



The driverless shuttles that Contra Costa County, Calif. will soon test have no steering wheels, controls or pedals. Photo courtesy of EasyMile

## Congress averts shutdown

By Austin Igleheart  
legislative assistant

President Obama signed a short-term spending measure, Sept. 29, that will keep the federal government working a little bit longer — at least through Dec. 9 — giving Congress 10 more weeks to pass a full funding budget for FY17.

The interim package includes several items important to counties, such as \$1.1 billion in funding to combat the Zika virus and \$7 million to help jumpstart implementation of the Comprehensive Opioid Addiction and Recovery Act. The bill also includes \$500 million in flood relief to areas in Louisiana, West Virginia and Maryland, as well as full FY17 appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs and military construction projects.

The measure's passage comes after months of impasse over FY17 appropriations as congressional leaders wrestled over numerous provisions, particularly over funding for the Flint, Mich. drinking water emergency and language that would have prevented Zika funds from going to Planned Parenthood affiliates.

Particularly important for counties, who are often on the front lines in responding to public health emergencies, the package provides \$1.1 billion in emergency

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By **Charlie Ban**  
senior staff writer

The view from the windshields of autonomous cars got a little clearer in late September, with guidance from the Department of Transportation and the

advent of a county's pilot project using a driverless shuttle.

The Sept. 20 release of the Federal Automated Vehicles Policy was geared mainly toward manufacturers, but it included sample state policy language for legislatures to con-

sider — including details about testing, deploying, licensing and operating autonomous vehicles.

"Counties will rely on that kind of language in understanding the issues surrounding autonomous vehicles," said

Daniel McGehee, director of the human factors and vehicle safety research division at the University of Iowa's Public Policy Center. "There are only a few states that have passed any

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## Concerns over election hacking misplaced but it's not impossible

By **Charles Taylor**  
senior staff writer

County election officials and voting technology experts say the likelihood of the November elections being hacked in a way that affects the outcome is small.

Even if systems are breached, several election administrators told *County News* they're confident that the decentralized nature of U.S. elections will offer protection from intruders

bent on manipulating or stealing data.

Andrew Appel, a Princeton University computer science professor, also believes that decentralization provides protection. But in testimony before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Information Technology Sept. 28, he said election equipment can be hacked. He should know. He has successfully hacked into voting machines to prove that point.

He called on Congress to "eliminate" touchscreen voting machines "immediately after the November election." Those direct-recording electronic (DRE) machines leave no paper trail, and hence, whatever vote totals they report, there's no paper record to back it up.

About 10 states use paperless touchscreen voting equipment, Appel said in an interview. Among them are several



# Several counties have requested Homeland Security cyber scans

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of the so-called battleground states for the presidential election — including all or parts of Pennsylvania, Florida and Virginia.

“I think this is a serious problem, and the obvious way to fix it is to have those 10 states do what the rest of the states have already done, which is move to paper ballots,” Appel said.

Even for the 40 states that use optical-scan machines with paper ballots, he said, “We can’t 100 percent prevent the computer from being hacked. But that very paper ballot marked by the voter drops into a sealed ballot box under the ‘opscan’ machine.

That’s the ballot of record, and it can be recounted by hand, in a way we can trust.”

In the wake of last month’s disclosure that voter registration data in Arizona and Illinois had been targeted, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Jeh Johnson offered his department’s help to state and local election officials seeking to protect their systems from cyber-attacks. As of Sept. 30, four counties had requested cyber-hygiene scans, said DHS spokesman Victor de Leon.

In a resolution passed Sept. 12, Shelby County, Tenn. commissioners asked DHS to designate “state and local election systems as part of the nation’s

‘critical infrastructure.’” Its cosponsors, Commissioners Steve Basar and Van Turner, could not be reached for comment. But Turner told *The Commercial Appeal* newspaper, “States and local jurisdictions are supporting the whole notion that we need to protect the voting franchise from hackers.”

There are more than 9,000 election jurisdictions in the United States, according to Merle King, executive director of the Center for Election Systems at Kennesaw State University in Georgia. He said that while registration databases have been accessed by hackers, the possibility of voting machines’ being compromised is “highly improbable” because, by and large, they are never connected to the internet. “They have multiple internal and external verification procedures to ensure that all of the votes that are cast by the voters and tabulated by the systems are validated,” he said.

“That doesn’t mean there aren’t threats, and things go wrong in every election, so it doesn’t mean that we’re not concerned about things that can go wrong with the voting system,” he added.

Of greater concern to several election supervisors who were interviewed is that talk of cyber-intrusions and possibly “rigged” elections can undermine the voting public’s trust is the electoral process. Ion Sancho, supervisor of elections for Leon County, Fla., said that malicious intent might not be a hacker’s motivation. “There doesn’t need to be any nefarious reason other than to call into question the credibility of the American process of elec-

tions,” he said.

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump is recruiting poll watchers to monitor the November elections. That bothers Grant Veeder, Black Hawk County, Iowa’s auditor and elections chief. “One thing I don’t like hearing about is candidates encouraging people to take it upon themselves to make sure there isn’t voter fraud at the polling places,” he said. “We have our own safeguards for that, and we have laws about what individuals are allowed at the polling place.”

He said if unauthorized election watchers broke the law or caused a disruption, precinct workers are “empowered” to call police to have them removed. He recalled only one such incident in the 35 years he’s been running elections.

With Election Day now about a month away, elections officials are emphasizing voting security and integrity.

Sancho and King point to the logic and accuracy testing of voting machines and ballots weeks prior to elections, a process that the public can observe. However, Appel said, “L and A” testing cannot detect fraudulent, vote-stealing computer software. “The reason is that the fraudulent software knows whether the machine is in L and A mode or election mode, and it won’t cheat during testing mode.” However, he said the testing can detect “misprogrammed” ballots, such as those with misspelled or misplaced candidates’ names, or the wrong party affiliation, for example.

Appel said one “best practice” that many states have adopted to show transparency in

elections is to allow precinct totals to be publicly announced to all witnesses present at each polling place, after voting has ended. “Those witnesses can take the numbers back with them to their candidate’s victory party and add them up from all the precincts themselves, and compare with the list of precincts as published by the county election administrators.”

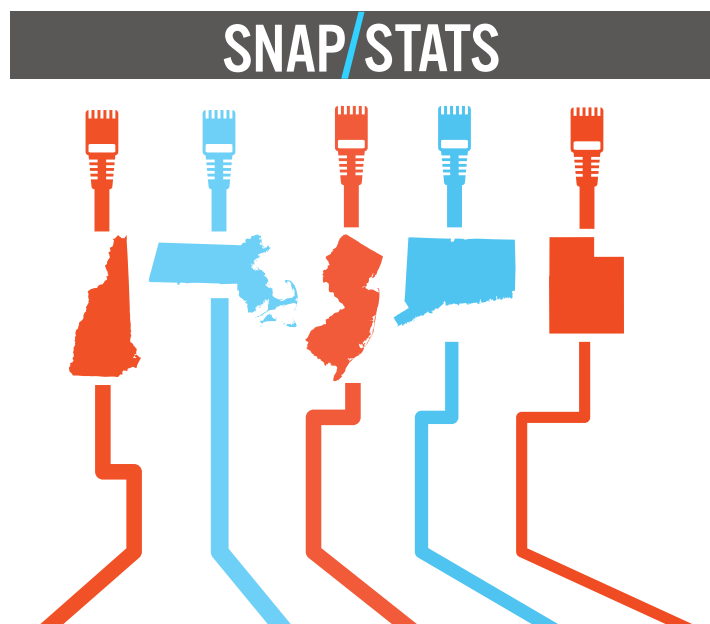
King has worked with the major associations of U.S. election officials: the National Association of County Recorders, Election Officials and Clerks (NACREC) and the International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers (IACREOT), which recently merged into a single association.

One of the things he’s stressed to them is continuity planning — for when the unexpected happens or things go wrong. What back-up systems are in place for voting machine failures, flooded polling places or power outages? In 2012, Superstorm Sandy hit just weeks before the presidential election, and its effects lingered for months.

Perhaps no one knows the list of things that can go awry better than Stan Stanart, elections director for Harris County, Texas.

In 2010 when he first ran for office, 67 days before the election the county’s warehouse that stored voting machines burned down, he said, destroying 10,000 voting machines. Vendors went into overtime to provide new machines, and some were borrowed from other counties. Elections in the

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## STATES WITH MOST INTERNET ACCESS

State	% Households with Internet Access
New Hampshire	85.7
Massachusetts	85.3
New Jersey	84.5
Connecticut	83.9
Utah	83.8

Source: Computer Ownership and High-Speed Internet Use for Individuals by State: 2013, U.S. Census Bureau

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Mourning the loss  
of Joan Murphy

Dear NACo Friends:

It is with a very heavy heart I must inform you about the loss of our dear friend and colleague, Joan Murphy. She passed away Sunday, Sept. 18.

In addition to being an outstanding County Board member for Cook County, Joan served NACo for more than 14 years on the Transportation Committee. She served as both a vice chair and subcommittee chair, most recently for the Ports Subcommittee.

She was instrumental in the

**She was instrumental in the formation of WON and worked diligently in promoting women to run for office.**

formation of WON (Women of NACo) and worked diligently in promoting women to run for office.

I will always remember Joan on our "karaoke outings," making everyone (especially the new members) of the Transportation Committee feel welcome, and belting out a truly fantastic version of a Patsy Kline song. She was truly a warm and loving person, with a kind heart, and a big supporter of NACo.

Joan was my good friend, and I will miss her very much. I know she meant a lot to many of you, so please keep Joan and her family in your prayers.

Jim Healy  
DuPage County (Ill.) Board  
[james.healy@dupageco.org](mailto:james.healy@dupageco.org)

## Mich. senator explains his cyber bill

By Joe Briggs, chair  
Telecommunications and  
Technology Steering Committee

Over the past decade, county governments across the country have worked hard to increase the number of services provided online, and have also taken steps to increase government transparency by making important records and documents available over the web. While these actions have brought local government in to the 21st century, they have also exposed counties to the



Briggs

serious risk of cyber threats. Since the beginning of my tenure as chairman of NACo's Telecommunications and Technology Steering Committee, our committee members have always highlighted the need for policy makers in Washington to take action to help address cybersecurity at the county level.

As the Department of Homeland Security begins its annual National Cyber Security Awareness Month campaign, I thought it would be a great opportunity to highlight the work of Sens. Gary Peters (D-Mich.) and David Perdue (R-Ga.) who introduced the State and Local Cyber Protection Act of 2016 (S. 2665) in the Senate earlier this year. In a recent interview with *County News*, Sen. Peters shared important insights about the State and Local Cyber Protection Act.

**Q: What would your bill do to support local governments?**

**A:** Our country faces unprecedented risks for cyberattacks and we must take action to combat these threats and protect the sensitive information of Americans. I introduced the State and Local Cyber Protection Act to help ensure that state and local govern-

ments are equipped with the resources and best practices to counter possible cyberattacks. This bill will allow state and local governments to voluntarily request assistance from the Department of Homeland Security to help identify cybersecurity vulnerabilities, determine protections to improve network security, and provide technical and operational training for their employees to give them additional skills to address cybersecurity incidents.

The bill will also authorize DHS to provide state and local government employees with civil liberties and privacy training to ensure that individuals' private information remains secure while employees protect against cybersecurity threats.

**Q: What brought your attention to the issues of cybersecurity at the state and local level?**

**A:** As a member of the Homeland Security Committee and the Senate Cybersecurity Caucus, I am very aware of the growing threat of cyberattacks to our businesses, military and government. Many local government officials have also brought these concerns to my attention. Phil Bertolini, the chief information officer of Oakland County, Mich., a community I have represented for years in several capacities, has been particularly proactive on cybersecurity issues and has been a great resource as I've worked on these issues.

However, this is an issue that concerns all levels of government. Many local governments allow residents to pay fees online, collecting sensitive financial information in the process. Local governments can also acquire personal health information through public health efforts like vaccination campaigns, and may not even be aware they have it. This is the type of information that we know cybercriminals target,



Sen. Gary Peters (D-Mich.)

and I'm concerned that there is too much variation in the levels of data protection across the country. Cyberattacks look for the weakest link, so we need to encourage best practices at all levels of government. Everyone is a potential target, and victim, of cyberattacks whether they realize it or not.

