I was the guy from Hawaii," he said.

Hokama explained he wanted to share the tradition with other officers and started distributing leis at events.

"I came along and said I'm going to wear my lei," he said. "We started it and then it became a normal practice throughout my tenure."

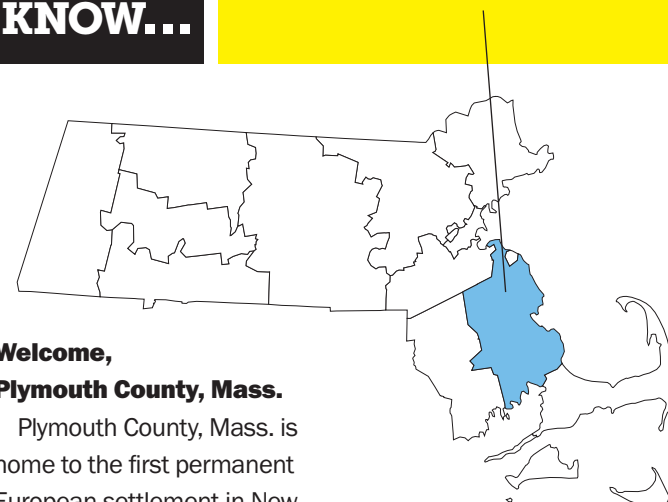
The leis are made up of perishable flowers and are flown in a special refrigerated box to NACo's annual conferences.

"I've recommended that we still bring some leis to give to the new president, especially a lei for the outgoing president giving our thoughts of appreciation."

"It's just a cultural practice for us," Hokama said. **CN**

GET TO
KNOW...

Plymouth County, Mass.



Welcome,
Plymouth County, Mass.

Plymouth County, Mass. is home to the first permanent European settlement in New England. Located along the Atlantic Ocean south of Boston, the county marks the spot where English Pilgrims arrived onboard the Mayflower. The Plymouth Rock symbolizes the location where the colony began.

The Plymouth General Court, which served as the legislative body of the Plymouth Colony, created Plymouth County in 1685. A few years later, the Massachusetts Bay Colony annexed the county. Plymouth County has no charter and operates under Massachusetts General Laws,

special acts of the legislature, by custom and by directives from state executive offices.

The county has two county seats: Plymouth and Brockton. Plymouth served as the capital of the Plymouth Colony until it merged with the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Visitors can travel to Plymouth Harbor and board the Mayflower II, a full-scale reproduction of the ship that brought the pilgrims to New England.

"Get to Know" features new NACo member counties.



Credit: Plimoth Patuxet Museums

Hanover County makes up for lost time with 301st anniversary celebration

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

You'd have to really look hard over Hanover County, Va.'s first 301 years to find one that was as tough as its 300th.

But with the public health conditions improving, officials finally feel safe to commit to a range of deferred celebrations, eager to make up for lost time.

"It was devastating for a lot of our folks to have to cancel last year's events," said Sean Davis, chairman of the Board of Supervisors. "They're so social and engaged in their community, and the events bring people home. When you go to the Tomato Festival or the Strawberry Faire, we basically think of them as family reunions.

"Missing out last year has intensified the excitement of being able to celebrate this year."

It's a dynamic counties across the country are facing, reopening not just their events but reestablishing social bonds, playing host to so many opportunities to celebrate

community. And to celebrate their successes.

"While we certainly had a detour last year with the impact of COVID, celebrating our 300th is not a milestone we want to take lightly or forget in any way," said County Administrator John Budesky.

"Doing this work has probably been the most humbling experience of my professional career and many of those who have worked in local government are going to see their communities come together the way they did," he said. "That work really put us in a position that we're going to have that opportunity to celebrate with our community."

The long-term planning for the celebration of the county's 300-year anniversary focused on the county's existing signature events, augmenting them to celebrate the anniversary of the county's founding — Nov. 26, 1720 — including the Hanover Tomato Festival and the Ashland Strawberry Faire. But the short timeline posed



challenges for a volunteer committee, so county staff, including Public Information Officer Tom Harris, took charge of planning.

"About a month ago we saw that the coronavirus situation was abating somewhat," Harris said. "We felt we could plan for events, but it was too late for a large celebration."

Those events will include a Hanover County night at a Richmond Flying Squirrels baseball game, two weekends' worth of community days at Kings Dominion, located in the county, and the Aug. 28 opening of the Hanover Museum of History and Culture. That opening will include a traveling Smithsonian exhibit: "Change

in Rural America."

Davis said the pivot was intentional, and the involved staff and officials worked hard to make the reimagined celebration fit the moment.

"We had to go back to the drawing board with how we were going to celebrate," he said. "You can't just put the cake in the freezer and thaw it out a year later. Things have changed."

For one thing, with families trying to make up for lost summer travel from 2020, the county diversified its calendar for celebrations, and spread them out throughout the county.

Celebrations will also include historic Hanover Tavern's AutumnFest, a celebration at Patrick Henry's home in the county, and a classic car cruise. By diversifying the events, mostly held outside, the county can maintain a safe number of attendees while also offering many opportunities to celebrate and resume a public life that has been limited during the pandemic.

"We'll be very intentional as the calendar year goes on about having opportunities for our community to come together," Burdesky said. "We will celebrate not just the past of Hanover County, but the opportunities that are ahead of us for the next 300 years."

While he hopes the events will offer social outlets to county residents proud of their history, he's hoping they will be good for the county itself, too.

