HARRIS CO. SETTLES BAIL CASE, REFORMS SYSTEM

by Charlie Ban
senior writer

In a case Commissioner Rodney Ellis called as big as *Brown v. Board of Education*, Harris County, Texas has settled a lawsuit alleging the unconstitutionality of its bail system for misdemeanor offenses and committed to changes, in place since March, that eliminate money bond for misdemeanors.

The county will increase funding for public defenders, increase court hours for administrative work to clear or prevent warrants and a notification system to communications.

See BAIL page 2

Burning Man keeps bridges intact with Nevada counties

by Charlie Ban
senior writer

For a week, Pershing County, Nev., jumps up eight spots in total population for the Silver State. Up to 70,000 people will converge on the Black Rock Desert wilderness area starting Aug. 25 for Burning Man, the 33rd year of a gathering that involves the assembly and dismantling of an ersatz city on an expansive salt flat.

Though the event has evolved and gentrified from its origins as a counterculture gathering, it still operates on a series of principles that emphasize artistic expression and inclusion and features a variety of art installations, music performances, all culminating in the burning of a four-story effigy. Participants settle into a grid layout, which provides some order to chaos (and directions to emergency personnel). The event is held on a U.S. wilderness area, under Bureau of Land Management jurisdiction, but its execution involves the three northwest Nevada counties that become hosts, service providers and transportation hubs for revelers.

Though it doesn’t play host to the event, most revelers travel north from Reno through Washoe County, which ends up realizing the most tax revenue from supply purchases along the way.

“There has been more recognition of what local governments can do to participate in events like this,” said Washoe County Assistant Manager Kate Thomas. “What our role is, not only to make sure the events are successful but taking some of the principles and the ideals from the event and incorporate it back into the work we do as community builders.”

Burning Man has been solely

See BURNING MAN page 10

NACo CEO: Strengthen government partnerships

by Rachel Looker
staff writer

Establishing a national commission on intergovernmental relations is paramount to finding solutions to the country’s problems.

That was the message delivered to Capitol Hill July 23, when National Association of Counties (NACo) CEO/Executive Director Matt Chase testified in support of a national commission to facilitate inter-
Equal protection, due process clauses used in Harris County bail lawsuit

From BAIL page 1

cate with people charged with misdemeanors, all of which could cost $97 million to implement. The pending settlement of ODonnell v. Harris County ends a three-year battle brought by a woman who spent three days in jail because she couldn’t afford the $2,500 bail for driving without a valid license.

“This is the first time the equal protection clause and the due process provisions of the constitution were used as they relate to cash bail,” Ellis said. “It’s the same theory that Thurgood Marshall used to integrate the schools, something the Constitution didn’t bring about when it was written, that legislation had brought about.”

Harris County spent almost $10 million in legal fees trying to fight the lawsuit, but it was inevitable, Ellis said, that the county was bound to lose.

It’s also one of the more substantial changes among the bail reform efforts playing out across the country, with state and local governments, judicial systems and prosecutors driving policy changes from different angles. In Harris County, more than 80 percent of misdemeanor or defendants will be released, which Ellis acknowledges is already drawing opposition from the bail bonds industry.

“This isn’t an accident, there’s a lot work over 10 years to go into something that seems like spontaneous combustion,” said Cherise Fanno Burdeen, chief executive officer of the Pretrial Justice Institute, whose organization tracks bail reform measures and lobbies others, including NACo on the issue. “What you’ve seen is a successful implementation of a set of recommendations by a coalition that included NACo and other organizations."

“What you’ve seen is a successful implementation of a set of recommendations by a coalition that included NACo and other organizations.”

“If you’re going to look at the charge, anyone charged with a misdemeanor, those are mostly probation-presumptive cases. Why are we putting anyone in jail in the first place? They take a plea deal we’ll say ‘Great, now you’re out on probation.’ If they were dangerous Tuesday and not dangerous Wednesday, what changed?”

She said the ability to pay rarely matches the risk of reoffending, and flight risk is something that should be determined subjectively by a judge.

“The vast majority of people show up for court either when they were supposed to or they show up for having missed court,” she said. “It’s really a ‘missing an appointment’ issue and not a fugitive issue. Meanwhile, when a guy offers to pay $7 million – $8 million, everybody knows that figure means nothing to him, he can just fly to a non-extradition country.”

Ellis was empathic when the Harris County Commissioner’s Court voted on the settlement on Wednesday, what are they thinking? We are looking at the Constitution and it’s a failure of the States and local governments to implement recommendations. Meanwhile, when a guy offers to pay $7 million – $8 million, everybody knows that figure means nothing to him, he can just fly to a non-extradition country.”

Ellis was sympathetic when the Harris County Commissioner’s Court voted on the settlement on Wednesday

See BAIL page 5

Harris County, Texas Commissioner Adrian Garcia (left) and Rodney Ellis at their July 30 meeting, when the Board voted 3-2 to settle its bail lawsuit. Photo courtesy of Harris County, Texas
governmental collaboration.

Chase testified before the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Reform and the Subcommittee on Government Operations about the role counties play in the nation’s federalist system.

The hearing, “Restoring the Partnership: The Future of Federalism in America,” discussed the state of federalism in the country and how Congress can improve intergovernmental processes.

Chase highlighted ideas for strengthening the intergovernmental partnership for federal, state, local and tribal officials, including the possibility of re-establishing the U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. The Commission on Intergovernmental Relations was established in 1959 to “strengthen the American federal system and improve the ability of federal, state and local governments to work together cooperatively, efficiently and effectively.” It was disbanded in 1996.

Chase discussed how national associations of state and local officials support the formation of a new, modern national commission to facilitate improved intergovernmental dialogue, engagement and problem solving.

As the country faces public policy challenges, Chase noted, the nation needs the collective efforts of governments working together to solve problems. He specifically referred to the future of work, cybersecurity, disaster mitigation, transportation, infrastructure, dealing with the nation’s aging population, the crisis with substance abuse and the challenges with uneven economic growth as public policy challenges.

“We must pursue a more modern, practical approach to forging intergovernmental partnerships with an emphasis on solutions,” Chase said. “After all, government works best when we work together and this includes with our colleagues in the private, nonprofit, academic and philanthropic sectors.”

Prior to the hearing, Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-Va.), who serves as chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Operations, and Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah) introduced the bipartisan Restore the Partnership Act, which would establish a national commission on intergovernmental relations.

Chase said the Restore the Partnership Act is an essential pillar in rebuilding and rebalancing the nation’s intergovernmental system. According to Chase, two areas of interest to national associations representing state and local governments include creating the commission on intergovernmental relations and updating the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, which would ensure that a bill does not include an unreasonable unfunded mandate on state and local governments as well as a transparent consultation process for federal rulemaking involving state and local governments.

“We are long overdue for a new infusion of thinking and commitment to improving our nation’s intergovernmental principles and practice,” he said.

Chase said for counties, a significant challenge with the federal government is dealing with rules and regulations.

“We’re not always here asking for money,” he said. “In fact, we’re asking for relief.” Counties and other local governments do not want to be treated as special interest groups and seek a continuous and transparent process when it comes to forming rules and regulations, he said.

“Right now, we don’t even have a seat at the table,” Chase said.

“Particularly in the rule-making process, we are being treated like the general public rather than intergovernmental partners.”

