

SPOTLIGHT ON: RURAL BROADBAND

Bringing
the internet
to remote
areas. **Pg.10**



County library,
co-op bring
telemedicine
to veterans
Pg.13



CONGRESS PASSES
BILL TO FIGHT
OPIOID CRISIS. **PG. 7**



COUNTY SCARES UP
TOURISM WITH GHOST
TOURS. **PG. 15**

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION *of* COUNTIES

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Bernie Hillenbrand poses in front of the Wisconsin state capitol in this undated family photo. He worked for the states of Wisconsin and New York before serving as NACo's first executive director.

Bernie Hillenbrand, first NACo executive director, dies at 93

By **Charlie Ban**
senior staff writer

Working out of an unused laundry facility and taking meetings in Washington, D.C.'s Mayflower Hotel, Bernard "Bernie" Hillenbrand took charge of NACo as its first

full-time executive director in 1957.

Over the next 25 years, his vision and personality led the organization to change the way counties were represented and received on the federal level. After retiring in 1982, Hillenbrand retired to pursue

the Methodist ministry. He died Oct. 5 at the age of 93 after a brief illness.

"In 1957, county governments had no presence in Washington, D.C.," said Larry Naake, NACo's former exec-

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Hurricane Michael leaves trail of destruction in Florida Panhandle

By **Mary Ann Barton**
editor

Hurricane Michael ripped through the Florida Panhandle last week, knocking out power and peeling off roofs in counties across the region after

making landfall Oct. 10 packing 155-MPH winds.

"Cell towers are down and some of the county emergency operations centers were damaged in that region," said Virginia "Ginger" Delegal, executive director of the Flor-

ida Association of Counties. "Some of these counties are our smallest and most rural — their resources are extraordinarily limited."

Some of the hardest hit

See HURRICANE page 8

China's curb on recycling challenges counties

By **Mary Ann Barton**
editor

County recycling programs around the country have taken a hit — with recyclables bringing in about half of what they did in early 2017 — because of China's crackdown on what recyclables they will accept.

The globe's largest importer of recycled goods put the world on notice late last year that it would no longer accept recyclables containing more than 0.5 percent contamination, a standard most say is next to impossible to meet. Veterans in the business say they don't expect any changes soon and in fact, call it "the new normal."

"It's certainly had a financial impact — commodities we sold six months ago are no longer selling at that price," said Elisa Seltzer, director, Emmet County, Mich. Department of Public Works, who got into the recycling business about 30 years ago.

Although Emmet County never exported its recyclables to China, it's now facing more competition for its local markets (27 factories, mostly in Michigan) buying recyclables.

More recyclables in the marketplace means factories are paying less. "People were getting \$160, \$180 a ton for cardboard where now they might be getting \$70 or \$80 a ton for cardboard," Seltzer said. Newsprint prices have dropped from about \$85

See RECYCLE page 3

Water bill ready for president's signature

By Julie Ufner

The U.S. Senate passed a comprehensive water infrastructure package Oct. 10 to authorize the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) by a vote of 99-1. The NACo-supported, bipartisan legislation now heads to the president's desk for his signature. This is the third WRDA bill passed in the past six years, moving WRDA back to a two-year authorization cycle.

The bill, America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (S. 3021), was pieced together

from a previously passed House WRDA package (H.R. 8) and a Senate WRDA bill (S. 2800). S. 2800 was unable to move independently through the Senate due to a hold by Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.) on an unrelated issue — reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which expired at the end of September. As a workaround, committee staff on both sides of the aisle negotiated a new bipartisan bill which was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives last month.

The compromise version

would authorize a wide variety of water resource projects and policies administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) for navigation, flood control, hydropower, recreation, ports, harbors, inland waterways, water supply and emergency management. As major owners and operators of much of this infrastructure, counties are directly impacted by the policies and projects authorized in WRDA.

Most notably for counties, the WRDA legislation includes numerous provisions that would require the Army Corps to consult with impacted stakeholders, including local governments. The bill would also authorize \$6.1 billion for 12 Army Corps projects and 65 feasibility studies for potential projects. It also includes \$4.4 billion for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program, which provides funds to states and utilities to improve drinking water infrastructure.

Other provisions of interest to counties include the following:

- Requiring the Army Corps to develop a process to consult with stakeholders, including states and local governments, on future and pending WRDA projects, annual district budgets, deauthorized projects and guidance documents.
- Authorizing study of the existing cost-benefit analyses used by the Army Corps and the White House Office of Management and Budget to determine which water resource projects are submitted to Congress for WRDA authorization.

- Allowing communities to work with the Army Corps on decertified levees. The bill would allow the Army Corps to provide technical assistance, on a reimbursable basis, to local governments that own levees not accredited by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Decertified levees lead to higher National Flood Insurance Program costs for homeowners. This provision would authorize the Army Corps to identify barriers to certification.

- Increasing the focus on natural and nature-based features. For projects in an aquatic ecosystem or estuary, the Army Corps could consider and include natural and nature-based features into projects.

- Increasing the focus on renewable energy projects. The bill would require the Army Corps to identify dams that can be used for hydropower and ports that can be used for wind energy. This would increase the use of renewable energy nationwide.

- Requiring drinking water systems with more than 3,300 users to undertake risk assessment and emergency response plans to assess the risk to and resilience of its system from both natural and manmade hazards.

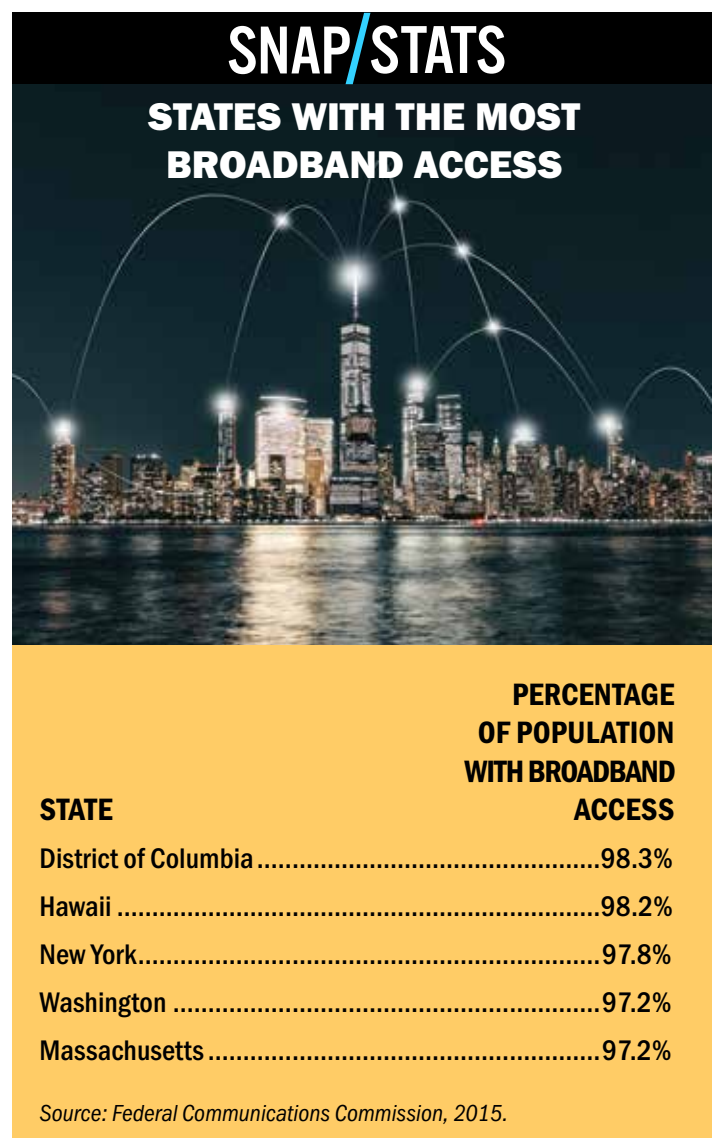
Absent from the legislation are provisions addressing the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) and EPA's Integrated Planning (IP) Framework, which NACo had advocated. HMTF is a tax levied against importers and domestic shippers using ports and harbors in coastal and Great Lakes areas. Even though the HMTF has a large surplus,

only a portion of its total is appropriated by Congress every year for operations and maintenance in the nation's harbors. The IP Framework, on the other hand, was designed to help communities struggling to comply with tighter Clean Water Act (CWA) requirements. IP would help communities prioritize CWA investments, while meeting CWA mandates and environmental goals. Congressional leaders have indicated a willingness to continue to work on HMTF and IP moving forward, separate from the WRDA 2018 bill.

WRDA legislation is historically passed every two years. However, in recent years, Congress has only been able to enact three WRDA bills: in 2007, 2014 and 2016. WRDA currently has a backlog of nearly \$100 billion worth of projects that have been authorized but have not yet received appropriations. The current WRDA legislation would be added to the list of projects awaiting congressional appropriations. NACo is encouraged by congressional efforts to move WRDA back to a two-year authorization cycle.

- To read the bill visit: <https://bit.ly/2ycRdmd>
- To read the section-by-section summary, visit: <https://bit.ly/2OP7c3j>
- To read NACo's letter of support for WRDA 2018, visit: <https://bit.ly/2yk2ilN>

Julie Ufner is an associate legislative director at NACo. She is responsible for all policy development and lobbying for the association in the areas of environment, energy and land use.



Recycling's 'new normal': New markets, cleaner materials, engaged public

From *RECYCLE* page 1

per ton to \$50 per ton.

Many counties are looking at diversifying how they are funded so they're not so reliant on markets, she said. Recycling makes up 40 percent of Seltzer's budget with county services (27 percent), revenues from the

county's solid waste transfer station (16 percent) and curbside pickup (15 percent) making up the rest.

"There has been a variety of responses to the current challenges facing recycling programs," said David Biderman, executive director and CEO of the Solid Waste Association of

America. "Some members are very pessimistic about the future of recycling in their communities, while others see this as an opportunity to fix problems and inconsistencies, and build a more robust and sustainable recycling system. Generally, local governments and their partners in the private sector recognize

we need to work together to address contamination and other systemic problems facing recycling."

Some material recovery facility (MRF) operators are slowing down their lines and investing in new sophisticated processing equipment, he said. This has increased costs at a time when the revenue associated with the sale of recyclables is about half of what it was in early 2017, he noted.

"Eventually, citizens will need to pay the true cost of recycling, through fee increases or higher taxes," Biderman said. "Although some communities are changing their recycling programs (e.g., taking glass or certain plastics out of curbside), most continue to accept a wide variety of paper, plastic, metal and glass."

In Boulder County, Colo., the county's new plastic sorting machines can tell the difference between different kinds of plastic using infrared detection. A 100-horse power air jet shoots the material into the proper containers. The items were pre-

viously sorted by hand.

The new machines were part of a \$2.8 million system upgrade. The new equipment reduces labor costs by replacing eight manual sorter positions on the container line, jobs that are increasingly hard to fill, the county noted. The improvements were paid for via a county recycling tax that passed in 1994 but is now expired.

In Emmet County, Seltzer said they are weathering the China ban recycling storm partly because the county operates all phases of its recycling process. County trucks collect trash and recycling and take it to the county-run MRF. The county uses a dual-stream MRF (dual-stream recycling is also referred to as "source separated recycling"). This means keeping the fiber component — paper and cardboard — separate from containers, including glass and plastic containers and cans.

The county collects recycling in 64-gallon carts used strictly for paper, cardboard and plastic

See *RECYCLE* Page 4



Boulder County's Conservation Manager Darla Ariens inside the county's recycling center.

Photo by Xandra McMahon/CPR News

WHAT IS WISH-CYCLING? AND WHY IS IT HARMFUL TO RECYCLING EFFORTS?

Recyclers have a word for well-intentioned, but ultimately harmful, behavior: It's called "wish-cycling."