"It's an opportunity to engage the public, let them know more about their government, more about their community, more about their neighbors," Harris said. "Just to get here, we had to take a number of efforts to allow our community to return to normalcy. Support our residents' needs with a call center we set up with our health district, a vaccination clinic.

"I'm really proud of our staff's flexibility — they're the champions of the process," Budesky said. "They really recognized their role as public servants."

Budesky wants non-resident county staff to participate in celebrations, too.

"We don't forget that folks have families and lives and responsibilities outside of work," he said.

"They inspired the Board and me when we continued to do things. We want our employees to recognize that we're going to do everything to support them in the worst of times and in the best of times we want them to see us as an employer of choice. Their experience is an asset to our community.

Knowing that many had other competing demands on their time, to see them step up and offer different processes to keep providing services to citizens, different ways to keep the work going..."

"Despite all of the challenges, we had a year with some of the highest permitting activity and new business investment," he said.

"It's really something to celebrate." **CN**



Hanover County, Va. residents enjoy a past Strawberry Faire. County officials are stepping up efforts there to celebrate their anniversary this year after COVID pre-empted last year's events.



VACCINE EFFORTS TARGET YOUTH

A girl receives a COVID-19 vaccine at the “Vax and Snax” Block Party in New Hanover County, N.C. Photo courtesy of New Hanover County

by **Rachel Looker**
staff writer

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children 12 years and older in May. With younger populations now eligible for the vaccine, counties are encouraging youth to get vaccinated.

The Cook County, Ill. Department of Health hosted “Youth Day” to educate, inform and encourage young people to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

The department had an existing community vaccine site at a local high school and when it closed at the end of June, staff decided to use the site for the event to encourage young adult populations to get vaccinated, Director of Community Mobilization Xandria Hair said. The department works with community-based organizations at bi-weekly stakeholder meetings to discuss vaccines in the community, Hair said.

“We listened to the organizations, and they thought this would be instrumental in helping to not only get residents and surrounding communities vaccinated, but also just create a space in which we could share

information,” she said.

Hair said they planned the event relatively quickly to ensure vaccine uptake in the young adult and youth populations would increase. The event featured live music, vendors from community organizations, giveaways, food and medical staff on site to answer questions regarding the vaccine.

“The youth that came out did get vaccinated, but they had questions and we welcomed questions,” she said.

Giveaways included tickets to the Brookfield Zoo and to Six Flags Great America. During the event, 73 attendees received a vaccine.

“This event really looked like a community that pulled together to work to get people vaccinated,” Hair said.

The Cook County Department of Health is utilizing other channels to encourage youth to get vaccinated including a video series called “My Shot, My Story” and a Facebook Live video series of “Ask the Doctor” sessions in multiple languages where the county partners with medical staff to answer questions about the vaccine.

New Hanover County, N.C.,

Public Health held a similar event dubbed the “Vax and Snax Block Party” offering free vaccines, food trucks and music with medical experts on-site to answer vaccine questions.

The event was an opportunity to engage the younger population, as well as their parents, and marginalized populations that are experiencing lower rates of vaccinations, Public Health Director David Howard said. The county administered 68 vaccinations during the event.

“It’s a community engagement and education event as much as getting vaccines into arms, so we’re trying to do both at the same time,” he said.

Preparedness Coordinator Diana Vetter Craft said the block party featured a DJ who has a following with minority youth in the county.

“There are so many different avenues that our county has been able to play with in educating, but also making sure that people get the opportunity to get vaccinated,” she said.

When the FDA initially approved the Pfizer vaccine for those 12 and older, Howard said the county had a steady number of parents bringing in their

children to receive a vaccine, but the number has declined, and the department is looking to increase vaccine uptake.

“We did see a pretty good diverse mix of young people and we saw different demographics, so we were pleased with that,” he said of the block party.

Meanwhile in Polk County, Iowa, county supervisors there approved vaccine incentive campaigns, specifically targeting youth, to increase vaccination rates.

Polk County Supervisor Angela Connolly said one campaign awards a nonprofit or school-affiliated group with \$100 for any youth between the ages of 12 to 18 who receives a vaccine. Nonprofits will also receive \$50 for every new individual who gets vaccinated at the health department above the age of 18. Funds will be awarded through Sept. 3 to encourage school-aged youth to get vaccinated before the start of the school year.

Polk County is using funds from the American Rescue Plan for the incentives, according to Connolly.

“We’re trying everything we can. We’re really in a race against time with the new vari-

ant of COVID-19,” she said.

While vaccinations are on the rise across the country for those between the ages of 12 and 17, Polk County Public Health Communications Officer Nola Aigner Davis said they are not at the levels the county would like to see.

“We know that kids are going to go back to school and they’re going to be around their friends, playing sports, involved in activities and anytime you bring a close-knit number of people together, that’s when we see disease outbreak spread,” she said.

Polk County is holding a lottery every other week targeting the youth population and drawing names for a \$5,000 scholarship for youth under the age of 18 who are vaccinated. The county also holds a drawing every other week for \$50,000 and draws names for 10 winners of \$1,000 each week for anyone who has been vaccinated.

“I think as elected leaders, we need to keep pushing out the importance of vaccinations and don’t let up until we get to the point where we get that herd immunity for our community to really feel safe,” Connolly said. **CN**

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STAFFORD COUNTY, Va.

