

SPOTLIGHT ON:
HUMAN TRAFFICKING



How counties try to stop sex trafficking.

Pg. 9

Gangs prey on juveniles for profit.
Pg. 13



A firefighter watches a backfire set to control the spread of the Mendocino Complex fire. California's largest wildfire in history has burned more than 366,000 acres so far. Photo by Dave Mills/U.S. Forest Service

Counties power through largest wildfire in California history

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

Fueled by triple-digit heat and 30 mph winds, the largest wildfire in California history has challenged local officials as it engulfed more than 366,000 acres over the course of two weeks in Lake, Mendocino and Colusa counties.

The top priority during the Mendocino Complex fire? Communicating with the public, said Carmel Angelo, county executive officer for Mendocino County, which was still in recovery mode from a devastating October 2017 fire when the fires broke out July 27.

"The county has an obligation for the health and safety of the

public," Angelo said. The county alerted residents of evacuations via reverse 911, Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) and Nixle (a notification service) and continues to update the public throughout the disaster with posts on Facebook and Twitter.

In neighboring Lake County,

See FOREST FIRES page 2

Wrestling pro to take office as Knox County, Tennessee mayor

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

During his professional wrestling career "Kane" often got into scraps with a rival known as "The Undertaker." Now, as mayor-elect of Knox County, Tenn., Glenn Jacobs hopes to have a more collegial relation-

ship with his medical examiner. Jacobs capitalized on more than 20 years of wrestling fame to bring attention to his run for office, and in the process turned some heads. He takes office Sept. 1.

"My celebrity got me in the door, but I had to educate myself on the issues. People

weren't going to vote for me just because I was a wrestler," he said. "It was a novelty, they'd laugh and then realize I knew what I was talking about."

Not that a career in wrestling is a disqualifier, with Jesse Ventura's term as governor of Min-

See KNOX COUNTY page 3

Judge revives WOTUS rule in 26 states

By Zach George

The Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule released in 2015 under the Obama administration is now officially in effect in 26 states after a federal judge in South Carolina issued an injunction on the Trump Administration's efforts to delay the controversial 2015 rule.

On Aug. 16, U.S. District Judge David Norton of the District of South Carolina ruled in favor of the Southern Environmental Law Center, which claimed the administration violated the Administrative Procedure Act by failing to seek public comment on the Environmental Protection Agency's rule to delay WOTUS implementation, released Jan. 31. (*See "States, environmental groups sue Trump administration over delay on WOTUS rule:"* <https://bit.ly/2Mn0WPV>.)

Norton's injunction means the 2015 WOTUS rule now applies in the following 26 states: California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia and Washington.

For the remaining 24 states, federal district courts in North Dakota and Georgia have issued injunctions preventing the 2015 WOTUS rule from going into effect. There is litigation pend-

See WOTUS page 2

California county loses community center, fire engines in Carr Fire

From **FOREST FIRES** page 1

“everybody in my district was evacuated,” said Supervisor Jim Steele, who said the county employs the same notification methods as Mendocino County.

The fire got within a half-mile of his home, where his wife sheltered in place watering down their deck, said Steele, a forester by trade.

In remote rural areas, first responders also knocked on doors, Angelo and Steele said. The Sheriff’s Office got help from the police department and Cal Fire (the state department of Forest and Fire Protection) in evacuating residents.

“We rely on technology more and more,” Angelo said. “And social media is great.”

“You also need to understand — that’s as long as your internet is running,” said Mendocino County Supervisor Carre Brown. “Our fire last fall burned down a communication tower... you couldn’t [make a call] but you could text. There are a lot of

variables.”

During a fire disaster, Angelo begins her day at about 7 a.m. with a briefing from Cal Fire, and then visits shelters to make sure residents have everything they need. She also makes stops at the Emergency Operations Center and the call center.

Another inter-departmental briefing with Cal Fire is usually scheduled for mid-morning “so we make those connections,” she said. The county human resources director also helps coordinate getting county employees in place to help during the disaster.

Feeding firefighters is another part of the equation during a wildfire. Lake County has a contract with Red Cross, which comes in to feed first responders and others. “There are a lot of moving parts to it — some that go right, some that go wrong,” Steele said.

Two weeks into the fire, Lake County opened a local assistance center as a one-stop shop for victims having trouble with everything from debris removal to replacing a driver’s license to concerns about animals, said Steele. He foresees the county will continue to “mop up” for the next few months as residents recover.

At the end of the day, “you go home, check your calls, check your emails,” Angelo said, “and get up and do it again the next day.”

Budget impacts, policies

Every problem during a wildfire can’t be fixed with shelters, donated food or insurance. Wildfires can cripple a county budget and some policies can hamper how a county prepares for the next disaster.

“We’re on the ropes here,”

Steele said of the fires that have devastated his community over the past few years. “We’ve lost 5 percent of our housing stock. About 1,900 homes, 50 businesses and a lot of those are tourist industry-style resorts. All of those have been impacted. For this budget, the discretionary side, that’s what drives our quality of life assets here.”

“Definitely the budget is impacted,” Angelo asked. “You have homes that have burned and you have impacts from sales tax, property tax, economic development, which is squelched. How do you bounce back? The biggest thing is getting your community to recover.”

Angelo noted that Mendocino County will look to the state for assistance in the short-term.

“We anticipate the state will help us so we don’t run into a problem with cash flow as we move forward,” she said of her county and other California counties hit by wildfires.

Meanwhile Brown said that another way to get ahead of any future wildfires is to examine policies or legislation that might hamper mitigation and recovery efforts.

“It’s important for counties across the nation,” she said. “Statewide, we’re reexamining our fire suppression, for the safety of our communities, what do we need to do in changing policies or regulations? That means perhaps ‘When can you do fire suppression burning?’

It might not be a good air quality day so what are the regulations? I mean, it’s all a balancing act. Counties and states, they need to be looking at their policies. Doing fire suppression burning and having bad air quality for three days instead of a forest fire with really, really bad air quality for three weeks...

When you have these horrific fires, it’s impacting the health of half your state.”

Currently, at the California statehouse, a debate is underway between counties and other local governments, utilities, state lawmakers and the governor on wildfire liability policy after Cal Fire determined that Pacific Gas & Electric’s (PG&E) equipment was responsible for at least 16 major fires across Northern California last fall. PG&E is lobbying for a limit to the liability of electric utilities by revising a legal doctrine called “inverse condemnation,” whereby property owners demand payment for their lost property.

Currently, utilities pay for all destruction of private property if their equipment was a cause of a fire.

A plan advanced by Gov. Jerry Brown (D), however, would still allow lawsuits for inverse condemnation, but would require judges to balance the public benefits of the electric infrastructure with the harm caused to private property and would also allow utilities to only pay a portion of damages and not be entirely responsible.

“The proposal will shift liability to communities that are trying to recover,” said Napa County Supervisor Diane Dillon, who testified on behalf of the California State Association of Counties.

Shasta County loses fire hall, community center

While Lake and Mendocino counties did not suffer damage to any county facilities, neighboring Shasta County did see considerable fire damage from the 220,000-acre Carr Fire.

The blaze burned more than 1,000 homes as well as Shasta County’s Keswick Fire Hall and

Community Center including the three fire engines inside, according to Pat Minturn, the county’s public works director.

“The fire hall was a substantial metal building, left more or less standing with the burned engines inside,” he noted. The community of Keswick was wiped out, he said. The county provided water service to 209 customers there and “we have eight customers left.” The county also lost approximately \$1 million worth of guardrail and signs, Minturn said.

Another wildfire, the Hat Fire, burned several thousand acres in Fall River Mills and swept across the county’s road maintenance yard. No buildings or equipment were lost, however, “thanks to heroic efforts of Cal Fire,” he said. Cal Fire has since occupied portions of that facility and the county’s nearby airport as bases for ongoing fire suppression activities. 

Injunction could go wider

From **WOTUS** page 1

ing in a federal district court in Texas that could result in a nationwide injunction of WOTUS, meaning the rule could be once again halted in every state.

Since its release in 2015, NACo has expressed concerns with the Obama-era rule due to its broader interpretation of WOTUS and the potential impact it could have on county-owned and maintained roads and roadside ditches, bridges, flood control channels, drainage conveyances and wastewater and stormwater systems. NACo had called for the 2015 final WOTUS rule to be withdrawn until further analysis. 

SNAP/STATS



MOST LIGHT VEHICLES PER CAPITA (2015)

VEHICLES PER 1,000 PEOPLE	
Montana.....	1,594
Wyoming.....	1,389
South Dakota.....	1,262
North Dakota.....	1,177
Iowa.....	1,165

Source: State Motor Vehicle Registrations – 2015 - Office of Highway Policy Information, U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration.



Glenn Jacobs (standing, third from left), measures in at 7 feet, one foot taller than all of his campaign team, pictured here. Photo courtesy of Rob Link

Former pro wrestler eyed chance to work in local government

From KNOX COUNTY page 1

nesota serving as a high-profile example.

The opportunity to work in government on a local and executive level drew Jacobs to the mayor's race.

"Mayor appealed to me because you can make policy and impact things," he said. "When you look at a legislature, there's not much you can do because you're one of several hundred people. In county government, even more than on the federal level, what you do has an impact on people's everyday lives."

