

Mother Nature deals double blow



The Eagle Creek wildfire burns Sept. 4 east of Multnomah County, Ore. causing evacuations. Photo by Tristan Fortsch/KATU-TV via AP

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

A dry summer has led to a spate of Western wildfires that county officials worry will affect health conditions and economic viability for years. And they have not been relegated to rural areas — the Columbia River Gorge went up in flames, bringing smoke into the city of Portland, Ore.

The wildfire risk jumped exponentially after a snowy winter, ice storms and a wet spring fueled the growth of underbrush and tall grass that subsequently withered as the weath-

See WILDFIRES page 8



Monroe County, Fla. employees haul away debris washed ashore by Hurricane Irma. The county took a direct hit when the hurricane made landfall Sept. 10. Photo courtesy of Monroe County

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

Counties and parishes that took a hit from two monster storms — Hurricanes Irma and Harvey — are digging out from flooding, high winds, loss of power and more in Florida, Texas, Louisiana and elsewhere in the Southeast. Hurricane Irma claimed at least 26 lives on the U.S. mainland, The Associated Press reported.

Much of Florida, about 6 million homes across the state — including the Keys in Monroe County — was without running water and electricity and cellphone service last week after getting slammed by Hurricane Irma Sept. 10.

Monroe County Commissioner Heather Carruthers,

who rode out the storm with her family in Orlando, helped coordinate recovery efforts after her county took the brunt of the storm, by participating in four hour-long conference calls each day with federal, state and local emergency management officials. The hurricane made landfall in Monroe County packing 130 mph winds.

Social media played a crucial role for counties during the hurricanes and their aftermath. Carruthers and other county officials kept residents updated by posting messages to the county's Twitter and Facebook pages after the conference calls and after speaking with emergency workers on the ground via satellite phone. A day after the storm, the coun-

ty let residents know that running water would be available for just two hours. The post and other subsequent messages received thousands of "shares" on Facebook and hundreds of comments. Another post let residents know that county inspectors were out making damage assessments. "It always comes down to communication," Carruthers said.

FEMA estimates one in four homes in Monroe County were destroyed and about 65 percent were damaged, FEMA Director Brock Long said at a news conference.

The county had prepared for days leading up to the massive storm, evacuating the area and offering bus service to a shel-

See HURRICANES page 2

Counties' hurricane preparations extensive, varied

From HURRICANES page 2

ter at the Miami-Dade County Fairgrounds; Carruthers said she was surprised that about 10,000 of the area's 79,000 population decided to stay put. "We know there are some stubborn people who think they can stay behind," she said. "Everyone in the Keys becomes an amateur meteorologist."

The timeline for some county and residents' prep work before the hurricane hit included:

- The county evacuated 500 inmates from the jail in pre-dawn hours Sept. 9 to Palm Beach County, Fla.
- Animals from the Monroe County Sheriff's Office Animal Farm — including ponies, snakes, alpacas and "Mo" the sloth — successfully weathered

the storm in the jail along with some detention staff, deputies and detectives.

- County trash centers closed down the afternoon of Sept. 7.
- The last flight out of the Key West International Airport was at 5:50 p.m. Sept. 7.
- The three hospitals in the county closed at 7 a.m. Sept. 8 to give employees time to evacuate. Patients were evacuated, some of them in a C-130 to a hospital in Alabama.
- The county's special needs residents were taken to Florida International University by chartered bus.
- The three Monroe County Trauma Star helicopters were flown to Dotha, Ala.
- The county opened four "refuges of last resort" on Sept. 9 at 9 p.m., about 11 hours be-

fore the hurricane made landfall, for those who stayed behind, at area schools.

The county's emergency management team set up shop about 50 miles up Route 1 in Marathon and then relocated to Ocean Reef, which is nearly three hours up Route 1 from the county.

"We have used the Marathon Government Center, turning our chambers into a control room," Carruthers said. "But it is not Category 5-rated and though it's on the second floor, the area around it can flood in a bad storm. That's why we moved the county emergency management team to Ocean Reef during the storm."

Carruthers said she is heartened by the messages she has received from other county of-

ficials from outside her region and for the speedy response from state and federal officials to help the county rebuild after the storm. "It's been really encouraging," she said.

Lee County, Fla., officials also made good use of social media, by asking residents to post information on businesses they saw open, after the storm. Residents were quick to respond, posting information on gas stations, grocery stores and where you might find ice or where they were experiencing extra-long lines. The county posted information about which pharmacies were open, how to treat intersections where traffic signals weren't working and trash pickup information. The county also asked residents to stay off the

roads so emergency personnel could do their jobs.

In Collier County, Fla., where the hurricane made a second landfall, officials used Twitter to get the word out, asking residents to report open gas stations to GasBuddy.com and report downed power lines. The county posted aerial footage, recorded by the county sheriff's office, of flooded neighborhoods.

In Leon County, Florida Association of Counties' staff were embedded at the state emergency operations center where they served as a liaison to the counties.

Virginia "Ginger" Delegal, executive director of the Florida Association of Counties,

See HURRICANES page 11



SNAP/STATS

YOUNGEST STATES:

MOST PERSONS UNDER 5 (2016)

State	Percentage
Utah	8.3
North Dakota	7.3
Alaska	7.3
South Dakota	7.1
Nebraska	7.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Fairfax County, Va.'s members of Virginia Task Force 1 launch their inflatable boats in Harris County, Texas to help rescue flood victims after Hurricane Harvey. Photo courtesy of Fairfax County

President
Roy Charles Brooks
Publisher
Matthew Chase
Public Affairs Director
Brian Namey

Executive 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) n (ISSN: 0744-9798)
© National Association of Counties
Research Foundation, Inc.



Counties take PILT fight to Capitol Hill

By **Charlie Ban**
senior staff writer

Members of Congress from states and districts with significant amounts of federally managed land voiced support for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program (PILT) during a Sept. 7 Capitol Hill briefing, but they promoted more active management of forests and more local control of federally owned land.

NACo is requesting full funding for PILT — \$460 million — along with two years of back funding for the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program, which expired in 2015. Nearly 60 percent of the nation's counties (1,850) contain tax-exempt, federally managed land, yet must provide essential services for their communities and to visitors to those lands on a truncated taxable land base.

"There's just very little land to actually fund the services: EMS, pensions, schools, roads,

infrastructure," said Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.). "It's difficult, and until the federal government does something different in regards to the ownership of land, then the federal government has to come through."

Flake noted that the budgeting process, which has seen both Trump and Obama administrations zero out PILT funding in their budget requests, has been tough on public lands counties, which have to do their own budgeting without assurances of how much they will receive, and when.

It's something NACo Past President Bryan Desloge can understand, despite not representing a public lands county in a Western state. Leon County, Fla., where Desloge is a commissioner, contains 24 percent public land.

"PILT may sound like pennies on the dollar, but for the counties that get it, it's life or death," he said. "There's no way

they could operate without the PILT funding."

Graham County, N.C. is one such county. Only 26 percent of the land in its borders is taxable, and it received \$300,000 from PILT in 2016.

County Manager Becky Garland put PILT's impact in concrete terms.

"That money can buy three ambulances, or 10 police cruisers," she said. "It can hire six paramedics or six sheriff's deputies. It's vital to us to maintain essential public safety functions we are required to do. We are able to do a lot on a shoestring (budget) and PILT gives us the bow on that lace."

Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.) was optimistic about the fate of forested counties with the Sept. 5 swearing in of new U.S. Forest Service Chief Tony Tooke and the administrative changes he would bring to the service.

"I can't think of anything we could do that would be more



Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah) speaks during briefing. Photo by Hugh Clarke

beneficial to more rural counties and rural communities across the country than to start managing our National Forests in a better way," Westerman, himself a former forester, said. "Not just to generate timber revenue that needs to be generated that goes back to the counties, but to make the forest healthier, to make them better for wildlife, air quality, water quality."

Given the current number and variety of wildfires in National Forests Westerman said more active forest management would help the service revert to its original intent, rather than serving, as he dubbed it, as "the U.S. Fire Service."

"Not just for the economic side of it but for the health of the forest," he said.

Rep. Tom McClintock (R-Calif.), chairman of the House Federal Lands Subcommittee, called the federal government an "inattentive and incompetent landlord" which applied a "look, but don't touch" doctrine to federally owned land, to the detriment to local economies, and the PILT funding only makes a small dent in public land counties' plight.

"We should never lose sight that it is a very, very poor substitute for the revenues that are generated locally by healthy economic activity and by federal revenue sharing," he said.

"Our ultimate objective should not be to institutionalize PILT but to restore active management of federal lands and a healthy balance between federal land ownership and productive private ownership."

"Often, federal ownership means that federal land use policies are in direct contravention to the wishes of the local communities that are entangled with it."

Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, said the conservative estimates of all federally managed land would yield \$1.3 billion in property tax revenue, compared to the \$460 million total in PILT funding for that land.

"The real issue is about management, the real issue is about control," he said. "This is a nice Band-aid approach, but we shouldn't be looking at this as the end-all-be-all."

Bishop wants to pass legislation that gives management control of Bears Ears National Monument to San Juan County, Utah and the native American tribes who live there, "not everybody in the country."

"If I can, for that monument, give management control to those people who actually live there, I have established a precedent that I can use somewhere else. I think you can realize what that could mean for you in the future. That is essential." **CN**

CN SPOTLIGHT



State association executive directors met Aug. 28-29 in Washington D.C. at the National Association of Counties (NACo)-National Council of County Association Executive (NCCAE) Knowledge Management Forum. Participants got a chance to share "war stories" about their most pressing issues back home and talk about possible solutions. Photo by Hugh Clarke

Coalition urges reform of national flood insurance at Capitol Hill briefing

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

As Florida, Texas and Louisiana recover from devastating flooding from back-to-back monster hurricanes Irma and Harvey, the importance of reauthorizing and updating the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) was made clear Sept. 6 at a Capitol Hill briefing hosted by a coalition led by NACo.

A short-term fix for the program, scheduled to expire Sept. 30, took place two days later, when President Donald Trump signed authorization extending the NFIP for three months, through Dec. 8; HR 601 provides an additional \$15.25 billion in emergency appropriations for disaster relief.

"This is an issue that impacts everyone," Dauphin County, Pa. Commissioner George Hartwick said Wednesday. "There may not be a single larger potential impact to the ability to raise local government revenues than the potential loss in assessments if we don't get this solution correct."

Counties in Texas could see their property tax revenues sink after the devastation of Hurricane Harvey.

"This is something that is going to depress revenues, the only major revenues our counties have, immediately and for years," Donald Lee, executive director of the Texas Conference of Urban Coun-



(Left to right) Caitlin Berni of Greater New Orleans, Inc.; Dauphin County, Pa. Commissioner George Hartwick; Tallahassee, Fla. Mayor Pro-Tempore Gil Ziffer; and Jessica Altman, acting Pennsylvania insurance commissioner, take part Sept. 6 in a Capitol Hill briefing on the National Flood Insurance Program. Photo by Hugh Clarke

ties, a nonprofit organization of 37 member counties, told the Reuters news agency. The Lone Star State is one of seven states across the country that has no state income tax, making it especially dependent on property taxes. Florida, which likewise has no state income tax, could face a similar challenge after picking up the pieces from Hurricane Irma.

NACo hosted "The Future of the National Flood Insurance Program: Helping Communities Prepare and Respond," along with the National Governors Association (NGA), the National League of Cities (NLC), the Council of State Governments (CSG), the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) and

the Coalition for Sustainable Flood Insurance.

"It's very timely that we have this briefing — obviously, our hearts and prayers go out to those impacted by Hurricane Harvey as well as those preparing for Hurricane Irma," said NACo Executive Director Matt Chase.