Stafford County, Va. has used multiple seals throughout its 357-year history. Previous seals depicted a king on a throne with two female figures representing “justice” and “right” and an eagle holding arrows and an olive branch.

Although supervisors did not formally adopt the current seal until 1987, it was used as far back as 1964 when the county celebrated its tricentennial. Matthew Fontaine Snead, an artist from the county who served as a professional portrait painter for the Department of Defense, designed the seal during the tricentennial.



The current seal depicts an artistic rendering of the Stafford County Courthouse.

It includes the words “Progress Since 1664,” representing the year the county was founded.

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

U.S. News ranks country's Healthiest Communities in 2021

by Brayden Cohen

The top five healthiest communities in the country are Los Alamos County, N.M.; Douglas County, Colo.; Falls Church, Va.; Loudoun County, Va. and Broomfield County, Colo., according to *U.S. News & World Report*, which recently released its fourth annual Healthiest Communities rankings in collaboration with the Aetna Foundation.

The report evaluated approximately 3,000 communities nationwide across 84 health and health-related metrics in 10 categories, from education and economy to population health and housing.

The rankings serve as a tool to assess which communities offer their residents the greatest opportunity to achieve a healthy life and can inform residents, community health leaders and elected officials about policies and best practices for improving public health. This year's rankings are also accompanied by COVID-19 vaccine rates and other pandemic related data.

The five top-ranked communities all scored above the national average in at least eight of the 10 categories and scored well in measurements of income, employment and educational achievement.

Los Alamos County became the first community to repeat as the healthiest community with its highest scores in the housing, population health and infrastructure categories.

The population health category includes measures of access to care, health behaviors, health conditions and more and was linked to a lower county COVID-19 death rate. More than half of the top 500 Healthiest Communities had fewer COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people than the national case rate and nearly three-quarters had fewer deaths. Four of the top 10 Healthiest Communities had higher vaccine coverage rates than the national average and six of the least-vaccine hesitant counties were in the top 100 of the rankings.



A mental health paradise

Mental health and well-being are top priorities for county leaders coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic as residents across the country have been dealing with the stress of both a health and economic crisis. Honolulu County, Hawaii was the highest-ranked community for the mental health subcategory with the least amount of Medicare beneficiaries with depression and lower levels of adults with frequent mental distress (14-plus days in the past month).

“We are very proud of the number one ranking in mental health. We are healthy because we live in paradise... it is sunny all year,” said Tommy Waters,

Honolulu City Council chair and presiding officer.

“We have trade winds, beautiful breeze and white sandy beaches. In other words, we go outside.” He attributes Honolulu's positive mental health outcomes to their beautiful weather and outdoor lifestyle, however he also points to the policies and priorities Honolulu County made to ensure plenty of equitable mental health resources and services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The mayor had a psychologist sit on the health advisory board alongside an epidemiologist to help guide the county's COVID response,” said Waters.

“We set up a live call center within a week of the first lockdown, with city staff volunteering to do field calls about COVID restrictions and find health and mental health resources.

“We do public service announcements on the local television stations encouraging people to get help and giving them hotline numbers,” he said. “We also supported

having families stay together, which is another big key to the community.”

Lessons learned

It is not a coincidence that counties with higher income, education and employment levels are able to sustain healthier communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequities in the service delivery system, and the 2021 *U.S. News* rankings highlight how counties with the resources to invest in their community and the social determinants of health can greatly improve the health and quality of life of their residents.

For more information on the U.S. News Healthiest Communities Rankings 2021 visit <https://www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/rankings>. **CN**

Brayden Cohen is a Public Health intern in NACo's Counties Futures Lab and is an MPH candidate at The George Washington University.

COVID-19 RECOVERY CLEARINGHOUSE

The State and Local Coronavirus Fiscal Recovery Funds legislation, part of the American Rescue Plan Act, provides **\$65.1 billion in direct, flexible aid** to every county in America.

NACo is here to help.

Ask your questions and share your story on how your county is investing these funds at **NACo.org/coronavirus**.




Eviction moratorium extended

From EVICTIONS page 3

COVID-19 pandemic.

NACo will continue to monitor federal action around eviction and foreclosure moratoriums and advocate for additional assistance for both renters and homeowners. NACo has also established a federal Emergency Rental Assistance program resource hub, a COVID-19 Recovery Clearinghouse and a breakdown of funding provided in the American Rescue Plan

Act, which counties can utilize to navigate the funding and assistance available to them as they work to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic at the local level. Visit the NACo website for more information. 

Daria Daniel is the associate legislative director for Workforce Development and liaison to the Large Urban County Caucus. Sarah Gimont is a legislative assistant in NACo's Government Affairs Department.

WORD SEARCH

FREDERICK COUNTY, MD.
Created by: Mary Ann Barton

Q Y J T A U Q A O C A F A W E S D C S Z
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AGRICULTURE: The county's farmers produce about \$100 million in agriculture products each year.
BRIDGES: The county is home to three covered bridges listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
CATOCTIN: The highest point in the county is 1,880 feet above sea level.
CHEF: The county is home to award-winning chef Bryan Voltaggio.
DETRICK: The largest employer in the county is Fort Detrick, with nearly 10,000 employees, hosting the military's biological defense program.
COURTHOUSE: The county's fourth courthouse, in current use, was dedicated in 1982.
EDUCATION: Three institutions of higher learning are located in the county: Mount St. Mary's University, Frederick Community College and Hood College.
GERMAN: The county was founded by German settlers in 1745.