In Marion County, Ore., residents are getting fined as much as \$15.45 per pickup for improper recycling. The county tightened its rules about recycling and drastically scaled back its recycling program due to China's restriction on most recycled materials. It's led some residents to ask for smaller recycling bins or cancel recycling altogether.

The region's Mid Valley Garbage and Recycling Association sends a recycling coordinator to neighborhood meetings to talk to residents.

The National Recycling Coalition is calling on leaders and companies in the waste and recycling industry to remind their local residents that "they should ONLY recycle the items on their

LOCAL recyclables list. This is important for U.S. users of recycled materials, and the current China embargo makes this an opportune time for this reminder. When in doubt — throw it in the trash!"

"People feel better when they put (things) in the blue bin, even if it's contamination. It's horrible, and it's happening all over," said Patti Toews, project director, San Luis Obispo County, Calif. Integrated Waste Management Authority's (SLO-IWMA)

Here's a look at recycling dos and don'ts, from San Luis Obispo County, Calif.:

- Plastic bags top the list of things that should not be put in the blue bins, San Luis Obispo County noted, because the thin plastic can severely damage machinery.
- Batteries are another danger

to recycle. During the recycling center's process, batteries can spark and harm recycling-center employees. Let residents know where to recycle them.

- Needles have been a common problem as well. There have been several times where insulin needles will end up in the recycling bin because they are made of plastic and metal, however, they are a non-recyclable hazard. Give residents guidelines on how to dispose of needles.
- Food scraps are damaging to the recycling process. It is considered a recycling contaminant if food packaging that was not properly washed out or food scraps are thrown into recycling. If your county offers composting, be sure to let residents know about it.
- Frozen food boxes are not recyclable food packages. They are lined with a wax or plastic polymer

to help insulate the food. The wax makes the box "impossible to recycle," the SLO IWMA website said. If cleaned properly, plastic frozen food trays can be recycled, but not the boxes.

- Paper cups, typically used for coffee, have a similar wax lining to contain the liquid and therefore cannot be recycled. Yet, the cardboard drink sleeves and plastic lids are recyclable.
- Pizza boxes run a fine line. If there is grease on the pizza box, then it is a contaminant and should be thrown away, but, if the top portion is not greasy, it can be cut off and recycled.
- Dishware is also among the list of frequently recycled non-recyclables. Ceramic is not a recyclable product. And as for glasses, the type of glass used to make dishes does not melt at the same temperature as glass bottles, so it is not processed at

recycling plants. Broken glass should never be recycled, as it is a hazard to employees. It should be sealed in a box or wrapped in several sheets of newspaper.

- Diapers are another hazard that can end up in the wrong bin. Although disposable diapers contain paper and plastic, they are considered a bio hazard and should not be recycled. Also, the mixed materials could not be separated anyway.
- PVC garden hoses and PVC pipe can also damage machinery. The long hoses are not meant to be recycled and can tangle the recycling process, creating a safety hazard.
- Other items that don't belong in the blue bin include: Scrap metal, clothing, paper milk cartons, ice cream containers, paper towels, Styrofoam, light bulbs, shredded paper and electronic devices.

Recycling revenue cut in half

From RECYCLE page 3



Source: Emmet County, Mich.

EMMET COUNTY RECYCLING FUNDING

Emmet County, Mich. Recycling was initially equipped under a millage collecting .25 mills for two years. This provided for a truck, drop-off containers, and processing equipment. State grants assisted in funding initial construction and equipment.

bags and 18-gallon bins for tin, glass and plastic.

"We might be the only MRF in the country that collects plastic bags," Seltzer said. The county asks residents to recycle the bags together in the size of a soccer ball. They get picked off, bailed and are sold to Trex, a company that makes decking. "They've been a great market partner," she said. "It's a huge problem coming into single-stream MRFs because it gums up the equipment."

The county's education and outreach to residents includes messages on its website, on the trucks and on the bins. The Public Works Department has an open line of communication with its drivers and recycling processors, getting tips from them on challenges they face.

The drivers of the trucks sat down with office staff and the department's outreach coordinator "helping us design the 'oops!' tags that they put on the bins if people are messing up," Seltzer said. The "oops" or quality control tags identify problems when residents need guidance with recycling.

The county's MRF also handles recycling for neighboring Presque Isle, Cheboygan and Otsego counties.

Seltzer's advice for other counties?

"The best advice I have heard is stay the course, try to find alternative markets if markets have dried up, do what you can to clean up your material and message it to your community how important that is," she said. **CN**

Hillenbrand 'put counties on the map of politics'

From HILLENBRAND page 1

utive director who first met Hillenbrand as a California State Association of Counties intern in the 1960s. "By the '70s, we were included in the discussions with governors and mayors, and that was all due to the way he built the organization."

In fact, the *New York Times* called him, in 1981, "the lobbyist who put counties back on the map of politics."

That building process capitalized on the enormous support county elected officials could muster for causes like revenue sharing, funding for federally-managed land and the battle against unfunded mandates.

But beyond that, Hillenbrand saw a great value in NACo's potential to improve county operations and the savvy of county officials, all contributing to help counties emerge from an enduring reputation as "the dark continent of American politics."

Years later, in an interview with *County News*, Hillenbrand said NACo became "a place where county leaders could get together, talk about the problems they were facing and find solutions," he said in June 2018.

"There's a comradeship you can't get anywhere else, and bonding, seeing the same people every year at our meetings. People would look forward to next year."

"He was passionate, and he was hilarious, and he was a phenomenal storyteller until the day he died," said NACo Executive Director Matt Chase, who succeeded Hillenbrand's late wife, Aliceann Wohlbruck as head of the National Association of Development Organizations. "His passion for the public sector showed in the way he would tell the stories that advanced county interests."

Born in Syracuse, N.Y., Hillenbrand joined the Army at 18 and fought in the European theater. He was wounded twice by German mortars in



Bernie Hillenbrand served as director of NACo for 25 years.

the Battle of Hürtgen Forest and spent a year and a half recovering before joining the Merchant Marines.

He then earned masters degrees in public administration at Syracuse University and theology from Wesley Theological Seminary.

"He was a scrapper, and his youth in poverty was a big part of his story," Chase said.

"After the war, he decided he was going to live his life with no regrets and he put 100 percent into whatever he was going to do because he knew the alternatives. He had a hunger."

While working as assistant director of the American Municipal Association, he initially turned down the NACo job, but he saw counties' emerging influence and when a second offer came around, he accepted.

He developed an appreciation for counties' rising importance while working for the mayor of Syracuse, after noting how many functions of local government ultimately involved the county.

Hillenbrand's tenure at NACo stressed the power of relationships, Naake said, and Hillenbrand said that extended to the staff.

In 2016, he recounted how annual three-day-long planning meetings at his Washington County, Md. farm included every staff member.

"We would go through what

was working and what needed to change, and the opinion of a secretary meant as much as the opinion of a lobbyist, everything we said was equal" he said. "We were a family."

He was proud of NACo's inclusiveness, particular its distinction in electing the first Japanese-American man and African American woman to lead a national political organization.

Hillenbrand retired from NACo in 1982 and served as a Methodist minister until the compulsory retirement age of 70. He lived in Washington, D.C. and raised three daughters, a son and two stepsons.

Even into his mid-90s, Hillenbrand rode six miles a day on a stationary bicycle in his apartment, which included his original desk from the laundry room in the '50s.

"He had this optimism that he could do anything, that NACo could do anything," Naake said. **CN**

A celebration of life service is set for Sunday, Oct. 21 at 12:45 p.m. at the Foundry United Methodist Church, 1500 16th St. NW, Washington, DC. A reception will follow the service at the church. The Hillenbrand family welcomes attendees to share stories about Bernie. Contact the family about attending the service, sharing stories or sending condolences by emailing lisa@lisahillenbrand.com.

Election security: Building trust at the ballot box

By Dr. Alan Shark

With National Cybersecurity Awareness Month upon us and only weeks away from the 2018 elections, county officials can't help but wonder: "How secure is our election system?" And let's face it, there's far more at stake than simply deciding upon a winning candidate — trust in government is behind every ballot.

As widely reported, we know that cybercriminals tampered with the 2016 election. This has led to discussions about how to secure voting in districts across the country, especially as they increasingly transition to digital processes. Recognizing that voting procedures are set by each state, there is no blanket regulation that would improve upon voter security throughout the nation.

This year, the Election Assistance Commission handed out \$380 million dollars targeted for states to use as they see fit. Most will agree that this initial funding didn't come close to addressing the real needs of local governments — especially counties, which do the heavy lifting when it comes to local elections.

There are more than 8,000 jurisdictions across the country responsible for the administration of elections.

Cyberattacks have dramatically escalated in the past 2.5 years and have become more sophisticated and harder to detect and not limited to elections either. Since elections are entwined with trust, this is what is getting everyone's attention these days.

There is some good news to report, and that is the availability and publication of the *Handbook for Elections Infrastructure Security* published by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), funded by the Center for Internet Security (CIS).

This is a great resource that every public official should download and read (it's free) and the list of contributors and

reviewers is reassuring.

The primary goal of this handbook is to help improve the security of elections infrastructure as soon as possible, and ideally in advance of the 2018 elections, and establish a set of best practices that, with continual updates, support elections infrastructure security into the future.

The folks at CIS expect many elections systems will already incorporate the majority of these mitigations, allowing those jurisdictions to demonstrate a strong baseline. In that case, the handbook can assist in prioritizing for continual improvement and evolution.

While there is always the temptation to look for easy templates and solutions, the handbook does not recommend any single approach to managing election systems or developing and deploying any particular election systems technology.

Instead it recommends that election jurisdictions tailor their voting processes and systems to the needs of their voters and jurisdictional laws and requirements.

Developing a risk assessment is the best place to start. Just a few years ago, most strategies were aimed at eliminating any cyberattack through hardware and software solution defenses. Today no technology professional can guarantee 100 percent safety and

immunity from cyberattacks and intrusions. We have come to accept the new reality that we can only mitigate risk and develop remediation strategies if and when something happens. As the CIS Handbook points out, it all starts with a top-level assessment of vulnerabilities and potential consequences to the elections systems infrastructure and by identifying network connectivity — devices or systems that work with other devices or systems to achieve their objectives — as the major potential vulnerability.

The reason is simple: Given an adversary with sufficient time and resources, systems that can be accessed via a network cannot be fully protected against compromise. There are ways to improve the security of network connected systems with additional controls, but the inherent complexity of network connectivity results in significant residual vulnerabilities. As shown, election systems are linked one way or another to other systems and it is where the transfer of information can also lead to points of extra risk.

Of course, many counties are dealing with outdated or unproven technologies. To make matters worse, they lack the technical expertise or lack the resources to bring in outside experts. Such obstacles, while not to be ignored, should

not be offered as a blanket excuse for not acting with the resources you do have access to. Aside from the obvious network integrity and communications issues, the handbook offers some useful insights into the following:

- Eligibility for an individual to register to vote;
- Voter identity verification, unless specifically about the accuracy and availability of voter registration rolls;
- Security of campaigns or campaign information systems; and
- The accuracy of information about candidates or issues, including those conveyed using social media.

For election systems, this involves establishing trust in users, devices, software and processes. Many systems are "composed" or built up from a variety of commercial and purpose-built parts, device and software connected via processes and user actions. The results in security decisions about trust are made across many components and brought together at a system level. In other cases, key election system components or services functions are contracted out. This does not change the security responsibility for decision-makers, but forces them to think about how the desired security properties can be specified in contract language and service

specifications, rather than implemented directly. The last of the three sections focus on:

1. A set of critical risk-mitigating activities from which all organizations can benefit,
2. Recommendations for best practices in contracting for IT services, and
3. A set of best practices in the form of recommendations and controls for network connected and indirectly connected devices, as well as for transmission of information.