As Congress works to reauthorize NFIP, it's important that there is a balance between the sustainability of NFIP and keeping it affordable to taxpayers, Chase said. NACo's key policies related to the flood insurance program are focused on rates for policy holders, the program's administration, flood zone mapping and mitigation.

The median annual premium for residential coverage

under an NFIP policy in effect on Aug. 31, 2016, was \$520, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Those premiums varied significantly, however. The central two-thirds' range of the payments for such policies was \$420 to \$1,330.

In addition to urging Congress to reauthorize NFIP, Hartwick and three other speakers at the briefing also presented their suggestions for improving the program, including keeping flood insurance affordable, strengthening the federal, state and local partnership before and after disasters, updating flood maps and funding pre-disaster mitigation.

The issue hits home for Hartwick, who recalled the devastating impact that Hurricane

Agnes had when it flooded his hometown of Steelton, Pa. in 1972. Hartwick keeps a photo of himself sitting on his father's shoulders after the storm, all of the homes and businesses underwater in the background except for a steel mill that gave the town its name. In 2011, he also saw firsthand the flooding brought by Tropical Storm Lee, after it dropped more than a foot of rain on the county, claiming six lives and leaving more than \$200 million in uninsured losses.

Mitigation, mapping, affordability and program participation are key as Congress reauthorizes the program, said Caitlin Berni, vice president for policy and communications at Greater New Orleans, Inc., who also directs its Coalition for Sustainable Flood Insurance.

Tallahassee, Fla. Mayor Pro-Tempore Gil Ziffer said NLC "is asking Congress to do three things, and I'm adding a fourth." Ziffer said he hopes to see the flood mapping system updated. "Cities and counties need to be engaged in that, we know how to do that," he said. "You've got to redo mapping."

Jessica Altman, acting Pennsylvania insurance commissioner, said NAIC hopes to see strategies aimed at educating consumers about their options when it comes to flood insurance. NAIC also encourages

See NFIP page 9

NACo releases new *How to Gain Citizen Buy-In* publication



NACo's Counties Futures Lab recently released *How to Gain Citizen Buy-In*, highlighting innovative case studies from a workshop held at NACo's 2017 Annual Conference & Exposition in Franklin County, Ohio.

How to Gain Citizen Buy-In describes how counties have different and creative approaches to gathering support to fund necessary services and informing residents of public safety matters. The report

features Moderator Michael Montplaisir, auditor, Cass County, N.D., and presenters Verdenia Baker, county administrator, Palm Beach County, Fla. and Karl Keith, auditor, Montgomery County, Ohio, who shared their insights on successful initiatives undertaken in their counties.

Baker detailed how being transparent with citizens allowed for the passage of a 1-cent sales tax increase to

improve infrastructure. Keith demonstrated that reaching out to citizens not only in his county but all over the state was effective in organizing a campaign to protect consumers from card skimmers.

Finally, Montplaisir detailed how his county passed a voter-approved tax increase to raise revenue for major flooding preparation and relief by partnering with local communities and businesses.

The report lists key takeaways including 1.) be transparent with citizens along each step of the way; 2.) partner with stakeholders to reach out to the community and 3.) meet residents where they are.

For an in-depth look at these case studies and more, please visit www.naco.org/citizen-buy-in. And for other management and operational issues, visit www.naco.org/counties-futures-lab. **CN**

FCC group on 5G deployment short on local input

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

Some members of an FCC-appointed committee looking at how to speed deployment of 5G telecommunications services say the make-up of their group is “going to go nowhere” without more input from local government.

The FCC’s Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee was formed to make recommendations, due in November, on how to streamline local government rules for siting small cell nodes and towers to accelerate the rollout of next-generation telecom services.

While there are no standards yet for 5G mobile networks, members of the telecom industry say to expect speeds 10 times faster than current 4G networks.

The committee, which has met publically two times, is mainly composed of telecom industry executives and members of conservative think tanks, according to the Center for Public Integrity. More than 60 local government officials applied to be on the 30-member

committee, only two were initially chosen by the FCC, with two more added later.

The committee’s scant local government representation has drawn criticism from within its ranks.

“This is a serious risk right now — we have a lot of groups who are concerned that they’re not at the table, and if they don’t feel included...it’s those groups we want to adopt model codes,” said committee member David Don, vice president of regulatory policy for Comcast, at the committee’s second public meeting. “I think, just at the end, if we present a model code...and they feel they’ve had an insufficient amount of input, it’s going to go nowhere...One way or another, we’re going to need their buy-in.”

“If [local governments] don’t buy in, this is going to fail and we’ve all wasted our time,” University of Pennsylvania Law School professor and committee member, Christopher Yoo said at the meeting.

The FCC committee has identified 189 local government “barriers” to deployment of broadband but an FCC

spokesman said the information could not be shared until the group’s report is made public in November.

Shireen Santosham, chief innovation officer for San Jose, Calif., told the group that local governments have several concerns, including caps on fees that are redeployed to help bring telecom services to areas that are underserved.

Montgomery County, Md.

Councilmember Hans Riemer said he applied to be on the BDAC committee and although he was not accepted, he was invited to a closed-door meeting Aug. 29 of the committee’s Model Code for Municipalities Working Group; the FCC said the group is working to “develop fair and reasonable guidelines for the use of public assets to ensure the best overall outcome for all residents.”

It is charged with drafting a

model code for municipalities to accelerate broadband deployment to be voted on by all members of the committee at a public meeting in October or November.

“I really tried to convey to them that we need a collaborative approach to siting,” Riemer said. “If we get steam-rolled, the whole effort is going to get bogged down.”

See 5G page 9



Equipment enclosures for a “small cell” sit in the public right of way in Prince William County, Va.
Photo courtesy of Omar Masry

Applications open for new Creative Counties Challenge; will train local leaders on how to advance arts-based development

By Jenna Moran
program manager

NACo has opened the application process for its Creative Counties Placemaking Challenge. This challenge is part of NACo’s new program to train local leaders from rural and mid-sized counties on how to advance arts-based economic and community development. The program began last month and will continue through 2019.

The Creative Counties Placemaking Challenge application requires counties to form multidisciplinary teams to apply.

Teams must consist of four to six members, and include at least one county-elected official, one local arts leader and one local business leader and must come from a county with a population of fewer than 250,000. The deadline for application submission is Oct. 13 at 11:59 p.m. ET. Selected teams will be notified in December.

The Creative Counties Placemaking Challenge is a national initiative with the mission of supporting counties as they work to identify and strengthen ways to integrate arts into solutions to local challenges.

Teams that submit winning applications will attend an in-person, 2½-day training and peer exchange workshop March 28–30, 2018 in Des Moines (Polk County), Iowa. At the workshop, teams will gain access to national experts, innovative tools and practical strategies that they can use to develop a personalized creative placemaking vision for their communities.

Teams will leave the workshop with an action plan and improved local capacity to integrate arts and culture into community building and problem-solving. In addition,

team members will be able to access pre- and post-workshop technical assistance and mentoring support from NACo and Americans for the Arts through July 2019.

Following the workshop in Polk County, NACo will hold a series of webinars and conference workshop sessions throughout 2018 and 2019.

“NACo and its Arts and Culture Commission (ARC) recognize the critical role that rural America plays in shaping the nation’s economy and culture, as well as the unique community and economic development challenges facing rural

communities.

“It also recognizes the transformational role that the arts can play in bolstering core county functions such as economic development, public health, and justice and public safety,” ARC Chair Kay Cashion said. “I encourage rural counties to take advantage of this program.” Cashion is a commissioner from Guilford County, N.C.

The Creative Counties Placemaking Challenge was created in partnership with Americans for the Arts and is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts. **CN**

Centrists discuss bipartisanship at new NACo forum



NACo Executive Director Matt Chase (center) moderates a discussion Sept. 12 by Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-Ore.) (left) and Rep. Charlie Dent (R-Pa.) at County News Live, a forum held at NACo.

Photo by Hugh Clarke

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

A prominent centrist thinks a return to more widespread collaboration in Congress can't be far off.

"We're getting close to the zenith of this hyper partisanship," said Rep. Kurt Schrader, (D-Ore.). "It's time to start solving problems."

He and Rep. Charlie Dent (R-Pa.) participated in a discussion led Sept. 12 by NACo Executive Director Matt Chase at County News Live — an inaugural forum held at NACo headquarters and broadcast via NACo's Facebook page.

Dent, who recently announced he wouldn't seek reelection in 2018, gave some credence to the public perception that Congress doesn't do much.

"Congress does not do comprehensive reforms well, in my view. I believe we're much better doing incremental changes," he said, in reference to this summer's Affordable Care Act repeal and replace efforts.

"We should have been looking at it more incrementally," he said, noting that he and Schrader worked to promote a bipartisan working group focused specifically on stabilizing the insurance market and providing relief to smaller employers. But that small, but potentially effective fix, was lost in ideological battles, and the narrative became that only

the widespread change would fix the problems in the market.

"Small wins make a difference," Schrader said. "You start to build trust. It's very important to have the staffs work together, feel like they can work with each other in a positive way. People are getting tired with politics in D.C."

Their roles as centrists are complicated by what has been observed as a shrinking political center, which represents roughly 10 percent of legislators, down from 30 percent in 1996.

Schrader said the Blue Dog Democrats, of which he is a member, share many basic priorities with Dent's Tuesday Morning group of Republicans, with both respecting free enterprise, and favoring legislation that empowers business, technology, free trade, education and debt reduction.

Dent said as fissures in the Republican party make the most news, it crowds out the attention for the governing wing of the party.

"We've had ongoing battles between the purist wing and pragmatic wing of the Republican party in the pre-Trump world," he said. "Battles are now more driven by Trump loyalty — you're with him or against him."

"We're a center-right country and the Republican Party needs to be a center-right party. But I feel at times we don't give the center enough of a

voice. The right has a voice but the center doesn't have enough of a voice."

"The real solutions are always in the middle," Schrader said. "We spend so much time talking that we don't listen."

You don't move the country forward, you don't build infrastructure that way, you don't save communities, you don't get a better education. You have to see the other person's point of view."

He suggested that Democrats from urban areas could engender trust by focusing on the geographic disparity of the economic recovery, and how rural areas have been left behind.

"Most of us have rural parts of our districts," he said. "Recovery is great in Portland, but it's terrible in parts...that are agricultural or tourist-oriented. If I was a county commissioner, I'd reach out and say don't we matter too?"

"I think there are a lot of Democrats that are sympathetic to the plight of their rural counterparts," Schrader said. "That's an area I'd prioritize."

Prosperity breeds opportunity for a little more contentment, engaging the other side and working together."

In the upcoming tax reform discussions, Dent is encouraged that President Trump has reached out to Democratic leadership.

"I've always felt to have lasting reforms, they almost have to be done on a bipartisan basis, whether it's on health care or I would even argue tax reform," Dent said.

"It could be done on a partisan basis, just a tax cut, but it would be better done if we paid for it and created a greater efficiency in the tax code that would probably do more to drive growth than a simple tax cut." **CN**

Watch the entire exchange at www.countynews.org or www.facebook.com/NACoDC.

APPLY TO BE AN ALL-AMERICA COUNTY

Since 1949, the National Civic League has designated 10 communities each year as All-America Cities for their outstanding civic accomplishments. Counties were welcome to apply, and many counties have won in past years. This year, however, counties that apply and win will be given designation as an All America County with a county-specific shield.



The award program celebrates innovation and excellence in the full diversity of American communities — from neighborhoods, small towns and tribes to cities, counties and metropolitan regions. The smallest towns and largest counties compete on equal footing — judged on the impact of their work and excellence of their engagement, not reputation or size.

The 2018 award will spotlight programs promoting equity through inclusive civic engagement. Deadlines: Oct. 18: Letter of Intent to Apply (not required to apply); Feb. 28, 2018: Application

To learn more, go to <http://bit.ly/2vQbrz4>



McLEAN COUNTY, ILL.