HOSPITAL: The city of Frederick became a hospital town during the Civil War due to its location near battlefields in Monocacy, Gettysburg and Antietam.
KEY: Francis Scott Key, who wrote the national anthem "The Star Spangled Banner," was born in the county (now part of Carroll County) and practiced law there.
OKTOBERFEST: The county is home to a large two-day Oktoberfest celebration each fall.
POPULATION: The county's population is about 250,000.
PRESIDENTIAL: The presidential retreat, Camp David, is located in the county.
SCHIFFERSTADT: A 1758 stone house that serves as an architectural museum in the county.
STAMP: The first repudiation of the British Stamp Act took place in 1765 in Frederick County, when 12 county judges decided that residents would not pay a British tax.

PROFILES IN SERVICE

ROBERT GELDER

NACo Board Member
Commissioner
Kitsap County, Wash.

Number of years involved in NACo: Seven

Years in public service: 10

Occupation: County commissioner, prior non-profit executive

Education: Bachelor's in Political Science from the University of Rochester

The hardest thing I've ever done: Qualify for the 100th running of the Boston Marathon in 1996.

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: George Washington, Albert Einstein and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



Gelder

A dream I have is to: Travel for an extended period, at least six months

You'd be surprised to learn: I speak Norwegian.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done: Travel to Europe on my own at the age of 18.

My favorite way to relax is: Be with good friends and have great conversations.

I'm most proud of: Successfully completing a community campaign that added approximately 4,000 acres to public open space.

Every morning I read: The Kitsap Sun

My favorite meal is: Sushi

My pet peeve is: Being late

My motto is: True servant leadership is not led by ego.

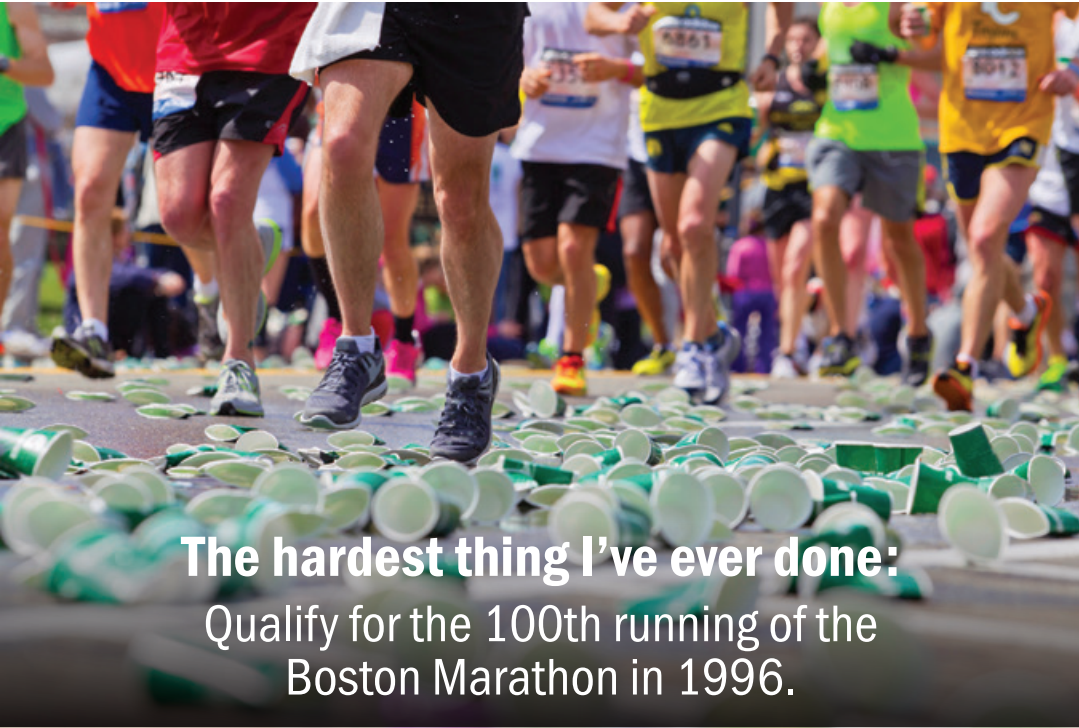
The last book I read was: Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents by Isabel Wilkerson

My favorite movie is: Tough one, but would have to say The Princess Bride

My favorite music is: '80s "new wave"

My favorite U.S. president is: George Washington

My county is a NACo member because: NACo provides an effective voice for counties on the federal level.



The hardest thing I've ever done:
Qualify for the 100th running of the Boston Marathon in 1996.

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BRIGHT IDEAS | MONTGOMERY COUNTY, Md.

COVID Corps in Maryland County Creates Workforce Opportunities for Young People

PROBLEM:

A high unemployment rate during the COVID-19 pandemic impacted employment opportunities for young people, specifically during the summer.

SOLUTION:

Hire young people to work for county agencies and organizations in roles that aid in pandemic response.

by **Rachel Looker**
staff writer

Over 100 youth in Montgomery County, Md., participated in a workforce program last summer that connected them to jobs all while helping the county with its COVID-19 response.

With many businesses closing in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, youth employment opportunities were unavailable, specifically during the summer when many seek jobs between school years.

To provide more opportunities for youth while expanding the county's COVID-19 response efforts, Montgomery County Recreation launched COVID Corps, a youth workforce development program.