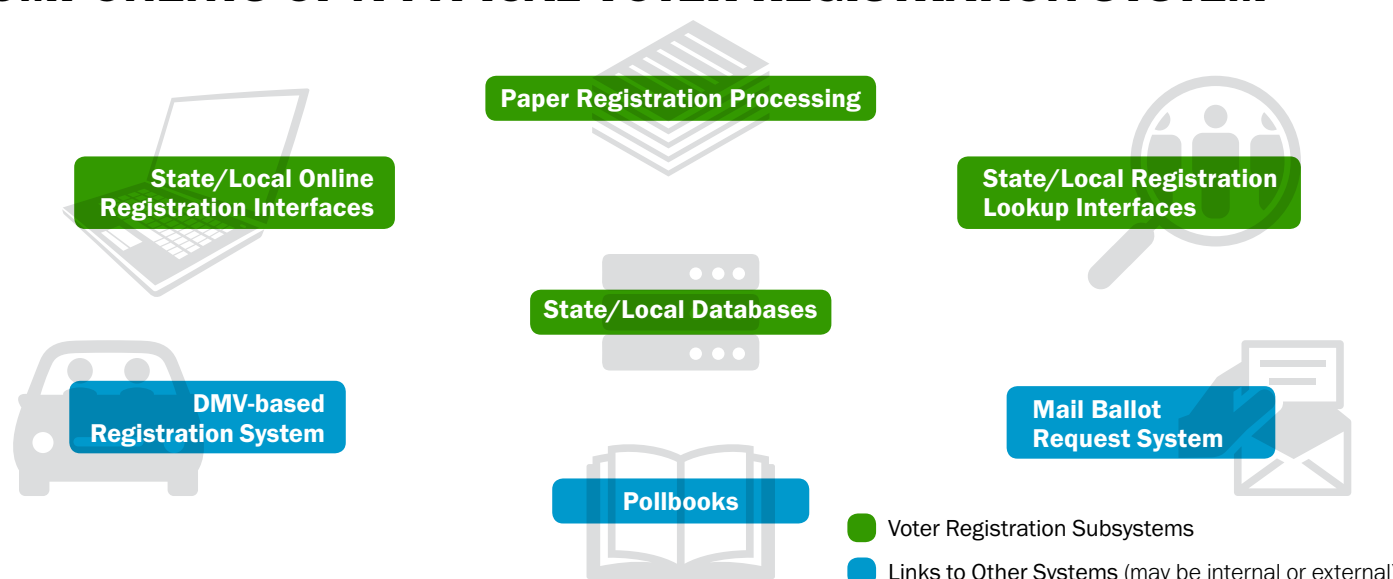
The handbook should be required reading for all election officials and can serve as the basis for in-house training or at the very least meaningful discussion among the various stakeholders.

Better yet, the CIS created the Elections Infrastructure-ISAC and membership is free. Once signed up, you will receive timely information about what is happening in localities across the nation.

Let's vote for being better informed and active. Everyone will benefit in the midterm elections. **CN**

Alan R. Shark is NACo's Senior Technology Advisor and Executive Director of the Public Technology Institute. Download the *Center for Internet Security and Handbook* here: <https://www.cisecurity.org/elections-resources/> Join the EI-ISAC: <https://www.cisecurity.org/ei-isac/>.

COMPONENTS OF A TYPICAL VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEM



Source: Handbook for Elections Infrastructure Security

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Congress approves major disaster reform bill

By Brett Mattson
and Lindsey Holman

The U.S. Senate recently passed H.R. 302, which contains the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018, on a 93-6 vote. The legislation, passed Oct. 3, was attached to the five-year reauthorization of Federal Aviation Administration programs, which President Trump has signed.

The legislation modifies several Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) programs to better assist states and counties in their disaster-related efforts. The legislation emphasizes improvements of pre-disaster mitigation planning and funding. Specifically, the bill recommends that up to 6 percent of the aggregate amount of federal disaster assistance provided to state and local governments be invested in a national public infrastructure pre-disaster hazard mitigation program. This funding would support mitigation techniques including but not limit-

APPLICATION PERIOD NOW OPEN FOR FEMA GRANTS

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced the opening Oct. 1 of the application period for more than \$395 million in hazard mitigation grants. States and localities will be eligible to apply for both Flood Mitigation Assistance and Pre-Disaster Mitigation grants. The deadline to apply for the FMA and PDM grants is Jan. 31, 2019.

In all, \$160 million is available through the FMA grants to help localities implement changes to reduce or eliminate risk of flood damage to structures insured by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). FEMA has allocated \$70 million of this funding for community flood mitigation projects such as floodwater

diversion and flood-control measures. Congress approved a short-term extension of NFIP on July 31 that will authorize the program through Nov. 30.

FEMA is also making available \$235.2 million of Pre-Disaster Mitigation funds for states and localities to proactively build resiliency measures to minimize the potential loss of life and property due to disasters. These grants are awarded annually and apply to all hazard mitigation planning and projects increasing the capacity of state and local governments to preempt losses as a result of natural disasters. For more information on the grants and to access the application portal, visit <https://bit.ly/2QF2YZI>.

ed to preparation and planning, elevating or moving structures prone to flooding and securing infrastructure to lessen the ef-

fects of natural disasters.

In a victory for counties, under the legislation, FEMA would also be prohibited from

attempting to recoup any aid provided more than three years prior to the date it was released. For counties, the recoupment process could strain local budgets if a government is required to pay back funds provided by FEMA years after they have been used. This provision would be applicable to funds given for programs related to Individual Assistance, Public Assistance and other federal emergency programs.

The bill expands the list of mitigation measures eligible for federal assistance, including fire prevention and wind-storm measures and will allow local governments to fund projects associated with reseeding, mulching, installing warning signs and hardening of electric utility poles. This is of particular importance for counties that experience dry and wet seasons, as these would assist communities in rehabbing areas left barren by wildfires, which could then be eroded or destroyed during the wet season by flooding.

FEMA would be required under the legislation to provide annual guidance and training to state and local first responders and utility companies. This training would help first responders prioritize certain healthcare facilities in the event of a disaster-caused power outage.

Finally, FEMA would be responsible for developing and issuing guidance on the identification and designation of evacuation routes. These routes must be reviewed for their durability, strength and sustainability. FEMA must also consider how best to evacuate vulnerable populations, including individuals with physical or mental disabilities, schools, nursing homes and the homeless. This would include planning on how to share information with evacuees, how to shelter evacuees and how to return them to their homes. **EN**

Mattson is a legislative assistant and Holman is an associate legislative director at NACo.

House, Senate reach agreement on opioid response

By Valerie Brankovic

Following months of deliberation, the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate recently reached agreement on a comprehensive opioid legislative package, the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act (H.R. 6). Congress' approval of the sweeping opioid bill comes after the House and Senate began negotiations to iron out differences between the two chambers' separate opioid bills. The Senate's approval of the final legislative agreement Oct. 3 follows the House's approval of the same package on Sept. 28. The bill now heads to the president for his signature.

As negotiated, the 660-page bill serves as a legislative vehicle for dozens of smaller opioid bills considered by legislators throughout the 115th

Congress. The package focuses on improving the federal response to the opioid epidemic via changes to Medicaid and Medicare, expansion of treatment resources for health care providers and enhancement of recovery supports for patients.

Several programs in the final legislative text could bolster local governments' response to the epidemic, and NACo sent a letter to congressional leadership Sept. 24 to express support for these provisions. Measures included in H.R. 6 supported by counties are:

- **At-Risk Youth Medicaid Protection Act (H.R. 1925):** The bill requires state Medicaid programs to suspend — rather than terminate — Medicaid benefits for justice-involved juveniles. The measure could help counties provide effective treatment and care coordina-

tion services for youth both pre- and post-release.

- **Medicaid Reentry Act (H.R. 4005):** The bill directs the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to issue best practices around providing health care for justice-involved individuals returning to their communities from county correctional facilities. (The legislation was amended from its original proposal, which would have restored Medicaid benefits for individuals 30 days prior to their release.)

- **Improving Access to Behavioral Health Information Technology Act (S. 1732/H.R. 3331):** This proposal directs the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation to incentivize health information technology demonstrations for behavioral health providers, including approximately

750 county-based behavioral health authorities.

- **Individuals in Medicaid Deserve Care that is Appropriate and Responsible in its Execution Act (IMD CARE Act) (H.R. 5797):** This bill partially lifts Medicaid's Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMD) exclusion to allow states to receive federal Medicaid payments for substance use disorder services provided in IMD facilities, and could enable county-based mental and behavioral health authorities to treat more patients.

- **Reauthorization of key federal health and public safety programs:** Secs. 3302-3306 of H.R. 6 reauthorize federal programs that support counties addressing substance use disorders. These include the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and programs under the ju-

risdiction of ONDCP, including the High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area and Drug-Free Communities Programs. The bill also renews the drug courts program, as well as training and technical assistance for drug court operations.

In addition to these bills, Congress considered other pieces of opioid legislation that were not included in the final legislation. In June 2018, the House passed the bipartisan Overdose Prevention and Patient Safety Act (H.R. 6082) which would have aligned privacy provisions governing patients' substance use disorder records with 42 CFR, Part 2 laws and improved information-sharing across health care providers. **EN**

Valerie Brankovic is a legislative assistant at NACo.



The Florida National Guard performs a reconnaissance mission in Bay County (Mexico Beach), Fla., after Hurricane Michael made landfall Oct. 10. Photo courtesy of the Florida National Guard

Hurricane Michael decimates Florida counties

From HURRICANE page 1

counties include Bay, Washington, Holmes, Jackson, Calhoun, Gulf, Franklin, Liberty, Gadsden, Leon and Wakulla. Bay, Gulf and Wakulla counties were under a mandatory evacuation in the runup to the storm. Counties in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina also braced for impact.

The Category 4 monster storm (just 2 MPH shy of a Category 5) killed four people in Gadsden County, Fla., and a girl in Seminole County, Ga., according to *The New York Times*, which described the hurricane as the worst to ever hit the region since record-keeping began in 1851. A man was killed driving his car when a tree fell on it in Iredell County, N.C. as the storm spun northward. The storm was the

third most intense to ever hit the continental United States, Accuweather reported.

Delegal, whose power and internet at home were out the day after the storm hit, said she was having trouble getting through to county officials due to power and cell tower outages. Major roadways across the region were impassable, she noted, including about 80 miles of Interstate 10 that later reopened.

When compared to previous hurricanes, there seemed to be more time for pre-storm preparation, she noted. “The storm came up quickly,” she said, but the counties were as prepared as they could be, with limited resources. The storm morphed from a tropical storm into a Category 3 hurricane in a matter of six hours Oct. 9. About 6,000 residents occupied 80 shelters in the

region that night, before the hurricane hit the next day, the American Red Cross reported.

Counties kept in touch with residents by posting to social media. Bay County, Fla. Emergency Services posted updates on its Facebook page noting curfews and impassable roads, asking residents to shelter in place and notifying residents of downed power lines as well as warning them to boil water or drink bottled water. The messages were shared by the thousands with hundreds commenting.

Franklin County, Fla. reportedly saw a storm surge of 10 feet of water. The wind gauge at the county airport there blew off after recording gusts of 90 MPH, *The Washington Post* reported.