Created by: William Coltharp
and Tom Healy

Introduced in: 1985

McLean County, located at the center of the state, is Illinois' largest county. At the intersection of three interstate highways and multiple rail service lines, the county is home to major financial institutions including State Farm Insurance and Country Companies, and the state's oldest public university, Illinois State University, as well as Illinois Wesleyan University.

The county's prominence on the state map, both in size and location, make the outline of McLean County's boundaries identifiable to a large portion of the state's population. Its rich, fertile soil is some of the most productive in the world and the topsoil layer reaches as deep as 48 inches.

The county logo pairs the county's outline with the color green, representing its agricultural character. The logo also includes the silhouette of the old courthouse dome, built in 1903.



Bill Wasson, county administrator, assisted.

Would you like to see your county's seal featured? Contact Charlie Ban at cban@naco.org.

Aging is a part of life, but HIV doesn't need to be

By Helen Holton
executive director

National Organization of Black
County Officials

Sept. 18 is National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day, an awareness campaign begun by the AIDS Institute in 2008. The day is designated to focus on the challenging issues facing a growing population of persons over the age of 50 with HIV.

The campaign focuses on:

- People living with HIV who are aging with the disease or are already over 50 at the time of their initial diagnosis
- Increasing the use of protection from HIV infection, especially among the baby boomer population, and
- Supporting the increasing number of grandparents who are the primary guardians for

children who have lost their parent(s) to HIV/AIDS.

Most adults over the age of 50 when they think about HIV prevention, testing, care and treatment tend to think it only pertains to younger people. It is, as if by chance, this is a disease you no longer need to have concern about as you get older. That couldn't be further from the truth. The need for prevention, research and data targeted at the graying population is needed more than ever before.

The advancements of modern medicine combined with increased understanding of the aging process continue to shed light on the impact of HIV/AIDS on our most seasoned population. HIV is no longer the death sentence it was in the early days of the disease. Many people live full

and rich lives after diagnosis. The difference is largely linked to getting tested and knowing your status.

Challenges of preventing HIV among older people according to the CDC are:

1) Older people in the United States are more likely than younger people to be diagnosed with HIV infection late in the course of the infection, which results in their starting treatment late and possibly suffering more immune-system damage. Late diagnoses can occur when health care providers don't test older people for HIV infection, and older people may not consider themselves to be at risk of HIV infection or may mistake HIV symptoms for those of normal aging and not consider HIV as a cause.

See HIV page 8

ON THE MOVE

NACo OFFICERS, COUNTY OFFICIALS

• NACo First Vice President **Greg Cox** represented NACo at the Maine County Commissioners Association Annual Conference in Oxford County, Sept. 8-10. Cox was also at the South Dakota Association of Counties Annual Conference Sept. 17-19 in Pennington County, along with **Gordon Cruickshank**, Western region representative.



Faulkner



Cadle

providing print and digital solutions for all of NACo, including solidifying and implementing NACo's brand.

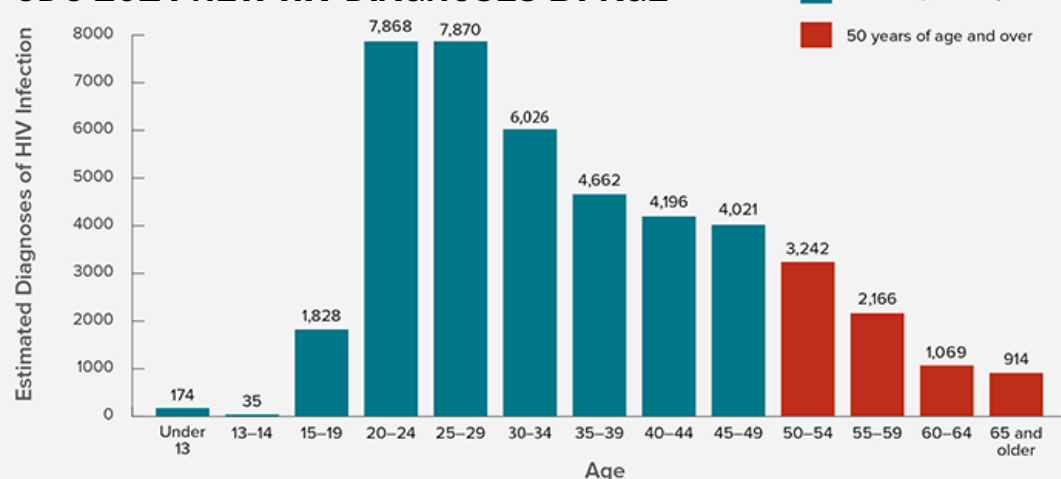
• **Tiffany Faulkner** has returned to NACo as FSC chief administrative and analytics officer. In this role, she will be responsible for managing FSC budget preparation and forecasting. At NACo, Faulkner previously held positions as budget manager and accounting manager.

• **Matt Chase**, NACo executive director, was a featured speaker at the New York State Association of Counties Fall Seminar in Onondaga County (Syracuse), Sept. 13-15.

NACo STAFF

• **Frank Cadle**, former graphic intern, is NACo's new junior graphic designer. He will lend design support by

CDC 2014 NEW HIV DIAGNOSES BY AGE



New NACo
Member

GET TO
KNOW...

Grady
County, Ga.



Welcome, Grady County, Ga.

Grady County is named for Henry W. Grady, Southern journalist and editor of the Atlanta Constitution. Perhaps the county's greatest claim to fame is being **the birthplace of professional baseball player Jackie Robinson**, who was born in Cairo, Ga. in 1919. A historical marker is located at the site of his childhood home, where a brick chimney is the only structure still standing. The county is also home to the Cairo High School Syrupmakers. In 2013, **Sports Illustrated** ranked the "Syrupmakers" as the most unique team nickname in the country.



Wildfires put lives, health, ecology, property values at risk

From WILDFIRES page 1

er turned dry over the summer. The Pacific Northwest, known for its regular precipitation and mild climate, baked in 90-degree to 100-degree weather exacerbating wildfire risk.

The Eagle Creek Fire in Oregon was sparked Sept. 2 when a teenager reportedly threw a smoke bomb into the woods of Hood River County. Overnight, it grew to 3,000 acres into Multnomah County. By Sept. 12 it had grown to more than 35,000 acres and engulfed one of Oregon's ecological treasures and forced the evacuation of hundreds of residents in western Hood River County and eastern Multnomah County. On Sept. 4, embers had floated across the milewide Columbia River, and the fire jumped into Skamania County, Wash.

"We live in a wind tunnel that is packed with fuel," said Skamania County Commissioner Bob Hamlin. "It was a 95-degree day, with no humidity, the conditions were ripe for a wildfire."

The Portland area had gone more than 90 days without a soaking rain, making a particularly dry environment for a fire.

"It was scary situation because east winds have a history of causing the strongest fires in our area," Hamlin said. "You think of a fire break as being nothing more than a fire cut through with a bulldozer. This jumped a river almost a mile wide."

Residents reported 16-inch embers falling from the sky. Interstate 84 has been closed, though the Columbia River-side westbound lanes may reopen.

"This is a fire that will still be burning underground, in the root systems and stumps, until December. Big wildfires like this don't go out until snow is on the ground."

Montana Fires Break Records

Since July 15, western Montana has had a series of fires

that have consolidated their smoke around the Bitterroot Valley of Ravalli County. That's starting to wear on residents who have had to move their outdoor activities elsewhere, including youth sports, and residents with respiratory conditions have been encouraged to leave. Fewer than 1,000 people have left their homes. Lightning strikes have lit fires in trees that have died from pine bark beetle infestations.

"We've spent more time on unhealthy to hazardous air quality than any time I can remember," said Commissioner Greg Chilcott. "These fires that used to be just ground fires are now crown fires. They're very destructive and exponentially larger than they have been in the past."

Throughout the 20th century, 295,000 acres of Ravalli County forests burned in wildfires. In the first 15 years of the 21st century, 897,000 acres have burned.

"It's an unenviable trend," Chilcott said. "But I guess it means we're running out of forest to burn."

And it's hell for local property values.

"People buy real estate in the Rocky Mountains because they want those beautiful mountain views," Chilcott said. "Now they're just seeing a charred moonscape."

The fires have meant the county's volunteer fire departments have pitched in to help federal and state firefighters. The sheriff's office assists with evacuations, road closures and other needs and the roads department is often tasked with cleaning up.

The Seattle area isn't on fire, but it has been dealing with the smoke from fires in British Columbia in August, and in September from other parts of Washington, plus Oregon and California. Like Portland, it has gone most of the summer without significant rainfall.

Phil Swartzendruber, an air quality scientist with the Puget

Sound Clean Air Agency, which covers King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties, said the fires have meant two distinct problems for residents.

"The effect people can most relate to are the more immediate tangible effects, burning eyes, coughing, irritation of the throat," he said. "That's not the big health concern. The big health concern is fine particulate matter that penetrates deep into the lungs and increases risk of cardiovascular disease including heart attacks and stroke. It can affect lung development in children, and exacerbate risk of asthma for other folks."

He compared a five-days stretch of fine particulate matter levels well above the acceptable standard throughout the region as comparable to what you would see very localized in the winter from wood burning stoves.

"There are lot of variabilities as to where the fires are and how the smoke is moving up here, so it's hard to tell exactly what we're dealing with and what to expect (in regards to fine particulate matter)," Swartzendruber said.

At one point, white ash fell overnight, covering the area like a thick layer of spring pollen.

"That kind of stuff, you won't breathe it in — it will be caught in your nose and throat," he said. "We're just really just hoping for rain."

Outside of Yosemite National Park, Mariposa County, Calif., has had to evacuate its county seat of Mariposa for the first time in history after a fire split.

Supervisor Kevin Cann, who serves as the Western Interstate Region's second vice president, said most of the nearby fires have been caused by carelessness.

"People parking in tall grass, forgetting how hot a catalytic converter gets," he said. "Usually that grass is 6 inches tall. Thanks to the snow we had, it's

3 feet, but now it's dead and brown."

Also, people shooting steel-coated bullets, which spark, on Bureau of Land Management land have lit a few fires.

On top of county efforts by the sheriff's office and public works department — which means delaying planned proj-

See WILDFIRES page 13

Make aging population aware of HIV risks

From HIV page 7

2) Many older people are sexually active, including those living with HIV, and may have the same HIV risk factors as younger people, including a lack of knowledge about HIV and how to prevent getting it, as well as having multiple sex partners. Older people also face some unique issues.

3) Many widowed and divorced people are dating again. They may be less aware of their risks for HIV than younger people, believing HIV is not an issue for older people. Thus, they may be less likely to protect themselves.

4) Although they visit their doctors more frequently, older people are less likely than younger people to discuss their sexual habits or drug use with their doctors. And doctors are less likely to ask their older patients about these issues.

5) Stigma is a particular concern among older people because they may already face isolation due to illness or loss of family and friends.

Stigma negatively affects people's quality of life, self-image and behaviors, and may prevent them from seeking HIV care and disclosing their HIV status.

Aging with HIV infection also presents special challenges for preventing other diseases because both age and HIV increase risk for cardiovascular disease, thin bones and certain cancers.

Older HIV patients and care providers need to maximize prevention efforts against these conditions and remain vigilant for early signs of ill-

ness.

They also need to be careful about interactions between the medications used to treat HIV and those used to treat common age-related conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, elevated cholesterol and obesity."

The National Organization of Black County Officials, Inc. (NOBCO), in partnership with other national organizations funded by the CDC work to increase awareness, education, and action throughout NACo and will continue to share information with you.

Please reach out to us if we can be of service to you, your county or community in addressing HIV. It takes all of us working together to stop the spread of HIV and other infectious diseases.

If you use social media, please share the images in this article and use the hashtags for National HIV/AIDS Aging and Awareness Day (NHAAAD) on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram: #nhaaad, #hivagingchat and #nhaaad.

