

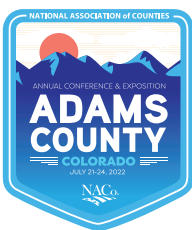


Galloping bronze horse statues outside the Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center will welcome nearly 3,000 county officials and others from across the country July 21-24 for NACo's 87th Annual Conference in Adams County, Colo. Photo courtesy of Marriott

## ADAMS COUNTY, COLO. HOSTS NACo'S 87TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

by **Mary Ann Barton**  
editor

Nearly 3,000 county officials and others are expected this week at NACo's 87th Annual Conference and Exposition July 21-24 at the Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center in Adams County,



Colo., just outside of Denver.

Some of the highlights of the conference include the election of a new NACo second vice president, a virtual press conference on American Rescue Plan initiatives as well as General Sessions on Friday and Sunday that

See **ANNUAL** page 2

## Larry Johnson reflects on year

by **Mary Ann Barton**  
editor

Each year, *County News* interviews the outgoing NACo president to review their year in office heading up the association. DeKalb County, Ga. Commissioner Larry Johnson was sworn in as NACo president July 12, 2021. He will be-

come the immediate past president of the organization after the Annual Business Meeting at the 2022 NACo Annual Conference in Adams County, Colo.

**Q: How would you describe your year as president?**

**A:** I would describe it as adventuresome, educational and

thriving.

**Q: What was the most challenging part about being president of NACo?**

**A:** I think just coming out of the pandemic, and seeing people get back to a sense of

See **JOHNSON** page 2

## New drug czar boasts county government chops

by **Charlie Ban**  
senior writer

Rahul Gupta is behind the wheel of a great big truck, but he knows how to navigate the winding roads all over the country, thanks to his experience in one of the most mountainous states.

Following a long line of at-

torneys, academics and law enforcement veterans, Gupta is not only the first physician to lead the Office of National Drug Control Policy, but also the first with experience in county government, after six years in charge of public health agencies in West Virginia, for Kanawha County and Charleston and neighboring

Putnam County.

Gupta will elaborate on the Biden administration's drug control strategy and the resources available to counties in a conversation with NACo Executive Director Matt Chase during the Opening General Session for the 2021 NACo An-

See **GUPTA** page 3



# Colorado senator to address General Session

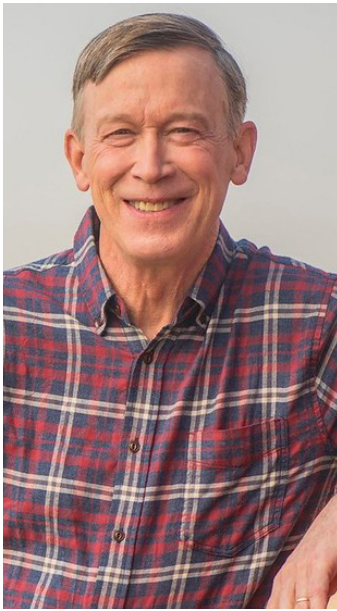
From ANNUAL page 1

will feature exciting keynote speakers including Heather McGhee, best-selling author of “The Sum of Us,” Rahul Gupta, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (see story, Page 1), author Mike Ebeling, author of “Not Impossible” and Colorado Sen. John Hickenlooper (D).

In her *New York Times* best-selling book, “The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together,” McGhee, 42, argues that racism has costs for everyone, not just for people of color.

Often described as one of the country’s most insightful and influential thinkers, McGhee, who hails from Chicago, offers a powerful exploration of inequality in the United States.

She finds examples from across the country of how racism hurts all populations and explains the benefits everyone gains when people of all races come together to solve soci-



Hickenlooper

ety’s problems.

Hickenlooper, 70, is a native of Narbeth, Pa., and was elected to represent Colorado in the U.S. Senate in 2020. He served as mayor of Denver from 2003 to 2011 and governor of Colorado from 2011 to 2019.

He got into politics after a career as a petroleum geologist and later, a co-founder of Wynkoop Brewing Company, a

brewpub, in 1988.

As governor of Colorado, he introduced universal background checks and banned high-capacity magazines in the wake of the 2012 mass shooting in Aurora, Colo. He expanded Medicaid under the provisions of the Affordable Care Act, halving the rate of uninsured people in Colorado.

NACo members will vote for a second vice president during Sunday’s Annual Business Meeting. In the running are Supervisor James Gore, Sonoma County, Calif.; Chair-at-Large Phyllis Randall, Loudoun County, Va. and Commissioner Greg Puckett, Mercer County, W. Va.

(Read the candidates’ platforms on Pages 9, 10 and 11.)

NACo members on Sunday will also consider the American County Platform, NACo’s policy advocacy agenda for the year ahead and conduct other association business.

In addition to the General Sessions, conference attendees will discover policy steering committee meetings and more than three dozen workshops, advisory board and task force meetings.

An exhibit hall will be open throughout the conference at the Gaylord Rockies featuring more than 120 partners from the private, non-profit and government sectors.

Attendees can quickly find conference programming in printed program guides available at the conference or by using the conference app, which can be downloaded from app stores onto smartphones, tablets and computer web browsers.

For questions about the app, attendees should stop by the registration desk. **CN**

Conference-goers can share their experiences on social media by posting with and following the hashtag #NACoAnn.

# A look back at NACo presidency

From JOHNSON page 1

normalcy and just trying to be there to be the coach to help push them and say, “We can do it, we can make it, we got this.” Because this is not new to counties. We’ve always had to deal with multiple issues at the same time, and we’ve always risen to the occasion.

The pandemic wasn’t the same across the country. Depending on where I went, I had to adjust as a leader and how I interacted. In trying to do that, sometimes it was tough.

## Q: What was the most exciting part of your year?

**A:** Going from the east to the west to the north to the south — meeting all these different people and being able to connect with people from different parts of the country. There were lots of different environments, it was so refreshing. The federal lands issue. And farms, family farms. Those stood out to me. For a lot of counties, that is still their livelihood. Getting a real good understanding of those issues really has helped me to grow.

## Q: What are you most proud of?

**A:** I think, just the THRIVE initiative (<https://www.naco.org/thrive>) I had to get people to tell their stories. And the mental health and DEI initiatives that I’ve launched. The THRIVE initiative, I didn’t want to come out with something so definite that people couldn’t see how they fit into the picture. Because as we come out of the pandemic, people are trying to get their legs up under them. Their psyches, their mental health. And so, the THRIVE initiative allowed me to connect with counties, wherever they were, to help propel them. And then from there, we expanded



Johnson

that to the mental health initiative. It’s causing great awareness.

## Q: What advice would you give your successor?

**A:** Make sure you continue to take care of your home district. You can’t turn your back on the people at home. We kept the momentum going. So, always keep your constituents first. That “home team” is very important. And I want to thank them for keeping everything going and moving forward and keeping the residents informed, keeping our initiatives going. You’ve got to have a team to help you do that. Because as a national president, you have to do both.

## Q: What’s next for you?

**A:** To work on this mental health initiative and to make sure that it is moving forward. To make sure that the DEI initiative is moving forward, and just continue to help the next president, to be the best past president you could ever be. My parting thoughts, to all of the NACo members, is to keep your head up, to continue to be that light and inspiration to the residents that you serve. But also be looking to build partnerships and collaboration in NACo. It’s an organization that can help you to do those things better. **CN**

## SNAP/STATS

### IT'S NATIONAL ICE CREAM MONTH!

ITEM	BY THE NUMBERS
CONSUMED YEARLY, PER PERSON: .....	4 GALLONS
CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMY: .....	\$13 BILLION
NUMBER OF DIRECT JOBS: .....	29,000
AMOUNT MADE IN 2021: .....	1.3 BILLION GALLONS
MOST POPULAR FLAVOR: .....	CHOCOLATE

Source: American Dairy Foods Association



## Gupta faced myriad challenges while leading two county public health departments

From GUPTA page 1

nual Conference July 22 in Adams County, Colo.

Gupta's background will prove vital in executing a hard pivot in federal policy, one in the face of a continuing substance abuse epidemic fueled by opioid-based painkillers, that effectively reaches local governments.

Gupta also served as West Virginia's state health commissioner and as a drug policy advisor on Joe Biden's presidential transition team in 2020 and 2021.

"President Biden clearly recognized that this is a public health crisis, and we have to address it by bringing all public health and public safety folks together and someone like me has done exactly that in their career," Gupta said during a recent interview. "Having influenced and worked to develop the president's strategy in a way that really reflects 21st century challenges but also 21st century solutions and being realistic on what we could achieve...is very important to me."

And having worked in county and state public health, he could judge which aspects of the national drug control plan would resonate with local officials and practitioners and which plans would be relegated to the bookcase.

The administration's solutions and goals prioritize saving lives through a combination of harm reduction and expanded treatment, law enforcement efforts to cut off illicit drug trade and resources to test for counterfeit prescription drugs that contain fatal amounts of fentanyl.

"Your chances of dying with counterfeit medications are worse than playing Russian roulette," Gupta said. "We're at an inflection point in our nation's history where behind these 107,000 deaths a year, there are millions of people who have non-fatal overdoses, and underneath that is tens of millions of people who've suffered from addiction and substance use disorder. We have probably about 40 million or so that are going to need treat-



**Rahul Gupta speaks during the Rural Action Caucus meeting during the 2022 NACo Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.** Photo by Hugh Clarke

ment and we've got a fraction — less than one of 10 people — who needs treatment isn't getting it today, so that's the sort of magnitude of the challenge that we face."