**Q: What are the challenges in getting this legislation passed?**

**A:** Funding is always a challenge. The Department of Homeland Security wants to ensure that it has the funding and staffing necessary to accomplish its mission. While DHS has many critical responsibilities and I'm sensitive to concerns of overburdening the department, I believe that making resources available to state and local governments to improve the cybersecurity of the nation at-large would be a very valuable part of the department's mission to protect our national security.

In a closing, we asked Sen. Peters what county leaders can do to get involved. He said:

I introduced this bipartisan legislation with my Republican colleague Sen. David Perdue from Georgia. This is an issue that impacts leaders on both sides of the aisle and at all levels of government, and I welcome feedback on this legislation and other ideas for improving cybersecurity.

Most importantly, don't assume that your networks are not a target. Take steps to secure your information systems and encourage good "cyber-hygiene," practices such as using strong passwords, recognizing phishing attacks and practicing strong operational security.

In my home state of Michigan, our state government estimates that they are subject to more than 600,000 attempted intrusions into their information systems every day. That is a clear indication that our networks are under siege. As these attacks become increasingly sophisticated, we must ensure that we have the right training and tools to tackle these intrusions at all levels of government. **CN**



# Kidnapping computer's and system's data; latest hacker gig



**By Jerryl Guy**

**information technology manager**

A few years ago, the word ransomware was not in existence. Today, however, the term is becoming quite common in the computing world, as computer users find out about it in very unpleasant ways.

The Department of Homeland Security defines ransomware is a type of malicious software, or malware, designed to block access to a computer system until a ransom is paid. Ransomware is typically spread through phishing emails or by unknowingly visiting an infected website.

This kind of crime is growing very quickly because it is easy and it pays. Like many private individuals, organizations and businesses, counties are finding themselves victimized, and just like other victims, some counties are reluctantly paying the ransoms to free their systems from the disabling crypto-locks applied by the invading ransomware.

On June 9, the Nightly News on NBC4i TV in Cincinnati reported that a Morrow County, Ohio computer being used by a government official fell victim to one of these crimes, rendering the computer unusable. A phone number appeared on the computer screen with instructions to call in in order to restore the computer to usability.

Luckily, the ransom was only \$200, which was quickly paid by the official, and the computer was soon restored to its original

condition.

The FBI, one of the main agencies fighting to stop cybercrimes such as ransomware, recommends that these incidents be reported to them. It, like other law enforcement agencies, strongly advises against paying the ransom since success tends to perpetuate the crimes. Ironically though, law enforcement agencies are not immune from attack and demands for ransom.

On an April 26 NBC News report, Lincoln County, Maine Sheriff Todd Brackett said, "We are cops, we don't pay ransoms," but pay they did, as they found themselves unable to function when their computers were rendered inoperative due to ransomware.

Many other police departments are finding themselves in similar conundrums. Their principles demand these payments not be made, however, their need to have access to their data to effectively protect and serve their counties, compels them to violate those principles and pay the ransoms.

And they're not alone in disregarding their own advice. Other ransomware victims, including counties, find it more expedient and cost effective to simply pay up. The damage to their reputation and the public's trust, plus the cost to restore their systems, overrides any principled stance against the perpetrators. Until that changes, ransomware criminals are likely to continue in their success.

Ralph Johnson, the chief in-

formation security officer for King County, Wash., is a long-time cybersecurity trainer for local technology professionals. He advises that the most effective way to protect one's county from this kind of crime is by being prepared and following basic best practices.

It is very important to keep all systems up to date and have regular reliable backups. Patching — keeping systems software up to date — minimizes vulnerabilities that crypto-malware can exploit, and an effective backup strategy allows the organization to restore files in the event that an organization is impacted in this manner. Backup files must also be stored in a location that is logically separated from the main system so that it does not fall victim to the same ransomware's crypto lock.

For several years, cyber professionals have been advocating for intense and regular training for all computer users in cybersecurity awareness. Though much can be done with firewalls, antispam, anti-phishing and other sophisticated defensive systems, the best cyber protection is always the well-informed user.

This will remain true, Johnson said, as long as human nature leads humans to click on dangerous links and visit dangerous websites. Many organizations are heeding that advice in order to protect their users and their organizations from these kinds of malware and other dangers. **CN**

## CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH EVENTS

This month, NACo and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) are recognizing National Cybersecurity Awareness Month to spotlight the challenges and solutions for county governments in addressing cybersecurity.

Over the course of the month, join us for a variety of events highlighting how counties and individuals are enhancing cybersecurity.

### Oct. 3

**Oct. 3 Edition: County News Exclusive —Cybersecurity at the Local Level: How Congress is Trying to Help**

On March 10, Sen. Gary Peters (D-Mich.) introduced the State and Local Cyber Protection Act of 2016 (S. 2665), which would direct the Department of Homeland Security to provide training and resources to both state and local governments. Learn how these changes could bring assistance to you community. Subscribe to County News | [www.NACo.org/CountyNews](http://www.NACo.org/CountyNews)

### Oct. 5

**Webinar: Cyber Readiness: Going Beyond "Awareness" and Building a Culture of Security** | 1 p.m. – 2 p.m. EDT

This webinar, presented by Symantec, will discuss building a strong culture of security and ensuring users do the right thing when it comes to security.

### Oct. 13

**Facebook Live Conversation: Cyber Hygiene for County Employees**

3 p.m. EDT

This conversation will feature Michael Dent, Fairfax County, Va. CISO and a DHS representative in a live interview moderated by Jake Williams of StateScoop. They will be responding to live Facebook questions and comments. Follow NACo on Facebook to watch the event.

### Oct. 20

**Webinar: Online Extortion, Ransomware and other Cybercrimes: How to Protect Yourself and Your County** | 2 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. EDT

Cybercrime is becoming more prevalent in today's computing environment, mainly because more and more, this crime pays. With growing sophistication, internet criminals are luring users into clicking on nefarious links, which expose them to malware. They've developed systems to monetize their dark activities by holding individual and organizational systems hostage to financial demands. Victims of these and other common cybercrimes suffer financial loss and often loss of data. Join us for an informative session on how to protect yourself and your county from being their next victim.

### Every Thursday in October

Twitter chat hosted by Department of Homeland Security, focusing on the month's theme, Stop.Think.Connect, DHS will also be hosting weekly Twitter chats each Thursday using #ChatSTC.

### Every Week

NACo Blog post on the critical issues and challenges counties face in cybersecurity.

NACo County News and guest writers will publish a blog post every week on the most interesting cybersecurity issues facing county governments.



## Plan for all contingencies

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county have also been beset with power outages, the loss communications between early-voting locations and a chemical spill on Election Day.

Whether it's a cyber intrusion or a physical threat to election systems, Sancho sees something positive in the heightened focus on security in general. "You really need to look at security as a holistic item," he said. "It's not just internet or Wi-Fi, you really need to look at insider attacks as well — ensuring that, for example, access to the critical systems is not allowed to be by one person.

"I'm hoping that this will be the beginning of plans of what can we do to actually reduce the risk to voting systems," Sancho added. "People must plan, for example, for attacks to their system." **CN**

## Calif. county test set to begin

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legislation around autonomous driving but this might get things started so counties can start knowing what to look for."

Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx told the Associated Press that members of the Group of Seven nations are interested in adopting the guidelines in their own countries.

"That's really good news for counties," McGehee said. "If the world is working together on these common standards, that's going to help everyone adopt the same rules. Counties won't have to invest resources to figure out how to do things."

In California, Contra Costa County already has invested resources. The transportation authority has bought two driverless shuttles from a French company and will be testing them in a matter of

months.

While developing the country transportation plan, the authority's surveys came back with some common responses.

"A lot of people said they'd like to take public transportation but by the time they get to the parking lots, they're full," said Linsey Willis, director of external affairs for the authority. "Or they live too far away from a bus stop to walk. It was clear there was a first- and last-mile problem."

Gov. Jerry Brown accelerated the process when he signed AB 1592, Sept. 29, which will allow the authority to test autonomous cars on public roads. Contra Costa County could become the testing ground for a suburban transit solution.

After preliminary testing on a decommissioned military base that is a hotbed for autonomous vehicles, the 12-passenger shuttles without a steering wheel, brake pedal, accelerator or operator, will debut at a private office park.

"It's 585 acres, it's gigantic," Willis said. "Some of the buildings are on the other sides of a road, though, so we needed approval to operate on public roads before we can do that."

McGehee sees a lot of potential in counties using automated vehicles to supplement transit in off-hours.

"It's an opportunity to help different social inequities in commuting," he said. "Transit authorities that close down service early on certain routes can make use of these vehicles to take a smaller load of passengers. It can be a great match for people who can't afford a car and (counties) that can't spend the money to keep the entire system going for 100 people."

McGehee briefs the Johnson County (Iowa) Board of Supervisors annually on advances in autonomous driving technology and what it could mean for economic development.

"They've all ridden in one of these cars, so they know what to expect," he said. "But it's not a time to panic, these aren't going to be invading their roads anytime soon." **CN**

## Zika, PILT, flood relief funds make the mix

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funding to combat the Zika virus. Approximately \$400 million is specifically dedicated to help prevent and respond to the Zika virus, including compensating state and local public health departments for previous funding cuts and paying health care costs for those most affected by the virus. Another significant portion of the funding will go towards vaccine research.

The bill — formally, "continuing resolution," or CR — notably did not include language that would have barred Zika funds from going to Planned Parenthood clinics; this had been one of the main obstacles to Congress reaching a deal since the president first requested \$1.8 billion in February.

The administration has been using money shifted from other accounts, including money that had been set aside for studying and fighting Ebola and for state-level emergency preparedness, to address Zika. Currently more than 23,000 people in the mainland U.S. and Puerto Rico have contracted the virus, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The continuing resolution will also provide approximately \$7 million to support drug treatment and recovery programs through Dec. 9. Of that funding, about \$3.84 million will go towards Department of Justice programs and about \$3.27 million will go to the Department of Health and Human Services. The funding represents a portion of what was authorized through the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 (CARA), signed into law July 22. CARA authorized government programs to combat the opioid and heroin crisis but did not actually appropriate any money to do so.

Additionally, \$500 mil-

lion in federal housing assistance was included in the CR to help parts of Louisiana, West Virginia and Maryland that have been devastated by recent floods. While some Democrats objected to this flood-relief funding unless the CR also contained funds for Flint, Mich., the measure was ultimately included after House leaders struck a deal to include funding for Flint in separate legislation, the Water Resources Development Act of 2016.

The CR also extends authorization of the EB-5 Regional Center Program through Dec. 9.

EB-5 was created by Congress to attract foreign investment and create jobs in the U.S. The program funds visas for foreigners who invest at least \$500,000 to \$1 million in approved U.S. businesses, for state and local economic development and job creation. NACo policy supports permanent authorization of the EB-5 program.

In addition to the above provisions, the CR also extends funding for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program for the duration of the CR. While this is far short of the necessary amount to fully fund PILT, it will allow the Department of Interior to begin the administrative process to determine PILT payments for FY17.

Despite this short-term success, there is still a great deal of uncertainty surrounding appropriations for FY17. With the 10-week CR out of the way, Congress has adjourned until after the Nov. 8 elections, leaving them with just about one month upon their return to complete the appropriations process and pass legislation by Dec. 9 that would fund the government through Sept. 30, 2017, rest of the fiscal year. **CN**

Brian Bowden, associate legislative director, also contributed to this report.

### GET TO KNOW...

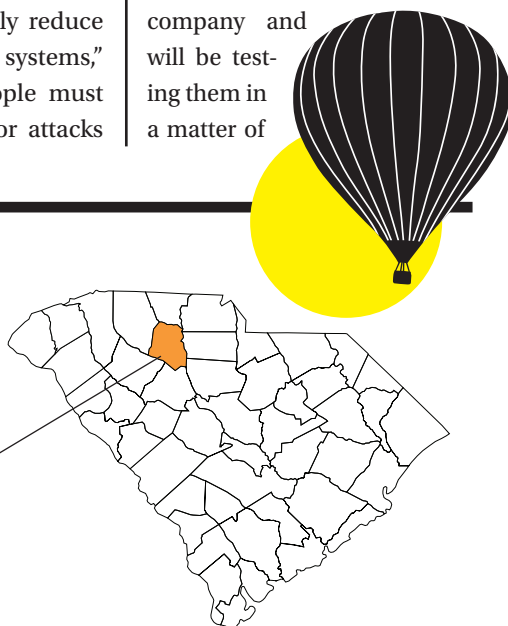
#### Union County, S.C.

