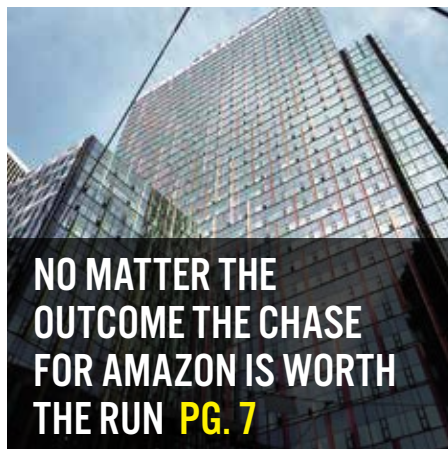




**AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES  
TAKE TO THE ROADS IN  
S.C. COUNTY PG. 5**



**NO MATTER THE  
OUTCOME THE CHASE  
FOR AMAZON IS WORTH  
THE RUN PG. 7**



**BUDGET DEAL SETS  
STAGE FOR TAX REFORM.  
PG. 11**

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION *of* COUNTIES

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### ANALYSIS

## Health care markets face unsure future

**By Brian Bowden**  
Associate legislative director

In the shadow of the failed effort to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA), recent administrative action, legislative efforts and the kick-off of 2018 open enrollment on Nov. 1 has put the ACA's marketplaces in the spotlight.

Approximately 7 percent of the U.S. population, or 22 million people, receive their health insurance through this ACA-created system intended to provide a mechanism for health coverage for those who were previously uninsured. By comparison, employer-based

See ANALYSIS page 2



## China's ban on some recycled materials could impact county landfills

**By Mary Ann Barton**  
senior staff writer

Lane County, Oregon, is seeing more trash in its landfill these days. And in Washington County, Oregon, the county is asking people to throw some plastic items into the trash that they used to recycle. In Rockland County, New York, the company the county contracts with to sell its recycled materials is working out new deals with India. And over in Doña Ana County, New Mexico, they have begun a public outreach program dubbed "Love the Planet? Recycle Right!"

Changes are coming to trash habits in Oregon, New York and New Mexico and likely other counties around the country due to a ban by China on some recycled materials that's set to begin Jan. 1, 2018. In an effort to curb pollution in its country,

China will hold recycled materials to a much stricter cleanliness standard that some in the industry say is almost impossible to reach.

The proposed ban could "adversely affect municipal recycling programs throughout the country," the Solid Waste Association of America (SWA-

NA) said Oct. 11, in a letter to all state solid waste departments.

China notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) in July that it would begin a ban of mixed paper, "most scrap plastics" and scrap metal. China is also cracking down on the cleanliness of the materials it will accept by reducing from 5

percent to 0.3 percent of allowable contamination of imported recyclables.

"I was surprised by the breadth of the prohibition as well as the 0.3 percent requirement," said David Biderman, executive director and CEO of SWANA.

See RECYCLING page 9

## Trump OKs pilot project for drone integration at local level

**By Kevan Stone**  
associate legislative director

President Trump has signed a Presidential Memorandum directing the Department of Transportation (DOT) to create guidelines for a pilot program allowing local governments to participate in

unmanned aircraft systems ("UAS" or "Drone") integration. The memorandum directs a framework to be developed and participants in place within the next 12 months.

The memorandum outlines three main objectives that would increase county involvement in drone integra-

tion. First, the directive will allow DOT and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to enter into agreements with state, local and tribal governments to create "innovation zones" for testing new UAS operations. These agreements

See DRONES page 3



# Cost-sharing reduction payments to insurers frequently challenged

From ANALYSIS page 1

health systems and the Medicaid and Medicare programs cover more than 250 million people, and are largely unaffected by these developments.

On Oct. 12, the White House announced that the Department of Health and Human Services secretary will no longer make cost-sharing reduction payments (CSRs) to insurers participating in the marketplaces. These payments — which the current administration had been making on a month-by-month basis — reimburse insurers for the subsidies they are legally required to make for low-in-

come individuals who are enrolled on the marketplaces.