If you have found this article helpful, please share it among your contacts either on social media, by email or snail mail to be a part of improving the health of our nation, one person at a time. **CN**



Culling voter rolls ‘the Ohio way’ before Supreme Court

By Lisa Soronen
SLLC executive director

In *Husted v. A. Philip Randolph Institute*, the Supreme Court will decide whether federal law allows states and local governments to remove people from the voter rolls if the state or local government sends them a confirmation notice after they haven't voted for two years, they don't respond to the notice and then they don't vote in the next four years.

While Ohio is being sued in this case, 12 other states use a similar process. The State and Local Legal Center (SLLC) filed an amicus brief in this case supporting Ohio.

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) says that

roll maintenance procedures “shall not result in” people being removed from the polls for failure to vote. The Help America Vote Act modified the NVRA to say that states may remove voters if they don't respond to a confirmation notice and don't vote in the next two federal election cycles.

The Sixth Circuit struck down Ohio's scheme, reasoning that it “constitutes perhaps the plainest possible example of a process that ‘result[s] in’ removal of a voter from the rolls by reason of his or her failure to vote.” According to the lower court, the problem with Ohio's scheme is that the “trigger” for someone being removed from the voter rolls is their failure to vote.

Ohio argues that it doesn't

remove voters “‘by reason of’ their failure to vote; it removes voters ‘by reason of’” their failure to respond to a notice. The state also claims that the NVRA doesn't regulate what triggers the confirmation notice.

The SLLC amicus brief points out that thousands of states and local governments register voters and maintain voter rolls. Processes vary based on factors including state law and resources; so, states and local governments need clear direction and flexibility regarding what process they may use to maintain voter rolls. The brief points out that while in this case Ohio is being sued for the process it uses to take people off the rolls, states and local governments have been sued

for keeping ineligible voters on the rolls.

Joshua Davis of Reed Smith wrote the SLLC brief which the following organizations joined: the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, the United States Conference of Mayors, the International City/County Management Association, and the International Municipal Lawyers Association. **CN**

NACo is a founder, a funder and a board member of the State and Local Legal Center (SLLC), headquartered in Washington, D.C. The center extends NACo's advocacy on behalf of counties to the highest court in the land.

NFIP needs overhaul

From NFIP page 4

greater growth in the private flood insurance market as a complement to the NFIP to help provide consumers with more choices, she said.

Jason Tuber, senior adviser to Sen. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), said legislation sponsored by the senator, whose state was devastated by Superstorm Sandy in 2012, was created with the goal of making the program more solvent, affordable and fair. The so-named Sustainable, Affordable, Fair and Efficient (SAFE) National Flood Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2017 would extend the NFIP for six years. The legislation was introduced in June and awaits committee action. **CN**

Local zoning authority under siege in state capitals

From 5G page 5

“There is no one who agrees more than local government that we want to help deliver better services to our residents,” he said. “But getting government out of the way is not part of the solution.”

Paralleling the group's work, the FCC announced two rulemaking procedures in the spring that look into the 5G rollout issue; but the agency has told the committee that its recommendations may or may not have any bearing on the rulemakings, which “aim to do things like speed decisions by state or local governments on tower siting applications and ease access to utility poles,” FCC Commissioner Michael O'Rielly told an audience in Virginia last month.

While NACo supports next-generation telecommunications, it opposes preemption of local authority as well as the preemption of the county role in wireless communications facilities siting.

Members of the public may submit comments to the BDAC

in the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System at www.fcc.gov/ecfs. Comments to the BDAC should be filed in GN Docket No. 17-83.

Meanwhile in state capitals, local zoning and licensing regulations are under siege.

- **Arizona:** HB 2365 was passed in April and became law Aug. 9. It requires counties to establish rates, fees and terms for the installation, modification or replacement by a wireless provider of a utility pole located in a right of way; the co-location of a small wireless facility in a right of way and the co-location of a small wireless facility on a county utility pole.

The Maricopa County Department of Transportation must now allow “small wireless facilities” to be installed on its traffic-signal poles, MCDOT spokesperson Nicole Moon recently told the *North Phoenix News*. The units are not to exceed roughly the size of an end table. Small equipment boxes will typically be mounted on the poles or nearby.

- **California:** Counties are urging Gov. Jerry Brown not to

While NACo supports next-generation telecommunications, it opposes preemption of local authority as well as the preemption of the county role in wireless communications facilities siting.

sign SB 649, which passed Sept. 14. The California State Association of Counties estimated a loss of \$100 million a year due to decreased fees. CSAC said “... locals wouldn't be able to require in-kind public services (such as Wi-Fi access or connecting civic amenities to fiber) in exchange for the use of these publicly-owned structures. Evidence that the bill is even needed is lacking, as jurisdictions around the state have already worked collaboratively with providers to install similar antennas on publicly owned poles.”

In a column published in *The Sacramento Bee*, CSAC called the then-proposed legislation “a triple rip-off: Neighborhoods lose flexibility to address visual blight, taxpayers get shorted by limits on lease revenues and residents still pay the same high prices for their wireless services.

At the same time, these providers still won't serve many of California's disadvantaged communities.”

- **Delaware:** Gov. John Carney (D), signed HB 189 last month; The new law enables carriers and their partners to apply to place small cells on public rights of way directly through the state's department of transportation.

- **Florida:** New law HB 687 signed June 23 by Gov. Rick Scott (R) caps attachment fees at \$150; Florida counties stand to lose as much as \$145 million in fees annually, according to some estimates. Six counties had issued moratoriums on the placement of the equipment. “It really takes away our ability to regulate cellphone facilities on our right of way,” Seminole County, Fla. Commission Chairman John Horan recently told the Orlando Sen-

tinel. “These are in the right of way. They belong to the public, and these are private cellphone companies using the right of way.” Counties have until Jan. 1, 2018 or three months from their first application to create local ordinances that adhere to the new law.

- **New York:** SB 6687 directs the public service commission to prohibit attachment of wireless equipment to existing utility poles in certain circumstances.

- **Virginia:** Gov. Terry McAuliffe (D) signed SB 1282 allowing telecom companies to attach “small cell facilities” to towers, buildings, utility poles, light poles, flag poles, signs and water towers. Under the new law, companies pay \$100 for up to five small cell facilities on a permit application. The new law also prohibits local governments from adopting a moratorium on considering zoning applications.

New small cell wireless legislation was also signed into law in Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio and Texas where cities have telecom siting authority. **CN**

2018 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

CELEBRATING 48 YEARS
OF INNOVATION

APPLY FOR THE 2018 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Does your county have an innovative program that improves county government and enhances services for county residents? Apply for the 2018 Achievement Awards! There are 18 categories ranging from information technology, health, criminal justice, human services and many more.

To begin your application visit:

www.naco.org/achievementawards

QUESTIONS?

Contact **awards@naco.org**



IMPORTANT DATES:

- SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE:
**MARCH 26, 2018 AT
11:59 P.M. EDT**
- NOTIFICATIONS OF
ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS:
WEEK OF APRIL 23, 2018
- NACo ANNUAL CONFERENCE
AND EXPOSITION:
**JULY 13 – 16, 2018
NASHVILLE/DAVIDSON
COUNTY, TENN.**

Legal pot presents counties with potpourri of issues

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

Across the street from the Deschutes County courthouse sits Oregrown, a sleek retail space, much like an Apple store, selling Oregon's newest legal crop, cannabis, marijuana, weed, pot, reefer or whatever you call it. The many nicknames for the drug are matched by the ways county governments overlap in their interactions with it, through zoning, enforcement, public safety, taxation and assessment and more. In legal recreational states, county tax offices are processing more cash payments than they ever expected to see. And throughout it all, a tenuous relationship with federal law threatens to upend the industry.

So far, eight states — Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon and Washington — and Washington, D.C. have legalized adult recreational use and 29 states have approved medical use. Within those states, you can legally buy for recreational use in 61 counties.

Nevada's July 1 opening was marked with shortages that prompted the governor to declare a state of emergency. California's legal recreational market opens Jan. 1, 2018. Maine and Massachusetts' legal markets will open later in 2018.

"Colorado sold \$1 billion in recreational marijuana in 2016," said Eric Bergman, policy director for Colorado Counties, Inc. (CCI). "Think about California — will it be \$20 billion? \$30 billion?"

How much of that goes to counties is up in the air. While they benefit indirectly from increased employment and property taxes, states take a large bite — usually — and the cities where cannabis products are sold also stand to benefit. Counties have to get excise taxes through popular initiative.

Not that it's a tall order.

"Even though Oregonians

hate sales taxes, they've voted them down five times. Last year, they passed 111 marijuana taxes, so they don't have a problem with that," said Rob

Bovett, legal counsel for the Oregon Association of Counties who has worked in state and national drug policy since the late '80s.

"In a lot of conservative counties, pot is considered devil weed. It's not what they want, it's not what their constituents want, but yet they

were dealing with the impacts of legalization but without the resources to be able to go after

See MARIJUANA page 12

BANKS AVOID ACCEPTING DEPOSITS FROM LEGAL CANNIBIS VENDORS

The Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) memo puts the onus on banks to ensure that the money they hold hasn't resulted from illegal activity. Since the federal government still considers marijuana to be an illegal substance, cannabis businesses scare away many banks forcing the businesses to operate on a cash-only basis.

"Storage issues, auditing...it's in everyone's interest to get them checking accounts, let them deposit money, manage it electronically," CCI's Bergman said.

It can certainly be unwieldy. Judy Steele formerly worked as deputy director of the City and County of Denver's excise and licenses office and now works as a cannabis regulatory specialist for Silver Lining Solutions. During a

workshop at the 2017 NACo Annual Conference, she said that her office had prematurely gotten rid of bill counting machines.

"Nobody was paying their taxes by cash anymore," she said. "Then this marijuana money started coming in, and we had to take the files out of the safe and start using it to store money again."

During a NACo Annual Conference workshop, Humboldt County, Calif. Supervisor Rex Bohn said the amount of cash from the cannabis black market in his county could exceed \$2 billion, according to graduate study by a local bank president.

"You can tell when that money comes into use because it can be moldy, or mildewy," Bohn said. "It smells like it's been buried."

Josephine County, Ore. recently purchased new bill-counting machines to expedite transactions

and detect counterfeit bills (which would become the county's liability). Record keeping, the chance taxes and permit fees will be underpaid and the risk of having so much cash on county property all complicates county administration.

The longer a state has legalized recreational use, the more financial institutions adapt. Washington state has a two-year lead over Oregon, and in 2016 saw three-quarters of businesses paying their special taxes electronically by check, versus half in Oregon.

Matt Cate, executive director of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), has been serving on the Cannabis Banking Working Group assembled by the California treasurer, and he says they are onto two solutions that should be working by January to ease counties' troubles.

A special deposit slip for banks will

allow members of the industry to deposit money that can pay their taxes, sidestepping the need to secure cash tax payments on county property.

CSAC will also collect information for and maintain a clearinghouse for all data a county would accumulate about cannabis businesses.

"That will help banks comply with both the Cole Memo and FinCEN memo and feel more comfortable," he said. "It all comes down to how we can make sure taxes are paid and do what we can to put an end to this all-cash world."

Credit unions have picked up some of the slack in Colorado and Washington. Because they are chartered by the states, without federal oversight like banks, credit unions are better able to accommodate state cannabis policy.

Hurricane recovery poses challenge for counties

From HURRICANES page 2

said that counties' hardest work is ahead of them. "They know how to prepare pre-storm and during, but after is when the challenges present themselves," she said. "Recovery afterward is incredibly unpredictable."

Temporary housing for those left homeless, especially from mobile home parks, will be a particular challenge, she said. The tourism industry will rebound, she noted. "The tourism industry is resilient and will bounce back." She said the BP oil spill was a bigger challenge.