#### Welcome, Union County, S.C.

From balloons to books, Union County, in the northern, or upcountry, part of the state can lay claim to some pretty interesting backstories. On April 20, 1861, a strange object appeared in the sky above a small town in the county. **A large hot air balloon called the "Enterprise" descended to the ground, piloted by Professor T.S.C. Lowe, who had left Cincinnati, Ohio the day before.** He had attempted to fly from Ohio to Washington, D.C. but instead was swept southward across Virginia into South Carolina.

The locals crowded around the balloon, many insisting that Lowe be "shot on the spot," since they believed him to be a "Northern spy." In fact, he was, or was soon to become, one. Three months later, President Lincoln would appoint him as the Chief Aeronaut of the Union Army Balloon Corps. **Meanwhile, local tradition claims his life was spared because he gave a Masonic distress sign and Masons in the crowd prevented any attacks.**

Skipping a century or more ahead, today's Union County is home to the Sumter National Forest, and in 2009, its Carnegie Library was named the Best Small Library in America by the *Library Journal*.





# Fulton County moving far away from jail's troubled past

By Charlie Ban  
senior staff writer

Fulton County, Ga. wants its jail to be a roadmap, not just a building.

That map leads to a future of promise, far from the decrepit conditions that brought on nine years of federal oversight, ending just 18 months ago. Right now, there's no specific destination, but it is in the general direction of better overall financial health for the county and its citizens' well-being.

The path is already a long way from inmates sleeping in hallways because the cells that didn't lock properly were packed full. Even out from under the federal consent decree that ended a 2004 lawsuit, Commission Chairman John Eaves isn't satisfied with its breathing room — he wants to keep moving ahead to the point where the county is a national leader.

"We believe we can be a model for criminal justice reform," he said. "Before, arresting people and putting them in jail was the first — and, in many cases, the only — option. Now we're moving to a point where there are a lot more ways you can handle an offender."

The consent decree, with 120 stipulations, was based on three main issues — overcrowding, understaffing and squalid conditions. The problems weighed the commission down both financially and emotionally, but ultimately inspired action. It was the third consent decree on the jail since 1982.

"If there's a silver lining to a consent decree, it's that you don't have a choice except to act," Eaves said. "You face the threat of fines or being put in jail yourself," if you don't improve, and indeed Eaves and Sheriff Ted Jackson faced a contempt case in 2014.



The Fulton County Jail includes four different facilities, the Rice Street facility (pictured) is the largest. Photo courtesy of Fulton County, Ga.

That case was dismissed after the county finally replaced the door locks and outsourced inmates to other jails to bring the population down below the mandated 2,500-inmate limit stipulated in the consent decree. The entire women's population is currently housed in the county's Union City Jail.

## Building Momentum

Roughly \$59 million later, a major renovation fixed many of the building's structural problems. Though it had taken eight years to get to the point where these issues were being addressed, there was sympathy for the journey from those most likely to be watching — the Southern Center for Human Rights, which brought the original case against the jail on behalf of inmates there.

"I'm not sure if it's like trying to steer a really big boat, maybe that's why it's taken so long," said Mary Sidney Kelly, an investigator and paralegal

with the Southern Center who has worked on the jail case. "They've made a lot of progress in the last year. Now you have a functioning building that that handle the number of people who are housed there."

Joan Garner, a county commissioner who came into office in the fifth year of the consent decree, saw the effort the county has taken in recent years, building up speed and momentum.

"It took a lot of planning to get to this point," she said. "Sometimes it was a new way of thinking. Every department that is touched by the justice system meets once a month to look at the jail, the courts, how they intersect. Now we're at a point where we can implement changes."

For Eaves, the hard part was getting the County Commission to commit to fixing the jail when plenty of other needs and projects called out for county funding.

"The real political will was in making it a priority, and I made it priority number one," he said. "Commissioners have a lot of competing priorities and spending that kind of money on something that most of our citizens don't deal with on a regular basis is a big commitment. When they have health concerns or want to go to the library at certain times, those are more important to them than improving the jail."

## More than a Lockup

"At any time, between 40 percent to 70 percent of our inmates have problems with mental illness," Eaves said.

A series of accountability courts — drug courts, veterans' courts, mental health courts — are helping divert potential inmates into treatment programs that are more effective and less expensive than incarceration. Every inmate receives a mental health assessment during intake, and law enforcement

officers are receiving crisis intervention training to help identify and manage situations in which they respond to someone with a mental illness.

"It meant a lot of our partners in the justice system had to rethink their historic strategies, but now the system has options it didn't before," Eaves said. "You didn't have a mental health court before, all you could do was throw someone in jail and keep them off of the streets, but they wouldn't get any better. Now we have the capacity to put more emphasis on diversion programs every year."

"So far, our drug treatment programs have the lowest recidivism rates, but the mental health programs treat the most people."

Kelly, from the Southern Center, agreed with that tactic for lowering the jail population.



# Senate passes water resources bill

By Julie Ufner

associate legislative director

A bill to reauthorize water resources projects passed the Senate Sept. 15 by a 95-3 margin.

The Water Resources Development Act of 2016, or WRDA, reauthorizes Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) water resources projects for navigable waters, harbors and ports, inland waterways, flood control, water supply, emergency management, hydropower and recreational-based Corps projects.

The Senate's WRDA bill, S. 2848, would clear a backlog of Corps' project authorizations and move forward with 30 projects. In addition, the measure also includes money to address the recent lead crisis in Flint, Mich. and to assist communities across the country dealing with aging and failing water infrastructure and lead contamination.

Here are provisions in the bill of interest to counties.

**Army Corps Projects:** The Senate bill would authorize just over \$10 billion for 30 new Corps projects, including Los Angeles River restoration efforts, harbor work in Charleston, S.C. and flood protection projects in New Jersey and California, while creating programmatic changes to the Corps' project delivery process.

Specifically, the bill authorizes the Corps to provide technical assistance to a non-federal project sponsor (such as a county) that is developing its own feasibility study; expands the existing authority of the Corps to accept funds from states and local governments to carry out water resources projects to apply to all projects (not just flood control projects); allows the Corps to establish partnerships with non-federal interests to address the backlog of maintenance at Corps projects; and amends the Corps' existing authority to accept funds from non-federal interests by removing requirements pertaining to the appropriation

## A WORD ABOUT WRDAS (PRONOUNCED WERE-DA'S)

**WRDAs** do not provide funds for projects, instead the legislation gives the Corps authorization to move forward with a specific set of pre-designated projects or provide policy direction or clarification for Corps programs and projects. Funding for WRDA projects generally occur through Congress's yearly Energy and Water appropriations bill.

Historically, WRDA bills were passed every two years, however, in the past decade, WRDA bills have become increasingly difficult to pass due to the congressional earmark ban. The ban prevents the horse trading for votes that led to more frequent authorizations.

Only two WRDA bills—WRDA 2007 and Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA)—were enacted in the past decade.

of funds.

**Funding for Harbor Maintenance Programs:** The Senate's version of WRDA would ensure that the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) remains solvent so that the nation's ports, harbors and waterways receive the resources to ensure the unhindered passage of commerce.

The HMTF collects a user fee levied on the value of imported goods. The collected fees are intended to support the operations and maintenance funding needed for the deep draft and coastal waterways. Historically, HMTF collections have far exceeded funds appropriated for harbor maintenance, resulting in a large and growing "surplus" of more than \$9 billion.

**Water Infrastructure Funding and Policy Changes:** Along with \$220 million for the Flint, Mich. lead contamination emergency, the Senate bill would authorize a \$300 million grant program for reducing lead in drinking water. Additionally, the bill includes \$1.4 billion to help small and disadvantaged communities meet federal drinking water standards.

Furthermore, S. 2848 would authorize \$1.8 billion for grants to address sewer overflows, sanitary sewer overflows and storm water discharges. The bill would also provide \$100 million in assistance to states with emergency drinking water situations through the drinking water state revolving loan fund

program.

**Innovative Water Financing:** The Senate's bill would amend the public-private partnership program established by the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) in 2014 to remove the requirement that it be authorized by an appropriations

**The Senate's WRDA bill, S. 2848, would clear a backlog of Corps' project authorizations and move forward with 30 projects. In addition, the measure also includes money to address the recent lead crisis in Flint, Mich. and to assist communities across the country dealing with aging and failing water infrastructure and lead contamination.**

bill. The bill would also clarify the scope of projects eligible for assistance under the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation (WIFIA) program and authorize the financing of fees if the applicant is a small community.

In addition to existing innovative financing options, the bill would establish a trust fund for water infrastructure that would be used for capitalization grants for the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water

State Revolving Funds. The EPA would also be authorized to use WIFIA authority to make secured loans for emergency situations related to drinking water contaminants.

**National Drought Resilience Guidelines:** The Senate's bill would direct the EPA, in conjunction with the secretary of interior, the secretary of agriculture, the director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other federal agency heads, along with state and local governments, to develop non-regulatory national drought resilience guidelines relating to drought preparedness planning and investments for communities, water utilities and other water users and providers.

The Senate bill would also establish and authorize a number of other programs that may provide funding and guidance for counties to address a wide variety of water resources interests including:

- **Gold King Mine Spill:** Would require EPA to pay for the response costs of the Gold King Mine spill in Colorado within 90 days of passage.

- **Lead Testing in School and Child Care Drinking Water:** The Senate's bill would authorize a total of \$100 million for grants to carry out a voluntary school and child care lead testing program

- **Levee Vegetation:** Would clarify the levee vegetation management policy adopted under WRRDA by prohibiting the Corps from requiring or

carrying out vegetation removal (unless there is an unacceptable safety risk) until they issue new guidelines. S. 2848 would require the Corps to explain why they have failed to develop the new guidelines required in WRRDA

- **Local Government Water Management Plans:** Would allow local governments to participate in feasibility studies in their watershed if the other sponsors of the study agree and if the local government provides its share of the costs

- **Rehabilitation of Existing Levees:** The Senate's bill would authorize \$125 million for a pilot program for the Corps to immediately address subsiding coastal levees

- **Rehabilitation of High Hazard Potential Dams:** The Senate's bill would authorize \$435 million over 10 years for a Federal Emergency Management Agency program to rehabilitate high hazard potential dams

- **Wetlands Mitigation:** The bill would require the Corps to issue guidance regarding credits available from mitigation banks and in-lieu fee programs, and allow mitigation banks and in-lieu fee programs to be considered reasonable alternatives

While the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has crafted its own version of WRDA 2016 (H.R. 5303), the House has yet to consider it. The House's version does not include funding for drinking water and wastewater projects. If the House is able to pass its narrower version of WRDA before Congress adjourns for the upcoming elections, it would give the chambers time to work out policy differences between the House-Senate bills during the lame-duck session. NACo will continue to monitor the progress of WRDA legislation and work with Congress to pass legislation that preserves the local-state-federal partnership in protecting and improving our communities' water resources. **CN**



# New program would help restore local World War I memorials

If you have World War I memorials in your county that could use some sprucing up, here's an opportunity for funding to help.

The U.S. World War I Centennial Commission and the Pritzker Military Museum and Library have announced a new program to help people across the country restore and preserve local World War I memorials.

100 CITIES/100 MEMORIALS is a fund-matching program, where groups or individuals can:

- identify local sites in their area

- create a simple plan for helping to restore the sites

- submit their plan for consideration for matching grant funds, and

- restore the sites, with communication help and possible matching funds.

In November, 100 of the submitted projects will be jury-selected to receive matching funds. To qualify for a matching grant, a project needs to be submitted by Nov. 11. It must be located in the 50 states or U.S. territories, and it either should have been completed since Jan. 1, 2014 or will be completed by Nov. 11, 2018.

The details of the program, including guidelines and online application form, can be found on the website, [www.ww1cc.org](http://www.ww1cc.org).

The program is designed to foster a sense of heritage in local communities, to recognize local stories and people who were involved in the war, and create a way for community members to participate in the national World War I Centennial.

The 100 CITIES/100 MEMORIALS program is particularly well suited for community-service projects hosted by school groups, scout troops, veteran group posts, historical-cultural organizations, church groups, local sports teams and others.

The sponsor organizations have teamed with the World War I Memorial Inventory Project, a nationwide database of sites across the country, to help identify where monuments are located, and what condition they are in.

