

**NEW FROM NACo**

## Effort aims to boost leadership skills at the county staff level

**By Matt Chase**

Can you imagine what would happen if General Colin Powell, Fortune 1000 CEOs and other executives came together with career coaches and professors from the most prestigious universities to mentor your frontline leaders? What if we could leverage such talent and expertise to advance excellence in county government?

Thanks to a new program adopted by NACo's Board of Directors, we can.

The NACo Higher Performance Leadership Academy, a 12-week online program, was designed — in partnership with the Professional Development Academy — to enable frontline county staff to achieve their fullest potential, making them smarter, more

effective leaders.

The academy gives managers the tools they need to accomplish their goals faster, build collaboration across departments and foster positive cultures within their teams. Covering topics such as leadership, organization, collaboration, communication and delivery, the curriculum addresses the whole solution of competencies needed to close the leadership skills gap at the frontline.

Additionally, and importantly, the academy is designed to be non-disruptive to frontline leaders' busy schedules. It requires just a few hours of time each week,

*See LEADERSHIP page 2*

## County official testifies on election security

Ricky Hatch, clerk/auditor for Weber County, Utah, testified before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform July 24 to discuss the role counties play in ensuring safe and efficient

elections.

Hatch outlined the vital role counties play in administering and securing elections, including overseeing the allocation

*See ELECTIONS page 3*



**Ricky Hatch, Weber County, Utah, listens to comments about his testimony July 24 on Capitol Hill.** Photo by Hugh Clarke



**The screen tells it all: An exciting election for NACo 2nd vice president July 16 at the Annual Conference was decided by 31 votes. Gary Moore, judge-executive from Boone County, Ky., was the winner in what started as a four-way race. Complete conference reports begin on page 9.** Photo by Hugh Clarke

## Senators: Why rush to 5G while rural areas ignored?

**By Mary Ann Barton**  
**senior staff writer**

Several senators July 25 questioned the race to install the 5G network in large urban areas as rural America continues to languish without high-speed broadband.

Members of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee heard from members of the telecom industry, called as witnesses for the hearing, "The Race to 5G: Exploring Spectrum Needs to Maintain U.S. Global Leadership."

Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.), chair of the committee, and Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii), fellow committee member, have introduced the Streamlining the Rapid Evolution and Modernization of Leading-edge Infrastructure Necessary to Enhance Small Cell Deployment Act (S. 3157) or STREAMLINE Small Cell Deployment Act. The proposed legislation curtails local government involvement in the locating of 5G equipment.

The bill "reflects many

*See BROADBAND page 2*



# Senator says rural must be part of race to 5G

From BROADBAND page 1

months of hard work, of meetings with stakeholders from across the country, and of negotiation, and it is still a work in progress as we try to bring the benefits of 5G to American consumers, reap the benefits of 5G leadership for America and respect the important role state and local governments play in deployment decisions," Thune said.

"The race to lead the world in 5G has begun," he said.

But several members of the committee, including Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.), aired concerns about talk of

accelerating 5G in urban areas while rural households and businesses languish. In all, about 80 percent of the 24 million Americans without high-speed internet live in rural areas.

"If rural America isn't a part of that equation, America doesn't win the race," Tester said. He wondered if places like Big Sandy, located in Chouteau County in his home state, will be left further behind.

"There's going to be a lot of [5G equipment] boxes put up around — you guys have talked about it," he said. "What kind of money will it take —

today's dollars — to make 5G a reality everywhere?"

"Our companies are prepared to invest \$275 billion of their own money to build out 5G," said Meredith Baker, president and CEO of the Wireless Association.

"That does the whole country?" Tester asked.

"That's where we're going to start," Baker noted.

"I'm trying to get an idea of how much it costs to do the whole country," Tester said.

"Because my guess is you're going to start in New York City, Chicago, Miami, Houston and Phoenix and San Diego — and Big Sandy won't be on that list, OK? What's it going to cost to make sure Big Sandy is on that list?"

Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), who heads the Senate Broadband Caucus, said the lack of rural broadband is a "repeating theme for a lot of us, and we're still not getting there. I'm a bit frustrated by that."

Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) told the committee there are 700,000 residents in her state, mostly in rural areas, who don't have access to high-speed broadband.

She told the committee she wanted to share "a little bit about what I hear at home when I travel to those areas that are still left behind."

Resort towns in northern Wisconsin, she said, are missing out on a big piece of the economic pie after conducting a study that showed that summer residents would stay longer if high-speed broadband was available.

Others talk about passing on buying a home in areas

where high-speed broadband isn't available because they need it for their jobs. And she also hears from parents who drive their children to the library every night so they can do their homework.

The proposed legislation by Thune and Schatz would limit local government fees that counties are currently able to assess to telecom companies for placing, constructing or co-locating new wireless service facilities including 5G small cell antennas.

S. 3157 would also restrict fees that local governments can charge telecommunications companies to "actual costs."

That would cap what local governments can charge telecommunications companies for the use of locally owned rights-of-way.

It would also reduce or eliminate any application fees local governments may assess for processing incoming requests for construction.

In addition to the cap of fees that local governments would be able to charge, S. 3157 would also limit the amount of time local governments have to consider and respond to requests made by telecommunications companies to build new wireless services facilities on locally owned land to 60 days for co-located wireless service facilities and 90 days for new wireless service facilities.

NACo has asked its members to encourage their representatives in Congress to vote "no" on S. 3157 if it comes to the floor of the House or Senate for a vote. **CN**

## NACo offers leadership program

From LEADERSHIP page 1

and there's no travel away from the county required.

This past July, NACo's Board of Directors approved a scholarship program to make this high-impact program accessible exclusively to NACo member counties.



This is regularly a \$1,995 course that costs just \$495 for each county's first enrollee, and \$1,495 thereafter.

With increasing challenges with unfunded mandates from states and the federal government, heightened community incivility and the constant struggle to achieve more with less, county front-line staff need the sharpest skills to deliver results for our residents.

The NACo High Performance Leadership Academy will help to retain rising stars in county government and enable them to be better leaders.

The first sessions begin Sept. 17. Subsequent sessions will begin in January 2019.

We encourage counties to identify individuals for enrollment. To learn more, visit <http://www.naco.org/Skills>. **CN**

Matt Chase is NACo executive director and County News publisher.

## SNAP/STATS



**MOST PROPERTY DAMAGE FROM FLOODS BY 2030\***

New Jersey.....	\$10.4 billion
California.....	\$10.3 billion
Florida.....	\$7.9 billion
New York.....	\$3.7 billion
South Carolina.....	\$2.9 billion
Louisiana.....	\$2.6 billion
Massachusetts.....	\$2.1 billion
Maryland.....	\$2 billion
Connecticut.....	\$1.9 billion
North Carolina.....	\$1.5 billion

\*Source: Business Insider, "Flood-prone US states have billions of dollars of property at stake in the next 15 years — here's where it will be worst," July 23, 2018

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# Local efforts key to census accuracy

By **Charlie Ban**  
senior staff writer

The 2020 census is still a year and a half away. But on the other hand, the 2020 census is only a year and a half away.

In addition to record keeping and congressional representation, the share of \$800 billion in federal funding hinges on results of the census, making it crucial for counties to help ensure an accurate tally.

Although the Census Bureau will hire 500,000 temporary workers to follow up with addresses that do not respond, counties are in the best position to reach out locally to convince residents to buy in.

"If you get the count wrong, your county is going to feel the impact for a whole decade," said Karen Narasaki, a consultant to the Bauman Foundation. "Every statistic is normalized back to the census — food assistance, low-income heating, children's health insurance, housing."

The last two census counts have had 74 percent national response rates, and the bureau expects 65 percent of people to respond to census forms before the bureau initiates follow-up contact.

Counties typically form Complete Count Committees, which pair local officials with members of community groups and business owners to plan outreach.

Tim Olson, associate director of field operations for the Census Bureau, said counties should start forming committees in late 2018 and early 2019,

but some have a head start. Coconino County, Ariz. has been planning throughout 2018 and along with its seat, Flagstaff, has pledged \$300,000 over two years to aid outreach and turnout. That will make up for the loss of Recovery Act funding for the 2010 census.

"It's less than \$2 per resident," said Kim Musselman, special assistant to the county manager and the coordinator for the county's census work. "We estimate every person counted in the 2010 census accounted for \$1,900 in federal funding, so it's a pretty good return on investment."

The county and city are splitting the contributions evenly, matching the population divide between the two. Both have significant challenges to overcome in the process.

Flagstaff has seen its population grow but also struggle with affordable housing, and Northern Arizona University carries more than 31,000 students.

"That means a lot of reaching out to renters, but that's tricky," said Musselman.

"With the price of housing, you may have six people staying in an apartment but four people on the lease. We have to communicate to them to answer the form truthfully and honestly. It's confidential — they won't get in trouble."

The university has grown significantly over the last 20 years, and the 2000 census undercounted them.

"The problem there is convincing students to answer — they may have permanent homes elsewhere but as of

April 1, they count for Coconino County," Musselman said. "They're using our infrastructure, our resources for nine months of the year."

Outside of Flagstaff is a different story. Coconino is the second largest county by area in the contiguous United States, with small pockets of population throughout a vast landscape, including the most remote community in the lower 48 states, accessible only by foot, mule or helicopter. Lack of broadband connectivity there and in other counties will prevent many residents from answering online.

In addition to the practical considerations, trust in the process will also be a challenge, particularly demographic groups, many of which are historically undercounted, particularly African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans, children under the age of 5 and the poor.

"One quarter of Asian immigrants have never experienced a census," Narasaki said. "We've never had a solid answer on why it's hard to get people to respond about children younger than 5."

Wake County, N.C. plans to reach out to those demographic groups with a variety of community events, parades and municipal meetings. The county has staffed subcommittees for outreach and is ready to start in 2019.

"We will focus on events like the Raleigh International Festival and the Chinese language schools," said Sharon Peterson, the county's long-range planning administrator. "We meet

with community leaders, particularly in the Hispanic, Asian and African American communities and work with them to carry the message to their members that it's important to be counted."

Like Coconino County, Wake County splits the effort. Municipalities will contribute \$25,000, and the county will contribute staff time to the outreach efforts.

A shadow hangs over preparations in the form of the citizenship question, which could suppress responses.

"It's going to make it difficult for the federal government to say 'give us your data and please trust us,'" Narasaki said. "In this environment where people are afraid, where they're being picked up in courthouses and parks, schools and libraries, people are afraid to open their door and answer questions."

The Census Bureau says that responses are confidential and don't leave the bureau, but believing that, and convincing residents of that, is a challenge.

"We've talked a lot about mistrust of the government," Musselman said.

"We haven't figured out exactly how to remedy that, but our general message is that by not participating and not being counted, you're playing into the very thing that they want, to minimize our population. Let's stand up and be counted so that we are giving them what they are trying to discourage us from doing."

You can view the predicted mail non-response rate for census tracts using the Response Outreach Area Mapper: <https://census.gov/roam>. **CN**

## Election security on front burner

From **ELECTIONS** page 1

of voting machines, managing polling locations, printing and mailing ballots, recruiting and training poll workers, and protecting voting machines, computers and other equipment used to cast, record, tally and certify votes.

"Elections are not just a one-day event for counties," Hatch told the committee. "From a cybersecurity standpoint, we work year-round to protect against direct hacking attempts that seek to improperly access voter rolls, remove election information from county websites, or alter voting data."