Florida Gov. Rick Scott (R) has been holding evening calls with county officials and shared his cellphone number with them, Delegal said.

Delegal noted that there was a lot of teamwork between Florida counties across the

state before, during and after the storm, as counties opened their shelters to other counties when the storm shifted its path and took on hundreds of inmates that were evacuated, as Palm Beach County did for Monroe County.

After clobbering Florida, Tropical Storm Irma headed north to Georgia and South Carolina, where coastal counties were inundated with flooding.

Knee-high floodwaters could be seen gushing through the streets of Charleston County, S.C. on Sept. 11 and more than a million were left without power in Georgia.

Meanwhile, in Harris County, Texas, county Judge Ed Emmett is calling for sweeping reforms of the area's flood control strategy in the wake of Tropical Storm Harvey, which

flooded more than 100,000 homes in the area when it hit Aug. 25.

Residents in Texas and Louisiana continue to dig out there, after three landfalls that left a climbing death toll and thousands stranded when more than 50 inches of rain fell, flooding the region.

"It's the worst flood we've ever seen, for sure," said Gene Terry, executive director of the Austin-based Texas Association of Counties, shortly after Hurricane Harvey had decimated coastal counties.

"But this ain't our first rodeo so to speak — we're gearing up for the next 10 days."

In Harris County, Emmett has laid out options including accelerated buy-outs of flood-prone properties, creating a flood control district with neighboring counties

and seeking authority from the state to levy a sales tax to pay for the initiative.

"Why do we keep fixing the same problem over and over again? It doesn't make much sense," said county spokesman Joe Stinebaker. Emmett's No. 1 priority is now "dealing with this all too-common flooding."

All of the options would require federal and state help, Stinebaker said. "Local folks are not going to be able to afford this. We need the feds and the state to step up or remediate again."

State lawmakers "are also going to have to step up," he said, to give Harris County, population 2.5 million, some kind of authority to regulate building in the floodplain. Currently, Texas counties don't have that ability.

Anyone interested in assisting should go to:

FloridaDisasterFund.org **CN**

Not all counties high on cannabis legalization

From MARIJUANA page 11

it,” Sonoma County, Calif. Supervisor James Gore said at a workshop at the NACo Annual Conference in July.

It was that realization that made Karl Rodefer an advocate.

Though he went to high school and college in the '60s and '70s, “the age of Aquarius,” Rodefer, now a Tuolumne County supervisor, wasn't a marijuana user, and doesn't plan to become one even as he helps his county shape its policy going forward with an eye to allowing sales in a year. The county put a hold on all cannabis businesses last year to study what legalization would mean locally.

“If we can control it the way we control alcohol, I think it can be managed,” he said.

Rodefer describes his conservative Sierra Nevada Range county as 50-50 on legalization, making his job difficult to navigate, but he has been making the case that legalization will keep the county from being at a disadvantage has been his argument.

“The saying is, ‘if you're not at the table, you're on the menu,’ and we don't want to be responsible for dealing with the consequences of statewide legalization, but not able to reap any benefits. You're leveraged into allowing it even if you don't want it. If we had a choice we wouldn't do it, but we live in California so we'll do it and do it right.”

Rodefer doesn't see it as a financial boon for the county, judging from conversations with colleagues in Colorado and Washington.

“I haven't found anybody yet who is making enough money to pay for all of the unintended consequences,” he said. “You can tax (the industry) into oblivion, but the state is keeping all the money.

“It's a lose-lose for local jurisdictions.”

Latah County Commissioner Tom Lemar acknowledges that his native Idaho may likely be among the last states to legal-



The interior of Oregrown, a recreational marijuana retail store in Deschutes County, Ore., was designed in a sleek, upscale style. It is located blocks from the county courthouse. Photo courtesy of Oregrown

FEDERAL POLICY UNCLEAR

The Obama Administration took a decidedly hands-off approach to cannabis enforcement despite the drug's classification as a Schedule 1 substance on par with heroin in the DEA's eyes. The Trump Administration has yet to formally announce a policy, though Attorney General Jeff Sessions's office has made inquiries of states that have legalized recreational use.

“I swore an oath to two constitutions that seem to be at odds with each other,” said Tuolumne County Supervisor Karl Rodefer. “Since it's still (a) Schedule I (narcotic) we can't study it and its effect on young people's brains. I don't have anything but anecdotal evidence and a smattering of studies of dubious pedigree to base any decisions on about the benefits or drawbacks.”

In 2013, then-U.S. Deputy Attorney General James Cole set priorities for federal prosecutors in states which had legalized adult uses of marijuana, shifting away from strict enforcement of federal cannabis prohibition and toward a more hands-off approach, so long as state and local laws prohibit access by minors, prevent leakage to non-legalized states

(and transfer between states, even if both have legalized) and tracking revenues to cut down on illicit trade. Federal marijuana prosecutions have declined in such states.

“Are we going to be continuing to live under the Cole Memo and its guiding principles, which is what every recreational state has been doing? Will we get new principles, or will the feds come in and shut it all down,” said Rob Bovett, legal counsel for the Oregon Association of Counties. “Sessions is a wild card there, and we have no idea, but it is nice to have a good close working relationship with the U.S. attorney (for Oregon, Billy J. Williams).”

Williams has called for information to be submitted to Sessions in writing about how Oregon is controlling its leakage, the term for surplus.

In August, the Associated Press reported that Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety did not form any new policy recommendations regarding cannabis, largely reiterating current Justice Department policy.

Nonetheless, Sessions has criticized the public health and

safety issues resulting from marijuana legalization in Western states.

“The new administration has been doing a lot of sabre rattling so there's a lot of back peddling,” CCI's Bergman said.

The chief federal concern is the black market, which includes any interstate transfer. “You go to London and the most expensive product they sell is black market cannabis from southern Oregon,” Bovett said. “Leakage [excess marijuana] is a major problem.”

Humboldt County, Calif., a cannabis hotspot, has developed a Track and Trace smartphone app.

After a cultivator harvests and packages their crop, they apply a traceable, counterfeit-resistant stamp to the packaging. The stamp includes a QR code and unique stamp number that is coded with information about the product, including size, strain, grower and more. As the package goes through the supply chain—from cultivator to manufacturer to distributor to dispensary—the stamps are scanned by each licensee so they can be tracked until the product is sold to a patient.

“Taking steps like controlling leakage is how a county proves it is serious about enforcing the laws,” Bovett said.

ize recreational use, but he saw a lot of support in neighboring Whitman County, Wash., where he has visited two facilities.

“They have five growing seasons in a year, so they're employing a lot of people,” he said during a NACo Annual Conference workshop. “We're seeing an increase in employment among our residents, and they're well paid, and they're getting health insurance, which is something that we need in this country. The industry is being responsible that way. I don't think that we can automatically say this is a terrible thing.”

Where does the money go?

Rodefer is correct that the largest share of tax revenue goes to states. In Colorado the revenue issue has been “huge,” in Bergman's words. “There was no revenue being generated for counties at first.

The first taxing framework sent the state's excise tax revenue to schools and the sales tax back to the jurisdiction in which products were sold, usually cities.

Colorado counties have gained local excise tax authority, which allows them to put taxes to the voters, and so far, 11 counties have gone for it.

After covering tax administration costs, Oregon gives counties 10 percent of state sales tax revenue for law enforcement, with an option to levy 3 percent taxes by initiative.

What counties do

In counties that have opted in for recreational production and sale, they determine where those businesses can locate through land use regulations.

“The big elements are sight, sound and smell,” said Nick Lack, Deschutes County, Ore. planning director. “We have measures for sight and sound monitoring, but smell is what bothers people and why these

See MARIJUANA page 13

Pot laws works-in-progress

From MARIJUANA page 12

businesses are in agricultural land or light industrial areas.”

Rodefer laments that in California, the only authority Tuolumne County has is zoning.

“So you tell a grower to correct a violation, we give them 30 days, then they file appeals and when we finally come to tear the plants out, they’ve been harvested,” he said.

Clark County, Nevada’s business licensing department has been cracking down on those businesses that risk their marijuana licenses to promote or sponsor public marijuana consumption.

Then, there are some questions about whether counties should be involved. In Colorado counties are responsible

for health inspection in food production facilities, which include marijuana infusion businesses. If they haven’t opted in to legalizing cannabis use, some counties don’t want to get involved if the city is the one that legalizes it, Bergman said.

Bergman is also concerned about how the finite number of recreational licenses will be managed on a secondary market.

Sonoma County, Calif. Supervisor James Gore said there’s still a long way to go until laws and policies are finalized “There is no perfect way to do this, we are going to continue to write and rewrite these laws for the next five years, to figure out what drives compliance, what gives us the resources to address the problem operators and other things.” **CN**

Western counties battle wildfires

From WILDFIRES page 8

ects — the human services department is providing assistance to more than 500 residents who lost property in the fires.

“The entire sheriff’s office is diverted to secure the houses when you have 5,000 people evacuated,” he said. “It’s a tremendous responsibility.”

Cann worries that the increasing frequency of wildfires will make it hard for homeowners to insure their properties, which will exacerbate the housing shortage in his county.

“These fires are not so much an inconvenience for park visitors as they are for the service economy workers who live here,” he said. “When neigh-

borhoods full of three-bedroom houses are evacuated, those people have to live somewhere in the meantime, because they still have to work.”

Behind nearly every story of how a county deals with wildfires is the root cause many officials point to — dense growth in federal and some state forests, which have left residents and local governments at the mercy of nature.

Hamlin sees the Eagle Creek Fire’s silver lining in the smoke’s impact on the nearby cities.

“It sent a lot of smoke into Portland-Vancouver area,” he said. “I think it made a lot of people, who are complacent about the issue of wildfires, wake up to the fact that these

out there, they’re real and they’re going to affect us.”

Chilcott sees, in his dense nearby forests, the same buffet that attracted pine bark beetles that killed the trees that eventually become fuel for fires. “Our forests are basically in an unhealthy state,” he said.

While NACo and WIR prioritize active forest management practices, Chilcott acknowledges that it’s a complicated topic.

“I think our federal agencies would be happy to actively manage forests, but there are a lot of regulatory barriers to projects getting off the ground,” he said, specifically the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. “Active management is almost an impossibility until they reform those acts.” **CN**

LEGAL POT POSES PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS

On top of the logistical challenges for counties in processing cash payments, the portability of the crop and its street value have caused public safety concerns for counties.

The impairment that a cannabis high produces affects driving, adding new kinds of DUI enforcement to counties’ responsibilities.

John Bishop, executive director of the Oregon State Sheriffs’ Association, said his members have reported increases in cannabis-impaired driving at the same time as reports of opioid-impaired driving have increased.

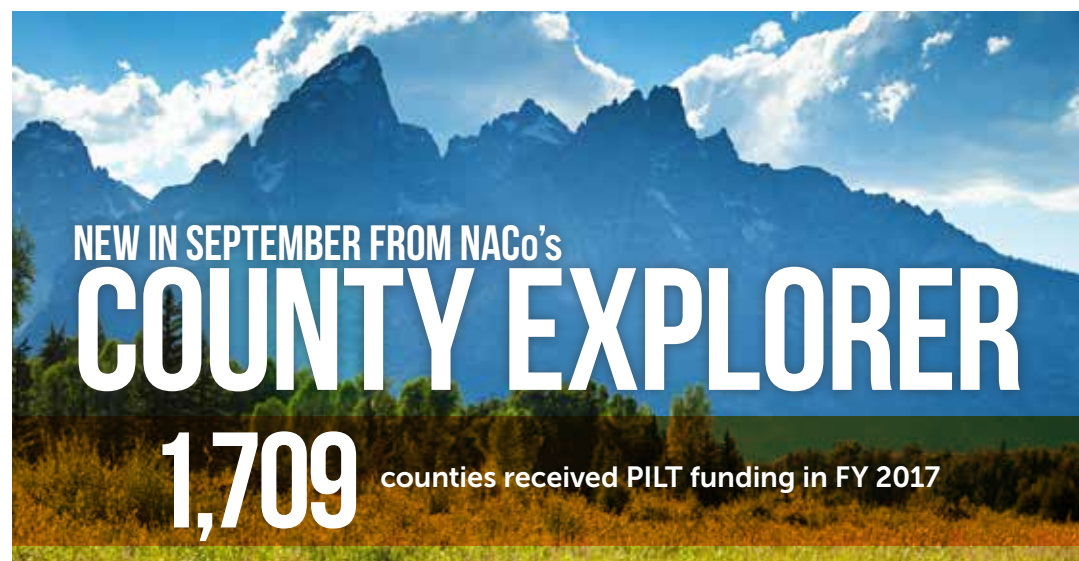
“They drive sloppily, take wider turns, have slower reactions,” he said. “The state police are catching most of them, so far it’s just another part of county law enforcement’s day — a big factor but not number one.”