## 100 CITIES/ 100 MEMORIALS PROGRAM SPECIFICS

- All submitted projects are given communication resources, to help participants to publicize their work, post imagery to social media and to tell their own stories.
- There will be webinars and videos provided on the website to help with "How To Properly Provide Restoration," and "How To Create a Project Plan."
- A database from the World War I Memorial Inventory Project will be available as a tool to help find sites in local areas.
- All sizes and scope of projects can be considered for this program's matching funds. However, the amount of matching funds available per project is currently limited to \$2,000.



WWI Doughboy Memorial on the grounds of the Angelina County Courthouse in Lufkin, Texas

# NACo: don't end inmates' Medicaid benefits pre-trial

By Charles Taylor  
senior staff writer

If congressional staffers can influence their bosses, it's a good sign that so many showed up at a recent Capitol Hill briefing on H.R. 5100.

The bipartisan bill, sponsored by Rep. Tony Cardenas (D-Calif.), would suspend rather than terminate Medicaid benefits for incarcerated, at-risk youth who face charges but haven't been convicted. It's called the At-Risk Youth Medicaid Protection Act.

Many kids in the juvenile justice system rely on Medicaid, but 19 states cut off their benefits if they are in jail, despite the fact that they haven't been found guilty of the crime they're charged with, Cardenas said. The culprit is a glitch in the Social Security Act that prohibits federal Medicaid matching funds from being spent on incarcerated youths' medical care.

"This is a huge deal for county governments," said NACo Executive Director Matt Chase. "The most expensive way to treat these individuals is to start and stop their treatment versus just continuous treatment."

Counties spend \$93 billion annually on justice and public safety services, including inmate health care costs. For incarcerated youths, the prevalence of mental illness is three to four times higher than for the general population, Chase added — contributing to county jails' becoming de facto mental health facilities. And counties are left to pick up the tab for medical and behavioral health care for these youth.

"Our preference would be that any individual who is arrested and not yet convicted not lose their Medicaid," he added, referring to pre-trial adults. "The congressman is taking an incredible step forward for us to say it should at least be suspended and not terminated."

More than 95 percent of people who are jailed eventually return to their communities but must reapply for any Medicaid

benefits they had before their arrests. It's a process that can take months, creating a gap between the medical care they received in jail and reconnecting with services after their release.

Summit County, Ohio Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio cited a study of her county's juvenile justice system which found that over a 10-year period, 100 percent of youth incarcerated in state facilities in her county were receiving Medicaid.

"If a child has to wait for weeks or months," she said, "it may not just be a matter of whether he recidivates because his behavioral health needs aren't being met, it could be a matter of life or death for that child. So I think the importance of providing that linkage, so there's great continuity of services, is so very important."

James Baumberger, assistant director of federal affairs for the American Academy of Pediatrics, said his organization "strongly" supports H.R. 5100.

"Pediatricians see these kids," he said — "they've experienced trauma, they've experienced violence, they're experienced abuse. Many of them have mental health issues or are struggling with substance use." He said two out of three kids who enter the juvenile justice system have diagnosable mental health or substance use disorders.

"We think it makes all the sense in the world to ensure that Medicaid is only suspended and not terminated when a kid enters the juvenile system to streamline that transition when they leave."

Chase also explained that the termination of federal benefits also applies to military veterans who are incarcerated.

"You can be someone who goes and fights overseas for this country," Chase said. "You can come back — you fought for freedom, you fought for due process — but if you are arrested, you lose your veterans benefits and your Medicaid benefits while you're awaiting trial. It's not really the American way." **CN**



## Diversion will be key to shrinking Fulton County Jail population

From FULTON page 6

"Jail is not an effective place to address behavioral health problems," she said. "You can do it more effectively and less expensively in the community."

Annual bookings in the jail have plummeted, hitting close to 26,000 in 2015 after reaching more than 45,000 in 2010. And there's more room for improvement.

Garner is excited about the integration of new population-management software that can help make the disposition of cases more efficient, cutting down on pre-trial detention time.

"We have superior court, state court magistrate court juvenile court, they all have their unique ways of operating," she said. "I see a more consolidated approach to operating that will fit together better."

### Now Hiring

While inmates are now experiencing improved conditions, one aspect of the consent decree remains unresolved. The sheriff's office did not move for termination of the consent decree — but the commission did — because staffing levels were still low. Fixing that is going to be harder than repairing a building or building diversion programs, and it's caused, in part, by the unique political layout that makes Fulton one of 20 counties in the Atlanta metropolitan region, which offers a lot of competition for labor.

"I wouldn't call it intractable, but it's a difficult program to solve," Kelly said. "They're competing with other counties and private employers for applicants. It's still an outstanding issue."

Eaves pegs the turnover rate at 30 percent.

"It's a little dispiriting to know that a third of the people you hire and train won't be around that long, but I understand it," Eaves said. "It's a high-stress job; there's always

the potential for violence or verbal harassment. After a few years there, if you have a chance to work somewhere else, I can't fault someone for taking it. The jail is not an easy or glamorous assignment."

Eaves' best solution is to streamline the hiring process, which can take as long as two months.

"That's too long to fill some of these high-turnover jobs," he said. "There's nobody waiting on the sideline for these jobs, so the soonest we can vet and train them, the better."

### Where to Go from Here

Eaves and his staff have toured other county jails throughout the country, hoping to learn and adapt programs that have been successful elsewhere. They have included Bexar County, Texas; Johnson County, Kan.; Salt Lake County, Utah and King County, Wash.

"Everywhere I've gone, I've seen something that would work in Fulton County," he said. "Nothing that worked well somewhere else wouldn't work for us."

It's the next step in what he sees as a race for the county to be a national leader on local criminal justice issues that, like the jail improvements, took some time to speed up, but that time investment is an asset for Fulton County.

"The national conversation on justice reform was happening on the local level long before," Eaves said. "Many states and counties are having this discussion and I feel like we have a five-, six-year running start on it."

As jail alternatives develop and population drops, Eaves likes the jail's chances of comparing favorably to peer counties' per capita spending and crime rates.

"Considering where we started, I feel good about what we've done and where we're going," he said. **CN**

## SPECIAL FROM NATIONWIDE

# Be your own hero during National Retirement Security Week

This year's National Retirement Security Week will be Oct. 16-22. This national effort highlights the importance of saving for retirement — and raises awareness of the retirement plan options offered to you.

Most workers have ideas about their retirement years, but few have taken action to make their ideas financially possible. The reasons may be as varied as the individual, but research suggests workers don't realize how easily and quickly they can improve their retirement readiness.

Nationwide's campaign theme for 2016 is Be Your Own Hero, encouraging you to take charge of your retirement planning while helping you feel more confident about your retirement.

As you know, Nationwide provides great tools and resources to help participants understand what it will take to prepare for and live in retirement. During October, there will be messages from Nationwide, providing you with helpful tips and some easy actions you can take now to take charge of your retirement, including:

- enrolling in the plan
- understanding how much you might need in retirement
- updating your contribution amount to keep you on track
- understanding and selecting the best investment options for you
- creating a monetary distribution strategy plan for those nearing retirement, and
- how to improve your overall retirement readiness.

To learn more about how participants can take charge of their retirement planning today, visit [nrsforu.com/BeYourHero](http://nrsforu.com/BeYourHero). **CN**

You can also join the conversation online and see what Nationwide is doing throughout

National Retirement Security Week:

● Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/NRSforU>

● Twitter - <https://twitter.com/NRSforU>

National Retirement Security Week is just one more way we help participants take charge of their retirement security, plan for the future they want and feel confident about their retirement.

Please contact your local Retirement Specialist if you have any questions.

Disclosures: Nationwide Retirement Specialists are registered representatives of Nationwide Investment Services Corporation, member FINRA. Nationwide representatives cannot offer investment, tax or legal advice. You should consult your own counsel before making retirement plan decisions.

Investing involves market risk, including possible loss of principal. No investment strategy can guarantee a profit or avoid loss. Actual results will vary depending on investment and market experience.

NRE-0653AO.1 (8/16)



**GILA COUNTY, ARIZ.**

**Adopted: c. 1912**

**Based on a design by:  
Richard McCormick**

The Gila County seal is based on the seal for the Territory of Arizona, designed by Richard McCormick, secretary of the territory, who introduced it in 1863.

The Spartan artwork (which to some was comic, the present-day secretary of state's office noted) featured a bearded miner standing casually in front of a wheelbarrow, pick and short-handled spade. Two bare mountains rose in the background, and at the bottom was the Latin phrase *Ditat Deus*, "God enriches."

"A few decades ago, the county considered changing the seal, but some of the residents who were alive when it was passed objected, saying it was in the archives now."

Assistant County Manager Jacque Sanders assisted.

Would you like to see your county's seal featured? Contact Charlie Ban at [cban@naco.org](mailto:cban@naco.org).



Gila County adopted its seal around 1912, emulating the territory's seal in honor of George W. P. Hunt, a Missouri transplant who made Gila County his home before taking office as the state's first elected governor.

The Gila County seal's Latin inscription is slightly off, reading "*Dit Deus*," which Assistant County Manager Jacque Sanders best guesses to mean "God is rich."





# CAPITAL LOOP

**NOTE: CAPITAL LOOP WILL HIGHLIGHT NACo'S LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY EFFORTS AND RESOURCES.**



Monroe County (Fla.) Mayor Heather Carruthers shows the complex species protection permit process in testimony before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Photo by Nick Lyell

## County Mayor: Endangered Species Act complicates flood insurance for counties

● Heather Carruthers, mayor of Monroe County, Fla., testified Sept. 21 before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee about the difficulties counties encounter when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and FEMA use National Flood Insurance Program participation requirements to advance federal endangered species regulations. Carruthers said the resulting lengthy, complex permit process added no additional protection but did add new levels of bureaucracy and cost. Contact: Hadi Sedigh, [hasedigh@naco.org](mailto:hasedigh@naco.org)

NACo has prepared a toolkit (<http://bit.ly/2aPiOqf>) that provides updated information on pressing federal legislative and regulatory issues facing the nation's counties. It also contains helpful tips for communicating with members of Congress and the media. If you do not already have plans to meet with your senators and representative(s) while they are home, we encourage you to reach out to their offices and request meetings. Contact: Paul Beddoe, [pbeddoe@naco.org](mailto:pbeddoe@naco.org)

## House Judiciary Chairman Goodlatte releases remote sales tax 'discussion draft'

● House Judiciary Committee Chairman Robert Goodlatte (R-Va.) has released his remote sales tax legislation discussion draft: the *Online Sales Simplification Act of 2015* (OSSA). Under OSSA, the seller's state (origin) would determine whether the sale is taxable and the buyer's state (destination) would determine the rate that will apply. OSSA would also require states to adopt a single statewide tax rate for remote sales, which would eliminate the ability of local governments to decide their own sales tax policy. Contact: Mike Belarmino, [mbe-larmino@naco.org](mailto:mbe-larmino@naco.org)

## Senate passes water projects bill

● On Sept. 15, the U.S. Senate passed its version of the Water Resources Development Act of 2016 (WRDA) (S. 2848) by a vote of 95-3. See *County News*, this issue.



## Counties win coveted seats on new FAA Drone Advisory Committee

● (See *County News*, Sept. 19, "New Wild West on the Horizon") Contact: Kevan Stone, [kstone@naco.org](mailto:kstone@naco.org)

## Last Chance! DOJ needs your feedback on new ADA accessibility rules for state and local government websites. Deadline Oct. 7

● (See *County News*, Aug. 18, "DOJ extends comment period for website accessibility rules") Contact: Jacob Terrell, [jterrell@naco.org](mailto:jterrell@naco.org)



## Download NACo's Fall Advocacy Toolkit

● To help you make the most of the congressional recess,

SPECIAL TO NACo MEMBERS

# Saving Lives with the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey

By Gretchen Gooding  
U.S. Census Bureau

Communities across the nation now have new American Community Survey (ACS) statistics to help them make informed decisions. In mid-September, the U.S. Census Bureau released the 2015 American Community Survey's one-year estimates, providing a detailed look at America's people, places and economy for communities with populations of 65,000 or more. With information on 40 social, economic, housing and demographic topics, the ACS can help you find solutions at the local level.