While fulfilling his post-residency service to an underserved community in Covington County, Ala., Gupta developed strong relationships with his patients in his rural community, and those experiences drove him to pursue a career in public health when the scope of the social determinants of health became apparent. Within weeks of arriving in West Virginia for his first public health job, he was one of two full-time county health officers in the state when the H1N1 pandemic hit.

"We had no option but to lead," he said. "The thing about working at the local level is that everything is your problem, everything becomes your job and you don't necessarily get to go for training for every one of them and you don't have experts right next to you sitting for everything."

He faced a number of challenges in county public health, including combating the proliferation of "shake and bake" meth labs, inspection and remediation of motel rooms that had been used as meth labs and enforcing stricter controls on over-the-counter medications in pharmacies.

In 2014, a chemical spill in the Elk River upstream of a major drinking water intake threw nine Charleston-area counties into crisis. He also combat-

ed obesity, pushed for a state Medicaid expansion and addressed the growing substance abuse trends. He saw the seeds sprouting years before.

"When I was a physician in Alabama, I would see the drug sales representatives come to my office at least two times a week and push and give samples of these opioids," he said.

He also led the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department effort to become the first accredited local health department in the state, and in doing so also established a logo and branding campaign that made the department more recognizable, helping to establish public credibility.

"There's a genuine feeling of helping your community move forward and to be able to provide the sort of leadership that helps improve the health and lives for individuals is very rewarding," he said.

Those six years leading public health efforts in two counties showed Gupta exactly the people he'll be counting on to help execute the national drug control plan, the recipients of federal support, the feet on the ground and the ears and eyes who will be able to respond back with results, and other feedback to help refine the administration's strategy and tactics.

And he learned firsthand the working conditions that public health officials face, from working with elected officials to building coalitions with businesses, the faith community and others.

"I felt like I've got to be able to figure out 'How do you practice public health at a very local level to understand the real challenges that communities face?' he said. "I appreciate the hard work my colleagues all across federal government do, but the fact is that having worked in a local level is such an important part of your DNA, it allows you to really understand, [to] have been there and done that."

When he moved to state government, Gupta launched a "social autopsy" to gather data on the nearly 900 opioid overdose deaths in 2016.

"We wanted to find out how we can understand and learn from the dead in order to save the living," he said.

That meant looking a year back in each of those people's lives, scouring medical examiners' records, EMS records, behavioral health records and more. Their families helped fill in where they were working, their level of education, their family lives and other social factors. And the heavy numbers came into play:

- How many times they overdosed before they died.
- Were they incarcerated?
- Did they undergo any treatment?

As Gupta zoomed out, he saw startling trends, including that four out of five people who died from overdoses had come into contact with the health care system before they died, illustrating a systemic failure in helping them.

"That's the kind of thing that

informs what I do every day, because those total numbers have been replicated all over the country," he said. "We saw 56 percent of people dying of an overdose within a month of leaving incarceration; if you saw three doctors, you were three times more likely to die, and if you went to five different pharmacies shopping for drugs, you were like 70 times more likely to die."

The conclusions the report reached helped the state mobilize quickly to fill some of those gaps, which resulted in West Virginia showing the first drop in opioid death rates in the country in 2018.

"It was clear that what we need to do is expand treatment, stop people from dying with naloxone and then make sure data systems are in place that can capture those people before they die. At the end of the day, you've got to have data."

Since the scope of the addiction crisis rose to the American consciousness, several other crises have overtaken it, not the least of which has been the COVID-19 pandemic, which hit its own million-life mark recently. Refocusing county officials takes a close relationship with Gupta's friend as state health commissioner — numbers.

"I think the most important way we could do that is by raising awareness of the fact that three out of four people that are dying right now out of the 107,000 is because of opioids like illicitly manufactured fentanyl, what that also means is if we had naloxone right there, we could save tens of thousands of lives right now," he said.

"The first thing we have to do is focus on what works to save lives, and one of those strategies is to get naloxone to people. Once we save their lives, let's get them connected to standard treatment. The other most important piece of course is going after the bad guys, making sure that we're going after drug trafficking profits. These are poly-national criminal organizations that are holding communities hostage all over the country." **CN**



# Alaska throws ARPA lifeline to tour operator, replaces lost revenues

by **Charlie Ban**  
senior writer

Angie Oberlitner lives her best life when she's out and about in Anchorage, Alaska, showing off her home to visitors from all over the world.

So, there she was, instead sticking her head into a cardboard box lined with foam. But in 2021, that seemed like a pretty good deal, one that was allowing Alaska Step on Guides to survive and put it in a position to thrive, a year after she started to question whether the COVID-19 pandemic had put an end to her business.

And while recording her tour stories for a smartphone app wasn't what she had ever imagined, neither was anything else over the prior year.

"Most of our clients started canceling in February," Oberlitner said of 2020, explaining that the cash outlays for business upgrades, insurance and permits put her business in debt before clients started coming in later in the year. "That's just how Alaska business runs."

"By the time it was all said and done, we maybe did four different things in the entire season of 2020, so overall I took home probably a little over \$1,000 that year."

Looking ahead to 2021, she knew she was facing a make-it-or-break it season. A little more than a year after the pandemic put her on her heels, Congress passed the American Rescue Plan Act, and the Anchorage Borough Assembly awarded her funding in an effort to protect small businesses.

ARPA's \$65.1 billion stimulus directly to county governments gave them wide latitude to spend their shares however they felt they'd get the best bang for their bucks. And for many of the local businesses that live and die on an expected stream of visitors, the borough offered some financial relief.

"That was very helpful for



**Anchorage Borough Assembly Member Felix Rivera.** Photo by Hugh Clarke

us," said Anchorage Assembly Member Felix Rivera.

"We're a big enough city

an additional number of independent travelers," said Robert Barr, Juneau's deputy

## "Our finance director was telling us that would be a \$26 million hole in our budget."-Juneau Mayor Beth Waldron

that we were able to do that and the ability to use the funds as we needed allowed us to target programs specific to industries that we knew needed that extra boost."

Anchorage applied the same flexibility to gift cards the borough distributed to residents.

The tourism decline affected Alaskan boroughs and municipalities even more than states in the lower 48, because while their distance from population centers gave the state time to observe and prepare for the pandemic, coming to visit and spend money there wasn't as easy as driving over a few state lines.

"We had almost no cruise ship passengers in 2020," said Beth Waldron, mayor of the City and Borough of Juneau. "Our finance director was telling us that would be a \$26 million hole in our budget."

That was another ARPA feature — allowing counties to use funding to replace revenue lost because of the pandemic.

"We generally welcome north of a million tourists off cruise ships every year, plus

easy decisions about where to best allocate those both within the community and within the city and borough government," he said.

Waldron said that the assembly kept a close eye on the city and borough's financial standing along with its battle against COVID-19.

"Luckily we've had pretty fiscally conservative assemblies before us, so we had a budget reserve, but our biggest fear was that we could survive a year but if this lasted more than one year, we were in a world of hurt trying to figure out revenues," Waldron said.

"City government just can't move fast and raise money

wasn't a lot of commercial activity."

The pandemic abated in Alaska, and the local governments had a chance to stop just surviving and start looking ahead.

Rivera said the ARPA funding allowed Anchorage to look more strategically at its workforce, noting that the yearlong hiatus in the tourism industry left many workers looking for new jobs, some of which wouldn't return from when the economic climate improved.

"We're hoping to look at funding some of the gaps in our workforce training," he said. "Going into the future, our tourism industry can re-

quickly. Doing an increase in sales tax requires a public vote, and at that time there

ally come back strong, know-

*See ALASKA page 5*

**Angie Oberlitner shows off Ship Creek Overlook Park in Anchorage. The park lines Alaska's most productive king salmon sportfishery.** Photo by Hugh Clarke





*From ALASKA page 4*

ing that they have a healthy workforce.

“Some people didn’t have the necessary training,” he noted. “They want to know what’s next. We’ve been sort of so pandemic-focused, they really want to see where we’re going to in the future, what’s the next phase of Anchorage?”

Angie Oberlitner’s next phase view of Anchorage and the rest of Alaska took shape in 2021.

“The ARPA funds gave me enough of the bridge to pay debt that had rolled over from 2020 that was coming due in 2021 and it also kind of allowed us to just get a little bit of float space to see if visitors were going to come,” she said. “Boy, did they come.”

The difference was, people weren’t comfortable riding in a car with her, so Oberlitner drove separately and transitioned to walking tours.

Then, working with a friend in the tour-guide business, an app offered her a chance to not only ensure the quality of every tour she essentially gave, but increase the num-

ber of visitors who would take tours simultaneously.

Another ARPA grant from the borough supplied the start-up funding.

With GPS activation, the app can start playing Oberlitner’s narration when visitors reach specific points, and the tours themselves can be custom-made with different themes in mind.

“People who don’t want to get in a car with a local guide can still get that local knowledge from a lifelong Alaskan,” she said. “What we offer is that personal connection.

She’s nearing completion of her Seward, Kenai and Fairbanks apps. From her cardboard box recording studio, Oberlitner has used online audio editing software to put the tours together and has tested them on friends and family.

The app allows her to be in two, three, four or more places at once.

