



Jonathan Shuffield, NACo's associate legislative director for public lands and the Western Interstate Region, discusses the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program with 25 county officials who visited NACo headquarters during the annual PILT Fly-In. County officials met with staff from 60 congressional offices to advocate for a permanent funding source for PILT and the Secure Rural Schools program. They also attended a White House meeting with the Deputy Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt; Theodore Wold, special assistant to the president for domestic policy; Jeffrey Schlagenhauf, associate director for economic policy at the Office of Management and Budget and Ryan Thomas, chief of staff at the Department of Agriculture. Photo by Hugh Clarke

Proposed 5G order curtails local authority

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Commissioner Brendan Carr recently announced a proposed order aimed at accelerating next-generation 5G wireless networks by limiting local authority. Similar to the STREAMLINE Small Cell Deployment Act introduced in the Senate, the FCC's proposed order would limit fees local governments are currently able to assess on telecommunications companies for the placement, construction or co-location of new wireless service facilities.

The FCC plan would only provide local governments 60 days to evaluate applications from companies for attaching 5G Small Cells to existing structures and 90 days for equipment on entirely new structures. Unlike the STREAMLINE Act, however, the order does not include the "deemed granted" approach, under which ap-

plications are automatically approved if the local government fails to complete its evaluation within the set timeframe.

"What they are really trying to do is get communities in a position where they're just rubber-stamping these applications without really looking at them or seeing the situation in the field, to overwhelm them," said Rusty Monroe, a consultant in North Carolina who advises local governments on telecom issues.

"There are some communities that are hit with hundreds of applications," he said. "They're [telecom companies] not in a rush to build. It normally takes them three to 12 months to build the sites after they're permitted."

Monroe said that talk of amping up 5G in order to help

See 5G page 2

Legislation would stop diversion of 911 fees

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

Since 2009, about \$1 billion in 911 funding intended to bolster counties' emergency response has been diverted by states into non-911 programs, according to Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reports. Some say the amount might even be higher because some states have opted not to report that information to the FCC.

A fix may be on the horizon.

Rep. Chris Collins (R-N.Y.) has introduced The 911 Fee Integrity Act, legislation designed to prevent states from diverting 911 fees. The bill would require states to use the fees solely for 911 services.

"It is completely unacceptable that we have seen states diverting fees meant to make important and necessary improvements to emergency response systems," Collins said. "Diverting these important fees puts lives in danger, especially in rural areas."

In New York, 41 percent of all fees collected annually are diverted into the state general fund. The state collects more than \$180 million each year through its monthly surcharge of \$1.20 on cell phone bills. Last year, only \$10 million of \$185 million collected went to 911 call centers.

Once in the general fund, there are no restrictions on how the monies are spent. The state's Public Safety Communications Surcharge (originally classified as the "911 surcharge") sends

\$25 million to the state police.

"The diversion of 911 fees in New York has been going on for a decade or so," said Stephen Acquario, executive director of the New York State Association of Counties. "County officials have long complained it was wrong and subjected the state to federal penalty and loss of grants to the state. We have made incremental progress with the state but have a long way to go."

See 911 FEES page 2

FCC to curb local control

From 5G page 1

underserved areas is just talk. “They won’t be touched for years,” he said. “They build where they can get the biggest bang for their buck.”

According to Carr, the plan would cut roughly \$2 billion in administrative fees and stimulate additional investments. Local governments, however, say the proposed language would significantly limit their ability to properly regulate wireless telecommunications infrastructure deployment. By narrowing the window for evaluating 5G deployment applications, the FCC would effectively prevent local governments from overseeing public health, safety and welfare during the construction, modification or installation of broadcasting facilities. **CN**

Zachary George, legislative assistant and Mary Ann Barton, senior writer, contributed to this report.

Counties, FCC question diversion of local 911 fees by states



Monmouth County, N.J. Freeholder Deputy Director Lillian G. Burry protests the diversion of 911 fees. Photo courtesy of Monmouth County, N.J.

From 911 FEES page 1

In Niagara County, N.Y., the state collected more than \$10.2 million between 2013 to 2017 from county residents but only returned \$2.2 million to the

county in those five years.

Earlier this year, the county hosted Collins and FCC Commissioner Michael O’Rielly to discuss the issue. Sheriff James Voutour pointed out how the diversion of the fees is impacting his county.

“In Niagara County and several other counties, the New York State Police have shut down their dispatch centers and rely on county centers for 100 percent of law enforcement dispatch,” said Sheriff Voutour. “The New York State Police do not pay any expenses for this service.”

The story is much the same in other New York counties. Residents in Monroe County, paid \$2.7 million in 911 fees last year but the county only received 8 percent or \$200,000 of that back in state grants.

Co-authors of the bill, Reps.

Anna Eshoo (D-Calif.) and Leonard Lance (R-N.J.), vice chair of the Communications and Technology Subcommittee, have also seen 911 fee diversion in their home states.

In Lance’s New Jersey, the legislative action comes after Monmouth County officials were trying to find out why they weren’t receiving their share of 911 fees. They estimate county residents have paid \$5 million over the past 13 years; but only \$1.14 million of that has made its way to the county to help upgrade the emergency response system and communications center. And it’s been eight years since they’ve seen any fees at all.

In 2016, \$122 million was generated in New Jersey for the 911 System and Emergency Response Trust Fund, in which an estimated \$108 million was

used for other purposes.

In June, Monmouth County officials held a press conference after state lawmakers talked about raising the fee by 10 percent to 99 cents a month for landlines and cell phone bills. “We oppose any legislation that would call for the increase of 911 fees as the County has yet to rightfully receive any funding collected through the trust fund since 2010,” Freeholder Deputy Director Lillian G. Burry said.

“Our residents have paid their fair share into the fund and should not be asked to contribute even more without seeing those monies come back to the County.”

The problem isn’t just in New York and New Jersey. The FCC has flagged a number of states for diverting 911 fees — including Rhode Island, New Mexico, Illinois and West Virginia. **CN**

SNAP/STATS

DEADLIEST U.S. HURRICANES

NAME	YEAR	CATEGORY	DEATHS
Great Galveston Hurricane (Texas).....	1900	4	8,000
Lake Okeechobee (Florida)	1928	4	2,500
Katrina (La./Miss./Fla./Ga./Ala.) ...	2005	3	1,200
Cheniere Caminada (La.)	1893	4	1,100
Sea Islands (S.C./Ga.)	1893	3	1,000

Source: National Hurricane Center

CORRECTION

In the Aug. 20 issue of *County News*, the article “Business as usual despite personal transition” misstated Claire Hall’s birthday. The correct year is 1959.

President
Greg Cox
Publisher
Matthew Chase
Public Affairs Director
Brian Namey

Consulting Editor
Beverly Anne Schlotterbeck
Senior Staff Writer
Charlie Ban
Senior Staff Writer
Mary Ann Barton
Design Director
Leon Lawrence III

ADVERTISING STAFF
Job Market/Classifieds representative
National Accounts representative
Beverly Schlotterbeck
202.393.6226
FAX 866.752.1573

Published biweekly except August by:
National Association of Counties
Research Foundation, Inc.
660 N. Capitol Street, N.W. STE. 400,
Washington, D.C. 20001
202.393.6226 | FAX 866.752.1573
E-mail cnews@naco.org
Online address www.countynews.org

The appearance of paid advertisements in *County News* in no way implies support or endorsement by the National Association of Counties for any of the products, services or messages advertised. Periodicals postage paid at Washington D.C. and other offices.