New Orleans, La. is one such community benefitting from timely ACS data. In the bureau's newest Stats in Action video (at <http://bit.ly/2deyxuSI>), we highlight how the New Orleans Fire Department is saving lives by figuring out where to target smoke alarm installations. The city used free and publicly accessible ACS estimates to identify homes that were least likely to have a smoke alarm and most likely to have fatalities due to fire. This is just one example of the many issues that ACS data can solve.

Here are some other ways, counties have used ACS data:

● The Catawba County (N.C.) Aging Coalition used ACS data to understand the demographics of the 65-plus population. It used this information, in conjunction with other sources, to update the Catawba Aging Services Plan.

● ACS statistics on language and ability to speak English helped King County, Wash. Elections identify the languages spoken by limited-English-speaking voters. They collaborated with the Seattle Foundation to award funds to community-based organizations to do voter engagement in these other languages.

● The Gwinnett County (Georgia) Department of Fire and Emergency Services used ACS statistics on disabilities

to justify the need for the 2015 Chesney Fallen Firefighters Memorial Grant to purchase bedside alarms for deaf or hard of hearing individuals.

● Crittenton Children's Center (Missouri) used demographic data from the ACS in its Community Health Needs Assessment. This information will help them to better understand and serve the needs of their six-county service area.

Additional data releases are planned later this year for smaller counties.

For areas with populations of 20,000 or more, the Census Bureau created a new product — the Supplemental Estimates Tables. This product features simplified tables that provide access to ACS data at a lower population threshold than standard one-year tables. It was released for the first time in July with 2014 data, and an updated version with 2015 data will be available on Oct. 20. All counties, regardless of size, will be included in the 2011-2015 ACS five-year release on Dec. 8.

Let us know how you use the ACS by sharing your story online using #ACSdata. We are also looking for the next community to highlight in the Stats in Action video series. Does your county have an innovative ACS data story to share? If so, send it to [acso.users.support@census.gov](mailto:acso.users.support@census.gov) with the subject line "Stats in Action."

## LEARN HOW TO REPLICATE THE NEW ORLEANS SMOKE ALARM PROJECT

Tune in to the Census Bureau's webinar on Thursday, Oct. 13 at 2 p.m. EDT during Fire Prevention Week to learn how you can start a project like New Orleans' in your county. Visit the ACS Events page at <http://bit.ly/2d-nqphO> for more details.



# Dog gone? County shelters embrace Finding Rover app

By Charles Taylor  
senior staff writer

County animal shelters across the nation are finding that Finding Rover when he's lost is a little easier these days.

Montgomery County, Ohio, San Diego County, Calif. and Washoe County, Nev. are among those that are using the Finding Rover smartphone app, to help reunite lost dogs with their two-legged best friends. One shelter director says it's saving money because lost dogs are spending less time in their kennels.

The free app uses facial recognition that's so good — 98 percent accurate, according to Finding Rover — that it helped San Diego County Department of Animal Services match a lost Shiba Inu dog named Roxy with a photo of her wearing sunglasses. Less than four hours after she was taken in, her owners found her by using the app.

Roxy was the shelter's first success in 2014, when it became the first sheltering organization in the United States to partner with Finding Rover, the app's creator confirmed. Since then, the shelter has reunited at least 15 dogs with their owners, an official said.

Finding Rover works like this: dog owners or shelter operators download the app, Android or Apple, and set up an account; this can also be done on the web. The pet's owner must upload a full-face picture of the dog (there's no Finding Kitty app for cats...yet).

To recognize the face, the user lines up three circles the app superimposes on the photo with eyes and nose, making a triangle. And voila, you're in the system. Shelters that are Finding Rover partners must also upload photos of all the lost dogs they're keeping.

"It saves us money," explained Mark Kumpf, shelter director for Montgomery County, Ohio. "We figure the average cost per dog that comes into a shelter depending on the system and the number of days it has to stay can be anywhere between \$160 and \$225 dollars. Imagine how much money you save when the dog never has to

go to the shelter."

Pet owners save, too. "They don't have to come and pay an impoundment fee and a board charge," he added. "It's a great way to put people in touch with their lost pets."

Dan DeSousa, deputy director of San Diego's shelters, said there are no concerns

about data security. "Your information is locked away. The only time it actively does any matching is when the computer says this picture matches that picture."

When Montgomery County's Animal Resources Center got involved, Kumpf said, the county signed a memorandum of understanding with Finding Rover.

"The M.O.U. simply says that we're going to provide the information to Finding Rover, and we're both going to keep that information private. We're not going to market to people based on the information," he said. There are no ads or in-app purchases.

Even for shelters that don't maintain a photo database of impounded canines, Finding Rover can be helpful, Kumpf said. "If you are an individual officer or individual employee — and you don't have a policy that says no — you can download Finding Rover on your own smartphone, tablet or what have you, and when you pick up a dog, you, the individual officer, simply take a picture and say 'Hey, I found this dog and it's going to be at the shelter.'"

Kumpf's is the Dayton area's largest animal shelter, taking in over 7,000 dogs and 3,500 cats per year. DeSousa's shelters take in, on average, about 12,000 dogs annually.

"It's your pet's lifeline," Kumpf said. "You can lose tags; people can scan for microchips and not find them. But you know what? That picture, with ... almost 100 percent accuracy, if someone else finds your dog, Finding Rover is going help you find its way home, and it's free. Why wouldn't you do it?"

Finding Rover's founder and CEO, John Polimeno, is a retired California construction

company owner. He first got the idea for the app and website when he saw a lost-dog flyer on a telephone pole while dining out, said DeSousa, who has spoken with him. Polimeno said it reminded him of when he lost a dog as a kid.

"He reached out to the big-name IT companies that do facial recognition for humans... and they all kind of laughed and said it can't be done, one dog looks like another dog," DeSousa said. But Polimeno wasn't dissuaded. He took his idea to the University of Utah's Software Development Center and said "Can you guys help me do this?"

It took them two years to develop proprietary facial recognition technology that could do the job, according to Finding Rover's website.

DeSousa said it was a no-brainer for San Diego to get involved; his shelters were already photographing strays they took in, although they did have to switch from taking side profile shots to face shots.

In Northern California, the Solano County Sheriff's Office joined Finding Rover last month. The Animal Care Division registers every dog that enters the county's shelter with Finding Rover, and it also uses the service to show off dogs that are available for adoption.

"Discovering your dog is missing can be heartbreaking for a family," Solano County Sheriff Thomas Ferrara said in a statement. "We want to do everything we can to reunite you with your beloved dog as soon as possible, and Finding Rover is an innovative tool to help us do that." **CN**

To become a Finding Rover shelter partner, visit [www.findingrover.com/partner](http://www.findingrover.com/partner). Individual dog owners can sign up by downloading the app or online.



Henry, a Jack Russell terrier, was reunited with his human "mom," Gina Laws, thanks to San Diego County's animal shelters being a Finding Rover partner. Photo courtesy of San Diego County, Calif.



## LEADERSHIP EDGE

By Monica Wofford

Curtis was a rock star. But, that was 20 years ago in a small company with a big county presence. Since then he'd been promoted in a larger corporation and seemed to have gotten lost in the shuffle. He was then elected to office, and while this renewed a bit of stardom, it also came with constituents who thought he could fix everything and blamed him openly for failures.

The blame and pressure was taking a toll. He lashed out on little things and seemed to be gifted at micromanaging. His

inner control freak went into overdrive, and he acted as if his needs were all that mattered. The behavior was becoming habitual, but the reasons were simple: his needs were not being met and he was responding to this fact.

Unfortunately, that response manifested itself as difficult behavior. At work and in his elected role, these behaviors were getting noticed. His employees saw a difficult boss. The citizens he represented saw an unlikely-to-be-re-elected representative, but he saw no behavior alternative.

Bad bosses and difficult people are easy targets for

widespread complaints and labels. Yet, people are not difficult on purpose, but become difficult when expected to be different than what comes naturally to them. Whether others explicitly state those expectations, they come from a more internal source, the result can be a shirking of one's own inherent needs. But, why do they behave this way? The answers may be surprising.

### Not Feeling Appreciated

For Curtis, the likely needs being left unattended are popularity, appreciation, freedom from control and detail, friendship, the need to express



Wofford

himself and to be heard. These needs are inherent in the very personality that is also the most charming, engaging and likely to readily seek a stage or spotlight. Emotional intelligence, personality and the need for a psychology degree aside, if these were his needs, they were readily being met as the superstar in a small company.

As the spotlight grew dim in larger ventures and under consistent citizen pressure, the lack of focus on these needs created stress. The normal human reaction is to then vie for those needs in ways that appear much more demanding. A child with this personality might throw a very public tantrum.

Adults have learned to hide their needs better and may instead interrupt frequently or turn a conversation to appear to be "all about me." It's a response to the fear of not feeling appreciated, which for the personality described in Curtis is a strong trigger for what most would call bad behavior.

### Conditioned Behaviors

A large part of the population believes they need to be one person at home and one person at work. If the work person is far from their natural personality, this means they're essentially faking it and lacking authenticity. How difficult and exhausting. Faking it for long creates the kind of stress that will drain every ounce of normally kind and

patient energy. Enter the leader, like Curtis, who may have been called a narcissist and who never learned how to create an environment of appreciation in healthy ways. This does not excuse unprofessional behavior but may elicit a bit more empathy than a decision that the behavior is committed purposefully. One solution lies in his resolving the conflict himself. If Curtis were to give himself permission to be the gregarious figure that he is and surround himself with those who naturally love the details of every issue, his team might instead be called a "match made in heaven."

### Cognitive Dissonance

Cognitive dissonance is the state in which a person holds contradicting or inconsistent beliefs about their behavior. In layperson's terms, this state is often referred to as not knowing what one doesn't know. Whether needs aren't being met, conditioned behaviors are present or someone is just acting up, chances are he or she doesn't know why or how to change the behavior.

Labels from others come easy, but are not helpful. Making them aware is delicate. Not taking their seemingly difficult behavior personally is essential. Why a difficult leader does what they do could be rooted in myriad reasons. The key is to seek out the truth if the relationship is important and one values the person. At a minimum, recognize they likely aren't doing it on purpose and stop personalizing. Try to meet their needs and practice acceptance of what is, hopefully, temporary behavior. **CN**

*Monica Wofford, CSP is a leadership development coach and author of Contagious Leadership and Make Difficult People Disappear. To learn more, email [Monica@ContagiousCompanies.com](mailto:Monica@ContagiousCompanies.com), call 1.866.382.0121, or visit [www.MonicaWofford.com](http://www.MonicaWofford.com).*

## OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNTIES TO SUPPORT UNPAVED ROADS RESEARCH EFFORT

The Federal Highway Administration has released a solicitation for counties to contribute to the Unpaved Road Safety Pooled Fund. This is proposed to be a collaborative research program through the Transportation Pooled Fund Program.

The Unpaved Road Safety Pooled Fund will explore ways to advance safety on unpaved roads. The Transportation Pooled Fund Program allows federal, state, and local agencies and other organizations to combine resources to support transportation research studies.

Counties are encouraged to contribute to the fund or work with states, other counties or other agencies to contribute to this important effort. The solicitation closing date is Oct. 22.

For more information, visit:

**[www.pooledfund.org/Details/Solicitation/1419](http://www.pooledfund.org/Details/Solicitation/1419)**





# Investing in Kids: A winning proposition

By Sheila Capestany,  
King County, Wash., and  
Elizabeth Gaines,  
Forum for Youth Investment

Experts say that by preventing or mitigating adverse childhood experiences, early childhood interventions can have a profound impact on later life outcomes, including reductions in violence and increased adult earnings. These investments have also documented strong return on investment

King County, Wash. Executive Dow Constantine set out to tackle this challenge by championing Best Starts for Kids, an initiative to invest in promotion, prevention and early intervention. Although King County is doing well by many measures — health in-



development in the nation, starting with prenatal support, sustaining the gain through teenage years, and investing in safe,

ensure stable sources of funds to support services for children and families. The type of tax varies by county between property, sales, soda and other special taxes. The eight counties in Florida created special taxing districts for children.

These dedicated funding initiatives are winning big; in communities where they have been up for reauthorization, voters supported them at rates between 72 percent and 86

percent. Voters polled on why they support these funds cited the clear and immediate effects in their own community, the local ownership of the solution and the fundamental need to support all kids.

Miami-Dade County, Fla.'s Children's Trust, a mill property tax passed by voters during the height of the economic recession in 2008 (original ballot initiative was in 2002), has generated at least \$100

million annually for programming in the county. The trust emphasizes collaboration and accountability, and encourages providers to take creative approaches in linking and coordinating services across health, safety and early development.