“I’ve got tons of stories to tell, so they can still get that experience,” she said. “They can get the insider stories of, you know, the people and the places ... it’s like a tour guide in your pocket.” **CN**



## 2021 ARPA SPENDING REPORTS LEND INSIGHTS

NACo, the National League of Cities and Brookings Metro are tracking how counties and cities are using the American Rescue Plan Act’s (ARPA) flexible State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) using the Local Government ARPA Investment Tracker that the three organizations maintain.

The latest data, current as of the Dec. 31, 2021 reports to the Treasury Department, reflects decisions that counties and cities made in the seven months after receiving their first tranche of money. This data comes from 240 counties and 89 cities that have at least 250,000 residents.

Large counties and cities had budgeted 41 percent of their funding — a combined \$25.3 billion. The 329 large counties and cities are receiving \$62 billion in SLFRF dollars in two roughly equal tranches, distributed in May 2021 and May 2022.

Congress gave SLFRF recipients through 2026 to fully expend their allocations.

Large counties and cities had many urgent economic, fiscal and public health needs to address with their first tranche, but many were awaiting the final regulations to allocate the funds, which came weeks after the reporting deadline that this data reflects.

Cities were a bit faster to budget their funds than counties — 89 cities had budgeted a combined \$14.5 billion by the end of last year, 55 percent of their total allocation. The 240 counties had budgeted 30 percent, suggesting that many counties were taking a more conservative approach or had more complex processes to formally approve the use than cities.

Congress and the Biden-Harris administration argued for ARPA to support state and local governments in part to prevent a reoccurrence of the Great Recession’s aftermath, when state and local employment never fully rebounded from the deep cuts it sustained. ARPA’s rules give local governments wide latitude to rehire employees laid off due to the pandemic, provide them with back or premium pay, hire

additional employees to help administer SLFRF dollars and invest in facilities and systems that help government do its work in a post-pandemic world.

Cities and counties can also use their allocation to replace lost revenue during the pandemic. Those projects count as government operations, and large cities and counties budgeted a combined \$10.7 billion toward them through the end of 2021 or 42 percent of their total budgeted SLFRF dollars. Government operations accounted for the single largest use of budgeted dollars for both cities and counties: 32 percent of budgeted funds in counties and 50 percent of budgeted funds in cities.

### Public health was the most common investment.

Counties designated a combined \$1.3 billion of their budgeted SLFRF dollars to fiscal health recovery and another \$1 billion toward their employees. They invested more significantly than cities in facilities, equipment and IT, with more than 300 discrete budgeted projects in this area totaling more than \$750 million. Many of these were capital investments to promote public health, such as upgrading ventilation systems in county buildings to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Others assisted disproportionately impacted communities, such as upgrades to early-education centers or shelters for domestic violence victims.

At the end of 2021, large counties and cities had spread their funding widely across these categories: 14 percent to public health; 12 percent to infrastructure; 9 percent to economic and workforce development; 9 percent to housing; 8 percent to community aid and 6 percent to public safety.

There were some notable distinctions between county and city uses of the funds. Counties,

which typically operate local public health systems, dedicated considerably more toward public health (20 percent) than cities (9 percent). Counties also budgeted a larger share toward infrastructure (14 percent) than cities (10 percent), with sewer and water systems accounting for the bulk of their budgeted infrastructure spending, followed by broadband. Cities spent more of their ARPA funds on public safety (7 percent) than counties (4 percent) — investing most significantly in police department capacity and violence reduction or prevention strategies.

COVID-related public health projects were the most common type of project investment for both types of jurisdictions through the end of 2021. Both counties (505 projects) and cities (143 projects) used ARPA dollars to support vaccination and testing sites, public health communications and financial incentives for residents and employees to get vaccinated. A number of counties and smaller cities that had yet to budget much of their allocations nonetheless set aside dollars for urgent pandemic-related health responses.

The larger the allocation a jurisdiction received, the more diverse the set of priorities they sought to address. The average county or city that received more than \$250 million in SLFRF dollars budgeted funds across 10 detailed spending categories (out of 40 total), compared to six categories for those receiving between \$100 million and \$250 million, and five categories for those receiving less than \$100 million.

Overall, through the end of 2021, America’s large cities and counties made significant progress toward deploying their flexible ARPA allocations. They addressed exigent needs — particularly restoring critical government services and ramping up public health responses — while navigating local budgeting processes and some uncertainty about the final rules for the SLFRF program. And they used the flexible program to begin to address a variety of locally specific needs.



# I LOVE MY COUNTY BECAUSE ... ART COMPETITION NOW ACCEPTING ARTWORK



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OCT. 7, 2022**

**WINNERS  
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COUNTY  
NEWS**

**WIN  
\$100  
(GIFT CARD)**

**\* PLUS  
SNAG A PAGE IN THE  
"I LOVE MY COUNTY  
BECAUSE" CALENDAR**

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- ENTRY DEADLINE OCT. 7, 2022
- ENCOURAGE COUNTY SCHOOLS, REC CENTERS  
AND OTHER KIDS' PROGRAMS TO ENTER!
- A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR KIDS TO LEARN  
MORE ABOUT COUNTY GOVERNMENT



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THE WEBSITE  
FOR MORE  
INFO**



# Residents in every county now have access to 988 lifeline

by John Palmieri, M.D.  
and Chelsea Thomson

On July 16, the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, transitioned to an easy-to-remember number – 988 – for community members who need support during a suicidal, mental health and/or substance use crisis.

The number 988, unlike 911, is an intervention itself as it connects people who call, text or chat (through [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org)) to trained counselors 24/7. Counselors listen, support and share resources to decrease distress and suicidality and — where available — can connect callers to mobile crisis teams, crisis stabilization centers and community-based supports.

The Lifeline has provided life-saving services to millions of people since it launched in 2005. The 988 line is expected to ease access and reduce barriers and stigma associated

with seeking help. Counties, which are on the front end of service referrals and community well-being, are preparing for an increase in calls.

In Allegheny County, Pa., which contracts with a provider offering a crisis line, mobile crisis teams, walk-in center and short-term residential beds, “988 is about access and widening the front door but we need to have the ‘Then what?’” said Jenn Batterton, manager of special initiatives at the health department, “and we are working to build up the capacity at the backend and of preventive services.”

In DuPage County, Ill., where the county has operated a Lifeline call center for over a decade, they are using 988 to “develop an entire continuum of care to make sure that if someone calls, they have access to someone who can go out to them or they have somewhere to go,” said Lori Carnahan, director of behavioral health,



noting that “988 is a transformational step” and we realize “that in a month from now, we will be better positioned than we are now.”

“In five years from now, it will be even better,” said Karen Ayala, executive director of the health department.

Counties can leverage this momentous opportunity as a first step in building a longer-term vision for equitable, affordable and enhanced access to robust mental health and substance use services.

Calling 988 offers immediate help during a mental health emergency, yet a full range of crisis care, preventative services and ongoing treatment and recovery services are critical to long-term stability. SAMHSA envisions a day when everyone has someone to call, someone to respond and a safe place to go for crisis care.

In Rensselaer County, N.Y., which has a “living room program” and mobile crisis unit, the county notes “that 988 is an entry point into the system and some people will need immediate crisis follow up,” said Katherine Alonge-Coons, commissioner for the mental health department.

The county is working to determine “what elements in the continuum need to be built up and what are we positioned to help create in our county?” she said.

While SAMHSA is leading this transition, the ultimate success of 988 implementation

and crisis care transformation depends on the partnership between federal, county, state, city, territorial, tribal and private partners to collaborate, coordinate, develop policies and programs, evaluate progress and secure resources to achieve these goals. County leader voices are essential to ensure that local needs inform broader decision making around system design and financing.

To learn more about the 988 transition visit [samhsa.gov/988](https://samhsa.gov/988) and NACo’s online 988 toolkit (<https://www.naco.org/resources/toolkit-counties-988-national-suicide-prevention-lifeline>) or attend the workshop at the 2022 NACo Annual Conference Saturday morning. **CN**

*Palmieri works at the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Association; Thomson is the justice program manager in NACo’s Counties Futures Lab.*

## Counties see downside of depending on tourism

by Stephenie Overman

The summer tourism season is heating up, with nearly half of the U.S. population making travel plans, according to a study by Deloitte.

The recreation and tourism industry can be a good engine for economic growth.

But along with tourist dollars often comes economic stress for the locals, particularly those earning the lowest incomes.

An Economic Research Service report found that, between 1979 and 2013, only 1 percent of recreation-dependent counties remained in persistent poverty. Twenty-four percent of the counties that came out of persistent poverty were dependent on recreation.

Some of those numbers may reflect, not upward mobility, but the displacement of people who could not afford to remain in expensive touristy areas, warned Megan Lawson, an economist with Headwaters Economics, a nonprofit research group in Bozeman, Mont. Being tourism-dependent “is definitely a double-edged sword,” said

Andy Jones, senior planner for Taos County, N. M. Taos, the county seat, has a full-time population of about 400 residents but attracts as many as 10,000 visitors during a good season.

The most important thing counties that depend on tourism can do to improve equality, according to Lawson, is “to understand what is being impacted the most by the tourism economy, and who is paying for those impacts.”

“Are residents paying for infrastructure expansions through higher property taxes? Can sales and lodging taxes be used to help shift some of the burden to visitors, to make sure they’re paying their fair share?”