Donations can be made to the American Red Cross or the Salvation Army. **CN**

CN JOB MARKET

EQUALIZATION DIRECTOR

MINNEHAHA COUNTY, SD invites applications for the Equalization Director to lead the planning, operation and management of the Equalization Office. Will supervise staff who annually value all real residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural County property. Develop policies and procedures to comply with applicable law. Prepare annual budgets. Analyze market income and construction data. Oversee the calculation and preparation of assessment appraisals. Bachelor’s in business administration, mathematics, statistics or related field plus 5 yrs relevant experience. Comparable experience may be considered. CSDA, CAE designation, budget management and previous supervisory experience preferred. Hiring range is \$3,108.80 - \$3,348.00 biweekly DOQ. Appointment above the hiring range is DOQ/DOE Minnehaha County offers health, dental, vision, and life insurance, a generous paid time off program, extended sick leave, retirement, and an employee assistance program. Full list of qualifications and application: <http://jobs.minnehahacounty.org>. **Posting deadlines November 13, 2018 at 5pm.** EO/AA Employer. Contact HR with questions at 605-367-4337.

WORD SEARCH

NODAWAY COUNTY, Mo.
Created by: Mary Ann Barton

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

CARNEGIE: Dale Carnegie, author of “How to Win Friends and Influence People,” was a native of the county. When he died in 1955, the book had sold more than 5 million copies in 31 languages and is still popular today.

COURTHOUSE: The current county courthouse, one of three built in the county’s history, was built in 1881 with a design by Jacques Eckel and George Mann. Mann later designed the Arkansas State Capitol.

DERBY: At least 10 Kentucky Derby winners have ties to the county. “Elwood” was the first Derby winner, in 1904, to be bred by a woman, Mrs. J.B. Prather, at Faustiana Farms in the county. Ben Jones and son Jimmy Jones, who operated a horse farm in the county, trained horses that won the Derby eight times.

FARMS: The county is home to more than 1,000 farms; the county Farm Bureau recently celebrated its 100th annual meeting.

GOVERNORS: The county was home to two Missouri governors, Albert P. Morehouse (who started the Nodaway Democrat newspaper), and Forrest C. Donnell. Donnell later occupied the same house in the county that Morehouse had lived in.

LAZY: A patent was issued in 1891 to Elizabeth Howell, a county resident, for a Lazy Susan, a revolving serving table.

MARYVILLE: The county seat, it was named after the wife of Amos Graham. Graham served as one of the original county commissioners.

MOZINGO: Mazingo Lake Recreation Park includes a 1,006-acre reservoir owned by the city of Maryville, surrounded by 3,000 acres of parkland which includes golf courses and cabins.

MUSEUM: The county is home to the Nodaway County Historical Society and Museum. In addition to local history, it also displays traveling exhibits from national museums.

NEWSPAPER: The Maryville Daily Forum, still in existence today, was founded in 1872 as the Nodaway Democrat.

PLATTE: The Platte Purchase was a land acquisition (about the size of Rhode Island and Delaware combined) in 1836 by the U.S. government from American Indian tribes. The land included Nodaway County.

RIVER: The county is named for Nodaway River. The name of the river first appeared in a journal of explorers Lewis and Clark, who camped at the mouth of the river in 1804. The Indian word means “jump over water.”

UNIVERSITY: Northwest Missouri State University is located in Nodaway County.

WILSON: Brigadier Gen. Leigh Wilson, who died in 1978, operated the Wilson Motel and the Hitching Post restaurant in the county.

WINE: Backyard Vine & Wine, a family-owned winery and vineyard, is a popular new tourism venture in the county.

Celebrate Community Planning Month in October

By David Heinold

I encourage you to join me in celebrating Community Planning Month in October as we recognize the vital role county planning plays in helping build safe, healthy and vibrant counties across the nation.

County planning spans a variety of sizes and scopes in government administration across the country. County planners are an integral part of managing growth, conserving rural heritage, and protecting the natural environment from development impacts.

In my home county of Minnehaha County, S.D., the county planning department works every day to ensure that flooding doesn't occur in low-lying areas through administration of the Floodplain Management Ordinance that sets restrictions on what landowners can do with

their properties located in the designated floodplain area.

The planning staff is also working with landowners on code enforcement cases that are driven by complaint basis to make sure that minimum property maintenance standards can be met by rural residents.

Since agricultural development is a vital economic industry to the state of South Dakota and Minnehaha County in particular, staff are responsible for making recommendations on livestock operations to the planning commission while balancing the often-competing interests of landowners spread throughout the rural area.


This can be a challenging endeavor if not dealt with in a proactive manner with an up-to-date set of concentrated animal feeding operation regulations in the zoning ordinance to ensure that all people feel their voices

have been heard in the planning process. This is a critical component of good planning practice in county government of all shapes, sizes, and forms.

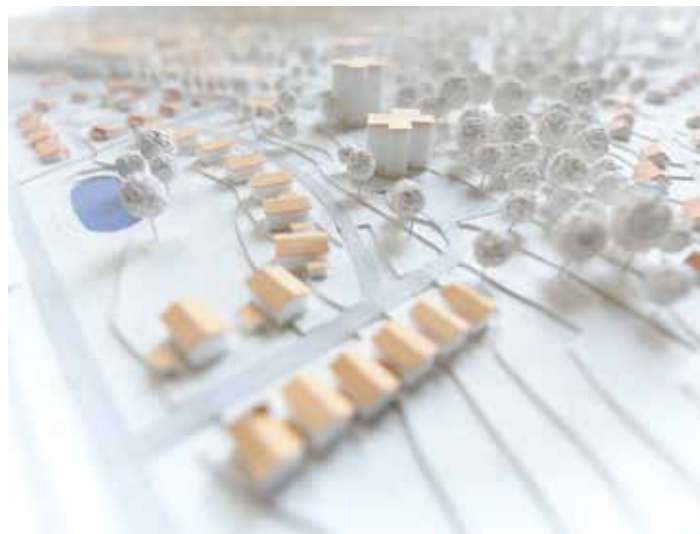
The National Association of County Planners (NACP) works to strengthen the relationship between county planners, elected officials and other related county personnel while working

closely with other planning organizations such as the County Planning Division of the American Planning Association.

An upcoming example is a NACo webinar on Wednesday Oct. 31, to recognize the importance of county planning in addressing affordable housing. Visit naco.org/webinars to learn more and register.

NACP, an affiliate of NACo, is committed to providing you with a variety of forums for continued professional development through disseminating information and resources of value to the general membership as well as provide a conduit for public input on NACo policies that address county planning issues. We have members across the country who are actively involved in county planning and raising awareness on land use issues. To learn more and be involved with NACP, visit countyplanning.org or contact me at dheinold@minnehahacounty.org or Jack Morgan, NACo staff liaison to NACP at jmorgan@naco.org. 

David Heinold works for Minnehaha County, S.D. as a Planner II and is president of the National Association of County Planners.



Registration is now open at

www.NACo.org/LEG19

2019 NACo

LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

MARCH 2-6 • HILTON WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON, D.C.



STRONGER COUNTIES. STRONGER AMERICA.

SPOTLIGHT ON:

RURAL BROADBAND

BROADBAND SERVES AS A RURAL LIFELINE AND BUILDING BLOCK

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

Lori Shaw came home to Coalstrip, Mont. from Bozeman. She was in her mid 20s — a prized demographic for rural Rosebud County, and she didn't know what she wanted to do with herself. She started a pet care business, visiting houses and caring for animals. Within a year,

business was booming and the income allowed her to start an activist movement supporting the state's coal industry and environmentalism.

Shaw marketed her business in town on social media. Even more critically, her activism relied on social media to spread messaging statewide. But there was a drawback to life in her town of 2,300, located 30 miles from an interstate.

"Fifty percent of the time, I don't have internet," she said. "I'm paying for it, but I can't get it. A lot of my clients will need me on the fly and they'll message me and I just won't get it until it's too late: 'Can you feed the horses? Can you check on my dog?'"

"If it doesn't get much better, I'm not sure how much longer I can stay."

It's a story playing out all over

rural America, with the technology available for business, telemedicine, agriculture and ranching all limited by their ability to connect to reliable high-speed internet. The current standard for broadband access is 25 Megabits per second (Mbps) download speed and 3 Mbps upload.

"It feels like we're the red-headed stepchild because we hear about 5G and we don't

even get 3G consistently," said Doug Martens, a Rosebud County commissioner.

It's a resource allocation problem. Internet service providers have to build the fiber optic lines long distances for relatively few customers and often through difficult terrain. The costs to these businesses often outweigh the benefits,

See RURAL page 10

Broadband 'is a utility ... not just a nice thing to have'

From RURAL page 10

and in Coalstrip's case, as Martens said, they missed the boat.

"When our phone company was building out the lines, a lot of our citizens didn't think they needed it," Martens said. "It didn't make sense to overbuild the whole city for 10 customers when most people were fine with dial-up."

He added that commissioners had a blind spot for a long time because public buildings like county offices and schools were wired for broadband, while small businesses and residential neighborhoods have not been.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) found that between 2012 and 2016, that level of service was available to 69.3 percent of rural Americans, reaching 43.6 million people from a starting point of 45.7 percent of rural areas and 27.7 million people in 2012. By comparison, 97.9 percent of the urban population, accounting for 254.2 million people, had broadband access in 2016.

Seven states had less than 50 percent rural access to broadband in 2016, with Arizona bottoming out at 34.4 percent of the population connected.

"I think it's absolutely huge, because it touches all there is for a community to be concerned about," said J.D. Clark, the county judge in Wise County, Texas and past chairman of NACo's Rural Action Caucus. "When you talk about broadband for rural communities, you're talking about healthcare or telemedicine, you're talking about education, you're talking about economic development, you're talking about public safety — with deputies having Internet in their cars, doing reports remotely on the scene. It's everything."

For entrepreneurs like Shaw in a state like Montana that had 59.2 percent rural broadband, doing business means finding someone with reliable broadband to beg and borrow



State-of-the-art combines include several computers. Photo by Lori Shaw

time in their homes or offices. Coalstrip residents have access to wireless broadband, an unreliable substitute which requires a clear line of sight between the user and the tower on a good day. No trees, no hills, nothing in the way. It's not a viable substitute, something the FCC has acknowledged. And it may tip the scales for people who would otherwise want to live in small, rural communities, with lower costs of living and quality of life aspects they desire.

"Our fear is that people will gravitate toward Billings, which has much more reliable service," said Jim Atchinson, executive director of the South-Eastern Montana Development Corporation, which serves four counties including Rosebud. "If you have good connectivity and UPS, you can have a successful business in rural America. If you don't, that's strike two."

Atchinson's organization performed a survey of its client counties and found the most pressing need in this coal-centric region was reliable internet.

"A few years ago, many of us didn't know what broadband was but now we know what we have for a town of 2,300 was a bandage," he said. "We have numerous providers who did a lousy job for expensive fees."

Rosebud County Commissioner Doug Martens said the

need for broadband snuck up on county commissioners because of the unequal access to it.

"It flew under the radar as a problem for a long time," he said. "We've just gotten to the point in the last five years to where we're using the technology that is available in Forsyth (the county seat)."

It's a resource question. The cost to extend fiber lines to small pockets of population are often prohibitive. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's e-Connectivity Pilot program has allocated \$600 million to expand broadband in underserved rural and tribal lands with populations of less than

20,000 residents, though the standard of service targeted through those programs is lower — 10Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload.

Atchinson hopes to cobble together enough sources of funding to build out fiber to Coalstrip, but it's a chicken and egg proposition.

"If we can had some more economic diversification, added about two or three dozen jobs, maybe we could get the town wired through federal grants and private business matches," he said. "The challenge there is adding those jobs without broadband. We understand the costs but we're going to find a way to

solve that puzzle."

The concern over rural broadband availability isn't limited to small businesses. Agricultural work is increasingly dependent on connectivity as technology is added to traditional farm equipment.

"I was in a combine the other day and the farmer told me that it has 27 computers running it," said Shaw, who serves as a member of the Coalstrip City Council. "Half the time when it breaks down, John Deere can fix it remotely," if the company can read the diagnostic data that needs to be transmitted.

"Drones have become an important tool, too," Martens said. "You can take drone flights of your fields, monitor irrigation patterns, you can send a picture of a weed you don't know about to Monsanto or Dupont and they can get back to you with what chemical you need to treat it."

