

FCC curtails local authority in vote to speed 5G deployment

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

The Federal Communications Commission voted Sept. 26 to limit local governments' timeframes and fees in an effort to speed the siting of small cell wireless infrastructure necessary for the 5G network.

The order gives counties and other local governments 60 days to approve small cells being attached to existing structures and 90 days for erecting new poles. Application fees are limited to \$500, which can include up to five small wireless facilities. Recurring charges for placing wireless facilities on public property is limited to \$270 per year, including right-of-way access

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New Hanover County, N.C. Sheriff's Office deputies speak with a resident after Hurricane Florence makes landfall. The storm dumped rain on the region, creating flooding conditions in counties from South Carolina to Maryland. Photo courtesy of New Hanover County

Counties face off against Florence

By Mary Ann Barton
and Charlie Ban
senior staff writers

More than a week after Hurricane Florence roared ashore in North Carolina, Georgetown County, S.C., just south of Myrtle Beach, was preparing for historic flooding thanks to the hurricane.

Evacuations of 6,000 to 8,000 residents was underway last week. "We're offering door to door transportation today," said Jackie Broach-Akers, public information officer for the county. Two school buildings served as shelter for residents and crated pets in the path of the flood.

"We knew as soon as we saw predictions for Hurricane Florence this was going to be an issue," Broach-Akers said. "We saw river flooding issues after Hurricane Joaquin and Matthews." The predicted floods last week were expected to be even higher this time, up to 10 feet.

The county was piling sandbags around its historic county courthouse used for county council meetings and moving "anything we can" to higher floors, Broach-Akers said. "We've also been giving out sandbags to the public for days."

County employees are wear-

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House passes FAA reauthorization bill

In a triple slam, the House voted Sept. 26 on a bill to reauthorize funding for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), provide hurricane relief money and reform the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The FAA bill (H.R. 302) reauthorizes FAA programs for five years. The Senate is expected to consider the bill over the next several weeks. Both chambers are expected to pass short-term extensions for the agency.

The bill, H.R. 302, addresses several issues important to counties, including the Essential Air Service (EAS) program, drones or unmanned aerial systems (UAS), the Airport Im-

provement Program (AIP) and noise mitigation measures.

It also provides \$1.7 billion in hurricane relief funding and includes the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018, which reforms Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) programs aimed to help communities prepare, respond and recover from natural disasters.

Of interest to counties:

Passenger Facility Charges (PFC): The PFC cap will remain at \$4.50, despite calls from many airports to raise the cap. Instead, the bill would require a study on charges that are added to airfare

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FAA bill funds air travel to small communities

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for airport construction.

EAS: EAS would receive \$155 million for FY'18 and up to \$172 million in FY'23. The EAS program expands access to air travel by providing subsidies to airlines serving rural airports in small communities.

Small Community Air Service Development Program (SCASDP): SCASDP would receive \$153 million for FY'18 and up to \$168 million in FY'23. The grant program is designed to help small communities address air service and airfare issues.

• **AIP:** AIP would receive stable funding of \$3.35 billion from FY 2018 through FY 2023. AIP provides federal grants to airports for capital improve-

ment projects.

• **UAS (drones):** The bill expands the use of model aircrafts by allowing operators to fly at night, beyond visual line of sight and over people. However, the bill would require model aircraft operators, including hobbyists, to pass an aeronautical knowledge and safety test.

The bill directs the Government Accountability Office to study the potential role of local government regarding UAS regulations.

• **Noise mitigation:** The bill would require the FAA to study the potential health effects of overflight noise and consider the feasibility of amending current departure procedures for noise sensitive communities.

• **Contract Tower Program:**

The bill would make several amendments to the Contract Tower Program, which gives private firms the ability to operate air traffic control towers and accounts for around half of the towers owned and operated by the FAA. The bill would modify the current calculations of the contract towers' cost-benefit ratios and subsequent payments by requiring a recalculation of the annual cost-benefit ratio of towers partially supported by airports or local governments.

• **Passengers rights:** The bill would ban airlines from removing passengers once they have boarded the airplane. **CN**

See a summary of the FAA reauthorization bill here: <https://bit.ly/2ztZdR4>.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DISASTER RECOVERY REFORM ACT OF 2018

- Reforms FEMA and the Stafford Act by ensuring that a percentage of assistance provided in the wake of disasters is invested in pre-disaster hazard mitigation so that states, tribal and local governments can pre-empt the damage and distress that results from disasters.
- Clarifies what may be eligible for mitigation funding, making sure investments are cost effective and reduce risk.
- Speeds recovery by creating efficiencies in FEMA's programs such as getting structures inspected faster.
- Clarifies federal programs to help expedite assistance for recipients of FEMA aid, resolve issues quickly and rebuild more efficiently.
- Provides more flexibility in meeting disaster survivors' housing needs.
- Simplifies federal requirements for individuals and state, locals and Indian tribal governments.
- Helps communities meet the needs of pets in disasters.
- Increases transparency and oversight in the disaster assistance process.

Source: Highlights of House-Senate Agreement Reforming and Reauthorizing the FAA, FEMA Disaster Programs, TSA, & NTSB <https://bit.ly/2ztZdR4>.

SNAP/STATS



MOST MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATIONS - 2008-2017

COUNTY	STATE	NUMBER OF DECLARATIONS
Webster County	Mo.	12
Marion County	Ark.	11
Barry County	Mo.	11
Nemaha County	Neb.	11
Major County	Okla.	11
Okfuskee County	Okla.	11
Ottawa County	Okla.	11

Source: The U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency 2008-2017 Disasters data, as of March 18, 2018. Courtesy NACo Counties Futures Lab

CN SPOTLIGHT



Washington state county commissioner testifies on Endangered Species Act

David Sauter, Klickitat County, Wash. commissioner, testifies Sept. 26 before the House Natural Resources Committee in support of three Endangered Species Act bills. The EMPOWERS Act would require federal agencies making listing decisions under the ESA to meaningfully consult with state governments before a listing determination is made. The Endangered Species Transparency and Reasonableness Act would require the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to track, report to Congress, and make available online information on ESA lawsuits and attorney payouts from those lawsuits. The LAMP Act would allow the federal government to enter into cooperative management agreements with state and local governments, tribes and non-federal stakeholders to improve endangered species recovery and habitat management. Photo by Hugh Clarke

CountyNews

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Greg Cox
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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

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E-mail cnews@naco.org
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Storm challenge: Getting residents to evacuate

From FLORENCE page 1

ing a lot of different hats during the disaster.

“We have library staff in here helping with required record-keeping for FEMA, our Finance staff is in here, Planning is in here to help with risk and damage assessment. Parks and Rec are helping man the PIO desk and preparing facilities. Our landfills are open today to help people get rid of stuff and prepare their homes.”

“I’m very lucky that my house is not in the predicted flooding area this time,” Broach-Akers said.