He shared recommendations to better protect the elections infrastructure:

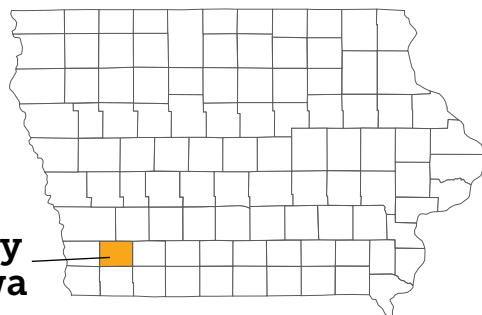
- Support a dedicated, predictable federal funding stream to help local governments protect elections and prevent funds from stalling at the state level
- Pursue additional coordinated federal and state outreach to local jurisdictions, especially those that are remote and rural, and
- Undertake a robust federalism consultation process with states and local governments when considering any changes to election cybersecurity protocols.

Hatch stressed the uniquely local role of elections and the importance of including counties in future cybersecurity efforts. "All elections are local," he said. "We stand ready to work with you, federal agencies and our states to strengthen our nation's elections process and retain the public's confidence." **CN**

To learn more, see NACo's recently released publication on the county role in the elections process at <https://bit.ly/2LqTkM5>.

New NACo★  
Member  
**GET TO  
KNOW...**

**Montgomery  
County, Iowa**



### Welcome, Montgomery County, Iowa

Montgomery County is located in the southwest corner of Iowa and is named for Richard Montgomery, an American Revolutionary War general. Founded in 1851, the county is the **site of the still unsolved Villisca Axe Murders, committed in 1912.** The murders have been profiled in several television series, books and podcasts, including Stuff You Should Know and Lore. **Montgomery County is also the home to Clyde Cessna, founder of the Cessna Aircraft Company.**





# Next stop, Senate, for Interior bill

By Austin Igleheart  
and Zach George

The House passed the FY19 Interior-Environment Appropriations bill July 19 that would fund the Department of the Interior (DOI), the Forest Service (USFS) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), among other key programs and federal agencies. Overall, the \$35.3 billion spending package would provide \$13 billion to DOI, \$8 billion to EPA and \$3.1 billion to the Forest Service. The package, which was met with significant opposition from House Democrats due to measures they argue will hinder environmental protections, also includes policy language aimed at reducing regulations from EPA and other agencies.

The bill passed along party lines by a vote of 217-199.

Of particular importance to counties, the following programs and agencies are funded through the bill:

**Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT):** DOI's PILT Program, which reimburses counties for forgone property tax revenue due to the presence of tax-exempt federal lands within their jurisdictions, would be funded at \$500 million for FY19. The allocated amount is \$35 million above the president's FY19 budget request, but \$53 million below FY18's enacted funding levels. The reduction occurs because Secure Rural Schools (SRS) payments — assistance to counties affected by the long-term decline in revenue from timber harvests on federal lands — from the prior year will be deducted under the PILT formula now that SRS has been reauthorized. The reduced funding level will bring PILT funding for FY19 in line with previous fiscal years.

**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):** EPA would be funded at \$8 billion under the appropriations package, representing an overall decrease of \$100 million from FY18 and a reduction of \$228 million to EPA's regulatory programs. The

## SPEEDREAD

**U.S. House-passed FY19 Interior-Environment Appropriations package would fully fund PILT, repeal 2015 WOTUS rule.**

bill would fund EPA's Clean Water State Revolving Fund program at \$1.5 billion, the Drinking Water SRF at \$1 billion and the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act program at \$45 million. As major owners, operators and users of local water resources and infrastructure, counties often use these programs to build and maintain key water infrastructure projects. The bill also includes \$80 million for brown-field grants and \$1.12 billion for cleaning up contaminated superfund sites.

**U.S. Forest Service:** The USFS would be funded at \$6.1 billion under this package, \$3 billion of which would be allocated to fire suppression and prevention. Including these funds, the measure would provide \$3.9 billion for wildland firefighting and prevention activities, fully funding the 10-year average for DOI and USFS wildfire suppression costs. Further, \$500 million is included specifically for USFS suppression operations, while \$655 million would be provided for hazardous fuels management, an increase of \$30 million above FY18 levels.

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM):** BLM would receive \$1.23 billion in the appropriations package, an increase of \$62.5 million over FY18. This funding includes \$60 million for sage grouse conservation efforts and a \$6.16 million increase in funding to promote energy and mineral development on BLM lands. Language is also included that would prevent the listing of the greater sage-grouse under the Endangered Species Act.

**National Park Service (NPS):** The National Park Service would be funded at

\$3.25 billion, an increase of \$53 million over FY18. The bill includes an increase of \$175 million to address the deferred maintenance backlog on NPS lands. Of this increase, \$40 million would be directed toward maintenance, repair and rehabilitation projects, while \$135 million would be used for deferred maintenance of NPS facilities.

**Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF):** Additionally, the bill would provide \$360 million for LWCF programs. State and local recreation and battlefield preservation programs would be prioritized under the bill, with 62 percent of this funding directed to NPS State Assistance, Forest Legacy, American Battlefield Protection and Highlands Conservation Act programs.

In addition, the bill would fully repeal the "Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS)" regulation originally finalized in 2015. The 2015 WOTUS rule has been fraught with legal challenges and is currently undergoing revisions at EPA following an executive order by the president in late 2017 directing the agency to review and either rescind or rewrite the rule. As co-regulators and regulated entities under the Clean Water Act, counties have called on EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to rewrite the 2015 WOTUS rule in a way that includes their state and local government partners.

The bill now heads to the Senate for consideration, though it is uncertain how the upper chamber's final version of these appropriations measures will differ from that passed by the House. Once the Senate passes its version, any differences that remain must be negotiated between the two chambers and a final compromise bill must be agreed upon before the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30 to avoid a partial government shutdown. **CN**

*Austin Igleheart is a legislative associate and Zach George, a legislative assistant.*

# National Flood Insurance Program extended to Nov. 30

By Jacob Terrell

The U.S. Senate approved a short-term extension July 31 of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) through Nov. 30 on an 86-12 vote. The Senate vote follows the U.S. House of Representatives' approval of an identical extension, sending the legislation to the White House for President Trump's signature.

The new extension comes as many coastal communities prepare for hurricane season and as efforts to enact a long-term extension of the program have seemingly stalled in Congress. NFIP's last long-term authorization was passed in 2012 under the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, which expired Sept. 30, 2017. Since the

program expired, Congress has passed a series of short-term extensions until members agree to a long-term reauthorization bill.

In addition to providing flood insurance coverage to local property owners, NFIP also provides pre-disaster mitigation funding for communities that participate in the program. Counties have urged Congress to enact a long-term reauthorization of NFIP. When the federal government uses short-term funding extensions, counties are often unable to effectively plan and implement a workable budget. **CN**

*Jacob Terrell is associate legislative director for telecommunications and technology.*

# NACo, DHS offer free cybersecurity protection

County governments protect and serve the residents of their communities. As the country shifts toward using more technology, protecting digital information has become a new challenge for counties.

To meet these challenges, NACo has joined with the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) to promote increased cybersecurity protections for county governments.

The MS-ISAC is the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's key resource for cyber threat prevention, protection, response and recovery for state and local governments.

MS-ISAC's cybersecurity program, can provide — at no cost to counties:

- vulnerability management program
- IP and domain monitoring
- notifications of possible compromises
- incident response resources
- tools for simplifying security updates
- secure portals for communication and document sharing

- cyber-intel advisories and alerts
- malicious code analysis platform, and
- self-assessments for cybersecurity management.

Cybersecurity for counties provides real-time monitoring and early threat detections through the MS-ISAC's Security Operations Center and threat-response with its Computer Emergency Response Team. They provide 24/7 support and offer a professional team to assist with cybersecurity incidents.

In addition to these resources, the MS-ISAC can provide additional cybersecurity services at cost. These services include:

- network security monitoring and analysis
- vulnerability assessment services
- network and web application penetration testing, and
- phishing assessments **CN**

*To learn more about protecting your county with NACo and the MS-ISAC, please visit [www.naco.org/cybersecurity](http://www.naco.org/cybersecurity).*

# Shuster releases surface transportation, water proposal

By Sofia Ferber

House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-Pa.) July 23 released an infrastructure proposal that could set the stage for future legislative action. The proposal follows significant focus on infrastructure development from the Trump Administration throughout 2018, though some of its specific provisions differ from the administration's infrastructure agenda.

A path forward for Shuster's proposal is unclear — Congress is focused on other infrastructure priorities ahead of the midterm elections this fall, like the FY19 Department of Transportation appropriations and a reauthorization of both the Federal Aviation Administration and the Water Resources Development Act.

Shuster's proposal is limited to programs under the jurisdiction of the T&I Committee, but the draft document includes several programs important to counties, which are detailed below:

## Water resources

Counties are major owners, operators and users of local water resources and infrastructure, and sometimes rely on federal programs to build and maintain key water infrastructure projects. Some of these programs addressed in Shuster's proposal include:

- **Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) Reauthorization:** The proposal would reauthorize the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) WIFIA program, which was authorized in the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014, through FY24. The Army Corps WIFIA program is modeled on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WIFIA program, which provides low-cost loans for water infrastructure related projects. The provision would give the Army Corps the ability to contract with the EPA to run the

Army Corps \$50 million WIFIA program.

- **State Water Pollution Control Revolving Funds:** This proposal would provide ongoing financial assistance for water quality projects, specifically the **Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)**. The CWSRF program funds municipal wastewater infrastructure construction and upgrade projects. Shuster's proposal would reauthorize the program at \$3 billion annually through FY 2023 and would require at least 10 percent of grants be used for municipalities with a population of 10,000 or fewer. However, the Drinking Water SRF is not addressed in the infrastructure proposal because it is governed by the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

- **Technical Assistance for Rural and Small Treatment Works:** The infrastructure proposal would allocate \$25 million through FY 2023 towards providing technical assistance for the treatment and operation of rural and decentralized wastewater treatment systems.

- **Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) Discretionary Spending Limit Adjustment:** The HMTF is funded through a tax levied against importers and domestic shippers using ports and harbors in coastal and the Great Lakes areas. However, while the HMTF has a large surplus, only a portion of its total is appropriated by Congress every year. The proposal would exempt the HMTF from the budget caps set in the Budget Control Act (P.L. 112-25) and ensure that the appropriated funding would be fully utilized.

## Highway Trust Fund

In order to maintain a robust infrastructure network, the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) must remain solvent. Counties support an "all tools in the toolbox" approach to ensuring solvency, including an increased usage of user-fees-based infrastructure. The proposal would address a few issues related to

the HTF:

- **Highway Trust Fund Commission:** The infrastructure proposal would create a commission of 15 members, appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, speaker of the House, House minority leader, Senate majority leader and the Senate minority leader. The appointed members may comprise, but are not required to include, individuals that represent interested parties such as an individual or elected officials from state, local government, public transportation authority or agency and users of the surface transportation system.

The only requirements are that the commission be made up of individuals knowledgeable of the U.S. surface transportation system and the commission may not include a member of Congress. The HTF Commission would be tasked with conducting a study on HTF funding levels and evaluating the different revenue sources available to achieve necessary funding levels. The study would be released by 2021 and would provide recommendations for achieving long-term solvency of the HTF.

- **Highway Trust Fund Reform and Solvency:** Shuster's proposal includes new taxes to contribute to the solvency of the HTF, including taxes on transit fuel, bicycle tires and electrical vehicle batteries. In addition to creating new taxes, the proposal would increase the gas tax from 18 cents to 33 cents per gallon in 2020 and increase the diesel and kerosene tax from 24 cents to 44 cents per gallon in 2020. Shuster's proposal also calls for the eventual elimination of the gas tax by 2028, provided the new commission established under the bill can provide gas and diesel tax alternatives to ensure the solvency of the HTF.