Ranching is still all about raising animals, but technology helps.

"There's a lot more to feeding cows than you'd expect," Martens said. "Rationing is done online. You take blood samples from your livestock and send it off and a company gives you the ideal feed ration so you aren't underfeeding or overfeeding them."

To Clark, the variety of modern needs makes broadband access necessary for the health and future viability of rural communities.

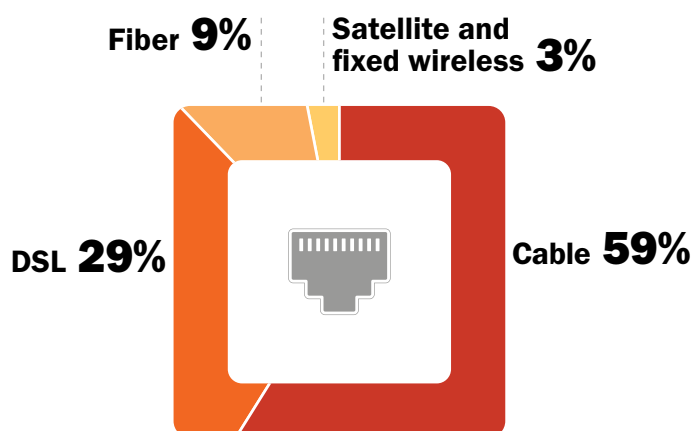
"When you look at it from an economic development standpoint, businesses now, that's what they're looking for," he said. "It's a utility, it's not a 'nice thing to have. They're going to go somewhere they can have reliable speed broadband."

"The same goes for people looking to move to your county. There are going to be more and more professional jobs that are allowing people to work from home some of the time. They need dependable high-speed Internet to do that, period. And students need reliable broadband at home." **CN**

SPOTLIGHT ON:
**RURAL
BROADBAND**

WIRED INTERNET CONNECTIONS IN THE U.S.

Internet service over the same connection as cable TV is by far the most popular type of wired internet connection for the U.S. customers, followed by DSL (which comes over telephone wires).



Source: Federal Communications Commission

Garrett County, Md. brings broadband to remote residents

By **Mary Ann Barton**
editor

Garrett County, Md. lies in the westernmost part of the state in the Allegheny Mountains and averages 46 people per square mile. It is an internet dead zone.

“These people have lived here for generations, before the internet was a thing,” said Nathaniel Watkins, the county’s chief information officer. “It’s not like they’re actively choosing not to have it, the world has changed around them ... they can’t compete, their kids have to go to McDonalds to do their homework, it’s a real problem that we’re facing.”

Some of the roadblocks to getting broadband? “We’ve got rocky soils, it’s pretty rugged terrain, it’s not easy or fast to get service to people here without some help,” said Cheryl DeBerry, who serves as the rural broadband project coordinator for Garrett County Economic Development.

After receiving \$50,000 in funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission last year, the county matched that and hired a consultant, “to help us figure out what to do,” DeBerry said. They used the competitive bid process to attract a private company, Declaration Networks Group (DNG), to get wireless broadband to residents and later the commission kicked in more funding for design, engineering, equipment and installation.

SPOTLIGHT ON:
RURAL BROADBAND

Wireless

DNG was able to use county and state-owned property to locate equipment needed for wireless internet. “If it doesn’t make sense [to internet service providers] to expand, what can we do? Give them access to our rights of way,” DeBerry said. In addition to state and county-owned property being used to locate equipment,

the company also checked to see if they could locate wireless equipment on structures owned by residents who lived in an area where neighbors were clamoring for service.

“The wireless side depends on your neighbors,” said Watkins. “It’s very much neighbors helping neighbors.”

“Our private partners basically field calls from people looking for service,” he said. “Oh, you’re behind the Walmart, and you want service?”

The next call might be to someone in a location that works as a hub for telecom equipment. “Do you mind if we get service to your neighbor by putting something on your building?” That “something” is usually wireless equipment in the 5Ghz spectrum (not to be confused with 5G).

Today, DNG has 600 customers and is adding about 50-70 new customers per month.

Fiber networks

In addition to wireless internet, parts of Garrett County

are also being wired for broadband “We’ve been working with local providers as well,” Watkins said.

“We’ve been working with Comcast specifically to get connectivity to several areas. About a year ago, we did a pilot program with them.”

The pilot program consisted of cooperation between the county and Comcast when it came to digging. “Doing the

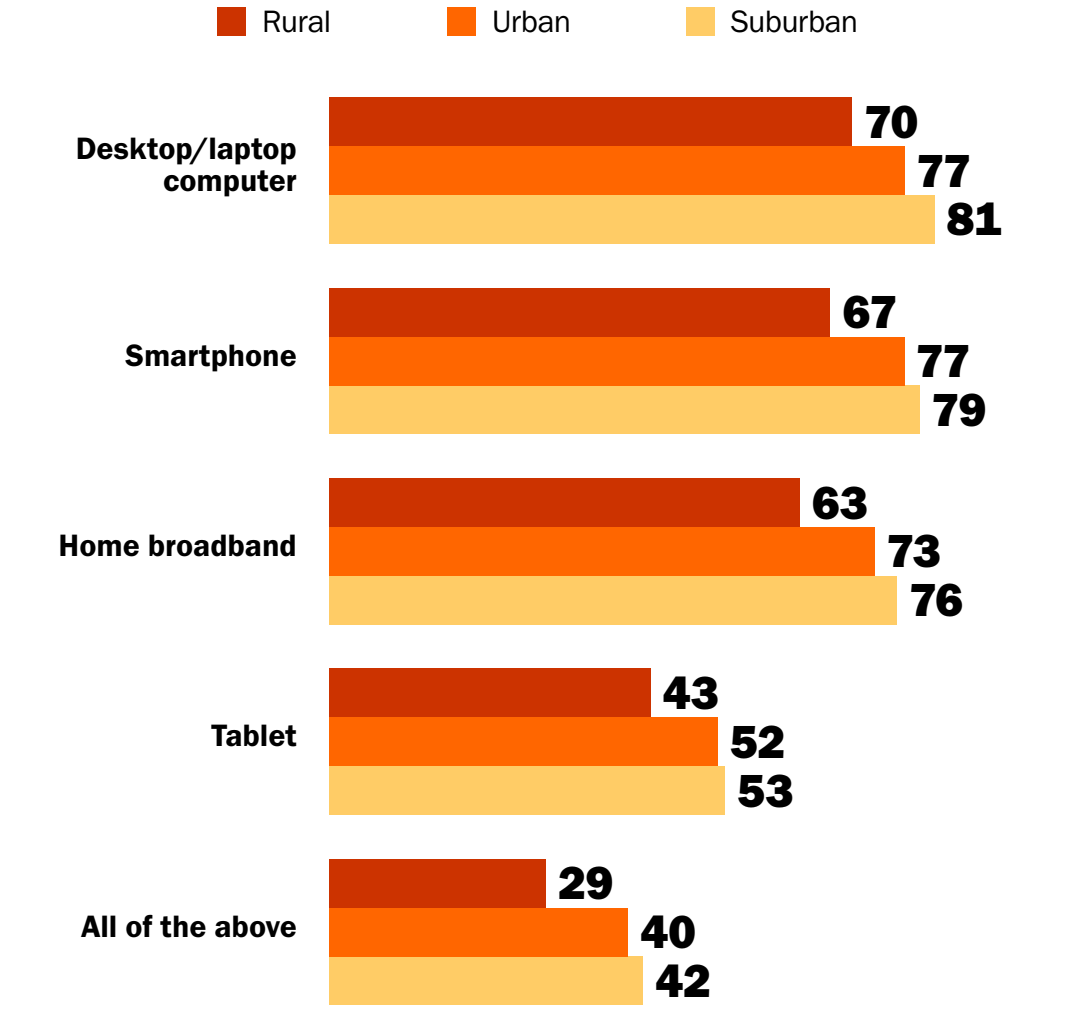
underground work — digging trenches to lay down wires, was the biggest hurdle for Comcast,” Watkins said. “We said ‘Hey, if we’re willing to dig the ditch for you guys...’ And that worked. It turns out, that’s a big expense. We said we’ll dig the ditch if you give us our own conduit to use and let other ISPs use it as well. We dug the ditch. They gave us two sets of conduit, one

for their use, one for us. It all started with us showing we’re willing to work with them.”

Comcast was able to add about 45 customers and several small businesses, who previously had no service options at all other than satellite. Since then Comcast, the largest home ISP in the country, is expanding service, on its own dime, to bring service to about 200 more homes. **CN**

MAJORITY OF RURAL AMERICANS HAVE HOME BROADBAND, BUT DIGITAL DIVIDE REMAINS

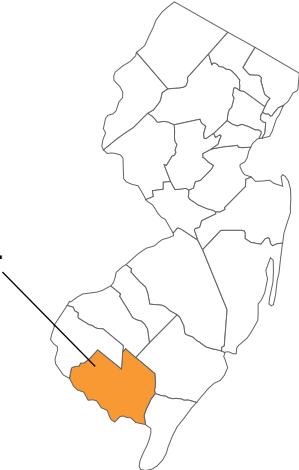
Percent of U.S. adults who say they have...



Source: Survey conducted Sept. 29–Nov. 6, 2016. PEW Research Center

New NACo★
Member
GET TO KNOW...

Cumberland County, N.J.



Welcome, Cumberland County, N.J.

Cumberland County was founded in 1748 and named for Prince William, Duke of Cumberland. The county’s economy was formed around four main industries: Glass-making, food processing, textiles and maritime trades. With New Jersey being one of the leading oyster-producing states in the 19th century, **Port Norris, located in Cumberland County, was once known as the “Oyster Capital of the World.”** Records show there were more than 300 oyster boats operating on the Delaware Bay by the late 1800s. Some of the more noteworthy folks who hail from Cumberland County include four-time MLB all-star Los Angeles Angel **Mike Trout**, style-maker **Jonathan Adler** and Wawa president **Chris Gheysens**.



County teams with co-op to bring telemedicine to veterans

By Mary Ann Barton
editor

The Jackson County, Ky. library teamed up last year with a Veterans Administration hospital and the People's Rural Telephone Cooperative (PRTC) to bring telemedicine to its local veterans.

The new service for veterans, dubbed the "Virtual Living Room," means that local veterans can now head over to their county library to meet via broadband with their doctor, saving a day's worth of travel.

The library is wired by PRTC for gigabit internet, delivering speeds 100 times faster than traditional internet service. It's unusual for the area, which is located in the heart of Appalachia, surrounded by mountains and woodlands. PRTC used a \$20 million loan from the USDA Rural Utility Service, a \$25 million grant and loan from the 2009 American Reinvestment and Recovery Act and \$5 million in capital funding to spread 1,000 miles of fiber in Jackson and neighboring Owsley counties. The co-op serves more than 18,000 customers in those counties and is expanding into Clay and Lee counties.

"The library, for 44 years, has strived to provide services to the citizens of our county," said Malta Flannery during last year's ribbon-cutting. "It's wonderful to know that our little library, in such a small county, is the first ever to pilot a project like this."

When veterans schedule appointments with the VA, an email is triggered to Jackson County Library Director Ashley Wagers. Library staff assist them with logging onto the computer and helping them with the camera. The veterans are then given privacy so they can speak with their doctor.

"Reliable, affordable, high-speed internet service makes rural communities stronger by connecting them to distant cities, services and the rest of the



Local veterans pause for a photo in the Virtual Living Room at the Jackson County, Ky. Library. Vets can meet with their doctors face to face via the internet without traveling long distances. Photo courtesy of Jackson County

SPOTLIGHT ON:
RURAL
BROADBAND

world," said Keith Gabbard, CEO of PRTC.