COVID Corps launched for county residents between the ages of 16 and 23 and connected youth with jobs that assist county agencies and other organizations with pandemic recovery and response.

Montgomery County Recreation hired, trained and deployed more than 100 young individuals to support the county's response to COVID-19 during the summer.

Recreation Supervisor Jonathan Smink said prior to COVID-19, Montgomery County Recreation held a program called TeenWorks that served as a youth development workforce initiative. The county council and county execu-



Members of Montgomery County, Md.'s COVID Corps helped county agencies and organizations with pandemic response.

tive wanted to put a spin on the program during the pandemic to help multiple agencies in the county with response efforts.

"We were able to quickly pivot and create COVID Corps to run based on what we had been doing beforehand," Smink said.

According to Montgomery County Recreation Youth Development Manager Marhonda Williams, the county hired 49 new individuals and had about 60 to 80 individuals already on payroll who participated in the TeenWorks program.

"The COVID Corps program was comprised of us working with many other agencies in county government, as well as some nonprofit organizations throughout the county, many of whom have never worked with apprentices or interns or young people even as volunteers," she said.

The county received more than 1,300 eligible applications for the program for 125 positions and conducted virtual interviews for both in person and virtual assignments, Smink said.

Staff selected 132 young adults to participate in the program, using skillsets to match COVID Corps members with assignments. Each member received minimum wage and participated in job readiness training, skill building, safety protocols, workshops, financial literacy training and career building internships to gain valuable work experience and receive feedback in their roles.

"This was an opportunity for people who may not have ever been employed before," Williams said. "Not only were we giving them their first or second job, we were also giving them training, we were giving them coaches and mentors to support them."

More than 20 organizations throughout the county served as host sites for COVID Corps members who supported a variety of services from sharing information for COVID-19 testing centers to helping seniors navigate technology and stay engaged with their families.

Montgomery Recreation informed participating organi-

zations that they would receive support from staff throughout the duration of the program as they hosted corps members, Smink said.

"The need really turned into excitement very quickly as soon as those COVID Corps members hit their assignments," he said. "We immediately received feedback from so many of our hosts as to how incredible these young people were."

Williams said members helped with the senior meal program, delivering meals to homebound populations and preparing food packages used for drive-up meal distribution centers.

Others provided customer service in multiple languages with COVID Corps members speaking a total of 25 different languages combined, according to Williams.

Members aided the county's health and human services (HHS) department, supporting county-run testing sites and the HHS warehouse that hosted the county's personal pro-

TECTIVE EQUIPMENT.

"It really is multifaceted as far as who benefits," Williams said. "The young person benefits, the organization benefits and then the county as a whole benefits — now during the pandemic, but also in the future."

COVID Corps members provided a total of 23,000 hours of community service last summer. Six members received job offers following the completion of their assignments.

"I think many of our hosts realized that they were missing out on a potential opportunity to have volunteers or apprentices or even employ young people [and] COVID Corps gave them an opportunity to see how it can be done successfully and I think the county is going to benefit from that," Williams said. **CN**

Montgomery County's COVID Corps program is the recipient of a Best in Category 2021 NACo Achievement Award in the Parks and Recreation category.

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION



ALABAMA

• A new app is allowing residents to learn more about historic sites in **BALDWIN COUNTY**. The **Baldwin County Historic Tours app** highlights historic places throughout the county during a walking or driving tour. Users can listen to audio, read text or watch videos related to 11 historical sites incorporated in the app. The app also includes interactive photos and uses a phone's location features to provide users with a tour route, according to *Gulf Coast News Today*.

• The Sheriff's Office in

JEFFERSON COUNTY has launched the "Project Lifesaver" program to **locate individuals with cognitive disorders**. Those who participate in the program wear a small bracelet that uses radio frequency technology to allow deputies to identify an individual's location, WIAT-TV reported. Residents can sign up to receive a free bracelet by contacting the Alzheimer's of Central Alabama organization and the Autism Society of Alabama.

DELAWARE

NEW CASTLE COUNTY buildings will be **powered by 100 percent renewable energy** to reduce the county's carbon footprint. County Executive Matt Meyer announced an alliance with Constellation, an energy solutions provider which was selected as the county's electricity supplier, to purchase renewable energy for 18 county facilities. The county will continue to use energy from the electrical grid and support renewable energy sources by purchasing renewable energy certificates equivalent to what is being used in the 18 facilities.

INDIANA

The **HAMILTON COUNTY** Council approved funds to



MINNESOTA

BLUE EARTH COUNTY Commissioner Vance Stuehrenberg participated in the county library system's "**Library in the Park**" event. Participants were able to play with sidewalk chalk, jump ropes, an Imagination Playground and listen to a story told by the commissioner. Stuehrenberg's wife assisted him with the reading as "Mary Moose."

design the **county's first domestic violence shelter**. The shelter will cost \$3 - \$5 million to construct and county officials are considering utilizing county-owned land for the 20,000-square-foot shelter.