“But we do have several people in the EOC who are working today trying to find time to move things out of their homes or family members’ homes. One is trying to get their elderly mother’s home ready. Some are wondering what they’ll come home to after helping members of the public get ready for it.”

Flooding in Georgetown County is just the latest episode in the saga of Hurricane Florence, the first major hurricane of the 2018 season, which made landfall Sept. 14 in New Hanover County, N.C. south of Wrightsville Beach, with winds of 90 mph. Rain pushed rivers over their banks after rainfall in from South Carolina to Maryland.

New Hanover County, N.C. is still assessing damage, said Woody White, who chairs the Board of Commissioners.

“There was hardly any damage from this surge on the municipalities, which is a testament more toward the coastal storm damage reduction efforts that we’ve put in over the last 20 years with our beach re-nourishment projects — doing it differently, building up dune systems and preparing to keep the water in the ocean for lack of a better way to put it,” he said. “And so, as a consequence of that, we saw more damage from wind and wind-driven rain and flooding in flood-prone areas, not storm-surge areas.”

In addition to long-term re-nourishment of dune systems, preparing for emergencies throughout the year was key

in handling the disaster, said White, who rode out the storm at the EOC and his home.

“There is no substitute for preparation,” he said. “Thinking through the ‘what if’ scenarios: ‘What if our public utility fails because it doesn’t have fuel? What if our 911 center fails because the generator goes out? What if the forecast is worse than we think?’”

White said that running through ever scenario year after year is what makes getting through such a disaster possible.

“Knock on wood we had no catastrophic generator failure,” he said.

The county made sure there were back-up generators at shelters, the 911 center and the emergency operations center, he said. They also assisted the public utility authority in making sure there was backup power at the area’s hospitals.

New Hanover County worked closely with its municipalities on the timing of evacuation orders and conveying orders to the public, White said, estimating that half of the county’s population of 200,000 evacuated.

Convincing people to evacuate was the most challenging part of handling the disaster, White said. “There’s a real cultural and emotional attachment to your home. And a mentality of resistance — ‘I just don’t want to leave, I’ll just ride this storm out.’ Overcoming that is difficult.”

“If they had remained, the burden that puts on commodities, like groceries and fuel, that would have made the chaos we have slowly been working out of so much worse,” he said. “But for the most part, people heeded our warnings.”

New Hanover County got the word out about the threatening storm with daily press briefings, consistent messaging on social media and numerous interviews on radio, TV and newspapers.

The county transported about 350 or more residents out of harm’s way by public bus for two days prior to the storm making landfall. The buses transported them to shelters in nearby Wake and Forsyth counties, White said. “If residents don’t have

means to self-evacuate, you need to know the government is going to help you.”

South Carolina hit

Jason Patno, director of the Charleston County, S.C. Emergency Preparedness Division, said that about seven days before the storm as some models showed the path of Hurricane Florence turning south, the county began talking with the National Weather Service, South Carolina Emergency Management Division, neighboring counties and municipalities.

In days leading up to the storm, conference calls were held with about 30 entities on the line, sharing how they were prepping for the storm.

It was also an opportunity to ask questions about operations, evacuation orders and recovery efforts.

“There’s much more cooperation” at all levels, as a result of dealing with disasters together over the last several years, he said, including Hurricanes Irma and Matthew in 2017 and 2016, and flooding in 2015.

Something new the county is doing: holding conference calls with local businesses and colleges and universities. “This is an example of lessons learned from past years,” he said. “What I’m hearing is it’s been successful.”

The big question businesses and colleges wanted to know was if an evacuation order was going be held. “We also get a lot of questions about re-entry and we go over that plan with the businesses,” Patno said. “Our goal is the same as theirs — to get them up and running as soon as possible.”

Tornadoes in Virginia

The remnants of Hurricane Florence spawned eight tornadoes Sept. 17 in several central Virginia counties. In Chesterfield County, just south of Richmond, three tornadoes were spotted including an EF-2 that touched down with winds clocking up to 125 MPH, collapsing a building which housed a flooring company and killing an employee at the company.

LESSONS LEARNED IN BRUNSWICK COUNTY, N.C.

When the winds died down near the home of Frank Williams, chairman of the Brunswick County, N.C. Board of Commissioners, a second threat emerged — widespread flooding that cut the county into three parts for four days.

“People think because the wind stopped and the sun’s out, the event is over,” he said. “Well, if it rained upstream, the event might not have even started yet.”

Emergency workers tended to drivers who stalled out on flooded roads or wound up on submerged roads that had washed out.

“The sheriff’s office was out and about in a helicopter, in boats, rescuing people at the height of the storm,” he said.

Days later, things returned to normal when Williams drove past gas stations that didn’t have lines stretching a half-mile away.

“For people who had 8 feet of water in their house, it might be months before things get back to normal,” he said.

The county itself suffered minor damage to its administrative building. The commission chambers had 18 inches of water and the bottom floor was flooded, displacing several departments while damage is repaired.

“We lost some furniture and had to tear out some carpet, but we were lucky,” he said.

Williams said the biggest challenges throughout the storm and its aftermath came from getting the right information to residents, which was made more difficult by the modern fragmented social media environment.

“Everybody wants information

but they get it from the wrong places,” he said. “I spend half my day on Facebook responding to people and quashing rumors, but your average person isn’t following their county government on Facebook, so it’s hard to get our message out there.

“And you can do an eight-minute interview with the news, and they’ll show the least important 30 seconds.”

Coordinating with nonprofits has been key, but the county is hamstrung in terms of endorsing organizations with which it doesn’t have agreements.

“As a commissioner I can make suggestions on individual nonprofits,” he said.

“It’s important to make sure people donate the things we need — we need food right now, not water — and that they take it to the right place,” he said.

“People were sending donations to the emergency operations center but (first responders) were out saving lives, not receiving donations.”

Williams said it was crucial for elected officials to show empathy while also remaining calm.

“Let citizens know the government cares what they’re going through,” he said. “And know what’s happening on the ground, don’t just rely on what you see on the news.”

He also recommended staying in contact with other levels of government and leveraging relationships with other elected officials to expedite recovery efforts.


“And stay focused on recovery while media moves on,” he said. “You’re in this for the long haul, and there’s no ‘microwavable solution.’”

In the 48 hours after the tornado hit, the county reached about 1 million people via its social media posts with updates about road closures and debris removal, according to Susan Pollard, the county’s communications and media director. County Administrator Joe Casey briefed about 10,000 Facebook users hours after the tornado hit by streaming live updates.

In addition, the county also posted a video of its building inspector discussing safety con-

cerns with damaged buildings.

Several other things that “went right” during the aftermath of the tornadoes included having mental health therapists available, quickly dispatching debris crews who were standing by and partnering with nonprofits.

“They tend to become the eyes and ears in the community to help set up recovery teams for residents with unmet needs,” said Emily Dillon, emergency management coordinator. 

OBITUARY

Former NACo IT Committee chairman Gaiter dies

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

Connections mattered to Lew Gaiter III.