The project got off the ground with a Smart Rural Community Grant from the Rural Broadband Association, headquartered in Arlington County, Va. The grant

was used to create a comfortable, private area in space donated by the county library.

"I love that this project was bringing together all of the best elements of Jackson County — a great communications company and team, government folks who were empowered

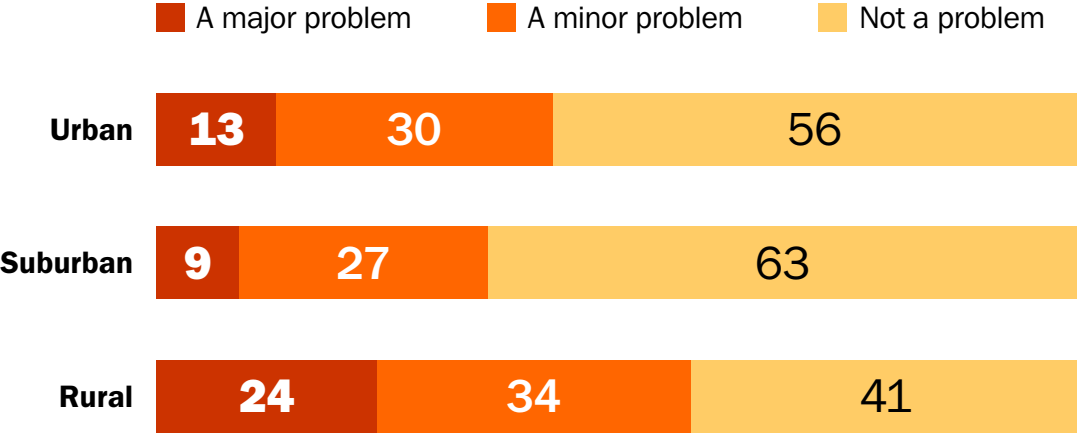
to get something done and a local community that came to rally behind folks in their community who have served our country — and now don't need to travel for hours to get some basic medical and mental health support," said Shirley Bloomfield, chief executive

officer of the Rural Broadband Association.

PRTC worked with the local Veterans Affairs Medical Center to connect them with the library and local veterans. "They came to us to share with us that they had the broadband and the support of the community — it was a win-win situation," said Tuyen Tran, associate chief of staff at Lexington VA Medical Center. One of the barriers to care at the VA Medical Center is that so many veterans live in rural areas and getting access to good quality healthcare is difficult." Tran said the VA would like to replicate the program to help other rural veterans.

Wagers said the library hopes to increase its work with the VA to get the word out to more veterans in the region about the service at their library. **CN**

ONE IN FOUR RURAL RESIDENTS SAY ACCESS TO HIGH-SPEED INTERNET IS A MAJOR PROBLEM

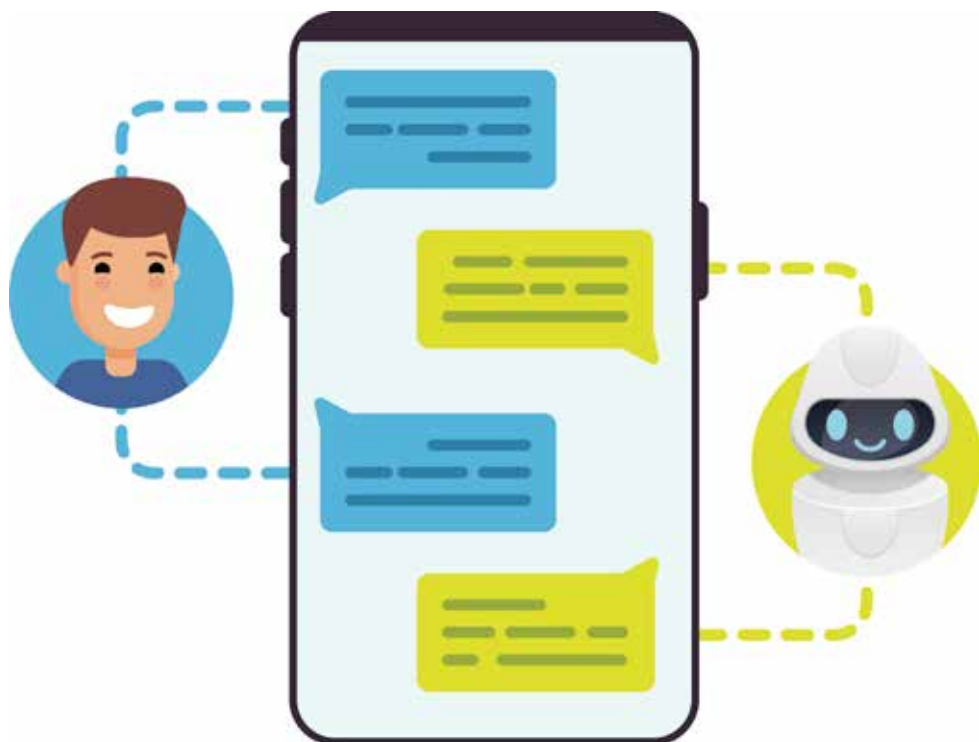


Note: Respondents who did not answer are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted Feb. 26–March 11, 2018. PEW Research Center

SPONSORED CONTENT

SOLUTIONS SPOTLIGHT

Customer service technology solves problems for citizens



Charleston County, S.C. became the first county in the United States to launch an interactive chatbot-driven customer service system — all through text messages — this past June.

“The Charleston County team knows that citizens find text messaging to be the easiest form of communication, and we wanted county government to be accessible to all citizens based on how they want to communicate to us,” said Shawn Smetana, Charleston County public information officer. “Our expectations of instant gratification and quality customer service have drastically changed. The goal, from a communications standpoint, is to evolve with the needs of the community.”

So enter in Citibot technology that enables citizens to text message in a question, or a citizen request, or a personalized message — and the Citibot chatbot will instantly respond.

“We built Citibot with the citizen engagement experience in mind,” said Bratton Riley, Citibot co-founder and CEO. “Roughly 70 percent of inbound



communications into local government are questions, and content-heavy government websites don't always have the easy answers. So Citibot finds the answers for them and sends it back via text message.”

For example, citizens may have a question about the recycling pickup schedule during the holidays or how to get a building permit; all they have to do is text message the question, and Citibot does the rest.

Other citizens want to report issues like potholes and broken recycling bins, and again, it's as easy as sending a text message to Citibot, and a work order will be generated into the county's work order system. When the county fixes the pothole or the bin, the citizen automatically receives a text message confirming the repair, and the county has the opportunity to say “thank you.”

“Citizens have reported everything from drainage issues to too many mosquitos,” Smetana said. “We are happy that citizens are helping us quickly address

county issues and schedule service. Additionally, we suggested that we incorporate a live chat feature into Citibot because that would make our citizen interaction more efficient for our staff, and the Citibot development team is building that feature for us and their other clients right now.”

“Citibot is all about digital inclusion,” said Riley. Some citizens don't have internet access or have any interest in downloading a government mobile app, but almost everyone now has a mobile phone and 97 percent of them are texting.”

Riley's father, Joe Riley, Jr., was the mayor of the City of Charleston for 40 years (1975-2015), so Bratton understands the inner workings and external politics of local government and the needs for an inclusive government.

“I was also fortunate in that whenever I called into local government, I received a return phone call very quickly because of my last name,” says Riley. “We created Citibot because I want every citizen to have the same privilege of direct access into local government that I have had.”

PROFILES IN SERVICE

CRAIG POPE

Board Member
Commissioner
Polk County, Ore.



POPE

Number of years involved in NACo: 7

Years in public service: 40, but seven as a commissioner.

Occupation: County commissioner

Education: Some college in mechanical engineering

The hardest thing I've ever done is: Leave the family farm and my parents without the help they needed 32 years ago during hard times.

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner are: My late grandfather, Bud, my father and my beautiful wife.

A dream I have is to: Leave a legacy of contribution to community that my family can be proud of.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Am pretty artsy. I like to create, build and re-purpose.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done was: Sell off my 23-year-old business after getting elected county commissioner.

My favorite way to relax is to: Lounge in my boat on a lake in the summer or ride a mountain sled in the powder of the Cascade Mountains in the winter.

I'm most proud of: My amazing children and the families they have built.

Every morning I read: News on Twitter feeds.

My favorite meal is: Baked potatoes or eggs and bacon.

My pet peeve is: Rude drivers.

My motto is: Demonstrate good behavior to those around you, especially your children, if you expect them to demonstrate good behavior to you and others.

The last book I read was: *Locker Nine*

My favorite music is: '70s rock.

My favorite U.S. president is: John F. Kennedy.

My county is a member of NACo because: I see the value in collaboration with my peers across the nation and in finding common ground on issues where we can collectively make a difference as a larger voice.

My favorite movie is: *Guardians of the Galaxy*



BRIGHT IDEAS | PENDER COUNTY, N.C.

Halloween Ghost Tours Celebrate County Legends

PROBLEM:

Pender County, N.C. had a wealth of ghost stories and a dearth of cultural outlets for amateur actors.

SOLUTION:

Ghost walks around the county seat feature local legends and bring community members together to produce the event.

By Charlie Ban
senior staff writer

The Pender County, N.C. Tourism staff would hear footsteps in the office. Nobody was there. Doors would open, but nobody was there. They would get up to greet a visitor, but nobody was there. The sound of something dragging across the floor reverberated from the ceiling.

The staff's conclusion was that the office, a floor below the county's historic jail, was haunted. From there, Tourism Director Tammy Proctor saw an opportunity to show off the county's collection of ghost stories and celebrate Halloween. "Nobody between Wilmington and New Bern was doing ghost stories," Proctor said. "We have a wealth of stories in the county to tell."

Pender County's atmosphere has been convincing enough to serve as the setting for a few scary movies, including 1985's "Silver Bullet" and 1997's "I Know What You Did Last Summer," which adds to the county's spooky bona fides.

What became "ghost walks" started small in 2016, with a walk around the county's courthouse square in the county seat of Burgaw. A series of 10 stories built to a finale in the courthouse, with a retelling of a murder that involved a victim's cremation that year.

"It had a 'trial of the century' atmosphere at the time," Proctor said. "It was really exciting,



Actors perform in the finale of Pender County's ghost walk — a "trial of the century" courtroom scene. Photo courtesy of Pender County, N.C. Tourism

my favorite part of the ghost walks."

Putting the ghost walks together draws story contributions from the county's two historical societies and librarian, with art and set design from the county's arts council.

"We try to walk a fine line between being creepy but child friendly," Proctor said. "That feeling when you're a kid where you're telling scary stories — you know they aren't true but you want to look under your bed anyway? That's what we're looking for."

The actors for the vignettes come from residents and students in high school drama programs.

"We don't have a community theater program here, so this became an opportunity for people to act in the county," Proctor said. "The county is more than 900 square miles, but this is something that brings everyone together."

The tourism department has contributed \$1,000 in props, set materials and marketing, but the proceeds are split among the historical societies

and arts council. And there have been plenty of proceeds, because the five showings over two years have all sold out — the single 200-person walk in 2016 and four walks, selling 800 tickets, in 2017 spread over two days.

"Having sellouts has been exciting," Proctor said. "People enjoy what we're doing, and the ghost walks encompass our culture, our history and the arts, so it's a real reflection of Pender County. By the end, we just end up letting people cram in so they can see the finales."

The first tickets for the 2017 show were sold to a North Carolina family who live far away from the county, outreach that validated Proctor's tourism efforts. "That's our goal as a tourism office, to bring people here," she said. The ghost walks will take a break in 2018, however, following Pender County's battering and flooding thanks to Hurricane Florence a few weeks before and a packed calendar that is making rescheduling problematic.