As an example, he explained that federal changes eliminated the advance refunding of municipal bonds, which has constrained fiscal options for county governments.

“We have many things that aren’t federal dollars,” he said. “It’s actually more federal guidelines and regulations and handcuffing our ability to be flexible at the local level.”

Forming a commission would be beneficial to having a dialogue about issues that have federal, state and local intersections such as elections, where counties pay the majority of the costs of election equipment, Chase said.

“We aren’t asking for the federal and state governments to just bail us out, but often times those mandates are imposed and we do have to carry those out often in quick time frames where you can’t adjust your tax base,” he said.

Chase testified alongside Teresa Gerton, the executive director of the National Academy of Public Administration and Carl W. Stenberg, a James E. Holshouser Jr. distinguished professor of public administration and government at the School of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. EN
Congress tackles flood insurance reform

by Lindsey Holman

Bipartisan bills in both the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate were introduced late last month to reauthorize and reform the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The bills, S. 2187, sponsored by Sen. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.) and H.R. 3872, sponsored by Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-N.J.), would reauthorize the program for five years and make key reforms to enhance and modernize NFIP.

NFIP was created under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 to provide insurance coverage to property owners for damages and losses due to catastrophic flooding. The new proposed legislation would reform the affordability and accessibility of the program for policy holders, impacting residents in counties across the country. Some specific changes in the bill include:

• Creating a five-year pilot program to provide means-tested assistance for low-income policy holders.
• Capping annual rate increases to 9 percent. Currently, premiums can increase by up to 25 percent each year for the lifecycle of the policy.
• Authorizing monthly premium payments to ensure low-income policy holders can afford flood insurance.
• Requiring the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to perform a study on its ability to offer business interruption coverage, which would cover loss of income and assets a business may experience as a result of a flood.

Mitigation

The legislation would seek to enhance the mitigation techniques made available to policy holders by reforming the NFIP to include:

• Setting aside 10 percent of disaster assistance allocated to FEMA’s Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) for buyouts, elevation and other mitigation for the highest risk properties covered under NFIP.
• Requiring FEMA to develop strategies to help urban communities mitigate flood risk in places where elevation is not feasible and offer premium credits for taking advantage of these strategies.
• Authorizing FEMA to create a low-interest mitigation loan.
• Establishing a revolving loan fund for the purpose of mitigation with a priority given to high-flood risk states as defined by FEMA. The initial funds are supplied by both FEMA and the state, and then loaned out at low interest rates to help communities, schools, families and businesses mitigate flood risk.
• Pushing FEMA to give priority to flood mitigation activities that provide benefits on a floodplain-wide or community-wide basis to have impact on a community or specific part of a community.

Mapping

This legislation would reform the NFIP by instituting proper mapping techniques to help mitigate against future disasters, including:

• Authorizing nearly $400 million per year for improvements to the National Flood Mapping Program to increase accuracy of flood mapping.
• Providing communities with the ability to appeal flood maps.

Program administration/consumer protection

The new proposals would also make changes to the administration of the NFIP, which has long served as a pain point for many policy holders. Reforms would include:

• Temporarily freezing interest payments on the NFIP debt to restore the program to solvency and reduce future borrowing. Providing forbearance on these interest payments will free up approximately $400 million per year to invest in more cost-effective mitigation efforts.
• Requiring FEMA to process all flood claims within 60 days of the policy holder filing with an extension of 30 days under extraordinary circumstances.
• Requiring the disclosure of flood risk and prior flood damage to lessors and homebuyers prior to transfer.

NACo will continue engaging with both House and Senate lawmakers to include additional reform provisions that address program improvements important to counties. Counties support a long-term reauthorization of the NFIP and encourage Congress to achieve this goal prior to the Sept. 30 expiration deadline.

Lindsey Holman is an associate legislative director in NACo’s Government Affairs Department. Brett Mattson, legislative assistant, contributed to this article.
The Harris County, Texas Criminal Justice Center may see its population drop steeply with the elimination of bail for most misdemeanor offenses.
NACo reunites military buddies

by Mary Ann Barton

Monsoons, bar fights, investigating black market deals. Those were just a few of the memories from 40 years ago, when two Army buddies — one from Colorado, the other from Indiana — worked side by side as military police investigators at Camp Casey in South Korea.

After a year or so together in the early ‘80s, the duo went their separate ways.

Fast forward to the spring of 2018, when Arapahoe County, Colo. Commissioner Jeff Baker opened his copy of County News to read a profile of a man with a familiar face: His old buddy from Camp Casey, Jim Golgart.

“I read his profile in County News. I saw the name,” said Baker. “We put two and two together. And then I called him.”

Last month, the two got together to chat at the NACo Annual Conference held in Clark County, Nev. before heading to the NACo Veterans and Military Services Committee Meeting.

Baker, a longtime county employee who was sworn into office in January 2017, and Golgart took a break between workshops at the Annual Conference to talk about catching up with each other after nearly four decades.

Golgart, the Veterans Services Office director for Le Sueur County, Minn., served for four decades.

The two recalled breaking fights, working with their fellow colleagues — Nancy Sharpe and Bill Holen, who is also a veteran, Golgart said.

“Forty years ago, June 20, I got on a train from Chicago and went to Anniston, Ala. and started basic training at Fort McClellan,” he said. “I just turned 18.”

Baker, a Denver native, joined the Army when he was 19 and did his basic training at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri. “I wanted to be a cop, but you couldn’t be one until you turned 21,” he said. “The Army let me carry a gun and a badge.”

The two worked together in 1981 at Camp Casey, in Dongducheon, South Korea, about a 20-minute drive from the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

“We were both assigned to 2nd MP Company, and worked as military police investigators,” Golgart said.

“There was no average day, it would depend on what was going on.”

They investigated fights, shoplifting by soldiers and civilians using the PX base store, black market selling of cigarettes and liquor, theft of government property, fights in the village, assaults, domestic calls and more.

“There were a lot of clubs and bars outside the gates,” Baker said.

“We had a lot of young soldiers away from home for the first time, they would get into fights, sometimes with Koreans.”

A military exercise called Team Spirit saw the area population increase with an influx of Marines.

“They have some money in their pocket,” Golgart said. “At the time, a beer would cost a quarter.”

Beer wasn’t the only bargain.

“The other thing you’ll notice in our photos, we appear to be really, really well dressed;” Baker said. They often wore suits that were custom-made for $15 to $25 in town. “We wore three-piece suits. We were soldiers, but we were investigators, so we wore civilian clothes.”

“We were very well dressed,” said Golgart, whose pencil-thin mustache at the time earned him the moniker “Inspector Clouseau” from the popular Pink Panther films.

“They often traveled to Seoul or the DMZ. “I was an M-16 gunner,” Baker said. “I had to carry this huge machine gun and the ammunition up to the DMZ and march back.”

The two recalled breaking up fights, working with their desks up on cement blocks in a Quonset hut when their office flooded during monsoons and pulling tipsy “turtles” (their nickname for newcomers to the base) out of concrete ditches during the rainy season.

“We had to put our desk up on concrete blocks and pallets because of the water,” Golgart said.

“That’s where I learned to type…on a manual typewriter. We didn’t have computers, Internet or cell phones.”

After working together for a year, they went their separate ways when Golgart left in the summer of 1982.

Baker, whose wife Yangson hails from Korea, also continued his career in the military, serving 17 years as a military police officer, including a tour in Desert Storm.