Whether it was forming a bond with nearly every person he engaged or hooking Larimer County, Colo. up to broadband internet, he wanted to find a way to connect and exchange ideas.

Gaiter died at 58 years old Sept. 18 after a decade-long battle with multiple myeloma. He spent the last eight years as a Larimer County commissioner.

"What I remember most were the relentless efforts he would make to make connections with people, engage everyone in discussions," said Chip Taylor, executive director of Colorado Counties, Inc. "It was a product of who he was — someone who always tried to connect. It made him effective as a Larimer County commissioner, it made him effective as a member of CCI, and it was part of what made him effective with NACo."

"He was eternally optimistic about the ability of people to come together and work things out."

Nearly all of his career in government included service to NACo: on the Community and Economic Development, and Telecommunications and Technology steering committees. He also served as chairman of the Information Technology Standing Committee from 2016–2018. He served as CCI president 2017–2018.

After a career in software engineering, Gaiter considered



Larimer County, Colo. Commissioner Lew Gaiter III Photo courtesy of The Coloradoan

running for the Larimer County Board of Supervisors in the 2000s. He was appointed to the Board in 2010 and then won elections that year and in 2014.

"I really enjoy serving people, period," he in a 2010 interview. "The (chance) to give back to the county that's been pretty good to me over the years has been a fun opportunity."

Gaiter was renowned for his in-depth conversations and discussions, and credited his parents with encouraging him to be open and thoughtful.

"If you really believe in something, you won't be opposed to differing points of view, they'll just help you develop that belief," he said. "I've found over my adult life that I really enjoy talking with people who actually disagree with me and I learn a lot about what's going on. I try to listen open minded and I've changed my views in a lot of

"He was eternally optimistic about the ability of people to come together and work things out."

— Chip Taylor

things. My core values haven't changed but they've solidified."

Cooke County, Texas Judge Jason Brinkley saw that when the two served together on the NACo Telecommunications and Technology Committee.

"Lew and I didn't always see eye to eye on how to get where we wanted, but we had the same end goals," he said. "We agreed on the outcome but would debate the issues and the path to get there in committee, then be able to go to lunch together and pick right back up."

Brinkley said Gaiter's technology career made him a natu-

ral fit for his NACo committees, and he was passionate about broadband access in rural areas, net neutrality and FirstNet.

"He was one of the most kind and diplomatic people I've met," Brinkley said.

As a Larimer County commissioner, he pushed for the creation of the county's department of economic development and office of emergency management, was instrumental in the development of the county's Innovation Awards program and advocated for a five-year strategic plan process.

His record as a commissioner formed the basis of his platform when he ran for the Republican nomination for governor in 2017.

"Gaiter rarely mentioned problems facing the state while speaking with a Coloradoan reporter," *The Coloradoan* noted in December 2017. "Instead, he

touted his accomplishments as a commissioner, from analyzing and streamlining employee processes to implementing internal innovation awards to reward workers for improving customer service. In his words, he doesn't campaign on issues as much as solutions."


Taylor said Gaiter's run was a great boon for the state's counties because his credibility forced his opponents to focus on local governments.

"One candidate made it a point to visit all 64 counties and seek endorsements from commissioners," Taylor said. "Lew had the cache on local issues that forced them into the race. They recognized his credibility."

Gaiter was the father of nine, an active ski patrol volunteer and a rabid Denver Broncos fan.

CCI President Dave Paul, a Teller County commissioner, called Gaiter a man of strong faith who valued his family, his friends and his community, giving limitless attention to improving the lives of those around him.

Even when he wasn't feeling his best, he never complained and consistently delivered sound judgement and advice to those he worked with at CCI.

"When I was privileged to see Lew a few weeks ago, surrounded by family and friends, he expressed some regret that he wasn't feeling up to making it to the stadium one more time, to support his beloved Broncos," Paul said. "When I saw the pictures of him at the game I couldn't help but smile." 

GET TO KNOW...

Fayette County, Ohio.



Welcome, Fayette County, Ohio

Fayette County was founded in 1810 and named for the Marquis de Lafayette, a French officer in the American Army during the Revolutionary War.

Visitors can hike the Tri-County Triangle Trail, connecting Ross, Fayette and Highland counties via abandoned railroad corridors that have been converted to recreational trails. **Home to Midland Acres, a Standardbred horse farm**, Fayette County has the largest number of horses of any county in Ohio. During a typical breeding season, hundreds of mares are delivered to the farm from across the country.



Counties protest FCC action on local control

From 5G ORDER page 1

fees and attachment fees.

"The FCC's impractical actions will significantly impede local governments' ability to serve as trustees of public property, safety and well-being," NACo said after the vote in a joint statement with the National League of Cities. "The decision will transfer significant local public resources to private companies, without securing any guarantee of public benefit in return."

FCC Chairman Ajit Pai held little sympathy for the local government position. "There are some local governments that don't like this order," Pai said. "They would like to continue extracting as much money as possible in fees from the private sector and forcing companies to navigate a maze of unnecessary hurdles to deploy wireless infrastructure."

But fellow FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel, the lone Democrat on the panel, blasted her fellow commissioners, noting that "instead of working with our state and local partners to speed the way to 5G deployment, we cut them out."

"We told them that going forward, Washington will make choices for them about which fees are permissible and which are not," she said. "About what aesthetic choices are viable and which are not, with complete disregard for the fact that these infrastructure decisions do not work the same in New York, New York and New York, Iowa."

Proponents of the rule say it will help bring broadband to underserved areas. But Rosenworcel pointed out that "you will not find a single commitment made to providing more service in remote communities...not one wireless carrier has said this action will result in a change in its capital expenditures in rural areas."

The order, she noted, has the power to undermine agreements already in play in local governments across the country.

"Every major state and municipal organization has expressed

concern about how Washington is seeking to assert national control over local infrastructure choices and in the process stripping local elected officials and citizens they represent of a voice," Rosenworcel said.

Counties strongly protested the action in letters to the federal agency. In its 57-page letter to the FCC explaining why it opposes the rule, Howard County, Md. shows photos of how dangerous siting telecom equipment can be. In the letter, the county also documented 20-pages of legislation that it had already hammered out with local utility providers. "Howard County Government is proud

on local governments to prevent harm to the historic preservation, environmental and safety interests of the county."

Elbert Bennett of the Kentucky Association of Counties, said: "Expediting the review process to a time period that does not allow for thoughtful discussion and review limits local control and should be reconsidered. The proposed order would significantly narrow the amount of time for local governments to evaluate 5G employment applications from communication providers — effectively hindering our ability to fulfill public health and safety responsibilities..."



5G equipment installed above power lines. Photo by Denny Gainer

of the cooperative partnerships with our local cable, gas, electric and telecommunications providers," said Allan Kittleman, county executive and Mary Kay Sigaty, chairwoman, Howard County Council.