He consulted with a number of Tennessee politicians, including former aides to Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) who was said to have preferred serving as mayor of Chattanooga to serving as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Jacobs' interest in politics and government was born out of a high school assignment to argue Walter Mondale's positions during the 1984

presidential election. His fascination grew from there, though his philosophy opposed Mondale's.

He hopes that his stature in the wrestling world, along with his stature at 7 feet tall, will help draw attention to his new role as mayor.

"I hope I can get people interested in local government, and relate to them how im-

portant it is to be involved in your community."

His campaign was a 15-month process that gave him a new view of Eastern Tennessee, where he has lived for 25 years.

"If you really want to learn about some place, run for office," he said. "You will learn a lot about it."

Over the course of two clean and civil campaigns, he didn't have to break a chair over his primary opponents' head or yank his general election opponent's leg.

"Political discourse is getting to the point where a lot of people's campaigns are 'I'm not as bad,'" he said. "I was proud nobody in my races resorted to that - we talked about the issues that mattered to Knox County."

Jacobs developed his positions through plenty of conversations with county staff members and officials and his predecessor, Tim Burchett, and he plans to continue many of the same policies, but knows his main priority.

"Any mayor's job is jobs," he said. "When people are doing well and working, you have more tax revenue, crime

is lower, the quality of life is higher. There are still going to be issues but success breeds success."

He wants to capitalize on having both the University of Tennessee's main campus and the Oak Ridge National Laboratory nearby.

"The way the global economy is going to go in the foreseeable future is going to involve another industrial revolution in manufacturing and computational power," he said. "Given what we have, we can be ahead of the curve and at-

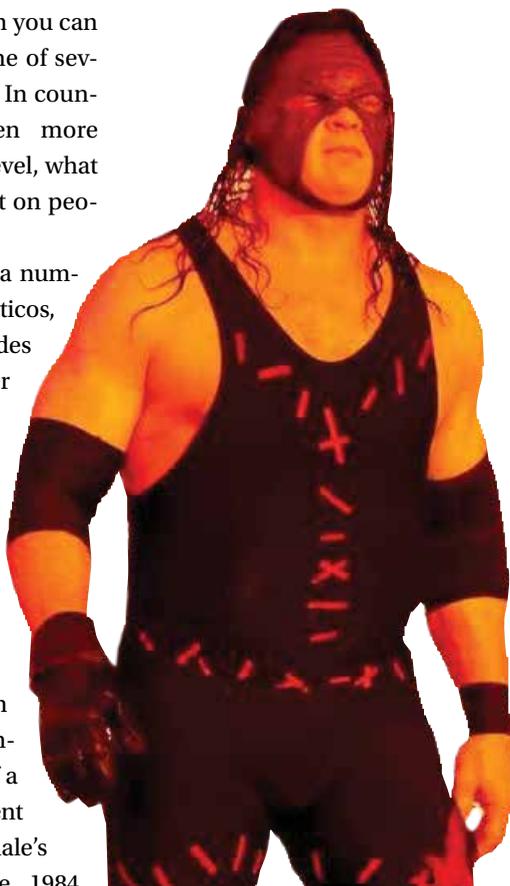
tract some jobs."

At the same time, he wants to focus on giving young people more awareness of their education and professional options.

"We've dropped the ball in career education and we're left without vital trades workers," he said. "Not everybody has to go to college."

As for his career, he won't be jumping back into the ring too much.

"I'll do the occasional big event, but my priority now is being the best mayor I can be," he said. **CN**



ON THE MOVE

NACo STAFF

- **Lindsey Holman** is the new associate legislative director for justice and public safety. Prior to joining NACo, Holman served as an associate with Eagle Hill Consulting and as the founder/CEO of Aegis Resilience LLC.



Holman

- **Hadi Sedigh** has been named the new director of NACo's Counties Futures Lab, which is now allied with the Legislative Affairs Department. Sedigh has been with NACo since 2013, initially as a legislative assistant, and since 2014 as an associate legislative director.



Sedigh

BRIGHT IDEAS | MONTGOMERY COUNTY, Md.

Neighborhood Action Teams Solve Complex Problems

PROBLEM:

Solving complex community problems that need input from several county departments and others.

SOLUTION:

Create a Neighborhood Action Team that includes county employees, non-profits and residents.

By **Mary Ann Barton**
senior staff writer

When residents of Connecticut Avenue Estates in Montgomery County, Md. were unable to use their only neighborhood playground that had gone to seed — littered with drug paraphernalia and mattresses — they contacted the county for help. Due to the park's tangled history, "we could not find one agency in the county that had jurisdiction over this park," said Luisa Montero, director of the county's Mid-County Regional Area Service Office.

Residents complained about the trash, playground equipment in need of repair and illicit activity going on at the park.

It was time to organize a

Neighborhood Action Team or NAT, which is run by Montero, one of the county's five regional service area directors. Each director serves as a "mini mayor," getting into the nitty-gritty issues of their communities and coming up with ways to solve problems — some of them more complex than others.

With leadership from the area directors, a Neighborhood Action Team brings residents, non-profits and a variety of county departments and agencies to the table to solve community issues.

Last year, the County Council formalized the process by passing legislation for the Neighborhood Action Teams, to give the regional area service directors an additional layer of authority.

By passing legislation, it "gave it a little more teeth," Montero said. "The birth of it came from the work that had already been going on, but it holds everybody more accountable and lifted the work up a bit."

It also added reporting requirements to measure its results. There is no increase in budget, she noted, it's simply a new way of approaching, prioritizing and solving problems.

So much of this work is long-term, she said, different than "a one-off approach, where code enforcement comes in, gives a citation and they go away and it's done."

The Neighborhood Action Team approach works well in her region of the county (which is about 100 square miles with a population of about 230,000), Montero said, especially as a way to tackle problems due to an increase in population, which has led to overcrowding, excessive traffic, code violations, safety issues, as well as problems with parking and trash. In addition, civic associations were not that well-organized and needed help utilizing green spaces and holding block parties, she said.

Thanks to the Neighborhood Action Team approach, some of the problems have been tackled including the playground at Connecticut Avenue Estates.

Several county departments got involved including:

- Transportation — to mow the grass and cut back vegetation on a regular basis; and also maintain a storm drain system underneath the park
- Housing and Community

Affairs — to pull in community groups for regular clean-up events and to stay in touch with residents about future needs related to the park

- County Attorney — to answer legal issues
- Montgomery Housing Partnership — to organize clean-up events and put up a new sign, and
- Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning — in helping locate historic ownership documents.

The regional service area directors are in a position to assess when it's time to pull in more than two agencies for the Neighborhood Action Team approach, Montero said.

"It's when there's a myriad of issues, when they aren't easily solved — they're more systemic," she said. Similar to the playground concerns, residents themselves might come to the county to ask them to pull together a Neighborhood Action Team to assess an issue and some of the non-profits might add their two cents. "We hold an internal meeting first, where we lay out the problems, talking about it and seeing which department is respon-

sible, followed by an informal action plan, Montero said.

Regional service area directors reach out and establish relationships with a lot of different groups. "Part of our job is to establish positive relations," she said.

The county's councilmembers are very supportive of the initiative and the directors report to them quarterly about NAT and other issues.

Montero said they are keeping statistics and collecting information to measure the program's success. "In the fall, we're going to be meeting with county staff — a performance management and data analytics team — to help with metrics," she said. "We've had a few conversations about this."

Her advice to other counties considering a similar program? "First of all, it would be to make sure the executives of the jurisdiction are totally on board with it; it really requires a mandate that 'this is important,'" she said. "We have established relationships (with county agencies, non-profits and residents), but it certainly helps when you have a mandate from the top."

It also helps to have someone (similar to the area directors) at the helm doing the nitty-gritty day-to-day work, someone blowing the whistle and logistically calling the meetings together, she said.

By addressing these issues not just in silos and with enforcement but "including the education component, the community-building component — things are moving along at a much better rate and community members are much more satisfied," Montero said. "It isn't perfect, but at least there is a difference in the way that the issues are being addressed and resolved." 



Residents gather in a Montgomery County, Md. park at a block party — one component of a Neighborhood Action Team approach to fixing a community problem. Photo courtesy of Montgomery County, Md.

For more information contact Luisa Montero: Luisa.montero@montgomerycountymd.gov

Current Medicaid financing structure — critical for counties

By Edwin Park

One of the most essential aspects of the Medicaid program is its flexible federal-state financial partnership, which ensures that federal funding is highly responsive to the needs of states and their residents. Media reports indicate that depending on the outcome of the November elections, Congress may again consider proposals to radically restructure Medicaid's financing by imposing a "per capita cap."

Such a cap poses severe risks to counties because of the considerable roles they now play in delivering Medicaid-financed services, contributing to states' shares of Medicaid costs and helping administer Medicaid programs.

Today, the federal government pays a fixed percentage of states' Medicaid costs, with states and many counties responsible for the remaining share. The percentage of Medicaid costs borne by the federal government is known as the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) and varies between 50 percent and 76 percent, depending on states' per capita income relative to the national average. But for certain costs, the federal share is even greater. For example, under the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion, the federal government now pays 94 percent of the cost and will pay no less than 90 percent over the long run.

This ensures that if state Medicaid costs increase, the federal government shares in those higher costs with federal funding automatically rising in response. This is especially important in cases where states experience higher-than-expected Medicaid spending due to an economic downturn or recession, a new costly treatment, or a public health emergency or epidemic. Conversely, if state Medicaid costs fall, the federal government shares in those savings.