These dedicated funding initiatives give counties the opportunity to safeguard their children's potential, no matter what lies ahead. **CN**

## For years, communities have relied on federal and state dollars to meet their children's learning and development needs, but unfortunately those resources aren't enough.

Indicators are high, unemployment is among the lowest in the nation — there are some widening and troubling disparities in the county by race and place. Health outcomes vary widely by race and across communities in King County, as does high school graduation and income.

Of the more than 80,000 households added in King County since 2000, almost all of the increase has been split between the top and the bottom of the income spectrum. Moreover, King County historically has spent the majority of its funds on downstream interventions, through the justice, mental health and substance use systems.

The Best Starts for Kids, funded by a tax levy, aims to change this. It will generate about \$65 million per year, at an average cost to property owners of \$56 per year, and provide one of the most comprehensive approaches to childhood devel-

opment in the nation, starting with prenatal support, sustaining the gain through teenage years, and investing in safe,

healthy communities that reinforce progress. "This is a victory for children, youth and families across King County, and our opportunity to transition to upstream solutions," Constantine said.

But King County is not alone; others are seeking innovative ways to increase viability and reduce inequity in their counties. For years, communities have relied on federal and state dollars to meet their children's learning and development needs, but unfortunately those resources aren't enough. Local investments are needed to scale proven programs, and some counties are on the cutting edge of this path.

In addition to King County, more than 20 communities, including Philadelphia, Denver, and 16 counties in Florida and Missouri, have passed new dedicated-revenue tax initiatives for child and youth programs and services. Dedicated-revenue streams can



## NACo CALL for PROPOSALS: EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

### Interested in presenting at an upcoming NACo Event?

Complete the rolling "Call for Proposals" form to submit your ideas. NACo will review all proposals for possible inclusion in a future live event or webinar. For more information on how to submit content ideas for educational events go to:

[www.naco.org/proposals](http://www.naco.org/proposals)





# Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge participants announced

Twenty-seven counties were among the 50 local governments and agencies selected to participate in the Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge, a partnership between NACo, the American Public Health Association (APHA) and The Aetna Foundation, in collaboration with CEOs for Cities.

The Challenge is designed to create economically competitive, inclusive and equitable

“Local governments drive health improvements, and counties have developed innovative approaches to transform the health of communities across the nation.” –NACo President Bryan Desloge

communities. It will award \$1.5 million in prizes to small and mid-sized cities and counties that are able to show measurable improvements in health outcomes over the course of several years through cross-sector partnerships.

The HealthyCommunity50 will move on to compete for the grand prize in the Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge. They will receive a \$10,000 communi-

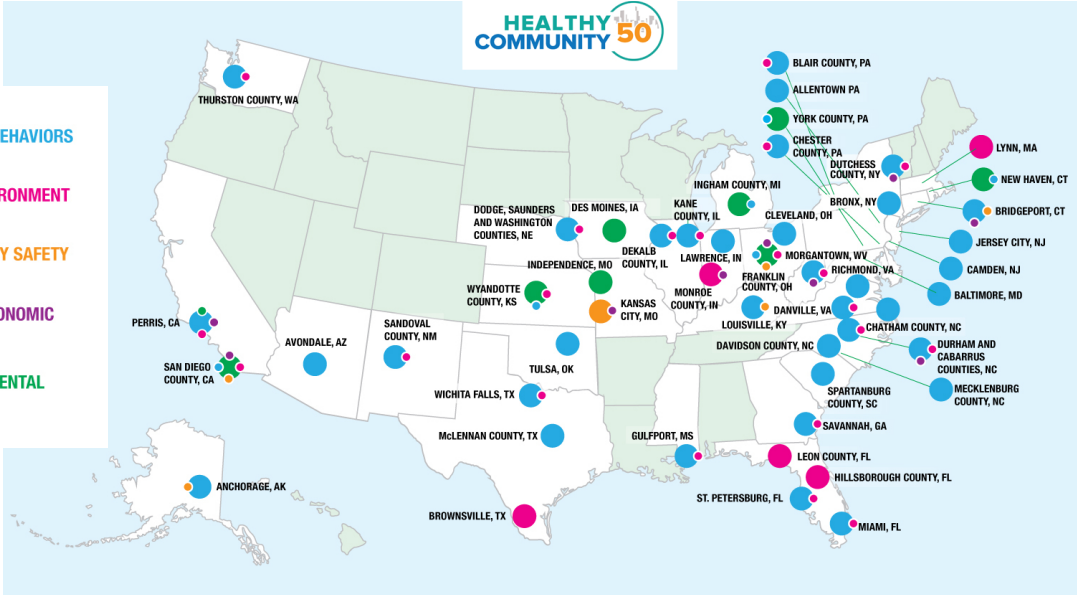
ty seed award to implement programs able to show measurable improvements around key social determinants of health.

The 50 competitors were chosen from hundreds of submissions by an advisory board. Their efforts will be measured in at least one of five domains: healthy behaviors, community safety, built environment, social and economic factors, and environmental exposures.

“Local governments drive health improvements, and counties have developed innovative approaches to transform the health of communities across the nation,” said NACo President Bryan Desloge. “County leaders are learning by example and putting best practices into action.

“We’re excited about participating in the HealthyCommunity50 and look forward to applying the lessons learned to promote healthy communities in counties across the nation.”

An expert panel will conduct site visits to all HealthyCom-



munity50 members to understand the community’s approach to the project first-hand and speak with the members of the cross-sector team and key stakeholders. At the conclusion of the Challenge, the programs most able to show measurable change will be eligible for prize awards from \$25,000 to \$500,000. Participants will be judged on their own progress and will not be competing against each other. **CN**

For more information, visit [www.healthiestcities.org](http://www.healthiestcities.org) and join the conversation at #HealthiestCitiesChallenge.

## WORD SEARCH

**MACON-BIBB COUNTY, GA.**

Created By: Charles Taylor

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

- CAMP OGLETHORPE** Prison for captured Union soldiers during the Civil War
- COTTON** Mainstay of county’s early economy
- CREEK INDIANS** Lived here in the 18th century
- DESOTO** Spanish explorer of the area in the 16th century
- FORSYTH** Northwest adjacent county
- HEART OF GEORGIA** Nickname based on location near state’s geographic center
- HOUSTON** County to the south
- HUMID SUBTROPICAL** Local climate category

- LITTLE RICHARD** Rock and roll entertainer born in Macon
- NATHANIEL MACON** North Carolina statesman for whom city was named (many early settlers were from North Carolina)
- OCMULGEE RIVER** Runs through downtown Macon
- PAYNE** City abolished in 2015, after Macon-Bibb consolidation
- ROBERT REICHERT** First and present mayor of the city-county
- THE TELEGRAPH** Daily newspaper
- WYATT BIBB** County’s namesake, a former U.S. senator and congressman from Georgia, later governor of Alabama

# IN SEARCH of CIVILITY

“County innovations would be all but impossible without a fundamental value that enables us to govern well: civility.” —NACo PRESIDENT BRYAN DESLOGE

**Civility** is much more than just behaving politely. Civil behavior shows that we have respect for others and their opinions, especially when we disagree.

Go to [www.NACo.org/Civility](http://www.NACo.org/Civility) for a brief assessment of civility today, a guide to civil engagement, a few examples and other resources.



# PROFILES IN SERVICE

## FRANK J. THORNTON

Human Services and Education Steering Committee Supervisor, Henrico County, Va.

**Number of years active in NACo:** 20 years

**Occupation:** Retired educator; former assistant professor of French

**Education:** B.A., M.A. in French literature

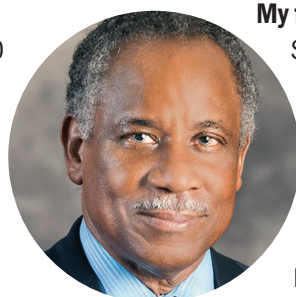
**Three people I'd invite to dinner:** Martin Luther King, Jr., George Washington Carver and Alexandre Dumas Sr.

**You'd be surprised to learn that I:** Delivered the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* morning paper during hurricanes Connie and Hazel.

**A dream I have is to:** Visit several countries in Africa, especially Ghana.

**I am most proud of:** My wife and family.

**Every morning I read:** the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*.



**My favorite meal is:**

Southern-fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, rolls and ice tea.

**My pet peeve is:**

To encounter Do-Gooders.

**My motto is:** Always

have a workable plan A, B and C.

**The last book I read was:** *The Battle of New Market Heights* by James S. Price.

**My favorite movie is:** *Warlock*, with Henry Fonda, Richard Widmark and Anthony Quinn.

**My favorite music is:** old R & B from 1955–1970.

**My favorite U.S. president is:** Barack Obama.

**My county is a NACo member because:** We serve and hold the citizen in very high esteem and honor. We call it "The Henrico Way."

**The hardest thing I've ever done:**

Worked during the summer in a tobacco factory to earn money for college

# SOLUTIONS SPOTLIGHT

# Taking Control Yields Healthy Outcomes

Three years ago, the Public Employee Benefits Cooperative (PEBC) in north Texas battled a health crisis within its ranks.

The PEBC provides a choice of flexible and affordable benefits to local government employees serving Dallas, Denton, Parker and Tarrant counties, as well as the North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA). Statistics revealed that employees across their counties experienced higher-than-average disease and chronic condition rates.

Claims costs were driven by a prevalence of conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), with the occurrence of diabetes at 80 percent above the norm. As a result, the intensity and frequency of medical services sought by members dramatically outpaced their public sector peers.

With more than 22,000 members across five independent organizations, the PEBC engaged UnitedHealthcare to realize a shared vision of employee health and effective cost management. Using data on high-cost claims and disease prevalence, multiple initiatives focusing on member health ownership, preventive care and wellness, more effective provider relationships and utilization and compliance were launched.

Health Savings Accounts (HSA) were adopted by more than 1,200 members. Extensive outreach prompted an increase in wellness exams, and cholesterol and cancer screenings. Top-quality physicians were identified as offering the best care for the best value. Emergency room utilization was reduced, and nurse call-in lines improved the well-being of those with conditions

such as asthma, diabetes and COPD. Members with diabetes, heart disease, back pain and osteoporosis received personalized disease management programs. The PEBC effectively took control of its health.

Bolstered by positive health results and cost savings, the PEBC and UnitedHealthcare are committed to this new vision designed to create a culture of better health for all. There is growing acceptance that employees make better decisions when presented with compelling data and information about their health. The result is a health plan that continues to be stable and affordable, sustaining a healthy and productive workforce.

The State and Local Gov-

ernment Benefits Association (SALGBA) named this member health ownership initiative the 2014 SALGBA Challenge winner, recognizing the cooperative's success and naming it as a best practice within the industry.

The fifth annual SALGBA Challenge, proudly sponsored by SALBGA, Governing magazine, and UnitedHealthcare, is a simple platform where your program can be similarly awarded and acknowledged by other public sector entities.

To apply, fill out the five-question application form at [www.salgba.org/challenge](http://www.salgba.org/challenge) by Jan. 13, 2017 for recognition and prizes. For additional questions, email [salgba@salgba.org](mailto:salgba@salgba.org). **CN**

# RESULTS

BY PEBC EMPLOYER GROUP

Preventative care and wellness activities increased and cost savings were achieved by engagement of members in the management of their own care. The drive to motivate health ownership achieved the following statistics in a three-year period.

## Dallas County

8.3% reduction in non-high cost net paid PMPM

## Denton County

16.3% reduction in diabetics with complications

## Parker County

23.5% reduction in ER visits

## Tarrant County

2.5% reduction in PEPM costs

92% of members touched enrolled in a clinical program

## North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA)

21.5% reduction in complications due to diabetes

12.5% reduction in musculoskeletal complications



# MONEYMATTERS%

## Plummet in Workforce Participation Rate Disconcerting

By Joel Griffith  
deputy research director

How healthy is the jobs market in the United States? After peaking seven years ago at 10 percent in the aftermath of the Great Recession, the unemployment rate this August remained steady at 4.9 percent — near the post-recession lows and close to the level experienced during other periods of economic expansion. But a closer look at the jobs market — and definitions — suggests that improvement is needed.