He retired as a chief warrant officer from the U.S. Army in 1993 and went to work as a crime scene investigator for the Aurora Police Department. He then worked for Arapahoe County, including as the manager of Facility and Property Operations for the county before winning his commissioner’s election in 2016.

Golgart said he’s gotten involved with various committees including those at NACo that look out for veterans’ health and behavioral health.

“I come and I learn,” he said.

“It’s not just veterans. You look at mental health, health care, suicide, health care in county jails.”

The two plan more get-togethers in Colorado, where Golgart’s son is based at Fort Carson, Colo.

“It’s funny because I’ve worked with my fellow commissioners — Nancy Sharpe and Bill Holen, who is also a veteran,” Golgart said.

It was Holen who suggested to Baker that he ought to come to Washington, D.C. to a NACo legislative conference where he saw Golgart at a Military and Veterans Affairs Committee but didn’t recognize him because of his beard.

“Then he saw him in County News, and the rest is history. “It’s a very small world,” Golgart said, “when you’re dealing with veterans.”
Child advocacy center gets its wheels

A new child advocacy center in Delaware County, N.Y. is on the move.

The county is the first in the state to receive a mobile child advocacy center to enhance services for children who have been abused.

The mobile unit is funded through a partnership between the New York state Office of Victim Services and the state Office of Children and Family Services as part of a $4.45 million investment by the state. Delaware County’s unit is one of seven being funded through the partnership.

The Delaware County Department of Social Services received $250,000 to purchase the mobile unit and will receive $50,000 annually for three years to cover maintenance costs.

The mobile center is operated by Delaware Opportunities, a community action agency that receives funds and works closely with the county’s Department of Social Services.

Since its opening on June 1, the mobile unit has worked with 16 cases, helping 26 children as of early August.

“It’s truly a ‘if you build it, they will come’ situation,” said Stacy Osborn, director of Safe Against Violence, one of Delaware Opportunities’ programs that provides services for victims of abuse. The new mobile center is part of the program.

The unit is a renovated 28-foot Winnebago that is designed specifically for child advocacy purposes. The RV is set up with an interview and observation room that includes video equipment to record interviews, a waiting area, bathroom and kitchenette.

New York is the first state where Winnebago custom-built an RV to be used as a child advocacy center.

Winnebago custom-built Delaware County’s mobile child advocacy center which includes an observation and interview room, a waiting area, bathroom and a kitchenette.

The mobile unit is funded by Delaware Opportunities’ programs, including its Safe Against Violence initiative, which works to provide services to children and families.

Delaware County does not have a fixed child advocacy center location. Osborn explained that the county is very rural and does not have public transportation; the mobile center provides services to families who would be unable to get to a physical location.

“Before the mobile unit, if a child was a victim of abuse, they would be referred to a child advocacy center outside the county,” said Stacy Osborn, director of Safe Against Violence.

Osborn added that the mobile unit can travel to private, child-friendly locations where not everyone will be able to see where it’s parked.

“We’re not an obvious building with a sign out front where people are like, ‘Oh, I just saw that kid go in there,’” she said.

Osborn said the main purpose for the mobile unit is to reduce the number of times a child has to repeat their story to different service providers.

“All the parties that offices to provide accessibility for families who live close by, has the ability to travel to other communities to reach clients.

“When time is of the essence, we don’t have to transport them 45 minutes to our office or to a freestanding facility,” Osborn said. “We can bring it to them and we’re there and able to interview them within 10 minutes of them knowing that we need to talk to them.”

When the RV travels to a community, Bartow said it stays in publicly discreet areas.

Before the mobile unit, if a child was a victim of abuse, they would be referred to a child advocacy center outside the county, explained Shelly Bartow, executive director of Delaware Opportunities. In this situation, a family may have to drive several hours to get to the center and then go through the interview process after making the trek. Additionally, local cases would get top priority, meaning others from outside the county would get bumped.

“Rather than taking a long time or not at all, now families can get in within 24 hours for these services,” Bartow said.

“The RV, which may be parked at the Delaware Opportunities

see CHILDREN page 15

MARVIN MYERS
Board Member
County Surveyor
Roscommon County, Mich.

Number of years involved in NACo: 10
Years in public service: 29
Occupation: Professional surveyor
Education: B.S. in Surveying Engineering from Ferris State University; B.S. in Land Surveying from Ferris State College; A.S. in Civil Engineering Technology from Ferris State College; 64 credit hours with the Natural Resources Technology at Kirtland Community College
The hardest thing I’ve ever done: Marriage
Three people (living or dead) I’d invite to dinner: Thomas Jefferson, my grandfather and my wife.
A dream I have is to: Have more grandchildren. They are the best.
You’d be surprised to learn: I have been married to my beautiful bride for 44 years!
The most adventurous thing I’ve ever done: Surveying, every day is a new adventure.
My favorite way to relax is to: Attend a late model car racing event.
I’m most proud of: My wife, Rosalie, my children and grandson.
Every morning I read: Emails.

My favorite meal is: Hot dogs and baked beans.
My pet peeve is: Drivers that don’t use turn signals.
My motto is: Learn how to learn, it is the beginning of lifelong learning.
The last book I read was: Epic Wanderer: David Thompson and the Mapping of the Canadian West by D’Arcy Jenish.
My favorite music is: Anything new and different. My collection is extremely diverse.
My favorite U.S. president is: Thomas Jefferson
My county is a NACo member because: NACo is our county’s lobbyist.

My favorite movie is: Star Wars
My NOBCO internship experience at NACo: ‘One I will never forget’

by Brianna Jenkins

I began my internship with the National Organization of Black County Officials (NOBCO) Jan. 29, 2018. I obtained this internship through a school program that provided housing for a semester in Washington D.C., a class once a week and a full semester of credits. My time with NOBCO was transformative.

I met so many amazing people, such as Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children’s Defense Fund, who spoke at NACo’s Legislative Conference in 2018. I have now attended two National Organization of Black County Officials Economic Development Conferences (NOBCO EDC) and two NACo Annual Conferences, one where I addressed members at a workshop.

The first NACo Annual Conference I attended was in Davidson County (Nashville), Tenn. The hustle and bustle of this conference was overwhelming at first, but I quickly became comfortable. I served as NOBCO’s representative at our table, meeting and greeting anyone who stopped by to share what NOBCO is all about. We mixed condoms in with our candy dish to bring attention to the intersections of health, HIV and prevention. HIV is something people don’t typically enjoy talking about because of the stigma that surrounds it, but we do our best to keep everyone educated because HIV does not discriminate or wait for someone to bring it up.

My favorite part about NACo conferences is that even after the meetings are over, there are plenty of events. Our visit to Woolworth on 5th in Nashville taught me the history, up close, of the movement led by students, who began the process of lunch counter desegregation.

The last day of the conference showed NACo at its most exciting — Election Day for 2nd vice president. I have never experienced something so intense and informative. Many county officials that step up to the microphone to announce their county’s vote begin with a couple of facts about their county, and the energy in the room is a roller coaster of different emotions. The second NOBCO EDC I attended was in Wayne County (Detroit), Mich. At this conference, I heard from four presidential candidates; Sen. Cory Booker (N.J.), Sen. Amy Klobuchar (Minn.), Miramar, Fla. Mayor Wayne Messam and entrepreneur Andrew Yang of New York. I learned a lot about each candidate during their address to conference members, and had the opportunity to meet and speak with Yang. I thoroughly enjoyed the opening reception, which took place at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History where I was able to walk through the museum, at my own pace, giving me the chance to really absorb all the history that surrounded me.