Plans for the shelter include six family suites with four beds each, *IndyStar* reported. Domestic violence deaths in the county increased from an average of two per year to eight during the duration of the pandemic from March 2020 to December 2020, according to the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

MARYLAND

• **BALTIMORE COUNTY** Public Library eliminated **extended loan fees and outstanding balances** on cardholders' accounts. The move eliminates the fines that create barriers for individuals who need to utilize library resources and services. Cardholders will no longer face financial assessments for returning items late but are required to return overdue books to check out additional materials and will be responsible for replacement costs

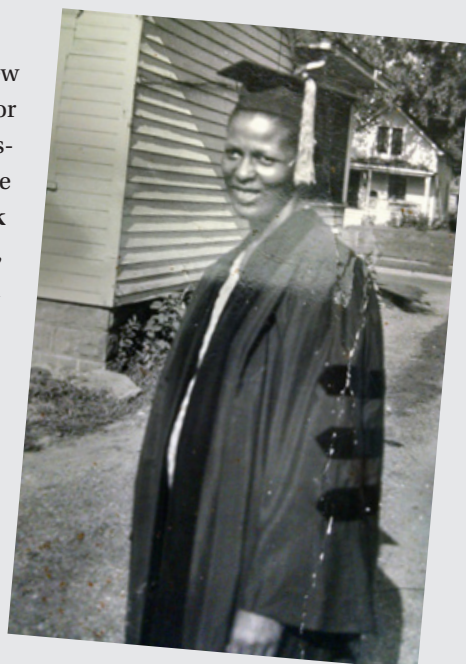


if an item is lost. Library patrons who have not visited a library branch because of financial obligations are encouraged to start over with a clean slate.

• **HOWARD COUNTY** launched a new program to **divert mental health crisis calls** from police to crisis counselors. The county police department partnered with Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center to direct non-emergency 911 mental health calls to a hotline with trained cri-

IOWA

JOHNSON COUNTY's name is taking on a new meaning. Originally named for Richard Mentor Johnson, the former vice president under President Martin Van Buren, the county will now be named for Lulu Merle Johnson, the **first black woman to earn a Ph. D. in Iowa**. Johnson, whose father was born into slavery, enrolled at the State University of Iowa in 1925 and was one of 14 black women at the school, NPR reported. "Through her determination to succeed despite discrimination and adversity, [she] embodied the values, ideals and morals which the people of Johnson County strive to preserve and uphold," supervisors wrote in a passed resolution.



From NEWS FROM page 10

sis counselors. The county's 911 dispatchers will ask questions related to the caller's safety and if it is deemed law enforcement is not required, callers will be asked if they would like to be connected to a mental health professional, *Maryland Matters* reported. Crisis hotline counselors can contact law enforcement if a caller's situation escalates.

- Landlords in **MONTGOMERY COUNTY** will now be required to **install window guardrails** in any dwellings where children under the age of 10 live. The guardrails must also be installed for tenants who request it in writing. The number of injuries from window falls has doubled during the pandemic, County Council President Tom Hucker said. Tenants will be notified about their right to have a window bar installed during the rental process, DCist reported.

**MISSOURI**

The county council in **ST. LOUIS COUNTY** approved a **vaccine incentive program** that uses up to \$875,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funds to purchase gift cards for those who get vaccinated. Funds will be split to purchase a combination of grocery gift cards and gas cards. The county health department has seen an increase in COVID-19 cases, KSDK-TV reported.

NEVADA

WASHOE COUNTY is working with the city of Reno and the state to use carbon mapping technology to share **real-time carbon emission data** and to track it against emission reduction targets outlined in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The state, city and county plan to identify key areas of energy efficiency, track emission reduction efforts and inform

new environmental initiatives.

NEW JERSEY

UNION COUNTY is building an inclusive **LGBTQ+-affirming park space**, which will include a walking trail lined with historical placards, an inclusive playground with intergenerational attractions with sensory-friendly and ADA-compliant elements including a variety of expression swings, traditional playground equipment and activity panels centered on auditory and musical expression. Other elements will include a meditation maze; a space for reflection and meditation; a wildflower garden alongside a brook; an outdoor stage for performances and a resource kiosk with information on programs and services.

The county commission also established the Office of LGBTQ Affairs to provide a platform for leadership and collaboration to support equality and to serve as a catalyst for advocacy, awareness and action on current and emerging issues that impact the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer individuals.

NEW YORK

Why should humans have all the fun? And by fun, we mean protection from contagious diseases. **CHEMUNG COUNTY** is offering **free rabies vaccinations** for dogs, cats and ferrets. If those animals are older than four months, their owners can be fined up to \$200 by the state if they aren't vaccinated.

NORTH CAROLINA

Boys and Girls Club summer campers recently got to spend a day with **WAKE COUNTY** deputies. More than 100 children had the chance to **learn from deputies about their jobs**, backgrounds, resources and equipment, including drones.

PENNSYLVANIA

The **BERKS COUNTY** library system is lending out eyewear

that **allows color-blind patrons to see color**. Statistics extrapolate 17,486 county residents experience color vision deficiency. People who are red-green color blind only see about 10 percent of the one million-plus hues and shades people with standard color vision see, making colors appear bland, dull and those containing red and green difficult to discern. All eight pairs of color-blind glasses are designed for outdoor use, but the library will be adding indoor glasses to their collection by the end of the year.

SOUTH CAROLINA

The state Supreme Court struck down **GREENVILLE COUNTY's** annual fee on registered vehicles and telecommunications fee charged to property owners. Both were **deemed illegal taxes**. *The Greenville News* reported that the decision may mean losing out on \$7 million - \$16 million in lost revenue, and the county may refund taxpayers. The vehicle fee was established in 1993 to pay for road maintenance and the telecommunications fee was established in 2017 to enhance the county's public-safety communications network.