For a more complete picture, a look at the “labor force participation rate” is required — a term defined as the number of people in the labor force divided by the entire civilian non-institutional population age 16 years and over. “The labor force” only includes those who

If a person of working age is jobless but not looking for employment, he is neither counted as unemployed nor as part of the labor force.

are either employed or unemployed. To be counted as unemployed, a person must meet three requirements: be jobless, be looking for a job and be available for work. If a person of working age is jobless but not looking for employment, he is neither counted as unemployed nor as part of the labor force.

In August, the labor force participation rate was just 63.8 percent. This rate has dropped 2.9 percentage points since the end of the Great Recession. In short, the percentage of working age people joining the labor force has declined even as a greater percentage of this shrinking pool are employed. As such, the drop in the un-

employment rate is partially attributable to the fact that a growing number of working age people are simply not seeking employment.

Immediately prior to the start of the Great Recession in 2007, the unemployment rate was virtually the same as currently. Yet the labor force par-

ticipation rate was 3.2 percentage points higher. The same percentage of a relatively larger labor pool was employed (see chart 1). At the beginning of

the Great Recession 62.9 percent of the civilian population was employed. This ratio bottomed out at 58.3 percent in December 2009. But over the past 81 months, the percentage of the civilian population employed has only risen to 59.7 percent—less than a third of the way towards a full recovery on this indicator (see chart 2).

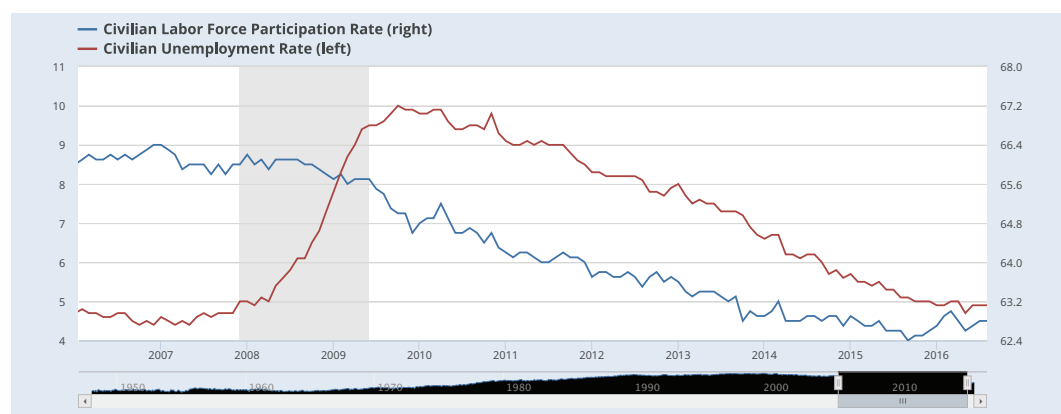
The demographics shift is only partially responsible for some of this decline in labor force participation. Senior citizens are less likely to be employed or to seek employment than their younger counterparts. But the Council of Economic Advisers estimated that an aging population accounted for only half of this recent decline.

Compared to the start of the Great Recession, the labor force participation rate for those 25–54 years old declined from 83.1 percent to 81.3 percent; meanwhile, the percentage of those 55 years + in the labor force increased from 38.9 percent to 40 percent (see chart 3). For young adults, participation in the labor force dropped precipitously from 74.1 percent to 70.9 percent this August. This continues nearly 30 years of decline, from a peak of 79.6 percent participation in 1987 (see chart 4). Only a portion of this decline, particularly with the youngest demographics, is attributable to pursuit of higher education.

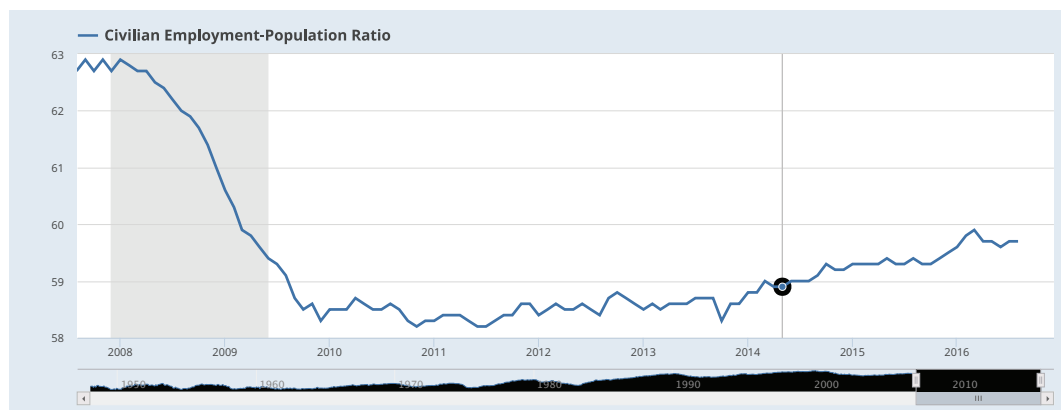
Both the unemployment rate and labor force participation provide insight into the health of the economy. The drop off in the percentage of able-bodied, working age adults in the jobs market should give policymakers pause for concern. Fostering an environment hospitable to ingenuity and enterprise can increase the availability of opportunities and the incentive to pursue them. **CN**

Griffith is NACO's deputy research director.

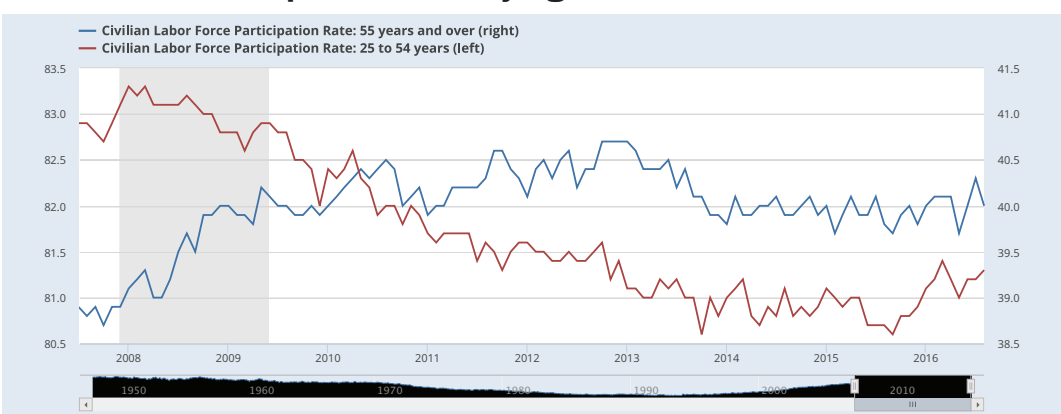
### Labor Force Participation, Unemployment Rate 2007–2015



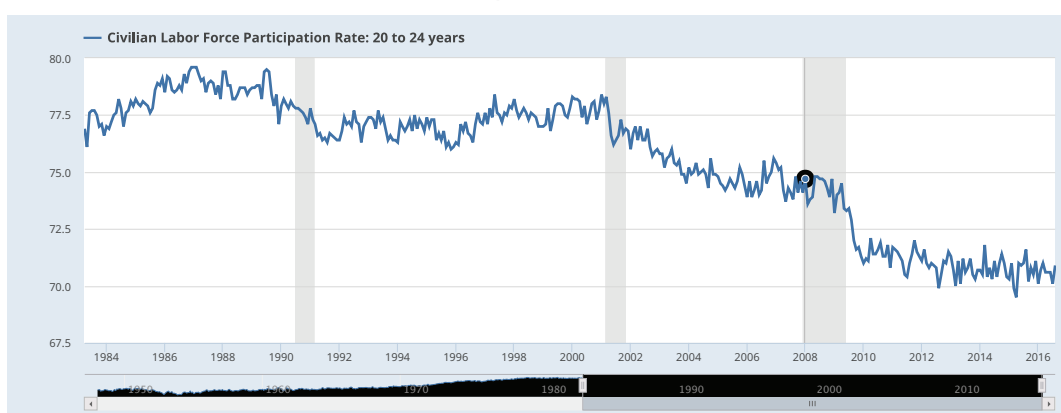
### Civilian Employment-Population Ratio



### Labor Force Participation Rates by Ages 25–54 and 55+



### Labor Force Participation Rate Age 20–24





## the HR DOCTOR

With Phil Rosenberg

*Phil Rosenberg*

# Who Are Our Heroes?

**I**t is cultural mythology which defines the characteristics of a nation. More than 4,000 years ago, it was the lessons of the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Mesopotamian hero whose adventures taught the values of a life of engagement, enduring friendship, sacrifice and loyalty which marked the hopes of early civilization.

Also common to such great heroes is their appreciation of the importance of going on quests to achieve success in reaching goals despite dangers and losses. This was certainly the message in Greek mythology as set forth in the Iliad with its hero Achilles.

It was that way with the founding of ancient Rome and its heroes such as Romulus, Horatius, Aeneas, Scipio Afri-

canus and Caesar.

All of these heroes, whether in very ancient times or in the world of our recent past, were champions in the service of their countries and demonstrated key values that are associated with being an extraordinary hero. These values include bravery in the face of uncertainty and poor odds of success, strength and skills, honor. They also include patriotism, and loyalty defending personal and civic values like freedom and generosity to the others — and especially to those who served with you.

America is rich with its epic heroes — rich with the defining values of the nation. Whether the heroes are George Washington, Davey Crockett, Daniel Boone, Sergeant York or many others, there are such people who contributed, often with their lives, to the creation of a “land of the free.”

Without these metaphorical epics and the values they represent, the use of the word “hero” is diminished. The nation is then at risk of losing the values which help create it, help mark its uniqueness and help support its continued success.

Today the world is a place seemingly very different regarding those it considers heroes. Today

the “heroes” seem to be sports, film or TV stars, social media phenoms, billionaires, and only occasionally more humble persons doing extraordinarily generous or brave things.

I challenge HR Doctor Fans — all 12 of you around the country — to read, for example, the newspaper Sports sections with an eye towards our search for today’s heroes. Somewhere in those sections will be actual sports scores. Much of the “news,” however, will be full of stories of various athletes being paid huge amounts of money right alongside stories about doping, assault or other criminal charges levied against some of them. Then there are those among our cultural icons such as those purveyors of pop music sometimes riddled with violent or foul language. Those persons seem to lose precious brain cells displaying

poor judgment in their personal behavior, and disrespect for others, which outweigh whatever their musical talents might be. Perhaps the HR Doctor is just becoming more curmudgeonly, or jealous of the physical prowess or ostentatiousness of many of those who suffer from testosterone overdoses, but it seems to me that exalting such behavior or even language over time depresses the soul of the next generation of kids and of society. Today’s kids — and adults — continue the search for heroes and role models for their own life. Can we not offer better examples for them to follow?

I am pleased to offer a few suggestions. Those would be the heroes whose life and conduct center around service, creation of a better life for themselves and their communities, and are trying to leave

behind a glorious legacy of making a positive difference. Whether your name happens to be Mr. Gilgamesh, Achilles, or Crockett, you eventually came to realize that all humans share a bond of mortality. All of us (sorry to tell you this) will eventually die. The best we can do is to leave behind memories of a life of caring and a positive legacy.

How about as more focus in our hero search on the exploits and thoughts of those mighty warriors who served their country honorably in the military? How about those who serve honorably in the police and fire services, and as nurses, teachers, doctors, volunteers — even human resources directors in county or city governments!

One of the greatest groups of heroes in our society certainly are parents — at least the ones who take very seriously indeed their responsibilities to grow and nurture another generation. Likewise, there is the amazing group of many hundreds of thousands of folks who give care to seniors.

How about the humble neighbors like my skilled friend retired Deputy Fire-Rescue Chief Mike Conlan, willing to come by and help you complete a project beyond your individual capabilities?

In short, there are no shortages of heroes who should be receiving far more attention than we give them and receive far more honors than we bestow at present. There is no shortage of “non-heroes” whom we seem to confuse with those who will really make for an America which will continue to thrive a hundred years from now! Perhaps our vision is impaired... perhaps it is time to spend more time focusing on those who are really noble! **CN**





# NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION



## CALIFORNIA

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY** wants everybody into the pool — the carpool, that is. The county is investing \$10,000 in a partnership with Scoop, a carpooling smartphone app company, to **subsidize employees' commuting costs**.

For a dollar each way, the county's 17,000 employees can arrange rides to and from work through the app. The county hopes to get more cars off the road and ease congestion during a one-year pilot.

Anyone can use the service, but the company specifically contracts with cities, counties and businesses to make it more affordable for employees to participate.