"It was a hard thing to do,

cancelling this year," Proctor said. "Now (with a few days before Hurricane Michael made landfall) it's looking like a smart move." This year's cancellation will, however, give the crew more time to refine the scripts, props and technical aspects of the walks.

"We'll be able to give 100 percent next year, rather than just managing to make it work," Proctor said. "When we come back next year, we will have had a chance to enhance what we were planning. This has become a major event for us, and we're going to make it worth the wait." **CN**

"Ghost Walk: The Ghosts of Pender's Past" is the recipient of a 2018 NACo Achievement Award in the Arts Culture and Historic Preservation category. Does your county have an innovative program that improves county government and enhances services for county residents? Apply for the 2019 Achievement Awards! To begin your application, visit www.naco.org/achievementawards.



LASSEN COUNTY, Calif.

Introduced in: 1954

Lassen County was formed in 1834 and was named for Peter Lassen, one of Gen. John C. Fremont's guides and a famous frontiersman.

The seal came into use in 1954 to identify vehicles and equipment used by the county road department. By the 1960s, the seal was widely used by all county departments to identify their association with the county.

In the Board of Supervisors' chamber, a large wooden carved seal has presided over board meetings since 1961.



The Lassen County seal is a view of Mount Lassen from Manzanita Lake at the north entrance in Lassen Volcanic National Park, which began as two national monuments designated by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1907. Mount Lassen is the largest "plug dome" volcano in the world.

Information provided by Mark Totten, Lassen County planning director and purchasing agent (retired) and Jim Chapman, Lassen County supervisor District 2 (retired).

If you would like your county's seal featured in "Behind the Seal," contact Charlie Ban at cban@naco.org.

the HR DOCTOR

with Philpot & Winkeler

Woodrow Wilson said: "You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand."

How many of your employees come to work merely to make a living? What else motivates them each day? Perhaps you asked them just that very question during their original employment interview, but how many years ago was that? Would they answer the question in the same manner today?

Motivation spurs people into action, and the term has a positive connotation. However, there are also forms of motivation that create less desirable actions, such as action driven by fear (of losing a job, of having to change jobs, of failure), frustration (over change, over process, over workload), complacency. How do you facilitate positive motivation through purpose, mission, public service and/or leadership? Many individuals are self-motivated, but that doesn't mean they don't also crave leadership and mission-driven purpose.

Sometimes teams that have lost momentum have lost motivation. Perhaps the team becomes overly focused on the tasks they can almost perform on auto pilot, rather than using their technical expertise for problem-solving. In this case, motivation may be a matter of being reminded of:

- How their work contributes to the mission of the organization
- How their work betters the lives of citizens
- How their work is a critical piece in a larger system

Finding and Fostering Motivation in Our Work



- What the positive impact of their work is on others
- How their knowledge, skills and abilities bring about success, or
- How their strengths bring depth to the team

Employee engagement surveys often ask questions about motivation, but sometimes there are so many questions that, by the time an employee sifts through 40 different sections on medical, dental, vision, parking, carpooling and training, he's lost all motivation to even complete the survey, missing all those questions in section 41 on motivation.

So consider creating your own motivation in public service survey for your staff. It can be an anonymous questionnaire. Or you can sit down individually with staff and ask them: What motivates them about their career today? How does that differ from what motivated them in the first year of employment?

Here are some sample questions if you use the anonymous survey tool. You may want to create a range of answers, one to seven, with seven being the highest, or make the answers yes or no response.

1. I love my job.
2. This county feels like family.
3. My work is valued by my su-

pervisor.

4. I am respected by my supervisor.
5. I am encouraged to do my best.
6. I know and believe in the mission of my department.
7. My department is outstanding.
8. I feel supported when I bring forward a concern or mistake.
9. I contribute to my team's success.
10. Our work environment allows me to do my best every day.
11. My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.
12. I am valued by co-workers.
13. My work makes the community in which I live a better place.
14. Our county serves citizens with respect and courtesy.
15. I am proud to be a public servant and work in county government.

Perhaps you also want to ask survey respondents to rank reasons why they come to work each day, including salary, benefits, time spent with co-workers, interesting work, continual learning, leadership, mission, personal accomplishment, and innovation.

Questions you can ask your staff individually include:

1. What motivates you when you arrive at work each day?

2. How does that motivation differ from what motivated you on your very first day of work?

3. Why (or why not) has that motivation changed?

4. How can we motivate new employees who join this team?

5. What is one small thing that makes a difference when you feel your motivation waning?


6. What is one way in which you motivate the others on the team?

Sometimes the way in which someone motivates others can give insight into how they themselves prefer to be motivated. Do they give praise and if so, do they give the praise, publicly or privately, verbally or in writing? Do they show appreciation by bringing in food to share with others? Do they celebrate a work anniversary? Do they offer their assistance without being asked? Do they take on a task or lead a project? Do they create a silly award that rotates from team member to team member?

Consider this example of motivation. Ryan has worked for Shay for three years and seems to have inconsistent performance, particularly in the area of deadlines. Periodically, Ryan will get behind on his work, leading Ryan and Shay to go through a cycle of coaching, ver-

bal warnings and work plans. Whenever Ryan is on a work plan, he and Shay meet each week for an hour to discuss the work plan and check in on the status of Ryan's projects. When Ryan is on a work plan, his projects are on time; the minute he is off the work plan, things are late again. Shay thinks Ryan has great skills, but she is exhausted by the amount of documentation required whenever Ryan is on the work plan and she feels like Ryan only produces when he thinks he may be on the path to dismissal.

One day, Shay wonders if she meets with Ryan weekly, only for a half an hour, when he is not on a work plan, will the feedback motivate Ryan to stay on deadline? Six months later, Shay got her answer. The discussion in those weekly meetings reminded Ryan of how his work connected to the department's broader goals and the county's mission. The weekly feedback prolonged Ryan's motivation and his performance had been sustained without the work plan.

Motivation varies from person to person and is based on the individual needs of the person. That is why often first-line supervisors, who know the employees best, can be a critical piece in the motivation puzzle. But asking motivation questions and using a variety of motivation strategies can be an effective way for leaders create high performing, highly engaged teams. As public sector employees, the connection to service and to citizens is a common motivator, and asking your team about motivation and taking a moment to reflect upon motivation, can be a powerful pause that energizes the work. We are public servants because we desire to enrich the world. 

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

MONEYMATTERS

A Best Practice from the Government Finance Officers Association Shared Services

Alternative service delivery that involves shared services requires governments working together to achieve shared policy objectives and services.

GFOA recommends that governments examine the benefits of alternative service delivery that involves shared service efforts and use the process described below for successful implementation.

1. **Getting Started.** Governments should organize themselves to establish relationships that encourage the identification of prioritized opportunities.

Talking with communities that have successfully launched cooperative initiatives is one such example. Stakeholders such as unions or customer groups can play a successful role in the establishment of intergovernmental efforts. Communicating with them early and often can improve chances for positive implementation.

There are several potential outlets to find shared service information such as extension offices of state universities, local government relation offices of state governments, local and national professional associations and councils of governments

2. **Feasibility Study.** Clearly identify the costs, benefits and potential risks of a proposed agreement. Data collection may be necessary for more complex endeavors. Governments need to determine the return on investment to the greatest extent possible, both in financial and quality terms. Key items that should be considered in the feasibility stage include goals and objectives, tangible and intangible benefits, potential barriers (political, economic, funding, human resource, legal, social or economies of scale).

3. **Coming to Agreement.** Agreements between collaborating communities should address the following:

- **Liability and Legal Basis for**

the Relationship. This would include enabling legislation, understanding of relevant employment law and risk management (including workers compensation and indemnification). It is also important that legal counsel for all participating jurisdictions review the agreement before it is finalized.

- **Cost allocations (both direct and indirect).** Cost allocation establishes the methodology for deciding who pays how much. Consideration may also need to be given to the handling of capital expenditures and any revenue coming in from this service.

- **Financing.** Revenue sources must be identified to fund the service. The establishment of an authority with its own taxing powers may be necessary for more complex services without designated revenue sources where allowed by state statute. Debt financing may also be considered, but could be dependent on legal statutes.

- **Governance structure, membership, and protocols.** A governance structure must be in place to facilitate oversight and communication. This may include elected officials, staff, and citizens.

- **Time period covered.** The agreement needs to specify the time period covered with a process for renewal of the agreement. If there is a sunset provision, that time frame should be specified.

- **Dispute resolution and mediation.** A clause or some language in the agreement should cover how disputes will be resolved. Arbitration may be an option.

- **Service Level Agreements.** The level of service agreed upon and expected by all participating entities should be explicitly documented with associated performance measures to ensure that level of service is achieved. The measures should focus on

the quality of the service.

- **Termination clauses.** A critical feature to the intergovernmental agreement is the opt-out provision, which is often crucial to gaining political support for the agreement. It is important to ensure that the opt-out clause is practical and will not, if enacted, disrupt service delivery. Likewise, opt-in provisions should be considered for those governments that might want to join.

4. **Implementation.** Continuity of service is of primary concern for stakeholders. For this reason, the transition must ensure a seamless provision of services. To avoid the risk that service quality will suffer, emphasis must be placed on proper training of employees providing the service. Performance measures, benchmarks or milestones should be established related to the particular service. As much as possible, governments should try to simplify processes for providers to ensure good working relationships. A decision should be made on the most effective means to provide administrative or support services.


5. **Ongoing Monitoring.** A shared service agreement should be treated as a contract, and the terms and conditions should be monitored regularly to ensure they are being met.

All governments involved need to agree on what will constitute regular monitoring frequency (e.g., holding monthly meetings of the original study committee or the new governing committee to monitor progress and contract compliance), what to monitor, how to measure what is monitored (e.g., customer satisfaction, finances, employee performance, hiring, and safety), communicating results (reporting format may include the medium or media for communicating the results (e.g., internet, paper reports,

etc.) and quality and quantity of work performed.

6. **Long-term Review/Agreement Reassessment.** Changes in the service environment may necessitate regular review of the agreement. The original assumptions or parameters surrounding the agreement may need to be adjusted at various

intervals.

San Diego County, Calif. was awarded the GFOA Award for Excellence for outstanding use of GFOA's Best Practice on Alternative Service Delivery: Shared Services. To learn more about the county's implementation process, visit <https://bit.ly/2I-yVKn0>. 

ON THE MOVE

NACo OFFICERS

- First Vice President **Mary Ann Borgeson** and Second Vice President **Gary Moore** attended an opioid summit Sept. 28 at the White House.

NACo STAFF

- **Laura McKaskel** has joined NACo as a staff accountant. Prior to joining NACo, she worked for the Navy League of the United States. She holds an MBA from Appalachian State University and BS in Health Education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

- **Blaire Bryant** is now associate legislative director for health. She has worked at NACo for a year as a health program manager in the County Solutions and Innovations Department.

- **Mary Ann Barton** is now the *County News* editor and senior writer and will manage all editorial duties, including content, print production and mailing, the calendar, advertising and the budget.

- **Charlie Ban** is now the *County News* digital editor and senior writer. He will manage all digital content for the publication.

- Research Analyst **Jonathan Harris** presented a workshop on citizen engagement at the North Dakota Association of Counties Annual Conference in Burleigh County (Bismarck), held Oct. 7-9.

- Program Manager **Jenna Moran** attended and spoke at the Transportation Research Board as a panelist for the Resilience Summit Oct. 9-10 in Denver.

- Program Manager **Jack Morgan** participated in the Strengthening Economies series of Coal Reliant Communities forums Oct. 8-9 in Campbell County, Wyo.

- Associate Program Director **Rashida Brown** participated in a National League of Cities discussion Sept. 26 on county, state and regional alignment of policies and programs affecting young children, in Orleans Parish, La.