The cost-sharing subsidies that reduce deductibles and copayments for enrollees are one type of financial help that the ACA provided to lower-income consumers buying insurance on the marketplace.

Other help comes in the form of a tax credit, typically available for people with incomes of up to 400 percent of the poverty level. In 2017, 400 percent poverty level for a family of four tops out at \$98,400.

CSRs have been the subject of extensive litigation. Most notably in 2014, the House sued the Obama ad-

**The Alexander-Murray package is co-sponsored by 24 senators — 12 Republicans and 12 Democrats. With the expected votes of all Senate Democrats, it would have the 60 needed votes needed to pass the Senate.**

ministration in *House v. Burwell* (now *House v. Price*) claiming that these payments to insurers had never been appropriated by Congress and were thus illegal.

A district court judge accepted this argument in the spring of 2016 and the Obama administration appealed, arguing that there was in fact an appropriation. The Trump administration had not taken a position, and until the Oct. 12 continued to make the payments.

Following the administration's decision, attorney generals from 19 states filed lawsuits against President Trump arguing his decision violated federal law, asking for an injunction that would force the administration to make CSRs. They were turned down on Oct. 25 when a federal judge — an Obama administration appointee in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California — said the Trump administration had a stronger legal argument for stopping the payments than the state attorneys general had.

Even before the White House's announcement, marketplace stabilization and funding certainty for insurers participating in them was the focus of congressional hearings convened in September by Sens. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Patty Murray

(D-Wash.), the chair and ranking member of the Senate Health, Education Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee.

On Oct. 16, Alexander and Murray introduced the Bipartisan Stabilization Health Care Act of 2017. The bi-partisan measure would fund the CSRs for the rest of 2017, 2018 and 2019, and would direct \$106 million to states for marketplace enrollment outreach in 2018 and 2019. It would also provide states more flexibility in seeking approval for and implementing what are known as 1332 waivers. Created by Section 1332 of the ACA, these waivers allow states to modify how they implement key elements of the ACA.

A report released by the CBO Oct. 25 estimates that the bill would reduce the federal deficit by \$3.8 billion over the next decade.

The Alexander-Murray package is co-sponsored by 24 senators — 12 Republicans and 12 Democrats. With the expected votes of all Senate Democrats, it would have the 60 votes needed to pass the Senate. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has indicated he would only bring the bill to the Senate floor if Trump supports it and will sign. Meanwhile, House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and other House Republicans

have voiced their opposition to the measure.

The House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady (R-Texas) and Senate Finance Committee chairman Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) announced a new competing legislative agreement, Oct. 24, that would fund CSRs through 2019, but also would repeal the ACA's individual and employer mandates. The introduction of this legislation by the leaders of two Congressional committees that also hold jurisdiction over health care and mixed signals from Trump on the Murray-Alexander package further complicate ACA marketplace stabilization efforts.

It is now widely expected that any such legislation would be wrapped in to a package that would fund the federal government past Dec. 8 and raise the debt ceiling.

Legislation to reauthorize funding for a variety of health and human services programs including the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), community health centers, the Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) and payments to disproportionate share hospitals (DSH) is also likely to be included in this must-pass vehicle.

Open enrollment in the individual marketplaces for the 2018 year runs from Nov. 1 through Dec. 15 of this year in most states, including those using healthcare.gov. The sign-up period of 45 days is shorter than the 90-day window in previous years. Coverage takes effect on Jan. 1, 2018.

**See MORE ANALYSIS page 3**



## SNAP/STATS

### BEST SMALL TOWNS (AND THEIR COUNTIES) FOR HALLOWEEN

Town	County
St. Helens, Ore.....	Columbia County
Romeo, Mich. ....	Macomb County
Estes Park, Colo. ....	Larimer County
Anoka, Minn. ....	Anoka County
Salem, Mass. ....	Essex County

Source: *CountryLiving*, Oct. 2, 2017

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In the race to deploy next-generation wireless technology, called 5G, the wireless industry has denigrated local government and urged the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to invade our authority over local zoning and permitting. Without a forceful response, the FCC majority seems poised to acquiesce to industry demands. NACo and other local government associations are fighting back and have organized a sign-on letter to defend local government rights. For the following reasons, I urge all county leaders to join us.