Under a per capita cap, how-

ever, the federal government would provide only a fixed amount of federal funding per beneficiary, irrespective of states' actual funding needs. And in order to produce federal budgetary savings, which is the purpose of the cap, the cap amounts would be set to grow at a rate considerably slower than projected growth in per-beneficiary Medicaid costs.

For example, under the per capita cap included in last year's Senate bills repealing the Affordable Care Act, the annual adjustment for the cap amounts for children and non-disabled adults after several years would equal only general inflation (about 2.4 percent), even though Medicaid per-beneficiary costs for those groups were expected to increase by 2.5 percentage points more each year, according to the Congressional Budget Office. As a result, the cap would lead to large and growing federal Medicaid spending cuts.

The per capita cap included in the "Graham-Cassidy" repeal bill considered by the Senate in September 2017 would have cut federal Medicaid spending by \$164 billion over the next decade and \$1.1 trillion through 2036 (on top of the \$2.5 trillion in cuts resulting from repeal of the Medicaid expansion), according to the consulting firm Avalere.

As the federal government shifts costs to states — and in many cases, counties — states would have no choice but to institute sharp cuts to their Medicaid programs, including cuts to eligibility, benefits and provider payment rates. With the ranks of the uninsured swelling, counties would bear much of the brunt as the uncompensated care burden for their hospital, clinic, health system and public health department services spikes. The actual Medicaid funding cuts are likely to be even greater if state Medicaid programs experience higher-than-expected growth in per-beneficiary costs, such as from a clinical break-

SPEEDREAD

For more information about the county role in Medicaid, join NACo for Creating Healthy Smiles: Medicaid and County Approaches to Improving Oral Health webinar on Aug. 30 from 2 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

through or from a new disease like Zika. For example, when more anti-retroviral drugs became available to combat HIV/AIDS in the mid-1990s or when new drugs to treat Hepatitis C entered the market in 2014, Medicaid programs faced a significant increase in their prescription drug costs.

In addition, due to the way the per capita cap is structured, it would not account for the impact of the aging of the population, as more seniors from the baby boom generation enter "old-old" age even though seniors aged 85 and older have Medicaid costs that are 2.5 times higher than younger seniors because of their far greater health and long-term care needs. Lastly, some states would face disproportionately larger cuts if their growth in per-beneficiary costs were higher than average.

Medicaid's financing structure is the backbone of its ability to provide affordable, comprehensive health coverage and long-term services and supports

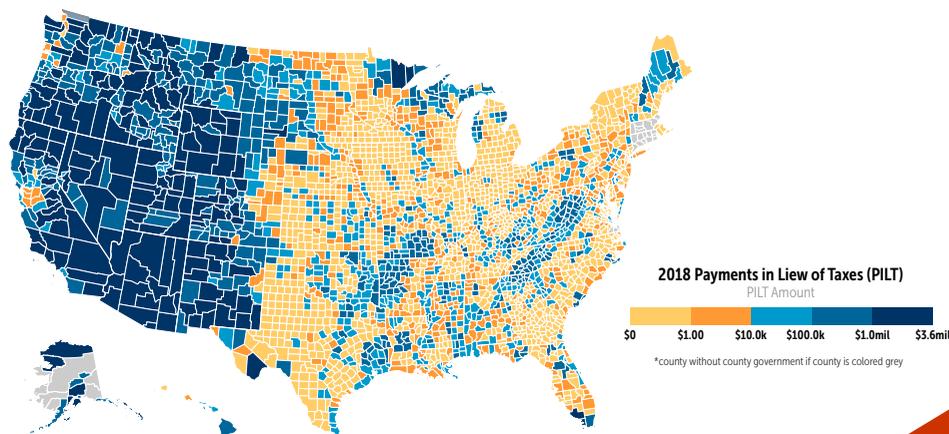
to tens of millions of low-income children, parents, seniors, people with disabilities and other adults.

Any renewed effort to cap and cut federal funding poses a fundamental threat to Medicaid by shifting costs to states and inevitably leading to sharp cuts to eligibility, benefits and provider rates. The likely harm to counties would thus be severe, considering all the roles they now play in financing and administering Medicaid and delivering services to Medicaid beneficiaries. **EN**

Edwin Park is a research professor, at the Center for Children and Families, Georgetown University Health Policy Institute.

31% of all libraries are county-supported, operated by a county government, library district or jointly by two or more units of local government.

1,001 counties have 20 or more public schools located within their boundaries.



Source: NACo Analysis of U.S. Department of the Interior Data, 2018

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Senate approves minibus spending package

The Senate has approved an FY19 “minibus” appropriations spending package consisting of four appropriation bills: Interior-Environment, Financial Services, Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (T-HUD), and Agriculture.

T-HUD Appropriations Bill

The Senate minibus includes discretionary funding for the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for FY19. While House appropriators have approved their own FY19 T-HUD appropriations bill, the House has not yet held a full vote on the bill. Once the House does agree on its T-HUD appropriations measure, the two chambers will appoint a conference committee to negotiate a final package before the current fiscal year ends. With both the House and Senate out for August recess, further action is not expected until September.

Funding levels for each department are as follows:

- **Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):** The bill includes \$44.5 billion in discretionary appropriations, an overall increase of \$1.8 billion for HUD programs compared to FY18. The Senate legislation includes significant funding for key county priorities, including \$3.3 billion for the Community Development Block Grant program and \$1.36 billion for the HOME Investment Partnerships program.
- **Department of Transportation (DOT):** The appropriations bill would provide \$26.6 billion for DOT in FY19, \$698 million below FY18 enacted levels and \$1.2 million below the level outlined in the pending House version of the bill. The legislation would fund BUILD program grants (formerly known as TIGER grants) at \$1 billion and the Essential Air Service (EAS) at \$175 million.

Interior-Environment Appropriations Bill

The FY19 Interior-Environment Appropriations bill totals \$35.9 billion in discretionary funding, including funds to reduce the National Park Service’s deferred maintenance backlog, address various environmental and conservation programs and prevent and fight wildland fires. The Senate’s total funding allocation is slightly higher than the \$35.3 billion provided by the House in its version of the bill, which passed July 19.

- **Department of Interior (DOI):** The Senate appropriations package would fund DOI at \$13.1 billion, including full funding for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) Program at \$500 million.
- **U.S. Forest Service (USFS):** The USFS, which operates under the Department of Agriculture (USDA), would receive \$6.29 billion to improve the health and management of our national forests and to fight wildfires. Hazardous fuels reduction programs would receive an increase of \$5 million aimed at preventing catastrophic wildfires, especially near developed areas.
- **Wildland Firefighting:** \$4.3 billion of the appropriations package would be reserved for wildland firefighting. Fire suppression funding would be funded at the 10-year average, with an additional \$900 million tacked on if regular suppression funding is not sufficient. Of these funds, USFS would receive \$724 million and DOI would receive \$176 million.
- **Bureau of Land Management (BLM):** The bill would provide \$1.34 billion for BLM, an increase of \$11 million over FY18.
- **National Park Service (NPS):** \$3.21 billion would be provided to NPS, \$13.4 million more than was provided in FY18. Much of this increase in funding would be allocated to help NPS address its \$11.6 billion maintenance backlog,

including \$23 million for a deferred maintenance matching grant program.

- **Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS):** FWS would be funded at \$1.57 billion under the Senate’s appropriations bill, representing a decrease of \$19.7 million from FY18.
 - **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF):** LWCF would receive just over \$425 million in the Senate bill, roughly equal to FY18 enacted levels.
 - **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):** EPA would maintain level funding at \$8.1 billion under the Senate appropriations package, \$100 million above the House version. The bill would invest \$2.27 billion in water infrastructure by funding the EPA’s Clean Water State Revolving Loans Fund at \$1.4 billion and the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund at \$865 million. The bill also includes \$80 million for brownfields grants and would dedicate \$8 million of those funds to persistent poverty counties, defined as counties with 20 percent or more of their population living in poverty over the past 30 years.
- Unlike the House Interior-Environment Appropriations bill, the Senate bill does not include a provision repealing the controversial 2015 Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule. However, when the House and Senate conference over the FY19 appropriations bills, WOTUS is expected to be a point of contention among negotiators.
- While the Senate appropriations package did not contain many new policy riders, it does contain some existing riders carried over from the FY18 appropriations package enacted earlier this year, including extending the ban on the listing of the greater sage grouse as an endangered species and language treating biomass as a carbon-neutral energy source.

Agriculture Appropriations

The Senate’s minibus pack-

age includes \$145.1 billion in total funding for Agriculture, Rural Development, the Food and Drug Administration and related agencies for FY19. The discretionary portion of this funding totals \$23.2 billion, an increase of \$225 million relative to FY18, and \$6.1 billion above the president’s FY19 budget request.

- **Rural Development:** Rural development programs would

receive \$3.8 billion in the Senate appropriations package, \$825 million of which would be targeted specifically toward infrastructure investments. This funding includes \$1.25 billion in rural water and waste program loans, \$425 million for rural broadband development and \$53 million for Distance Learning and Telemedi-

See MINIBUS page 7

WORD SEARCH

LINCOLN COUNTY, Neb.