Housing “is top of mind in many tourism-dependent communities right now,” she said, adding that most places are facing a housing crunch across the income spectrum, not just for those working in low-wage service jobs.

As prices rise to both own and rent, “workers earning all levels of income pay more, add roommates, move to lower quality housing or move to a less ex-

pensive community nearby or leave the area entirely,” Lawson said, noting that the rising prices affect local businesses and governments’ ability to hire and retain qualified employees. Median housing prices in Taos have gone up “around 60 to 70 percent in the past four or five years.”

“It’s stretching us to the limit,”

Jones said. Short-term rentals and people moving to the area from more expensive locations to work remotely have contributed to the boom.

Taos County is working to expand affordable housing opportunities, according to Jones. The first step was an Affordable Housing Plan, which was approved last summer. With

the plan in place “we are now able to move forward with the creation and adoption of an Affordable Housing Ordinance.”

The document will allow the county to leverage New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority funds and make use of the exemptions for affordable housing.

**See TOURISM page 8**





# Counties get creative when housing, transportation take a hit due to tourism

From *TOURISM* page 7

ing to the anti-donation clause, a provision that generally pro-

hibits the state from making direct grants of aid to entities or persons.

And that enables the county

“to work with developers and individuals who wish to develop affordable housing and the workforce housing we so des-

perately need,” he said.

Grants will be given to developers and individuals to repair houses if they rent them out long-term at an affordable rate.

Tourism is the main economy for Kane County, Utah, which describes itself as “the Heart of the Park” because of its proximity to Zion National Park, Bryce Canyon National Park and other recreational areas.

“It creates a pinch” for local workers sometimes competing with tourism dollars, said Camille Johnson Taylor, tourism director for the county.

A recent University of Utah’s Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute report finds that short-term rentals are affecting housing availability and affordability in high-tourism areas. Short-term rentals make up 23.3 percent of total housing units in Summit County, 19.3 percent in Grand County and 16.5 percent in Rich County.

But Johnson Taylor likes to remind people that not only

are more than 40 percent of jobs in Kane County related directly to tourism, but that the visitors create an increased demand for enforcement, nursing and county jobs as well.

Helping residents cope with high transportation costs is another way to avoid the displacement of lower-income workers, according to Lawson. “Housing takes time to build, but transportation support can help alleviate commuting impacts in the near term.”

Transportation planning often occurs at the regional level, “but is not always integrated with housing planning,” she said.

By doing more to integrate transportation planning with housing outreach, “communities can support displaced workers, and help the businesses where they work stay afloat.” **CN**

*Overman is a freelance writer who frequently writes for County News.*

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## 「UNTOLD STORIES」

Together, we can tell the full story of county efforts in responding to the coronavirus pandemic and driving recovery in our communities.

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# NACo Second Vice President Candidates

## CANDIDATE PLATFORM



Gore

### James Gore

County Supervisor  
Sonoma County, Calif.

Fellow County Leaders,  
Our time is now.

As your candidate for NACo 2nd Vice President, my job is to LISTEN to you, to LEARN from you, and then to DELIVER with you. I commit to this work because I believe in our ability to lead our Nation, from the local level up, through these divisive and disruptive times. I further commit to put you in a position, alongside NACo, to share, collaborate, negotiate, and fight for your communities. Your voice matters, and together, our voices don't just matter, they drive change.

To date, I want to thank you for the broad level of support we've received from many of you throughout the country — urban, rural, North, South, East, and West and then some. Throughout this campaign our purpose has remained steadfast: to pursue NACo's mission to "Strengthen America's Counties." Each and every day, we achieve this goal by showing

up and bringing the Ground Truth from our communities forward to be acknowledged, respected, and acted upon. Further, we educate ourselves and our partners, we find common cause, and we drive success in a postpartisan way that delivers for all of our communities throughout this Nation. That's why we're here and why NACo is such a strong and necessary organization.

This campaign is about CONNECTION and what we can achieve when we come together. That's exactly what embodies the strength and success of NACo. It's also what we've achieved within my state association this past year, which I led as President as we unified - rural and urban - to take on the pandemic, broadband, disaster resiliency, and mental health.

You all inspire me.

You don't just do your jobs; you are fighting for our Country's future...and I respect you for that. Public service can be brutal, and you all wear the weight of your communities on your shoulders. That responsibility can be both a blessing and a burden. Through NACo, we share that weight together. We find camaraderie and shared purpose. And we Get it Done.

More than ever, I'm committed to partner with you and deliver by:

- Leveraging ARPA into dedicated, flexible funding for Counties

- Federal investments need to come direct to Counties with maximum flexibility. Far too many resources

come as grants with onerous requirements to apply, track, report, and comply. Many of our Counties (especially rural) simply cannot pursue and manage these programs. When compliance runs counter to commonsense, reform is needed. I pledge to work with you to use the successful rollout of ARPA to get more direct, flexible funding into our counties.

- Navigating beyond this PANDEMIC

- As the Chair of NACo's Programs and Services Committee, I've led our work to survey our membership on the good, the bad, and the ugly from the pandemic. We've put a plan together to honor the innovations and build a better battle plan for the next pandemic. We must use these lessons to reinvigorate our economies while strengthening our safety net and our mental health services. As the provider of last resort, we need to flip the script and ensure that our authority matches our responsibility.

- Protecting and Promoting our working lands (PILT, America the Beautiful '30x30') & Expanding Rural Development delivery

- 62% of counties have federal land within their borders. We must honor the work done thus far and strengthen our advocacy to fully fund PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) so that public land counties

can continue to provide basic services. We must drive the conversation around the implementation of "America the Beautiful (30x30)" to account for conservation gains made to date and expand active land management throughout the public lands network. Having worked for the Secretary of Agriculture on Rural Development nationwide and later as the Assistant Chief of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), I have first hand experience negotiating the Farm Bill and working with county leaders and private landowners on these common sense solutions.

- Resiliency: Expanding funding and flexibility to counties for Disaster Preparedness, Mitigation, and Response.

- On average, 24% of counties experience at least one disaster per year. In my home county of Sonoma, we have had 9 in the past 5 years. Fires, Floods, Drought, and then some. Since our catastrophic wildfires in 2017 - which burnt down more than 7,000 homes in our region - we have fully embraced resiliency as a way of life. We have expanded emergency management funding, preparedness programs, community engagement and use of advanced technology. We have drastically improved, and I have led this work locally, at the State, and Nationally as a multi-year Chair of NACo's

Resilient Counties Advisory Board (RCAB). Through this work, we've forged partnerships with peers from Texas, Oklahoma, Florida, North Carolina, Wisconsin and more. We testified before Congress and got a huge win with changes to the Disaster Recovery Reform Act. More needs to be done, As the saying goes, "All disasters start local and end local." As a member of the FEMA National Advisory Council, I commit to continue driving the conversation back to NACo and into our counties.

We've got work to do.

In a Nation that appears more divided and disrupted than ever, we are the ones driving progress forward. We don't just endeavor to deliver for our constituents, we have to deliver. And we do, each and every day, in spite of the road rash we get from working where the rubber meets the road.

I firmly believe that we are not just the last bastion of basic democracy, but the vanguard for the future. We don't get to abstain from votes or point the finger at someone else to fix our communities. We step up and get it done.

The future of our Nation must be led from the ground up. Urban, rural, suburban — together.

I ask for your vote, and pledge to work my tail off for the County Family, all 3,069 of us.

You can reach me at 707-322-4298 or [Gore2ndVP@counties.org](mailto:Gore2ndVP@counties.org)





# CANDIDATE PLATFORM




**Puckett**

## Greg Puckett

County Commissioner  
Mercer County, W.Va.

Eight years ago I was elected to my local County Commission. Since that time, I have worked innovative efforts to bring opportunities to my county, region, state, and country. Coming from a rural community in southern West Virginia, sometimes overcoming politics can be difficult to accomplish goals that have never been achieved before. As an advocate for change, I knew that leadership would be difficult, but with support from the National Association of Counties (NACo), I was able to find my voice and develop relationships needed to help strengthen communities. Although local partnerships are essential, I've realized that it's those relationships you build along the way that can lead to comprehensive change.

That is why I want your vote for NACo's 2nd Vice President!

When I announced my candidacy I knew that this road

would be anything less than a challenge. During this time, I've had opportunities to meet and discuss important issues to your counties. While many were familiar to me, some seemed somewhat foreign to my way of thinking, but have allowed me to be educated through openly candid conversations giving me a greater understanding on how collectively our voices can be heard.

I've learned that we ALL have a passion unique to county government. Whether it's dealing with drought in the West, devastation from tropical storms in the South, substance abuse and mental health issues in rural Appalachia, or food insecurities and the high cost of living north of the Arctic Circle - I know what resiliency looks like and I want to help share YOUR story with my own.

Currently, I serve as Chair of the Rural Action Caucus (RAC), member of NACo Board of Directors, and one of ten Commissioners on NACo's Opioid Taskforce. I'm currently involved in the Economic Mobility Leadership Network, serve as Vice Chair of the Arts and Culture Committee, Vice Chair on Healthy Counties Committee, Vice Chair on the Juvenile Justice Subcommittee, member of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Subcommittee, and most important - an advocate for all things NACo.

For me, servitude isn't something I'm interested in, it's something I'm committed to in every aspect of my life.