Blood and urine tests are the standard measures for impairment. Association of Oregon Counties Legal Counsel Rob Bovett said what he learned from Colorado and Washington is that it’s important to keep law enforcement engaged in the legislative process.

“There’s a temptation for law enforcement, in a new legalization state, to throw up their hands and walk away,” he said. “That’s an enormous mistake. If they’re not at the table, nobody will speak for them, they’ll get rolled over by the industry.”

The consensus among county officials in different states is that as more states legalize recreational use, the black market will dissipate eventually.

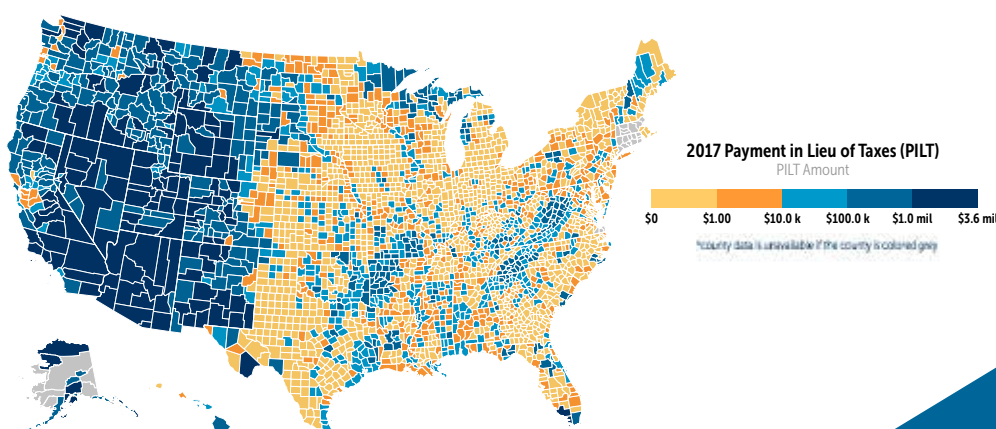
“A lot of the concerns that I have right now will ameliorate themselves over time,” said Tuolumne County Supervisor Karl Rodefer, “because the legal industry will drive out the illegal.”



65% of counties have an average State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction over \$6,000

78% of all public transit agencies are county-supported

77% of public nursing homes are owned and operated by counties and hospital districts



Source: NACo Analysis of U.S. Department of the Interior Data, 2017

www.NACo.org/CountyExplorer

**PROFILES IN
SERVICE**

**WILL RETURN IN
THE NEXT ISSUE**

apdu
ASSOCIATION of PUBLIC DATA USERS

2016 DATA VIZ AWARD WINNER

NACo Resources

ON STAGE AT THE 2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

More than a dozen new publications and golden favorites

DOWNLOAD YOUR PICKS TODAY!

www.NACo.org/2017Resources

How to Gain Citizen Buy-In

2016-2017 NACo Annual Report

American County Platform and Resolutions



Service Sharing: How Counties Do More with Less

The Impact of Eliminating the State and Local Tax Deduction

Municipal Bonds Advocacy Toolkit

Medicaid and Counties: Understanding the Program
& Why it Matters to Counties

Payments in Lieu of Taxes Advocacy Toolkit



Serving the Underserved: Counties Addressing Poverty

Thinking SolSmart: County Strategies for Advancing Solar
Energy Development



Counties Matter Challenge: 100 Brilliant Ideas at Work

Faces of the Social Services Block Grant

Managing County Workers: Recruitment,
Retention and Retirement



Water Quality Management at the County Level

Calling 911: Funding and Technological Challenges
of County 911 Call Centers

Managing Disasters at the County Level:
A Focus on Flooding

County Roles and Opportunities in Advancing
Safety and Justice



Medicaid Coverage and County Jails

Secure Rural Schools Profiles

**Counties and Cash: How to Improve the
Management of Cash Transactions**



MONEYMATTERS%

NACo's U.S. Communities Suppliers Are Hurricane-Response Ready

Hurricane Irma tore through Florida and came just 16 days after Hurricane Harvey slammed Texas. Category 4 hurricanes cause billions of dollars in damage. It is estimated that Irma and Harvey's combined destruction could be the costliest in U.S. history.

Catastrophic weather events test the limited resources of public agencies. Counties need rapid assistance and costs add up. The U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance can facilitate recovery efforts by helping hurricane-affected counties meet their needs quickly while saving taxpayer dollars.

During emergency situations, U.S. Communities' supplier partners provide quick access to products and solutions needed for relief, recovery and rebuilding at the best available government pricing. These suppliers' contracts also

During emergency situations, U.S. Communities' supplier partners provide quick access to products and solutions needed for relief, recovery and rebuilding.

include FEMA language to accommodate a county's requirements.

Graybar is a leader in the distribution of high quality electrical, energy management and lighting. In an emergency situation, they can quickly provide the materials necessary to set up command centers, power up shelters and repair or replace damaged electrical and communication systems. After Superstorm Sandy hit New Jersey, Graybar was ready for business within six hours of the storm to help provide temporary power and keep key buildings up and running.

HotelPlanner, a disaster

travel provider, manages the strategic placement of first responders by concentrating relief support in affected areas while keeping other groups outside the main area of operations. 150,000 global lodging options comprised of hotel, motel, condo, mobile RV set ups, and much more can be created as needed. Their system houses additional information such as availability of generator operations and power truck and semi parking to help coordinate response efforts.

Safeware-Mallory has aided the rescues and recovery efforts of many hurricanes

for over 20 years. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Safeware-Mallory was able to get supplies to Gulf Port, Miss. when no one else could. Key emergency products and solutions include: hazardous materials storage, medical and first aid supplies and law enforcement and fire equipment.

HD Supply Facilities Maintenance can help get your facilities back to normal by having over 70,000 maintenance, repair and operating products (MRO) in stock and property improvement services. Resources also include guides that help you prepare for different scenarios, respond to emergencies or developing storms, and recover after an emergency event.

U.S. Communities is the leading national cooperative purchasing program, providing world-class government procurement resources and solutions to local and state government agencies, school districts (K-12), higher education institutions and nonprofits. Enrolling in U.S. Communities means that you can receive vital program support and resources at a cost your budget can bear.

There is no cost or fee to use the program and you have access to lowest available government pricing. But, it is more than just good pricing. Cooperative purchasing can also deliver significant time efficiencies when every second counts. By utilizing a lead public agency model, the costs of preparing a bid and managing a contract, the costs can be significantly reduced, or avoided. **CN**

Visit www.uscommunities.org/solutions/hurricane-response to learn more about disaster relief efforts made possible through U.S. Communities.



Comment period extended for WOTUS rule withdrawal

Public comments will now be received until Sept. 27 on the first part of a two-step process to review and rewrite the "Waters of the U.S." rule finalized under the Obama administration in 2015. The proposed rule to rewrite the current WOTUS definition is expected to be released as early as this fall.

White House sends initial Harvey aid request to Congress

The request for over \$14 billion in Hurricane Harvey emergency spending is intended to fund preliminary recovery efforts and shore up the Federal Emergency Management Agency's disaster aid reserves.

DOT announces new round of TIGER grants

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) announced a new round of Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant funding, totaling \$500 million Sept. 6. As part of the rollout of this new funding, DOT hosted two webinars on Wednesday, Sept. 13 and Tuesday, Sept. 19 to assist in the completion of TIGER applications. Deadline for applications is Oct. 16.



MANAGING DISASTERS AT THE COUNTY LEVEL: A FOCUS ON FLOODING

Available online or in hard copy
www.naco.org/focusonflooding

Contact:
Jenna Moran, 202.942.4224

BRIGHT IDEAS | ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, Md.

'Safe Stations' Program Offers Path to Recovery for Opioid, Heroin Addicts

PROBLEM:

Increasing number of addicts dying or overdosing on drugs.

SOLUTION:

Offer 24/7 help at county fire and police stations to addicts who need medical attention or a path to recovery, without fear of arrest.

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

Little did Jenna Keefer know that reading a Facebook post by Anne Arundel County, Md. would be the first step in turning her life around. Hooked on heroin for the past eight years, she woke up April 20 to a message the county had posted:

"Arundel VFD is participating as a 'Safe Station.' Anyone who is currently addicted to opiates and has made the decision to get help can stop by our station where we will provide medical treatment (if needed) and help get them in contact with Anne Arundel County addiction treatment resources."

The county was getting the word out that day about a brand-new program, Safe Stations, offering help to drug addicts at any of the county's police or fire stations.

Jen Corbin, director of the Anne Arundel County Crisis Response Team, said that the program is the brainchild of a number of county departments all working together and leadership from Anne Arundel County Fire Chief Alan Graves, Police Chief Tim Altomare, Sheriff Ron Bateman and Anne Arundel County State's Attorney Wes Adams, who lost a family member to an opioid overdose earlier this year.

Safe Stations was launched as opioid and heroin overdoses

escalated in Anne Arundel County, where there have been more than 720 overdoses this year, more than 90 of them fatal, according to the fire department. The county couldn't get people into recovery right after an overdose, Corbin said, because at that point, they're mainly thinking about getting their next fix.

"We were all thinking, what if they came to us?" Corbin said. "We were desperate to do something. Now we're seeing people reach out on their own terms. I placed someone yesterday who had OD'd 11 times."

When someone decides to enter the program on their own terms, Corbin said, "We hear 'I'm tired of waking up every morning and worrying about when I'm going to get my next fix' or 'I want to be normal, I want to have a real life.'"

The day the Safe Stations program launched, Keefer decided to head to her local fire station.

How had she gotten to that point? The 29-year-old traces the beginnings of her heroin addiction back to when she first tried alcohol and marijuana when she was 16. Drinking became a daily habit, she said in a recent video about her experience, posted to the county fire department page. When she was 21, she had graduated to a "pain pill" habit. When it became too expensive, she turned to heroin, she said. The drug became an "everyday thing" for her for the next seven to eight years, until April 20.

"I took myself to the fire station," she said. "When I got there, the firefighters were so accommodating and made me feel like I made the right decision. Crisis Response came in and talked to me about the next steps and at that point I knew there was no turning back and was definitely going to be my next path in life. I went into a treatment center on April 21 and spent the next

25 days there."

After getting out of the treatment center, Keefer moved into a recovery house in Annapolis and is now looking for a job. "Life today for me is amazing," she said. "Life after addiction and recovery is possible. If you're out there and you're struggling and you're willing to put in work just ask for help. There are people willing to help. If you're struggling, please, please ask for help."

Any county resident who is addicted to drugs is encouraged to ask for help and can do so 24 hours a day by going to any Anne Arundel County or Annapolis City fire station.

