



NCCAE MEMBERS TALK PRIORITIES AT NACo MEETING IN D.C. PG. 5



ON-CALL SERVICE SPREADS TRANSIT OPPORTUNITIES. PG. 6



LIBRARY FOCUSES ON AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY. PG. 14

Appropriations to dominate fall legislative agenda

by Valerie Brankovic

As 2019 winds down, both Congress and the White House have a long to-do list, with FY 2020 appropriations and major program reauthorizations topping the agenda.

County priorities — ranging from human services to disaster recovery — will be at the center of these negotiations.

President Trump's approval of a two-year budget deal in August set the stage for Congress to complete FY 2020 appropriations bills by establishing topline spending levels for defense and domestic programs. However, legislators face an important deadline: The end of FY 2019 on Sept. 30, when funding for federal agencies and programs will expire if Congress does not complete spending legislation or pass a continuing resolution (CR).

Over the past few months,

the U.S. House Appropriations Committee approved all 12 annual appropriations bills for FY 2020.

However, since the House completed FY 2020 appropriations legislation prior to passage of the two-year budget deal, spending levels approved in the spending bills could be revised to comply with what is outlined in the budget agreement.

Across the Capitol, the U.S. Senate has held hearings on each of the FY 2020 appropriations measures and scheduled markups for these bills in September. However, with the Sept.

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Mariposa County, Calif. Supervisor Kevin Cann, president of NA-Co's Western Interstate Region, briefs 100 county officials at the Annual Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) Fly-In, held Sept. 10-12 in Washington, D.C. Photo by Hugh Clarke

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Erie County's Fiore Leone recalls four decades of service

by Rachel Looker
staff writer

There is no stopping 86-year-old Fiore Leone, council chairman of Erie County, Pa.

On a hot August day, it's hard to keep up with Leone's pace as he stops at points along Lake Erie's Presque Isle Bay. He walks through the county's waterfront public library, viewing an Idea Lab and a Heritage Room with historic county records. He travels next door to the Bayfront Convention Center where he views meeting rooms and explores two hotels connected to

the center. He then hits the road driving to Pleasant Ridge Manor, a county-operated geriatric center, before ending his day gaveling in a council meeting in an adjacent township.

These places all have one thing in common: Over four decades of service, they are Leone's proudest accomplishments.

Born and raised in Erie County, Leone was elected to the original Erie County Council that formed in 1978. He is retiring in January 2020, which will mark exactly 42 years of service and

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Hurricane Dorian: Coastal counties face flooding, power outages

by Rachel Looker
staff writer

With the second week of September marking the peak of the Atlantic Hurricane season, coastal counties along the eastern United States are recovering from the impacts of the season's first major storm: Hurricane Dorian.

Dorian's only landfall in the United States occurred at Cape Hatteras in Dare County, N.C., where it was identified as a Category 1 storm with maximum winds near 90 mph, according to the National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration. The county was under mandatory evacuation prior to the hurricane.

Dare County Manager Bobby Outten said the southernmost areas of the county, near the villages of Avon, Frisco and Hatteras, were hit the hardest by the storm.

Dorian's impacts left the county with significant flooding and downed trees that left vegetative debris on roads, Outten said.

"For the most part, we're in

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Dorian floods coastal roadways

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the recovery stage down south but we're getting closer every day and certainly grateful that it isn't as bad as it could have been," he said.

Dare County started preparing for the hurricane season in March, Outten said. When it became apparent that Hurricane Dorian was going to impact the North Carolina coast, the county began to monitor its path and checked generators, gas and fuel supplies and ensured that all emergency management personnel were available and prepared to handle the storm.

The county has a control group that includes the chair of the county commissioners,

mayors, the National Park Service, superintendent and the sheriff who meet and discuss emergency plans. The county's joint operations center works to provide information to the public and starts a public awareness program to inform county residents about the hurricane.

"Since the storm has hit, we meet almost every day regularly with those people... and start the recovery process and make sure we're meeting the people's needs, getting things where they need to be and taking care of the problems we have," Outten said.

In Currituck County, County Manager Ben Stikeleather said the hurricane caused downed trees and power outages. For



Drone shots show the flooding of North Carolina Highway 12 in Hyde County, N.C. Photo courtesy the North Carolina Department of Transportation

36 hours, two thirds of the county's population was without power, he said, adding that every county facility was using power generators at some point during the storm.

"If it hadn't been for our public safety servants and for the volunteer firemen here, along with the DOT, we would have had roads that would have been blocked for several days," he said.

Stikeleather estimated debris cleanup will last for at least one month.

"I think that it's important to recognize that a lot of communities on the North Carolina coast... we don't have large municipalities so we do not have a large staff to pull from when these kind of things happen," he said.

Other areas in eastern North and South Carolina dealt with several tornadoes, one that reached wind speeds of 115 mph.

Ocracoke Island, an island that is part of the Outer Banks region in Hyde County, N.C.,

experienced severe storm surge ranging from four to seven feet, leaving North Carolina Highway 12 severely flooded.

Hyde County Board of Commissioners enacted a mandatory evacuation of all Hyde County residents and dispatched air transportation units to help evacuate residents. Following the storm, the island of Ocracoke was without power and under a boil water advisory. Ferry services between Ocracoke Island to other islands in the region and the mainland were temporarily suspended.

There have been three fatalities in North Carolina related to Hurricane Dorian that occurred during storm preparations or storm cleanup.

North Carolina Emergency Management has requested help from FEMA to conduct damage assessments.


According to the National Weather Service, Hurricane Dorian formed from a tropical wave in the Central Atlantic and strengthened as it trans-

formed into a Category 5 storm and made landfall in the Bahamas. The storm caused massive devastation to the islands where it hovered over Grand Bahama Island for 18 hours before making its way toward the United States.

Elsewhere, Dorian brought hurricane and tropical storm warnings to counties stretching from Florida to Virginia.

On Sept. 4, the hurricane weakened as it traveled parallel to the east coast of Florida, with the storm 95 miles off the coast of Volusia County. Coastal counties in the state faced tropical-storm force winds and heavy rain. Flagler County and Indian River County experienced major beach erosion.

In the following days, Hurricane Dorian headed north toward the coasts of North and South Carolina.

Charleston County, Beaufort County and Horry County along coastal South Carolina received heavy rain and strong wind gusts that downed trees and wires. 

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LIBRARY STATS	NUMBER
No. of public libraries in United States:	16,568
No. of in-person visits to libraries, by year:	1.4 billion
No. who attend library programs, by year:	113 million
No. of public libraries offering free Wi-Fi:	Nearly 100%
Libraries that offer tech training to patrons:	84%
Libraries that offer online homework help:	95%

Source: American Library Association

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Congress looks ahead at workforce development, environment, infrastructure

From CONGRESS page 1

30 deadline fast approaching, legislators will have a limited timeframe to consider each of the 12 spending measures and reconcile differences with both the House legislation and the two-year budget agreement. The Senate Appropriations Committee was expected to begin holding markups last week.

During these negotiations, Congress will consider funding for federal programs important to counties, including the Payment-in-Lieu-of-Tax (PILT) program, improvements to the nation's infrastructure and programs for the prevention and treatment of substance use disorders.

Reauthorization of NFIP and TANF

Beyond FY 2020 appropriations, Congress must still consider reauthorizations for major federal programs, including the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and the Temporary Assistance for Needy

Families (TANF) program.

NFIP provides insurance coverage to property owners for damages resulting from catastrophic flooding. The program is currently operating under the 12th short-term extension following its expiration at the end of FY 2017. In the 116th Congress, multiple reauthorization bills have been introduced, including bipartisan legislation sponsored by Sen. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.) and Rep. Frank Pallone (D-N.J.).

In addition to enacting five-year reauthorizations, these proposals aim to enhance and modernize NFIP and increase funding for flood map improvements.

The House and Senate must still negotiate differences in these bills and may have to enact another short-term extension in order to finalize a long-term reauthorization in October or November.

NACo supports Congress' efforts to enact a long-term NFIP reauthorization and new resources that could improve

counties' ability to respond to natural disasters.

Similar to NFIP, TANF is also set to expire on Sept. 30. Administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), TANF is a federal entitlement program providing funds to states, tribes and territories for a wide range of benefits and activities to address both the effects and the root causes of poverty.

In 10 states, counties play a significant role in funding and operating the program, including directly contributing to TANF's maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements.

Republican legislators in the House and Senate recently reintroduced the JOBS for Success Act, which would enact a five-year reauthorization for TANF while making significant alterations to the program's work and administrative requirements.

Given the potential impact of these changes on counties, NACo is continuing to work with lawmakers to ensure a bi-

partisan TANF reauthorization is enacted prior to the Sept. 30 deadline.

Regulatory issues

In addition to Congress' busy legislative agenda, regulatory issues will take center stage in the coming months at federal agencies.

Leading items include the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed changes to the current Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) definition and the agency's upcoming regulations around the integrated planning legislation that passed in December 2018.

This fall, EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers are expected to release a final WOTUS rule. This move follows the agencies' 2017 release of a proposal to withdraw the 2015 WOTUS definition implemented under the Obama Administration and reinstate the 1986 WOTUS regulations.

After the rule is finalized this fall, EPA and the Army Corps will issue a finalized WOTUS

definition by summer 2020. NACo has worked closely with both agencies on the proposed rule and in April 2019 submitted comments detailing how the rule could impact county-owned infrastructure.

EPA is also weighing regulatory action on the integrated planning legislation that passed in December 2018. The Water Infrastructure Improvement Act allows localities to bundle permitting requirements outlined under the Clean Water Act, rather than filing separate permits for each requirement.

Looking ahead to 2020

This fall, Congress is also prepping for various program reauthorizations taking place next year, including renewal of the surface transportation legislation, titled the America's Transportation Infrastructure Act (ATIA) and reauthorization of the federal workforce legislation, the Workforce Innovation

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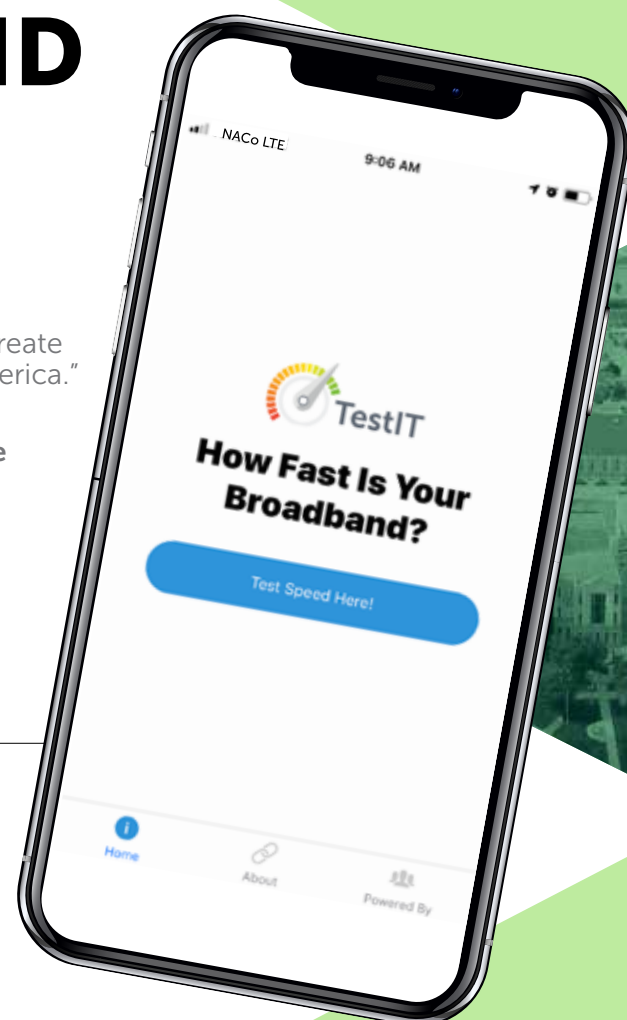
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Pa. councilman looks back at 42 years of service

From LEONE page 1

makes Leone the longest tenured county official in the state of Pennsylvania.