One of the bonuses of working at NOBCO: Living in Washington, D.C. It allowed me to walk through the museum, at my own pace, giving me the chance to really absorb all the history that surrounded me.

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NACo releases Connected and Automated Vehicles Toolkit

by Jenna Moran

The National Association of Counties (NACo), in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration, has created the Connected and Automated Vehicles Toolkit: A Primer for Counties to provide county leaders with an opening framework to the connected and automated vehicles conversation and starting ideas for how counties may enter the field.

Technology manufacturers, software developers, auto companies, universities and many other professionals have long been imagining and testing a variety of techniques to optimize the nation’s transportation system through the use of integrated technology, communications, vehicles and infrastructure. These breakthroughs are poised to revolutionize local and national transportation systems and could bring significant changes to the built environment and how residents live, work and move around the community.

As significant advances in transportation technologies continue to be made, it is imperative that county officials, county engineers and transportation planners understand these advancements when making decisions about future needs.

The primer has four main sections: Technology, policy, deployment and next steps. With the fast pace of technological advancements in the connected and automated vehicle industry, it can be hard for government policy and procurement systems to keep pace. The technology section provides an introduction to connected and automated vehicles (CAVs) and the technologies developed to support them, while the policy section provides an overview of current CAV-related policy at the federal, state and local levels. With a basic understanding of current technology and policy in place, the toolkit then sets the stage for the current state of CAV deployment at the federal, state and local government levels — as well as within the automotive industry.

Each of these sections highlights useful existing resources.

N.J. bail reform: right thing philosophically, operationally complex

From BAIL page 5

duced, New Jersey Association of Counties Executive Director John Donnadio said it hasn’t added up to cost savings for his members yet.

“We’ve certainly seen a reduction in the county jail population, so from that point, it’s reached its intended purpose,” he said. “The counties are still processing the same number of prisoners. The majority of the cost-drivers at the county level were increasing county prosecutor office staffing, investing $50 million in hiring prosecutors, investigators; there was very little investment going into the county jails. We haven’t seen any jail layoffs, we may see some attrition in a few years, but … we’re still processing the same number of prisoners.

“We thought we might see some nominal cost-savings five years down the road, but we haven’t yet.”

Even though the measures haven’t produced savings yet, Donnadio said they were successful.

“It was, philosophically, the right thing to do. Operationally, there are other issues.”

For all the merits of community-based human service delivery, Donnadio said county jails were still helping get help for inmates on a regular basis.

“These same prisoners who couldn’t make bail were reviving mental health services in the jail and now they’re back in the community.”

“The same prisoners who couldn’t make bail were receiving mental health services in the jail and now they’re back in the community,” he said. “It’s something our jail wardens, our welfare folks, our human services folks are talking about. We’re struggling with what to do with the folks who were receiving mental health services in jail and now they’re not. We’re processing more prisoners than in the past but turning them around.”

Donnadio also said the technology upgrade costs might force an increase in court filing fees.

“If any states are looking at bail reform, I can tell you it’s going to cost a lot more money than they think it will.”

FINES, FEES ALSO CAUSE PROBLEMS

Bail isn’t the only financial consideration facing people in the justice system. Fines and fees can include traffic citations, penalties for conviction and court costs.

These fines are intended as a revenue source, in addition to a penalty, but low collection rates stymie that effort. Partially, it’s a matter of a disproportionate number of low-income people being affected. The Prison Policy Initiative found that the median monthly income for incarcerated people is less than $2,000. Texas Appleseed found that between 20-50 percent of people are in jail because of failure to pay fines.

If any states are looking at bail reform, I can tell you it’s going to cost a lot more money than they think it will.”

$3.9 million to collect $3.4 million in probation fees.

NACo’s publication Reducing Fines and Fees in County Justice Systems offers a variety of approaches for holding people accountable for minor infractions while improving outcomes:

- Inquiring about a person’s ability to pay financial obligations
- Reducing penalties by a flat amount or by using a graduated scale
- Creating flexible payment plans
- Eliminating fees
- Prohibiting warrants and jail time for unpaid fees
- Adopting practices that can help minimize failures to pay or appear in court
Burning Man gathering in Nevada desert poses challenges, opportunities for surrounding counties

From BURNING MAN page 1

in Black Rock Desert since 1991 and has grown steadily from 250 attendees that year to more than 51,000 in 2010, up from 43,000 a year before. That co-incided with a turning point in local attitudes toward the event.

"Not that long ago, it was a giant pain for folks, and there was a lot of grumbling about the traffic and the commotion," Thomas said. "Now there's a turnaround, we have the art in the community from the event and locals have realized there's a lot more to gain from the folks who come through town in offering car washes and spa days rather than fighting it."

In Gerlach, the last permanent town before the desert, the stores fly banners "we're your playa supplaya," and the event has a Black Friday-scope effect on local merchants' revenues.

"Folks are able to make their living outfitting people who come from all over the world to participate in Burning Man," Thomas said. "Some people are buying RVs, others are buying food and supplies for a week and a lot of them have flown right into Reno, so they're getting everything here." After some rocky years and minor legal actions between organizer Black Rock City LLC and different surrounding counties, the event is coexisting and collaborating with local governments.

"Once a year we bring all co-operating agencies, including Washoe and Pershing counties, to meet at the Emergency Operations Center in Reno to review past operations and look ahead to the coming year, oftentimes practicing emergency response scenarios," Burning Man spokeswoman Megan Miller wrote in an email. "Counties were deeply involved in our 10-year permitting process that recently concluded with an Environmental Impact Statement."

Outside of the direct economic benefits, Washoe County

"Event planning experts told us to expect a minimum of 10 percent of the people who RSVP for an online
Burning Man gathering in Nevada desert poses challenges, opportunities for surrounding counties

received a $75,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to create a series of art installations along the road to Black Rock Desert.

Other counties in the northwest part of the state are also participants in the Burning Man cycle, but don’t see the same payoff. Once split among Pershing, Humboldt and Washoe counties, the event now takes place entirely within the former’s boundaries, though Washoe briefly broached the topic of shifting county lines in 2018.

"The city of Lovelock (the county seat) doesn’t derive much tax revenue from the participants at Burning Man," said Pershing County Commission Chairman Larry Rackley. "They don’t really stop here; If they’re coming from the east, they’ll stop in Fernley (in Lyon County) for groceries."

Pershing County makes roughly $300,000 by providing 45 sheriff’s deputies for the week. Though Black Rock City has a temporary jail, offenders are eventually brought to the county jail in Lovelock for their hearings, which typically brings the jail to capacity.

"Where we get behind and where we lose money is when sheriff’s personnel have to be there before and after the event," Rackley said. "That’s about $30,000 that the county eats every year."

Rackley said the event organizers often have a representative at County Commission meetings, and the organizers have been active partners in the planning process.

"Our staff meet regularly with district attorneys to consult on legislation and law enforcement matters," Burning Man spokeswoman Megan Miller wrote in an email. "Depending on the issue, Burning Man meets with county departments such as roads and health. Burning Man representatives meet year-round with sheriffs to discuss matters of concern with respect to public health and safety, from traffic management and vending operations along the highways to on-site emergency response coordination."