Created by: Mary Ann Barton

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- **ABE:** The county is named for President Abraham Lincoln.
- **CAPITAL:** Although the capital city of Nebraska is Lincoln, it is not located in Lincoln County.
- **CODY:** Buffalo Bill Cody, often served as a scout and guide to area hunters.
- **COURTHOUSE:** The county’s first courthouse was built in 1874; the present courthouse was completed in 1920.
- **HAGEL:** Former U.S. Sen. Chuck Hagel was born in the county.
- **HOMES:** The median listing price for a home in Lincoln County is \$150,000.
- **INDIANS:** The county was home to the Sioux and Cheyenne Indian tribes.
- **MALONEY:** Lake Maloney is a popular getaway spot in the county where you can go fishing, boating and camping.
- **MILLER:** Big band leader Glenn Miller spent a year of his childhood in the county.
- **NEBRASKA:** The county is located in the central western corner of the Cornhusker State.
- **PONY:** The Pony Express, which delivered mail via between California and Nebraska over 18 months from 1860 to 1861.
- **RAILROAD:** The Union Pacific Railroad stopped in North Platte, the county seat.
- **SHORTER:** The county’s previous name.
- **TRAINS:** The world’s largest train yard, Bailey Yard, is located in the county.
- **WEATHER:** The coldest temperature on record for the county was -34 degrees F recorded Dec. 23, 1989.

Senate has passed 7 of 12 appropriations bills

From MINIBUS page 6

cine grants, including targeted funding to combat the opioid crisis through telemedicine. It also includes \$24 billion in loan authority for rural housing loans and rental assistance and \$1 billion in grants and loans to promote rural small businesses.

- **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS):** NRCS would receive \$879.1 million through the bill, a \$5 million increase in funding over FY18, to help farmers, ranchers and other landowners conserve and protect their land. \$150 million would also be allocated for watershed and flood prevention efforts in rural communities.
- **Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS):** APHIS would receive just over \$1 billion in FY19 under the Senate's package. APHIS programs help combat pests and diseases that threaten U.S. agriculture production.

- **Agricultural Research:** Under the Senate's appropriations package, \$2.73 billion would be allocated to agricultural research conducted by agencies such as the Agricultural Research Service and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** The Senate funding bill includes over \$73 billion in mandatory SNAP funding. This is \$794 million below FY18 due to a decline in SNAP enrollment.

- **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC):** The Senate appropriations bill would fund WIC at \$6.15 billion, \$25 million below FY18 enacted levels.

Not included in the minibus: The Senate's final package did not include an amendment introduced by Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), which would have provided \$250 million in election secu-

rity grants. The amendment needed 60 total votes to be added to the bill, but failed on a vote of 50 to 47.

To date, the Senate has passed seven of 12 appropriations bills, marking the first time since 2000 that the chamber has approved the majority of its 12 bills by August. The upper chamber has also pushed ahead of the House of Representatives, which has cleared six appropriation bills to date.

Congress has until Sept. 30 to wrap up the FY19 annual appropriations process — including reaching a compromise between the two chambers on final spending levels — to avoid a potential government shutdown or the need for a continuing resolution to keep the government funded while negotiations continue. 

Austin Igleheart, legislative associate, and Sofia Ferber and Zach George, legislative assistants, contributed to this report.

Housing for County Workers report is online

The latest report from the NACo Counties' Futures Lab, *Access to Housing: Supporting County Workers Through Affordable Homes*, examines how county governments are increasingly providing housing assistance benefits to employees as a strategy to build and sustain workforces that will best serve communities.

The report describes how measuring rising housing and transportation costs is central to understanding the affordability crisis that is impacting county workers and their families. The Center for Neighborhood Technology's (CNT) Housing + Transportation (H+T) Index illustrates the cost of living in local communities by generating a score that is based on the amount that households pay on housing costs and transportation. Only 96 out of 3,069 counties in the U.S. are affordable according to CNT's H+T Index.

Officials from San Mateo

County, Calif., Teton County, Wyo. and Loudoun County, Va. shared how their jurisdictions developed and implemented affordable housing programs for employees. These case studies highlight current trends in employee housing. The key takeaways from the report include: 1) Affordable housing programs for employees help recruit talented workers; 2) These programs help retain employees who can live closer to work; and 3) Employees with affordable housing located within the county they serve are part of local communities and have fewer barriers to doing their jobs.

A copy of the report is available online at www.naco.org/AccessToHousing. For additional resources on affordable housing and county management and operations issues, please visit the NACo Counties Futures Lab at www.naco.org/counties-futures-lab. 

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Business as usual despite personal transition

By Charles Taylor
special to *County News*

Last year, Bill Hall was president of the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC). This year, Claire Hall is AOC's immediate past president.

They are the same person, but, then again, they aren't.

Hall, a Lincoln County, Ore. commissioner, entered the world in September 1969 as Bill Hall. But after a lifetime of feeling his gender identity and physical body were out of synch, on June 3, 2018, he was reborn as Claire Elizabeth Hall — the female he had longed to be since his childhood growing up in Portland.

"I think June 3, the day that I went public, is my second birthday," Hall told *County News* recently. "How many people get to remake their entire lives, choose a new name, build a new wardrobe from scratch? But it's been exhilarating."

As an elected official, Hall's journey to becoming Claire has been a very public one. Although she had been contemplating the change for some time, it wasn't until just before Christmas 2017 that she made up her mind. Hall had taken a symbolic step about a month earlier, after presiding over his last meeting as AOC president in Eugene, Ore.

"I gaveled down my final meeting as president and then walked a couple of blocks down the street and had my ears pierced," Hall said, who remains on AOC's executive committee this year. It wasn't to signal a forthcoming gender transition, per se, she said. Lots of men have two pierced ears these days, she reasoned, so it wouldn't seem that strange. And yet, it would also be a step along the way to a new identity.

Columbia County Commissioner Alex Tardif is treasurer of the AOC board; he said association members have been "welcoming ... kind and gracious."

"I think it speaks volumes having a past president who is openly and publicly sharing

their life story and their transition from being a man to being a woman, and finally being comfortable and confident in their own skin."

Tardif, relatively new to AOC, was just getting to know Bill Hall. "He always was very reserved and appeared to be kind of disconnected and shut off, whereas Claire is just this vibrant, energetic, excited individual," he said. "It's as if she gained confidence in her ability to shine."

"Bill was a great person. Claire is an amazing woman."

Days before going public in early June of this year, Hall announced to county staff in an email: "My name, dress, and other forms of gender expression are changing, but my core self is not changing and has not changed. I have identified as female my entire life. I finally reached the point in my life where I am taking the steps to bring the inner and outer me into alignment."

"I will remain focused on issues of social justice, like the needs of children, families, seniors, people with disabilities and veterans," she wrote. "But now, the act of living my life itself becomes an act of social justice."

Lincoln County Commis-

sioner Terry Thompson was among the first of Hall's colleagues to be clued in to what was to come.

"First, I was almost speechless," Thompson said, "because I had no idea that this was going to happen, and I had no idea of the publicity that was going to be around it." Both commissioners are Democrats; Thompson says he's more conservative. But his attitude is "live and let live."

"I've watched a lot of people with money and power and things they think are going to make them happy, and they don't. If this makes you happy," he told Hall, "you should try it. That's why we have a free society."

Hall has had a high profile in Newport, the Lincoln County seat, since moving there from Portland in 1987 to work at the local newspaper and as a radio journalist. She was elected to the Board of Commissioners in 2004 and is currently serving her fourth term in office.

The news of her transition has been received largely positively in this seaside county of 48,000 along Oregon's Pacific coast. "People have been accepting, supportive and loving even beyond my wildest dreams" — which didn't quite

surprise her. "Lincoln County is a place with a lot of diversity and is very accepting of diversity, and so I felt confident going into this. But I've been rewarded with kindness, high fives, hugs, you name it."

There have been some "nasty" comments on social media, "but that's kind of par for the course these days," she said.

At age 58, Hall's revelation has been a long time in coming. She's known since she was five years old or so that something was different. In kindergarten, she now says, "I didn't quite fit in with any group. Not with the boys, not with the girls, though I generally felt much more comfortable with the girls."

But at the time, she had no vocabulary to describe her feelings. "I kept it locked as deeply inside of me as I could, since I didn't see any realistic path to bring it out, to act on it. I just felt like I had to contain it as best that I could."

Hall experienced gender dysphoria, which, according to medical literature, is a "conflict between a person's physical or assigned gender and the gender with which [they] identify."

"I think it was when I was a teenager that I even became aware of the term — 'transgender' wasn't widely in use then, it was still 'transsexual' — and that it was possible to do this, but even then I didn't see it as something that was going to be in my future for a variety of reasons." Perhaps chief among them was, what would people say? How would family react?

Hall was a teen when he first heard of Renee Richards, the physician and tennis player whose transition from the male Richard Raskind was making headlines. "Here's someone who actually did this," Hall recalled, but it would be decades before she was ready to forge her own new identity.

Caitlin Jenner has been a more recent inspiration. Hall, who stands six-feet tall without heels, met the former Olympian briefly in late May at a talk at the University of Oregon, just

days before coming out publicly on June 3. "The fact that she did it at age 64, and she did it in a very public place ... I figured I could deal with this in my county of 48,000 people."

That Jenner could transition in her 60s and become, arguably, a striking woman who is six-feet-two-inches tall was also encouraging. Hall had once worried that passing as a woman would be difficult for someone so tall.