Recently, I was asked about my platform, and why my position was "Committed to Change", because, as respectfully suggested, my message was missing examples of what needs to change. Was she saying that we are not accomplishing our goals? Are we failing in some capacity? To her point, I would stress to the contrary, and that we are achieving more than any organization of our kind. So, while I regularly use CHANGE as a mantra to keep on point, I also mean that we must be adaptive to our environment and be able to politically mobilize in a way that is continually moving us forward; ever changing and modifying to serve our communities the best... however that may look to us.

For me, CHANGE is a broad term and very fluid. I believe that we should be committed to COMMUNITY and focused on HEALTH (both physical and through strengthening our mental health system). We should ADVOCATE for more opportunities and leverage our positions as leaders within counties, parishes, or boroughs to set a NARRATIVE for our nation to follow. All of this can be done in a GIVING environment with the ENERGY to do the work at hand.

So, when I see CHANGE, that's what I believe, and that's what I want people to believe in me.

To narrow that philosophy into three simple things that EVERY community can do, we

must...

1. Clean up our communities and increase opportunities for economic mobility whether we are dealing with blight of our urban infrastructure, or dilapidated structures that litter our rural byways from decades of neglect. We must overcome the stigma associated with poverty and the impacts of mental health, and visually create the communities we wish to become. Sometimes the best way to build a community is by tearing down the devastation that has been left behind by industrial modernization and abandonment from within.

By assessing our needs and building capacity through renewed investment, we can create a flourishing system of engagement that will help re-imagine our shared spaces and encourage leadership in community-based volunteerism efforts. This cultural shift will bring a renewed sense of pride and ownership that our communities desperately need.

2. Focus on solutions to overcome our mental health struggles and substance use disorders toward opioids and other drug related dependence that is killing our communities; quite literally. To overcome addiction, communities must focus on a myriad of solutions including investment in primary prevention and expand efforts across the continuum into effective treatment and recovery options. This includes expansion of local community-based coalitions, and oth-

er programs such as Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) and Quick Response Teams (QRT) to help mobilize communities with leaders that are dedicated to creating safer, healthier communities.

3. Invest in leadership. To advocate effectively at every level, we must lead by example and put 'unity' back in 'community'. I've always believed that you must be willing to put in the effort to SHOW what you want to accomplish. Not just talk about it. Collectively, we must be present beyond a ribbon cutting and engage in a process of collaboration, without rhetoric, and beyond affiliation. This ability to harness leadership in a way that builds collaboration, rather than division, will truly create change. As local elected officials, we must set the example that builds an accord that is, at its core, transformational to the behavior within the new environment that we create.

Together, we have more than an opportunity to lead, we have an obligation to do so. With NACo, we are servants beyond our locally myopic visions. With your vote, I would be honored to serve in leadership with the National Association of Counties to collectively create a narrative of hope, strength and resiliency in how we CHANGE our communities.

If you would like more information, please visit, [www.gregpuckettwv.com](http://www.gregpuckettwv.com), email [puckett2vp@gmail.com](mailto:puckett2vp@gmail.com), or call 304-922-2551.





# CANDIDATE PLATFORM




**Randall**

## Phyllis J. Randall

Chair-at-Large  
Loudoun County,  
Va.

With the support of my State Association, the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo), I offer my candidacy to be your Second Vice President of the National Association of Counties.

Counties are at the center of implementing sound, reasonable, effective public policies, and that's how we must lead. Not from the top down, nor from the ground up, but from the center out. I believe NACo is the right organization to lead this national conversation and advocate for progress on the following issues:

### The Second Pandemic

Exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic, the nation is experiencing, and will continue to experience, an epidemic of mental, behavioral health and substance abuse issues to include anxiety, depression and suicidology. Every year in America, we lose more people to mental health crises and substance abuse

than we lost during the entire Vietnam war.

As a Mental Health/Substance Abuse Therapist, I have over twenty years of professional experience. I am highly qualified to address these issues. As the current Chair of NACo's Healthy Counties committee, I've ensured our committee remains focused on mental health in a post-COVID environment. However, I now believe the entire NACo body should, among other things, do the following:

A. Hire an expert or, if practical, appoint a current member from NACo staff to train elected officials and county staff who wish to be fluid in the language and solutions of Mental/Behavioral Health and Substance Dependence;

B. Provide educational materials for office holders and county staff;

C. Lead, encourage and welcome the conversation on Mental Health and Substance Abuse in all spaces with the goal of educating and destigmatizing these health conditions;

D. Appoint NACo ambassadors to liaise with congressional staff or Members of Congress on a regular basis.

### Support Our Farming and Agricultural Communities

Throughout the COVID pandemic, the entire nation realized the importance of producing our own foods. In the United States we import more than half of our fresh fruit and almost a third of our fresh vegetables. Many of these goods come from countries not con-

sidered allies of America or good actors on the international stage. In 2017 alone, the US imported \$4.6 billion worth of food from China. Although we all recognize that an international economy requires importing foods and other goods, we should be equally aware that, according to the United States Census of Agriculture, between 2012-2016 viable farmland in America shrank at a rate of 3.2%, which equates to 3.3 million acres. Our farming industry is a vital part of our rural economies. We must protect farmable land by:

A. Vowing not to build permanent structures on our prime agricultural soil;

B. Encouraging landowners to put valuable farmland into conservation easement;

C. Adding protections through county zoning policies.

### Establishing a Goal of Upward Economic Mobility for Every County in America

There has been and will likely always be great disparities in median incomes and wealth distribution among American Counties. However, counties with household median incomes of twenty-five thousand dollars or less often face not just serious economic issues but health and safety issues as well. Poor counties often have no hospitals, doctors or dentists. First responders in poor counties often don't have the required equipment and training to perform their jobs effectively, and the school system performance in these counties are often well below the national average. This leaves students vulnerable and unprepared

to compete in the world after graduation if they graduate at all. Vast economic disparities among our nation's counties often mean a young person's success is more dependent on their ZIP code than their hard work, intelligence and talent. As the nation's leading county voice, should never accept this.

In NACo, I am a founding and active member of the Economic Mobility Leadership Network. The goal of this small cohort is to identify opportunities for counties to export policy successes to help other counties become economically stable and mobile.

As a direct result of my work in the Economic Mobility Leadership Network, Loudoun County and a county in Mississippi have formed the first Sister County relationship. Not only have our two counties signed a formal Sister County agreement, we are in constant communication, sharing best practices and planning periodic exchange visits. As part of this new relationship, Loudoun recently provided our Mississippi Sister County with a fully outfitted fire truck. Similarly, our Mississippi Sister County is providing our agricultural sector with important information about growing in difficult soil.

I believe NACo member counties can and should:

A. Complete surveys detailing and cross-referencing average incomes and education levels with notable health disparities, and the results of this NACo analysis should be widely disseminated and shared with Members of Congress;

B. Form Sister County relationships where beneficial to

both counties;

C. Share the lessons learned from these relationships regularly with the entire NACo body.

### Civility in Politics

Not long ago, we had political opponents. Today, many have political enemies. We have forgotten the goal of communication is not to make the other person conform to your beliefs, but to hear and be heard. Compromise has become an unacceptable word, and name calling has become the norm.

During my first term as Chair-at-Large of my county, I led a board of six Republicans and three Democrats. This term the Board has six Democrats and three Republicans. During both terms, our Board members have treated one another with respect. We disagree without being disagreeable, disrespectful or disparaging.

Treating our political opponents and colleagues with respect does not mean we give up our own values or positions. And it certainly does not mean we allow any person to treat us disrespectfully. However, as county officials we collaborate closely with our colleagues who often share different political beliefs. As an organization and as county leaders, our members should model this professional behavior for state and federal bodies.

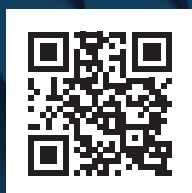
I appreciate you taking the time to read my platform, and I humbly ask for your vote to be NACo's 2nd Vice President.



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# Automating Data and Analytics to Improve Public Health in LA County

Back in 2018, an article in Health Management Magazine discussed the need to elevate the role of clinical laboratories in healthcare delivery, patient health, and the management of public health priorities. The article points out that, at the time, contemporary research indicated a subordinate role for laboratories, with pathology services generally treated as a low value commodity.

The argument of the authors was that with the ever-increasing reliance on data to improve service delivery, patient outcomes, and population health management, laboratories should play a transformational role in the progress of value-based healthcare. The article put forward a vision of “Lab 2.0”, where laboratory medicine plays an integral role in value-based healthcare by “combining longitudinal patient results with population data and the latest medical understanding to connect the clinical dots.”

## Connecting the Dots with Data

Fast forward to 2021 where the global SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic put “Lab 2.0” into breakneck motion by placing a greater dependency on laboratories to provide data to help manage population health. Public health organizations — from the largest state to the small-

est communities — found themselves relying on a network of laboratories to process and provide results from COVID-19 testing.

The largest county in the United States, Los Angeles County is home to more than 10 million people and host to millions of visitors each year. When the true scope of the pandemic came to light, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LAC DPH) knew the importance of laboratory testing as a mechanism to track the progress of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and took action to make the collection of results more efficient.

## 1.6 Million Cells of Data ... and Counting

As of October 5, 2021, over 31.5 million positive and negative SARS-CoV-2 test results have been reported to LAC DPH via the electronic lab reporting (ELR) system. In addition, more than 900,000 test results have been reported

in flat files from laboratories not yet reporting via ELR. At the height of the pandemic, an average of 5,400 and up to 35,000 flat file test results per day were being reported to LAC DPH.