Most eventgoers travel to the desert from Reno through Washoe County, but a few travel west through Humboldt County’s dirt roads.

"The heavy truckloads will turn the roads into talcun powder," said Humboldt County Commissioner Jim French. "If we get some rain, the roads end up like gumbo. We’re usually still catching up with repairs the next year."

Humboldt General Hospital is back on as the medical care provider for Burning Man after a few years off, and the hospital brings its $100,000 field hospital structure, along with eight extra ambulances that French said sit idle for the rest of the year.

Far removed from the commerce that Washoe County enjoys, some Pershing County residents take exception to the bohemian atmosphere at Burning Man, but Rackley said others take advantage of the county’s senior center’s day and night trips to the event. He’s gone a few times and was impressed.

"The lights are incredible, they’re really breathtaking," he said. "I don’t go every year, but it’s always a good trip."

Traffic begins to pick up in the Nevada desert heading to Burning Man in 2018. Photo by Duncan Rawlinson
Counts help employees prepare for retirement

Nationwide recently announced that Eric Stevenson will be the next leader of Nationwide’s retirement plan business. Stevenson steps into the role succeeding John Carter, who was recently named president and chief operating officer-elect over all of Nationwide’s financial services business lines.

Stevenson most recently served as senior vice president of distribution for Nationwide’s retirement plan business, which is responsible for nearly $145 billion in assets under management for more than 2.5 million participants.

The National Association of Counties (NACo), in partnership with Nationwide Retirement Solutions (NRS), and state associations of counties, provides county employees with a Section 457 Deferred Compensation Program. Since its inception in 1980, NACo’s Deferred Compensation Program has grown to become the largest supplemental retirement income program available to county employees. More than 380,000 county employees from more than 3,100 county agencies currently participate in the Program, with accumulated assets of more than $19.2 billion.

“Our experience serving small and medium-sized businesses and public sector plans for state, city and county employees, as well as first responders, puts Nationwide at an advantage to best understand the unique needs of plan sponsors and their participants,” Stevenson said.

County News asked about Nationwide’s vision for county employees’ retirement readiness and how counties can attract and retain talent through robust benefits packages.

Q: What is the best way for a county employee to assess whether they are on track for retirement savings?

A: Take advantage of the tools your retirement plan provider offers to ensure you’re tracking against your goals. For example, Nationwide’s My Interactive Retirement Planner calculates how much participants may need and allows them to model different retirement scenarios. Additionally, they can generate a Retirement Readiness Report to have a conversation with their Retirement Specialist or advisor to explore other savings solutions to help them meet their goals.

Q: How can counties help prepare their employees for retirement?

A: Identifying a trusted retirement plans provider, and one whose values align with yours, is the first step. Nationwide is committed to helping drive retirement readiness by engaging with our county partners and their employees on an ongoing basis. From attending new employee orientations to coordinating workshops and being available for personal consultations on-site, we partner to help educate employees on the benefits and make it easier for them to start saving.

Q: What should employees do to maximize their savings?

A: Employees should contribute what they feel comfortable to their 457 plan and then meet with their Retirement Specialist or advisor on an annual basis to review their account and discuss options to help maximize their retirement readiness. They can also take action through a Participant Engagement Program if one is offered. Nationwide has found that employees who engage in our program increase contributions by approximately 22 percent. (Participant Engagement Program results from April 2017 to October 2018)

Q: What is the biggest mistake people make with their retirement accounts?

A: Waiting. According to a Nationwide study, we found that on average, employees start saving for retirement at age 31.
Prepare for self-driving cars

From DRIVE page 9

that have been created to track and showcase these advancements, from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s Automated Vehicles for Safety webpage to the National Conference of State Legislatures’ Autonomous Vehicles State Bill Tracking Database, as well as NACo’s Connected Counties: Tech Innovations in Transportation publication and the National League of Cities’ Autonomous Vehicle Pilots Across America report.

There are a number of ways that county leaders can leverage new technology innovations to facilitate transportation services’ design and delivery, improve public safety and promote local and regional economic development. By making minute changes to infrastructure and policies today, counties can prepare themselves to be at the forefront of the mainstream application of connected and autonomous vehicle technology in the future.

This toolkit primes county officials to determine if their counties have potential to be leaders in the continued development of the connected and automated vehicles field whether via the adoption of local policies or the deployment of CAVs on local roads.

‘My time was transformative’

From NOBCO page 8

attend events I would otherwise not have the opportunity to, such as the screening of True Justice: Bryan Stevenson’s Fight for Equality at the National Archives Museum. At this event, I learned about Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Ala., and the work he does to find justice for those accused.

I heard him speak about his work and what it means to him and was even able to meet him and have him sign my copy of Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption. I was also introduced to his Community Remembrance initiatives.

I was able to speak to members about the initiative in July at the joint National Association of Black County Officials (NABCO)/NOBCO meeting during NACo’s 84th Annual Conference in Clark County, Nev. It was a great experience to speak to county officials about a way in which they could help preserve history. I was met with a lot of questions, congratulations and constructive feedback.

Working with NOBCO has been an eye-opening experience. Before starting this internship, I didn’t know anything about county government and how important it is. NOBCO focuses on many issues, and I spent the most time working on healthcare, technology, criminal justice and the 2020 Census. I’ve also learned a lot about things such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Smoke-Free Policy, the 3DaysCount bail reform campaign, 5G deployment, Smart Counties and the Census.

My assignments allowed me to learn new things, such as the social media project I did in February 2018 when I posted African American “Sheros” for black history month, and this year when I posted black history facts. My experience at NOBCO will be one I will never forget, and one that has taught me skills, and provided me with opportunities that will benefit me in the future.

Jenna Moran is associate program director, Resiliency, Transportation and Infrastructure at NACo.

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Randolph County, Ill.

Welcome, Randolph County, Ill.

Randolph County is located in southwest Illinois along the Mississippi River. The county was organized in 1795 as part of St. Clair County and named in honor of Edmund Randolph, who served as an attorney general and Virginia governor. The county seat is Chester.

The first European settlement in what is now Randolph County was called Kaskaskia, which was originally settled by the French and Native Americans. The county was part of Quebec until it was officially annexed into Louisiana. For a period of time, the British ruled the area until it was conquered by the American colonies during the revolution. Between 1801 and 1812, Randolph County covered most of southern Illinois.

The county relies on the agribusiness, mining, manufacturing and transportation industries as well as tourism with activities such as fishing, camping, hunting, kayaking and hiking. The Church of the Immaculate Conception on Kaskaskia Island, one of the oldest churches in Illinois, can be found in Randolph County.

The county was home to Elzie Crisler Segar, the late cartoonist who created Popeye the Sailor Man in 1929. Segar grew up in the county seat of Chester.

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We’ve all seen those too-good-to-be-true emails offering riches if we just send over some personal details, like banking information or our social security number. But phishing — defined by the Federal Trade Commission as “when a scammer uses fraudulent emails or texts, or copycat websites, to get you to share valuable personal information” can be a serious and sophisticated threat. Successful phishing attempts can lead to data exfiltration, malware infections and more. These are major risks for organizations responsible for public data such as State and Local Government and Education (SLED) or State, Local, Tribal and Territorial (SLTT) entities. Keep reading to learn how you can defend your organization from phishing attacks.