His resume is quite impressive: Member of the county board of elections and member of the Board of Trustees for the county nursing home since 1979, liaison to the Regional Chamber of Commerce Industrial Development Authority, served on the board of both the Regional Airport Authority and the City and County Gaming Authority, chairman of the Erie County Retirement Board and last but certainly not least, served nine times as Erie County Council chairman.

Four decades ago, Leone's motivation to run for county council stemmed from the state of the Pleasant Ridge Manor, a geriatric center located in the county, which Leone described as a "pigsty" at the time that was not a caring environment for the elderly.

"I've always had a heart for the aged and indigent in this community and I focused on Pleasant Ridge Manor," he said.

He fought for nearly 10 years for the county to operate the facility and improve its conditions.

Now, he said the center provides services with dignity and respect for those in long-term care.

Marking his other accomplishments, Leone helped to establish a county-operated library system that was previously controlled by the Erie School



Erie County Council Chairman Fiore Leone leads a county council meeting in Fairview Township, Pa. Photo by Rachel Looker

District.

"The county looked at it [the library system] and said it's time we did something better for the community than what has happened as far as the library services," he said.

Today, the library system's main branch, the Raymond M. Blasco Memorial Library, is located on the Presque Isle Bay waterfront and provides a variety of services such as an Idea Lab, a media lab, career resources and a Genealogy and Heritage Room that collects materials relating to Erie County history.

"The library is probably the catalyst of what transpired on our bayfront area," he said.

The Presque Isle Bay waterfront development has been one of the major transformations

Leone has seen in the county throughout his tenure.

"If you look at it now compared to 1978, there isn't any comparison," he said.

"I mean... there was nothing in 1978."

In 2007, the construction of the Bayfront Convention Center created northwest Pennsylvania's largest convention and meeting space venue that connects 400 hotel rooms and 128,000 square feet of meeting space.

"The county felt it was necessary. We felt it was something that was needed to attract or try to attract economic development within the community," he said.

Throughout his elected career, Leone has seen county

government adapt with new and expanding governmental responsibilities.

"It's changed because there are many issues that have become involved in county governments that have added to the services of county government," he said.

"When I was here in 1978, the budget wasn't even close to what it is right now."

Looking to the future, Leone said he believes the most pressing issue facing county governments are state mandates.

He referred to a mandate that requires Erie County to replace the current voting machines with machines that produce a paper trail.

"The mandate is to have the machine, but the state doesn't want to pay for them.

But the governor says we'll pay a portion of them, so who pays the difference? The local taxpayers and that's where there's a lot of things that have to change from the federal government to the state government even to the local government," he said.

These challenges never discouraged Leone from running for council.

"Just something that got into my blood and I started running and I thought 'I'll do what I have to do as far as the community is concerned,'" he said.

"I'm not ashamed of my services. I've worked hard and I did what I thought was right for the community."

This year, Leone was recognized for his service as part of the Governor's Awards for Local Government Excellence and was awarded the Outstanding County Commissioner/Council Member of the Year Award by the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania.

"I always felt I did what I always thought was right, he said.

"I did what I always felt was best for my constituents, for the people I represent."

Leone will retire in January, but the concept of retirement isn't new to him.

He retired twice before after serving as the Director of Facilities and Operations for almost 30 years at the Erie School District and after working as a consultant with an architect firm for over 23 years.

"I just want to be able to say I've been a good guy and I want to be able to help those that have problems," he said.

"I'll miss the people that I've represented for the past 42 years."

And what doesn't come as a surprise?

"I do intend to keep quite busy even after I retire," he said, "if you want to call it retiring." **CN**

House could act on surface transportation soon

From CONGRESS page 3

and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

This July, the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee approved the ATIA bill, which would reauthorize the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and provide new competitive grants to support construction of resilient infrastructure.

Although Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-

Ky.) has signaled he's open to a vote on the legislation, any movement will likely come after the chamber finalizes FY 2020 appropriations.

The House could move on a surface transportation bill later this year or early next year.

In addition, Congress is also beginning discussions around reauthorization of WIOA, which will expire Sept. 30, 2020. WIOA provides federal funding to states and counties

for a wide range of workforce development and job training programs and has been critically important to helping counties respond to economic downturns and other challenges.

Between finalizing appropriations and preparing for major program reauthorizations, Congress has plenty to do over the next few months, and at any point could tie in other issues to these discussions. **CN**

County state associations prioritize legislative issues

by Rachel Looker
staff writer

State associations of counties are sharing priorities to address the top issues facing county governments.

Senior representatives from NACo and members from state associations of counties met last month to share their perspectives on legislative priorities during a roundtable-style discussion at the 2019 NACo-National Council of County Association Executives (NC-CAE) Knowledge Management Forum held at NACo headquarters.

Through a survey and other research, NACo gathered information from 89 percent of states with a state association of counties and identified three main legislative priorities:

- Finance, pensions and intergovernmental affairs
- Justice and public safety
- Transportation

Participants worked to narrow down specific issues regarding these priorities during the discussion.

"We need your stories and how you approached these things in your counties and in your state associations so we can take the next step," said Kevin Leonard, executive director of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, who welcomed attendees to the forum.

Inmate healthcare

The discussion kicked off with justice and public safety, with Leonard explaining that counties in North Carolina are dealing with inmate medical issues.

He referred to the suspension versus termination issue that involves connecting eligible individuals with Medicaid to reduce the long-term costs for county jails.

Clint Mueller, legislative director for Advancing Georgia's Counties, discussed the gap between the time when inmates are released and when they can access Medicaid or other hu-

man services programs, which poses challenges specifically for inmates who are on medications.

Other state association representatives agreed that inmate medical issues are a top priority and emphasized the behavioral health and the human services side of the conversation.

State association representatives all agreed that counties across the country are facing challenges with substance abuse services, re-entry programs, a lack of resources for mental health problems and addiction issues.

In Washington state, counties are dealing with the rising costs of public defense lawyers, where only 4 percent of the costs are paid for by the state and the remaining balance is the responsibility of the counties.

"It is a cost that is completely outside our control and it is constantly growing," said Paige DeChambeau, external communications manager at the Washington State Association of Counties.

'Not only unfunded, but under-funded mandates'

The conversation during the finance, pensions and intergov-

ernmental affairs discussion focused on unfunded mandates.

While some states have a complete catalog of mandates in the state, many others have difficulties listing what mandates they must follow because there is no complete mandate catalog.

"I think the conversation should be not only the unfunded but the under-funded mandates," said Lucas Beenken, a public policy specialist with the Iowa State Association of Counties.

In Iowa, Beenken explained there are many under-funded mandates, specifically involving fees.

He explained that state services are provided at the local level, but the amount retained from a fee is not enough to cover the cost of doing business, he said.

According to Beenken, the state may get the largest chunk of a fee that's collected, even when the county is doing the majority of the work.

Representatives from the state associations discussed maintaining a healthy tax base in regard to property taxes, sales taxes, online sales transactions and utility-replacement taxes.

Geoffrey Neill, a principal

policy and fiscal analyst at the California State Association of Counties, said property taxes and unfunded mandates are connected in California. Properties are required to be reassessed every year, but the value can't increase by more than 2 percent unless the property changes hands or is newly constructed. He explained that properties that don't frequently change owners have lower property taxes.

In North Carolina and Pennsylvania, among other states, a pressing issue that is the responsibility of counties is funding new voting machines that produce paper ballots.

Raising the gas tax?

For many state associations, transportation was a top issue.

Participants at the Knowledge Management Forum delved into the transportation topic by discussing funding distribution formulas, structural deficiencies with roads and bridges, fees for electric vehicles and urban versus rural funding.

A hot topic was finding ways to raise the gas tax.

Julie Ring, executive director of the Association of Minnesota Counties, said the association is facing challenges with divided

perspectives among members on the gas tax. She explained some commissioners in rural counties are opposed to raising the gas tax.

In Montana, the state association created the Montana Infrastructure Coalition that consists of civil contractors, representatives from the chamber of commerce, architects and engineers to advocate for increasing the gas tax.

"It changed the conversation we had with elected officials about a group of statewide, fairly prominent, mostly politically active people coming to the legislature saying to the state, 'You need to do something and increase the gas tax because our infrastructure in terms of roads and bridges is falling apart,'" said Eric Bryson, executive director of the Montana Association of Counties.

While the gas tax did increase in Montana, Bryson noted that the gas tax was turned into a grant program and counties have to apply for the increase.

Afterward, participants worked to establish a strategy on a specific issue before the next NCCAE meeting in October and focused on how to get the word out by training for media messaging. **EN**



NACo CEO/Executive Director Matt Chase welcomes attendees at the 2019 NACo-NCCAE Knowledge Management Forum held at NACo headquarters. Photo by Hugh Clarke



Volunteers and participants in the Exceptional Foundation, which provides purposeful activities for adults with developmental disabilities, ride Gwinnett County (Ga.) Transit's microtransit shuttle bus to get around. Photo courtesy of Gwinnett County Transit

ON-CALL SERVICE SPREADS TRANSIT OPPORTUNITIES

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

For communities, a bus line is a lifeline.

The problem is, as population density drops, the costs of running buses on fixed routes for fewer and fewer riders make it hard for transit systems to afford to continue providing service. But as technology evolves, precision, on-call service by smaller vehicles — microtransit — is becoming a viable alternative, though counties vary on how to provide that service.

Some, such as Pinellas County, Fla., subsidize the use of existing ride-share services

including Uber and Lyft and was one of the earliest adopters of ride-share augmentation of transit systems. Newcomers are creating their own systems, and to different ends.

As pilot programs go, Gwinnett County, Ga.'s situation may be ideal. Its microtransit program — seven 12-person shuttle buses that respond to hails via smartphone app — exists in a vacuum, serving the city of Snellville, east of Atlanta. The city has never had transit service and is isolated, making microtransit the only game in town.

"If you're doing a test case, it's easier to control, rather than mixing with services on

fixed (bus routes)," said Gwinnett County Transit Director Karen Winger. "If there were buses operating simultaneously, it would be hard to tell if the microtransit was cannibalizing rider numbers. We know the people we are carrying are purely generated from this pilot program."