Mail subscriptions are \$100 per year for non-members. \$60 per year for non-members purchasing multiple copies. Educational institution rate, \$50 per year. Member county supplemental subscriptions are \$20 each. Send payment with order and address changes to NACo, 660 N. Capitol Street, N.W. STE. 400, Washington, D.C. 20001.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to *County News*, 660 N. Capitol Street, N.W. STE. 400, Washington, D.C. 20001

(USPS 704-620) ♠ (ISSN: 0744-9798)
© National Association of Counties
Research Foundation, Inc.



Data sharing and integration: Why it's worth it

By **Adelia D. Jenkins**

Counties hold a veritable treasure trove of administrative data on the individuals and communities they serve. These data are routinely collected in the course of service delivery and, taken together, form a rich picture of people's experiences and trajectories. The challenge is that, all too often, each government agency only has access to the data collected through its program provision — just one puzzle piece in that much larger picture.

When counties start to bring these pieces together, important connections are brought to light. For example, behavioral and mental health supports may help a mother maintain employment and avoid interaction with the justice system.

Access to a high-quality early learning or home-visiting programs may help a family cope with stress or trauma and avoid referral to the child welfare system. More stable housing may increase a child's attendance and achievement in school. It may have even greater impact if it's paired with convenient access to preventative medical care. Without the capacity to share and link data across programs, we'll simply never know.

This realization has motivated many counties to rethink their traditional, siloed approach and pursue data sharing and linkage for interdisciplinary projects and program evaluations.

This work is often slow going, as counties must contend with the quirks of legacy systems, the inertia of business as usual, the risk aversion of legal counsel and the limited capacity of over-burdened staff.

And yet, there are success stories.

In Cuyahoga County, Ohio, data from Case Western's ChildHood Integrated Longitudinal Data System proved essential in designing, implementing and evaluating a

new county program to support mothers experiencing homelessness who also have children in the child welfare system. The unique Pay for Success initiative aims to reduce the number of days that children spend in foster care and is projected to save taxpayers over \$4 million dollars.

In Philadelphia, the Data Management Office and partners at the University of Pennsylvania were able to map early childhood risk factors, including issues such as inadequate prenatal care, homelessness, lead exposure, and child maltreatment and compare the geographic dis-

Access to a high-quality early learning or home visiting programs may help a family cope with stress or trauma and avoid referral to the child welfare system.

tribution of these risks to the geographic distribution of high-quality early childhood programming. Their analysis was used to advocate for a new city-wide beverage tax to support expanded public pre-K. Once the tax passed, the analysis then informed the targeting of over 2,000 new program slots to high-need, low-supply neighborhoods.

So, how can a resource-strapped county with aging technology systems get started?

Here are a few lessons we've learned from counties that are leading the way:

- **Remember that data sharing is as relational as it is technical.** Rather than rushing to procure new systems, we recommend starting with a cross-agency retreat to surface common priorities and research questions.

- **Start small.** Once you've surfaced a cross-agency priority, start with a coalition of the

willing and focus on demonstrating value. Public or foundation funding for a single ad-hoc data-sharing project may be leveraged to support basic infrastructure that is adaptable for future uses.

- **Tap local universities.** When county resources are scarce, academic partners can lend valuable research capacity and expertise.

- **Focus on strong and inclusive governance.** Clearly defined policies and procedures to support decision-making, routine meeting structures, and well-documented proceedings all help to foster a culture of trust, collaboration, and openness.

- **Emphasize transparent communication and stakeholder engagement.** The linking and use of sensitive personal data are governed by local, state and federal privacy laws, as well as rigorous technical safeguards. Nevertheless, individuals and communities will have questions about how their information will be used and protected. Counties should lean into opportunities to talk about why data are necessary for social policy improvement and make time to address stakeholders' concerns, expectations and priorities.

- **Set data standards.** Focus on linking only data elements that are both relevant to the social problem at hand and of sufficient quality to provide insight. This will require you to define "data quality" and sustain a continued exchange between those who are building the system or data model (generally agency analysts and technologists) and those who work most closely with the data day-to-day (practitioners and program staff).

- **Tap into a peer learning community.** While every county is unique, no one is well-served reinventing the wheel. We recommend that counties beg, borrow and steal from their NACo colleagues, as well as resources like Ac-

tionable Intelligence for Social Policy (AISP).

Check out the AISP website for free resources and information about its Learning Community, and tune in to NACo's upcoming webinar on Sept. 26 at 3 p.m. ET featuring AISP and its partners from the Broward County Data Collaborative. The county will discuss how it is leveraging AISP's technical

assistance and other resources to formalize a data governance process, engage stakeholders and advance a race equity agenda through community-participatory research. **CN**

Adelia D. Jenkins is executive director, Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy (AISP), University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice

WORD SEARCH

ROWAN COUNTY, N.C.
Created By: Mary Ann Barton

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

BARBECUE: If you're driving through Rowan County, be sure to stop at top-rated barbecue restaurant, The Smoke Pit.

CATAWBA: Catawba College, founded in 1851, is located in the county; others include Livingstone College, Rowan-Cabarrus Community College and Campbell University.

CHARLOTTE: The county is located northeast of Charlotte and is included in the metropolitan area.

COURTHOUSE: The former county courthouse, built in 1854, is now the Rowan Museum.

DOLE: Former U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Dole (R) is from the county.

FARMS: The county has a number of "pick-your-own" farms where you can find blueberries, apples, pumpkins and more.

JACKSON: President Andrew Jackson practiced law in the county.

PARDO: The first Europeans to enter what is now Rowan County were the Spanish expedition of Juan Pardo, in 1567.

PIEDMONT: The county is located in the Piedmont region of North Carolina.

SALISBURY: The county seat.

SPORTS: The county is home to the National Sportscenter and Sportswriters Hall of Fame Awards.

STONE: Old Stone House, built in 1766, is the county's oldest building.

TOMATO: The county is home to the Woodleaf Tomato Festival.

TRANSPORTATION: The county is home to the North Carolina Transportation Museum, featuring 60 acres of exhibits and train rides.

VINEYARDS: The county is home to Morgan Ridge Vineyards.

ANALYSIS

Work Requirements Expand for Those Receiving Benefits

By **Russell Sykes**

A major emphasis of the current administration is to expand work, education and training to work, or other forms of community engagement requirements as conditions of eligibility for numerous health and human services programs. For the first time it would expand work requirements for Medicaid and strengthen current minimal ones in subsidized public housing. The federal Office of Child Support Enforcement is urging states to use federal incentive funds to finance employment and training efforts for non-custodial parents.

This stronger emphasis on work took off in 1996 with the enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act and the creation of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF).

The concept of work in return for benefits found its way into the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in 1998, when the Employment and Training Program (SNAP E&T) was initiated, and recently passed House legislation would expand SNAP work requirements and make them mandatory in most instances.

Public housing is also in line for expanded work requirements. Programs to promote work at a public housing authority's discretion have existed for those receiving direct subsidies or housing choice vouchers since 1985, but they have been extremely small and experimental. The administration's budget proposal for FY19 would require work or other activities as a condition of eligibility for the 26 percent of nonworking, nondisabled residents of public housing.

The inclusion of Medicaid in the panoply of programs with work-community engagement requirements is the newest proposal. States have

been given the option to seek waivers to implement work or community engagement requirements in Medicaid as a condition of eligibility for adults without disabilities. A number of states have pending waivers, and CMS has granted waivers to Kentucky, Arkansas and Indiana.

There is a question as to whether allowing states to impose work or other engagement requirements through waivers is legal, because it may exceed administrative authority and possibly violate the Americans with Disabilities Act. Kentucky's waiver was challenged in court and has been temporarily halted. In response, the administration is reopening public comments on work requirements for Medicaid to address the court concerns and reinstate the program.