## Investment in infrastructure

Counties play a critical role in the nation's transportation system, owning 46 percent of

all public roads, 38 percent of the nation's bridge inventory and 78 percent of all public transit agencies that connect residents, communities and businesses. Shuster's proposal addresses the following infrastructure programs:

- **National Infrastructure Investments:** The infrastructure proposal would provide \$3 billion, which is \$1.5 billion above FY 2018 enacted levels and was slated for elimination in the president's FY 2019 budget request, for the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant program. Formerly known as TIGER Grants, BUILD Grants in Shuster's proposal reflects the Trump Administration's infrastructure agenda, including a focus on rural areas and an increased local match requirement.

- **Extension of Federal Surface Transportation Programs:** This infrastructure proposal would authorize additional funding for federal surface transportation programs, including the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program. Surface transportation programs, like the STBGP, provide counties with federal funding towards the maintenance of any federal highway, bridge, tunnel, road or transit capital project.


- **Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act:** Shuster's proposal would ex-

tend the authorization of the FAST Act (P.L. 114-94) for an additional year — providing \$18 billion for the legislation in FY21. The bill was enacted in 2015 and authorized, for a five-year period, federal surface transportation programs that support county owned infrastructure.

## Accelerating project delivery

With counties owning a large percentage of the nation's infrastructure, the acceleration of project delivery helps save financial resources by reducing delays and allowing infrastructure projects to be completed in a timely manner.

- **One Federal Decision:** The infrastructure proposal would use the administration's One Federal Decision executive order, which aims to improve the current permitting process by consolidating decision-making, cutting costly delays and changing environmental review methods. Shuster's proposal would also reduce the permit processing time to no more than two years, pursuant to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews.

- **Application of Categorical Exclusions for Transportation Projects:** The proposal would expand categorical exclusions under NEPA reviews to apply to all transportation projects, not just multimodal projects. 





# NACo sounds alarm on disaster funding in letter to lawmakers

By Jacob Terrell  
and Zach George

Proposed funding levels from FEMA are not enough for counties and others to respond, recover and mitigate disasters, NACo said July 25 in a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

NACo, along with the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA), International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) and Big City Emergency Managers (BCEM) sent a letter to U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) and Vice Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) expressing concerns with funding levels to FEMA grant programs in the FY 2019 Homeland Security (DHS) Appropriations bill.

Senate appropriators approved the FY19 DHS spending measure in June on a 26-5



vote and the bill is currently awaiting a vote.

In the letter, NACo and the other organizations highlighted concerns with the lack of increased funding for Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG) and the funding mechanism used

for Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants and Flood Mapping programs. EMPG provides funding for disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation across the county.

Based on recent data, NEMA and IAEM authored a report finding EMPG pro-

grams demonstrate a significant return on investment.

Given the report's findings, the organizations requested a 5 percent or \$18 million increase to the program, which was not included in the FY19 spending bill.

Based on the figures in-

cluded in the report, an \$18 million requested increase would result in at least a \$36 million impact across the nation. The EMPG has not received an increase in funding since 2012.

The associations also raise concerns with the FY19 bill transferring \$228 million from the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) to increase spending for Pre-Disaster Mitigation and Flood Mapping programs.

Though NACo and the other associations support funding for these programs, the organizations say they should receive direct appropriations rather than transferred funds from DRF, which counties use to develop emergency management and mitigation plans for major flooding. **CN**

*Jacob Terrell is an associate legislative director and Zach George is a legislative assistant.*



# SAVE THE DATE

## JULY 12-15

## 2019 NACo ANNUAL CONFERENCE and EXPOSITION

### CLARK COUNTY/LAS VEGAS, NEVADA



# NOBCO examines HUD's smoke-free public housing policy

**By Brianna Jenkins**

On July 31, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Smoke-Free Public Housing Policy took effect. It's been in the works since 2009, initiated as an effort to improve the health of residents in public housing. The reality is people living in public housing will no longer be allowed to smoke where they live. Over the past 18 months HUD has been working with local public housing agencies to engage residents and tenant councils for a smooth transition.

The National Organization of Black County Officials (NOBCO), through its work with National African American Tobacco Prevention Network, realized that many people were not talking about this policy and thought it would be a good idea to bring it to the forefront before it actually took effect. Stepping up our game and raising awareness through webinars and social

media helps us reach more people with relevant information where they are and when they're available.

On April 30, we hosted a live webinar simultaneously with Facebook Live. The webinar, moderated by Helen Holton, included four guests who candidly discussed the policy. In attendance were Commissioner Loretta Smith, Multnomah County, Ore; Carol McGruder, co-chair, African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council (AATCLC); Leroy Ferguson, housing program specialist, HUD; and Earl Fowlkes, president, Center for Black Equity and chair, D.C. Human Relations Commission.

According to Leroy Ferguson, the chief architect of the policy, this idea was the result of discussions with colleagues on how to make public housing healthier for residents. The best way to improve the health of residents was to go smoke-free. The policy was enacted on Nov. 29, 2016 under then-HUD Secretary Julian Castro,

and became policy 60 days later. Today, more than 700 Public Housing Agencies have formally adopted a smoke-free policy.

Commissioner Loretta Smith said, "Making public housing smoke-free will obviously be difficult because people are so used to being able to smoke in their homes... but we need to deal with respiratory issues... we need to give people a better quality of life." Carol McGruder from the AATCLC stressed, "We need clean air for everyone in the community. This policy is not about people who smoke, it's about where they smoke because when you are living with people who you share air with you have to be aware of them."

On June 30, NOBCO reconvened for Part 2, joined by Commissioner Toni Carter, Ramsey County, Minn., and Kevin Jones, executive director, Urban Collation for HIV/AIDS Prevention Coalition, who went into further detail about the policy, smoking

cessation and other types of smoking such as vaping and marijuana use.

"We need to continually work to connect the community around smoking cessation from youth to seniors; it's an ongoing effort," Carter said. Kevin Jones spoke about people living with HIV and how it relates to smoking. He said: "People have to be aware of the dangers of smoking and how it counteracts the positive effects of taking medication."

In several states, including Washington D.C., marijuana is now legal in some form. The focus of this policy is where you can smoke. The HUD rule doesn't differentiate what you're smoking, it mandates no smoking in public housing.

The question was asked, "What is someone who uses marijuana for medical purposes supposed to do?" Ferguson reminded participants, "marijuana is still illegal on the federal level and HUD is a federal agency." The waters get murky, however, around alternatives

to smoking tobacco such as vaping, medical marijuana, and the latest craze among youth with Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems, or ENDS.

Enforcement came up, and Ferguson said, "There are graduated enforcement techniques that will be used to prevent a PHA from evicting a person after a single incident in violation of the smoke free policy. The warnings will be put into a folder to keep track and the PHA's will instead monitor the person more closely, by increasing the frequency of inspections." The last step in the process is eviction.

While tenants are reprimanded for not following the rules, there are smoking cessation programs to help them quit. McGruder said, "Smoking tobacco is especially bad for people of color because pigment keeps nicotine in the body longer." **CN**

*Jenkins is an intern with the National Organization of Black County Officials.*

## States file lawsuit over SALT deductions cap

**By Charlie Ban**  
**senior staff writer**

Four states opened the newest front in the war against the state and local tax deduction cap when they sued the federal government, saying the cap violated the Constitution. Reactions to the lawsuit from associations of counties in those states line up as pretty tepid.

The tax reform bill signed into law in 2017 caps the federal tax deduction that homeowners can take for their state and local taxes at \$10,000. It disproportionately affects homeowners in coastal states with higher average property taxes, including New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Maryland, all of which are plaintiffs.

The suit, filed in the Southern District of New York last month, focuses on the limits of the federal government's tax powers

established by the 16th Amendment and federalism established by the 10th Amendment.

"When the Constitution was ratified, it was widely understood that the federal government could not abrogate the States' (sic) sovereign tax authority, and that the federalism principles embedded in the Constitution would constrain the federal government's tax power," according to the suit.

"Since Congress enacted the first federal income tax in 1861, Congress has provided a deduction for all or a significant portion of SALT in every federal income tax law, respecting federalism constraints on its taxing power and the concurrent tax authority of the sovereign States(sic). This uninterrupted practice provides strong evidence that the federal government lacks constitutional authority to drastically curtail the

deduction."

Michael Sanderson, executive director of the Maryland Association of Counties, said changes to the SALT deduction have upended county management.

"It's a big unknown, this has been the most difficult fiscal prediction I've seen state and local governments have to make in more than 25 years," he said. The bedrock upon which financial forecasting is based has changed.

"You try and run the numbers on what a proposed change will do, typically you did it in a static way," he said. "This is a big enough change to affect people's decisions on how to declare their income and how to file, and it leaves us in a total mess down here."

"Every way you slice this issue, Maryland has been on the list of states most aggressively affected," he said.

Sanderson said the suit seemed to be the logical step in what has become standard operating procedures in politics.

"It seems to be part of the political landscape now that aggrieved political parties seek a court remedy for what historically would be a political remedy," he said. NACo and 20 other local government associations formed a coalition, Americans Against Double Taxation, to oppose the proposed elimination of the SALT deduction.

John Donnadio, executive director of the New Jersey Association of Counties, said he doesn't expect much from the suit, or at least no time soon.

"At the end of the day that could take years to work through the courts," he said. "In the meantime, the IRS will be promulgating regulations (on the new tax structure), states will be promulgating regulations, and

there's a lot that needs to be figured out as a practical matter."

Likewise, he has not spent much time studying the complaint, saying there were more immediate concerns for the association.

New York and New Jersey are exploring ways to circumvent the cap, including establishing charitable funds to which residents could pay their local and school taxes and receive a federal tax credit. The New Jersey association is telling counties and municipalities to hold off on that step.

"Until the IRS or the (New Jersey) State Department offers some guidance, we're advising people not to do this," Donnadio said. "There are folks who want to move forward with this, but I'm not aware of any local government that has set one up, and I don't think they should." **CN**



# President creates training council to help fill jobs

By Daria Daniel

President Donald Trump issued an executive order (EO) July 19 establishing the National Council for the American Worker, a federal interagency body designed to increase job training opportunities for students and workers through education, skills-based training and other

means of workforce development. The council will be co-chaired by the U.S. secretaries of commerce and labor, the assistant to the president for domestic policy and the advisor to the president overseeing the Office of Economic Initiatives.

The purpose of the council is to develop policy and strategy recommendations related

to improving the workforce in America. According to the White House, “[t]here are currently more than 6.7 million unfilled jobs in the United States.” The EO encourages public-private partnerships between private employers, educational institutions, labor unions, non-profit organizations and state and local governments to improve and increase job training and educational opportunities to fill job vacancies.

The EO also establishes an American Workforce Policy Advisory Board comprising up to 25 members appointed by the president from the private sector, employers, educational institutions and states to offer diverse perspectives on how the federal government can improve education and training for American workers.

“Counties commend the White House for its continued focus on job creation and the nation’s workforce development system by establishing the National Council for the American Worker and the American Workforce Policy Advisory Board,” said NACo Executive Director Matt Chase. Counties, Chase said, play a critical role in funding and facilitating workforce development programs. Specifically, local elected officials play a central role by providing local flexibility to oversee, design and implement education and training programs, to meet the needs of businesses and jobseekers.