That data is crucial in evaluating the program and negotiating rates with technology vendors.

As Gwinnett County went through its transportation planning process a few years ago, transit, or lack thereof, kept coming up.

"Around Atlanta, it's a little harder to get transit to stick," Winger said. "But we're seeing a need that microtransit is meeting. During the pilot, we were carrying about 300 people a day. There's no way we would have come close to those numbers if we ran a fixed bus route through the middle of the core of Snellville."

Montgomery County, Md.'s Ride On Flex program has operated in a different environment since debuting in June 2019 with corner-to-corner service through a system de-

veloped by the company Via. A suburb of Washington, D.C., Montgomery County has a robust rail and bus system, but in addition to providing transit services for people who don't drive, the one of two Flex zones aims to alleviate congestion around rush hour, one single-passenger vehicle at a time.

Two different zones offer two service schedules, with the city of Rockville zone operating weekdays between 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. and Wheaton between 6 a.m. - 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.

"We're seeing a gradual growth in ridership — summer was a good time to start this off because it's a little slower, we could work through the kinks, get operators adjusted," said Dan Hibbert, division chief for Montgomery County's transit services. "My goal is to get people on transit as a viable alternative to driving."

(Please) fence me in

Key to these programs' viability is the geographic restrictions.

See **TRANSIT** page 7

Counties get creative when public transportation is scarce

From TRANSIT page 6

Passenger Transport puts it bluntly: “The more closely you try to meet customers’ expectations of a personalized experience, the more costs will rise. Basically, an agency is (looking for) a sweet spot between a taxi service and traditional public transit.”

It’s something Hibbert is already having to push back on, just two months into Montgomery County’s program.

“Council members want a zone in their district, and people want the zones to be larger,” he said. “We can’t do that if we want to control costs.”

But the zones can also be mission-driven. Winger adjusted Gwinnett County’s service zone to include facilities for the Exceptional Foundation, which works with adults with developmental disabilities.

“They’re able to get around to volunteer work, like the nursing home where they serve as companions. I’m not sure that would have been feasible in a system we didn’t have control over,” she said.

Do it yourself

Why are these counties building their own microtransit systems, rather than subsidizing the use of existing Uber

and Lyft networks?

Both Gwinnett and Montgomery counties own the vehicles and employ the drivers. Their buses have cameras on board and are equipped with wheelchair lifts.

“We’ll distribute service on a more equitable plane than Uber,” Winger said. “Uber is for-profit, and their business model requires volume. A trip with a lift takes more time, and that means fewer trips can be made and they make less money. We’re trying to serve as many people as we can, regardless of their mobility challenges.”

Control over the experience is big for Hibbert.

“We feel comfortable that the customer service that we will provide will be what we’re looking for, for our citizens,” he said. “Unlike Lyft and Uber, we control that. We know that we can provide a service with tax dollars that’s the highest level that we can.”

The ease of using the same farecard for Flex as the D.C. area’s Metro rail and bus system is also a plus.

“It’s simple and straightforward,” Hibbert said. “A \$2 fare gets you anywhere in the zone.”

Winger said at the program’s core, it is a government service, even though it is oper-

ating in the same sphere as a rapidly-growing part of the private sector.

“This is crucial to, for example, people who fall into the ‘dialysis donut hole,’” she said. “They are dependent on dialysis but not destitute enough for Medicaid to pay for their transportation. They’d end up paying on their own, and for an Uber or Lyft, that could be \$20-\$30 a trip. For these people, that’s money back in their pockets.”

Data collection is also a major benefit for the county operating the system. A report by the Shared Use Mobility Center pointed out a lack of data sharing by Uber has made it difficult for Pinellas County to evaluate its Direct Connect program.

Next stop?

Following its six-month pilot, Gwinnett County is shopping for a software vendor among several candidates. Technology company TransLoc donated use of its software during the pilot.

Winger hopes to launch a permanent program in early 2020. Then, she wants to connect it to other transit systems.

“Once the service connects to the rest of the network, our drivers are going to understand what the local bus con-

nections are,” she said. “They’ll understand the network and we’ll get better service.”

Because technology develops and adapts so quickly, Winger is hesitant to put too much in stone. And she knows what her “white whale” looks like.

“Even during the pilot, the technology was evolving and outpacing what we had planned,” she said. “I’m trying to look ahead and see how this kind of service interacts with a fixed route in a way that someone can trip-plan seamlessly across all modes.”

Hibbert said that even after two months of the Flex program, he was seeing good feedback.

Although its evaluation would include measures like average trip length, passengers per hour and wait times, “we’re also looking at metrics like customer satisfaction, how many people download the application, growth rate of downloads,” he said.

“We think transit is the fabric of our community and however we can provide it with our resources to be effective, we want to do that.” **CN**



Montgomery County, Md. Executive Marc Elrich steps off a Flex microtransit bus. Photo courtesy of Montgomery County

ON THE MOVE

NACo OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

- President **Mary Ann Borgeson** and Executive Director **Matt Chase** addressed attendees at the Texas Association of Counties Legislative Conference, held Sept. 4-6 in Travis County (Austin), Texas.
- South Region Representative **Ruby Brabo**, supervisor, King George County, Va., has been appointed to the Local Government Advisory Committee to the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council.
- Mercer County, W.Va. Commissioner **Greg Puckett** presented findings from NACo and the National League of Cities’ joint opioid task force Aug. 26 to the National Prevention Network’s Conference “A Revolution in Prevention” in Cook County, Ill.



Brabo



Sedigh



Peterson



Hurley

NACo STAFF

- **Hadi Sedigh** is now serving as chief innovation officer at NACo, managing the County Innovations Lab, following the consolidation of the Counties Futures Lab and the County Solutions and Innovations department.
- **Jack Peterson** is now director of NACo’s state and affiliate relations in the Government Affairs department.
- Associate Legislative Director **Eryn Hurley** is now managing the work of the Pensions, Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs Steering Committee.

Rail safety facility draws NACo members

by Zach George

Train traffic keeps counties lively, but road crossings and derailments can be deadly.

Several members of NACo's Transportation Steering Committee saw firsthand what the railroad industry is doing to refine safety measures and procedures during a trip in mid-August to the Transportation Technology Center in Pueblo County, Colo.

The facility is funded by the Association of American Railroads and Federal Railroad Administration to conduct research of rails, rail cars, tankers and disaster mitigation equipment and procedures.

"I saw a commitment from the industry to hold up their end of the bargain in terms of safety," said Randy Maluchnik, a Carver County, Minn. commissioner, chairman of NACo's



Visitors get a look at how derailed tanker train fires are fought while visiting the Transportation Technology Center. Photo courtesy of the Security and Emergency Response Training Center

Transportation Committee.

"They're willing to do the research — and this is expensive research," he noted. "It's more than just a show or a PR move, this is meaningful work that counties can benefit from."

The facility conducts test-

ing for all categories of freight and passenger rolling stock, vehicle and track components and safety devices on 48 miles of railroad test tracks in a 52-square mile facility. These tracks are used to develop and research an array of equipment

from locomotives to track components to signaling devices. The facility also uses specialized tracks to evaluate vehicle stability, safety, endurance, reliability and ride comfort.

Commissioners saw locomotive and rail testing and got to

operate a locomotive. They also witnessed demonstrations on bridge testing, track and wheel health and wayside detectors — in addition to interacting directly with the engineers and rail experts who design, develop and test these technologies.

Transportation Technology Center, Inc. (TTCI) is an example of a public-private partnership that tackles public safety issues. The Federal Railroad Administration contributes roughly a third of its annual research budget toward projects conducted at TTCI.

Committee members observed a training session at the Security and Emergency Response Training Center (SERTC), a first-responder facility operating at TTCI. Founded in 1985 to train railroad officials on handling hazardous

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Robust crowd turns out to advocate for PILT, SRS



Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) discusses his proposal to reauthorize the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program for 10 years during a Sept. 11 Capitol Hill briefing. Photo by Hugh Clarke

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

One of the largest PILT fly-ins in years brought roughly 100 county officials to Capitol Hill Sept. 11 to advocate on behalf of permanent mandatory funding for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program and permanent funding for the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program.

Both programs compensate counties that contain federally managed land, which cannot yield property tax revenue and counties that have seen a decline in timber harvests from federally managed forest land. PILT paid out \$514 million in fiscal year 2019.

County officials met with members of Congress and their staffs, primarily from their home states and members that serve on appropriations committees and authorizing committees that could help advance legislation.

During a Capitol Hill briefing, Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) discussed his proposal to reauthorize PILT for 10 years.

Sen. Steve Daines (R-Mont.)

talked up his bill that would expand PILT funding for counties with fewer than 5,000 residents. It would not reduce the PILT amounts paid to larger counties.

One of the most effective points a county official can make is showing how federal policy affects local management and services. For Chaves County, N.M. Commissioner Robert Corn, volatility is a huge problem.

"We don't know if it (PILT funding) is coming, when it's coming, how much is coming," he said. "We fund vehicles for the roads department and sheriff's office with PILT money, so if it's not looking good, it's a matter of trying to get a few more thousand miles out of a vehicle and hoping it holds, rather than replacing it."

Supervisor Richard Lunt demonstrated to his congressional delegation how budgeting in Greenlee County, Ariz. was complicated by irregular PILT funding.

"We can't get the biggest bang for our buck, being able to do purchasing that is ef-

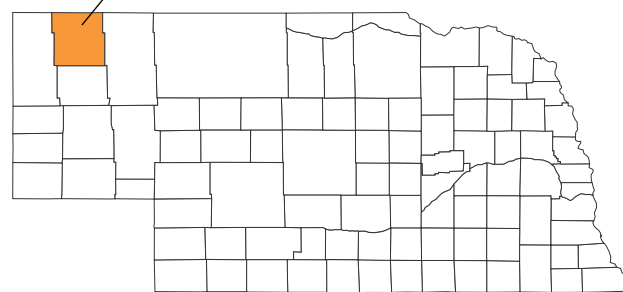
ficient, buying in bulk, if we don't have the money," he said. "The government knows it's getting a bargain for the services we provide around federal lands. Every year hunters get lost, and every year, we're sending out law enforcement to find them. It's something we're glad to do but there's no question it's a bargain for what the federal government gets."

The large fly-in contingent coincided with an influx of freshman members of Congress. Cascade County, Mont. Commissioner Joe Briggs, who serves as NACo's West Region representative, offered some advice to newcomers to Capitol Hill.

"There can be an assumption that all the congressional staff members know what the other staffs are doing, and that's not the case," he said. "Sometimes we are a bridge, telling them what else we have heard on the Hill because they can get siloed in their offices." **CN**

GET TO KNOW...

Dawes County, Neb.



Welcome, Dawes County, Neb.