Few disagree that employment for those who can work is both economically and socially beneficial. Most work-eligible adults in public benefit programs already work, but there is a troubling percentage of nondisabled, nonworking adults enrolled in public benefit programs. The numbers could be as high as 9 million but estimates tend to be made at a point in time, subject to dispute and likely count duplicate beneficiaries across several programs. Regardless, as a matter of public policy, they need our attention.

The idea of reciprocity, where public agencies provide benefits based on expectations that work-capable adults make reasonable efforts to get training or jobs, has become more widely accepted. Employment not only improves an individual's economic condition, but it also builds social capital by connecting adults to colleagues and other contacts. It can also prevent social isolation and improve both physical and mental health outcomes.

The nation's economy has

recovered from years of sluggishness and the unemployment rate is at historically low levels. Yet employers need qualified workers and in many sectors, cannot find them. This creates an opportunity for states to ramp up their efforts across health and human services programs to train and place nonworking, non-disabled adults into jobs by working in close partnership with employers, both for- and not-for-profit organizational partners, and the work-capable clients themselves, to accomplish this goal.

Eligible populations now covered by TANF and SNAP E&T work rules already overlap even more so if SNAP rules are greatly expanded and become mandatory. This could lead to confusion and duplicative engagement requirements in other programs. States and localities may currently lack systems and infrastructure to track clients assigned to activities or to enforce requirements.

Meanwhile, preparing and moving eligible adults into employment presents its own set of challenges. Clients often have limited work histories and face multiple difficulties such as child care, transportation, parental responsibilities, child support obligations, previous incarcerations or chronic health conditions. Subsequently, adequate funding and innovative approaches are fundamental to supporting activities that embrace education and sector-based training aligned with available local labor market jobs. Key to the success of any training are employer networks with businesses willing to hire adults with limited skills and experience, and provide on-the-job training through apprenticeships, subsidized employment and other skill development.

Expanding work requirements to multiple programs will be very resource dependent, if the goal is truly to get

clients into jobs instead of simply imposing sanctions. Even if work-eligible adults willfully and without good cause fail to comply with work rules and are penalized, the question remains as to whether denying benefits could make the cure worse than the problem.

Proposals in both housing and Medicaid to include compliance requirements could instead of leading to work, block beneficiaries from access to health care or housing, potentially leading to increased health problems,

potential homelessness and increased costs of both charity care in health and shelter costs in housing.

The bottom line — states and localities must be both intentional and cautious in properly designing programs to help vulnerable populations achieve success through various approaches that combine expectations and consequences. **CN**

Russell Sykes is a senior fellow at the American Public Human Services Association.



NACo OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

- **Lynn Johnson** (above) of Jefferson County, Colo. was sworn in on Sept. 4 by U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar II. Johnson, who has been a longtime supporter of NACo, is the new assistant secretary for the Administration for Children and Families.
- First Vice President **Mary Ann Borgeson** spoke at the South Dakota Annual County Convention, held Sept. 9–11 in Hughes County, S.D.

NACo STAFF

- **Hadi Sedigh** spoke at the Association of Minnesota Counties Policy Conference and special Opioid Conference, held in Douglas County (Alexandria), Minn. Sept. 12–14.
- **Daria Daniel** spoke at the National Association for Community Economic Development Associations Conference session on Building Prosperity with New Advocacy Partners Sept. 12 in Philadelphia, Pa.
- **Julie Ufner** was a panelist at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Local Government Advisory Committee meeting in Washington, D.C., Sept. 13. Panelists discussed "Communicating Risk: Improving Federal, State, Local and Tribal Coordination."

IN MY OPINION

'Your County Is a Ground Zero for Civil Rights Struggles'

Dear Colleagues:

As black county officials working to repair broken systems that unfairly limit opportunities for our communities to prosper and unjustly deny rights to the people we serve, we should advocate for local criminal justice reform efforts that have the power and potential to effect systemic change on a massive scale.

Mass incarceration, bail reform and the broader fight for equal justice together represent one of the greatest civil rights struggles of our time, and Harris County, Texas is a ground zero for that fight. Make no mistake — your county is a ground zero too.

Our civil rights movement is far from over. A recent report by the Economic Policy Institute has found that the incarceration of black people nearly tripled from 1968 to 2016 and black people today are more



Ellis

likely to be jailed or imprisoned than they were in 1968.

During this same time, the wealth gap between black families and white families has nearly tripled, leaving black families with fewer paths to prosperity and more vulnerable to a criminal justice system riddled with inequality and racial disparities.

If we don't address the mass incarceration of minorities and the gross racial disparities found throughout our criminal justice system, fundamental rights will continue to be

denied and whole groups of people will be treated as second-class citizens.

In Harris County, which has the one of the highest rates of mass incarceration in the country, the bail reform lawsuit brought by plaintiffs who were forced to languish behind bars because they were too poor to pay bail has exposed a two-tiered system of injustice.

This system that privileges wealthy defendants and punishes poor defendants — mostly black and Latino — is based on the size of their pocketbooks and not the alleged crimes.

In Harris County and elsewhere across the country, a wealthy defendant accused of a violent crime can pay to walk away while poor and vulnerable defendants accused of petty, nonviolent misdemeanors suffer behind bars for weeks and months at a time before they've even gone to trial or

have been convicted of a crime.

These unconscionable practices have destroyed countless lives, forced innocent people to plead guilty, torn families apart and done nothing to make communities safer.

Fundamental rights are blatantly violated and this type of system abandons cherished values like fairness and liberty.

Both a federal judge appointed by former President George H.W. Bush and the ultra-conservative U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals agree. Both have ruled repeatedly that the Harris County bail system routinely violates the constitutional rights of poor defendants, unjustly denies poor defendants their liberty and is used as an instrument of oppression.

We all must join the fight to end mass incarceration and advocate for bail reform, fair sentencing and community-led solutions to crime and public

safety. NOBCO's commitment to bail reform is a bold step in this emerging civil rights movement.

I look forward to taking the journey with all of you to work together to coordinate strategic, local action around criminal justice reform and do our part in the ultimate quest for fair and equal justice for all people.

Anyone interested in initiating or furthering their existing reform efforts in their county are welcome to contact my office at 713.991.6881 or *Comm_Ellis@cp1.hctx.net* to connect to resources and discuss ways in which we can all work together on these important issues.

Commissioner Rodney Ellis
Harris County, Texas

Ellis is president of the National Association of Black County Officials

Fixing what ails you: Rural county to reopen hospital

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

When the local hospital closed five years ago in rural Lee County, Va., Supervisor Larry Mosley said the residents in the westernmost county in the Old Dominion were devastated.

But in a twist not often heard these days, residents are getting ready to celebrate its grand reopening in the coming months.

"I can't go to the grocery store or Walmart without getting asked when the new hospital is going to open," Mosley said.

Lee County Regional Medical Center is set to open later this year in Pennington Gap, with about 100 employees. Mosley noted that the new owner, Florida-based Americore Health, committed to hire as many local residents as possible.

As of June 30, there were more than 7,200 designated



Lee County (Va.) Regional Medical Center closed in 2013; the county stepped in to help reopen it five years later. Photo courtesy of *The Roanoke Times*

Health Professional Shortage Areas lacking adequate primary care nationwide, nearly 60 percent in rural regions, according to the federal Health Resources and Services Administration. The nation needs 4,022 primary care facilities to fill the gap.