Howard County officials said they object to "any rules that usurp local authority to manage the public rights-of-way, including rules that would preempt localized decisions as to the location of small cell infrastructure and aesthetic concerns."

Many other county officials also weighed in including:

Andrew Do, chairman of the Orange County, Calif. Board of Supervisors said: "The proposal designates any preexisting structure — regardless of its design or suitability for attaching wireless equipment — as eligible for a new expedited 60-day shot clock. When paired with the commission's previous decision exempting small wireless facilities from federal historic and environmental review, this places an unreasonable burden

Paul Farrow, Waukesha County, Wis.: "...local government should be able to recoup any financial impact to our local taxpayers due to the deployment of 5G. If the FCC places an arbitrary cap on these fees, you are potentially creating a situation where you are mandating local government subsidize the telecommunications industry."

Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), an association of 35 rural California counties representing 3.7 million residents living in 55 percent of the state's land mass, said: "RCRC supports policies that close the digital divide and provide quality broadband access to all California residents. Regrettably, we must oppose this effort to restrict local authority and stymie local innovation, while not increasing broadband access to the most underserved populations." **CN**

See a 100-page fact sheet and copy of the FCC order here: <https://bit.ly/2Nyop0g>

DHS proposes 'public charge' test

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has proposed a new regulation that would redefine how the government determines whether an individual applying for immigration status meets the definition of a "public charge," defined as a person who relies on public assistance.

The draft rule would allow federal immigration authorities to reject an application for admission to the United States if the officer determines the individual is unlikely to earn enough to support their family. It would also allow authorities to deny permanent legal residency or visa extensions to immigrants already in the country if they or their dependents have used a wide range of public benefits.

Under current policy, an individual is deemed to be a public charge if he or she accesses government benefits that provide cash assistance such as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or receive government-funded long-term institutional health care.

The proposed rule would broaden the scope of programs considered when evaluating the public charge designation to include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps), Medicaid or Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program and other housing benefits.

If enacted, the regulation is likely to impact predominantly legal immigrants and families, since undocumented immigrants cannot access most federal benefits, while certain immigrant populations such as refugees, asylees and survivors of domestic violence would not be subject to public charge determinations and would not be affected by the proposed rule.

In addition to expanding the types of benefit programs that

would trigger a public charge determination, the administration's proposed rule would expand immigration authorities' ability to conduct extensive research on an immigrant's history and economic prospects.

Counties could be affected by this proposed rule in multiple ways. First, many counties administer federal programs, and this rule could impose new tracking and reporting requirements for local offices. Additionally, the rule could compel counties to inquire about an individual's immigration status when they apply for benefits, even though immigration status remains a federal issue.

Counties are also concerned that discouraging individuals from seeking health care benefits such as Medicaid may increase the risk of public disease outbreaks or burden already fiscally-fragile public hospitals or health care facilities with uncompensated care.

Furthermore, if the contemplated changes to the public charge definition result in fewer individuals accessing federal benefits such as SNAP and Section 8 housing vouchers, county governments would face increased costs assisting these individuals and their families, effectively resulting in a cost-shift from the federal government to local governments.

The administration is expected to submit the proposed rule for publication in the Federal Register in the coming weeks. Once the rule is published, the public will be able to submit comments for a 60-day period, including weighing in on whether certain programs, such as the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), should be included under the new rule. After DHS considers these comments, the agency will issue a final rule. **CN**

See the proposed regulation here: <https://bit.ly/2pwyRbe>

Focus on employees during National Cybersecurity Awareness Month

By Alan Shark, Ph.D.

National Cybersecurity Awareness Month (NCSAM) — celebrated every October — was created as a collaborative effort between government and industry to ensure that every American has the resources they need to stay safer and more secure online.

NACo along with the Public Technology Institute (PTI) are members and sponsors of the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC), a nonprofit funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). MS-ISAC and its newest sibling Elections Infrastructure — ISAC — provide a host of free services to counties that are aimed at protecting local government infrastructure.

While we can rest assured (at least many of us can) that trained professionals are at work 24/7 protecting our county's digital infrastructure, the message for this campaign is all about increasing county employee awareness as cybersecurity is clearly an all-hands effort.

PTI's latest survey reveals that 64 percent of local governments provide cybersecurity awareness training for workers and contractors with 63 percent claiming to have created an information security culture. While this is an improvement over previous years much more needs to be done at a time when cyberattacks are very much on the rise.

Personal responsibility is of upmost importance when it comes to protecting a county's infrastructure. The "bad guys" are always looking for weaknesses and vulnerabilities. Here are seven simple things a county can do and should be a core component in any cyber-awareness plan:

1. Passwords still matter. Using different passwords that contain and include at least eight characters with numbers and symbols. Try and come with a formula where you can re-

member them too. For example, you may use an old address as a starter or transpose a letter for a number or symbol. Passwords should not begin with a capital letter, and underscore is a good way to separate a bunch of numbers.

2. Use multiple passwords. By using multiple passwords for different accounts, you spread the risk of having one breach expose you to everywhere you have a login account. Too many passwords to remember? Consider using a "password manager" like LastPass or Dashlane. Most offer free versions that one can try out. While these systems require a complex master password, password managers do the rest. You can elect to have them assign complex random passwords and most have an autofill feature that fills in the necessary fields automatically. Another advantage is most password managers remember and recall passwords and payment information across your devices if you so choose. This includes PC, laptops, and all your mobile devices.

3. Think before you click. Ransomware and phishing attacks have increased dramatically the past two years. Many of these attacks can be traced to employees clicking and opening attachments. Before you open an attachment are you sure it is from a person or entity they say they are? Do you see suspicious signs like misspellings, using a salutation such as "dear customer" instead of your name, a return URL or address that is different from the senders? For example, if you receive something that appears to be from your bank, is the URL taking you to the bank or is it directing you somewhere else. It's always best not to click on such emails regardless of how real they look. Instead simply go directly to the company's site and see if there is any real issue for you to resolve. Finally, if in

doubt always contact your IT folks as they have ways of checking authenticity without risk to others.

4. Limit address book entries. It is shocking to learn how many professionals use their mobile device address books to store credit card numbers, passwords, family social security numbers and birthdates. As tempting as it is, don't use your mobile device's directory as your personal information database. Most cyber breaches attack your address books and yes, these same rogue software programs are programmed to search for this type of information in addition to all your contacts. Remember, the bad-guys goal is to exploit every bit of information they can and use it to cause further havoc which could lead to identity theft, use passwords to enter systems to obtain further a perhaps more important information.

5. Update your devices. Computer and mobile device manufacturers are routinely updating their operating systems to help improve performance as well as actively addressing known security vulnerabilities. It should go without saying, make sure you not only have the best virus and malware protection, but also system updates in real-time to gain maximum protection.