“NACo will continue to engage with the administration to ensure local perspectives are considered in creation of a demand-driven workforce development system, and that counties receive the needed resources to effectively educate, train and reduce barriers for jobseekers and to support and strengthen American businesses,” he added. [CN](#)

*Daria Daniel is associate legislative director for community, economic and workforce development.*

# NACo releases new resource on SNAP

By Eryn Hurley

NACo has released a new analysis of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provisions included in the House- and Senate-passed farm bill reauthorizations.

NACo’s analysis explains the differences between the two chambers’ reauthorization bills as they relate to SNAP and the potential impacts these provisions could have on counties. SNAP is a public assistance program offering nutrition support to eligible low-income individuals and families. The program currently serves 42 million residents across the nation and accounts for 80 percent of spending in the farm bill.

Following passage of farm bill reauthorization legislation, the House named 47 Republicans and Democrats to serve on a conference committee to

reconcile differences between the House and Senate proposals. Senate leadership had been expected to select its own conferees in the next several days, but the process stalled after members failed to reach consensus on amendments to the farm bill. Once the House and Senate come to an agreement on the farm bill legislation, both chambers must then pass the new version of the bill before it can be sent to the president for his signature.

Although SNAP is primarily a partnership between the federal government and states, 10 states delegate SNAP administration directly to county agencies, which covers services for 31 percent of all program recipients. [CN](#)

*Eryn Hurley is associate legislative director for human services and education.*

# Opioid legislation stalled in Senate

By Valerie Brankovic

Senate legislation focused on addressing the opioid crisis is increasingly expected to get delayed until after the approaching November midterm elections.

This impasse follows significant movement in both chambers and action taken by the U.S. House of Representatives, in June, when they passed comprehensive opioid legislation.

The Senate’s delay comes after members spent the first several months of the year considering dozens of opioid bills across various committees, some of which were included in the wide-ranging Opioid Crisis Response Act, which the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee approved in May.

Looking ahead, the Senate’s path forward is complicated by the chamber’s busy legislative

calendar over the next three months.

While the House has adjourned for the annual August recess, the Senate will remain in session for most of the month, but is expected to focus on FY19 appropriations, major program reauthorizations and presidential judicial appointments.

Members of Congress are also expected to return home in October leading up to midterm elections, leaving limited time in the months ahead for legislators to negotiate next steps on opioid proposals.

The Senate had been expected to build on the momentum from the House, where legislators moved quickly throughout May and June to combine 58 narrowly-focused opioid proposals into the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act. [CN](#)

*Valerie Brankovic is a legislative assistant.*

WORD SEARCH

NEZ PERCE COUNTY, IDAHO

Created By: Mary Ann Barton

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

**AGRICULTURE:** Agriculture is the financial mainstay for the majority of rural residents in the county.

**CULTURE:** Some of the annual cultural activities in the county include the Dogwood Festival, Hot August Nights and the Lewiston Roundup.

**DISNEY:** Lillian (nee Bounds) Disney, wife of Walt Disney, grew up in the county on the Nez Perce Indian Reservation. She is credited with naming Mickey Mouse (who Walt wanted to name Mortimer Mouse).

**EXPEDITION:** The first to meet tribal members was the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1805.

**FAIR:** The 74th annual Country Roots & Cowboy Boots Nez Perce County Fair takes place this year from Sept. 20-23.

**GOLD:** The county seat of Lewiston was founded in 1861, in the wake of a gold rush in Pierce, just northeast of Lewiston.

**IDAHO:** The county is located in north-western Idaho.

**INDIANS:** The county was named for the Nez Perce Indians who first occupied

the area.

**LEWISTON:** County seat; it served as the territorial capital for 22 months before the capital was moved to Boise.

**LOWEST:** The lowest point in the entire state of Idaho is at the Snake River in Nez Perce County on the western border. This low point is 710 feet above sea level.

**ORIGINAL:** The county was one of the four original counties in 1863; there are now 44.

**RECREATION:** The county is home to hunting, fishing, golf, team sports, tennis, swimming and hiking.

**SEAPORT:** The county is the location of Idaho’s only seaport, the Port of Lewiston. The port lies 465 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean along the Columbia/Snake River systems.

**SNAKE:** The Snake River creates a state border with Washington (and further upstream, Oregon).

**TIMBER:** Timber is a leading industry in the county.





# WORKSHOPS

## Ruling on internet sales tax 'big deal for counties,' Sen. Alexander says

By Mary Ann Barton  
senior staff writer

The Supreme Court's recent decision to allow the collection of taxes on internet purchases "is a big deal for counties...and for Main Street businesses, which are under a whole lot of pressure for a variety of reasons," Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) said during an interview with *County News*.

Alexander discussed that and other issues July 14, when he also addressed members of the Large Urban County Caucus and Rural Action Caucus at the NACo Annual Conference in Davidson County, Tenn.

Serving in the Senate since 2003, Alexander, 78, is also a former U.S. education secretary and served as governor of Tennessee from 1979 to 1987.

Alexander chairs the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions and also serves on the Appropriations, Energy and Natural Resources and Rules and Administration committees. Alexander was born and raised in Blount County, Tenn.

The Supreme Court's recent decision to allow the collection of taxes on internet purchases (*See County News, June 21 "Supreme Court gives OK to collecting tax on internet sales"*) could mean up to \$26 billion a year that counties and states could use to keep tax rates down or to pay for local roads, education or public health, Alexander said.

Collecting the taxes "has needed to be done for a long time," he said, "because it wasn't right for the federal government to force states not to



Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) speaks to the Large Urban County Caucus at its Annual Conference meeting July 14 in Davidson County, Tenn. Photo by Jessica Yurinko

collect taxes from out-of-state sellers in the same way that states and counties collected taxes from in-state sellers. That hurts the Main Street businesses in small towns across America and big towns across America."

Alexander also said it was unfair to the taxpayers who have been paying taxes on internet purchases while others did not.

"It's one of the biggest things that's happened to local governments in a long time," he said. Alexander said that to ensure that those new taxes are collected, states and counties need to streamline their procedures for collecting taxes.

As chair of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, he weighed in on a continuing concern for counties: Healthcare costs.

"We spend way too much on healthcare when compared to the rest of the world," he said. "It's not that we use more healthcare than other counties — it's that the prices are higher," he noted.

Alexander said that some of the reasons why the United States pays more include "waste, fraud, abuse and administrative costs."

"Finding a way to reduce the administrative complexity would save money and make doctors and hospitals a lot

happier, because they're overburdened," he said.

Alexander said the Senate is working on reauthorization of the Preparedness Act, which is a federal law "to try to make us ready for epidemics, disasters, for research on emerging epidemics...so we can step in and deal with that," he said. "That's very important because counties simply can't deal with it when it comes up."

On a day to day basis, "I think funding for community mental health centers is one way the federal government provides a lot of support for primary care and public health needs in counties," he said.

Alexander said on the front

to combat the nation's opioid crisis, there are now 42 provisions from 38 senators on ways to deal with the situation — everything from researching non-addictive pain medicine to stopping fentanyl from coming in from China to limiting the number of pills contained in blister packs.

But "it's not like a moon shot, it's not like the 1960s, where the president can say 'Let's go to the moon, give the job to an agency'...it's much more complicated than that," he said. **CN**

*See County News interview with Alexander at <https://bit.ly/2LZIQzk>.*



## CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

# The Opioid Crisis: Supporting County Medical Examiners, Coroners Offices

### WHO SPOKE:

**Andrew Baker, M.D.**, chief medical examiner, Hennepin County, Minn.

**Richard Jorgensen, M.D.**, coroner, DuPage County, Ill.

**Dotti Owens**, coroner, Ada County, Idaho

### WHAT PARTICIPANTS LEARNED:

Across the country, the opioid epidemic is putting a strain on already stressed county medical examiner and coroners' offices — “busting the cracks wide open,” said Andrew Baker, M.D., chief medical examiner for Hennepin County, Minn.

“Whether you know it or not, the bottom is about to fall out of our death investigation system in America,” he warned NACo members July 15. Baker was part of a panel discussion on “The Opioid Crisis: Supporting County Medical Examiners and Coroners Offices.”

In addition to the increasing number of overdose deaths due mainly now to fentanyl and its offshoots, it's hard to hire new forensic pathologists because they often choose to go into private practice where they can earn \$100,000 more per year, which helps to pay huge education bills, Baker noted. Newly minted doctors who have to pay

back steep loans are more apt to go for the higher-paying positions, he noted. The path to become a forensic pathologist requires four years of undergrad, four years of medical school, four years of training, a one-year fellowship and two “grueling” board exams “before you can apply for most jobs,” he said.

Dotti Owens, coroner, Ada County, Idaho, said one of the challenges she faces in a rural area include “zero funding and zero help” from her state. “It needs to be funded. A coroner with a \$4,000 annual budget... our body bag budget alone is \$1,000 per quarter.”

Counties are all over the map when it comes to recording deaths. “The numbers are skewed,” she said. Details, including information on what type of drug someone overdosed on, are often not recorded on most death certificates.

Richard Jorgensen, M.D., coroner for DuPage County, Ill., said that prosecutors are demanding more sophisticated autopsies so they can go after big-time drug dealers — which requires more time and funding. “It's gone beyond saying ‘this person died of a drug overdose,’” he said.

Baker noted that it might seem odd to the general public

to find out there is a shortage of forensic pathologists. “How could there be a shortage when you have the sexiest job on television?” he said, noting the number of TV police dramas that feature the position. “But for me to recruit someone from a private hospital is asking them to take a six-figure pay cut.”

According to the Association of Schools & Programs of Public Health, opioid-related overdose deaths rose 401 percent from 1999 to 2015.

But because there is so much incomplete cause-of-death reporting, the epidemic may be worse than it appears.

In Alabama, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi and Pennsylvania, more than 35 percent of unintentional overdose deaths were coded as unspecified, the group reported.

A concern among several in the audience: How to pay to beef up the budgets for a coroner's office?

A member of the audience, Michael D. Rodriguez, executive officer, Office of the Medical Examiner, Cook County, said the county has raised cremation fees from \$50 to \$100, which is expected to generate an extra \$1 million per year. The fees are paid by the funeral homes to the county. **CN**

# Creative Counties: Rebooting Main Street

### WHO SPOKE:

**Johnson Bullard**, MLA, ASLA, project manager, Hodgson and Douglas

**Allison Mays**, commissioner, Washington County, Va.

**Greg Puckett**, commissioner, Mercer County, W.Va.

**Kim Trent**, principal, Kim Trent Preservation Strategies

### WHAT PARTICIPANTS LEARNED:

If you're trying to revitalize your downtown, don't overlook possible funding from Opportunity Zones, Kim Trent, principal, Kim Trent Preservation Strategies, told NACo members July 15.

Trent was part of a panel discussion on “Creative Counties: A How-to Discussion on Main Street Redevelopment Projects.” Another option is grants from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. And yet another idea from Trent: New Market tax credits, via the Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions Fund.

You can also go the imaginative route: Mercer County, W.Va. Commissioner Greg Puckett, also a panelist, put himself high in the air in a bucket truck to raise money and said he wouldn't come down until \$10,000 was raised for revitalizing their downtown. “We raised \$11,400,” he told the audience. Plus, he noted, residents had fun saying “Puckett in a bucket!”

Part of the revitalization efforts in his county, he said, were as simple as buying \$150 worth of paint to spruce up old buildings. They also got artists involved who painted murals in a dark alley that became “Artists Alley” and is now lit up at night with bright lights. The county has seen a lot of revitalization — with downtown buildings being purchased, a new microbrewery restaurant opened and six events held in

the downtown area each year.