Demystifying the threat

A typical phishing attack begins when an employee receives an email that appears to be legitimate which urges them to click on a link or download a file. The user is unaware that this link or file is malicious — compromising not only the user’s computer, but sometimes the entire network. There are additional sub-categories of phishing which are more targeted, such as:
- Spear Phishing: Focused attempt at phishing an individual or small group of users
- Smishing (SMS Phishing): Leverages malicious SMS/text messages on mobile devices
- Vishing: Cybercriminal uses Voice over IP (VoIP) to gather information

Organizations should focus their defense resources on email, since it is the most popular form of phishing. Since early 2017, email has ranked as the most common initial infection vector among the Top 10 Malware measured by the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC).

Spotting the phish

Employees are often the first line of defense against a phishing attack. Therefore, it’s essential to train them on what to do if they receive a suspicious email. Implement a security protocol: Work with the IT department to determine a procedure for managing potentially-malicious email deliveries. Make sure this security protocol is part of regular employee training and communications, so everyone knows what to do if they suspect a phishing attempt.

When it comes to training, there are some basic security recommendations employees should follow whenever handling email:
- Do not click on unknown links or open suspicious emails. Hover over all links and “from” addresses to reveal their true destination.
- Never reveal personal, private organizational or financial data in response to an email. Legitimate organizations would never ask for this information via unsolicited emails.
- If you believe you have received a phishing email, do not respond. Follow organizational security procedure, or report it to the IT department immediately.

Train, then test

Similar to the old security adage “trust, but verify,” it’s essential to educate employees about phishing and then validate the training. Conduct regular phishing assessments to get a sense for your organization’s defenses against an attack. You can organize these internally or work with a professional security team to conduct phishing exercises. An outside cybersecurity phishing team comprised of experts, such as those at CIS, can demonstrate two areas of vulnerability in your organization:

1. The ability of a cybercriminal to lure a target to a particular website which may host malware used to compromise employee workstations.
2. The ability for an attacker to quickly collect sensitive user credentials which could be leveraged for access to the organization’s network.

Professional cybersecurity organizations providing phishing engagements should also be able to provide detailed reports of the assessment objectives, methodology and campaign results.

Stay on guard

While phishing attacks are a major infection vector, there are other threats your organization should consider. Download the Public Sector Cyber Defense Guide from CIS to learn other ways to keep your network secure, from implementing an Intrusion Detection System (IDS) to conducting regular vulnerability assessments.

Download the guide here: https://bit.ly/2TuXj0Z
LEADERSHIP EDGE

You Bring Your Weather

by Tim Rahschulte

Recently, a few friends of mine had an opportunity to take a vacation. The destinations of choice were Arizona, Florida and Hawaii. You can immediately recognize these as desired destinations for many people looking to escape the coldness and cloudiness of other places in the world. Certainly, there are many other places in the world people escape to when looking to get away.

These locations normally share one common element: Weather. Simply put, weather affects comfort. Weather influences moods and the way people feel.

The word “climate” is often used to classify different weather conditions. That same word, climate, is also used to describe workplace conditions. In other words, how does the office feel? Is there a positive climate or a negative climate?

Just like weather systems and geographical locations, you, too, bring weather with you when and where you show up in the world. That positive or negative climate in the workplace isn’t just happenstance. It exists because people make it happen.

It’s a byproduct of the people who are part of that system. Leaders bring the weather. Everyone brings weather. What kind of weather do you bring? Said another way, what shows up when you do?

This is a self-check question — and an important one. Think about your day, the meetings you attend, the people you meet and the work you do. Think about how you show up. Do you have a smile on your face or a frown? Are you a solutions collaborator or the person who always raises issues? Are you a problem solver or passive-aggressive? Are you “we” focused or “me” focused? Do you share and facilitate collaboration or roll your eyes in disgust?

How you show up matters because it’s a representation of your attitude. More importantly, when you’re a leader, people are always watching you. You’re always influencing, while others are always judging. Whether you want to or not, you’re affecting those around you.

We’ve all likely heard the sentiment that we can’t create every situation, but we can choose how to act in every situation. Tracey Arnish, the chief talent officer at SAP, has said, “Life is about perspective. The only thing you can control is how you choose to show up.” Indeed, and how you do that affects everyone in your path.

Next time you walk through the doors of your company or into a meeting room, ask yourself what’s showing up. Ask, “What kind of weather am I bringing?” Your attitude, conviction, and demeanor can be the difference between success or failure. And it will influence everyone around you. So always consider the impact of your weather and the climate you create.

Tim Rahschulte is the CEO of the Professional Development Academy and chief architect of the NACo High Performance Leadership Program (naco.org/skills).

Mobile advocacy center: ‘It’s truly an if you build it, they will come situation’

From CHILDREN page 7

would need the information can get it either by observing the interview or by reviewing the recording and this traumatized child doesn’t have to repeat this story five, six, seven times,” Bartow said.

In addition to making a situation more traumatizing to a child by having them repeat a story, Osborn said children often leave out details of their stories when they are repeating them multiple times to multiple people.

“By doing the interviews as a team, we have one person doing the interview and then other team members can observe the interview via closed circuit recording systems,” she said. “It just makes the whole system much more seamless.”

The mobile unit has been helpful to service providers who are now able to collaborate and be on the same page when it comes to different cases, Osborn said.

Bartow said she sees more agencies across the country providing mobile services when it comes to child advocacy programs.

“For a county like Delaware County, we can’t wait for people to come to us for services. They can’t get here. There are just too many barriers,” Bartow said. “The ability to be able to provide a mobile service to people and take the services to them is really huge.”
Online Game Engages Public in Water Conservation

**PROBLEM:** Communities face challenges finding new, innovative ways to engage the public and bring awareness to issues involving environmental sustainability.

**SOLUTION:** Use an online game to educate residents about water conservation, sustainability and climate change.

by Rachel Looker

Friendly competition is bringing awareness to the importance of environmental sustainability in Broward County, Fla.

The southern Florida county created the Play Conservation Pays and Win! online game as part of a campaign to promote water conservation and teach residents about climate change and sustainability.

The game was developed as a way to promote the Broward Water Partnership, which brings together the county and 17 municipalities. The partnership focuses on water conservation through education, the distribution of free water-saving devices and rebates for high efficiency toilets.

Previous campaigns to promote water conservation and environmental sustainability involved contests or challenges, but kept reaching the same group of individuals who were passionate about the environment and water conservation, said Sam Baker, program/project coordinator for Broward County.

“We've always been trying to come up with new ideas, new ways to reach people to get a different audience,” Baker said.

The county is central to the water partnership and implements outreach efforts that typically involve media messaging and education, said Carolina Maran, Broward County Water Resource manager.

“We don’t want to have the same repetitive messages because it’s hard to achieve new audiences when we are delivering the same type of message,” Maran said. “We understand that promoting messages about conservation can be challenging.”

The county worked with an outreach consultant to create the Play Conservation Pays and Win! online game, which launched in 2019. The game lasted three months and attracted more than 1,900 active players.

When users log into the game with a username and password, a depiction of the water cycle of southern Florida shows users where water comes from and how it reaches the county. Those playing the game can answer questions in the sustainability, climate change and conservation categories.

The questions asked users about rebate programs, water conservation, water reuse, plants, ways to reduce greenhouse emissions and the ties between water conservation and climate change. Maran said her team developed the series of questions, tasks and activities for the game.