When a person arrives at a Safe Station, they receive a medical assessment by Corbin's Crisis Response Team. If they're concerned the person has a medical issue, they are transported to an appropriate medical facility. The Crisis Response Team will communicate with the hospital

staff to ensure there is a "hand-off" from the medical facility back to Crisis Response.

If no immediate medical issue is identified, the county's "Warmline" is contacted (the Crisis Response Team's phone number, answered 24/7) and advised that there is a Safe Station case. The county's Crisis Response team will work closely with the individual in the station to determine the best resources and destination available.

Individuals seeking assistance are required to drop any needles and paraphernalia into a sharps collection container located at each station. If an individual is carrying illegal substances, the appropriate police agency will be notified for disposal purposes only.

Anne Arundel County State's Attorney Wes Adams' office is notified if the person has any outstanding warrants or court

See OPIOIDS page 19



Fire and police stations are safe havens for addicts looking to enter into recovery programs in Anne Arundel County, Md., under a new "Safe Stations" program started by the county. Photo courtesy of Anne Arundel County, Md.

the HR DOCTOR

With Phil Rosenberg



Preventing major disasters



Like every one of us, the horrific hurricane, wind and water damage in much of Texas compels our attention no matter where we live. Even now, I am awaiting specific predictions about the path of oncoming Hurricane Irma. I think back to my experience working for many years as a county and city-appointed official in California and Florida. I recall with unexpected clarity events like Hurricane Andrew, Hurricane Katrina, earthquakes and huge mountain brushfires. In all of these times of fear and uncertainty, there remain some common grounds for hope and pride.

As one Texas official put it in a media interview: "Texas is a state, but it is also a state of mind." Despite the mega-cost and time associated with remediation cleanup and rebuilding, we will all think about the acts of heroism and sacrifice neighbors, especially local government employee neighbors, showed.

We also think about what could have been done, but wasn't; what we should have done as individuals to better prepare, but didn't; and what we wish was in place before the next "big one" hits. Certainly, there will be other "big ones" coming in the future. Certainly, it shouldn't take hordes of lawyers filing tens of thousands of lawsuits to make us act now to put off the day when we again lament what we could have, should have and would have, done to ease the harm. Here are some thoughts on that subject.

We are grateful for the Herculean rescue efforts which affected many thousands of families in each of the disaster areas. Those efforts were led by local government employees at first before other forces from State, such as the National Guard, arrived on the scene. However, there were at least an equal number of neighbors, friends, private organizations, and charities like the Red Cross hard at work. They produced results that should make all

of us proud to be part of the American family.

Once giant disasters strike, crews are also marshaled in many different states to come to the aid of the people in California, Texas, Louisiana, Florida, New Jersey or wherever the monster hits.

Besides the gratitude we owe to those who help instead of whine and blame others, there is a critical realization for us to think about in local government. It is counties, cities, utilities and special districts that lead the efforts at responding to these disasters.

It is not the federal government that initially responds, despite the fact that everyone looks to the president to hold a news conference expressing sympathy and offering support. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is organized as a responding agency, more than a preventive one. In fact, FEMA is swamped or flooded if you will, by these mega-disasters just as much, at least metaphorically, as the

communities which may be underwater. It literally takes years, sometimes many years, for the paperwork, the processing, the inspections and so much more to take place when FEMA rolls into town. Meanwhile, it is local government — that bears repeating, local government — that has the burden of response, rescue and offering hope to citizens. A presidential news conference or a flyover by Air Force One has symbolic value but not anywhere near the value created when a firefighter-paramedic arrives soon after the disaster to help your mom out of the flooded house.

It is the local governments that have the burden in responding to the need to set up shelters, provide food, health care, clothing and much more for the thousands who may be suddenly living in a world torn upside down. In my own post-hurricane management experience in both County and City Emergency Operations Centers (EOC), I have seen promises made by FEMA but

results delayed. I have seen intricate recovery plans activated — plans created months or years before problems actually played out — with only partial success. That is because, as General Eisenhower reputedly said, "before the battle the plans are everything, during the battle the plans are nothing."

Unfortunately, we lack the ability to send our draft plans into the belly of the beast and ask the hurricane or the earthquake to review them and sign off that they are going to be accurate and are going to be successful. Rather, it takes skilled public servants to rally hope in time of despair and to create the environment in which maximum human effort produces the best results.

Most of our efforts, commendable as they are, focus on reactive responses. It is the primary job during "normal" times, for example, for police officers to respond to calls per-

See HR DOCTOR page 20

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION



ARIZONA

The U.S. Geological Survey plans to start using a peanut butter-flavored vaccine to help save prairie dogs carrying fleas with bubonic plague; plans call for dropping the bait across thousands of acres in Arizona as well as in Colorado, Montana, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming and other Western states.

NAVAJO COUNTY Public Health officials recently **confirmed that fleas in the area tested positive for plague.** **COCONINO** and **SANTA FE COUNTY** officials first found prairie dogs there to be carrying fleas with the plague. Ninety-five percent of prairie dogs die within 78 hours of becoming infected, according to the Humane Society. In June, the New Mexico Department of Health announced that three human cases had been detected in Santa Fe County. All were hospitalized; no one died.

Health officials are cautioning county residents to keep their pets leashed since the disease can be transferred and to avoid contact with dead animals. Plague is an infectious disease infamous for killing 25

million Europeans during the Middle Ages.

ARKANSAS

Arkansas Commissioner of State Lands John Thurston recently **turned back more than \$18.2 million to the state's 75 counties.** The funds were collected from property owners paying delinquent real estate taxes and from proceeds of excess taxes due when the agency sells property. Delinquent collections go back to the counties that should have received the money if taxes had been paid on time. In turn, the money is divvied up for schools, libraries and roads.

CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES COUNTY supervisors recently gave the OK for a pilot program designed to **help alleviate its homeless problem.** Homeowners can receive up to \$75,000 and a streamlined permitting process to construct "granny flats" or "in-law units" on their properties to rent out to the homeless. Other homeowners can receive \$50,000 for remodeling and legalizing an existing unpermitted dwelling.

The 18-month program has a \$550,000 budget, which is also helping fund a competition seeking innovative design proposals for these types of "micro dwellings." Homelessness spiked 23 percent across the county this year compared to 2016, with more than 55,000 sleeping on sidewalks, in their cars or along the Los Angeles River.

FLORIDA

• **HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY** commissioners recently voted 4-2 to **relocate a Confederate memorial statue** that sits outside the county courthouse if money could be raised privately to move it. The commissioners voted for a one-month deadline to raise funds to move the statue. A GoFundMe page was flooded with donations and raised enough to move *Memoria en Aeterna*, a 106-year-old statue commemorating Confederate soldiers, to the Brandon Family Cemetery.

• **MANATEE COUNTY** commissioners also voted to temporarily **move a Confederate memorial;** a spire on the statue, featuring Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson,



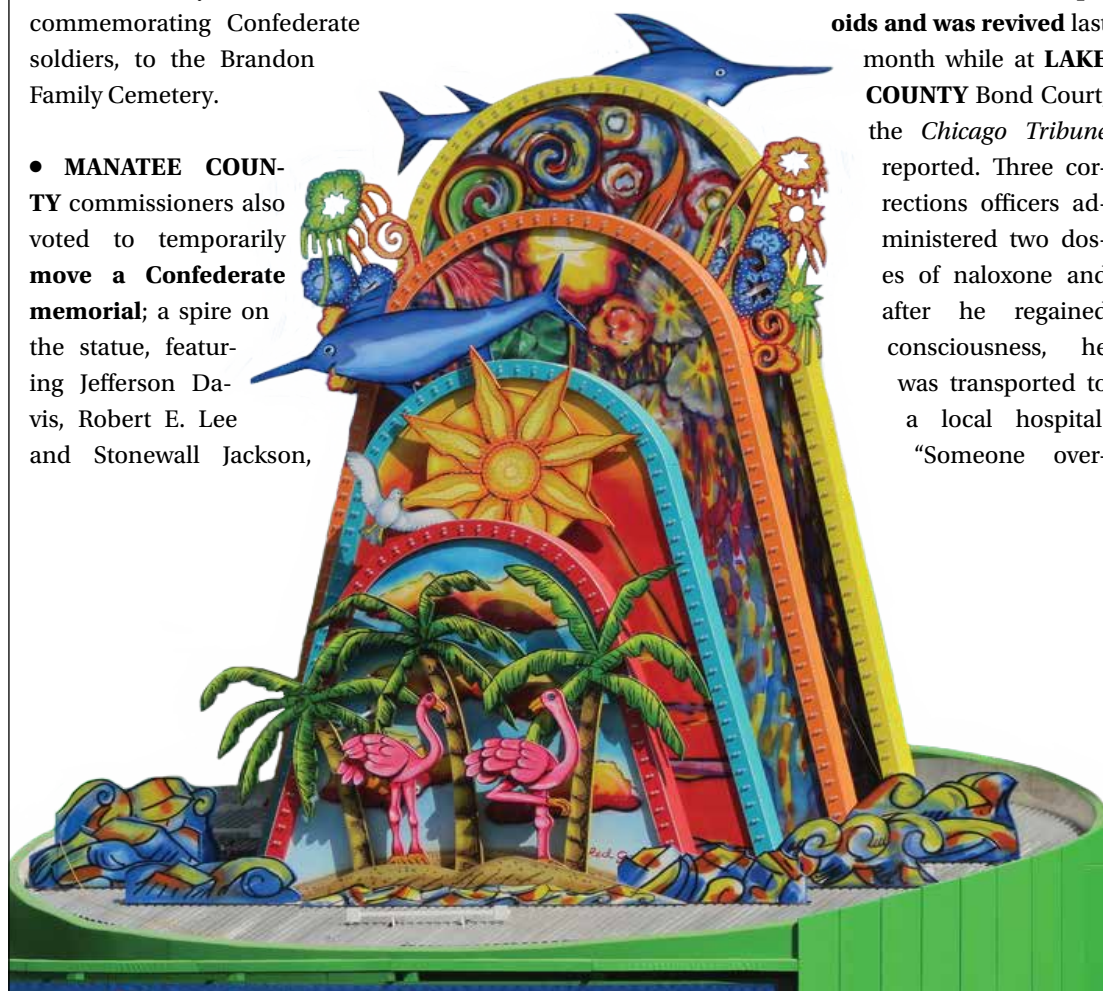
cracked in two while it was being moved, but will likely be repaired.

ILLINOIS

• The **COOK COUNTY** Board will **vote next month on whether to repeal its controversial soda tax.** The board delayed the vote at a two-hour meeting last week that attracted an overflow crowd, both pro and con. "We anticipate that we will continue to have the

votes for a sweetened beverage tax," said Board President Toni Preckwinkle. Those who support the tax, including former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, and opponents have committed \$6.4 million in dueling TV and radio ads, the *Chicago Tribune* reported. Preckwinkle says the tax is needed to maintain county services and help reduce sugar consumption-related illnesses.

• A man **overdosed on opioids and was revived** last month while at **LAKE COUNTY** Bond Court, the *Chicago Tribune* reported. Three corrections officers administered two doses of naloxone and after he regained consciousness, he was transported to a local hospital. "Someone over-



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY says that a kitschy \$2.5 million public sculpture at Marlins Park **must stay, after new Marlins owner Derek Jeter inquired about its removal.** The 73-foot tall sculpture was required as part of the local Art in Public Places program, which mandates that county-constructed buildings feature artwork, the *Miami Herald* reported. The mechanical sculpture, by artist Red Grooms, features flamingos and marlins that whirl whenever the Marlins hit a homerun.

dosing in a courtroom highlights the opioid epidemic we face,” said Sheriff Mark Curran, in a statement. “The Lake County Sheriff’s Office continues to work with community stakeholders, battling the prevalent opioid problem through education and enforcement.” He credited the actions of the corrections officers for saving the man’s life.