One of the few people Hall confided in prior to her transition was Bethany Grace Howe. The two met in the early 2000s, when Howe — then Barton Howe — was a reporter at the local newspaper where Hall had previously worked. Howe transitioned from male to female in 2016, and Hall — then still Bill — had been encouraging to her and following her journey on social media.

Howe maintained an interest in Hall's progression and shared some of the lessons she learned along the road to becoming a woman. "I learned a lot of lessons the hard way," Howe said.

One lesson: "You don't always have to be an inspiration; you don't always have to be a role model. You're allowed to be human."

Hall's transition has included jumping through a few legal hoops: an official name change, getting a new driver's license and Social Security card — same number, new name. A female colleague told him that's why she didn't change her name when she got married. "She said it wasn't any feminist conviction so much as not wanting to go thru all the hassle."

Hall has yet to decide if she'll seek reelection to a fifth term in 2020. "I still love the job; I still feel like I'm getting good things accomplished," she said. "Two years is a long time, and I really feel like if people are accepting, they will — as they have been up to now — be willing to give me another opportunity, but we'll have to see." **CN**



Commissioner Claire Hall
Lincoln County, Ore.

SPOTLIGHT ON:

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Contemporary slavery knows no boundaries



By **Charlie Ban**
senior staff writer

A long-held myth says that large sporting events are conventions for human trafficking, driving demand through the roof. Stories of women brought in to cater to thousands of tourists and sports fans shock the local population, drawing inevitable questions of whether being home to the Super Bowl or baseball's All-Star Game bring more harm than good to the community.

It turns out to be a moot point.

Hennepin County, Minn. has played host to both in recent years, and the county's trafficking-specific program staff took the lead in communicating that although trafficking wasn't much higher during events like that, many people still are sold for both sex and labor exploitation daily.

"Myths like that give people the impression that people aren't being trafficked for sex every day in Hennepin County," said Commissioner Marion Greene. "This is something that is happening all around us in our communities but there's a sense of invisibility. The people who are buying sex from young girls are people in our neighborhoods, but there's a sense of

otherness, that this happens to somebody else or this happens in other places, or other countries. No, it's happening here. It isn't distinguished by race or socio-economic status in terms of the buyers."

How many?

There aren't comprehensive statistics on the prevalence of human trafficking because there has been no consistent method of counting over the years and numbers are incomplete.

"Many people who have been trafficked don't report it, and many people who witness trafficking don't recognize it for what it is," said Karen Walsh, executive director of Cleveland-based Collaborative to End Human Trafficking. "The crime is not new, it just didn't have a name. We recognize slavery when it was based on race and people were chained, but human trafficking is different."

The Washington, D.C.-based Polaris Project has been trying to get an accurate count since debuting its National Human Trafficking Hotline and BeFree Textline in 2007. The organization's 2017 report cited 8,524 cases of human trafficking, a 13 percent increase over 2016. Over 11 years, the hotline received 40,200 reports. Polaris receives funding from the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services.

But even those numbers are incomplete. The hotline's reports last year represented 25 different types of human trafficking, ranging from street prostitution and escorts to forced labor or indentured servitude in domestic and construction work, nuances that likely contribute to undercounting.

"Most people know that pimps and hotels are involved in trafficking but don't know what else counts," said Rochelle Keyhan, director of disruption strategies for the Polaris Project. "It's hard to measure overall trends because the more we increase the community's understanding, the more they'll be reporting things they've seen for decades but not realized. What looks like an increase in trafficking could actually be an increase in awareness — we could be decreasing trafficking, but the number of reports is increasing based on the awareness."

Though human trafficking includes both sexual and labor exploitation, Polaris's 2017 statistics show 71 percent of reports in 2017 involving just sexual exploitation and 14 percent just involving labor trafficking. Those numbers also said the 82 percent of trafficking victims were female. Thirty percent of

sexual exploitation victims were minors.

Where is it happening?

"It's a reality that's happening across the country, in every community," Walsh said.

Keyhan concurred. When asked about rural counties with sparse populations, she checked and responded that advertisements were directed toward those counties, though she acknowledged some driving would be necessary.

Trafficking reports show heavy concentrations in places near ports, along highways, in high population areas. Polaris found a third of 2017's reports of human trafficking in California, Texas and Florida.

Greene said Minnesota includes a lot of ingredients for trafficking — being at a crossroads of Interstates 35 and 94, the former coming from the port in Duluth and the latter leading to the North Dakota oil fields, and the Native American population in some parts of the state are vulnerable.

"The intersection of race, poverty, lack of economic opportunity, they lead to greater vulnerability," she said.

Attitudes and awareness can make a difference.

"Terminology matters and

language makes a difference when talking about the issue," Walsh said. "Even use of 'missing child' versus 'runaway.' 'Runaway' blames the child."

Decriminalizing prostitution for minors is key, said rights-4girls Executive Director Yasmin Vafa, because they aren't old enough to consent to sex anyway,

"They aren't child prostitutes; they're rape victims," she said. "They're often not seen as victims of crime. This is the only form of child abuse where the response is to criminalize the children."

Counties are in a position to start the healing when a survivor of human trafficking gets out of "the life," but they can do more.

"We could do a great job on the social services side but that wasn't going to solve the problem," Greene said. "We have to attack demand."

Counties can disrupt trafficking through their justice, law enforcement and business licensing operations that come in contact with victims and perpetrators. Vafa said training judges and court staff to recognize the signs of human trafficking in people who come into the courthouse could serve as lookouts and interception points for victims. Requiring businesses such as motels to post information directed at victims of human trafficking could give them vital information and an escape route when they have the opportunity.

And the most important thing, practitioners agree, is a mandate from elected officials to do something about trafficking. Los Angeles County became a leader in fighting human trafficking after former Supervisor Don Knabe learned how prevalent it was and directed nine county departments to work together to form a response.

"It got a lot easier to make things happen when the Board of Supervisors was behind us," said Michelle Guymon, director of the Child Trafficking Unit with Los Angeles County Probation Department. 

COUNTIES FASHION ANTI-TRAFFICKING PROGRAMS



By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

That first call was the big test. The Los Angeles County law enforcement agencies and probation department reached an uneasy truce on how to treat minors who have been picked up for prostitution.

“If they (police officer) were sitting with a 14-year-old for six or eight hours, waiting for someone who might not come to pick them up, that’s time they’re not out on the street doing their job. We get that,” said Michelle Guymon, director of the Child Trafficking Unit with the Los Angeles County Probation Department.

At the same time, as a minor, the child could not consent to sex and was the victim of statutory rape and likely other kinds of abuse in “the life” of a trafficking victim. A jail cell was about the worst way to be treated.

So law enforcement agencies and the probation department had a deal. When a

detective or police officer somewhere in the county identified a child as being involved in prostitution, a call would go out to the probation department. A caseworker would have 90 minutes to reach the child at a police department or hospital and take custody.

SPOTLIGHT ON:
HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In August 2014 the first call to the hotline came in. The clock was ticking. Getting anywhere fast in Southern California is a challenge, but this was a child’s future on the line.

“The detective from Long Beach had his stopwatch out,” Guymon said. “It took 74 minutes.”

That response — law enforcement told Guymon 90 minutes would never work — built the foundation for a partnership between the two departments which, along with child welfare, comprise the county’s Sex Trafficking Integrated Leadership Team.

It’s just one way counties have developed programming

to address the care of human trafficking victims and the demand that threatens to draw more children into “the life” of prostitution.

Demand and enforcement

Men convicted of engaging in prostitution in King County, Wash. are ordered by the court to a 10-week course designed to teach them about the consequences of engaging in sex trafficking. It’s one of the most extensive “John schools.”

“The vast majority (of buyers) are opportunistic and just looking to buy sex,” said Ben Gauen, senior deputy prosecuting attorney for King County. “They don’t think about the chance she could be 15.”

The classes deconstruct why people feel they need to buy sex and hammer home that prostitution isn’t a victimless crime.

“It’s a crime of power and privilege,” Gauen said. “The vast majority of people involved in prostitution do it



See **TRAFFICKING** page 11

Consequences of ‘the life’ don’t end when human trafficking does

From **TRAFFICKING** page 10

because they lack viable economic alternatives, they’re used to cycles of abuse. It’s pretty eye-opening.”

Successful completion of the course will keep offenders from incarceration, or at least reduce their sentences.

“We’re not trying to send these people to prison for long periods of time or at all unless they have a (criminal) history, it doesn’t do us any good,” Gauen said. “We know the majority of people are not prosecuted or caught when engaging in this behavior, but those we can reach can go a long way to reducing demand.”

Other counties have approved ordinances to disrupt human trafficking in businesses. Los Angeles County requires motel owners to sign contracts disallowing any form of sex trafficking to take place in their facilities and hang posters in visible places with hotline information to report a possible human trafficking incident and for victims to receive help. They must also allow law enforcement to check guest registries at-will and take a training session on sex trafficking provided by the county. Hillsborough County, Fla. passed an ordinance in August 2018 creating a permitting process for massage parlors and bathhouses, frequent venues for trafficking, which includes an educational process for employees of these establishments.

Treatment for victims

McLennan County, Texas gets high marks from the non-

profit Polaris Project for the county’s prosecutorial methods when making the case against traffickers.

In addition to not charging victims, prosecutors take great pains to build their cases without victims’ testimony.

“They build circumstantial cases against traffickers by following the money and business operations that trafficking supports,” said Rochelle Keyhan, Polaris’ director of disruption strategies. “They gather enough evidence that they don’t have to build their case on the backs of survivors, which could traumatize them to recount it in court.”