Once a user answers two to four questions in each category, he or she receives water “drops” as points. Players can then use the “drops” to flip cards that reveal instant-win prizes or watch one of 18 videos the county produced. The instant-win prizes included gym memberships, pool passes and even pavilion rentals, Baker said.

By watching videos, users received points, increasing their likelihood of winning cash prizes. One user received the grand cash prize of $5,000, two users received second place prizes of $1,000 and three users received third place prizes of $500.

The game was an effective way to educate the public about water conservation, Maran said, adding that she saw competition between users, even internally at the county.

Baker emphasized how the graphics in the game provided visuals to inform users about how water is obtained, how sea level rise is contributing to water issues and how climate change and water conservation are connected.

“We took a local lens on these issues,” she said.

The platform for the game is available at a discounted rate if the county wants to create a similar campaign in the future, Baker said. The county has the option to create new questions or new graphics to promote different topics.

“We have a lot of different programs within our divisions so it’s available for you in the future for other campaigns or other types of promotions,” she said.

The game was promoted on social media through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, email blasts and the Conservation Pays webpage. Maran said the county saw an increase in social media activity whenever they posted about the game.

“We thought this was a unique way and a positive approach,” she said. “We were truly investigating all different resources and all different avenues where we can talk with people about the challenges that we see here on our daily basis.”

Baker added that the online game is a new way for local government to use innovation to be on par with the private sector.

“This right here is a completely new way for the public to get involved and not feel like they’re being bombarded with information; rather, they’re being rewarded for getting this information,” she said.

Maran said she feels people are interested in learning about these issues through different ways, such as playing a game on the Internet.

“I think the message is truly being innovative every year and finding different fun ways to share your message and get the attention from your community,” Maran said.

Play Conservation Pays and Win! is the recipient of a 2019 NACo Achievement Award in the County Resiliency: Infrastructure, Energy and Sustainability category.
Educate county employees on retirement plans

From SAVE page 12

Time is your biggest ally when it comes to saving for retirement, but many workers put off contributing to their retirement savings because they feel obligated to commit their income toward more immediate needs like paying off student loan debt or saving up for a down payment on a house. But the truth is, retirement savings doesn’t have to be all or nothing. Even a little can go a long way down the road. (Nationwide Participant Solutions Research Study, 2017)

Q: What should counties do to ensure employees are taking full advantage of their retirement accounts?
A: There are a couple things we recommend to Nationwide’s plan sponsor partners in the public sector. First, we encourage them to meet with their local Program Director to establish an annual education and marketing plan that’s designed to reach employees and drive up participation and savings. The second recommendation we give is to use our online Plan Health Dashboard, which provides a comprehensive view of the retirement readiness of all their plan participants.

Q: When recruiting new employees, what should counties highlight about their pension plan/457 to attract good candidates?
A: A 457 plan is a great way for new employees, particularly tax-advantaged tool employees can leverage to save for healthcare costs in retirement that would free up their 457 funds for other living expenses.

Q: Are all retirement plans the same?
A: 457 plans may look similar, but the level of engagement a county has with the plan provider is what sets things apart. We find the more a county collaborates with us and enables us to come in and support educational and marketing efforts, the better results we see from a participation and savings standpoint.

Hire Quality Staff @ Jobs Online
www.naco.org/jobsonline

BARBECUE: Readers of NKY Maga-zine have voted Smokin ‘n That BBQ in the county as their favorite barbecue in the region.

BASEBALL: The Florence Freedom Minor League Baseball team is based in the city of Florence, located in the county.

BURLINGTON: The county seat of Boone County has a population of about 16,000.

COURTHOUSE: The county’s first courthouse was made of logs and built in 1801.

DANIEL: The county is named for folk hero and pioneer explorer Daniel Boone.

DISTILLERY: The Boone County Distilling Company was originally created in Petersburg, Ky., in 1833.

GAINES: The Abner Gaines House in the county was an inn and stagecoach stop.

HISTORY: Boone County was founded in 1798 from Campbell County.

KENTUCKY: Boone County is located in the northeastern tip of the state.

MAMMOTH: These creatures, which went extinct 10,000 years ago, were attracted to an area of the county now known as Big Bone Lick State Park.

MORRISON: Nobel prize winner Toni Morrison told the story of a slave born in the county.

RABBIT: The Rabbit Hash General Store has been a fixture around town since 1831.

RIVER: The county is bordered on the north by the Ohio River and located in the largest bend of the river.

SPERTI: The late Dr. George Sperti, a native of the county, invented a wide range of medical products including Preparation H and Aspercreme.

TOWER: A large water tower in the city of Florence reads “Florence Ya’l.” It originally read “Florence Mail” but was repainted because the mail wasn’t built yet. Locals liked the “ya’ll” so much they decided to keep it.

NACo OFFICERS
- NACo First Vice President Gary Moore, judge/executive, Boone County, Ky. is planning to attend the Association of Arkansas Counties (AAC) conference being held Aug. 21-24 in Garland County.

NACo STAFF
- Blaire Bryant presented NACo’s work on opioid addiction with the Appalachian Regional Commission at the Maryland Association of Counties Summer Conference Aug. 14-17 in Worcester County.
- Lindsey Holman, associate legislative director, is planning to attend the Association of Arkansas Counties (AAC) conference being held Aug. 21-24.
- NACo awarded several accolades to staff members for their work during the Annual Conference in Clark County, Nev. Staff voted Erin Knight, manager of conferences and affiliate services as MVP, Frank Cadle, junior graphic designer for providing the best customer service and Health Associate Josef Burkart for best reflexes in responding to requests for assistance.

Legislative Assistant Zach George and Justice Associate Jessica Perez were voted best dressed. George recorded the most steps on Friday — 30,081. General Services Manager Kevin Carr recorded 27,000 steps on Saturday, Legislative Intern Jack-lie Wheeler recorded 27,000 steps on Sunday, Chief Technolo-gy Officer Rita Reynolds recorded 29,191 steps on Monday and Carr was the overall leader for the conference with 97,500 steps.
CALIFORNIA

The Board of Supervisors in ALAMEDA COUNTY agreed to lease a former jail to be used as a homeless shelter to the city of Oakland, according to the San Francisco Chronicle. The county will lease the jail to Oakland for $1 per year to convert the facility into housing for the homeless population. In the last two years, Alameda County’s homeless population has increased by 43 percent. The first jail facility that would be converted into a homeless shelter has plumbing, toilets and facilities to accommodate more than 800 people.

GEORGIA

An initiative by health leaders in DOUGHERTY COUNTY is expanding a gardening program to promote healthy eating. The “Pick it! Try it! Like it!” program involves four gardens throughout the county, WALB reported. This year, two additional gardens have been added with one located at the county’s health department. Through the initiative, county residents can harvest their own produce and learn how to prepare foods in healthy ways from an instructor.

HAWAII

MAUI COUNTY has established a program to assist first-time homebuyers, The Maui News reported. The First-Time Home Buyers Down Payment Assistance Program will select applicants through a lottery drawing process. Applicants must submit a credit pre-approval letter from a mortgage lender with their application. The program assistance will be made available in the form of a grant for eligible properties in the county.

KENTUCKY

MARSHALL COUNTY launched a text to 911 service where 911 dispatchers can send and receive text messages through a program called Texty, WPSD Local 6 reported. The service is helpful in situations where there is no cellular reception to make a phone call, but texts can be sent. The program allows individuals in certain situations to discreetly contact 911 services without making an audible call.