NEW JERSEY

More than 60,000 people live in **MONMOUTH COUNTY**’s flood-prone area, and the county’s Office of Emergency Management has launched a public education campaign to better inform citizens when and how they should evacuate. Officials say residents were confused about their flooding likelihood during Superstorm Sandy.

“**Know Your Zone**” signs have been posted around the county to illustrate the zones in which they are located, which were created using scientific surge models. The county also maintains a website to complement that information.

NEW MEXICO

The **LOS ALAMOS COUNTY** Council approved policies and procedures for the **Homebuyer Assistance Program**, a partnership with the Los Alamos Housing Partnership.

The program funds the first downpayment on a home for qualified homebuyers, the *Los Alamos Monitor* reported.

- **MORA COUNTY** has become the 20th county in the United States to **sue pharmaceutical manufacturers** for knowingly over-distributing the drugs that drove the nation’s opioid crisis.

The suit maintains that the companies have violated several laws, including the New Mexico Unfair Trade Practices Act. The companies have known the risks of opioids but instead promoted the drugs for long-term use and downplayed the risks to “expand the market for opioids and realize blockbuster profits,” the suit states.

The long list of defendants named in the suit include OxyContin distributor Purdue Pharma, Johnson and Johnson and Percocet distributor Endo Health Solutions.

Mora County Commission Chairman Paula Garcia said the county’s public health officials met with the commission about Mora’s “disproportionately” high overdose rates more than a year ago.

According to the state’s Department of Health, the county’s overdose rate was one of the state’s highest between 2011 and 2015 – 47.3 per 100,000 people. Mora County, with about 4,500 residents, had 14 drug overdose deaths in 2015, according to the suit.

Conaway said damage amounts will be proven in the litigation. The county doesn’t have an estimated or desired figure in mind, according to Aragon.

Garcia said any damages awarded to the county would fund prevention, education and treatment programs, the *Albuquerque Journal* reported.

NEW YORK

- **ONONDAGA COUNTY** voters will decide in a referendum whether the **sheriff will take control** of the Jamesville Correctional Facility and the county corrections department.

If voters approve, the change would take effect in January.

Onondaga County is the only county in New York that still divides jail operations between the sheriff and the county executive, and county lawmakers voted to consolidate jail operations under the sheriff’s office so the question could appear on the general election ballot, Syracuse.com reported. Because the move transfers control from one elected official to another, it requires approval by voters.

Under the proposed consolidation, the facilities would continue to be staffed by separate personnel, under separate union contracts, but would be administered jointly by the sheriff.

The county could save money because unified control over the jail would allow for better inmate management and fewer inmates sent to other jails thanks to overcrowding.

- **RENSSELAER COUNTY** has **reached an agreement with Airbnb** that will allow the home-sharing platform to collect and remit county hotel occupancy taxes.

The county’s 70 hosts earned \$510,000 in the past calendar year, *The Saratogan* reported. Rensselaer County joins **DELAWARE, DUTCHESS, ESSEX, FRANKLIN, LIVINGSTON, ONONDAGA, OTSEGO, SCHOHARIE, SCHUYLER, SENECA, ST. LAWRENCE, SULLIVAN** and **TOMPKINS** counties in entering tax agreements with Airbnb.

OHIO

- **CLARK COUNTY** will **not accept an \$840,000 grant** from the state prison department because they fear its requirements could cause jail overcrowding.

The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction grant would require the county to house people sentenced to low-level, fifth-degree felonies in local jails instead of sending them to state prisons, according to the *Springfield News-Sun*.

The sheriff’s office said it could lead to a nearly 25 percent increase in the county’s jail population.

- Facing a rash of opioid overdose deaths, **HAMILTON COUNTY** will **distribute 30,000 doses of naloxone**. The drug reverses the effects of overdoses.

First responders already carry it, but the county will distribute more through partnerships with hospitals, jails, faith-based groups and syringe exchanges.

The escalating potency of street drugs like heroin and fentanyl has prompted the county to double the strength of the naloxone doses to 4 mg, from 2 mg, *The Washington Post* reported.

VIRGINIA

The **CHESTERFIELD COUNTY** Economic Development Authority wants to **create an industrial “megasite”** by rezoning and buying 1,700 acres of land for large, industrial users. It would be among the largest in Virginia.

The authority would use that size to recruit companies such as automotive or aerospace manufacturers that need large parcels of land with buffer zones and easy access to an interstate highway, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* reported.

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 mbar-ton@naco.org.

Addiction help: ‘Safe Stations’

From OPIOIDS page 16

dates that would block admittance to a recovery center; Corbin and Adams often work together, giving talks about drugs at middle schools; when they found out warrants and court dates were impeding recovery efforts, Adams tasked a staffer to work with the Crisis Response Team to help with rescheduling, Corbin said.

To guide them through the process, people are assigned a “care coordinator” helping them obtain admittance to a detox center or other appropriate steps; Medicaid and grants help people who don’t have insurance, Corbin noted.

“We want Anne Arundel County to embrace every strategy possible to overcome addiction to opioids,” said County Executive Steve Schuh. “This program is a new innovative approach to assuring those in crisis get the treatment they need at the time they need it.”

Initially the program was funded from general funds in each participating department; because the program is so popular, the county was awarded a state grant of \$287,000 to hire more people.

Part of the funding comes from the federal 21st Century Cures Act. Funding is also being used to get the word out about the program in PSAs.

If your county is considering a similar program, “you need to have everybody involved to be a player,” Corbin said. “Legal, mental health, police, fire, hospitals.”

As of Sept. 4, the program has assisted about 100 people; Corbin said the Safe Stations program has seen a 57 percent success rate as of the end of July by helping 87 clients; of those, 41 completed their first treatment phase and nine were in treatment. Corbin said she expects that success rate to increase.

Similar programs can be found in other areas, including Lake County, Ill., and Manchester, N.H. **CN**



More mitigation, planning needed to avert disasters

From HR DOCTOR page 17

haps 80 percent of the time and engage in discretionary patrols for most of the rest of their shift time. We have plans which focus on response – certainly an absolutely essential and critical part of crisis management.

What we do not focus on, in this writer's experience and judgment, with sufficient foresight, is longer range anticipation well before the need to clean up anything in the first place. This is the work which, if we focused much more attention on, would mitigate or in many cases perhaps prevent the disaster.

Many examples can be cited, but in this brief article here are a few to think about. Not only is local government the incident commander in disasters, but it is these public agencies which also command long-range land-use planning. In effect, communitywide quality of life decisions are made at the local level.

Should urban sprawl to a massive extent be allowed to develop in a flood plain? Should homes continue to be built in areas which may be below sea level or lack adequate storm drainage capabilities? Should high-density buildings be allowed to rise up all over earthquake-prone areas? How about poorly built mobile homes in high-risk hurricane areas? What about lack of tough health, safety and chemical contamination prevention safeguards – apparently missing at the state level in Texas? When flood insurance is not included in all home purchase transactions, is it not all taxpayers who suffer and not just those individuals who should have, but didn't purchase the coverage?

In other words, should we not be devoting huge resources to prevention and mitigation rather than response? This writer believes the answer should be a loud "yes!" It is no different from how we respond or should respond to other areas of our personal protection.

The most unfortunate examples come in the health care arena. The large majority of the money any of us spend on health care comes in the form of intervention, after health care disasters have struck. If we spent a lot more money on prevention and not let lobbying or other political pressures get in the way of doing what is right in our own long-term best interests, we could prevent huge numbers of unnecessary deaths.

Lung cancer or automobile crashes stem in large part from preventable actions we could take, like seat belt use and stopping the "infection" of tobacco use. If we spent a lot more on education to prevent trouble including the troubles created by bullying or opioids, a huge amount of suffering would be mitigated. If we reduce the amount of violence spewed at us constantly by the media and struck a better balance between "action adventure" on prime-time TV and education, the amount of violence in the society could be reduced.

These ideas will fail miserably if they are not concerted, ongoing and vigorously supported by the industries involved in these areas, including health care or media production, as well as government. They will not succeed unless we have the will to realize that it is prevention as well as ex post facto responding which will save lives and save our community.

I believe that people around the world understand the value of prevention and how much better things would be if only actions were taken now to put off the day when massive trouble struck, just as most people agree with scientists in the climate change debate. However, this feeling crashes into a shortage of education and political willpower to confront vested interests and short-term thinkers.

We also do harm to ourselves by not stepping back and flying over our community organizations from 40,000 feet. Regrettably for those who plan


congressional or state legislative districts, there is no such thing as a "hurricane district" in which the storms agree to stop at jurisdictional boundaries. Local government in disasters is a hero, but how can we do our best in communities where there may be one county government but two dozen or more city governments, not to mention other jurisdictions? Many of these agencies choose to have separate police and fire rescue services. Perhaps these governments would better serve the public if there was a joint powers agreement rather than dozens of separate badges, logos and command structures.

Perhaps regional emergency management jurisdictions rather than separate city and county responses, would be helpful. Patients awaiting rescue really don't care what logo adorns the ambulance. A national volunteer corps of medical students, supported by infrastructure from hospitals, universities and government agencies would provide support. After all, many people may have chronic medical conditions and can't access their doctors. The electrical power to keep their refrigerators, and therefore their insulin supply for example, may not be available. The same is true for the elevators in multistory senior living facilities thus preventing residents from leaving their apartments.

Finally, being in the middle of a massive disaster like Texas flooding is not the time to criticize the heroism and planning efforts which have gone into the immediate responses. It is very much the time, however, to plant the seeds for a local, regional and national "stand down" day, or days. Not unlike what the military does in responding to ship collisions or repeated aircraft failures, this would be a time for planners to join with emergency managers and citizen blue-ribbon panels to work hard to avoid greater horrors that might come in the future.

Not that any of us need

more irony, but as I am dictating this article the power has just failed at my house in the midst of a sustained rainstorm. That's the bad news. The good news is that thanks to knowledge I have gained in

local government emergency management, my emergency whole house generator kicked in within 10 seconds. My computer never missed a beat! Now if only Alexa will come back online! 

WORD SEARCH

McLEAN COUNTY, ILL.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS FEATURED COUNTY IN 'BEHIND THE SEAL'

Created by: Mary Ann Barton

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

BLOOMINGTON: The county seat and state's highest city at 797 feet.

DAVIS: David Davis was a U.S. senator and associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

COURTHOUSE: The first McLean County Courthouse was built in 1832 for \$339.25.

FAIR: The McLean County Fair claims to be the largest county 4-H fair.

KICKAPOO: The area was once inhabited by the Kickapoo Indian nation.

LARGEST: McLean County is the largest county by land area in Illinois.

LINCOLN: When he was a lawyer in Springfield, Abraham Lincoln made frequent visits to Bloomington on business.

MACARTHUR: One of the county's oldest streets got a name change to give it a fresh start; its former name, Moulton Street, was known for being a red-light district during World War II.

McLEAN: The county was named for John McLean, a pioneer lawyer, territorial judge, first representative in Congress from Illinois and U.S. senator.

MURAL: Hanging in the Normal post office, an oil on canvas mural was created in 1938 by Albert Pels for the Section of Fine Arts, administered by the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department.

MUSEUM: The McLean County Courthouse, completed in 1903, ceased being a courthouse in 1976, making way for the Law and Justice Center. It is now a museum.

PHONE BOOTH: A phone booth sits atop City Hall in Lincoln; according to local lore the phone booth was installed sometime during World War II and used by the fire department until the mid-1980s to keep an eye on approaching storms.

POPULATION: McLean County has seen its population grow even as the overall population of the state has shrunk, according to the U.S. Census.

STATE FARM: George Jacob "G.J." Mecherle founded State Farm Insurance in 1922 after renting a room in downtown Bloomington, hired a couple secretaries and opened his doors for business. Today the company has 18,000 agents.

UNIVERSITY: University Street travels through Illinois State University and ends at Illinois Wesleyan University.