In theory, a specific reporting structure should help address data quality issues, but in practice, with laboratories processing hundreds or thousands of results every day and the tedium of manual data management of flat file lab results, even with the best intentions, data quality issues are going to occur.

Consider this — with an average of 5,400 daily file test results reported to LAC DPH, even a 5% daily error rate would result in 270 “out of compliance” reported results every day. Assuming it would take 10 minutes for each “out of compliance” result to be followed up on and rectified, the LAC DPH would have had to expend 45 work hours — greater than 5 FTEs per day.

With flat file data coming in from more than 50 different laboratories, the LAC DPH understood that standardization of the information provided by these individual laboratories would be critical. The team provided each laboratory with specific data reporting requirements for flat files, including how 32 fields of data should be laid out and how the information in each cell should be formatted.

## Improving the Course of Public Health with Analytic Automation

With a set format for each laboratory established, an Alteryx workflow was built to examine the structure of each report and determine if the columns were in the right order. More than that, the workflow could examine each individual cell to make sure the required information was present and in the right format. For laboratory reports that were verified, the results

were included in additional analyses to track the spread of the virus.

In this same process, reports that were out of compliance — either because of formatting issues and/or missing/incomplete data — were pulled and inconsistencies/errors identified.

Now, instead of the LAC DPH having to contact the specific laboratory with the reporting problems, an analytic workflow automated the notification process with an auto-generated email that was sent to the laboratory with detailed information. This automated notification sped up the process by which the laboratory could rectify the reporting issue and resubmit the information.

In addition to the time and resources saved, the LAC DPH sped up time to insight, which allowed the DPH to monitor percent positivity, pinpoint areas of concern, and better inform policy decisions.





ON THE MOVE



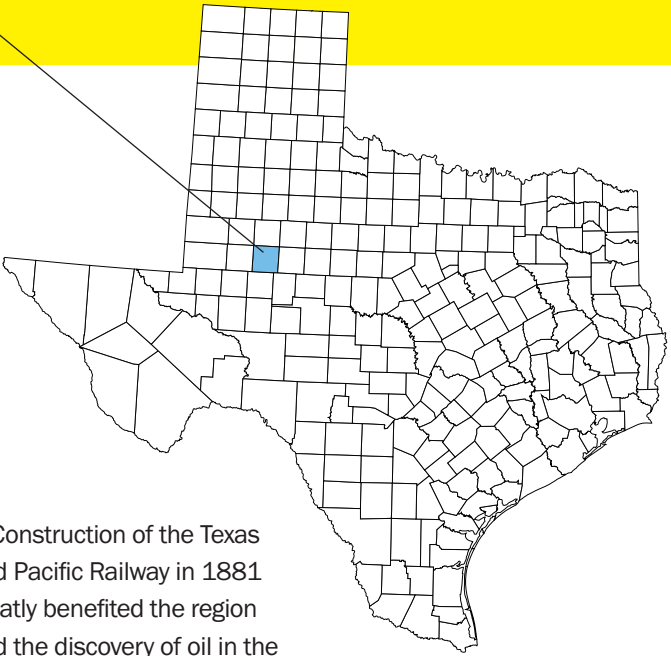
Karon

NACo STAFF

- **Samantha Karon** has joined NACo as a senior program manager for substance use disorders. She previously worked as a social research specialist for the North Carolina Division of Public Health. She earned a Master's of Public Health from the University of North Carolina and a bachelor's degree in International Studies and Philosophy from Emory University.

GET TO KNOW...

Howard County, Texas



**Welcome, Howard County, Texas!**

Named for Congressman Volney Erskine Howard, who represented Texas in Congress from 1849-1853, Howard County is 901 square miles and is located about 80 miles west of Abilene.

The county seat of Big Spring is a crossroads of West Texas and was once a huge trade route that gets its name from a nearby “big spring” in Sulphur Draw. A tributary of the Colorado River, Beals Creek, flows the center of the county.

The county population, according to the 2020 Census, is about 34,860, with 46 percent reporting as Hispanic. The first settlers in the county were from the Comanche tribe.

Construction of the Texas and Pacific Railway in 1881 greatly benefited the region and the discovery of oil in the county has led to decades of booms and busts depending on the price of oil.

The county is served by a local newspaper, the Big Spring Herald, founded in 1904. The annual Howard County Fair is set for September, when

fair-goers will participate in goat-roping, hotdog-eating contests and more.

*“Get to Know” features new NACo member counties. “Get to Know” features new NACo member counties.*



# COUNTIES MAY REQUEST REVIEWS OF CERTAIN 2020 CENSUS COUNTS



by Paige Mellerio

The U.S. Census Bureau has launched the 2020 Post-Census Group Quarters Review (PCGQR) to provide eligible local governments, including counties, parishes and boroughs, the opportunity to request reviews of population counts of group quarters they believe were not counted correctly as of April 1, 2020. This program was created in response to public feedback related to counting quarters’ populations during the unprecedented COVID-19 public health emergency.

The Census Bureau defines “group quarters” as places where individuals live or stay, in a group living arrangement, owned or managed by an entity or organization providing housing and/or services for the residents. Group quarter types eligible for review under the PCGQR program include:

- Juvenile facilities
- Correctional facilities for adults and children
- Nursing facilities/skilled nursing facilities
- Other institutional facilities
- College/university student housing
- Military quarters
- Emergency and transitional shelters (with sleeping facilities) for people experiencing homelessness

- Group homes intended for adults
- Residential treatment centers for adults
- Workers’ group living quarters and job corps centers
- Living quarters for victims of natural disasters

Additionally, service-based locations (e.g. soup kitchens, regularly scheduled mobile food vans, targeted non-sheltered outdoor locations) and sensitive group quarter types (e.g. domestic violence shelters) have been enumerated by the Census Bureau as ineligible for review under this program.

Updated population counts resulting from the PCGQR program cannot be used to change 2020 Census counts or data products, such as apportionment and redistricting. The updated data will, however, be provided to the Population Estimates Program and be used by other Census Bureau surveys such as the American Community Survey.

The deadline to submit all documentation is June 30, 2023. The Census Bureau will review cases on a rolling basis and notify all impacted governmental units of results no later than Sept. 30, 2023. **CN**

*Mellerio is an associate legislative director in NACo’s Government Affairs Department.*



## PROFILES IN SERVICE

### DAVID MEYER

**NACo Board Member**  
Commissioner,  
Board Chairman  
Washington County, Ill.  
UCCI president

**Number of years active in NACo:** 20

**Years in public service:**  
30-plus

**Education:** Bachelor of Science in agriculture

**Occupation:** Farmer

**The hardest thing I've ever done:** Become a self-supporting business owner; meet the demands of public office.

**Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner:**  
My wife, past high school teacher, former Vice President Mike Pence.

**A dream I have is to:** To be very fortunate, make money and enjoy life. If you don't have that, things get a little tough.

**You'd be surprised to learn that I:** Can manage relationships between people in the community and large businesses.

**The most adventurous thing I've ever done is:** Go boating on Lake of the Ozarks in Missouri. You don't realize how big the other boats are until you get out there.

**My favorite way to relax is:** To spend time with my four grandkids and my friends.

**I'm most proud of:** My family's strong commitment to agriculture, dating back more than a century. And my career in county government.



**Meyer**

**Every morning I read:** The Okawville Times and The Nashville (Ill.) News.

**My favorite meal is:** A ribeye steak dinner, cooked medium, or if I've had a lot of meat that week, a whole catfish dinner.

**My pet peeve is:** People who know it all.

**My motto is:** When you make a decision that affects other people, make sure you know where everyone is standing.

**The last book I read:** I have enough on my plate that whenever I sit down to read, I fall asleep

**My favorite movie is:** The Godfather

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

**My county is a NACo member because:** We gain a lot of knowledge about the day-to-day national events that we don't have time to track while we're working. And we meet a lot of people — I always find it interesting that when you sit down with a committee and talk about a problem, someone comes out with the right person to contact or the right solution. If you're not involved, you're missing out.