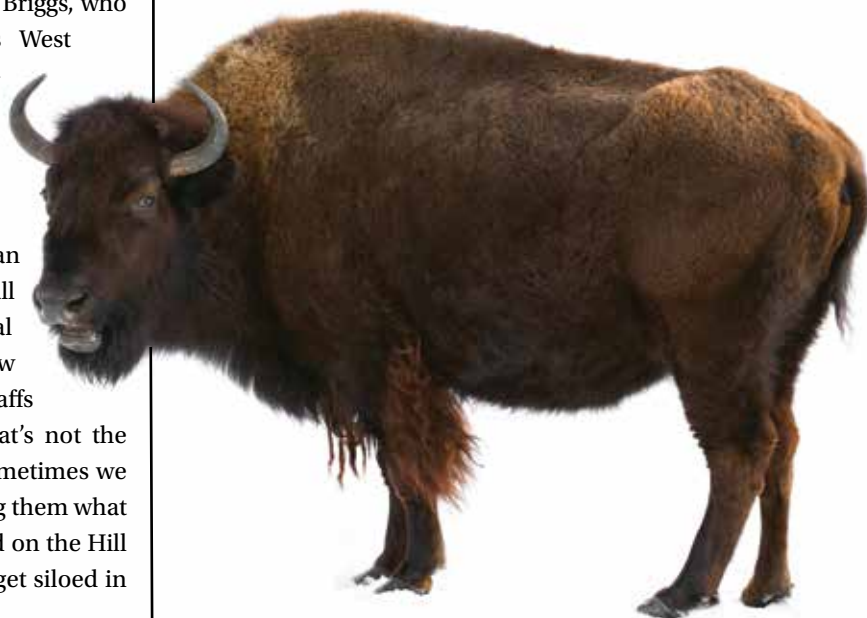
Dawes County is located in northwestern Nebraska. The 1,400 square-mile county shares its northern border with the southern border of South Dakota. Chadron is the county seat.

In 1877, the land that makes up Dawes County became part of Sioux County. Later in 1885, Dawes County was formed after separating from Sioux County. It was named after Nebraska Governor James W. Dawes who was the governor at the time of the county's formation. **The county was once the home to two divisions of the Sioux tribe – the Oglala tribe and the Brule tribe.** As of 2010, the county's population was over 9,000.

Trappers, fur traders, ranchers and homesteaders, who were early pioneers in the westward movement, came to the county for its supply of water, wood and shelter. Soldiers from the U.S. Army came to the county to maintain order in the western lands and established the historic Fort Robinson, the "Outpost of the Plains," in 1874. The fort is now a popular tourist attraction. The county's first railroad towns were built in 1885.

During the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, the county seat of Chadron was the starting point of the 1,000-mile "Chadron-Chicago Cowboy Horse Race." Nine riders competed for the \$1,000 prize to be the first to reach the entrance of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.

The World Champion Buffalo Chip Throw is held in the county seat each July during the annual World Fur Trade Days festival.



Railroads study safety

From TRAINS page 8


materials, SERTC has expanded to include outside groups from the public-sector emergency response community, the chemical industry, government agencies and emergency response contractors from all over the world. SERTC offers realistic training with full-scale props, including cargo tankers, intermodal containers and rail and tank cars. Grants are available to offset the cost for county government personnel to travel to and participate in training.

"Every county in the country that has freight rail traffic could benefit from training here," Maluchnik said, "even if you do table-top exercises at home, there's nothing that compares to being there firsthand."

Commissioners saw a simulated train derailment with real chemical flaring and blasts. The eerily realistic scene featured several rail tank cars engulfed in flames, while trainees acted in response to control the fire.

"The first responders are learning hands-on what to do, whether you drain them, how to drain them before you turn them upright," Maluchnik said. "They simulate a train wreck, they have pipes to pump in different chemicals to mimic different scenarios you might see in real life."

SERTC has prepared more than 70,000 safety professionals and other stakeholders worldwide in rail incident training. Many trainings were paid entirely by grant funding from the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). TCI officials emphasized the often-unnoticed opportunities and resources provided by SERTC, which can help communities be better prepared to respond to hazard material rail incidents.

And it's not just rail incidents. "They're taking tankers and ramming them full speed, but the work they do on rail cars can be adapted to truck tankers, too," Maluchnik said. 

NACo scholarship winners talk financial freedom

For the 15th year, high school seniors participating in the NACo/Nationwide scholarship essay contest shared their unique perspectives on saving for retirement. Graduating seniors became eligible by having a parent or grandparent contributing to the NACo 457 Deferred Compensation Program. They were asked to write a short essay on the importance of saving for retirement now. The winning entries were submitted by:

- **Alexander Lyberg**, Collier County (Naples), Fla.
- **Elizabeth Williams**, Ingham County (DeWitt), Mich.
- **Trinity Critelli**, Oneida County, (Frankfort), N.Y.
- **Hector De Leon**, Riverside County, (Moreno Valley), Calif.

In their essays, each student communicated the importance of preparing financially for retirement in response to the following prompt: A surprising percentage of Americans report that they would not be able to come up with \$1,000 tomorrow if needed. Why do you suppose so many Americans live paycheck to paycheck, and what can you do to be successful in your financial well-being now and in the future?

Each winning senior received a \$2,500 college scholarship from Nationwide and the National Association of Counties.



Alexander Lyberg

In addition to having an active high school career with cross country, tennis, marching band, National Honor Society and his church youth group, Alexander also completed an internship between

his junior and senior year and maintained a part-time job. The experience of working while in high school allowed him to understand the value of saving and making good financial decisions.

"I had options for both a private and public college education but decided to attend a state university. I did so because my parents invested in a prepaid college plan, which will allow me to finish my studies nearly debt-free. Once I have secured a job, I plan to take advantage of employer deferred compensation programs and put money away early in my career, even if it is a small amount. The effect of starting early gives me the best possible chance for financial security far into the future."

After graduating from Golden Gate High School in Florida, Alexander will attend the University of Florida to study Computer Science. Alexander's mother, Amy, is employed by Collier County Government/BCC.



Elizabeth Williams

When she wasn't marching with the band, performing in concert choir, being captain of the soccer team or participating in National Honor Society, Elizabeth spent her time reading *The Automatic Millionaire* and taking a Dave Ramsey financial literacy class. From these sources, she learned the value of living debt-free and the importance of compounding.

"To be successful in my financial well-being, I plan to do a wide variety of things. First, I plan to attend college with as little student loan debt as possible. I plan to work all summer and to get a job on campus so

that I can work to do this. In order to build wealth and invest in my future, I need to eliminate all sources of debt first. I learned the importance of making your money work for you and that investing earlier is the key to building a good future financially."

After graduating from Olivet High School in Michigan, Elizabeth will attend Alma College as a Pre-Medicine student with the intention of continuing her education and becoming an anesthesiologist. Her mother, Amy, is an employee of the Ingham County Health Department.



Trinity Critelli

A natural athlete from a young age, Trinity has been active in basketball, indoor track, dancing and travel softball during her high school career, as well as being focused on maintaining a 4.0 GPA and volunteering countless hours in her community. In addition to being physically fit, she also sees the importance of being financially fit.

"Living paycheck to paycheck with monthly bills, such as a car payment and student loans, has become the new normal. As an aspiring future financial planner and advisor, I am determined to change this unfortunate reality for many Americans. Not possessing the correct knowledge early on is a major reason why many Americans are not financially fit."

After graduating from Frankfort-Schuyler Central High School in New York, Trinity plans to attend Mohawk Valley Community College where she will continue to play softball and major in Business Administration. Her father, Craig, is employed at Mohawk Valley Community College.



Hector De Leon

An avid hiker who loves spending time outside with his family, Hector understands that education is the gateway to many opportunities. From his mother's determination to provide a better life for her family by earning her college degree, he learned the value of hard work. He also picked up along the way that "independence and stability stem from economic responsibility."

"My home life developed my philosophy of spending on important things first, and now in school I am learning even more."

"In class I have learned to save money when things are going well in order to be ready for tougher times. This is why I will ensure that as an adult, I will have adequate savings for emergencies."

After graduating from Rancho Verde High School in California, Hector will attend UCLA and pursue a degree in Political Science.

He plans to become an environmental and pro bono immigration lawyer. His mother, Maria, is employed by Riverside University Health System.

Scholarship honors decades of partnership

Nationwide and NACo are committed to helping participants plan for retirement as well as for their family's future.

Nationwide sponsors the Nationwide/NACo scholarship to recognize its nearly four-decade partnership with NACo and its member counties.

For more information about the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, contact Amy Humphrey at humpha1@nationwide.com or 860.480.1211.

Balancing Data Privacy in a Day of Convenience



by Rita Reynolds

I recently had the opportunity to watch *The Great Hack*, a Netflix documentary that came out in late July that is about the Cambridge Analytica scandal involving citizen data and elections. If you haven't watched it, I highly encourage you to do so. In the absence of time, let me break it down for you! The documentary focuses on how accessible our individual human data is and just how much of it is on the internet. Even if you have deleted your Facebook account, much of your data is still out there. The documentary focuses on how Cambridge Analytica gathered and cultivated massive amounts of citizen data from all across the globe and then supposedly used it in marketing campaigns to persuade certain citizens (dubbed the "persuadables") in voting decisions worldwide; including Brexit (the UK's withdrawal from the European Union) and the U.S. 2016 presidential election. This article is not going to focus on

how Cambridge Analytica used U.S. citizen data, but rather on how they were able to access it without one's approval.

The background of the documentary is that Cambridge Analytica had collected between 4,000-5,000 data points on every U.S. voting citizen. Every citizen. One may ask, how can this be? Well, does Facebook or Instagram sound familiar? Data from more than 87 million Facebook member profiles was obtained by Cambridge Analytica, who then used that data to assist the Leave campaign in the Brexit vote and the Trump 2016 presidential campaign. Regardless of the presidential outcomes, the fact that they acquired and used that much data on human beings is incredible and even scary.

While that's just one way citizen data is accessible, according to a May 2019 article from PEW Research, 69 percent of the United States is on Facebook; that's a pretty significant exposure. The importance of these numbers becomes even more meaning-

ful, when you consider that data and the data giants Alphabet (Google's parent company), Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Microsoft are now considered more valuable than oil. (May 2017, *The Economist*).

Yet the bigger story is that our personal data is out there and being used in ways we don't understand. One may ask, was it really that much important data? We will never really know for sure, but at the time of these campaigns, the data collected from the third-party app that gave anyone access to Facebook included information like interests, likes, location, political affiliation, relationships, photos and more.

So why is this important? In this day and age, our personal assets go beyond just finances; data rights are human rights. Personal data is extremely valuable. Think about how quickly relevant advertisements pop up on your Facebook page or even your cell phone through a text or an app after you have conducted an online search. To bring it to

the workplace, think about how much searching we do on the internet for new county equipment, software applications or even job postings for finding qualified staff. And then all of sudden, this particular product or service that you were searching about shows up on your Facebook feed, even though you weren't on your computer (but rather using only your cell phone). When we search through Google, Bing or another search engine, that information is more than likely being sold to advertisers, consultants and other entities that have paid the big search engines to have your information. Supposedly with permissions, of course. But do you really read those terms and conditions that pop up on your screen when you are diligently looking for that new book, clothing, food item or office equipment? Since we are in a world of instant gratification, I would venture to say "no."