The opening of a new full-service hospital in a rural area is an anomaly. In the past eight years, 87 hospitals have closed

in rural counties, according to a study by the Sheps Center for Health Services Research at the University of North Carolina.

"People don't realize what they have 'til it's gone," Mosley said. "It's not good for us to be without a hospital."

In Lee County, the 24,000-plus residents were aghast when their local hospital closed without warning Oct. 1, 2013,

when the hospital's owners said they were losing money, Mosley said, noting that the then-owners also made a point of referring patients to one of its "sister" properties farther away, which may have played a part in its downfall.

A petition to reopen the hospital garnered more than 10,000 signatures.

In the past five years, "it's

been hard on our citizens," Mosley said. "Sometimes you have to just put them in a car, you know, because the distance they have to travel is an hour. For some it's a little bit more. We've had people actually die."

The effort to reopen the hospital began almost immediately after the hospital closed with the county, the farm bureau, town council and community leaders meeting and donating funds to keep the lights on at the building.

A local banker, Sonny Martin, who has since passed away, helped lead the charge, Mosley said.

A state lawmaker passed a measure paving the way for the county to create a hospital authority to begin the process of reopening the hospital. The county kept the lights on and the boilers going at the empty building, spending about

See HOSPITAL page 7

Coastal resilience program prepares counties for the high costs of high tides

By Shanna Williamson

Four county-based teams have been selected to participate in a new technical assistance and training program focused on strengthening coastal counties' resilience. The selected teams are from: Santa Rosa County, Fla.; Calcasieu and Cameron parishes, La.; Harrison County, Miss.; and Cameron and Willacy counties, Texas.

A recent report from the Union of Concerned Scientists reveals the economic impacts of projected increases in sea level on coastal communities.

According to the report, approximately 2.5 million residential and commercial coastal properties across the United States currently valued at \$1.07 trillion dollars may be subjected to chronic flooding by the year 2100. As chronic flooding affects both properties and other critical infrastructure, local economies risk losing or seeing decreased local tax revenue generation.

States with the most homes at risk by the end of the century are Florida, with about 1 million homes or more than 10 percent of the state's current residential properties, New Jersey with 250,000 homes, and New York with 143,000 homes.

States that could lose the most in home property values by 2100 are Florida at \$351 billion, New Jersey at \$108 billion, and New York at nearly \$100 billion.

Decreases in property values also mean a lower property tax base. Florida, New York and New Jersey will see the biggest hits to their annual property tax revenue with municipalities losing about \$5 billion, \$1.9 billion and \$1.7 billion total respectively.

These numbers do not, however, take into account future adaptation, mitigation and resiliency measures that may be undertaken by coastal communities.

NACo's *Strengthening Coastal Counties Resilience Program*, sponsored by NACo in partnership with the Association of State Floodplain Managers, the Coastal States Organization and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, aims to help participating counties develop action plans that will guide their efforts to protect and strengthen both their natural habitats and economies.

The four teams will receive intensive, hands-on training designed to boost their capacity to better prepare for, plan for, absorb the impacts of, recover from or adapt to extreme weather events and climate-related hazards. Each team will also receive individual assistance to guide implementation of their coastal resilience strategies and projects.

Based on the recent Union of Concerned Scientists report, by the year 2100, the Calcasieu and Cameron parishes, La. and Harrison County, Miss. are anticipated to have at least 6,545 properties subject to chronic flooding under intermediate projected increases in sea level. These properties are currently valued at \$ 759,541,032, house 13,593 people and contribute \$8,678,443 to the annual property tax base.

The workshop, training, and resources provided to coastal counties through the *Coastal Resilience Program* will help counties proactively address the economic ramifications of projected increases in sea level. **CN**

To learn more about the program, visit naco.org/CoastalCounties. For more information, contact Jenna Moran at jmoran@naco.org. To see if data on your county was included in the study go to <https://bit.ly/2N4YrID>.

Williamson is a NOAA Digital Fellow assigned to NACo.

PROFILES IN SERVICE

VIVIAN PARSONS

Board Member
Executive Director
County Commissioners'
Association of West Virginia



PARSONS

Number of years involved in NACo: 22

Years in public service: 29.5 years – 7.5 years as an executive assistant and lobbyist for a county association and 22 years as executive director and lobbyist for a county association

Occupation: State association director, County Commissioners' Association of West Virginia

Education: Associate degree in business and bachelor's degree in organizational leadership

The hardest thing I've ever done is: Say a "final" goodbye to my dad.

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner are: My dad, my dad, my dad... He taught me the lessons of the "Little Engine that Could!" There is so much I'd like to share with him...my cheerleader!

A dream I have is to: Someday live on the coast.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Hate "hot dogs, apple pie and mayonnaise." (But I LOVE America!)

The last book I read was: *Seven More Days: Live a Life That's Bursting with Positivity and Happiness...Before it's Too Late* by Amy Dix (daughter of Larry Dix, executive director of the Nebraska Association of Counties!)

My favorite movies are: *Mamma Mia* and *Dirty Dancing*.

My favorite music is: '60s and '70s pop rock.

My favorite U.S. presidents are: Ronald Reagan and Abraham Lincoln.

West Virginia is a 100 percent NACo membership state because: NACo does for county members, on the federal level, what our state association does at the state level. NACo serves as West Virginia counties' federal connection!

The most adventurous thing I've ever done was: Accept the position of executive director 22 years ago; what a wonderful ride!

My favorite way to relax is to: Sit where the tide breaks and listen to the sounds of the ocean.

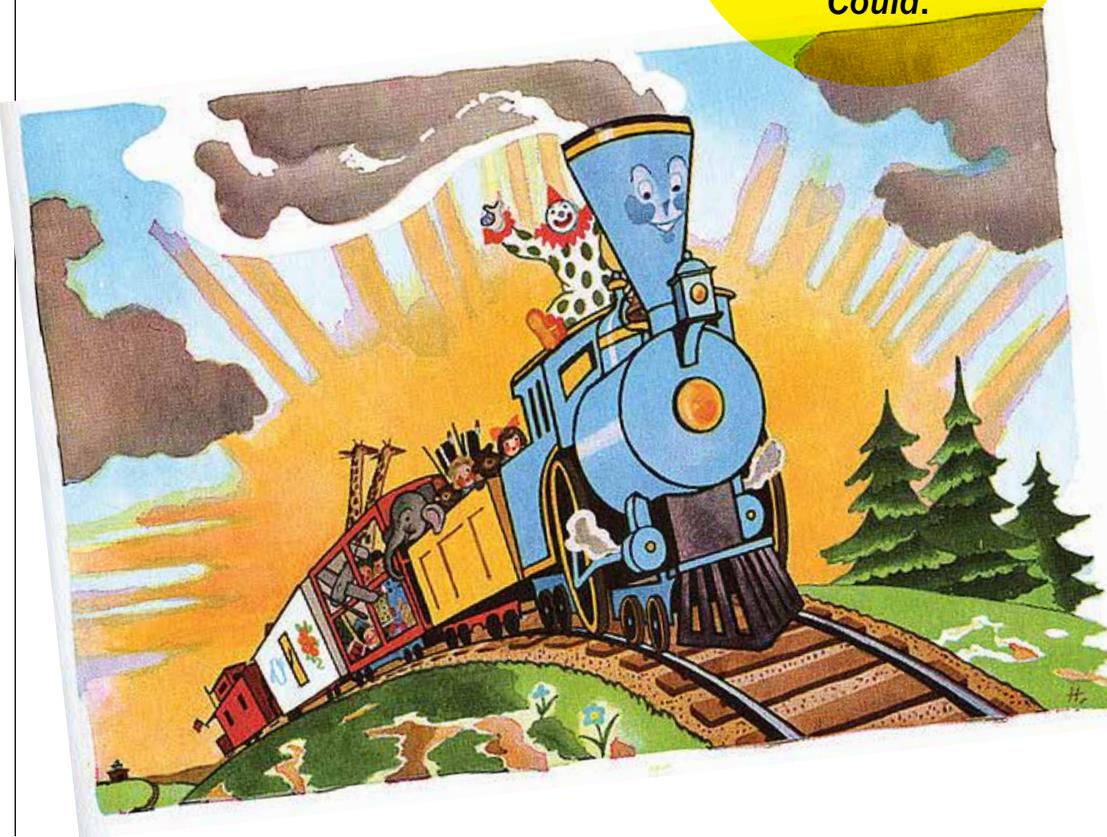
I'm most proud of: My two awesome sons.