The consequences of “the life” don’t end when the slavery does. Davidson County, Tenn. took that into account when developing its trafficking court, Cherished Hearts. If a screening process indicates that women in the judicial system had been involved in trafficking at any point in their lives, it opens the door to social services to address that trauma.

“We put them in stabilized housing, get them clothing, counseling, drug rehab, any resources that will help,” said Sarah Wolfson, assistant district attorney. “It’s a chance to rehabilitate them, because chances are whatever happened to them years ago has contributed to what brought them into the justice system now, even if it happened 10 years ago.”

Once a sexually exploited youth has been identified, assessed and triaged by the Hennepin County Children

SPOTLIGHT ON:
HUMAN TRAFFICKING

TOP VENUES/INDUSTRIES FOR LABOR TRAFFICKING 2017 STATISTICS NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

Domestic Work 238

Agriculture 134

Traveling Sales Crews 104

Restaurants/Food Service 66

Begging Rings 58

Total # of Cases 1,249

Source: National Human Trafficking Hotline

and Family Services team, the youth will be assigned a social worker who specializes in working with sexually exploited youth. The specialized social worker will work with youth to create a comprehensive, trauma-centered individual service plan that reflects each youth’s strengths and needs. The specialized social worker will incorporate, when applicable, the sexual assault and domestic violence services that Hennepin County already has in place, to ensure a comprehensive service plan.

Hennepin County, Minn.’s “No Wrong Door” also dedicates funding for an investigators and prosecutors to focus

on sex trafficking cases.

It’s not just changes in how counties treat victims or perpetrators that make the difference. Hennepin County’s training goes as far down to front-line county employees.

“It’s subtle things like language and word choice,” said Commissioner Marion Greene. “These employees in our health department, sheriff’s office...people who might come in contact with trafficking victims.”

When developing the Los Angeles County Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol, Guymon said it was crucial to be as responsive to victims’ needs as their pimps.

“They’ll tell them, ‘who else is going to pick up the phone when you call in the middle of the night,’ as a way to create dependence and trust,” she said. “That’s why we have to be there, too.”

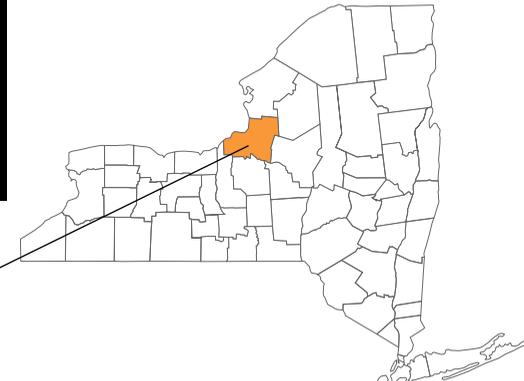
Many of those children have long histories of being let down by adults, so counties have a chance to break that pattern.

Greene concurred, and that backs the county’s mandate to all county service providers.

“There’s a lot of distrust because these kids likely had bad experiences that involved county social services before,” she said. “We need to communicate as government, ‘We see you.’” **CN**

GET TO KNOW...

Oswego County, N.Y.



Welcome, Oswego County, N.Y.

Oswego County was named for a word from the Mohawk language meaning “the outpouring” due to its location at the mouth of the Oswego River, which opens into Lake Ontario. Founded in 1816, **the area began to develop when it served as a military post on the American border.** Two harbors in the county — Oswego Harbor and Port Ontario — are home to several historical sites and landmarks, including Salmon River and the **West Pier-head lighthouses.**



Labor trafficking is an 'invisible' epidemic

By **Mary Ann Barton**
senior staff writer

Some county employees who come in contact with the public would be trained to recognize and report signs of labor trafficking, under a proposal by King County, Wash. Councilmember Jeanne Kohl-Welles.

Washington state is a focal point for the recruitment, transportation and sale of people for labor

because of the state's abundance of ports, proximity to an international border, vast rural areas and dependency on agricultural workers. Ready access to Asia and Mexico has made King County a "hot spot" for labor trafficking, the county has noted.

"Regardless if we're talking about labor trafficking or sex trafficking, the major problem is identifying individuals," said Kohl-Welles, who has been involved in trying to stamp out trafficking for more than a decade, since her days as a state lawmaker. Washington was the first state to criminalize hu-

man trafficking, in 2003.

"Frequently, from what I understand, people who have been trafficked are very reticent about reporting anything because they've usually been threatened," she said.

Those threats include everything from being deported to harming their families, she noted. Because many don't come forward, "it's very difficult to ascertain the number of people who are trafficked and that makes it more difficult to provide assistance," she said. Globally, the International Labor Organization estimates there are 14.2 million people trapped in forced labor.

Modern-day slavery, dubbed "labor trafficking," can be found in every state in the country, where individuals are forced to perform labor or services through fraud and coercion, according to the National Human Trafficking Hotline.

Labor trafficking takes many forms, including debt bondage, forced labor and involuntary child labor. Common types of labor trafficking in-

clude people forced to work in homes as domestic servants, farmworkers coerced through violence as they harvest crops or factory workers held in inhumane conditions with little to no pay.

The problem is found in urban, suburban and rural counties. In Licking County, Ohio, health officials are offering classes to help residents spot signs of trafficking. The classes are free to anyone interested thanks to federal funding from Ohio Children's Trust Fund.

The county was the site of several raids in 2015 by federal investigators after children from Guatemala, who came to the United States as unaccompanied minors, were claimed by unscrupulous people who then handed them over to work in a human trafficking operation in Ohio.

They were forced to live in broken-down trailers and work 12-hour days at egg farms.

In Alameda County, Calif., Nancy O'Malley, district attorney, formed a labor trafficking task force; her office has prosecuted more than 20 labor trafficking cases.

The labor task force meets quarterly and includes government organizations at all levels, community-based organizations, law enforcement and other stakeholders in the fight to end exploitation of vulnerable workers. The purpose of the group is to develop and vet best practices in the enforcement of labor exploitation and the rendering of services to its survivors.

In addition, the Alameda County district attorney maintains a tip line for anyone to report suspected labor trafficking. Meanwhile, a hearing on labor trafficking is planned Aug. 21 in King County, before a committee Kohl-Welles chairs to further explore the issue. Her proposals are based on a study completed last year on labor trafficking.

The hearing on labor trafficking comes on the heels of action taken by the King County Council last month, when councilmembers approved a new effort to highlight and prevent human trafficking including labor trafficking. Its goals are to:

- Raise public awareness, in-

SIGNS OF LABOR TRAFFICKING

- A sleeping bag at a business
- Rehearsed answers to casual questions
- Overly submissive workers
- Small children serving in a family restaurant
- Barbed wire or bars on windows
- Malnourishment
- Bruises

cluding how and where it occurs, and how to prevent and stop it

- Help identify victims and promote services to them, and
- Decrease demand in trafficking.

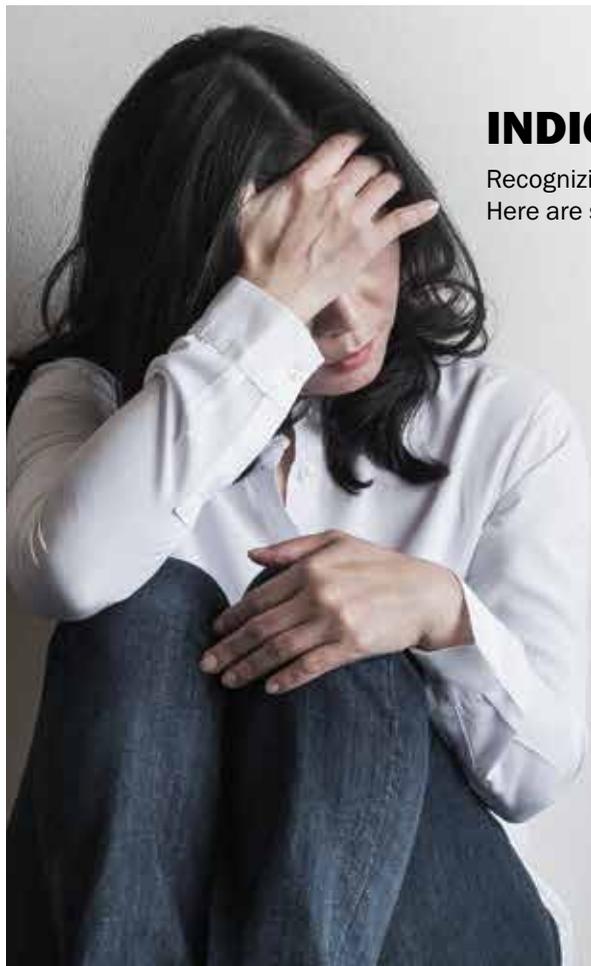
"Labor trafficking is an insidious and oftentimes invisible epidemic," said Kohl-Welles, who sponsored the effort, "and it is imperative we take steps as a regional government, and as a community, to address its systemic nature and reach survivors." 