So, what can citizens and ultimately county government do to protect the data rights of individuals? Europe has taken one approach by implementing The General Data Protection Regulation or GDPR. One may ask: "What is GDPR?" GDPR is a massive data protection or privacy law emanating from the EU that applies to most organizations, regardless of where they are located. While that undertaking was in process long before the Cambridge Analytica shenanigans became public, it was only official in May of 2018, right after the scandal went public. Any organization that offers its products or services to an EU resident or is established in the EU or is engaged in widespread website behavioral monitoring must comply with GDPR. This means even organizations based in the United States may be subject to GDPR. The most obvious result of GDPR is those new footers or pop-ups on websites that are supposed to inform you about what data is being collected when you use their site and have cookies enabled. What I have found is that many are just clicking on the "cookies" message and breezing by what the terms and conditions say.

How this affects local government in the United States is debatable and ranges from there is no need to legally comply with GDPR to "Yes, we know that we have many foreign citizens visiting our website and therefore we must comply in some fashion." What is more common is that states are beginning to enact their own data privacy laws. Take California for example. The California Consumer Privacy Act of 2018 mirrors the EU law in many ways. Data accuracy and notification to those subscribing on how their data is being used is required, as is the honoring of a citizen request to see what data the organization is collecting or holds on them. Other features include posting a privacy policy on their website that states:

- The type of personal data collected
- Any third parties with whom you share the data
- How users can review and change their data that you've collected
- How you'll update users of changes to your privacy policy
- Your privacy policy's effective date
- How you'll respond to "Do Not Track" requests

According to legislative tracking website Quorum, more than 200 pieces of legislation on privacy have been debated in state legislatures so far in 2019.

On a personal level, folks like you and I should be more attentive to what data we make available online. As I like to say often, the devil is in the details. Listed below are some questions to ask yourself and to share with your county departments and your citizens:

- What information do you have in your Facebook profile, your LinkedIn Profile? Do you include where you went to high school, college, if you are married, what your religious affiliation or political affiliation is?
- Do you include your hometown you currently live in?
- Do you have your cell phone

See DATA page 18

Disrupting Ransomware with Security Best Practices

Ransomware attacks are a favorite among cybercriminals, and it's easy to see why. In some cases, organizations have paid nearly \$600,000 from this simple attack (*Source: New York Times*). Cybercriminals lock access to important systems and/or data and demanding payment in return for access. A successful ransomware attack can lead to data exfiltration, extortion and sometimes the permanent loss of data. Attacks like this are on the rise, increasing over 350 percent since 2018, according to Trend Micro.

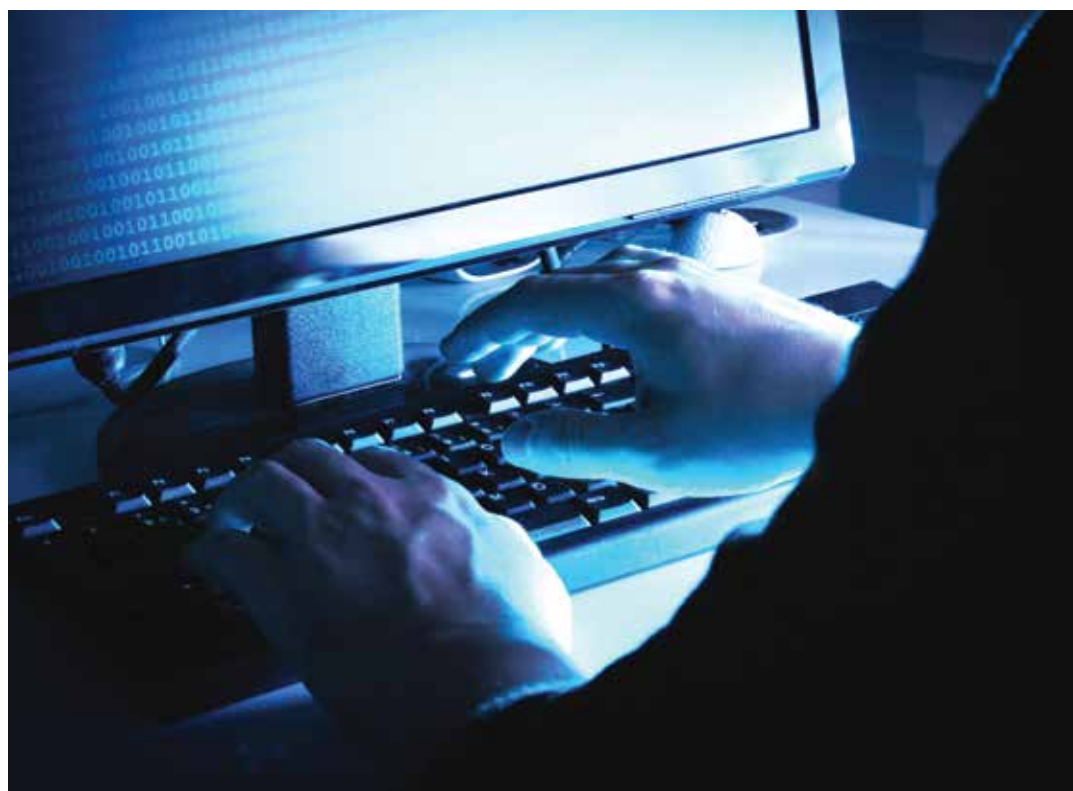
Ransomware presents major risks for organizations responsible for public data such as State and Local Government and Education (SLED) or State, Local, Tribal and Territorial (SLTT) entities. Keep reading to learn how you can defend your organization from ransomware attacks.

How ransomware works

Ransomware typically starts with social engineering, exploiting the weaknesses in humans. It then takes advantage of vulnerabilities for common programs, such as Microsoft Word or Excel. Open Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) and Server Message Block (SMB) ports are also exploited by ransomware variants. RDP is used for remote access to systems, while SMB is most commonly used for file sharing. Limiting access to authorized machines is key to stopping the spread of ransomware infections.

Cyber defense tip: Ensure all network devices, mail servers, and applications are securely configured. Implement consensus-developed guidelines like the CIS Benchmarks for defensive configurations that can help prevent the spread of ransomware.

WannaCry, a common ransomware variant used the initial infection vector of an exposed vulnerable SMB service



to spread through more than 230,000 computers in over 150 countries within a day (*Source: BBC*). Once ransomware is on the system, it will look to elevate its ability to access more of the network to spread the infection as far as it can go.

Key steps to defending against ransomware

While the effects of ransomware can be devastating, there are steps organizations can take to defend their systems and data. Four key security steps include:

1. Implement secure configurations, such as the CIS Benchmarks, before an attack in order to limit vulnerabilities that lead to open ports and privilege escalation.
2. Implement a user awareness training program to help educate users about common attack methods such as phishing emails.
3. Implement an Intrusion Detection System (IDS) for early detection.
4. Maintain effective data backups in case of a successful ransomware attack.

Following these best practices can limit the impact of a ransomware infection. An IDS can provide early detection and help you stop an infection in its

tracks. Early detection provides major benefits to organizations targeted by ransomware; typically saving on downtime, replacement/upgrade costs, and ultimately, ransom payments. Secure, regularly-maintained data backups will be essential to helping your organization recover if ransomware strikes.

Hopefully, you'll never need those backups — but what if you don't have them? "You're really looking at rebuilding from scratch," explains Brian Calkin, chief technology officer at CIS (Center for Internet Security, Inc.) in the *New York Times*. Effective data backup management includes regularly updating and maintaining backup files and sequestering backups from other networks which may be impacted by ransomware. Sometimes, cybercriminals go after backup files intentionally, so the early detection provided by your organization's IDS is key to preventing a successful attack.

Solution focus: Albert

CIS has developed a custom-designed IDS focused on monitoring SLTT government networks. Called Albert, this IDS leverages NetFlow traffic analysis combined with robust signature detection for identify-

ing malicious intrusions. There are currently more than 400 Albert sensors deployed nationwide protecting networks and systems from ransomware and other cyber threats.

On average, organizations using Albert network monitoring receive ransomware attack notifications within six minutes of malicious activity. What's happening in that time? Typically, it's a three-step process:

1.) Network traffic sent between computers and network devices, like routers/firewalls – is analyzed by the Albert sensor. The analyzed traffic is compared to thousands of known malicious signatures affecting SLTT government organizations. This happens fast by leveraging automation and cloud computing to analyze large volumes of data.

2.) When a signature match is found and malicious activity is identified, CIS' 24-hour Security Operations Center (SOC) reviews the alert. The activity is analyzed by experts with deep knowledge of government and public organization cybersecurity.

3.) An analyst from the SOC eliminates false positives and confirms valid malicious activity. The analyst gathers any relevant cybersecurity resources to

aid the affected organization, such as security primers and remediation steps. The organization is then notified of any confirmed threats.

Because all of this happens in just minutes, most organizations with an Albert sensor are able to mitigate a ransomware attack before it begins the encryption process on endpoints.

Security that goes beyond

Cybercriminals never let up; the CIS SOC processes approximately 10,000 security events per month. You can bolster your cyber defenses, however. Organizations should implement secure configurations before an attack in order to limit vulnerabilities that lead to open ports and privilege escalation. An IDS can help provide early detection of malicious activity, allowing your team to respond before escalation. And, if the ransomware succeeds, you'll be thankful for up-to-date, secure backups.

There are other best practices your organization should consider that can help avoid an infection altogether. One example that's often overlooked is security training for employees. By teaching employees how to spot and avoid suspicious email content, you can diminish an attacker's ability to enter your network via phishing.

Configuration management, IDS implementation, and phishing training are all connected – so it's important for your organization to develop a holistic security program that can face multiple threats. Download the Public Sector Cyber Defense Guide to learn how you can build a defense-in-depth cybersecurity program for your government organization.

This content was sponsored by the Center for Internet Security. Download the Guide: <https://bit.ly/2k6EUnQ>

California county focuses on racial equity

by Brent Ainsworth

Marin County, Calif., has quite the national reputation. Just across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco, tiny Marin (muh-RIN) is sometimes playfully teased as a den of decadence and jeered for its liberal extremism. At the county government offices, we’ve heard it all.

Good-natured ribbing aside, one of the worst hits to Marin’s image is not funny at all. A recent statewide analysis ranked Marin as No. 1 among 58 California counties for racial disparity.

A study by the Association of Bay Area Governments showed that three Marin municipalities — San Anselmo, Ross and Belvedere — were the least racially diverse towns and cities in the Bay Area, with white populations in the high 80 percent range. It’s a stark difference from the diversity of neighborhoods just a bridge away in San Francisco, Oakland, Richmond and Berkeley. Overall, Marin is 85 percent white and one of the oldest (in terms of average resident age) counties in California.

The “exclusive” adjective covers financial wherewithal, too. The median household income is just under \$105,000. The median price of a single-family home in the county is \$1.2 million and that creeps closer to \$2 million the closer you get to the Golden Gate Bridge. Typical rents are \$2,250 for a one-bedroom apartment and \$3,360 for a two-bedroom unit.