Every morning I read: News headlines: good and bad.

My favorite meal is: Everything Italian.

My pet peeve is: Mean-spirited bullies.

My motto is
"I think I can...I think I can..."
from *The Little Engine That Could*.



BRIGHT IDEAS MECKLENBURG COUNTY, N.C.

Disabled Teens, Young Adults Get Fit with Assist from County

PROBLEM:

Teens and young adults with disabilities needed an opportunity to join the fitness community.

SOLUTION:

Mecklenburg County, N.C. created a program using Adaptive CrossFit and Yoga to help participants increase their fitness.

By **Mary Ann Barton**
senior staff writer

While running a sports program organizing football, baseball and basketball games for disabled teens and young adults in Mecklenburg County, N.C. last year, Stacey Thomas was also looking at ways to add fitness classes to the mix.

"We were trying to start a more health and fitness focus, so we started offering Zumba and we were trying yoga," said Thomas, a therapeutic recreation specialist in the county's park and recreation department.

"People with disabilities are pretty much completely left behind when it comes to health and wellness, she noted. "They have access to programs and job opportunities, sports, art...things like that, all across



A participant in Mecklenburg County, N.C.'s fitness program gets help from a coach at CrossFit.

the nation. But health and wellness are typically where they're left behind." The fitness industry, she said, is "unsure how to welcome them, how to accommodate for them. This is

a really big thing."

In her personal time, Thomas began brainstorming new ideas after a visit to a CrossFit gym where she works out. There was a lot of talk there

about working with adaptive athletes and opening up the fitness world for people with disabilities, she said.

She started talking to her supervisor about partnering with the fitness company to work with disabled teens and young adults. Her supervisor told her "absolutely, go for it," she said.

The new fitness program was geared to disabled teens and young adults diagnosed with autism, down syndrome and cerebral palsy.

Thomas then went to CrossFit to find fitness instructors to work with her on the program and discuss the space they could use.

The county got the word out about the program by sending out email blasts and flyers to CrossFit, their Facebook community, schools, disability groups and rec centers.

"It all came together," she said. "It's definitely a lot of 'pre-work.'"

The new program launched in April 2017 and planning is underway to offer it again in the upcoming 2018-2019 season. "We definitely want to do it again," she said.

Participants not only get more fit but it's an opportunity to work on social skills and feel included, Thomas

said. One young man in particular, who has cerebral palsy and uses a walker "told me 'I thought I wasn't going to do a lot of the exercises,' but he surprised himself," she said.

In addition to gaining self-confidence, exercising helps someone who is disabled push themselves up from their wheelchair or gives them more strength to stand up if they fall down, Thomas said.

The park and rec department's healthy budget easily absorbed the cost of renting the CrossFit gym, and providing coaches and volunteers, Thomas said.

The program's success is measured by looking to see if the goals and objectives are met. The goals and objectives include improving intellectual skills by following directions and improving physical well-being; the progress of each participant is documented.

Want to start a similar program? Thomas said to look around your community for a gym to collaborate with. "Community connections are a big thing," she said.

If you're interested in finding out more about the program, contact Thomas at: Stacey.Thomas@mecklenburgcountync.gov.

'You need to support your rural hospital instead of going somewhere else'

From **HOSPITAL** page 5

\$500,000 over five years.

"It's just like a car," Mosley noted. "If you leave a car sitting for five years, I'm sorry, it's not going to start when you get in it. We knew if we didn't keep it in that manner, we were gonna be in bad trouble, it was going to be a hard car to sell."

The county tried to get the former owners to donate the building to the county; when that didn't work, the county had

the building appraised to find out how much it would cost to buy it. It came in at \$400,000. The former owners also had the building appraised, and that appraisal came in higher.

The hospital's former owner ended up selling the building to the county for \$1.6 million. The new owner, Florida-based Americore Health, is paying the county for the building.

"It's uplifting to think we're going to get these services back that were gone for five years,"

"You've got to find the right organization to run the hospital; there are very few out there, to be honest."

Mosley said.

Americore is committed to staying put, he said, and is planning to eventually add a rehabilitation center and a black lung clinic.

For other rural counties out

there facing a similar situation, Mosley said "you best get the community involved. It's been a long hard road for us. You've got to find the right organization to run the hospital; there are very few out there, to be honest."

If your county has a hospital that appears to be cutting back services, "they should come to county leaders and ask 'What can you do to help us?'"

On the other side of the coin, he noted, "you need to support

your rural hospital instead of going somewhere else outside your county."

Mosley said he expects a warm welcome for Lee County Regional Medical Center when they cut the ribbon, with not only local residents in attendance, but Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam (D), Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine and Rep. Morgan Griffith (R-Va.), who also played a role in helping the county on its long journey to reopen its hospital.

the HR DOCTOR

with Philpot & Winkler

Public Employees and the Perils of Technology

Case 1: Jenny works full time at the county in the Community Development Department, where she has been promoted steadily over the past five years. She is a mother of three and has decided to go back to school full time, taking advantage of the county's tuition reimbursement program. Community Development has busy seasons and slow seasons, so Jenny figures she can get a lot of school work done while at work. Jenny creates a folder on her computer just for school work, to keep it organized and separate.

Since she is working on class work from her desk so often, it becomes convenient to email other students, group project members and professors from her work email with school content. Everyone knows she is going to school and is proud of her courage to take on such a heavy workload. She is getting all of her work done and the county is supportive of her getting her degree in a work-related field, so she feels it is not a conflict. Additionally, Jenny knows that Juan just got his master's degree in a work-related field and used county time for his studies.

Case 2: Larry has worked at the county for 10 years in the Finance Department. He has always dreamed of starting his own business. The county encourages innovation and offers many classes on leadership, innovation and creative problem solving. Now after taking these classes, Larry feels encouraged to follow through on his entrepreneurial ideas. Larry, though, can't afford to quit his county job until his business has at least a small foundation. He is trying to keep his business and work separate, but his home computer does not have Adobe or Publisher to create the marketing materials he



needs. Larry also finds that the version of Excel on the county network is much easier to use than his home version, maybe because he uses it every day.

Larry has never smoked, but one of his co-workers gets two 15-minute breaks to smoke. Larry decides that he will use two 15-minute periods at his work computer to create marketing materials and use Excel for his start-up business. At first he decides he will not print at the office, only email himself. But when Megan down the hall has to recycle a huge color printing job because a typo was found, Larry sees all the recycled color printing and decides that 25 color copies of his marketing material are nothing compared to that waste.