6. Avoid public Wi-Fi. It is always tempting for on-the-go people to connect every time they see a Wi-Fi hotspot. There are plentiful offerings at airports, trains, coffee shops, hotels, and conferences. Unfortunately, public Wi-Fi (free or not) can easily be exploited by the bad-guys who can "see" what you are logging into with not much effort and be able grab your passwords. Never conduct business in public places offering Wi-Fi that requires passwords, which

PROFILES IN SERVICE

ROBERT POST

Board Member
Commissioner
Banner County, Neb.



POST

Number of years involved in NACo: 5

Years in public service:

38 years — 1980-2018 as a volunteer fire and EMS worker; 1995-2008 as fire chief; 2010-2018 as a commissioner

Occupation: Retired electrical contractor; farm and ranch operator

Education: Trade school

The hardest thing I've ever done is:

Shave my wife's head as her hair was falling out from chemo treatments.

Two other people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner are:

My father-in-law, my great grandfather Post, who nine generations back migrated to America in 1634.

A dream I have is to: Have our grandkids enjoy our ranch and live in a free America.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Fear heights.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done was:

Climb a 150-foot radio tower with the antenna and wire over my shoulder for a new fire department radio system.

My favorite way to relax is to:

Take my wife for a mule ride in our hills — Kawasaki Mule that is.

I'm most proud of: My family.

Every morning I read: The Bible.

My favorite meal is: Pizza.

My pet peeve is: The phrase "I can't."

My motto is: Anything worth doing is worth doing right.

The last book I read was:

A History of the Boundaries of Nebraska and Indian Surveyor Stories by Rollin C. Curd.

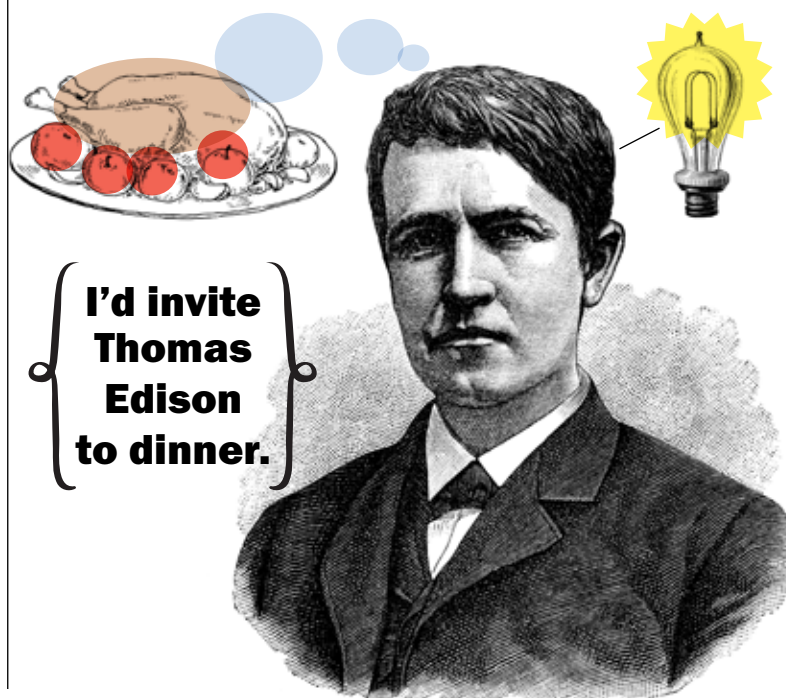
My favorite movie is: *Lonesome Dove*.

My favorite music is: Old country and bluegrass.

My favorite U.S. president is: Abraham Lincoln.

My county is a member of NACo because:

We see the value of a larger voice speaking for us and the power of that. The recent efforts on PILT show just how strong NACo is.



See CYBER page 8

Trump signs first round of FY2019 spending bills

President Trump signed into law Sept. 21 a bipartisan mini-bus spending package consisting of three FY2019 spending bills: the Energy-Water, Military Construction-Veterans Affairs and Legislative Branch appropriation bills. The president's signature completes three of 12 spending bills that need to be signed into law for FY2019.

Following are highlights from the bills of interest to counties:

Energy and Water Appropriations bills

The Energy and Water portion of the bill funds the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers civil works program, U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Reclamation and several other federal government agencies at a total cost of \$44.64 billion for FY2019.

The Energy and Water Ap-

propriations bill is important to counties because it funds federal energy, water and flooding-related infrastructure projects in local communities.

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE): The bill contains \$35.7 billion for DOE, \$4.9 billion above FY2018 levels. DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) will see its budget increased by \$57 million to \$2.4 billion. EERE works to develop and promote clean, affordable and secure energy.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) civil works program: The Army Corps will see its budget increased by \$172 million to \$7 billion. The Army Corps is charged with building, maintaining and operating coastal and inland waterways, addressing flooding risk and strengthening ecosystem restoration

through their civil works program.

Specific programs of importance to counties include the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, which will receive \$1.55 billion, a \$150 million increase above FY2018 levels and water infrastructure projects funded at \$2 billion to be allocated toward flood and storm damage reduction activities.

U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Reclamation: The legislation includes \$134 million for water storage projects authorized in the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WINN) Act, which is overseen by the Bureau of Reclamation.

Military Construction-Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill

The Military Construction-Veterans Affairs portion

of the bill provides more than \$86.5 billion in discretionary funding for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), an increase of \$5 billion over FY2018 enacted levels.

This funding, which will help ensure the nation's veterans receive the quality health care services they have earned, is broken down as follows:

VA Medical Care: \$72.3 billion is allocated to the VA to provide health care services, about \$5 billion above FY2018 levels. Of this, \$8.6 billion is allocated toward mental health services; \$206 million for suicide prevention outreach; \$400 million for opioid abuse prevention; \$270 million for VA rural health initiatives; and \$7.5 billion for treatment, housing and other services for homeless veterans.

Medical Community Care: \$9 billion is provided to the Medical Community Care pro-

gram, which funds non-VA care provided to veterans, family caregiver programs and other services. Specifically, the family caregiver program will receive \$865 million in FY2019.

Veteran Homelessness: \$1.8 billion will be directed to VA's homeless assistance programs such as the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, which will receive \$380 million.

Veterans Justice Outreach: This program, which provides access to mental health and substance abuse resources and treatment for justice-involved veterans, will receive more than \$54 million.

Congress has until Sept. 30, the end of the fiscal year, to wrap-up the FY2019 annual appropriations process or pass a continuing resolution to keep the government open past that date. **CN**

Prep for disaster with StormReady

By Shanna Williamson

NACo NOAA Fellow

When Hurricane Florence reached the southeast U.S. coast last month, community preparedness arguably offered one of the best lines of defense against the hurricane's impacts.

The National Weather Service (NWS) recognizes the importance of disaster preparedness and through its StormReady community preparedness program, equips local jurisdictions with the safety and communication strategies needed to prepare for, protect against and respond to extreme weather events.

Developed in the late 1990s, the StormReady program seeks to recognize the work emergency managers have done to prepare their local jurisdictions for severe weather.