SPOTLIGHT ON: HUMAN TRAFFICKING

INDICATORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Recognizing key indicators of human trafficking is the first step in identifying victims and can help save a life. Here are some common indicators to help recognize human trafficking:

- Does the person appear disconnected from family, friends, community organizations, or houses of worship?
- Has a child stopped attending school?
- Has the person had a sudden or dramatic change in behavior?
- Is a juvenile engaged in commercial sex acts?
- Is the person disoriented or confused, or showing signs of mental or physical abuse?
- Does the person have bruises in various stages of healing?
- Is the person fearful, timid, or submissive?
- Does the person show signs of having been denied food, water, sleep, or medical care?
- Is the person often in the company of someone to whom he or she defers? Or someone who seems to be in control of the situation, e.g., where they go or who they talk to?
- Does the person appear to be coached on what to say?
- Is the person living in unsuitable conditions?
- Does the person lack personal possessions and appear not to have a stable living situation?
- Does the person have freedom of movement? Can the person freely leave where they live? Are there unreasonable security measures?





GANGS TRAFFIC VULNERABLE JUVENILES FOR PROFIT

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

How much of sex trafficking is driven by gangs?

Just ask Bill Woolf, a former detective with Fairfax County, Va., who now runs a human trafficking prevention program he founded in Northern Virginia.

"Lots of gangs are shifting to human trafficking as their primary form of making money," said Woolf, who was a gang detective and co-director of a regional task force on human trafficking for many years in Fairfax County until last fall.

Human trafficking has been on the rise among gangs because it does not present as high a risk for gangs as trafficking in drugs or guns, said Woolf. Human victims can be manipulated and don't always come forward out of misplaced loyalty for the gang, and sometimes refuse to acknowledge they are a victim.

The FBI estimates that more than a million gang members prey upon communities across the country, and increasingly rely on sex trafficking to support themselves.

"I would say 51 percent of traffickers have some ties to gangs," said Woolf. It's a crime that saw 200 victims and 120 traffickers over the course of the last three years in Fairfax County. It can be found everywhere,

he noted — in rural, suburban and urban counties.

Examples can be found across the country. In Suffolk County, N.Y., earlier this year, five alleged members of the Bloods gang were busted in a major human trafficking ring. Last month, the county announced it was creating a permanent human trafficking investigative unit on the heels of the arrests and now treats prostitutes who are arrested as victims.

"This is not a victimless crime," said Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone. The victims, he said, are the prostitutes themselves.

In Pierce County, Wash., it was a cross-jurisdictional effort that landed several alleged gang members last fall in a sex trafficking ring. All face human trafficking charges by the county Prosecuting Attorney's Office. In all, 15 victims were identified, including one victim who was 13 years old.

According to the county's Human Trafficking Unit, which works closely with the county's Gang Unit, the penalties are severe in Washington state. The sentence for first-degree human trafficking is the equivalent to that of second-degree murder, with a convicted trafficker or pimp looking at spending approximately 25 years behind bars.

Gangs gain victims' trust

Gangs who are sex traffickers look for three things, Woolf said, when they are looking for trafficking victims: Accessibility, manipulation and a vulnerability to exploit. "They're looking for their opportunity to strike."

There are several ways that gangs con their victims, he said. One of those is using the "boyfriend-girlfriend ruse," when a gang member pretends to be the victim's boyfriend to gain her confidence. Once the victim has been talked into having sex with strangers, to "help the boyfriend pay his rent" or some similar ploy, the gang member might then blackmail the victim by saying they will post information about the "prostitute" on social media, tell her parents or call the police.

Another way a gang-member cons victims is to find vulnerable juveniles looking for the closeness of a family environment, Woolf said. One victim whose parents were going through a divorce, he recalled, was recruited by a "friend" who was already being trafficked by a gang. "She saw this as an opportunity. 'Hey, why don't you come over and hang out with my friends?' It was a very hospitable environment. She got comfortable there. They told her 'You are part of the family. As a member, you have to

SPOTLIGHT ON:
HUMAN TRAFFICKING

PROFILES IN SERVICE

RANDY HANVELT

Public Lands Steering Committee Chair
Supervisor
Tuolumne County, Calif.



HANVELT

Number of years involved in NACo: 5

Years in public service: 8

Occupation: Retired global executive (General Electric Co.)

Education: Engineering degree from Harvey Mudd College; nuclear engineering degree from UC Berkeley

The hardest thing I've ever done is: Basic research in nuclear thermionics.

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner are: Jesus Christ, Leonardo DaVinci and Gloria Hanvelt (my wife of 53 years).

A dream I have is to: Have a rational scientific and systems-based approach to public lands management.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done was: Race Hawaiian outrigger canoes across the Catalina Channel three times.

My favorite way to relax is: Gardening.

I'm most proud of: The most wonderful woman I somehow convinced to marry me.

Every morning I read: My daily devotion.

My favorite meal is: The last one I had with my wife, Gloria.

My pet peeve is: Ignorance.
My motto is: Only two things happen in life: results and excuses. No one likes excuses, so we do not offer any and we do not take any either.

My favorite movie is: Patton.
My favorite music is: Classical.

My favorite U.S. president is: Ronald Reagan.

My county is a NACo member because: We have been members of NACo forever, but never really participated. About six years ago, I gave the assignment to one of our new supervisors to find out what NACo was all about. We now participate in as much as we can: Legislative Conference, WIR, Annual Conference, PILT Fly-In, several committees and monthly phone calls. NACo is a really good partnership for us.



You'd be surprised to learn that I:
Have conducted a symphony orchestra.

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION



FLORIDA

After 24 years of a state ban, scalloping — and its potential **tourism dollars** — is making a comeback off the waters of **PASCO COUNTY**, the *Tampa Bay Times* reported. In February, the state approved a 2018 scalloping season for the county, which is compiling data to determine the number of visitors who come to fish for scallops and also plans to build more boat ramps for visitors. Each boat can collect up to 10 gallons of whole scallops per day or a half gallon of scallop meat.

For the first time since 1994, Pasco County, Fla. will have a scallop season and with it, the county hopes, more tourism dollars. Photo courtesy of Florida Fish and Wildlife



ALASKA

If nothing else, Alaskans have to be counted as among the country's most resourceful population. When **hackers** disabled **MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH'S** computer system and email server last month, borough staff rolled out some old tech-

nology — typewriters — to help bridge the gap. According to BBC News, folks from the Last Frontier State used the late 19th-century technology to type receipts, make library member lists and keep track of landfill fees as they rebuilt their 21st-century systems.

ARIZONA

You may have heard of “most popular baby names” lists, but **MARICOPA COUNTY** is taking it a step further and releasing information on the **most popular dog names**, courtesy of its database of

more than 300,000 licensed dogs. Its top 10, from most popular, are: Bella, Max, Daisy, Lucy, Buddy, Molly, Charlie, Bailey, Sadie and Maggie. The county also included links to adoptable dogs around the county in its announcement.

DELAWARE

NEW CASTLE COUNTY will put 34 **problem rental properties** up for sale via its Sheriff's Department under a new county policy, *The News Journal* reported. The county took action because the landlord owed \$415,000 in back taxes, the homes are in squalid condition and police were continuously being called to the properties. The point of the new policy, which came about after changes to state laws, is to pressure landlords to properly maintain their homes and keep up with their tax obligations, County Executive Matt Meyer said.

He signed an executive order directing the county finance department

to begin sheriff sale proceedings when it's determined that the owner of two or more properties (just one for commercial property owners) display a disregard for paying taxes and keeping properties up to code. Neighbors cheered the action taken by the county, telling the newspaper that the actions of some landlords were “tearing down our neighborhoods.”

GEORGIA

FLOYD COUNTY residents are leaving **too much junk** — used clothing and household goods — around community drop boxes. County commissioners are planning on passing a new ordinance to deal with the problem. “Donation bins are littering the county... we're in the process of working on an ordinance to deal with this as a nuisance,” Commissioner Scotty Hancock said. Commissioners say they don't want to put a damper on donations to charities but note that some donation boxes go unattended. “The YMCA has a box, but they maintain it,” County Manager Jamie McCord said. “If we don't write this ordinance the right way, we're going to hurt people who are do-

ing the right thing.”

KANSAS

• **BUTLER COUNTY** is considering shutting down a **plastics recycling business** because it's become an eyesore, the *Wichita Eagle* reported. County commissioners might revoke its business permit, the newspaper reported. The company has “ignored the county and allowed the condition of the property to continue to be an eyesore,” the county noted in a report. The county said it hopes to work with a partner to clean up the acres of debris instead of just hauling everything off to a landfill.

• **JOHNSON COUNTY** unveiled an \$18 million **library** recently, the first for the county in 18 years. The 33,000-square foot building features an outdoor deck with charging stations, a collection of 90,000 books and other materials including 21,000 audiobooks, 2,500 music CDs and more than 13,000 DVDs. Computer stations offer eight PCs and six Macs; patrons are also encouraged to bring their own laptops to take advantage of high-speed WiFi. Patrons will



find self-serve checkout kiosks, a drive-through window for busy parents to pick up holds and a 24-hour outdoor book drop-off.

NEVADA

- Investigations into the **Oct. 1, 2017 shooting** from a Las Vegas hotel room window that killed 58 people and injured 851 have ended, with no apparent motive by the shooter, who appears to have acted alone. **CLARK COUNTY** Sheriff Joe Lombardo said that despite falling outside of the federal definition, the shooting should qualify as an act of terrorism.

- WASHOE COUNTY** is expanding its network of equipment to monitor air quality conditions in outlying areas of the county in response to Northern California wildfires. More **portable air quality stations** will supplement the several air quality stations in Reno and Sparks, Fox 4 News in Reno reported.