Members of NACo's Large Urban County Caucus — counties with populations of 500,000 or more, representing 150 million constituents — also heard about Opportunity Zones July 14 from Jeremy Keele, senior advisor, Maycomb Capital.

“In low-income communities, community investment has dropped off dramatically in recent decades,” Keele told LUCC members. He said that's mainly due to consolidation of community banking.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act created Opportunity Zones to spur investment in distressed communities throughout the country. The Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) earlier this spring designated Opportunity Zones in 18 states. New investments in Opportunity Zones can receive preferential tax treatment; the IRS offers an FAQ on Opportunity Zones at <https://bit.ly/2JtrAAU>

If part of your Main Street reboot includes helping the homeless, Boone County, Mo. is finding ways to help them by visiting homeless camps and identifying people who are veterans in order to connect them with services at the VA; others are connected with mental health services, housing and other needs.

The county discussed its program after Chris Kingsley, senior associate for Data Initiatives at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, asked members of the Healthy Counties Advisory Board meeting July 14 for examples of how they're using data.

From February 2016 through January 2018, the Boone County program has housed 275 people experiencing homelessness, including 142 veterans and 41 chronically homeless individuals and families. **CN**



**Andrew Baker, chief medical examiner, Hennepin County, Minn. warns of the coming strain on medical examiners' and coroners' offices as the opioid epidemic continues.** Photo by Jessica Yurinko





## CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

# Engaging Artists, Building Community: A Meeting of the NACo Arts and Culture Commission

### WHO SPOKE:

**M. Simone Boyd**, writer

**Julie Whitney Brown**, founder, Old School Farm Pottery

**LeXander Bryant**, photographer, visual artist and founder, ORGNZD VISUALS

**Jay Dick**, senior director, State and Local Government Affairs, Americans for the Arts

**Barry Glassman**, county executive, Harford County, Md.

**Joe Ryan**, manager, Office of Drug Control Policy, Harford County Department of Community Services

**Caroline Vincent**, Public Art and Placemaking director, METRO ARTS, Nashville Office of Arts and Culture

### WHAT PARTICIPANTS LEARNED:

Adding the arts to the fabric of blighted neighborhoods in a county can help transform them into thriving communities.

That was the message NACo members heard July 14 at the “Engaging Artists, Building Community: A Meeting of the NACo Arts & Culture Commission” at NACo’s Annual Conference in Davidson County, Tenn.

The arts can lift an economically deprived area, according to the numbers. Just ask Jay Dick, senior director, state and local government affairs, Americans for the Arts. The arts industry contributes more than \$760 billion to the U.S. economy, he noted in his address to members of the commission. Non-profit arts generate \$27.5 billion in federal, state and local revenue, far surpassing the collective allocations of \$5 billion, he said.

To help spread the word, members of the commission received green and white buttons that said “Ask Me About \$27.5 Billion.” Guilford County, N.C. Commissioner Kay Cashion, who heads up the commission and presided

over the meeting, asked NACo members to be sure to grab a button at the back of the room. “I want you to wear those,” she said. “What an opportunity for us to talk about the arts. That’s the value of the return on investment.”

A panel of artists got into the nitty-gritty, discussing how their work in Davidson County helps local communities, in a talk led by Caroline Vincent, the interim director of Metro Arts Nashville Office of Arts & Culture. Metro Nashville Arts Commission or “Metro Arts” is the office of Arts & Culture for the city of Nashville and Davidson County.

Vincent noted that one of Metro Arts’ programs, called THRIVE, gives grants directly to artists usually in amounts of \$4,000 to \$10,000. Funding supports artist-led projects that encourage artistic and cultural experiences, community investment and neighborhood transformation.

Writer M. Simone Boyd, Julia Whitney Brown, founder of

Old School Farm Pottery and LeXander Bryant, photographer, visual artist and founder of ORGNZD VISUALS were on hand to talk about their art and how it has transformed parts of Davidson County.

Bryant said Metro Arts coached him on displaying his photography in neighborhoods. He wanted to paste it to buildings, after being inspired by a French artist known only as “JR,” who pastes giant photographs in public places in Paris. “It was something different than Instagram,” he said “I wanted something really interactive you could touch and feel.”

“As artists, sometimes we know the direction we want to go, but not the destination,” Boyd said. Through her writing, she said she explores what makes relationships in neighborhoods work. She said Metro Arts helped lend credibility to her efforts and helped her access additional funding. Because of Metro Arts, she was able to work with a library, the

YMCA and local college students to help young children in the neighborhood. “You can help us navigate red tape,” she told the audience.

Funding from Metro Arts helped Brown get her Old School Farm Pottery off the ground, she said, turning a hobby into a business. “It’s grown way beyond my expectation,” Brown said. The non-profit now creates employment opportunities for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities by crafting dinnerware.

The meeting ended with a screening of a Harford County, Md. video, “Addicted,” a play written by a Harford County art teacher and featuring Harford County high school students in the roles.

The dramatic video production was one part of a prize-winning package that used the arts as addiction prevention tools. It won an Achievement Award Best in Category for the Arts, Culture and Historic Preservation. **CN**



**Joe Ryan**, manager, Office of Drug Control Policy, Harford County, Md., details the county’s use of the arts to fight opioid addiction. Photo by Jessica Yurinko



## MERCER COUNTY, W. VA.

**M**ercer County was formed in 1837 and was named for Continental Army Brigadier General Hugh Mercer. Mercer County remained in Virginia for 20 years, until 55 counties of western Virginia joined the Union as West Virginia, the 35th state, on June 20, 1863.

The county seal was created in 1974 by a Bicentennial Committee created by the Mercer County Commission to plan the county’s participation in the nationwide celebration of the United States Bicentennial in 1976. It was first used on a commemorative bicentennial coin.

The seal illustrates key components of county history.

Information provided by  
Commissioner Bill Archer.



The Bluestone River featured at the top of the seal was the lifeblood for First Nation’s people who settled the region prior to the arrival of European settlers.

General Mercer on his horse is featured beneath the Bluestone, a river that was called the “Big Stone River” by indigenous people.

The images of a log cabin, cow, coal mine and logging operation counterclockwise, represent various aspects of life in the county.



## PROFILES IN SERVICE

### RANDY MALUCHNIK

**Board Member**  
Vice Chairman  
Board of Commissioners  
Carver County, Minn.

**Number of years involved in NACo:** 10

**Years in public service:** 24

**Occupation:** Veterans advocate

**Education:** Master's in vocational education

**The hardest thing I've ever done is:** Watch my daughter die after she was removed from life support.

**Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner are:** Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa and Mahatma Gandhi.

**A dream I have is to:** Do mission work in Palestine and Uganda.

**You'd be surprised to learn that:** I have traveled to all 50 states.

**I'm most proud of:** My work with veterans.

**Every morning I read:**

MinnPost.

**My favorite dish is:** Ice cream.

**My pet peeve is:** People who don't understand the difference between governance and power.



**MALUCHNIK**

**My motto is:** Roberto Clemente's "Any time you have an opportunity to make a difference in this world and you don't, then you are wasting your time on Earth."

**The last book I read was:** *Promise Me, Dad* by Joe Biden.

**My favorite movie is:** *The Gentle Man*.

**My favorite music is:** Chicago jazz and Kansas City blues.

**My favorite U.S. president is:** Teddy Roosevelt.

**My county is a NACo member because:** NACo is a great value for achieving good governance.

**The most adventurous thing I've ever done is:**  
Climb Pikes Peak.



## CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

### Resilient Counties Luncheon: Supporting Disaster Preparedness



San Diego County, Calif. Supervisor Greg Cox (current NACo president) and Sonoma County, Calif. Supervisor Jamie Gore discuss San Diego's 2-1-1 system. Photo by Jessica Yurinko

#### WHO SPOKE:

**Hon. Greg Cox**, NACo first vice president (now NACo president), supervisor, San Diego County, Calif.

**Chris Fennell**, chief development and marketing manager, Institute for Building Technology and Safety

**Nick Macchione**, director, Health and Human Services Agency, San Diego County, Calif.

**John Ohanian**, president and CEO, 2-1-1 San Diego, Calif.

**Mat Heyman**, guest researcher, National Institute of Standards and Technology

**Steven C. Seachrist**, PE, engineer V, Gwinnett County Department of Water Resources, Gwinnett County, Ca.

#### WHAT PARTICIPANTS LEARNED:

"I think Mahatma Ghandi once said a society is measured on how it treats its most vulnerable," San Diego County Supervisor Greg Cox said July 14 while speaking to NACo members at the Resilient Counties Lunch at the Annual Conference.

Cox, who was about to be sworn in as the next president of NACo, previewed his initiative "Connecting the Unconnected" with the audience.

"What we have found," he said, "with our 211-call system, we are really focused on connecting the unconnected. People in our community who need the most services who don't know where to turn in a time of need, they're floundering around. They're trying to figure out where do they go? Who do they call? Who do they see?"

United Way had operated a similar service there, he said, but when they decided to shut it down; a 501(c)3 non-profit was created in 2005 and championed by the county.

The county also decided to use it as a tool during disasters, he said. During fire disasters in 2007, the county was rolling out a new reverse 911 and mass notification system that included the 211 information in a recording. In all, the county received 160,000 calls over several days of the fires with phones manned by 1,200 volunteers. The year before, they had received 120,000 for the entire year, he noted.

"We've become a real firm believer in 211," Cox said. One of the first things those who worked for the new 211 service did was to take inventory of all

of the non-profits in the county, discovering there are more than 1,200 offering 6,000 programs to help residents.

"But if people don't know how to access them, what good are they?" Cox asked. "We have to have a way for people to get connected to services that are out there — 211 is the first intake for people in need of food," for instance, he said. "We're not dealing with just one issue. Too often we find ourselves in silos. What 211 has been able to do...we're dealing with the entire needs of the family. We think it's been a remarkable turnaround in San Diego."

When a county resident calls 211, they're calling for help with everything from mental illness to financial problems. The representative who answers the phone is trained to connect them to one of the programs that can help.

Sonoma County, Calif. Supervisor James Gore, chair of NACo's Resilient Counties Advisory Board, recently visited San Diego County to find out more about the service. "You might think it sounds like this tech tool but it's really a movement," he said, "and it is just rolling." **CN**





## CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

# Emerging Strategies in Addressing Poverty: Discussions of Key Issues, Policies Affecting Poverty and Well-Being in Rural America

### WHO SPOKE:

**Rebeca Benally**, commissioner,  
San Juan County, Utah

**Darlene Haman**, strategic  
planning coordinator, Herkimer  
County, N.Y.

**Camara Jones**, senior fellow,  
Satcher Health Leadership Institute

**James Wallace**, county adminis-  
trator, Herkimer County, N.Y.

### WHAT PARTICIPANTS LEARNED:

Utah took a statewide approach to combatting inter-generational poverty in 2012, creating a committee of work-force development, health, human services, juvenile courts and education agencies under the direction of the lieutenant governor. Counties developed plans to help disrupt patterns of poverty lasting at least two generations and staff committees to oversee those plans. In 2018, the state offered \$900,000 grants for every county to help fund those plans.

The process has been eye-opening, Benally said, noting that communication among counties and state agencies is wearing down entrenched territorialism.

"We realized that some counties and agencies were



**Dr. Camara Jones speaks about racial disparities in rural poverty. Darlene Haman and James Wallace, Herkimer County, N.Y. look on.** Photo by Jessica Yurinko

duplicating their efforts, so now we're looking for overlaps (to eliminate) and gaps (to fill)," she said.