The NWS site lists requirements for an official StormReady designation which includes:

- Establishing a 24-hour

The StormReady program seeks to recognize the work emergency managers have done to prepare their local jurisdictions for severe weather.

warning point and emergency operations center

- Establishing several methods of communicating severe weather warnings and forecasts to the public
- Creating a system that monitors local weather conditions
- Promoting the importance of public readiness through community seminars
- Developing a formal hazardous weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises.

Prior to receiving a StormReady designation, communi-

ties are provided with guidelines on how to enhance disaster preparedness. StormReady designations can help communities obtain funding for various preparedness activities and foster better citizen engagement in disaster preparedness through public education. As of September 2018, there were 1295 counties and parishes with StormReady designations.

The goals of the NWS StormReady program align well with NACo's Strengthening Coastal Counties Resilience Program, a technical assistance and training program focusing on strengthening coastal counties' resilience.

Both programs seek to help participants better prepare for extreme weather events and climate-related hazards through planning, education and awareness. **CN**

To learn more about The National Weather Service's StormReady program, visit: <https://www.weather.gov/stormready/>

ON THE MOVE

NACo OFFICERS

- NACo President **Greg Cox** participated in the Thomas Reuters Synergy Conference, Sept. 17, in Riverside County, Calif.

NACo STAFF

- **Derrick Scott**, interim accounting manager, has joined the NACo Finance staff as accounting manager. His responsibilities will include general accounting support and heavy grants management. He comes to NACo with substantial experience in monitoring grants for several different organizations. He has previously worked at George Washington University, Catholic Charities, and Zero to Three.
- **Brian Namey**, public affairs director, and **Jonathan Shuffield**, associate legislative director, spoke at the MACo Annual Conference held in Missoula, Mont. Sept. 16-20.
- **Julie Ufner**, associate legislative director, participated in an administration roundtable discussion on water quality held in East Baton Rouge Parish, La. Sept. 17. Ufner and senior administration officials from five federal agencies discussed major impediments to reducing nutrient losses.



Scott

County jails weigh documentary pitches

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

Two inmates at the Gwinnett County, Ga. Jail talked about the weapons and drug charges they were facing. They wondered about how the third man, now in another part of the jail, was reacting to his surroundings.

"I'm not going down for no case. He got to fess up. It's his first...charge," one said.

His friend was quick to remind him, "Don't forget, you're on a mic."

That exchange, and many others, were captured on a recent Netflix series "First and Last," chronicling the beginning and end of inmates' stints in the Gwinnett County Jail. The documentary and others like it wouldn't be possible without cooperation from sheriffs' offices, which must weigh the pros and cons of participation in these projects.

"We wouldn't allow any filming that would interfere with our operations or put the safety and privacy of inmates or the public at risk," said Shannon Volkodav, public information officer for the Gwinnett County Sheriff's Office. "We weigh a number of considerations when granting those requests — how much time it will take, what they'll be asking — the sheriff (Butch Conway) ultimately makes the call."

The crew was in and out in about eight weeks.

Conway and his staff were familiar with the filmmaker after the jail served as the location for "Cellblock 6," which examined the lives of women in the Gwinnett County Jail in 2010.

"Across the board, anytime someone is filming here, whether it's local media or a film crew, we always ensure inmates and workers who don't want to be filmed have their faces blurred. If they do want to participate, they sign waivers," Volkodav said.

The pair talking about their charges? They knew people would be listening; they signed



The Gwinnett County, Ga. Jail, as pictured in "First and Last." Photo courtesy of Netflix

the waivers, given that it would be months between the filming and release, they weren't gaming the system in any way, but their exchanges still offered an inside view to corrections officers who aren't normally privy to conversations among inmates.

"We definitely see a different side because we're not sitting around talking to inmates about their private lives," Volkodav said. "And these filmmakers follow inmates after they leave the jail, so that's more insight than we usually get."

The "First and Last" crew's arrival was a boon to the county and its employees over its eight weeks in town.

"They infused our community with money, they hire local caterers, stay in local hotels, hire local truck drivers, actors... most of those people are from Gwinnett County," Volkodav said. "And the film companies hire our off-duty deputies to provide security on the set, so it gives them a chance to earn extra income."

Allowing the A&E Network show "60 Days In" to film in the Clark County, Ind. jail was an opportunity for Sheriff Jamey Noel to learn the ins and outs of the jail for which he had recently taken custody. He took the network's initial pitch for the show and helped revise it for greater impact.

"They wanted to send an undercover state trooper into jail for a weekend and do a series about first-timers," Noel said. "That would have just given us a police officer's perspective on what's going on and not help us get into the mindset of what it would take to discourage people from winding up in jail."

Noel worked with the show's producers to come up with the ultimate concept: seven civilians going undercover as inmates for 60 days. Noel kept the program a secret from all but a few jail personnel, and within a few months, two seasons were filmed. The next two seasons were filmed in Fulton County, Ga.

Ultimately, both jails allowed filming because it gave the public a chance to see how things work in jail, with hopes that what they saw would help deter the kind of criminal activity that would cause someone to wind up locked up.

"We're proud of our jail facility — it's very clean, orderly and secure," Volkodav said. "It's a great way to highlight the good work we do here every day."

Noel was just months into his administration of the jail when filming for "60 Days In" began, so he was still learning the ropes, but if the camera seemed to add 10 pounds of contraband, he appreciated the learning experience.

"There's a lot of exposure," he said. "It was a little scary because nine times out of 10, the camera would catch something wrong before it ever came to my knowledge."

Noel's only editing rights involved threats to jail security, like exit codes for doors.

"It was a good tool for me to help improve what we were doing, show corrections officers what they were doing, and gain some perspective and feedback from our undercovers after they did their exit interviews."

He did regret, however, that the short break between seasons didn't give him a chance to implement changes after the first set of undercovers came

out.

"I'm sure people watching at home saw things stay the same and think 'they had all of that time to fix things, why didn't they?' Noel said. "We only had a week or two before they filmed the second season."

For Volkodav, watching "Cellblock 6" is like looking into a time capsule. The series featured Capt. Laura Hicks prominently, years before she died of cancer.

"It's really cool to see your coworkers on TV, but it's really special to see glimpses of her," she said. "She's been forever immortalized, and those images will last a lifetime. It's special for those of us who knew her."

Urge staff to report phishing attempts

From CYBER page 6

might include logging into your office or your bank. Consider having your own mobile hotspot offered by all wireless carriers. Even though you are still connecting via Wi-Fi it is far more difficult to snoop and the data is usually encrypted and ultimately converted to more secure cellphone frequencies.

7. Report suspicious attachments and electronic messages. Unlike "yesterday's" policies, county staff should be encouraged to quickly come forward

when something doesn't look right or they clicked on something they realized a moment later they should not have. Early reporting is far better than any shortsighted punishment.

Some policies in the past were punitive and actually discouraged early reporting; today, this needs to be reversed. Encourage and reward for early reporting and state penalties for failure to report in a timely manner.