TEXAS

The **HARRIS COUNTY** Commissioners Court voted to **create a county administrator position**. The administrator

will have the authority to appoint and fire many department heads and managing directors.

**VIRGINIA**

FAIRFAX COUNTY is expanding its **composting program** to four county farmers markets, Reston Now reported. The county first implemented a composting pilot program in November 2020 at two larger permanent locations — a landfill and a transfer station.

WASHINGTON

- The Metropolitan **KING COUNTY** Council passed a package of regulations giving **renters** in unincorporated parts of the county new protections against certain evictions, fees and rent hikes. Landlords will be required to offer one of about a dozen "just causes" to evict a tenant or end their lease and will limit move-in fees and deposits and cap late fees for unpaid rent. Landlords must also give 120 days' notice for large rent increases and 30 days' notice on evictions or refusals of lease renewals.

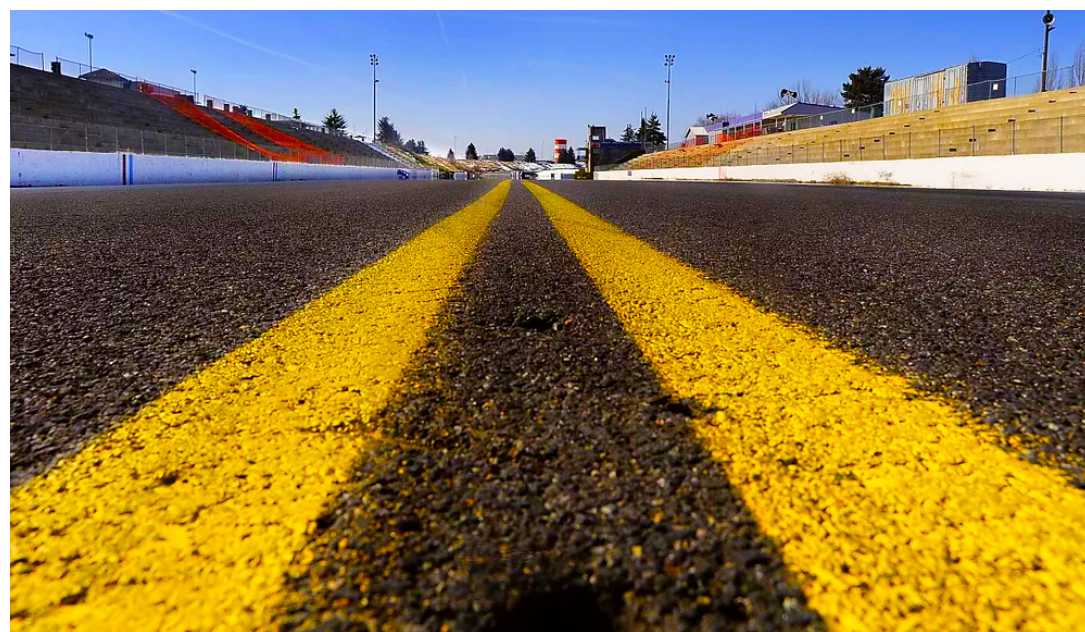
WISCONSIN

Gov. Tony Evers (D) signed a bill directing the state attorney general to cooperate with local governments who are suing opioid manufacturers and distributors as they struggle to recover financially from the epidemic and guide how a **potential settlement** would be distributed. At the June 1 deadline, 71 of the state's 72 counties had joined the national multidistrict litigation against opioid manufacturers, distributors and pharmacies. The bill gives the Legislature's Budget Committee the power to approve or deny any settlement agreement the attorney general reaches with the defendants.

WYOMING

PARK COUNTY plans to benefit from interstate travel in a different way. The county will charge out-of-state residents four times more than what they previously paid to dump construction and demolition waste at the **county's landfill**. "They're trying to look out for the Clark residents rather than the out-of-state folks," County Engineer Brian Edwards told the *Cody Enterprise*. The new rates will run on a trial basis for six months and will be analyzed at the end of 2021.

News from Across the Nation is compiled by Charlie Ban and Rachel Looker. Does your county have news? Contact cban@naco.org or rlooker@naco.org.

**WASHINGTON**

- After 13 years of ownership, **SPOKANE COUNTY** is **selling its raceway**. The county won it at auction in 2008 for \$4 million, and sold it to the Kalispel Tribe for \$6.1 million, *The Spokesman Review* reported.

Building collapse spurred an ‘all-out’ response from South Florida counties

From COLLAPSE page 1

details provided in missing person reports.

“We know that waiting for news is unbearable,” Levine said.

“Through this grief and through this loss, the rain, the smoke and all of the other obstacles that have been thrown our way, a clear picture emerges of what it means to be American,” she said.

“The story of our nation is the story of everyday men and women who summon great strength and resolve to face incredible challenges and to do things that have never been done before. That story has been written throughout the pages of our history and now it’s being written right in Surfside.

“It’s been written by the extraordinary men and women of our search and rescue team,

the first responders who ran directly into the collapsed building to pull people out, and those who’ve been risking their lives for others without pause or question for the last 11 days. It’s been written by all of those who’ve rallied and all of those who’ve come together in a time of unspeakable grief and great need.”

The county has brought cooling stations in close to the recovery site to give respite to workers, and county buses to provide shelter during breaks.