McKaskel



Bryant



Barton



Ban

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION



ARKANSAS

Officials in **BAXTER COUNTY** are wondering what caused a **mystery fire** one morning last month that shot 12 feet into the air from a hole in the ground. A volunteer fire crew responded to a 911 call and saw the fire burn for about 45 minutes from the hole, which is about two feet in diameter, the *Springfield News-Leader* reported. Gas company technicians detected no gas in the area. Others speculated a meteorite may have struck but the fire chief said “there’s no sign of a strike, no splashed dirt around the edge.” County Emergency Manager Jim Sierzchula said: “To me, it looks like an existing hole that was there, but what was burning? When I got there, it smelled like burned plastic to me. We’re just trying to figure it out.”

CALIFORNIA

• In a unanimous vote, **LOS ANGELES COUNTY** supervisors have agreed to oppose a Trump administration proposed rule on denying residency or citizenship to **immigrants who use public assistance**, the *Los Angeles Times* reported. The administration has proposed expanding the number of public programs and the financial thresholds that might weigh against applicants. The new rule would include portions of Medicaid, Medicare, food stamps and public housing facilities and housing vouchers. “This rule, if adopted, in my opinion would be very harmful,” said Supervisor Hilda Solis. “It is the county’s moral and civic responsibility to offer

service to every resident regardless of their immigration status.” The state of California has also said it plans to fight the proposed rule. (For more on the issue, see *County News*, Oct. 1 issue, Page 5.)

• The **MONTEREY COUNTY** Board of Supervisors will consider a 60 percent increase in funding for its **cannabis program**, the *Monterey Herald* recently reported. Nine county departments oversee the local cannabis industry. The proposed \$1.67 million increase would pay for eight new positions boosting the overall program to \$4.4 million and more than 19 full-time positions. The increase would be funded by cannabis tax revenue. Cannabis program manager Joann Iwamoto said the proposed funding increase is aimed at allowing the county to employ “best practices” — particularly with regard to compliance and enforcement — in its ongoing effort to continue supporting development of the local industry.

COLORADO

A Texas man’s search for the perfect spot to propose ended with the couple getting lost in the dark on a mountain in **BOULDER COUNTY**, CBS-4 reported. County Sheriff’s deputies **rescued the couple** who had flown into Colorado from Texas and hiked an 8.2-mile trail, a 3,000-foot elevation gain. A late start, little water and ill-equipped for colder temperatures, the couple became disoriented and got lost after the sun went down.

A hiker found them, took them to his camp where other friends gave them water, food and shelter. Another hiker descended the trail to get 911 service and county sheriff’s deputies responded. They arrived at the trailhead and their rental car at about 6 a.m. They didn’t require further assistance — and told deputies the engagement is still on.



FLORIDA

Beaches in the Gulf Coast counties are waiting to see how Hurricane Michael affects the **red tide** that’s been plaguing the area.

“There are two possibilities,” David Hastings, a professor of Marine Science and Chemistry at Eckerd College, told CBS Tampa affiliate WTSP. He says the different scenarios come down to the wind and the amount of rain. “The hopeful one is that strong winds from the hurricane blow red tide offshore,” Hastings said. If Hurricane Michael turns into a rainmaker, it could be bad news.

“The heavy rain will dilute farm and agriculture areas of all the nutrients, nitrates, phosphates and rain them into the beaches and coastal areas that serve to fertilize the red tide — exactly what we don’t want,” he explained.

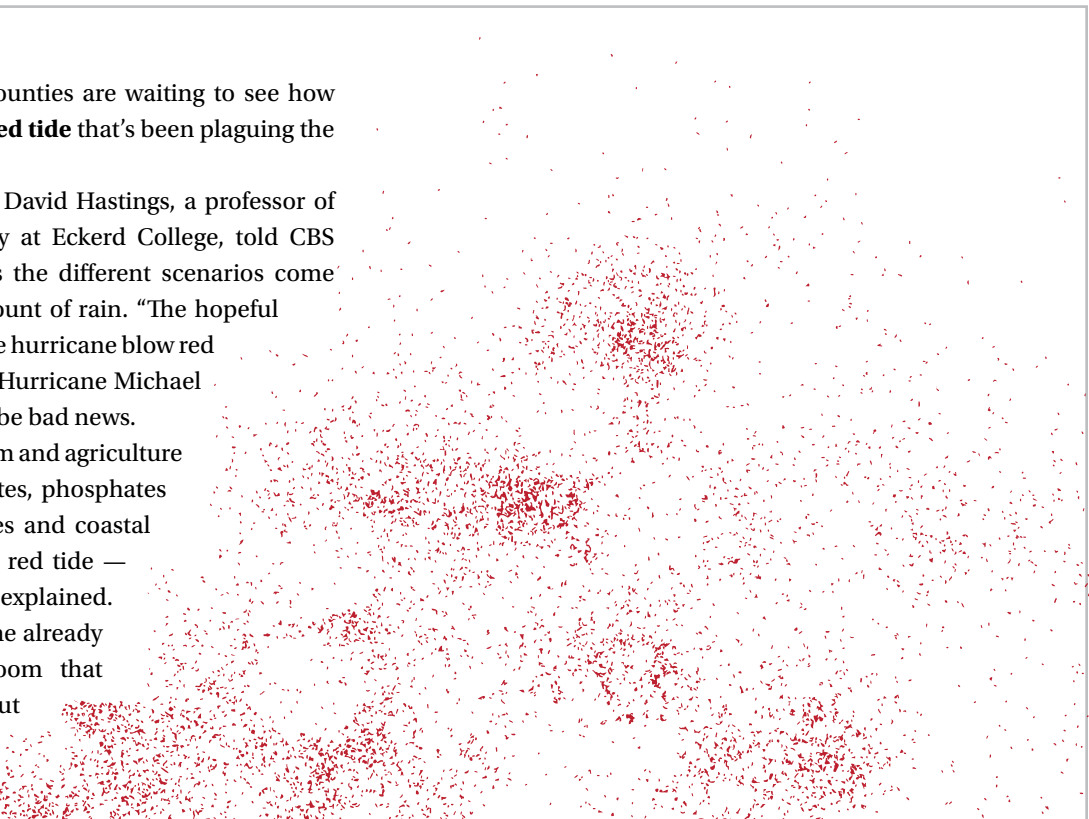
Rain and runoff could turn the already 145-mile-long toxic algae bloom that stretches more than 10 miles out into the Gulf into an even bigger problem.



INDIANA

The timing was right when Mark Storey, a funeral home director and dog handler approached the **GRANT COUNTY** Sheriff about bringing a **therapy dog to the jail** once a week so inmates could spend time with his dog. The jail was facing financial issues, “just like everybody else,” Sheriff

Reggie Nevels told the local NBC-TV affiliate. Since the dog, Nero, has started visiting the inmates, the jail staff has seen fewer fights and incidents. “And believe it, it’s working,” the sheriff said. “It’s amazing. It’s like a blessing. It has taken a lot of tension off our staff.” Storey takes Nero from cell block to cell block.





GEORGIA

It's not every day you see a cow lumbering down the interstate. But **COBB COUNTY** recently entered into a public-private "partnership" when they called in backup — ranchers — to help them wrangle 70 cows off roadways after a **cattle truck overturned**, FOX 5 reported. The accident caused major delays during the morning commute, as the county fire department worked to free other cows still in the trailer and others chased down cows. Police asked drivers to call 911 if they spotted a cow and the state department of transportation handled bovine transportation.

authorities told WJAC News they believed the audio overlay was a radio error, but posted clips of the barking to the department's Facebook page in hopes that residents might recognize the barks and identify the radio responsible for the interference.

TEXAS

A federal judge has ordered the **DALLAS COUNTY** jail to **stop setting bail** without regard to whether suspects can pay. U.S. District Judge David Godbey told the county it must provide suspects booked at its jail with an individual hearing within 48 hours if a magistrate judge doesn't release them after they've indicated they cannot afford bail, the *Dallas Morning News* reported. Commissioners have responded by expanding the county's pre-trial services office, adding intake technicians and staff to administer a risk-assessment tool that will aid magistrates in making bail decisions.

"It's something to look forward to every Wednesday," inmate Melinda Doyle said. "It's a big stress reliever," inmate Tiffany Riddle said. The sheriff said "this particular program we have with Mark is priceless. It doesn't cost us a penny."

MARYLAND

The **MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL** was expected to introduce a bill that would **ban smoking** in outdoor or partially enclosed dining areas, *Bethesda Magazine* reported. The proposed bill would expand on two laws banning smoking in the county. One passed in 2003 prohibits smoking in most indoor locations and another passed in 2011 bans smoking within 25 feet of a playground located on private property as well as in common areas of residential dwelling units. A public hearing is scheduled later this month.

NORTH CAROLINA

Motorists in 26 mostly rural counties will no longer be required to have their **vehicles tested for emissions**. Gov. Roy Cooper (D) signed

a bill approved by the Environmental Protection Agency allowing nearly 2 million people to avoid the \$16.40 charge for the test, after the state department of environmental quality noted a significant improvement in the state's air quality, the *Shelby Star* reported. Urban areas, such as **MECKLENBURG**, **WAKE**, **GUILFORD** and **FORSYTH** counties and their surrounding suburban counties will require emissions testing.

OHIO

The **CUYAHOGA COUNTY** Library received a **\$50,000 grant from the Google Impact Challenge**, the first county government to win such an award. Google already handed out \$50,000 apiece to four organizations that work in the community; the company allowed the public to vote on who would get an additional \$50,000. The Cuyahoga County Library will use the money to launch an internet hot spot program, which will allow students in high school equivalency classes to take home a free mobile internet hot spot.

The program will start this fall, with around 200 mobile hot spot devices distributed through the library branches and other community sites, News 5 Cleveland reported.

OREGON

- **MARION COUNTY** has joined a lawsuit challenging the Army Corps of Engineers' plan to **drain a large lake** to build a cooling tower. A federal magistrate OK'd the county to join the lawsuit filed by the state's capital city, Salem. The county's economic development coordinator says 70 percent of jobs in the area are recreation-based and could lead to an \$11 million loss in those industries annually. The Corps is performing the project to correct water temperatures in the North Santiam River and aid fish passage as part of a legal agreement reached in 2008, the *Statesman Journal* reported.

- Library card holders in **MULTNOMAH COUNTY** have a new benefit — **free movie streaming** at home. The library's agreement with Kano-



py, an on-demand streaming video platform, allows users to choose from more than 30,000 films, limited to six three-month "rentals." Selections are primarily foreign films, classic movies and documentaries, *Willamette Week* reported. The library recently also debuted the Library Music Project — a collection of Portland-made music.

PENNSYLVANIA

CLEARFIELD COUNTY emergency dispatchers are trying to identify some dogs whose **barks have been crowding radio communications**. Au-

VIRGINIA

Citing a Virginia Economic Development Partnership report saying the state lacks "shovel-ready sites," **LOUISA COUNTY** is planning a **county-owned business park**. In addition to attracting commercial development, the county hopes to reduce residents' commute times. *The Daily Progress* reported that more than 60 percent of county residents travel for work.

WASHINGTON

In a measure similar to what was passed in Seattle, the **KING COUNTY** Council has passed an ordinance requiring all gun owners in the county to **store their firearms** in gun cages or lock boxes. Violators face a potential misdemeanor charge and a potential fine of up to \$1,000 or a maximum of 90 days in jail, *Seattle Weekly* reported.

News From Across the Nation is compiled by Charlie Ban and Mary Ann Barton. If you have news, email: cban@naco.org or mbarton@naco.org.

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2019 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

APPLY FOR THE 2019 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Does your county have an innovative program that improves county government and enhances services for county residents? Apply for the 2019 Achievement Awards! There are 18 categories ranging from information technology, health, criminal justice, human services and many more.

To begin your application visit:

www.naco.org/achievementawards

QUESTIONS?

Contact awards@naco.org



IMPORTANT DATES:

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