5G technology promises ultra-fast high-capacity wireless connections. 5G will bring the next generation of speed to all of our devices, for whatever we want to do with them. But here is the catch: previous generations of wireless technology largely relied on wireless antennas being placed on relatively few large towers, but 5G will be supported by hundreds of “small cell” deployments deep into residential neighborhoods and urban centers.

Preparing the way for 5G and related technologies in all parts of the United States is and



Riemer

should be a national priority. Counties welcome these advancements and are prepared to work as partners with industry and all stakeholders to accelerate 5G deployment into our communities. Indeed, counties have a long track record of collaborating successfully with the industry to meet our common connectivity goals.

The problem is that the wireless industry, with the tacit blessing of the FCC majority, is seeking to avoid oversight and ultimately usurp control over local rights of way, where much of this infrastructure will be placed.

The wireless industry alleges that local governments are erecting insurmountable barriers to deployment and should be preempted by the

federal government. This is unfortunate because local governments have been great partners to the industry in the past. While local zoning codes and permit processes do need to be revised for the new infrastructure, there is no need to remove local government from the process. We must be there to negotiate with industry partners to get the best outcome. We have significant concerns about compatibility of equipment — left to its own the industry might take a low road in our right of way — and equity in our diverse communities. Without our voice, the next generation of infrastructure will deepen divides rather than close them.

Unfortunately, the FCC majority seems likely to side with industry’s dubious allegations as indicated by the mission and membership of the recently constituted Broadband Deployment Advisory Council (BDAC). Of the 30 members of the BDAC, only two come from local governments. The rest largely come from industry. While the local government representatives are doing an admirable job, how can such a group possibly produce balanced recommendations on

topics like “Model Code for Municipalities” and “Removing State and Local Regulatory Barriers?” Early reports unsurprisingly suggest that the BDAC will recommend further erosion of local government authority. This is why it is so critical for local governments to speak out now.

Our message is clear. Local governments want to be a partner in successful deployment of next generation infrastructure. We want the latest technology for our communities, but the way it is deployed matters to us. An approach that tries to remove our authority will create tremendous conflict and that will only slow down deployment when the entire goal is to speed it up. The greatest success will come from a regulatory framework that allows some flexibility at the local level and keeps us at the table. Will you join us?

Hans Riemer  
Council Vice President  
Montgomery County, Md.

*If you would like to be included on NACo’s letter to the FCC, please email a copy of your name, signature, title, jurisdiction and state to [jterrell@naco.org](mailto:jterrell@naco.org).*

## Enrollment in insurance marketplace begins Nov. 1

From MORE ANALYSIS page 2

Open enrollment in states that run their own marketplaces depends on the state. For instance, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Rhode Island and Washington have extended open enrollment beyond Dec. 15. For consumers that are already in a marketplace plan, they may be automatically renewed into that plan for 2018 and could face higher premiums. If their plan is no longer offered in 2018, the marketplace will automatically enroll them in a different plan.

Despite widespread confusion, every American is still legally required to carry health insurance or face a tax penalty. Every county in the U.S. currently has at least one insurer on the marketplace, and the two types of help for consumers—cost-sharing subsidies and tax credits—are still available. The administration has drastically reduced funding for “navigators,” organizations and individuals who help explain health insurance options, and advertising for open enrollment. Private insurance companies and non-profit groups have been trying to fill in the gaps.