Case 3: After three years in the Sheriff's Office, Eric has become a go-to guy. He volunteers for committees and takes extra shifts when asked. His previous two performance evaluations were stellar. Eric is familiar with the county's policies, including the horribly out-

dated Telephones in the Workplace policy, which states that desk phones may not be used for personal business, and the IT policies. Eric has never violated the old phone policy, and doesn't even share his work number with people outside of work. Even his kids' school only has his cell phone number.

Any time Eric takes a personal call on his cell, he immediately gets off the phone if his desk phone or email alert him. The IT policies say employees can't access Facebook during work hours, but that must be out of date too, since the county has an employee Facebook page. There have been many times Eric read up on upcoming trainings and awards on that page.

Eric also gets the local weather online during work and has looked at the local newspaper on his work computer. Occasionally, in the nature of his work, Eric has looked at Amazon to price out items for work. County initiatives and programs are often covered by the local news and Eric likes to read

the comments from the public as a gauge of public perception of the county. One of Eric's co-workers said the county can monitor each computer using some new software they just purchased, but Eric isn't worried; he isn't doing anything wrong.

Case 4: Christina has worked in Public Works for less than one year. She coordinates a large fund raiser for her child's football team. The team is very popular within the community and the fund raiser has become known as a community gathering. After having several sons on the team, Christina has found herself as the coordinator for many years. Her community involvement and examples of leadership drawn from her football fundraiser work helped her to give specific examples during her interview and are part of the reason she got the Public Works job.

Christina works on the fundraising a little during the day, and there have been several times Christina has quickly

minimized the screen when her supervisor, Anna, walked by. Christina doesn't mean to get sidetracked with the fund raising; she just wants to address ideas before she forgets them, and her co-workers are helping come up with great ideas to make this year the best year yet. The county encourages volunteering in the community.

Last week, Christina accidentally missed a work deadline. When Anna tells Christina she wants to meet with her at two o'clock today, Christina quickly deletes the fundraising files from her computer. As she does so, she sees that the fundraising time has added up, and she has to delete many, many files. Christina is on initial probation. Will the county be able to see the files Christina deleted? Should she admit the mistake to Anna and promise not to let the time get so unbalanced again?

Take a moment to think about the four scenarios listed above. Are any of the employees in the examples violating policies at your county? Does your conflict of interest policy include a statement about working diligently during work hours? Does it require review of outside employment for potential conflicts of interest? Has your telephone use policy been updated? Do your IT policies address social media use?

Keeping policies updated is a large task given changing laws and constantly changing technology. Most employees only sign a policy acknowledgement once every few years, or maybe when they are first hired. Certainly, it is their responsibility to read and understand the policies, but let's be honest — how many of them read the policies thoroughly?

It is just one more form to

LEADERSHIP EDGE

We Interrupt This Budget...

By Andrew Kleine

If your county's annual budget process reminds you of watching reruns of "Gilligan's Island" — a bunch of smart people stuck on the same pile of sand who just keep missing the boat — maybe it's time to change the channel.

Most counties have been budgeting the same way for as long as anyone can remember. They start with last year's spending and make changes incrementally — a little more or a little less, depending on the revenue forecast. Department heads take their funding levels for granted, interest groups howl at even the tiniest cuts and overworked budget analysts are more concerned with getting the numbers to line up than what results are being produced for the dollars spent.

Over time, the budget comes to resemble an island. It is a mountain of decisions made over the years, hard and immovable, only a sliver of which is visible to the eye.

In their 2004 book *The Price of Government*, David Osborne and Peter Hutchinson gave us a radical alternative to traditional budgeting, which they called Budgeting for Outcomes. The book is mostly forgotten today, but it made a big impact on me, and I have devoted much of my career, including 10 years as budget director for the City of Baltimore — a NACo member — to shifting budgets from static to strategic.

Budgeting for Outcomes (BFO) interrupts status quo budgeting in three fundamental ways:

First, it changes the starting point of budgeting from how money was spent the year before to what residents want to achieve in the future.

Second, it allocates funding to outcomes instead of departments or agencies.

Third, it opens up the budget discussion to voices that haven't been heard from before.

Changing the starting point

Sometimes it seems like there is no force in the universe greater than the inertia of a government budget. Breaking that inertia requires changing our point of reference. Focusing on outcomes — those measurable improvements we want for our communities — forces us to ask whether continuing the current fiscal course will get us to where we want to go.

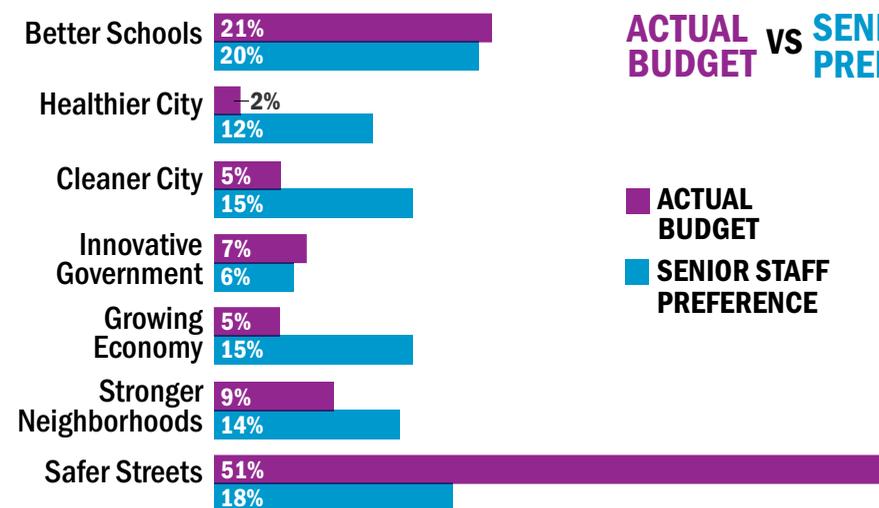
In Baltimore, we chose outcomes that represented the city's most urgent challenges such as reducing shootings, improving infant health and revitalizing vacant housing. The data on all of these outcomes showed us that change was needed and gave us a new perspective on the so-called "sacred cows" in the budget, which hadn't ever been seriously questioned.

The sacred cows included police staffing. We had to confront the fact that law enforcement alone was not the answer to our crime problems and that the cost of the police department was crowding out funding for longer-term violence reduction strategies, like youth development, and innovative practices like Operation Ceasefire. BFO helped us reprioritize our budget to look forward instead of backward.

Allocating funding to outcomes

In traditional budgeting, departments come to feel entitled to a base funding level. Each year, they are given spending targets based on the revenue outlook. In years when revenue is down, the targets are cut across the board, because that seems fair and is easy for county leaders to explain to their department heads, residents and others who count on government funding.

The truth is that across-the-board cuts punish high-value programs and protect those that aren't getting results. Underper-



forming programs are easily hidden within large line-item budgets and can go undetected even by snooping budget directors.

BFO makes hide-and-seek budgeting a thing of the past.

At the beginning of the BFO planning process, county leaders allocate available funding to outcomes, not departments. If you want to understand why this is important try a fun exercise: give each member of your leadership team \$100 of Monopoly money and ask them to distribute them into paper bags representing your county's outcomes (or goals or priorities, or whatever you call them), then tally up the dollars and compare to your actual budget.

In Baltimore, the difference was dramatic, as you can see in the bar charts above.

It turns out that, over time, the way base-funding is organized can become disconnected from the results that political leaders want to achieve, the needs of the community, the performance of services being funded and the conversion of dollars into units of service performance, such as trash pickups, street light up-time or high school graduates.

With funding organized by outcome, BFO's next step is to have departments compete and collaborate for funding on the basis of the value their programs have to offer.