## DELAWARE

The **NEW CASTLE COUNTY** Council is considering a proposal that would penalize home owners for having **standing water in their yards**. Home owners who don't comply would face a \$50 fine. One council member said the legislation is partially motivated by recent headlines about the Zika virus, according to WCAU TV News.

## FLORIDA

An 8,000-square-foot **Veterans Resource Center** is coming to **HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY**, thanks to plans approved by the County Commission.

Its location, near an existing a veterans' memorial park, will enhance the site's role as a focal point for countywide veter-

ans' activities, the *Tampa Bay Times* reported.

The park is already home to a Veterans Museum whose rotating exhibits have honored veterans of the Civil War, Second Seminole Indian War, World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

Construction of the \$1.8 million project is slated begin by the end of this year. Its cost is being borne by the county and the state's Department of Economic Opportunity.

## GEORGIA

**FULTON COUNTY**'s recently approved "**living wage**" will give the county's lowest-paid workers a boost in pay over the next five years — to a base salary of \$31,000 per year, *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* reported. Currently, about 10 percent of employees make less than that amount.

The measure will increase the salaries of more than 500 county employees, from custodial workers to clerks. Its estimated cost is \$16 million over the implementation period. The county's current minimum annual pay is \$23,500.

## LOUISIANA

The **BOSSIER PARISH** Police Jury has approved an ordinance **banning "fake guns" from school** campuses and events. Violators — both students and non-students — will

face charges for unlawfully carrying "imitation firearms, projectiles, dangerous weapons or ammunition" at school-sponsored functions and on school transportation.

Banned items include any device that is "substantially similar" in color and appearance to a real gun "as to lead a reasonable person to perceive that the device is a firearm."

## MAINE

**FRANKLIN COUNTY**'s Sheriff's Office has **created a "safe zone"** outside its headquarters to provide a secure place for people to meet to conduct business. Authorities say it will benefit people who have bought something online from a person they don't know, for example, a purchase on Craigslist or similar services, the *Portland Press Herald* reported.

It's also a place where a contentiously separated or divorced couple can meet to exchange legal paperwork or handoff kids for parental visits.

More than half a dozen cameras videotape every angle of

the outdoor meeting area. If an exchange takes a violent turn, a person must report it within two weeks so the video can be retrieved before it's taped over.

## MARYLAND

In an effort to spur development, the **WICOMICO COUNTY** Council wants to **repeal impact fees**. About \$5,400 per home has historically has been earmarked to fund schools, the *Salisbury Independent* reported. However, County Executive Bob Culver said schools can be covered without the fees.

"If we really needed impact fees, I would be the first one to suggest it, but we don't," Culver said. "We have our strongest savings account, our largest employment. We're going to have a great number going to the bond hearing. But that doesn't mean we will spend like drunken sailors."

## MINNESOTA

From now on, the check "won't" be in the mail. **HENNEPIN COUNTY** commissioners have inked a deal with a vendor to provide **prepaid debit cards to inmates** as they're released from county jails.

The cards will replace checks as the method for disbursing funds owed to inmates in wages or money remaining in their commissary accounts.

Cutting checks — some for as little as \$1 — often would cost more than the checks were worth.

County corrections officials added that paper checks sometimes become damaged before they can be cashed, and people who do not have bank accounts or valid identification encounter barriers to redeeming them. The agreement runs through Sept. 30, 2019.



## NORTH CAROLINA

● **CUMBERLAND COUNTY** will help **finance a baseball stadium** in downtown Fayetteville. The county will not own equity in the ballpark, but will provide increased revenue from a special tax district for the stadium.

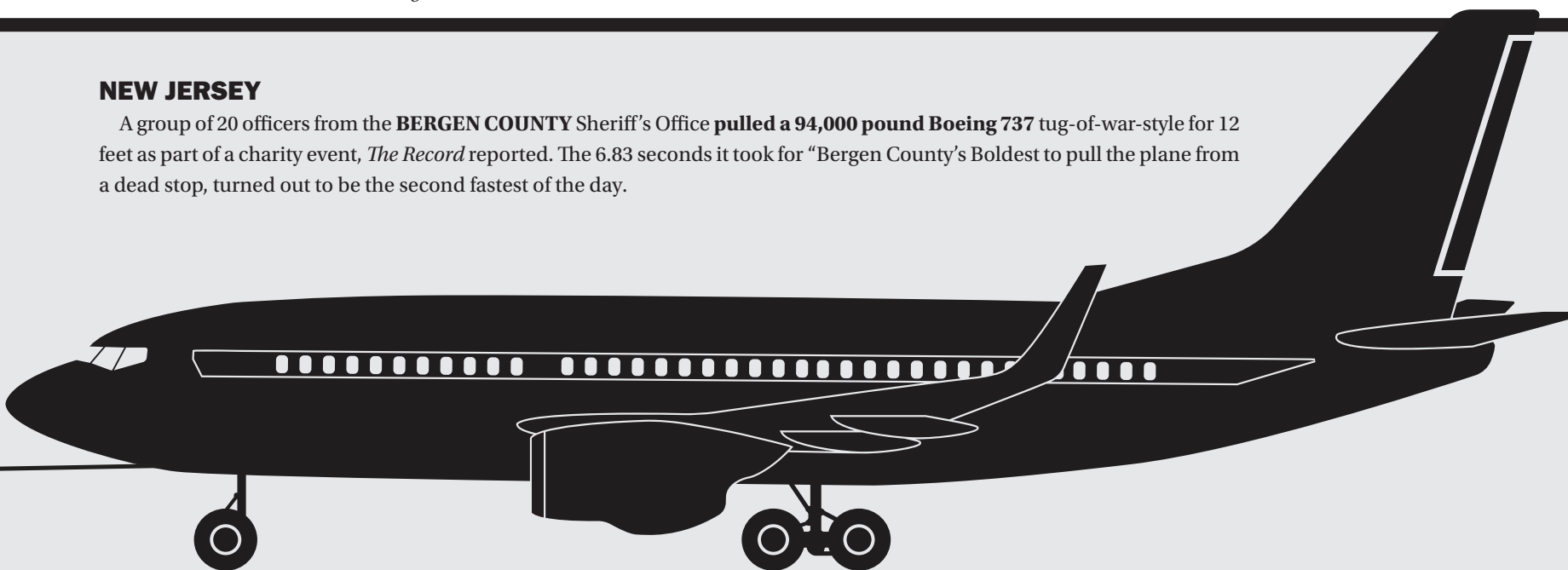
The Board of Commissioners passed a resolution that the financing agreement would be contingent on the county school board's agreeing to eliminate the increased tax revenue from a funding agreement the school system has with the county. The county will provide 100 percent of the county's part of the increased tax revenue to the project for five years and 75 percent for another 15 years, the *Fayetteville Observer* reported.





## NEW JERSEY

A group of 20 officers from the **BERGEN COUNTY** Sheriff's Office pulled a **94,000 pound Boeing 737** tug-of-war-style for 12 feet as part of a charity event, *The Record* reported. The 6.83 seconds it took for "Bergen County's Boldest to pull the plane from a dead stop, turned out to be the second fastest of the day.



● A new program in **WAKE COUNTY** will help people convicted of low-level crimes have their **records expunged**.

The district attorney's office has recruited legal aid organizations to offer free legal help in navigating the expungement process. Volunteer lawyers will review the cases and present them at the Wake County Justice Center Nov. 12, WTVD News reported.

● Emergency services personnel for **SURRY COUNTY** will have two years to get in shape for a **physical fitness test** and new employees will immediately be physically able to perform the tasks associated with their jobs under a new EMS fitness plan.

The new policy addresses the physical demands for the job and the long-term safety and health of employees, according to *EMS World*.

## OHIO

New technology will allow families to deposit money for inmates at the **CUYAHOGA COUNTY** jail and **visit by video**. Kiosks will be installed that will allow inmates to file grievances, ask for clergy, research case law, schedule doctor appointments and communicate with their families, *The Plain Dealer* reported.

Family members will be able to use an app on their via smartphone, tablet or computer. Corrections officers can monitor and terminate calls, though

calls with attorneys, mental health officials and clergy can be designated as privileged and not be monitored.

## SOUTH CAROLINA

**SPARTANBURG COUNTY** approved ordinance changes that give **more flexibility** to the Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System officials say is needed for the system to remain financially viable.

The changes will give trustees more flexibility to create more investment options and enable partnerships with other health groups to buy equipment at a reduced cost, *GoUpstate* reported.

The ordinance splits the current 11-member board of trustees into two boards — one nonprofit board with eight members to manage the assets of the district, and a new three-member nonprofit board of the health services district to oversee operations.

## TENNESSEE

A new mental health court in **BRADLEY, MCMINN, MONROE and POLK counties** will offer rehabilitative sentencing instead of jail time to defendants facing nonviolent charges who are suffering from mental illnesses.

The court will launch Jan. 1, 2017 and operate on a bi-weekly basis.

## VIRGINIA

Pets who are healthy and have no safety concerns will



**not be euthanized** at the **AP-POMATTOX COUNTY** Public Animal Shelter. The Board of Supervisors changed the shelter's policy after a dog who was to have been adopted was euthanized, WDBJ News reported.

## WISCONSIN

**DANE COUNTY** Executive Joe Parisi wants to create an **office of energy and climate change** as part of his 2017 budget proposal, plus a council on climate change.

The budget proposal also includes a tripling of the county's total solar energy production in 2017, converting the county fleet to compressed natural gas, including getting 75 vehicles running on gas produced at the county landfill, the *Wisconsin State Journal* reported. **CN**

*News From Across the Nation is compiled by Charles Taylor and Charlie Ban, senior staff writers. If you have an item for News From, please email ctaylor@naco.org or cban@naco.org.*

## ON THE MOVE

### NACo OFFICERS, COUNTY OFFICIALS

● President **Bryan Desloge** was the keynote luncheon speaker, Sept. 19, at the Montana Association of Counties Conference, in Billings, Yellowstone County.

● NACo Immediate Past President, Commissioner **Sallie Clark** gave a luncheon presentation and moderated a panel on women and millennials in the county workforce at the New York State Association of Counties Fall Seminar, held Sept. 19-21 in Niagara Falls, Niagara County.

● NACo First Vice President **Roy**

**Charles Brooks** and Aetna CEO Mark Bertolini engaged in a conversation about the social determinants of health and how they impact the development of healthy communities at an event sponsored by *The Atlantic* magazine and held Sept. 26 at the Newseum in Washington, D.C.

### NACo STAFF

● **Linda Langston**, strategic relations director, was a workshop presenter on mental health reform and criminal justice reform at the Idaho Association of Counties Annual Conference, held Sept. 26-28 in Boise, Ada County. Langston also testified before the Idaho State Legislature on mental health issues.

● **Chris Marklund**, associate legislative director, spoke at the Idaho Association's General Session Sept. 27.

● **Jacob Terrell**, associate legislative director, spoke about proposed Justice Department regulations on website

ADA compliance, Sept. 21, at the Montana Association of Counties 107th Annual Conference.

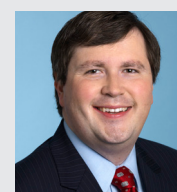
● **Emilia Istrate**, research director, participated in an invitation-only Treasury-U.S. Census Bureau Government Finance Statistics Conference, in Washington, DC, Sept. 27.



**Brooks**



**Terrell**



**Marklund**





## APPLY FOR THE 2017 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Does your county have an innovative program that improves county government and enhances services for county residents? Apply for the 2017 Achievement Awards! There are 18 categories ranging from information technology, health, criminal justice, human services and many more.

By applying for the 2017 Achievement Awards, entries will be in the running for the Counties Matter Challenge: Brilliant Ideas at Work, NACo President Bryan Desloge's presidential initiative.

To begin your application visit:

**[www.naco.org/achievementawards](http://www.naco.org/achievementawards)**

## QUESTIONS?

Contact **[awards@naco.org](mailto:awards@naco.org)**

## IMPORTANT DATES:

- **SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE:**  
MARCH 27, 2017 AT 11:59 P.M. EDT
- **NOTIFICATIONS OF ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS:**  
WEEK OF APRIL 24, 2017
- **NOTIFICATIONS OF COUNTIES MATTER CHALLENGE:**  
WEEK OF MAY 29, 2017
- **NACo ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXPOSITION:**  
JULY 21 – 24, 2017