A lot of people would love to live in Marin, but most of the county is preserved from sprawl. Consider federal and state park lands, water district land, county open space and agricultural land trusts and you end up with nearly 85 percent of Marin County as undeveloped and not zoned for subdivisions. Environmentally minded local government leaders made the commitment years ago to avoid sprawl and to preserve that beauty.

Most of the county’s 260,000

residents live along the Highway 101 corridor on the eastern side of the county that borders San Francisco Bay.

Marin didn’t necessarily end up this way naturally. We can point to the practice of blatantly racist redlining that was common nationwide until passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Government-endorsed redlining on maps prevented non-white people from securing loans, purchasing homes and building (ironically named) equity in certain neighborhoods, especially in coveted suburbia.

Although the practice was outlawed, its racial remnants are evident today. Many of Marin’s towns, cities and unincorporated hamlets have white populations near 90 percent, and other small zones have highly concentrated populations of African Americans and Latinos — the result of redlining. Today, the well-off residents strive to maintain their standard of living, but most workers who stock grocery store shelves, wait tables at restaurants or teach preschoolers can’t afford to live anywhere close to workplaces in the richer areas. Accordingly, traffic in Marin is horrendous. Thousands of lower-income workers live an hour’s drive away and commute to Marin to work each day, joining Marin residents who commute over the bridge to the city, turning Highway 101 flow to a painful crawl. Although there’s a new commuter train system in the northern half of Marin, public transportation is not that popular. It’s California, and the love-fest with the automobile from the ‘50s and ‘60s undermined public transportation for generations.

As tough as it is to discuss, racial inequity became the topic of high-profile and packed county public meetings over the past five years. The county is gradually working to level the playing field for all residents.

The county singled out “Diversity and Inclusion” as a focus area in its 5 Year Business Plan adopted in 2015. Equity

measures were emphasized in the 2016 State of the County update after shocking metrics were released about income disparity and discrepancies in life expectancy based on ZIP codes. Accordingly, the county compiled and shared metrics on a new equity dashboard, and the Health and Human Services Department’s strategic plan released last month focuses on equity and its relationship to wellness.

In 2017, the Board of Supervisors adopted a Racial Equity Action Plan, helping Marin become one of the first counties in California to formalize such a plan.

The first goal is to commit, as a county workforce, to achieving racial equity through education and community leadership. The second goal is about outreach and engagement by partnering with advocacy groups and other local institutions. The third and final goal was to ensure that the county is an equitable employer by refining hiring practices and flushing out artificial barriers to employment.

An employee group turned to the Government Alliance on Race and Equity for guidance, and new efforts to engage residents and strengthen community partnerships are starting to pay off.


Employees learned how to normalize conversations about race, develop new policies within their own departments and agencies, and become leaders in recognizing and eliminating structural racism. The county implemented an eight-hour training program on cultural intelligence and structural racism for every employee.

With a new county equity director keeping tabs, county programs are underway to increase gender and ethnic diversity on hiring boards and to ensure that there is diversity in each candidate pool, including openings for top administrators.

Diversity has been embraced and celebrated, including by affinity groups for employees of African American, Latino,

and Asian/Pacific Islander descent. Grassroots organizations were created for LGBTQ and disabled employees (and their allies) as well.

Marin has publicly acknowledged the painful parts of its past. The county government is working with its partners to rectify racist policies and foster a more inclusive and wel-

coming workplace at the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Marin County Civic Center in San Rafael and other county offices. We believe we’re changing for the better. 

Brent Ainsworth, a former newspaper reporter and editor, is a public information specialist with the County of Marin.

WORD SEARCH

RAMSEY COUNTY, Minn.
Created by: Mary Ann Barton

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

- BASEBALL:** The St. Paul Saints is a professional baseball team, a member of the American Association of Independent Professional Baseball.

CAPITAL: The state capital is St. Paul, the county seat.

COURTHOUSE: The Ramsey County Courthouse, a 20-story Art Deco skyscraper was built in 1932.

DEPOT: The county became a transportation hub after the Civil War with trains arriving from the Pacific and Chicago to Union Depot.

EMPLOYERS: Some of the top employers in the county include Medtronic, 3M Company and Land O’Lakes.

FITZGERALD: Novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald was born in and grew up in Ramsey County.

HISTORY: Founded Oct. 27, 1849, the county was one of the state’s original nine counties.

LANGUAGES: The county provides telephone interpretation services in 170 languages to those needing assistance from any county department.
- PARKS:** The county maintains more than 6,500 acres of parks including golf courses and ice arenas.

PEANUTS: Cartoonist Charles Schulz’ first cartoons ran in St. Paul’s *Pioneer Press*.

PIONEER: The *Pioneer Press* is Minnesota’s first newspaper, founded in 1849 and based in St. Paul.

RAMSEY: The county is named for Alexander Ramsey, appointed by President Zachary Taylor as the first governor of the Minnesota Territory.

SAINT: The county seat is St. Paul, named by a French priest in honor of Paul the Apostle. Locals sometimes refer to the city as “Pig’s Eye.”

SIZE: The county has the second largest county population in the state and the smallest land area.

STEAMBOAT: The county saw many settlers arrive by steamboat on the Mississippi River.

BRIGHT IDEAS | BOONE COUNTY, Ky.

Library Focuses on African American History

PROBLEM:

Lack of African American history left a gap in information on enslavement and the Underground Railroad in Boone County, Ky.

SOLUTION:

Compile records and research to tell the story of African Americans and educate the public.

by Rachel Looker
staff writer

"It's all hidden in plain sight."

That's how Bridget Striker, the local history coordinator at the Boone County Public Library, describes the information in court records, newspapers, wills and census data that tells the stories of African Americans in Boone County, Ky.

These resources encompass the African Americans of Boone County Initiative, which is run through the local history department at the Boone County Public Library.

Bordering Indiana on one side and Ohio on the other, Boone County was a part of the Underground Railroad, used by slaves to cross state borders.

In 2014, the initiative originated from a group's request for information and a tour of the Underground Railroad.

At the time of the request, Striker said the library only had two documented escapes of slaves from the county. By late spring of 2014, the library put together a basic tour of five stops that were part of the Underground Railroad.

The library offered the tour five times from May 2014 to September 2014. Now, more than 1,000 people from across the country have taken the tour, including students on school field trips, Striker said.

From the initial bus tour, the African American initiative grew.



A photo from the Boone County Historic Preservation Collection shows Boone County Poor House infirmary residents from 1920.

Photo courtesy Boone County Public Library, Boone County Historic Preservation Collection

"We started pulling together this information," Striker said. "The more information we put together, the more stories we had and the more we were able to really give voice to this history."

Hillary Delaney, the local history and genealogy associate at the Boone County Public Library, was the primary researcher for the content that contributes to the African American Initiative.

When first asked to research information for the Underground Railroad tour, Delaney said her goal wasn't to build a collection. With 25 percent of the county's population enslaved in 1860, Delaney kept uncovering information about African Americans who were enslaved in the county at the time.

"As I went along, I started saving these and then I would go back when I had time and research the information that I found," she said.

According to Delaney, the in-

formation came in waves, specifically when she would look through records of wills where she would find names, descriptions, ages and relationships.

"Most of the collections I've seen are based in primary sources like county records or things like that, but I take it from everywhere I can find it," she said.

The Underground Railroad Bus Tour combined with Delaney's research led to the African Americans of Boone County Resource Collection. The collection includes digital newspaper clippings, slave narratives, census records, journals and court records.

Striker said there's a physical collection where those interested in studying African American history can conduct research. Additionally, the library received funding to take the information in the collection and create an online, searchable database by the end of 2020.

"It's really a digital humanities project," Striker said.

The library has obtained information on 3,300 individual enslaved African Americans.

"The initiative is actually all of our various projects, kind of snowballed," Striker added. "You use these projects as building blocks so from the Underground Railroad tour, we ended up with information on individuals whether they were escapees or freedom seekers or whether they were slave-holders."

The Boone County Public Library was awarded two National Park Service Network to Freedom affiliations with the Underground Railroad Bus Tour and the Local History Department. Striker said this helped the initiative receive funding through the parks service.

Through another grant, the library is working with a graduate student from Northern Kentucky University to compile historic sites in relation to African Americans in Boone County.

"This project through the

parks service will really elevate the conversation of historic preservation within the county as it relates to African American resources," Striker said.

In 2018, the NAACP Northern Kentucky Chapter recognized the Boone County Public Library for outstanding community service with a Community Empowerment Award.

Striker said she hopes the initiative brings awareness to enslavement history and gives a voice to those who were enslaved and their descendants in a respectful way that can bring people together.

"Enslavement history is a lot of time-hidden history," Striker said. "It's there, but nobody really wants to talk about it, especially in a slave-holding county in a slaveholding state."

Delaney said she thinks many people do not realize the Boone County area was pivotal in African American history.

"I think that these communi-

See HISTORY page 18

LEADERSHIP **EDGE**

You Can't Wait to Be Great

by **Tim Rahschulte**

How often have you been disengaged because you saw others disengaged? How often have you said or thought that you're not going to give 100 percent of your skills and abilities because you think your boss is an idiot, your team is just not worth it or you're not getting paid enough or don't have the right title or it's just not worth your time? This is understandable sometimes, but it's also illogical.

It's understandable because you want to feel and see a sense of fairness. But we all know that life's not fair. What you should be aware of is the fact that you're always being watched. Whether you want to be or not, you are. And more than just being watched, you're being judged.

You're being watched all the time, and people are making judgments about you all the time. If you don't feel that you have a great leader or boss or manager and therefore are not

going to show up in a great way, how then do you show up? If it's not your best, then it's something closer to average or worse, and that's how people see you. So, the fact that you're waiting for someone around you to be great (or greater) is causing you to not be great. How illogical is that?

You don't have control over who your boss is. You don't always have control over who's on your team. You do, however, have control over how you show up. If you show up in average ways, you're going to find averageness all around you.

If you think there's averageness all around you and you show up in the great way you're capable of, you'll start to see the average get better. People aren't watching you only to make judgments; more likely, they're watching you to take cues as to how to make sense of a very complex world and, in turn, how to act themselves. When they see mediocrity, they'll base their ex-

pectations around that level of performance and come to believe that averageness is okay, desired or maybe even the best that's possible.

Ryan Russell, who leads the human-centered design work at Amazon, reminded me that there's a big difference in knowing the difference between average and great. He said, "When you have great people, you attract great people. Great people make people feel great."

That, in part, is what the best leaders do. And it's what the best followers do, too. Through our actions, we help enable people to do great things and in that process, we attract great people, and they also attract great people. If we have an average manager, we can help that person get better. If we have an average teammate, we can help that person get better. But we can help them get better only if we choose to be great all the time.