"Value" is something that everyone understands. It is that balance of price and quality that we look for when we are buying

a car, a dishwasher or even a pound of ground beef.

It just isn't normally applied to government spending.

When we introduced Outcome Budgeting to department heads and program managers in Baltimore, we told them that value is results per dollar spent. This equation is government's bottom line.

We wanted them to write budget proposals that boosted the bottom line in one of three ways:

- More results for the same money, or
- The same results for less money, or best of all
- More results for less money.

With budget proposals that explain the value of each and every service in county government, you are ready for a whole new kind of budget discussion.

Opening up the budget discussion

The third disruptive innovation of BFO is Results Teams. Results Teams are groups of employees and community members — one for each outcome — whose job it is to advise county leaders on how to get the most possible value from available dollars. They bring expertise and a fresh point of view to deliberations that have historically taken place behind closed doors.

If you think of budgeting as purchasing results, departments are the bidders and Results Teams are the purchasers. In the

ACTUAL BUDGET vs SENIOR STAFF PREFERENCE

ACTUAL BUDGET
SENIOR STAFF PREFERENCE

same way that a county procurement offices issues a Request for Proposals to buy goods and services, a Results Team issues a Request for Results (or RFR) to buy lower crime rates, cleaner air, faster commute times, etc. The teams then review and rank proposals and recommend funding levels within their outcome allocations.

Results Teams shine light into the black box of the budget, illuminating not only the funding tradeoffs that will advance county outcomes, but also the problems causing programs to underperform, be they management failures, poor design, external factors or insufficient resources. They are the heart of BFO.

Osborne and Hutchinson believed that governments faced permanent fiscal crisis. Even as the economy rose and fell, they predicted, the combination of an aging population, ever-growing health care costs and resistance to tax increases (among other factors) would produce perpetually unbalanced budgets and unrealized goals. If this is your county's reality, get off your island and give BFO a try.

Andrew Kleine was budget director for the City of Baltimore from 2008-2018. He is the author of City on the Line: How Baltimore Transformed Its Budget to Beat the Great Recession and Deliver Outcomes (Rowman & Littlefield). Information about the book is available at www.cityon-theline.com

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION



CALIFORNIA

• **LOS ANGELES COUNTY** is looking to expand its **mobile shower program** for homeless people, after a successful trial period. The Board of Supervisors OK'd expansion of the program to properly trained service providers. The motion authorizes the county to spend up to \$200,000 of proceeds from a quarter-cent sales tax, to support the operation of the showers.

"Providing access to a shower to someone who doesn't have access to one often can help on a job interview," said Supervisor Hilda Solis. "For children, a shower is often the difference between going to school or not." During the pilot phase, the county and non-profit organizations offered hot meals, health screenings, inexpensive or free cell phone service and criminal expungement assistance.

• **SONOMA COUNTY** has begun negotiations to build a \$50 million **composting facility**, a step to transforming organic waste into a commodity, the *Press Democrat* reported. The county is currently spending \$5 million a year to haul the waste elsewhere. The county is considering a company for the facility that earned praise for educating residents about composting. Another plus: The company earned kudos

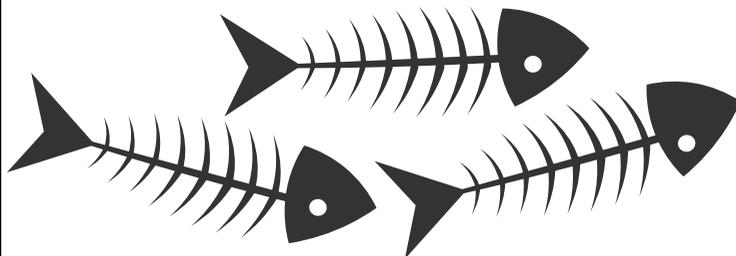
from the horse community (the county's equine population numbers 27,000) because its new facility would accept equine manure.

FLORIDA

• Millions of pounds of dead fish have washed up on Gulf Coast county beaches in the Sunshine State. Blame *karenia brevis*. That's the organism responsible for the **toxic algae crisis** — often called "red tide" or "green slime" — socking counties along the southwest coast of Florida. Gov. Rick Scott (R) declared a state of emergency Aug. 13 for seven Gulf Coast counties — **CHARLOTTE, COLLIER, HILLSBOROUGH, LEE, MANATEE,**

PINELLAS and SARASOTA. Some of the counties have had to dump truckloads of dead fish and sea debris that is then processed at the county solid waste facilities and later incinerated. Lee County purchased two raking machines for about \$118,000 to help clean the beaches. The state made available \$500,000 from Visit Florida to establish an emergency grant program to help local communities continue to bring in visitors.

• A herd of cows helped corral a female suspect during a **police chase** after she and another suspect crashed a stolen car in **SEMINOLE COUNTY**. The county posted a YouTube video of the incident, shot by a police helicopter helping officers on the ground locate the suspects. The video received more than 100,000 views and nearly two dozen comments including: "Bovine Justice League," and "LOL, who needs K9s when COWS are just as good!" and



"Wow what an **UDDER** embarrassment for her. If only she could've **MOOved** faster."

HAWAII

HAWAII COUNTY is fleshing out a request for \$680 million from the state and federal government (and the county chipping in about \$35 million) to help the island and its residents recover from the **lava flow** that started May 3. That amount could include \$196 million to buy property or compensate land owners. Funding is also needed to relocate farmers and pay for housing for those displaced by the eruption. County Mayor Harry Kim said the funding is about the future of the area. (See *May 15 issue of County News: "Rolling lava, noxious fumes, Hawaiian gods: When a volcano erupts in your county"* <https://bit.ly/2Budikg>)

INDIANA

The **HAMILTON COUNTY** Economic Development Corp. is changing course. Instead of trying to attract new businesses and duplicating efforts by the county's four largest cities, the agency will instead market the county to **future employees** to complement the cities' efforts, *Indianapo-*

lis Business Journal reported. The non-profit's board also voted to eliminate the position of CEO and president; they'll replace that position with a director of communications who will be charged with developing integrated marketing, web content and promotional strategies to advertise the county.

MARYLAND

WASHINGTON COUNTY wants its \$250,000 back after a company failed to deliver plans for a **waste-to-energy project** at the Forty West Landfill in Hagerstown, the county said in a letter to Green Kinetics Gateway LLC, headquartered in West Virginia. The county said the company must repay the full loan amount within 15 days of its letter, dated Aug. 14 or the county will "take all steps necessary to protect its interests," *The Herald-Mail* reported. The project was meant to extend the life of the landfill and generate additional revenue. The county originally signed an agreement with the company in December 2013 for a two-phase project that would turn waste at the landfill into renewable fuel sources.

See **NEWS FROM** page 11



MARYLAND

Outrageous food at the **MONTGOMERY COUNTY** fair was featured in a recent issue of *Washingtonian* magazine. The culinary delights included the "Loaded Onion," described as a "deep-fried bulb doused with melted cheddar, bacon bits and jalapenos and served with ranch for dipping." The "Jalapeno Funnel Cake" featured candied jalapenos and cream-cheese glaze. And not to be missed: The "Krispy Kreme Doughnut Cheeseburger." And an "honorable Alka Seltzer-worthy mention" is the "Deep Fried Candy," a deep-fried peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

From NEWS FROM page 10

MICHIGAN

OTTAWA COUNTY is updating its **911 service** lines from old copper phone wires to fiber optic cables. Funding has been in the works since 2012, the *Holland Sentinel* reported. Money raised from an increase in 911 fees paid by phone customers, from 19 cents to 25 cents, will pay for the new technology. The increase will pay for all state 911 centers to get new technology. It will take about 18 months to officially switch services over. The improved service will help police pinpoint the location of cell phone calls.