Alan R. Shark, Ph.D. is NACO's senior technology advisor and executive director of the Public Technology Institute.

BRIGHT IDEAS OAKLAND COUNTY, Mich.

Building Communities from Vacant Lots

PROBLEM:

Vacant land owned by the county was sitting fallow and pulling down property values.

SOLUTION:

Fix up the properties by adding gardens and getting the community involved.

By Mary Ann Barton
senior staff writer

When property specialist Jill Robinson joined the Oakland County, Mich. Treasurer's Office four years ago, her past job experience came in handy.

"In my previous jobs with the Michigan Land Bank and with a local nonprofit, The Greening of Detroit, I was able to see first-hand the benefit of community gardening and getting vacant land into the care of local residents," said Robinson.

She knew there were a lot of gardens throughout the county, but it didn't seem like there was an organization to help them connect with each other, she said.

The Treasurer's Office had an abundance of vacant lots because of foreclosures in the Great Recession.

"I was charged with finding productive uses for the properties that went through tax foreclosure, but were not purchased at a land auction," she said.

A program called Growing Pontiac was born. "We wanted to start a program that was partnership-based — where properties could start being utilized by people for good," she said.

The local Missionary Baptist Church had successfully started a few gardens in the county, so "we started meeting in their building, then gradually we began meeting other places," she said.

Eventually a benefactor and friend from an organization in Detroit called Recovery Park paid for strategic planning in 2016, which allowed the new



Oakland County, Mich. residents attend a "How to Grow a Spring Garden" class as part of the Growing Pontiac program, which turns vacant lots into gardens. Photo courtesy of Oakland County

program, a public-private partnership, to set goals, begin structuring the organization and set up a leadership team.

Typically, the county sells properties to neighbors or residents, or local community groups.

Many of them say they are going to plant a garden — which may be community-based — but are often for personal use, Robinson said.

The county provides information on how to get involved with Growing Pontiac.

There have been approximately 15 organizations and multiple individuals that have

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started community gardens.

"One of them has purchased 60-plus vacant lots and cleaned up an entire neighborhood," Robinson said, "using the lots as various teaching areas for native species, mushrooms, berries, orchards and chickens!"

Under the county program, the county holds classes such

as Garden Planning, Fermentation, Friends of Chickens, Compost 101 and What's That Weed? "We also have 'friend events' at local restaurants so we can meet other like-minded people and continue connecting the community," Robinson said.

Meanwhile, the county is just getting started on a Growing Pontiac Garden & Teaching Space dubbed Paddock Farm.

It's about 2 acres and the county plans to have raised beds, rainwater collection and phytoremediation.

People also get involved in the program via social media and word of mouth.

"We all speak about Growing Pontiac at neighborhood meetings or anytime we run into people," Robinson said.

Non-profit housing partners OLHSA, Habitat for Humanity and other housing groups also help out and spread the word about the program.

"We believe that gardens can help stabilize a block," Robinson said. "When it's obvious that someone is caring for a vacant lot, there is pride in the neighborhood."


The program also relies on donations from individuals and businesses including Home Depot and Lowes for seeds and a local garden store for classroom space.

"It's been a great effort in relationship-building," Robinson said.

One partner garden donates a majority of its produce to a fresh food store, pop-up markets and to area nursing homes.

Robinson advises other counties considering a similar program to "start with a vision and be flexible," she said. "Each community is different. Some people have a lot of gardening experience, some have none."

"Overall, people want to connect with each other, so get out into the community and talk," she said.

"Everyone is a potential teacher. Talk to people about what they like to do and you'll figure out some really interesting topics for classes." 

"Growing Pontiac" is the recipient of the 2018 NACo Achievement Award in the Community and Economic Development category. For more information, contact Robinson at robinsonj@oakgov.com. Does your county have an innovative program that improves county government and enhances services for county residents? Apply for the 2019 Achievement Awards! To begin your application visit: www.naco.org/achievementawards.

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES COUNTY has launched a program, L.A. Found, to help locate **missing people** with autism, Alzheimer's disease or dementia who could wander off, the *Los Angeles Times* reported. Family members and caretakers can apply for a bracelet that can be tracked through radio frequency by sheriff's deputies. Once approved, they can purchase a bracelet at a cost of \$325 from Project Lifesaver, a nonprofit that works with local governments. The bracelet emits a signal that can be picked up within a mile on the ground and within two to five miles from a helicopter.



COLORADO

The **ARAPAHOE COUNTY** sheriff recently warned residents of a scam involving **fake parking tickets**, FOX-TV recently reported. A resident contacted the sheriff's office after noticing that the name of a local city was misspelled on the ticket. "While this does not appear to be a direct attempt to defraud someone financially, we do take the production of fraudulent tickets seriously and are actively investigating this case," the sheriff's office said.

FLORIDA

- **MANATEE COUNTY** has created a website so residents

can check **local traffic** on live feeds from 200 cameras set up on local roads, the *Bradenton Herald* reported. Residents can check it out by clicking on a blue camera icon on a map. A team at the county's Traffic Management Center reports any traffic issues they discover.

Users can also search the map using a bar at the top of the map if they're looking for a specific road. The Florida Department of Transportation funded the Smart Traffic website with a \$300,000 grant, which covered the full cost of the project. Capillo said his team was also able to negotiate a free year of site maintenance. The free service officially launched with a demo during Tuesday's Board of County Commissioners meeting.

- Is your county in need of

teachers this school year?

You might want to learn a thing or two from **DUVAL COUNTY**, where they are offering a program that allows people without teaching certification to potentially become an elementary school teacher. The "Ready, Set, Teach!" program helps prepare interested candidates for the Florida Teacher Certification Exam. Passing the exam makes a candidate eligible for hire at any county public school. The county then helps candidates obtain professional certification within three years.

GEORGIA

Residents and businesses in **COBB COUNTY** can register with county police if they have a video surveillance system that could be used to help **fight crime**. The program is not intended for active surveillance; police use the video to help apprehend suspects in a crime. The program appears to be working: A suspect was apprehended in a string of armed robberies with the help of a private surveillance system.



MINNESOTA

DAKOTA COUNTY is participating in an effort to stem the **decline of the monarch butterfly** population. The county parks department raised wild-caught monarch caterpillars and released the adult butterflies to collect data on migration.

Over the summer, 51 monarchs were released from the park's indoor rearing operation, the *Dakota County Tribune* reported. Once the butterflies are ready to fly, staff place a small sticker with a unique number on the outside of their hind wing.

To date, more than 1.5 million butterflies have been tagged with more than 13,000 recovered.

NEVADA

Voters in **CLARK COUNTY** cities will have their **choice of polling places**, after the Board of Commissioners open cross-jurisdictional voter centers in the cities of Las Vegas, Henderson, North Las Vegas and Boulder City. Voters can cast their ballots in voting centers in any of those cities, the *Las Vegas Review Journal* reported.