MARYLAND

The MONTGOMERY COUNTY Council unanimously voted to remove barriers for homeowners to build Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). The Zoning Text Amendment makes it easier for homeowners to build ADUs, which are defined as second, separate living units on a lot zoned for single unit development. The amendment allows for the conversion of existing, legally built structures into ADUs and removes the prohibition of ADUs in new construction.

MINNESOTA

DAKOTA COUNTY is partnering with Lyft to provide transportation to certain residents on Medicaid waivers, TwinCities Pioneer Press reported. The pilot project focuses on helping those with disabilities find work in areas where public transportation is scarce. Residents who receive home and community-based services are eligible for the free program.

INDIANA

Records at the JOHNSON COUNTY recorder’s office are being digitized and archived to make it easier for residents to complete online searches. According to the Daily Journal, more than 400,000 records have not been indexed in the county since its incorporation in 1823. Records include real estate documents, leases and military discharge information. The county has entered an agreement with CrowdForce to index the records.

MISISSIPPI

A new program in CHICKASAW COUNTY will provide inmates with iPads at the county’s regional correctional facility. Inmates will be able to rent the iPads for a full month using their “canteen funds,” WCRI reported. The iPads will help inmates stay connected to family members, take college courses, watch movies and video chat. The goal of the program is to provide inmates with tools to help them find jobs when they are released from prison.

MONTANA

The LINCOLN COUNTY Health Department is offering training on how to administer Naloxone to someone who is suffering from an opioid overdose, The Western News reported. The program involves 90 minutes of online training followed by live training. A trainer teaches participants how to administer the medicine using different types of delivery methods such as a nasal spray and a compact auto-injector. Those who finish the training receive the medication free of charge.
NEVADA
- ELKO COUNTY is the fourth largest in the contiguous United States, so mobility is a big part of county operations. The county will soon take the keys to a mobile command vehicle from the Department of Emergency Management, which will serve as a satellite communications center, crucial in parts of the vast county that don’t have adequate connectivity. The Nevada Division of Investigation acquired the 2004 Freightliner Major Incident Response Vehicle through a Homeland Security grant, but it was not used much — only about 380 hours, according to the Elko Daily Free Press. “We can provide a unified command center out there instead of just being out in the dirt or out by a sand pile. We could coordinate everything, and we’ll have satellite phone connections,” Emergency Manager Annette Kerr told the paper. Photo courtesy of Elko County.

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NORTH DAKOTA
- Voters will decide in June 2020 whether WARD COUNTY should continue its weather modification program. The county’s contract with the North Dakota Atmospheric Resource Board for services doesn’t expire until March, and if voters approve continuing those services, funding would be necessary for the rest of the year, according to the Minot Daily News. Most of North Dakota above the Highway 2 corridor, which includes part of Ward County, is suffering from a moderate drought and could benefit from continued cloud seeding.

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S
atellite image of a wildfire in the western United States, with text overlay:

Natural Disasters: Not a Sprint — a Marathon

The HR Doctor

with Philpot & Winkeler

summer in the western United States is wildfire season. In a mountain community, a wildfire is threatening homes, residents are preparing for possible evacuations and a plume of smoke hovers ominously over neighborhoods. Residents stand in the streets taking photos with their cell phones and gaze up at the mountain, while a somber air show takes place as planes and helicopters tirelessly fight the blaze. The county jumps into action, activating and supporting an Emergency Operations Center (EOC), a Command Post and fire-suppression activities.

Designated employees across the county leave their regular positions to take assigned roles in the EOC where they offer their knowledge, skills and abilities to the effort. Other employees step up to cover the vacancies left in departments, ensuring ongoing operational coverage while allowing their colleagues to fully engage in the EOC and response activities without distraction.

Neighboring jurisdictions and community partners also assist in the fight to keep the citizens and their homes safe during this natural disaster.

While certain departments, such as Emergency Management, the Sheriff’s Office and Public Works are obviously needed in responding to a natural disaster, they are not alone in supporting the county’s emergency response: IT supports the technological infrastructure of the EOC, GIS makes numerous maps of the fire area as it evolves, Finance tracks expenses to assure state and federal funding, Public Affairs keeps the public informed and HR calculates overtime.

Within days, the fire is no longer a threat, but the danger of monsoon flooding emanating from the fire scar is high and ever present. The County Flood Control District leads these efforts by immediately assessing the flood risk and implementing mitigation measures while others at the county keep citizens informed via press releases and social media, work with non-profits to set up volunteer stations and go door to door to inform citizens.

A natural disaster is not a sprint; it is a marathon. In the case of flooding following fire, the threat of rain and flooding will last for quite some time. Here are several human resources items to consider when working with your Emergency Management department and preparing for a natural disaster:

First, have policies in place that address how people will receive overtime or straight time for working long hours during an emergency. Will staff in the EOC or others receive overtime? Will exempt staff receive straight time? If so, then ensure this functionality exists in your timekeeping software and is tested prior to the emergency. Also, identify how the organization will track natural disaster expenses. Have training and resources materials established ahead of time. How will emergency shifts be adjusted and what impact might this have on shift differential? Will anyone receive standby or on-call pay? If other jurisdictions are working together, side by side, then does each have a similar pay policy or will some workers perceive inequity?

Second, cross-training is the key to operational coverage. Flooding can occur days, weeks or months after a fire event. Employees in the EOC or Command Center could be activated and demobilized multiple times. They will need back up to ensure they can work shifts or rotations. Also, departments will need cross-training to complete the work of the employees working at the EOC. Desk manuals are important resource guides, as employees in the EOC are too busy to answer day-to-day departmental questions. Identify how temporary agencies and partners can assist.

Third, a wide variety of expertise is needed. HR will support the emergency efforts by identifying staff who are able to assist with specific skill sets. If an emergency declaration is needed, then the County Attorney’s Office’s assistance will be needed. As the Board will be involved in the outreach and will attend briefings at the EOC, each event where a quorum may take place will need to be posted according to public meeting law. If a quorum of the Board is present, then the Clerk of the Board will need to take minutes. Translation services may be needed for translation of press releases, social media, community meetings and door-to-door communications. Facilities staff may need to set up temporary facilities, arrange a volunteer center or community meeting or deal with a county building within the path of the natural disaster. A Government Relations Office will coordinate site visits from outside elected officials and government representatives. Additional employees may be called upon to assist due to their organizational skills, writing skills, communication skills or accounting skills to meet a specific workload.

Fourth, employee assistance programs and counseling may need to be brought in as employees deal with heightened stress, fear and exhaustion. These employees are not just dealing with the work of the emergency response; many of them may also be personally concerned for their own safety, the impact of the fire or flood on their own homes or those of family members. Communication may break down as employees work under stress and deal with uncertainty. Frequent communication, maybe in the form of a global email, can keep staff on the same page and lessen anxiety. Some employees may need to take leave to prepare for evacuation or assist others.

Whatever the emergency, from fires and floods to earthquakes, hurricanes, tornados and landslides, counties answer the call to help. Many employees across many departments are needed to assist in the ONE COUNTY response. Human Resources supports the emergency response by supporting employees and making sure they have the resources to not only do their jobs but to feel supported as part of the county family.

To all the public servants and first responders who preserve community, keep neighbors safe and help when the need is greatest, thank you.