Remember, excellence is not an exception. You can't wait

to have a great leader or great teammates for you to show up in a great way. Make the conscious decision to show up great and to be great all the time. Now you might think that "all the time" is a lot. Yes, it is. The greatest leaders know that the best never give up their enthusiasm to be great and to do great things. They make the decision to be great every day. Louie Ehrlich, the former president and chief information officer at Chevron said, "Everything you do has an influence, whether you like it or not." There's no escaping that fact as a leader. You're always being watched, and your actions are always influencing others. **CN**

Rahschulte is CEO of the Professional Development Academy and chief architect of the NACo High Performance Leadership Program (naco.org/skills). He is co-author of My Best Advice: Proven Rules for Effective Leadership.



DENALI BOROUGH, Alaska

Denali Borough, Alaska is located 250 miles north of Anchorage and was incorporated in 1990. The borough is 12,000 square miles, making it larger than nine states in the country. The borough has 1,825 year-round residents but hosts up to 600,000 visitors and 4,000 seasonal workers annually.

The Denali Borough seal was designed by Ree Nancarrow of Denali Park, who won a contest to create the borough seal in 1990.



The center of the seal features Denali, a 20,000-foot mountain peak that is the highest in North America.

Caribou in front of the mountain represent the wilderness throughout the borough, which is the gateway to Denali National Park.

The seal also features the George Parks Highway, completed in 1972.

The Alaska Railroad, completed in 1923, connects the borough.

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



NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

ALABAMA

The **WALKER COUNTY** Sheriff's Office has launched an **education program for inmates** to obtain their high school diplomas. Through a partnership with Beville State Community College, inmates can obtain their GED diplomas after completing the program, CBS 42 reported. Upon completion, inmates are eligible for a free college course at any Alabama community college.



ARIZONA

Members of the Havasupai Tribe who live in the Grand Canyon in **COCONINO COUNTY** may have a new way to cast their votes in the 2020 election. County officials are testing a **ballot-collecting drone** to deliver and return ballots in and out of the Grand Canyon, the Associated Press reported. Previously, ballots were taken out of the canyon by hikers or horses. Around 100 of the 450 members of the tribe living in the Grand Canyon are registered to vote.

ARKANSAS

Walmart lost an appeal on reducing **PULASKI COUNTY** tax assessments after a county judge ruled the company's reports were flawed in what tax assessors view as the first test of the **dark-store theory** in the state, the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette* reported. The dark-store theory says that big-box retail stores should be valued for tax purposes as if they are closed and vacant. The county's 2017 valuation of

eight Walmart Supercenters and two Sam's Club stores was \$145 million. Walmart wanted to reduce the value to \$74.3 million. Attorneys for Walmart and Pulaski County are preparing for the case to move to the state Supreme Court.

CALIFORNIA

- The Board of Supervisors in **LOS ANGELES COUNTY** voted to cancel a contract for a downtown **mental health treatment center** to replace the Men's Central Jail. The contract for the nearly \$2 billion project was voted down four to one, the *Los Angeles Daily News* reported. Four supervisors supported a motion asking for a task force to report on jail reform and replacement of the Men's Central Jail.

- Supervisors in **SAN DIEGO COUNTY** have launched the County Air Pollution Control District's "**Clean Air for All**" campaign to minimize the use of high-polluting vehicles. The program allows businesses, nonprofits and government organizations to replace vehicles that have high emissions with more environmentally friendly options, according to KUSI. The California Air Resources Board will present the county with \$28.5 million in state grants for the program.

FLORIDA

- A **universal playground** is under construction in **PASCO COUNTY**, Spectrum Bay News 9 reported. The park provides adaptive equipment for children with special needs. Donations for the universal playground, which will be the first in the county, totaled \$125,000. The playground will be built next to an existing playground.

FLORIDA

- A new memorial to honor veterans has been placed in an unusual spot in **PINELLAS COUNTY**. The nation's first **underwater veteran memorial** opened off the county's coast. The Circle of Heroes underwater memorial features a dozen six-foot statues of service members standing in a circle formation, *Tampa Bay Times* reported. In the center of the circle, a monument includes the bronze emblems of the five military branches. The statues provide unique diving opportunities for visitors.



A diver views one of the statues in the Circle of Heroes underwater memorial off the coast of Pinellas County. Photo courtesy of Circle of Heroes Veterans' Memorial

GEORGIA

DEKALB COUNTY is launching a new **tutoring program to improve children's literacy skills**. The goal of the program, called the AARP Experience Corps, is to enhance the reading skills of children in kindergarten through third grade who are behind in reading by two grade levels. In the county, data shows 74 percent of students are reading below their grade level. Volunteers must be at least 50 years old and have a high school diploma or GED to participate.

IOWA

The Department of Public Health in **LINN COUNTY** is working to improve air quality by **paying residents to buy**

new furnaces. County residents who are Alliant Energy customers can receive vouchers to replace wood-burning appliances with EPA-certified appliances, KCRG-TV9 reported. Incentives range from \$1,000 to \$8,000.

MARYLAND

CHARLES COUNTY residents can help deputies solve crimes through the **Virtual Crime Watch program**. Residents and business owners are encouraged to register their security cameras with the Sheriff's Office, which adds their name to a private database of those in the county who own buildings with cameras, WTOP reported. Investigators can then reach out

to registered individuals if a crime happens in the area to see if it was caught on camera.

MISSOURI

An ordinance passed by the **ST. LOUIS COUNTY** Council will **prevent elected officials from receiving county pensions** if they are convicted of a felony during their time serving in an official role. The council unanimously voted in favor of the ordinance.

NEVADA

The prospect of a massive gathering around the Air Force base housing Area 51 (examined in the Aug. 19 *County News*) has prompted two county Boards to pass **preemptive emergency declarations**.

FLORIDA

- There are new members in the **ORANGE COUNTY** Corrections Department — but they may not be who you think. A Corrections Chief administered the oath of office to **lab retrievers** Tony and Millie to be sworn into the K-9 Unit that operates at Corrections. The dogs work to keep the jail safe with Tony trained to find drugs and cell phones and Millie trained to detect narcotics.

Orange County Corrections Chief Louis Quiñones swears in Tony (left) and Millie (right). Photo courtesy of the Orange County Government



NYE and **LINCOLN** counties have both “pre-signed” declarations, which will allow for smoother assistance from the state if the need arises. Lincoln County approved events associated with “Alienstock” in two towns in hopes of keeping visitors occupied there and not trying to “storm the gates,” but Nye County denied a permit to organizers of “Peacestock 51.”

NEW JERSEY

- Emergency dispatchers in **MONMOUTH COUNTY** can now pinpoint the location of cell phone callers, thanks to new software that **extracts GPS data** from calls. Nearly 80 percent of the 911 calls in the county came from cell phones, *The Two River Times* reported.

- Three counties in New Jersey and one in New York have received more than **\$35 million to house immigration detainees** at their jails in 2019. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has paid **BERGEN, ESSEX** and **HUDSON counties**, along with **ORANGE COUNTY, N.Y.**, more than \$35 million through eight months so far this year, lohud.com reported. The total in 2018 was more than \$87 million. More than 55,000 individuals were held in August in county jails and private detention facilities across the United States.

NEW YORK

- Considering a drop in fatal crashes and crashes with injuries versus an increase in low-level crashes, the **SUFFOLK COUNTY** Legislature voted to extend its **red-light camera program**. The county hired an independent company to assess the effectiveness of the cameras. Because studies found that fatalities and injuries in crashes are down — despite the increase in overall crashes — the company recommended keeping the cameras, News 12 reported.

OHIO

- Roughly 700 Cleveland residents in one of the city’s least-connected neighbor-



NEW YORK

- A lawn filled with 660 American flags in front of the **TIOGA COUNTY** Office Building represent the **660 veterans and servicemembers who die by suicide** every month across the country. The county’s veterans service agency assembled the display to bring awareness to the epidemic and to raise awareness of the services the office can provide. Photo courtesy of Michael Middaugh

hoods will have **access to low-cost internet** thanks to a newly mounted antenna on the **CUYAHOGA COUNTY** Juvenile Justice Center. The county’s Board of Control approved a 10-year, \$10-per-year license agreement that will allow a private service provider to place the antenna on the building, *The Plain Dealer* reported. The project is part of a four-neighborhood pilot program, called empowerCLE+, which is aimed at closing the digital divide in some of Cleveland’s low-income areas.

- Proposed legislation would allow Attorney General Dave Yost to **take over nearly 1,000 lawsuits** by Ohio counties and cities that are pending against opioid manufacturers and distributors. The proposed “Consolidate Litigation Act” would give the Ohio attorney general’s office “the sole and exclusive authority” to file certain civil lawsuits. **SUMMIT COUNTY** Executive Ilene Shapiro told *The Plain Dealer* that the county’s standing to bring legal action was well-established.

The Summit County Council allowed its attorneys to settle lawsuits with any drug companies with less than 10 percent

of the opioid market in the county, which it, along with Cuyahoga County, did with an Irish drugmaker, for a combined \$15 million.

OKLAHOMA

GRANT COUNTY received a \$3.4 million grant from the

U.S. Department of Transportation in partnership with the state under the **Competitive Highway Bridge Program**. The grant will help the county fix and replace 34 bridges. Several other counties across the country also secured funding, which totaled \$225 million.

TENNESSEE

The **SHELBY COUNTY** Commission has established a **\$15 minimum wage for county employees**, the *Daily Memphian* reported. The state has no minimum wage and follows

See NEWS FROM page 18



Chester County Commissioners’ Chair Michelle Kichline (center) with Jamie Johnson of Chester County’s Department of Drug & Alcohol Services, handing out Naloxone at 2018 Naloxone Give-away Day. Photo courtesy of Chester County.

PENNSYLVANIA

CHESTER COUNTY will distribute free doses of opioid-reversing drug Naloxone to anyone who cannot, or does not wish to, obtain it from a pharmacy. The giveaway is part of the Pennsylvania Department of Health’s “Stop Overdoses in PA: Get Help Now” campaign to raise awareness of the medication’s effectiveness and application. Recipients will not have to provide any personal information to receive the Naloxone.

How can counties protect data rights?

From DATA page 11

- posted online anywhere that could be publicly accessible?
- Do you post pictures of yourself, your family members, new grandbabies that can be accessed publicly?
 - Have you reviewed your profile settings for privacy and when you create posts, are you diligent about not using the “public” feature on your news feed or your story?
 - Do you read the terms and conditions on a site that you join as a member?
 - Or the new “cookies” pop-up that so many sites have now, as a result of the GDPR laws in Europe?
 - Have you read the current Facebook terms (<https://www.facebook.com/terms.php>)?

The good news is that terms and conditions on most sites are much more transparent these days.

Consider the Facebook terms:

We don't charge you to use Facebook or the other products and services covered by these Terms.

Instead, businesses and organizations pay us to show you ads for their products and services. By using our products, you agree that we can show you ads that we think will be relevant to you and your interests. We use your personal data to help determine which ads to show you.

We don't sell your personal data to advertisers, and we don't share information that directly identifies you (such as your name, email address or other contact information) with advertisers unless you give us specific permission.

Instead, advertisers can tell us things like the kind of audience they want to see their ads, and we show those ads to people who may be interested. We provide advertisers with reports about the performance of their ads that help them un-

derstand how people are interacting with their content. See Section 2...to learn more.