NEW YORK

The **ONEIDA-HERKIMER** Solid Waste Authority is planning to **recycle food waste** into energy, which could account for nearly 14 percent of the 169,000 tons of municipal solid waste accepted to the landfill annually. Construction will begin in October on a 4,550-square-foot addition to one of the authority's buildings.

The agency is offering a tipping fee of \$20 less per ton of food scraps than the current \$62 rate to restaurants, colleges, health facilities and other large food waste generators. The Food2Energy project will cost \$3.4 million and have equipment that separates scraps



MICHIGAN

What's 100 feet long, 11 feet wide and nearly 6 feet tall? **MACOMB COUNTY** Public Works Office employees are calling it "the fatberg," a collection of oils, grease, fats and paper towels found in a **county sewage line**, the *Detroit Free Press* reported. The county is putting parts of "the fatberg" on display to warn residents not to throw grease and similar items down the drain. A similar-sized clog was found in Baltimore and the University of Michigan experienced a similar situation earlier this year.



WISCONSIN

A red panda peers out from under a towel at the **MILWAUKEE COUNTY** Zoo Sept. 13. Named “Lily” for the veterinarian resident who discovered her on ultrasound, she was the **first red panda to be born at the zoo**. The panda was born June 6 to “Dr. Erin Curry,” a 3-year-old mother from the Cincinnati Zoo, and father Dash, a 6-year-old from a zoo in Quebec, Canada. The cubs are blind for the first 21 to 31 days following birth; red panda mothers keep their babies hidden in nests for the first two to three months before teaching them how to climb and hunt. Photo courtesy of Milwaukee County Zoo

the HR DOCTOR

With Phil Rosenberg

Phil Rosenberg

The recently published HR Doctor column recounted family adventures during one of our four South African safaris. It focused on our interaction and study of Zulu culture and history. It was titled “The Warrior Inside Each of Us.” The theme was the value of reflecting on the fact that no matter how much pressure we may feel, how sad we may feel or how difficult our lives may be, inside each of us is the spirit of the Zulu warrior. That warrior ethos creates strategies to overcome even the most horrific and difficult circumstances. The warrior will act to implement that strategy boldly and with compelling urgency. Being part of the Zulu warrior tradition also means celebrating victories and caring for your colleagues.

There is, however, another kind of “warrior” who affects all of us. This American version of the Zulu warrior can also change an individual’s life while helping overcome serious difficulties. This kind of warrior can also convey lessons to our children and grandchildren. This kind of warrior also cares about neighbors, colleagues at work and people in other parts of the world.

This is the spirit of “citizen-warrior.” When civic engagement and virtue declines, when civil discourse gives way to shouting and vitriol and gossip, one of the first and perhaps the most serious casualties is our sense of community and security. It is easy to look back to the great ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome to see a common lesson. This is a lesson we are failing to hear and to support apparently. It is also a lesson we must do better at honoring and acting on.

If we choose not to care and

The Citizen-Warrior Inside Each of Us



respond to the problem of declining civic education and engagement, we will witness in the United States the same kind of decline as a nation and as individuals that the two forerunner societies mentioned also witnessed.


America will not be the same place that we love and respect as it might have been when we were younger and more idealistic. It will not have the same place of honor and success in the world that it once had. It will no longer be supremely powerful and influential in a positive sense the way it has traditionally been.

Does anyone reading this want that to happen? Does a government leader want to see the trends of decay go unchallenged? Does anyone involved in public service want to see a nation whose people don’t seem able to hear and respect one another’s views or find compromise for the greater good? Finally, does anyone reading this want to see a political entity caring or seeming to care more about automatic loyalty to an individual over loyalty to the nation?

Being a citizen-warrior and understanding what that means can make a huge difference not only for us individually but for our community and our country. A citizen-warrior, in my conception at least, has nothing to do with owning multiple weapons or stockpiling survival gear. It means very simply that we ensure that our schools share wisdom with young people about

the history and philosophies that made America great. It means what we remembered and think long, and hard, and often about the way we govern our communities and live our lives. It means not walking by things that are wrong at work like sexual harassment, racism and bullying, or other forms of improper, if not also, illegal conduct. Instead, it means taking steps to deal with those civil “evils” in constructive but powerful ways.

Being a citizen-warrior means letting our sense of charity — the better angels of our being — overcome our sense of selfishness. “Interrupting” something unfortunate or just plain wrong happening to someone else without speaking up and acting up to prevent the behavior from continuing also helps identify a citizen-warrior.

The spirit of the citizen-warrior resides in all of us, though we personally may feel sometimes that we are not brave enough or smart enough to let it rise to the surface. It is worth very serious thought indeed to bring that spirit to the fore for the sake of our own selves, our families, our nation and our world. Aren’t these aspects of citizen-warriorship really another form of the fundamental imperative of every great religion: Do unto others...? Doesn’t every governmental leader, certainly those closest to the concerns and hopes of all people, have a special duty to adopt the citizen-warrior ethos? 

from wrappers, packaging and utensils. The food would be turned into a “slurry,” the *Observer-Dispatch* reported, which would be fed into Oneida County’s adjacent anaerobic digester to transform again into biogas.

OHIO

Unpaid **child support** could add up to felony charges, but **MEDINA COUNTY**’s Back on Track program is trying to cut down on that and boost payments. If a parent doesn’t pay for a quarter of the time — 26 out of 104 weeks — they’ll be charged with non-support, but partners in the county job and family services department, sheriff’s department and prosecutor’s office will call a meeting to create a payment plan for parents, with job assistance if the parent isn’t employed, News 5 Cleveland reported. From October 2017 to June 2018, support payments have increased by \$730,000 over the previous year.

VIRGINIA

• A surge in inmates due to the opioid crisis is prompting **HENRICO COUNTY** to consider building an **additional jail facility**. The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* reports that county officials are eyeing a

facility that could house between 200 and 250 inmates serving alternative sentencing arrangements. During construction, the county could house inmates recovering from opioid addiction in a temporary facility.

• **STAFFORD COUNTY** is trying to relax a county ordinance that effectively blocked a Muslim **cemetery**. The county has required cemeteries and private wells to be more than 900 feet apart, but the Board of Supervisors is considering an exemption if soil evaluations found “no reasonable likelihood” that a proposed cemetery would contaminate nearby wells or may do away with the ordinance altogether, the *Free Lance Star* reported.

The U.S. Department of Justice announced in April it was launching an investigation into how the county’s zoning law treats religious uses after the All Muslim Association of America learned the ordinance would prohibit the organization’s planned cemetery.

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

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QUESTIONS?

Contact awards@naco.org



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IMPORTANT DATES:

- SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE:
MARCH 25, 2019 AT 11:59 P.M. EDT
- NOTIFICATIONS OF ACHIEVEMENT
AWARDS: **WEEK OF APRIL 22, 2019**
- NACo ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND
EXPOSITION: **JULY 11 – 15, 2019**
CLARK COUNTY/LAS VEGAS, NEVADA