Miami-Dade County’s Community Action & Human Services Department has been coordinating operations for a family assistance center, offering services including short



Heyman

and long-term home assistance, travel assistance, psychological, spiritual and grief counseling, financial assistance, food and clothing assistance, funeral assistance, expediting visa, passport, insurance verification, document recovery including Social Security cards, driver’s licenses and more.

The public safety response after the 1:30 a.m. collapse was almost immediate.

“It was an outpouring of engagement, activism, sympathy and seamless professional assistance,” said Commissioner Sally Heyman, whose district includes the city of Surfside. “Miami-Dade was on it right

away, the city of Miami Beach was on it. Broward County, Palm Beach and Monroe, it was ‘all-out’ from South Florida counties and cities.

“In a time of crisis, you really see people pull together,” she said. “Our law enforcement has been impeccable maintaining the integrity of what is a working scene of people and property.”

Heyman said that the chaos surrounding the effort to identify who is missing hammered home the importance of clear regulations around short-term rentals.

“You have to register if that’s the intent for the unit,” she said. “That’s where you have great uncertainty, where the numbers will start shifting because of the potential for what people expect from a unit, in terms of how many people normally live there and how many people

we’re searching for.”

The search and rescue teams are cataloging recovered personal items and actively searching for pets.

Cava ordered an emergency audit of residential properties of five stories or higher and 40 years and older under the county’s jurisdiction, and encouraged cities to do the same. Miami-Dade and Broward counties require recertifications for 40-year-old buildings, and Palm Beach and Pinellas counties are considering adding similar measures. In Los Angeles County, Calif., Supervisor Janice Hahn sent county building inspectors to survey a multi-structure condo complex.

“My concerns are that we don’t have something happen here that we’ve been watching in Florida,” she told her local CBS affiliate. **CN**

COUNTIES ASSIST WITH MIAMI BUILDING COLLAPSE

by Rachel Looker
staff writer

It has been all hands-on deck in Miami-Dade County, Fla., following the collapse last month of a 13-story condo building in Surfside.

First responders flocked to the collapse of the Champlain Towers South building assisting crews as they searched through the debris.

Members from the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue alongside seven other task force teams from Florida and an international task force from Israel continued search and rescue efforts in the days following the collapse.

First responders removed 3 million pounds of concrete in five days as they searched through layers of debris using sonar and video equipment and search and rescue canines to identify victims. The teams consisted of more than 300 responders that operated on 12-hour shifts.

To assist with the efforts, Escambia County, Fla. deployed its Mobile Command Center or THOR to the site in Miami-Dade County.

The state of Florida requested the county’s center to assist with the recovery and rescue efforts.

One county emergency management employee deployed with THOR for 10 days.

“We’re happy to go help out and we’re always willing to go help our neighboring counties and our state of Florida,” Public Safety Department Emergency Manager Eric Gilmore said.

The 52-foot trailer is pulled by a tractor and can be extended to 1,000 square feet. The interior has working space with a generator and 72 hours of fuel as well as wireless communications, cel-

several miles away from the incident,” Gilmore said.

He said the state is utilizing the mobile command center for operations and logistics and to identify other resources needed at the site of the building collapse in Miami-Dade County.

“It affords you the opportunity to pull right up to the incident, deploy the mobile command center and actually operate out of it,” he said.

Gilmore said the unit was last deployed within Escambia County

pace,” he said.

Escambia County has benefited from outside resources coming to help during its own disasters, such as Hurricane Sally in 2020.

“When we can go help anybody else in the state of Florida, we love to return that help,” Gilmore said. “We know how beneficial it is and how crucial it is to share those resources.”

Fairfax County, Va. is also contributing to the emergency response at the site of the building collapse.

A member from the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department’s Urban Search and Rescue Team also deployed to the building collapse in Miami. The structural engineer deployed through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The county department has a contract with FEMA for domestic deployments, according to Jeffrey Lewis, head of the Urban Search and Rescue team. The engineer, who becomes a county employee when he is deployed on any missions, is considered a disaster assistance specialist.

Lewis said the engineer has extensive experience with com-

plex building design and with the analysis of construction failures, previously working to provide information on how house structures have failed.

While in Miami, he provided technical guidance to the operation with other engineers working on site. Members of the county’s Urban Search and Rescue team complete hundreds of hours of training and education in different disciplines as canine specialists, collapse technicians or medical specialists.

“There’s a variety of different disciplines and each one of them has a different set of core training courses that are required to be a deployable person,” Lewis said.

The team has deployed with FEMA on a variety of crisis situations from earthquakes, terrorist events, building collapse, hurricanes or flooding and provided guidance on infrastructure issues in other counties.

“You cannot cooperate too much,” Lewis said of the importance of sharing resources with other counties during catastrophes. “The more cooperation that you have, the more effective you’re going to be in mitigating any kind of a disaster.” **CN**

‘You cannot cooperate too much. The more cooperation that you have, the more effective you’re going to be in mitigating any kind of a disaster.’

lular, satellite and VOIP phones, radio equipment and weather tracking equipment. A four-person communications room offers mobile office space with printers, scanners and other supplies.

“We can deploy it in the field or next to an incident site and use it as a forward command versus trying to be in an emergency operations center that’s removed

at the Naval Air Station shooting in 2019 where FBI utilized the space for their response and investigation. Prior to 2019, the mobile command center has been deployed for hurricane responses.

“Sharing of resources is absolutely crucial to get the response first and then of course the recovery going at a much quicker