While, the Section 2 reference is quite extensive and not reprinted here, it covers what Facebook does with your data.

While one may or may not be comfortable with these additional details, it is important that you are aware.

You can find out more at <https://www.facebook.com/about/privacy/update>.

If nothing else after reading this article, I would highly encourage you to consider the questions above and to look at what those major sites (like Facebook) do with your data and to whom they share your personal information.

Awareness is critical in balancing privacy with convenience.

Remember data rights equal human rights! 


Rita Reynolds is the chief technology officer at NACo.

Library preserves history

From HISTORY page 14

ties would benefit from knowing how important this area was when it came to that period of history and what was happening along there,” Delaney said.

Striker advises other communities to take a chance when it comes to establishing similar initiatives.

“If I had said to the group that wanted a tour back in 2014, ‘I’m sorry, we don’t have enough information to do a tour for you.’ Where would we be today?” she asked.” 

The African Americans of Boone County Initiative is the recipient of a 2019 NACo Achievement Award in the Arts, Culture and Historic Preservation category.

PROFILES IN SERVICE

MARCIA LAMB
NACo Board Member
Auditor/Treasurer
Billings County, N.D.



- Lamb**
- Number of years involved in NACo:** One and a half
- Years in public service:** 11
- Occupation:** County auditor/treasurer/HR director
- Education:** B.S. in Business Management
- The hardest thing I've ever done is:** Presented the American flag to my grandmother during my grandfather's military burial.
- You'd be surprised to learn:** I am a U.S. Navy veteran.
- The most adventurous thing I've ever done is:** Join the Navy.
- My favorite way to relax is to:** Do yoga or read a book and enjoy a glass of wine.
- I'm most proud of:** My daughter, Alexis, who is a senior in high school.

- Every morning I read:** News from every source I can.
- My pet peeve is:** People who don't say please or thank you.
- The last book I read was:** *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens
- My favorite music:** Everything
- My county is a NACo member because:** Of the access to high-level officials and the communications that have opened up doors for our county to make important differences on the federal and state level.

My favorite quote is:

"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

— Eleanor Roosevelt



NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

King County, Seattle eyeing homelessness plan

From NEWS FROM page 17

the federal guidelines for \$7.25 an hour.

VIRGINIA

ARLINGTON COUNTY thinks the best things in life are **free trees**. And the county's Department of Parks and Recreation is giving away 400 native trees, in what has become a twice-annual tradition.

The trees, ranging from 2-4 feet in height, come in two-gallon containers and recipients get counsel from county landscaping staff and a nonprofit, ArlNow reported.

WASHINGTON

The **KING COUNTY** Council and Seattle City Council are considering legislation to establish the **King County Regional Homelessness Authority**. The body would

oversee policy, funding, and services for people experiencing homelessness countywide. The legislation includes a proposed interlocal agreement and a charter that authorizes the creation of the new public development authority to administer and oversee regional homelessness efforts.

The authority would focus on unifying and coordinating the homeless response system in the county and city.

The county would contribute \$55 million in service and administrative funding and \$1.8 million to support start-up, with the city contributing \$73 million for services and administrative funding and up to \$2 million for start-up costs.

WISCONSIN

- **WINNEBAGO COUNTY** is considering switching to an **appointed medical exam-**

iner, rather than an elected county coroner. *The Post Crescent* reported that the change would allow the county more leeway in considering nominations for the position, which is currently appointed by the governor.

- Legislation introduced by Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D) would require cable, satellite and video providers that serve Wisconsin's 12 counties in Minnesota-based TV markets to provide subscribers **access to programming from Wisconsin markets**, which would include Green Bay Packers games, WKOW News reported.

News From Across the Nation is compiled by Charlie Ban and Rachel Looker. Do you have an item for us to include? Contact us at cban@naco.org and rlooker@naco.org.

the HR DOCTOR

With Phil Rosenberg

Phil Rosenberg

The Census Has Already Been Completed!

Before there was a president and before there was a judicial branch of American government, there was an amazingly important requirement created in the very first Article of the U.S. Constitution, in the very second Section. Section 1 says there will be a Congress, however that Section does not help us understand how membership in the House of Representatives is to be apportioned or how a reasonably fair allocation of tax expenditures and other things are to be accomplished. That is left to the important work established in Section 2 — that there will be an enumeration of population otherwise known as a Census.

The idea of having a Census is not at all new. In fact, it is very likely one of the defining characteristics of our move from the Stone Age into a Bronze Age “civilization.” The idea of civilization has some important defining characteristics such as the shift from a nomadic hunting and herding way of life to a more permanent village, tribal, town form of existence. That required a concentration of population, specialization and the creation of some monumental forms of architecture.

To sustain an agricultural-based community, having some hydrology projects would be a wonderful idea to help overcome the instability of dry spells. You can’t create those civilization markers without two other things. One is some form of writing for record-keeping and, thank goodness for government employees around the world, bureaucracies.

It was likely that the earliest of the Royals would have begun almost immediately to wonder how many people were under his rule — “his” recognizing that female rulers were few at the time. The king/Pharaoh/

sovereign would also likely have asked if all of these people were paying some sort of “fair” taxes? How many might be available for drafting into the military or into labor groups to build monuments? These questions required keeping records and a census. Even Joseph the carpenter in the New Testament had to head back to his village of birth to appear before the Roman census taker.

This national enumeration is central to questions of equitable distribution of government revenues and services. It must be done accurately and as free from undue political influence as possible. That may explain why after a long day of rest, the next miraculous creation was the Census Bureau in the Department of Commerce. Staffed by nonpartisan professionals, the employees of the Census Bureau are charged by law, as Article 1, Section 2 requires, with designing and conducting the Census every 10 years. The first one was in 1790. The next

one is coming soon to a nation near you!

However, the HR Doctor is pleased to tell you that a Census in this decade has really already been completed. The Census every 10 years — the one we are all familiar with and increasingly fretting about — is not the only one in American life. Beginning in 1957, the Census Bureau got another assignment. It was required to complete another census every five years. This census is conducted in years ending with the numeral “7” or with the numeral “2.” The 2017 data was only released in April 2019.

This important census is called the Census of Governments. It looks at all of the different kinds of government entities which make up the United States. As of 2017, I know you will be pleased to hear, there were 90,075 governments. Some folks will also be pleased to note that this number is way down from the 1957 number of 102,328 and way,

way down from the 1942 number of 155,116! We are all very fortunate indeed that the entire federal government consists of only one of these. The number of state governments also fortunately rests at 50, not counting Greenland.

All of the rest of the other government entities are local governments. Local governments are where the action is! That view may be a bit warped since that’s where the HR Doctor chose to spend his career, rejecting federal and state work, military service notwithstanding. I could come home each day and say to the beautiful HR wife Charlotte “look at what I got to do today!” I got to share regularly with my amazing daughters the value of public service and service to the community right where we lived. In local government we are closer to the people. This is literally true since the “palace of the people” — where the local government “rulers” live — is conveniently nearby rather

than far away from where the bulk of the population is located. Note, for example, the locations of Tallahassee, Albany or Sacramento. Figuratively, none of these local or state capitol buildings are as far away as D.C. may be from most of the rest of the known universe.

Of the dozens of thousands of nonfederal and nonstate government entities, who knows better than the National Association of Counties that 3,069 are county governments. The number has not appreciably changed since the first of these census tallies in 1957. There are 19,495 cities and 16,253 townships with some reduced authority compared to a chartered city.

The majority of local governments (i.e., all 57,296 of them) consist of two types: independent school districts and special districts. Since 1957 there has been a rather precipitous decline in the number of in-

See HR DOCTOR page 20



Are ‘special districts’ so common that they cease to be special?

From HR DOCTOR page 19

dependent school districts. There are now about 12,754, compared with 50,446 in 1957. In fact, in case you are “school district curious,” there were 108,579 in 1942. This decline is likely a factor of urban population changes, declining farm numbers, and pressures to consolidate to be efficient and absorb costs for redundant administrations, purchasing, and infrastructure.

In the future we are likely to see similar consideration given to the number of local fire departments or law enforcement agencies within large jurisdictions. Continuing tax cut pressures will likely lead to more consolidations in the future as officials assiduously avoid being labeled as a “tax and spend” person by their opponents. It takes courageous elected and appointed officials to admit that their small jurisdiction may not be financially

sustainable in the long run, or that consolidation might be in the overall community best interests.

Independent school district numbers have declined, but the opposite is true of special districts. America is increasingly a “SAD” nation — not psychologically I hope, but in terms of the growing popularity of Special Assessment Districts (SAD). Those represented 38,542 in 2017. There are many types of special purpose districts, including those for lighting, conservation, various forms of improvement districts for infrastructure improvements, and districts created for projects which affect multiple jurisdictions, such as library districts, performing arts authorities, airports and, yes, even cemetery districts.

A few are general purpose districts seeking to supersede traditional city and county authority to create a “bubble” for a limited sector of the popu-

lation. Near the HR Doctor’s beautiful agricultural property in central Florida, are two prime examples. Both require huge amounts of money to establish and grow as well as perhaps to influence, sorry, make that “lobby” state officials.

One is the “Reedy Creek Improvement District,” which every child reading the HR Doctor articles knows better as Disney World. The other is “The Villages Community Development District,” home to about 120,000 relatively well-heeled senior citizens.

The legislature in Florida was kind enough to grant a charter to the latter district to, in effect, become a super local agency authority. It chose, for example, to create its own fire department, but “rent” law enforcement support from multiple jurisdictions as it spreads over territory in three different counties.

The idea of this and other special districts — what in-

creasingly makes them attractive — is that they can create for themselves what might be regarded as higher standards of public service than they would likely otherwise receive in a more general government serving a more diverse population. The popularity of special districts will increase their numbers the more we pretend we can avoid paying additional property and other taxes while at the same time demanding more services, delivered faster and more conveniently.

Despite the popularity of this approach to how we govern ourselves, the potentially disturbing long-range and strategic implication is that these districts can be a form of “pay to play,” where upper-income people can buy into a feeling of being more insulated from economic and social pressures, which most people cannot afford to do.

It is not unlike the idea of a “mega” gated community. As

wealth concentrates into the hands of a small percentage of the population, the attractiveness of “bubbles” will grow also, perhaps at a loss to the overall population. Then again, those foregoing comments may be sour grapes since not living directly in The Villages makes me ineligible to join any of the more than 3,000 special interest clubs.

One of the outcomes of a professional and statistically valid census is that the enumeration of population variables including income is brought to light. This may scare some people, but it should be embraced by all people. It may help us come to grips with long-term policies we need to take us into an uncertain future in good shape.

Cheers for the Census Bureau and its hard-working employees. Their existence in the very first Article of the U.S. Constitution testifies to the incredibly important job they perform in the name of all of us! **CN**



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CAPABILITIES

- We have mobile/emergency water treatment solutions
- We can meet or exceed regulated MCLs
- We can meet or exceed compliance requirements

WATER SOURCES

- Municipal drinking water
- Groundwater remediation
- Industrial wastewater
- Small community water systems