**My favorite music is:**

**The Four Tops**



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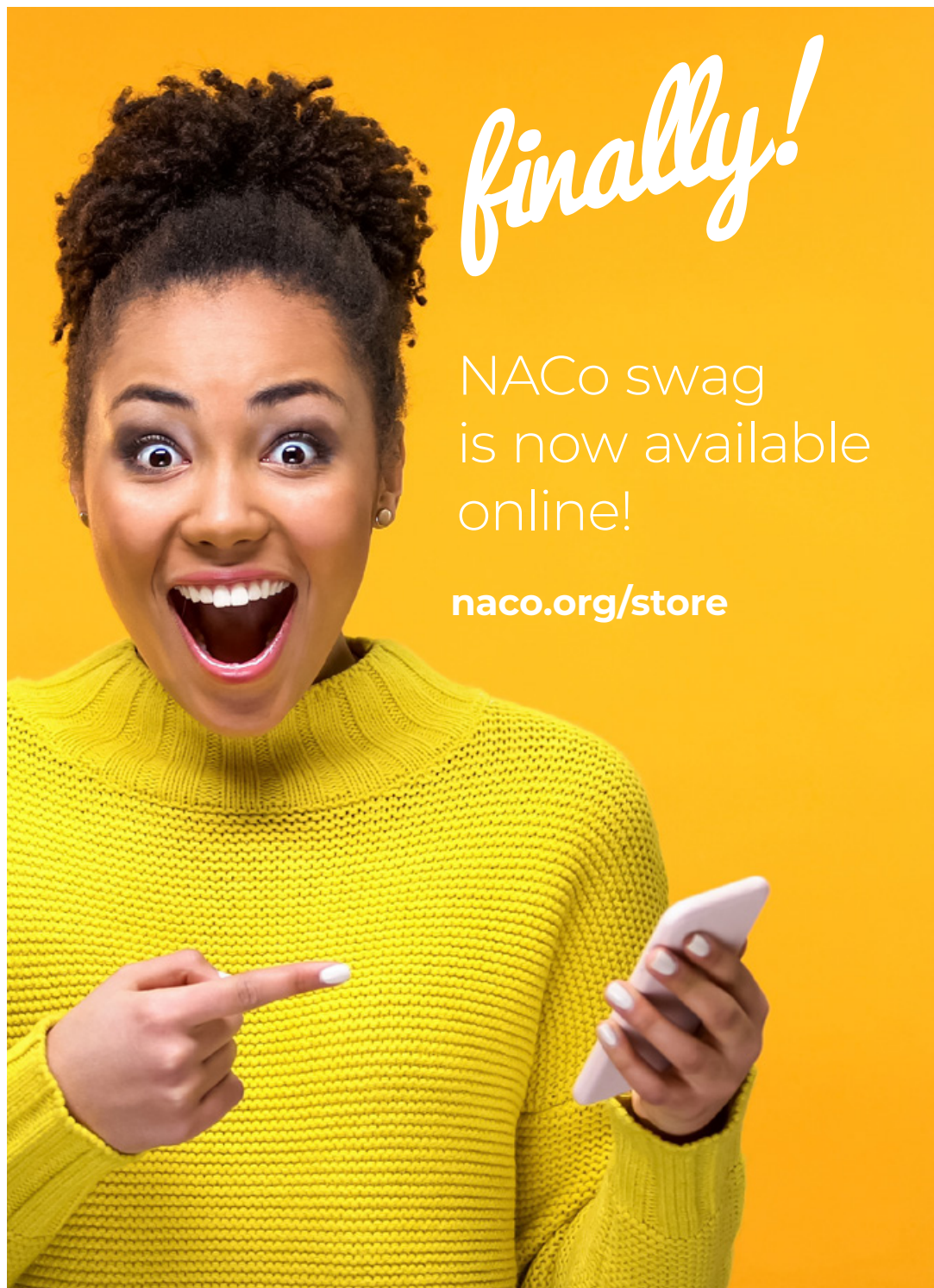
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WORD SEARCH

ADAMS COUNTY, Colo.  
Created by: Mary Ann Barton

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

**DENVER:** The county is part of the Denver metro area.

**ECONOMY:** Aerospace, aviation, bio/life science, food and beverage manufacturing, as well as agribusiness, are top industries in the county.

**FAIR:** Look for bull-riding, concerts and a truck pull among many other activities at the 117th annual Adams County Fair, held in August.

**HISTORY:** The county was created in 1901 from neighboring Arapahoe County.

**MARKETPLACE:** Stanley Marketplace, a popular dining and shopping venue in the county, is named for aviation pioneer Bob Stanley. The building was originally Stanley Aviation, built in 1954.

**MOUNTAINS:** The highest point in the county is Strasbaugh Hill, at 1,985 feet above sea level.

**MUSEUM:** Find out about the county's history at the Adams County Historical Museum.

**POPULATION:** As of the 2020 census, the county population is 519,572.

**PROTECTED:** A national protected area in the county is the 17,000-acre Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, a former U.S. chemical weapons manufacturing facility.

**SIZE:** The county measures 1,184 square miles.

**ADAMS:** The county is named for Alva Adams, who served multiple terms as Colorado's governor.

**AIRPORT:** The county completely surrounds Denver International Airport. The airport is owned by the City and County of Denver.


**BRIGHTON:** The county seat is Brighton, founded in 1870, as a stage/railroad depot and farming community.

**CASTLE:** Historic landmark, Westminster Castle, built in 1893, is located in the county; today it houses a private school.

**COURTHOUSE:** The original county courthouse was built in 1906; it later became a city hall. The county's modern Justice Center opened in 1998 and has expanded since then.

BEHIND THE SEAL

HUERFANO COUNTY, Colo.



The Huerfano County seal is marked by the mountains that catch the eye of anyone heading south through Colorado.

The Huerfano Butte was a landmark for early explorers and draws hundreds of visitors every year. It seems out of place, making people wonder why it is there at all.

The two mountain peaks are referred to as the Huajatollas or the Spanish Peaks and also known as the "Breasts of The Earth." The brown mound is the Huerfano Butte. Locals identify strongly with both visuals.

Special thanks to Lydia Martinez, executive assistant to the county commissioners, who assisted in gathering this information. Would you like to see your county's seal featured? Contact Charlie Ban at [cban@naco.org](mailto:cban@naco.org).



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## BRIGHT IDEAS | HARFORD COUNTY, Md.

# County Creates Marketplace for Local Agribusiness

### PROBLEM:

Local farmers and makers needed a place to market their produce and wares.

### SOLUTION:

Create and promote a marketplace where local residents and visitors can gather and purchase locally made goods and produce.

by Mary Ann Barton  
editor

As a former lamb producer, Harford County, Md. County Executive Barry Glassman had always hoped he could find a way to create an incubator location for niche agricultural products, much in the same way the county does for small businesses or new tech start-ups.

The county used that same formula — of an inexpensive space, co-located with other new businesses — to grow and see if local products can be successful before moving on to a bigger spot or larger production model.

“It really duplicates the small business incubator model and applies it to agricultural products,” Glassman said. “Our model is quite simply a horse barn with stalls instead of an office with cubicles.”

The Grove at Harford was founded as an outlet for farmers, artists and food processors in Harford County to sell their products directly to local consumers and to promote local agriculture commerce and sustainability.

Billed as “Harford County’s agribusiness incubator,” the Grove is an open-air building with eight interior stalls, with two kiosks and exterior stands available, each leased to a local agricultural entrepreneur with varying handcrafted products and specialties.

The creation of The Grove at Harford, the brainchild of County Executive Glassman, was a collaboration between numerous Harford County departments — Administration,



A customer looks over a display of items for sale at The Grove, a marketplace for local agribusinesses managed by Harford County, Md.

Agriculture, Community and Economic Development, Facilities and Operations, and Parks and Recreation — to fill the need for a local marketplace and to give vendors a centralized, direct connection to customers in a rural part of the county.

The Grove also serves as an event space for festivals, farmers markets, and more, functioning as a gathering place for county residents to enjoy food, entertainment, and to support local business.

After construction is completed in 2022 on a playground, pavilion and trail system, the Grove location will complete its transformation into an agricultural destination for all Harford County families to enjoy.

Glassman’s brainchild became The Grove, a space offering a marketplace as well as free events and parking, where local farmers and makers could sell their products.

The Grove vendor building cost the county \$998,000, which covered the creation of an adequate septic system for that building and existing

buildings at the site, including:

- the Harford County Agricultural Center
- the leveling of on-site land
- paving an expansive new parking lot
- and construction of The Grove building itself.

The construction costs for the trails and the pavilion totaled \$600,000, and the cost for an adjacent playground was \$200,000.

Marketing for the Grove is a Harford County Government-wide effort across multiple departments and social media platforms. Vendors also promote their stalls. Graphics are done by the county in-house.

Existing staff from multiple departments manage The Grove.

The Facilities department handles vendor leases and building/grounds maintenance, Parks & Rec helps with event setup and Economic Development handles all event programming and day-to-day interaction with the vendors.

Vendors are chosen to par-

ticipate at The Grove through an application process. All vendors must be local to Harford County, sell handmade items and have some form of agricultural element to their business.

Vendors pay a monthly lease to keep a stall at The Grove. An indoor stall is \$100 per month, and if they want to use their connecting outdoor stalls, it increases to \$125 per month.

The biggest challenge for the county for getting the project off the ground was raising awareness in the community that The Grove was open and what it was.

The addition of the ag-themed playground, pavilion and trails, plus a planned library accessible by trail, are making The Grove more of a destination.

The county’s is measuring the success of the project. We measure special event attendance, which ranges between 400 – 500 visitors and 100 – 150 for the county’s monthly “Fourth Fridays” events, which is significantly higher than during regular business hours.

“Our goal is incubating vendors, so we also look at vendor sales,” Glassman noted.

Tips for other counties hoping to create a similar experience for local agri-businesses: Glassman advised “talking to the community to raise awareness.”

Another tip: Make sure vendors don’t overlap by selling the same or similar products — aim for variety and unique items.

Plan events to attract a wide range of visitors (all ages) and partner on related events with community groups.

“For example, we partnered with Harford Community College on a canning class and an agricultural seminar on gardening,” he said. The Grove is also a stop on the Harford County Barn Quilt Trail. **CN**

*Harford County, Maryland’s “The Grove at Harford” program is the recipient of a 2022 Best in Category NACo Achievement Award, in the Community and Economic Development category.*



# NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION



## ALASKA

The CALIFORNIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES, MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES, ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA COUNTIES and ASSOCIATION OF OREGON COUNTIES passed a joint resolution recognizing NORTHWEST ARCTIC BOROUGH resident Saima Chase for her work educating Western Interstate Region Conference attendees about ice fishing during a day trip to her town of Kotzebue, noting Chase's leadership, hospitality, generosity, strength of community and rich culture and history, and recognizing that the tour highlighted a model of community, resilience, and lessons learned about innovation that serve as a model for many communities throughout the country. In addition to teaching ice fishing, Chase prepared a fish dinner for attendees.