San Juan County's is focusing on early childhood services, job creation and training, connecting to colleges and addressing drop-out rates of nearly 50 percent in high schools on a reservation, where unemployment rates often top 40 percent.

"They know education is important, but priorities are backwards sometimes," she said. "And when the men in the family can hold a job and provide for his family, that's

the greatest gift he can give them."

Herkimer County, N.Y. does comprehensive needs assessments every three years based on input from 85 representatives of social service organizations, and the different priorities of focus over the years demonstrate the changing needs of the rural county.

"Three years ago, opioid abuse wasn't on there," Haman said. "So you can see how fast things change."

Despite several initiatives in place to address intergenerational poverty in Durham County, N.C., Commissioner

Brenda Howerton said the efforts have largely been lost on much of the public.

"What I hear is 'You're not doing anything to impact our lives, you're doing research, research and analysis but it's not shifting the needle,'" she said.

Jones said three qualities in programming would "move the needle."

"We have to value all individuals and populations equally and recognize and rectify historical injustices," she said, adding that putting all major decisions in proper historical context was crucial.

When it comes time to allocate resources, she said, provide them according to need.

"That requires establishing some metric of need," she said, which also required proper study of poverty in rural areas.

Haman said that was the county's plan for the 60 spots available soon in a county-run daycare program.

"We want to make those spots available for families with histories of children being removed from the home, children who have experienced some abuse or neglect," she said. "It will help get them into the services that will get the child the tools they need," to be successful.

Jones stressed the need for county leaders to recognize where their social, economic and racial privileges affect decision making that could affect people in need of help.

Erie County, N.Y. Executive Mark Poloncarz described the relatively new layer of consultation by which the county government studies the consequences its new policies would have on the African American population. **EN**

*Staff contact: Michelle Price,  
mprice@naco.org*

## 2020 Census: What Counties Need to Do Now to Prepare

### WHO SPOKE:

**Karen Narasaki**, consultant,  
Bauman Foundation

**Kent Oliver**, director, Nashville  
Public Library

**Tim Olson**, associate director  
of field operations, U.S. Census  
Bureau

### WHAT PARTICIPANTS LEARNED:

The 2020 Census will be the first to allow responses via the internet and phone, broadening the opportunities residents to give the federal government an accurate count of county

populations.

Results will guide the distribution of more than \$800 billion in federal funding, often allocated by county, making a full measurement of population a crucial local priority.

"It's really about trying to convince local people to participate," Narasaki said. "Where they are is critically important. If you get the count wrong, your county is going to feel the impact for a decade."

That means pushing to correct historical undercounting of non-whites and children under

the age of 5. Rural areas are also a challenge.

The addition of a question regarding U.S. citizenship will complicate the count and will likely stoke fears and distrust in the census process. The July 2019 printing deadline will force a resolution on the citizenship question, which has been subject to several lawsuits alleging it will suppress responses from noncitizens who nonetheless use county resources.

Kent Oliver, director of the Nashville public library, said

that libraries, as one of the most trustworthy American institutions, could be an effective intermediary.

"There are roughly 17,000 public libraries, more than McDonald's," he said. "Libraries serve people from all walks of life, they serve everybody equally and have a lot of interaction with the hard-to-count population."

Congress did not increase funding from the 2010 Census, and will be facing a tighter labor market for 2020 than during the Great Recession in 2010.

The Census Bureau will hire 500,000 temporary, part-time employees to conduct home visits if Census forms from the bureau don't receive responses after a few weeks of their March arrivals.

"We'll be looking to hire in every county in the country, because no county has a 100 percent response rate," Olson said.

*Read about how some individual counties are preparing for the 2020 Census on page 3. **EN***

*Staff contact: Maeghan Gilmore, mgilmore@naco.org*



# SPEAKERS

## Award-winning songwriters discuss their craft

**By Charlie Ban**  
senior staff writer

Three country music songwriters closed out the final general session with local flavor, sharing the career experiences that led them to the Music City. Despite their accomplishments, all flavored their remarks with healthy doses of self-deprecation.

"I'm a 20-year overnight success," said Natalie Hemby, who retreated from the music

business after a performing contract fell through. "God gave me this other thing, songwriting. It's gotten me through so many things in my life.

"I worked at Comcast," she said, drawing laughter.

Hemby caught her big break writing songs for singer Miranda Lambert, whose career Hemby's husband manages.

Some of the most poignant songs come from misfortune, and Tim Nichols owes his big break to being taken. After

being scammed by a con man record producer, Nichols was featured on *60 Minutes*, which gave him national exposure and attention from more legitimate players in the music industry. Despite his initial difficulty in the business, he knew he had to go to Nashville to pursue his career.

"If you want to hunt tigers you have to go where the tigers are," he said. "I had to move to Davidson County," his choice in words specific to strike a

chord with county officials.

Nichols has gained fame as a writer of the Grammy-winning song "Live Like You Were Dying," which he said has given him some of his greatest satisfaction, but not from its commercial success.

"If you ever have the opportunity to win a Grammy, you should totally do it," he said, but what tops that is hearing about how his lyrics prompted people to change their lives through kindness and forgive-

ness.

Tom Douglas stressed the process in songwriting, which was fundamental to writers' work. The pinnacle of a writer's career is supported by a wide base made possible by prolific writing. Douglas finishes writing one song every three days, during which he loves the song he's working on.

"As soon as you're done, you move onto the next one," he said. "Otherwise you get hung up on them." **CN**



Songwriters Tom Douglas, Natalie Hemby and Tim Nichols introduce themselves to the General Session audience. They shared stories of how their country music-writing careers brought them to Davidson County. Photo by Jessica Yurinko





## STEERING COMMITTEE BRIEFINGS

### Lack of broadband, cyberattack vigilance top agenda at telecom committee meeting

If you're a county concerned about broadband in your community, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) wants to hear from you. "This is a work in progress — let us know if this is something we can help you with, contact us," urged Elizabeth Mumaw, chief, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs at the FCC.

Speaking to members of NACo's Telecommunications and Technology Policy Steering Committee, Mumaw discussed the FCC's Mobility Fund II, which will provide up to \$4.5 billion over the next decade to underserved areas. A map released earlier this year by the FCC shows areas of the country presumed eligible to receive support for 4G service. Many have disagreed with the information in the map, which shows that some counties are covered by broadband when they are not.

### Cyberattacks

Matthew Travis, deputy undersecretary for the national protection and programs directorate, Department of Homeland Security, said that counties cannot rest easy as election season nears, when it comes to protecting their voting systems from outside cyberattacks. "...in terms of the threats — we're not seeing that level (from the presidential election) of activity yet, but that doesn't mean it's not coming," he said. Having paper ballot backups are crucial, he noted.

Another big issue facing counties is ransomware attacks, he noted. They "are not a passing phase. Holding counties hostage for not insignificant amounts of money. Essentially, you're going to be faced with a decision of fixing the problem or paying the ransom. We prefer that you not pay the ransom. The best defense is cyber hygiene. A lot of this is preventable."



**Brian Newby, executive director, U.S. Elections Assistance Commission, discusses sharing best practices with NACo members July 13 at Finance, Pensions and Intergovernmental Affairs Policy Steering Committee business meeting.** Photos by Jessica Yurinko

### Guidelines for testing voting systems could be approved soon

When Brian Newby worked as the election chief for Johnson County, Kan., he wasn't sold on the Election Assistance Commission, a federal agency he now heads. "I was critical of the EAC because it didn't speak to me," he told members of the Finance, Pensions and Intergovernmental Affairs Policy Steering Committee Friday afternoon. "We try really hard ... to do things we think are beneficial to election administrators." Sharing best practices with election administrators, he said, "is a big strength of ours."

The EAC, which currently only has two commissioners, could soon update guidelines on testing of voting systems, which were last updated in 2007, Newby said. The commission needs three commissioners to approve the new standards, which could happen in a few months once a new commissioner is approved. President Trump recently announced his intent

to nominate Donald Palmer, who previously served as an election official in both Florida and Virginia.

Counties should take advantage of the EAC's Election Administration and Voting Survey (aka EAVS) which does a deep dive into county election data, Newby said. The data allows counties to compare their elections. "In the end we're a clearinghouse of information," he said.

### EDA has nearly \$600 million available to help counties hit by disasters

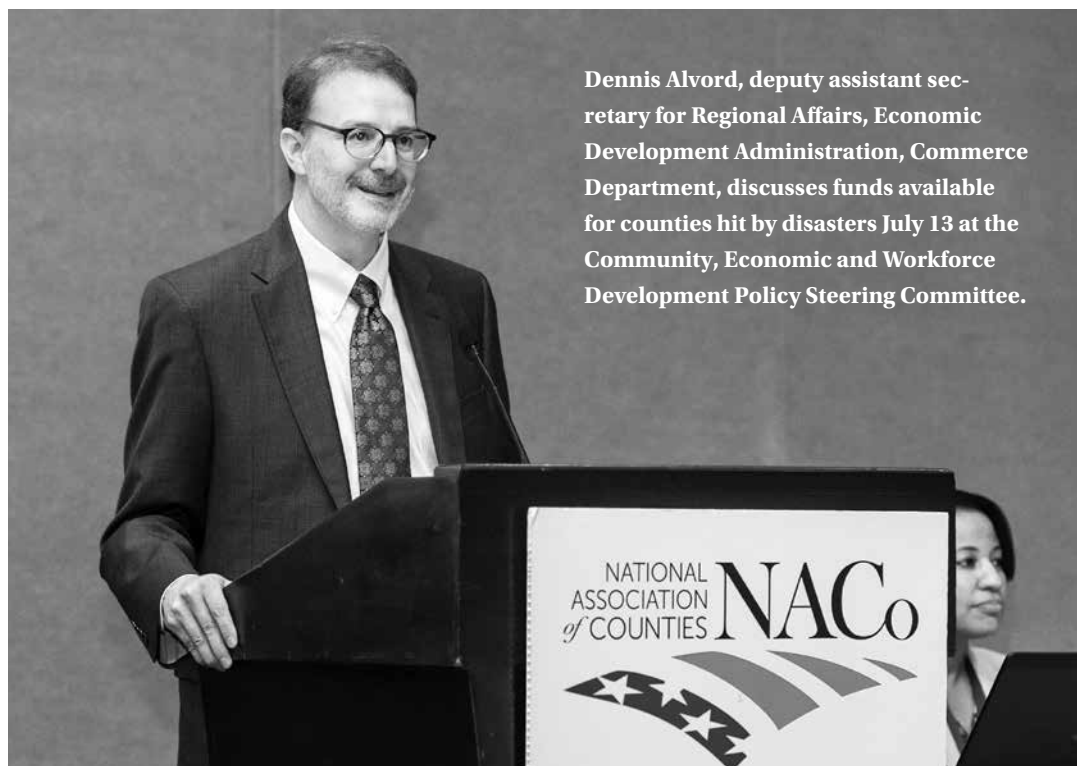
The Economic Development Administration can help counties that have suffered economically from federally declared disasters get back on their feet, said Dennis Alvord, deputy assistant secretary, regional affairs, Economic Development Administration,

Commerce Department.

"EDA has a long history of working with local communities to help with disaster recovery assistance," he told members of the Community, Economic and Workforce Development Policy Steering Committee at their meeting Friday afternoon.