NEW JERSEY

- In an increasing number of places, taking a plastic bag from a store will involve a 5-cent charge. In an **ATLANTIC COUNTY** park, bringing



in a plastic bag could mean up to a \$500 fine. The county parks department's **ban on single-use plastic bags and straws** took effect Aug. 14, in an effort to keep plastic out of the ocean and covers 7,000 acres of county parks, WPVI News reported.

- ESSEX COUNTY** is clearing out and closing accounts with Wells Fargo because of the bank's history of aggressive foreclosure and predatory lending practices. The county **withdrew a total of \$3.8 million** from its accounts at the bank, according to an announcement.

"As a county government we cannot control how banks operate, but we can support our residents and homeowners by sending a strong message that Essex County will only invest its funds with institutions that have client-friendly business practices and support com-

munity building," said County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.

NEW YORK

CAYUGA COUNTY is aiming to hire someone to help **inmates transition** to civilian life, which would make it the first county in the state to do so. A transitional care coordinator would help inmates coordinate with social service agencies to set up access to transitional housing, substance abuse programs, mental health appointments and job training.

The Auburn Citizen reports that while the state requires such a role, no counties have filled it. Sheriff David Gould said the transition coordinator will replace one of the open nurse positions on his staff and would ultimately save the county money by reducing recidivism.

OHIO

HAMILTON COUNTY police have orders to arrest anyone defying an order banning **homeless camps** in the county. Common Pleas Judge Robert Ruhlman's order responds to a request from County Prosecutor Joe De-

ters, following days of fighting in court over homeless camps that first appeared in downtown Cincinnati and moved just beyond boundaries of a growing no-camp zone. The judge said police and sheriff's deputies should arrest anyone who refuses to leave and seize their tents and belongings.

U.S. District Judge Timothy Black upheld the ban, declaring that the city could, essentially, outlaw homelessness if there was adequate space in shelters. The city and county have a capacity for 800 people, and the *Cincinnati Enquirer* reported there were vacancies.

UTAH

Location may be the key to real estate sales, but for the state of Utah, timing was more crucial.

The State Homeless Coordinating Committee voted to make an offer to buy a 1,100-bed emergency homeless shelter in **SALT LAKE COUNTY**, but did so two months after the county's real estate **assessment doubled the value of the property**. What had been worth \$3.2 million in 2017 is now worth \$7.7 million. That is well above the \$4 million mark Lt. Gov. Spencer Cox told the *Salt Lake Tribune* he hoped for the value of the property. Much more than that would require legislative approval.

WISCONSIN

Text messages sent and received on **ROCK COUNTY**-issued cell phones will soon be archived to comply with **public record retention policy**. Texts on county-issued cell phones will be stored on a server and kept for seven years via an app installed on 573 phones.

If an open records request is filed for text messages, IT staff will retrieve the messages and, along with department heads, supply "substantive" texts, according to *The Gazette*. Some county employees, including detectives in the Bureau of Investigation, will be exempt from the archiving system.

WYOMING

Overuse by out-of-area semi-trucks and tourist traffic is prompting the **WASHAKIE COUNTY** Board of Commissioners to consider **limiting two county roads to local traffic only**. The roads have been damaged by visitors, particularly heavy trucks and speeding drivers, and an ordinance closing either of the roads would give the Sheriff's Office the jurisdiction to issue citations for non-residents using the roads. The *Northern Wyoming Daily News* reported that that action could be taken immediately on one road, but another would require coordination with **BIG HORN COUNTY**, the Wyoming Department of Transportation and, possibly a public hearing.

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.

Recruitment often violent

From GANGS page 13

'take care' of us."

Other times, falling prey to a gang can be very violent. "A young woman thought she was dating a guy and was gang-raped at a party," Woolf said. "If he can get her agree to do it once, now you get the psychological effects. It's very detrimental. It's very traumatic."

Woolf noted that there are a variety of ways counties can combat human trafficking, including teaching prevention programs in schools, intervention through law enforcement and rehabilitation of victims. **CN**

To find out more about preventing human trafficking in your county, visit Woolf's prevention program website, Just Ask, at: www.justaskprevention.org.



WASHINGTON

With a Puget Sound orca whale in jeopardy, **KING COUNTY** has deployed its **marine research vessel**, SoundGuardian, to aid recovery operations coordinated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to feed a malnourished whale. The orca population is at a 30-year-low in the Pacific Northwest, with one 4-year-old orca badly emaciated. Experts believe J50 may only have a few weeks to live without an intervention. Photo courtesy of King County, Wash.

the HR DOCTOR

with Philpot & Winkeler

Text neck, as defined by *spine-health.com* is “neck pain and damage sustained from looking down at your cell phone, tablet or other wireless devices too frequently and for too long.” You have seen it all around you — at a meeting break, in line at the grocery store, a pedestrian walking down the sidewalk or with kids in the backseat of a car — or you have known the feeling yourself. The whole world appears to have text neck, maybe not the pain, but certainly the angle of downward glance. (Why is it so awkward to raise our hands to eye level when we look at our phones or tablets?) But text neck, as it is now called, isn’t entirely new. As a Mount Whitney climber recently shared, text neck feels a lot like hiker’s neck. When you hike all day, constantly looking down at your feet looking for rocks and steps, the neck angle is very much the same. Also, avid readers will recognize the neck stretch that is text neck.

According to the 2018 Liberty Mutual Workplace Safety Index, serious, non-fatal workplace injuries cost U.S. businesses more \$1 billion a week, or \$60 billion a year, with repetitive motion involving micro-tasks accounting for \$1.5 billion of the total.

The question, truly, is how can we improve not just text neck, but overall posture, particularly when we are seated?

According to a 2016 article by *Business Insider*, 86 percent of Americans sit all day at work. If this includes you, here are some ergonomic basics to assist in avoiding workplace injuries at your desk:

1. Adjust your chair

You just inherited an office chair that was likely adjusted for someone else. That former

employee may have been four inches taller or shorter, than you are. As part of onboarding, block out 20 minutes to adjust the office chair. If you don’t know how, YouTube has resources on how to adjust an office chair. The office chair is one of the most important tools you use every day and has levers and knobs that adjust everything from height, position and tilt.

2. 90-degree angles

Proper posture says that your elbows, hips, knees and ankles should be at 90-degree angles when seated. Adjust a chair with a buddy, where you and your co-worker evaluate how you are each sitting at your desk. Tell one another if your elbows and knees are at 90-degree angles. Perhaps you take each other’s photo sitting at your desk, so you can see if your posture at your desk resembles the mental image you have in your mind.

3. Eyes even with the top of the monitor

Often employees think they should be looking at the mid-

dle of the screen for proper ergonomics, but the rule of thumb is actually for the top of the screen to be at eye level so the chin is level and the spine is straight.

4. Wrists neutral

Wrists should be neutral or level to the work surface with a padded wrist rest. The mouse should be close to the keyboard, maintaining the 90-degree elbow position.

5. Avoid twisting

Work chairs turn, swivel and have wheels so you can turn your chair rather than twist your body. (The wheels on the chair are not just to give a few inches of height when trying to reach an item on a high shelf — please don’t try this at home.)

Avoid the temptation to lean or twist for that heavy binder without moving the chair.

If you need the binder on a regular basis as a desk resource, consider moving it to a location of greater convenience, or use the need to access the binder as a reason to stand up and take a break from sitting.

6. Use a foot rest

Having a foot rest can result in better overall posture in addition to making sure your feet touch the floor.

7. Head tilt

Holding a phone, either desk phone or cell phone, with your shoulder can create neck strain. Often, in the past, desk phones had a cradle, but headsets, and speaker phone options are also available. If possible, use the phone call as an opportunity to change position, stand if you were seated, sit if you were standing.

8. Don’t forget the lighting

Having to squint, strain or get very close to the monitor is bad for your posture, and sometimes this is caused by improper lighting as much as by seated position. Glare from a window or light may be corrected by a slight adjustment to the monitor. If you have to wear a hat at your desk, this might indicate a less than ideal situation.

9. Help others

If you see an employee’s workstation with boxes, books and magazines under the keyboard, mouse or armrests, it is likely an indication that chair adjustments may be needed. It also may be preventing wrist neutral position.

10. Remember to stretch

Take several minutes every hour, maybe even while you are on the phone, to roll your wrists, roll your shoulders and extend your arms. Also, “stretch” your eyes by focusing on an object far away from you.

Need some ergonomics materials, but don’t have an ergonomics expert? Here are some fun and informational resources:

The Department of Environmental Health and Safety at the University of Pittsburg has an Office Ergonomics Powerpoint available online at <https://www.ehs.pitt.edu/assets/docs/OfficeErgonomics.pdf> which may be helpful to share at an office staff meeting. The presentation covers a multitude of ergonomic topics including keyboard trays, mouse position, monitor height, phone use and lighting.

The University of California Performing Arts Safety Manual is a two-page safety guide developed by the Regents of California and is a great discussion starter on ergonomics, https://www.ucop.edu/environment-health-safety/_files/perform-arts/ergo.pdf. And of course, OSHA has an excellent resource on ergonomics, which may be found at <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/ergonomics/>.

Lowering our shoulders and taking a minute to stretch can not only improve posture, and lessen workplace injuries, but also reduce stress.

So let’s all take a moment, inventory our posture, adjust all the knobs on our chair, and best use the office tools already provided. It is time well spent. **CN**