CSAC Executive Director Graham Knaus patiently waits for a fish to bite. Photo by Charlie Ban

## CALIFORNIA

• **TUOLUMNE COUNTY** is helping county workers purchase homes with a new "assist-to-own" program. The program can help reduce a down payment by up to 3.5 percent of the mortgage for both regular and relief employees. Financial assistance comes in the form of a 0 percent rate-deferred second mortgage where repayment would occur when an individual refinances the loan, sells the home or at the end of the loan term, county staff said.

There is also an option of

closing cost assistance in the form of a gift of up to 2 percent. The program is available for single-family homes, multi-family dwellings up to four-units, condos, townhomes and manufactured homes in some instances, and while there is no first-time home buyer requirement to qualify, the home a county employee chooses to purchase with the program must be the employee's primary residence.

## COLORADO

The **BOULDER COUNTY** government website has officially changed its domain name to a .gov address, after using bouldercounty.org for years. The domain change was motivated by security concerns, in an effort to protect users from fake webpages, scammers, impersonators and more.

"Cybersecurity experts agree having a dot gov domain adds yet another layer of protection for local governments to protect themselves and their residents from online threats ranging from phishing attempts to misinformation or scam websites," Paul Jannatpour, the county IT director, said in a news release.

## HAWAII

**MAUI COUNTY** is preparing local businesses and residents for its **ban on sunscreens** that contain oxybenzone and Octinoxate. The county will only allow mineral sunscreen sales and use, because chemicals can harm corals and other marine life. That means only sunscreens with zinc or titanium oxide

will be allowed. Mineral-based sunscreens don't come off as easily in the water, and scientists have found the particles are too large to be absorbed by corals



## MINNESOTA

**HENNEPIN COUNTY** Emergency Medical Services has introduced a new "Jump Car" program to speed up response times to "low acuity or routine response" calls. Emergency Medical Responders (EMRs) will provide a basic medical assessment and care

but no transport until an advanced life support paramedic ambulance arrives at the scene. They will respond to routine low-acuity 911 calls, eliminating the need for advanced life support care or lights and sirens. All of that should free up other first responders.

• **RAMSEY COUNTY** Commissioners voted to extend the county's **smoking ban** to include a property used or controlled by the county. That will include 6,500 acres of parks, offices, corrections facilities and parking lots. It also includes smoking in cars parked in county-owned parking lots, *The Star Tribune* reported.

The ban includes vaping.

## NEVADA

• **CLARK COUNTY** is allowing **consumption of alcohol at large courtyards**, paving the way for food halls to welcome numerous customers looking to sample from various culinary and beverage stands. Previous county code required food and drink establishments with liquor licenses to only serve customers in an "enclosed" space, and customers could

## FLORIDA

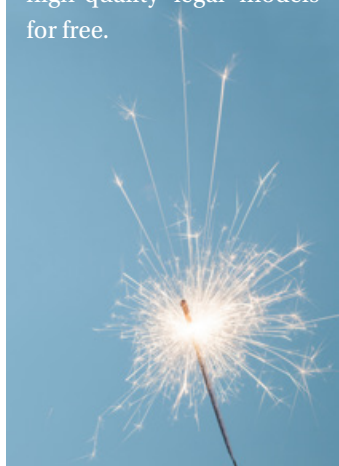
**PASCO COUNTY** is under quarantine after the discovery of a fast-growing population of **invasive giant African land snails**. The snails can produce up to 2,500 eggs per year and can carry a parasite that can cause meningitis.

The quarantine prevents residents from moving the snail or related items, like plants and soil, in or out of the designated quarantine area. The Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services plans to spend three years eradicating the snail population using the pesticide metaldehyde to treat the soil. It took 10 years for **MIAMI-DADE COUNTY** to eradicate an infestation of the snails that was discovered in 2011.



## CALIFORNIA

• A partnership with fireworks companies fueled a **YOLO COUNTY** effort to persuade residents to **trade illegal fireworks** for high-quality legal models for free.







NORTH CAROLINA

**PITT COUNTY** is challenging residents to turn trash into treasure. Each Friday, the county’s transfer station posts photos of **discarded but usable items** on its Facebook page. Residents can claim items, pick them up, touch them up and submit before and after photos to Pitt County Solid Waste & Recycling. Every three months, entries will vie for a \$100 prize for best improvement project.

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not take their drinks outside the premises, KVVU-TV reported.

• Rural counties are going to receive help supplying mental health resources through **state-supplied telehealth tools** for use responding to crisis calls. A digital crisis intervention program called Virtual Crisis Care — which is delivered using tablets — is expected to act as a third-party during police interactions. When officers are called to a scene or dispute, trained mental health

professionals could intervene virtually, if necessary. **LINCOLN COUNTY** Sheriff Kerry Lee said the new tool comes at a time when mental health crises are on the rise in his county and that “regular house calls” increasingly involve someone who is mentally ill or does not have the cognitive skills to act within reason — making de-escalation difficult, the *Nevada Independent* reported.

• **NYE COUNTY** will provide **Shoshone language assistance** to voters, a measure that will require qualified interpreters at the polls because the lan-

guage is traditionally non-written.

The federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 requires officials in any community with significant groups of non-English-proficient citizens to provide all election materials in that group’s language. Nye will be the only county to offer Shoshone language assistance in the United States.

• **WASHOE COUNTY** has established a legal assistance fund for county **employees who’ve been unfairly attacked** or harassed in public. Tempers have flared during hostile confrontations over election procedures and other controversies, the *Reno Gazette-Journal* reported. The legal and personal services will be available to county workers, but not elected officials. The county Commission voted to spend up to \$150,000 per fiscal year on such efforts.

WEST VIRGINIA

A federal judge has ruled against **CABELL COUNTY** and Huntington, saying three drug companies can’t be held liable for the **opioid crisis**.

“The opioid crisis has taken a considerable toll on the citizens of Cabell County and the City of Huntington,” U.S. District Judge David Faber wrote in his ruling. “And while there



NEW YORK

**WARREN COUNTY** Planning & Community Development is throwing down a local history-themed letterboxing challenge that will take participants to some of the most **historic sites in the county**. At the same time, participants will work to solve a riddle about the whereabouts of a famous 19th century poet, teacher and journalist Jeanne Robert Foster. The challenge leads people to find specified sites using clues in the form of a riddle.

The hunt will take the form of “letterboxing,” which incorporates orienteering, art and puzzle-solving, to find hidden treasures and complete a challenge. Organizers worked with town historians to come up with riddles for historic sites. When pieced together, it will yield an answer to Foster’s whereabouts.

is a natural tendency to assign blame in such cases, they must be decided not based on sympathy, but on the facts and the law.”

The city and county had ar-

gued that AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health and McKesson created a “public nuisance” because of the sheer numbers of opioid painkillers they shipped to the area over several years.

Lawyers for the drug distributors argued that West Virginia’s public nuisance law was meant to provide communities relief from situations like polluted air or water from a single factory or business. The judge noted that no cases involving the law focused on the sale or distribution of a product, such as opioid painkillers.

“The extension of the law of nuisance to cover the marketing and sale of opioids is inconsistent with the history and traditional notions of nuisance,” he wrote in the ruling. Cabell County did not join the national multi-district litigation that was settled for \$26 billion.



VIRGINIA

**FAIRFAX COUNTY** played host to the **U.S. Disabled Open Golf Championship** at the county park authority’s Laurel Hill Golf Club. The course previously hosted the 2013 U.S. Amateur Public Links Championship tournament and was able to provide adaptive golf carts for the players. The parks authority was able to organize the tournament on short notice after the prior host canceled late in the process, *Fairfax County Times* reported. Photo courtesy of Fairfax County.

Charlie Ban compiles *News From Across the Nation*. Does your county have some news we should know about? Contact [cban@naco.org](mailto:cban@naco.org).



# SLTT ORGANIZATIONS AND THE DEFENSE-IN-DEPTH STRATEGY

Defense-in-depth applies layers of controls and mitigations to systems and networks, providing redundancy and reducing the likelihood of a successful cyberattack or a single point of failure. Many U.S. State, Local, Tribal and Territorial (SLTT) organization networks are already protected by cybersecurity technologies. But while technology plays an important role in protecting SLTTs, it is only one layer of the defense-in-depth strategy. Simply stated, technology alone isn't enough.

## 3 Benefits to SLTTs that Adopt a Defense-in-Depth Strategy

A defense-in-depth strategy protects the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the network and the data within. It is beneficial to adopt this strategy because it:

1. Ensures network security is redundant, preventing any single point of failure.
2. Significantly increases the time and complexity required to successfully compromise a network.
3. Provides many hurdles a cyber threat actor must overcome. Most cyberattacks are opportunistic, meaning cyber threat actors take the path of least resistance. Unless your organization is the specific target, they will move on to less mature organizations that haven't implemented a defense-in-depth strategy.

## Defense-in-Depth Approach to Cybersecurity