The EDA has \$587 million appropriated to help com-

**See EDA page 16**



**Dennis Alvord, deputy assistant secretary for Regional Affairs, Economic Development Administration, Commerce Department, discusses funds available for counties hit by disasters July 13 at the Community, Economic and Workforce Development Policy Steering Committee.**



## STEERING COMMITTEE BRIEFINGS



**Tara Kunkel, senior drug policy officer, Bureau of Justice Assistance, DOJ, discusses funding to stem the opioid crisis with members of the Justice and Public Safety Policy Steering Committee July 13. Shelby County, Tenn. Mayor Mark Luttrell looks on.** Photo by Jessica Yurinko

### From EDA page 15

munities that were hit hard by disasters in 2017, Alvord said. EDA disaster grants are made by its Regional Offices under the agency's Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) Program, which enables EDA to make awards that support a wide range of construction and non-construction activities in areas which experience sudden and prolonged severe economic dislocation.

### Education of workforce needs to catch up to number of jobs

The U.S. economy is booming — with 6.6 million open jobs right now — but not enough workers to fill them, said Rosemary Lahasky, acting assistant secretary, Employment and Training Administration, Labor Department.

"The problem is not a lack of jobs, it's a lack of workers," she told members of NACo's Community, Economic and Workforce Development Policy Steering Committee Friday. "Our economy is strong but our system of education is not

keeping up. We're committed to bridging the skills gap."

One of the solutions, she said, is to simplify the DOL's apprenticeship program by expanding it to allow industry trade groups to run similar programs. "We look to empower" groups "outside of Washington" to "certify, update and maintain" their own apprenticeship programs.

### Congress answers calls for more opioid abuse funding

There have been a lot of sur-

prises in the opioid addiction crisis, most of them bad. But Tara Kunkel, senior drug policy officer at the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance, had a good one when it came to her grant programs for local governments, she told the Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee.

"I was happily sitting at \$13 million last year (for the Comprehensive Opioid Abuse program), and in March got a call that our funding had been increased to \$145 million to get out the community," she said. "Congress really did appropriate a lot more funding that is trickling down, slowly but surely to states and to the local level."

Aware that distribution could take longer than coun-

ties would like, BJA has created funding categories for counties and tribes, and others for states.

"We're dedicating a bulk of the money to counties because we want to balance out where the money is going," Kunkel said.

The funding will be dedicated to addiction treatment for people in jails and first responder diversion training and support programs. She said that eight different "telehealth" programs were in the works to meet the needs of rural counties that don't have the capacity to support certain medical services for both addiction and mental and behavioral health problems.

### Aging locks threaten inland commerce

Most inland waterway commerce in the United States is

**Rosemary Lahasky, acting assistant secretary, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, discusses apprenticeship programs with the Community, Economic and Workforce Development Policy Steering Committee.**

assisted by locks and dams, and Waterways Council Government Relations Director Tracy Zea told the Transportation Policy Steering Committee that the 557.8 million tons of products and materials, worth \$300 billion, was likely lost on people.

"Rivers are the forgotten R," he said, explaining that "they're not road, rail or runway."

A typical barge can carry the equivalent of 1,050 trucks, and, he added, you probably haven't had to stop your car to wait for a barge to go by.

The problem, Zea said, is that typical lock systems were built to last 50 years. Almost 60 percent of the 239 U.S. locks are nearly 10 years beyond that point, with many being built in the New Deal era.

"After hitting their life expectancy, the chance of a lock failing increases dramatically," Zea said, noting that lock failure would drastically increase truck traffic.

The Waterways Council has lobbied for an increase in the fuel tax, which barges themselves would pay, to fund lock improvements and replacements. **CN**





# PICTURE PERFECT



San Diego County, Calif. Supervisor Greg Cox is sworn in July 16 as NACo's president by his wife, Cheryl Cox, a former mayor of Chula Vista, Calif.



Brenda Howerton, Durham County, N.C. casts her state's votes. North Carolina, home of Person County Commissioner Ray Jeffers, was one of four states to field a candidate for NACo second vice president.



Keith Langenhahn, NACo Ambassador, goes over the conference agenda with Gary Eddings, Weakley County, Ind. at the First-Time Attendees Breakfast.



Crittendon County, Ark. contingent stop for a candid camera moment: (l-r) Ellen Foote, Paula Brown and Tawanna Brown.



## NACo 2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE PHOTO ESSAY

All Images by  
Jessica Yurinko  
unless noted.

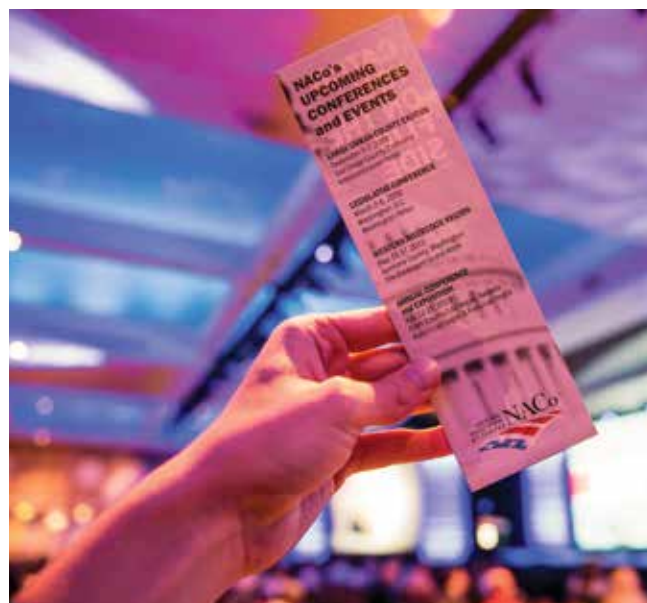




## NACo ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN PHOTOS



Douglas County, Neb. Commissioner Mary Ann Borgeson, NACo second vice president, takes the stage in Nashville.



Mark your calendars! The next four major NACo conferences and events are scheduled, with visits to San Diego County, Calif.; Washington, D.C.; Spokane County, Wash. and Clark County, Nev.



NACo members help stuff backpacks in Nashville.



HUD's Neal Rackleff talks affordable housing.



California Association of Counties Executive Director Graham Knaus and Darby Kernan, CSAC deputy executive director, pore over their state's votes in the NACo election.



NACo members get a look at a neighborhood mural during the Affordable Housing Mobile Workshop tour in Davidson County, Tenn. Photo by Hugh Clarke





Boone County, Ky. Judge-Executive Gary Moore supporters celebrate their candidate’s victory just as the winning, third-round vote is posted. Moore is fourth from left.



The Commonwealth of Virginia confers: Dean Lynch, Virginia Association of Counties; Phyllis Randall, Loudoun County; and Harrison Moody, Dinwiddie County, discuss the NACo election for second vice president.



Newly sworn-in NACo President Greg Cox accepts well wishes from his predecessor Roy Charles Brooks.



A NACo member peruses the newsstand at the Conference Resource Center.



**NACo 2018**  
**ANNUAL**  
**CONFERENCE**  
**PHOTO ESSAY**





A packed room waits for Britt Carter, associate director of the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, to take the lectern from J.D. Clark, Wise County, Texas judge, to



Lew Gaiter III, Larimer County, Colo. commissioner, opens CIO Forum.



Bernie Fazzini, Harrison County, W.Va. casts the votes for the Mountain State.



From umbrellas to water bottles — there is plenty of NACo merchandise for members at the Annual Conference in Nashville.

Research scientist Katherine Paschall, of Child Trends, discusses early childhood initiatives at Children's Impact Network meeting.



NACo members participate in a bike ride July 14 with bikes and helmets courtesy of ofo.






address the Rural Action Caucus.



Cindy Bullock, Iron County, Utah casts ballots for the Beehive State.



**NACo 2018**  
**ANNUAL**  
**CONFERENCE**  
**PHOTO ESSAY**



Advocacy groups found a home in the Exhibit Hall.





**Beaufort County, N.C. Commissioners Ed Booth (middle) and Gary Brinn (right) hear a sales pitch.**



**Always an opportunity for a selfie: Staff from the Local Leadership in the Arts Advocacy Award winner Davidson County, Tenn. Juvenile Court capture the moment. Photo by Leon Lawrence III**



**Commissioner Christopher Constance of Charlotte County, Fla. makes a point during the CIO Forum.**



**Gila County, Ariz. Supervisor Tommie Cline Martin, chair, Public Lands Steering Committee, presents the committee's policy recommendations.**



# THE WINNERS



St. Charles Parish, La. received Nationwide's Aspire Award, which honors leadership in promoting employee retirement savings. Marilyn B. Bellock, St. Charles Parish councilperson, accepts the award. Also pictured (l-r): President Greg Cox; Eric Stevenson, Nationwide; and Grant Veeder, vice chair, Defined Contribution and Retirement Advisory Committee.



Nathan Ehalt, county administrator, Burnett County, Wis. accepts Nationwide's second Aspire Award.



Americans for the Arts awarded Hillsborough County, Fla. its Public Leadership in the Arts Award. Seen here with the award are Commissioner Sandy Murman, Board chair and Jay Dick, senior director, state and local government, Americans for the Arts.

Richard Malm, chair, NACo Membership Committee presents the Recruiter of the Year award to Kentucky Association of Counties Executive Director Brian Roy.



**NACo 2018**  
ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE  
PHOTO ESSAY





Mercedes Salada proudly shows off her Davenport Presidential Scholarship award along with Bill Jaisen, president and managing director, NACo FSC.



Michael Matthews, Jr., Tarrant County, Texas, thanks NACo for his Presidential Scholarship, sponsored by Linebarger Attorneys at Law, a NACo corporate member. NACo Presidential Scholarships winners are selected from the home county of NACo's outgoing president.



**NACo 2018  
ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE  
PHOTO ESSAY**



Judge Sheila Calloway shows off the Local Arts Advocacy Award given annually by NACo's Arts and Culture Commission. The award honored Davidson County, Tenn. for its Juvenile Court Restorative Justice and Arts program. Also seen are Jay Dick, Americans for the Arts, and Kay Cashion, Guilford County, N.C., chair, Arts and Culture Commission.



Graham Knaus, CSAC executive director, displays the Best in Category Achievement Award for Health, which he accepted on behalf of Ventura County, Calif. at the Achievement Award Luncheon. Flanking him (left) are Dr. Graham Grant, president of the AETNA Foundation, which sponsors the luncheon and (right) NACo President Roy Charles Brooks.



## BRIGHT IDEAS | EL PASO COUNTY, Colo.

# County Eases Path to Voting for Disabled

### PROBLEM:

Disabled residents often find it difficult to vote.

### SOLUTION:

El Paso County, Colo. teamed up with The Independence Center, a local nonprofit, opening as a voting service and polling center during elections.

**By Mary Ann Barton**  
senior staff writer

El Paso County, Colo. established a highly accessible polling place for the 2016 presidential election through a partnership with the Independence Center, a local non-profit that serves individuals with disabilities.

The idea bubbled up from the county's election judges, who help voters during elections. They had asked questions about how to best help the disabled who are voting,

for those who are hearing-impaired. Desk stations where the voting equipment is located on Election Day can be raised or lowered and some have wider bases so wheelchairs can be comfortably wheeled beneath them.

The election office held an open house at the center for the disability community several months before the 2016 presidential election for a dry run. They invited the media and tested the equipment. The center created flyers to help get the word out. "There were formalized ways we reached out but there's an informal network too," Broerman said.

The county got some feedback after the open house to see how intuitive it was for the disabled to vote there. "We decided to expand it from one room into two rooms because our voting equipment took up a little more space," Leath said. Also in preparation for

for everyone in the disability community and for the volunteers who engage in the disability community."