MINNESOTA

BLUE EARTH COUNTY is adding “poll pads,” or tablets, to cut down on the time it takes to log in new registrations for **elections**. The new system will help save time checking in voters, registration and voter list checks, the *Mankato Free Press* reported. In 2016, the county had to process 6,000 new registrations by hand, a process that took weeks. The county used grant funds from the state to purchase enough tablets for every precinct. It also plans to purchase new voting machines at 40 of its 54 precincts next year in time for the 2020 elections. The state approved \$7 million in funding last year to upgrade and replace equipment across the state.

NEVADA

- **Craft beer** quantities are on the rise following **CLARK COUNTY’s** approval of a law allowing customers to buy



growlers from brew pubs, liquor stores and hotel bars in unincorporated parts of the county. The County Commission also allowed restaurants to charge a corkage fee to customers who bring their own wine, the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* reported.

- A new **DOUGLAS COUNTY** Sheriff’s Office program is recruiting and organizing volunteers to **visit and call seniors**. Caring Neighbors volunteers offer friendship, assistance accessing social services and education on home security and scam prevention. Senior participants are visited by a sheriff’s deputy and a uniformed volunteer to record information such as consent directions, next of kin and medication information.

NORTH CAROLINA

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has **subpoenaed voting records** from 44 counties in the eastern part of the state and the State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement. The subpoena requests “all poll books, e-poll books, voting records, and/or voter authorization documents, and executed official ballots” held by the election offices for the five years leading up to Aug. 30, 2018.

The subpoenas were issued by a federal grand jury based in North Carolina and give no indication as to the purpose of the investigation. Counties have until Sept. 25 to comply, the *Carteret County News-Times* reported.

NORTH DAKOTA

The **WARD COUNTY** Highway Department has acquired an Unmanned Aerial System device — or drone — primarily for use **in measuring stockpiled road materials** such as gravel and millings.

County Engineer Dana Larsen told the *Grand Forks Herald* that the measurements from the drone are more accurate, less expensive, faster and safer than measuring from the ground or using airplanes or laser systems. During a



WISCONSIN

After nearly 35 years, “Bookmobile Bob” Ripley is retiring as the **BROWN COUNTY Library bookmobile operator and outreach coordinator**. The library celebrated his last day, Sept. 4, with a Bookmobile open house, giving guests a chance to bid farewell to Bob and share memories.

12-minute flight, the drone took 255 photos, accomplishing what would have taken workers 3–4 hours to measure from the ground.

SOUTH CAROLINA

BEAUFORT COUNTY is joining the ranks of local governments banning the use of **single-use plastics**, starting Nov. 1, the Associated Press reported. Businesses that violate this new ordinance may be cited. Companies will be encouraged to offer recyclable paper bags instead of plastic ones, with exceptions given to dry cleaning bags and grocery store produce bags.

TEXAS

- **HARRIS COUNTY** has introduced a program to reduce **lead poisoning** and raise awareness among families with young children who are susceptible to it. The county health department’s program monitors cases of children who are already impacted and provides medical providers recommendations on testing. So far, 40 children are in the county’s database for tracking, the *Houston Chronicle* reported. Lead testing will be available at two Women, Infants and Children clinics.



initially proposed \$180 million for improvements but council took some of that funding an reallocated it to affordable housing, *Seattle Weekly* reported.

WYOMING

Following the state’s lead, **FREMONT COUNTY** is planning to end its relationship with the Bank of the West, following its decision to stop investing in **oil and gas companies**.

The bank will longer invest in companies whose main activity is exploring, producing, distributing, marketing or trading oil and gas from shale and/or tar sands or finance coal mines or coal-fired power plants that are not actively involved in the “energy transition.”

County Treasurer H. Scott Harnsberger said those industries’ contribution to Wyoming’s tax base make the bank and the county a bad match. State Treasurer Mark Gordon also plans to terminate the state’s relationship with the bank, according to the *News Letter Journal*.

- The deteriorating condition of **NUECES COUNTY** courthouse, which was built in 1914, has prompted Judge Lloyd Neal to ask the Texas Historical Commission for **permission to demolish it**. The county recently terminated an agreement to sell it to a developer to turn it into a hotel, the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* reported. An agreement with the historical commission for a grant of nearly \$1.5 million several years ago bars the the county from demolishing the dilapidated facility until 2027.

WASHINGTON

The **KING COUNTY** Council voted to **spend \$135 million on improvements to Safeco Field**, home to the Seattle Mariners, over the next 20 years, funded by future revenues from the county’s lodging tax. County Executive Dow Constantine

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

Managers need to clarify IT policies in the workplace

From *TECH* page 9

sign with possibly an intention to go back later and read them if their first week of on-boarding is slow (i.e. no one has time to train you right now, so read the policies).

Even if new employee orientation includes some policy overview, the information overload on that day is intense, with most new employees focused on getting their tax forms completed, getting benefit questions answered and asking questions about timesheets.

What can you do? Set expectations for your department or work group by regularly highlighting a policy at a staff meeting. Follow up the policy overview with an acceptable work practices discussion, question-answer, specific examples and finish with a memo of expectations that everyone acknowledges

after the training.

This gets everyone on the same page, with a clear understanding of what the organization expects. It also lays the ground work in case you, like Anna above, have to have a difficult conversation with an employee about technology in the workplace.

What can IT do? IT departments have the ability to monitor employees' work computers. Depending on the software the county has purchased, IT may be able to do any of the following or more:

- Collect incoming and outgoing emails, including emails from outside the network and/or from the employee's personal email provider, such as Yahoo or G-mail.
- Monitor the websites or social media employees visit, including the amount of time an employee spends on those sites.
- Take screen shots of web-

sites or social media the employee is visiting.

- View employee emails or documents
- Retrieve files or emails the employee has deleted
- Decrypt encrypted data, including personal data sent from a county device
- Block access to websites, including personal email websites, or
- Monitor all key strokes.

Do employees have any expectation of privacy on their work computers? No, computers are the property of the organization and anything created on them during the course of business is work product.

What if an employee saves documents on their hard drive or an external hard drive? Assuming the hard drive and external hard drive are county property, the information on them is still county property. What if an employee buys an

external hard drive and uses it at work?

Some employers have IT policies preventing use of personal hard drives or even thumb drives.

If an employer is serious about ensuring personal work is not completed on work time or on work devices, there is little, if any reason for employees to be using personal external drives at work.

Jenny, Larry, Eric and Christina are engaging in behavior that needs to be addressed by a supervisor.

The supervisor needs to make clear what is and is not acceptable work performance, and that conversation would ideally be documented, either formally or informally, depending on the policies that exist and the impacts the employee's conduct is having on their work.

Without conversations and expectations, employees

sometimes take their cues from other employees, rather than asking a supervisor or calling human resources.

In today's work environment, technology is omnipresent and rapidly changing. Ideally, your county's use of technology is improving efficiencies, something, and engaging the public more effectively.

But as the scenarios show, those benefits are countered by the potential for time wasting and personal use.

As public officials, it is imperative we ensure our policies address these pitfalls and that our employees are well trained and regularly reminded of the limitations on their use of technology. 

Erika Philpot is Coconino County, Ariz.'s human resources director. Rose Winkeler is Coconino County, Ariz.'s deputy county attorney.



SAVE THE DATE
JULY 12-15
2018 NACo ANNUAL CONFERENCE and EXPOSITION
CLARK COUNTY/LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES **NACo**