Advice for other counties? "We first reached out to our community groups," Leath said. "We got lucky, because we have the Independence Center here, who we were able to partner with."

"Those resources more than likely exist in their community — it's just about making that contact," Broerman said. "They are enthusiastic about being brought into the process. Most counties do not



Two people use sign language at a special polling place for the disabled in El Paso County. Photo courtesy of El Paso County, Colo.

have to reinvent the wheel. It's just about making that initial contact and going forward." **CN**

For more information, contact Leath at: 719.520.7325 or by email: [angieleath@elpasoco.com](mailto:angieleath@elpasoco.com).

The county got some feedback after the open house to see how intuitive it was for the disabled to vote there.

said Chuck Broerman, county clerk and recorder for El Paso County, Colo.

Angie Leath, director of elections in the county, said they met with several groups, looking for a community partner to expand their efforts. "The Independence Center was very willing to help us out, not only training our judges but offering their facility for voting," she said. The center is located on a bus line for the disabled.

The center's building offers features to help the disabled maneuver easier, with wider hallways and doors, contrasting tile colors to help guide them and acoustic paneling to reduce background noise

the election, the county created a video presentation in American Sign Language about what was on the ballot, posting it on their website and on YouTube.

The center prepared election judges by giving a free one-hour presentation on everything from etiquette to how to interact with voters to what is politically correct to say.

In all, 454 residents came to the facility to vote in the 2016 presidential election. Some used paper ballots and others used voting machines.

"There was a lot of enthusiasm generated — they saw the benefits, we saw the benefits," Broerman said. "It's a win-win

AUGUST 29th, 2018  
#CountiesCare

## #CountiesCare Social Media Day

Highlight what your county is doing to connect residents to services and alleviate poverty

[www.naco.org/countiescareday](http://www.naco.org/countiescareday)

@NACoTweets

@NACoDC

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES **NACo** | HEALTHY COUNTIES





# NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

## CALIFORNIA

Healthy food may become a prescription for saving on **health care costs** in a pilot program in seven counties in the Golden State, *The Mercury News* reported. Congestive heart failure patients in **ALAMEDA, LOS ANGELES, MARIN, SAN DIEGO, SAN MATEO, SANTA CLARA** and **SONOMA** counties are part of the three-year, \$6 million experiment that started in April. One-thousand patients will receive nutrition counseling and 12 weeks of homemade, heart-healthy meals with lots of fresh ingredients.

The food, low in salt and carbs, is expected to help reduce inflammation and keep the body from retaining excess water that puts pressure on the heart. The goal of the program is to save millions of dollars by making people healthier.

## FLORIDA

**MANATEE COUNTY** has **saved \$1 million** after starting a program that sends medics to check on residents who frequently visit the emergency room. County-trained employees in the Community Medic Program visit 100 patients in their homes, where they take their vitals and talk to them about their medications. Any problems are relayed to the patients' healthcare providers. "These patients aren't calling 911 as much and they aren't going to the emergency room as often," said James Crutchfield, program director. "This is the direction health care is going." For more information about the program, visit the website at: <https://bit.ly/2uYM9Q6>.



Lake County, Ill. Sheriff's Office personnel scheduled to participate in recent filming of the reality TV series "Live PD Presents: Women on Patrol" include (l-r) Deputy Amanda Hurtado, Deputy Roxana Stancioiu and Det. Rebecca Loeb. Photo courtesy of Lake County Sheriff's Office

## ILLINOIS

**LAKE COUNTY** Sheriff's Office deputies are scheduled to return to the reality TV show "Live PD Presents: Women on Patrol" on the Lifetime network, the *Chicago Tribune* reported. The series claims to capture an "unfiltered and unfettered look at the female officers on the front line of some of the busiest police forces in the country as they patrol their communities." Sheriff Mark Curan said it gives the community an inside look at how the Sheriff's Office operates. "Women on Patrol" airs on the Lifetime Cable Network on Mondays at 8 p.m. Central Time.

## ILLINOIS

**COOK COUNTY** is expected to close two branch courthouses as a way to resolve a **budget fight** that began after a

soda tax was repealed, the *Chicago Tribune* reported. No employees will be laid off this year but all employees must take 10 unpaid furlough days to help the county save \$6.2 million. Hearings at the courthouses will be shifted to other county courthouses.

The repeal of the tax eliminated \$200 million from County Board President Toni Preckwinkle's proposed spending plan. "We will continue working with all officials to ensure that all functions of the County are operating efficiently and in a fiscally responsible manner while still providing essential services to residents," Preckwinkle said.

ty landfill; the amount would be equal to half a year's regular input for the landfill.

## KANSAS

It sounds like a story straight out of the Disney/Pixar *Finding Nemo* playbook. Thirteen years ago, a **flamingo** imported from Tanzania to the **SEDGWICK COUNTY** Zoo flew the coop. Now it appears Texas is the new Tanzania. Sporting its leg band, number 492, the exotic bird was spotted on the marshy islands of Lavaca



Photo courtesy of Texas Parks and Wildlife



Trump gives a thumbs up with police officers, Palm Beach County, Fla. Photo courtesy of the White House

## FLORIDA

**PALM BEACH COUNTY** is seeking \$5.6 million in reimbursement from the federal government for its Sheriff's Office, which **protected President Trump** during his visits to the county from November 2017 to April 2018, the *Palm Beach Post* reported. Trump made 10 trips to the area over 47 days including Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter visits, as well as an April summit with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, at his Mar-a-Lago country club.

He greeted officers in April at the end of his last visit of the 2017-2018 season, posing for photos before boarding Air Force One. "Thank you to the incredible Law Enforcement Officers from the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office. They keep us safe and are very cool about it," Trump tweeted along with a picture of himself surrounded by local officers. County taxpayers were reimbursed \$3.4 million for security costs in 2017.

## IOWA

A **tornado** that toppled a portion of the **MARSHALL COUNTY** Courthouse clock tower July 19 did all sorts of damage around town, including hitting a meatpacking plant. The plant needs to dispose of 24 million pounds of pork product it lost in the storm after wind tore insulation and panels off the distribution center. The plan is to get rid of the pork at the coun-



Bay in **CALHOUN COUNTY**, Texas, about 685 miles south of the zoo, *The New York Times* reported. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department was alerted to the 5-foot pink escapee after an intern snapped a photo of it hanging out with a flock of seagulls.

## NEW YORK

• **NASSAU COUNTY** Executive Laura Curran recently signed an executive order prohibiting the release of **employees' personal information**. The executive order also covers county employees' home address, personal telephone number, personal cell phone number or personal e-mail address.

The order follows the Supreme Court's ruling in *Janus v. AFSCME*, which raised concerns among some that political groups might target government workers, enticing them to leave the unions that represent them. New York State and **SUFFOLK** and **WESTCHESTER** counties have also issued similar executive orders.

• Inmates at the **WESTCHESTER COUNTY** jail were able to take a **free three-credit course** this summer through Manhattan College: "Criminal Justice Ethics: Why We Punish." Non-inmate college students enrolled at Manhattan College, who are studying criminal justice ethics, were able to take the course, which was held at the jail. Inmates who complete the course will have the opportunity to attend Manhattan College following their release.

## OREGON

**COOS COUNTY** commissioners defined the **authority of the county forester** and his role in enacting forest closures to the public.

The commission approved an ordinance giving the forester the authority to close or restrict public access for up to three days. Any full closure beyond three days requires approval by the County Commis-

sion. Commissioners also approved regulations outlining the county's authority to exclude individuals from county properties and public land, including engaging in disruptive or threatening behavior such as fighting, making unreasonably loud or disturbing noises, violating any federal or state law and so on will be asked to vacate the property and possibly excluded from further entrance, *The World* reported.

## PENNSYLVANIA

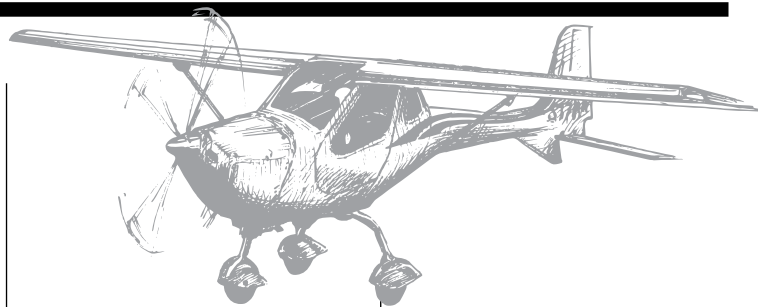
**LYCOMING COUNTY** commissioners will consider amending the county zoning ordinance to allow property owners to put new mobile or manufactured homes on a floodplain if they meet certain requirements. Currently, mobile homes grandfathered

into a **floodplain** have been allowed to remain there and may even be repaired or replaced, but no new mobile or manufactured homes can be added to a floodplain property, *The Sun-Gazette* reported.

## VIRGINIA

• The **ARLINGTON COUNTY** Board voted to join a lawsuit to prevent the Commerce Department from adding a question about U.S. **citizenship** to the 2020 Census, Arlington Now reported. The change, announced in March, has been criticized for its potential to discourage people from responding to the Census and affecting count totals.

• **FAUQUIER COUNTY** will be **auctioning off two airplanes** that have been sitting,



abandoned, at the county airport. Owners stopped paying "tie-down" rental fees years ago on a 1946 ER Coupe 415-C and a 1961 Cessna 172-C Skyhawk. An appraiser valued the 1946 plane at \$1,950 and the newer Cessna at \$3,600, Fauquier Now reported. Mary Catherine Anderson, senior assistant county attorney said, "These planes are in pretty rough shape."

Nonetheless, there have been enough inquiries to prompt the auction.

• Following Gov. Ralph Northam's (D) signing a bill to legalize gambling on **historical horse racing**, the **NEW KENT COUNTY** Board of Supervisors has amended the county code to make distinctions between historical horse racing and regular horse racing. Historical horse racing creates pari-mutuel pools from wagers placed on previously conducted horse races and is hosted at a racetrack, satellite facility or a nonprofit industry stakeholder organization, according to the county code ordinance, *The Virginia Gazette* reported.

Horse racing is defined as a competition on a set course involving a race between horses where pari-mutuel wagering is permitted and includes historical horse racing, according to the county code ordinance.

## WASHINGTON

**KING COUNTY** announced a **gun safety action plan** that requires all gun owners in the county to securely store firearms, directs the Sheriff's Office to destroy all weapons confiscated from crimes, establishes a task force on firearm safety and opens collaboration between the county and young adults for how to reduce the gun violence they experience. Those measures would need approval by

County Council. The Board of Health's approval would be necessary to require signs warning of the health risk of firearms to be posted in a number of different languages at gun stores and ranges and online.

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

## ON THE MOVE

### NACo STAFF



Walsh

• **Nastassia Walsh**, program manager, spoke at the Georgia Mental Health Summit in Macon-Bibb County, Ga., Aug. 1.



Langston

• July 24-25, **Linda Langston**, director of strategic relations, visited the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation in Hennepin County, Minn. to discuss resilience. The following day she spoke at the Governing Crisis Summit in Washington, D.C.



The Luzerne County Courthouse rotunda. Photo courtesy of Luzerne County, Pa.

## PENNSYLVANIA

In addition to recording marriages, **LUZERNE COUNTY** can now provide a venue, too.

The county courthouse rotunda, which can accommodate 125, is available to rent for **weddings**. The \$500 fee that pays for overtime costs to keep the courthouse open includes the use of lawn and grounds around the courthouse for photographs. The rotunda features a marble staircase and the county touts the excellent acoustics, which render sound systems unnecessary.



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