Counties invest over \$80 billion annually in community health systems and often serve as the payer of last resort for those who are unable to afford health care. Many states require counties to provide some health care for low-income, uninsured and underinsured residents. NACo supports expanding health coverage to help counties protect the health and welfare of their residents and meet their legislatively mandated responsibilities. NACo will continue to monitor legislative developments and their potential impact to counties. **CN**

## Zoning, property rights issues still fuzzy in drone directive

From DRONES page 1

will also allow local governments to propose and evaluate model policies expanding the county role in the integration of UAS into the national airspace system.

The second objective encourages the private sector and local governments to collaboratively operate drones in ways currently permitted by FAA regulations but not widely used, such as operations beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS), night time operations and flights over people. Details on these operations have not been determined and will be released by DOT once formulated. The third objective involves compiling data from



the various pilot programs to assess results across the country.

A key aspect of the directive for counties is that any county may apply to participate and there is no cap on the number of participating jurisdictions. As the criteria for applications emerge, an unlimited number

of local governments will have the ability to decide whether they want to participate in this pilot program.

The White House, in a call with local government stakeholders, acknowledged the importance of the use of UAS technology by local entities, mentioning crop and infra-

structure inspection as well as search and rescue operations as vital projects local governments can complete through drone use.

However, the directive makes no mention of zoning, privacy and property rights, which are often key issues for local governments regarding drone usage. Individual communities will have the ability to incorporate privacy concerns through their participation in the pilot program.

The date for the release of applications has not yet been announced. **CN**

*Christopher Harvey, legislative assistant, contributed to this report.*



# 2018 NACo LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE



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**Registration and housing open November 9**

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# Autonomous vehicles hitting Greenville County, S.C. roads

**By Charlie Ban**  
senior staff writer

In theory, autonomous cars are safer. They aren't operated by distracted, impaired or inexperienced drivers and follow hard and fast rules of the road.

But they won't exist in a vacuum. How computer-driven cars will fare when mixed in with living drivers is a wild card, and Greenville County, South Carolina will have a front row seat, thanks to a federal grant to introduce autonomous cars onto its roads.

County Councilman Fred Payne is hoping that using them as automated taxis in three different environments will offer some transportation options to his county and provide valuable data back to developers.

"The technology is proven, but we don't know what human behavior is going to be," he said. "We don't know if there will be acceptance of the vehicles, respect for the vehicles."

Experts say drivers will either ignore the cars, overact and avoid them or test them to see how they will react when challenged.

"They're all logical, predictable reactions, but we don't know what the percentages are. We'll find that out in a real-world environment."

A \$4 million Federal Highway Administration grant will help build out a taxi shuttle system, starting at the Clemson University International Center for Automotive Research and then spreading into two test communities. That \$4 million will be matched by \$2 million from the nonprofit Global Autonomous Vehicle Partnership and \$1 million from the developer behind a planned community where the taxis will operate to build a multimodal transit center.

"We would have done this without federal money but it would have been much slow-



**An automated taxi at the Clemson University International Center for Automotive Research.** Photo by Josh Morgan/Greenville News

er," Payne said. "This is a solution that could solve a lot of first-mile-last-mile problems and help people move away from owning cars."

After federal funding put Greenville County's bus system in jeopardy in 2007, Payne decided the county needed to move away from buses, which eventually directed him to autonomous vehicles.

The first autonomous vehicle, resembling a "stretch golf cart" will seat six passengers and cruise the streets of the university's research campus, albeit with a backup driver. These kinds of vehicles had been in use at Fort Bragg in North Carolina to transport wounded veterans, where the technology was initially tested and refined in a controlled environment.

"The vehicles themselves are worth about \$10,000, but the information they'll collect on those instruments will be worth much more," Payne said. "Most riders won't appreciate the brain inside these things. It will gather data that will play a major role in how autonomous

vehicle technology goes forward in this country."

Later, the vehicles will be replaced by climate-controlled shuttles capable of carrying up to 14 passengers and will be deployed in a high-end mixed-use neighborhood and later, a low-income residential area.

"We're doing this on public roads, not on a special route-way that's just dedicated to that, or in a parking lot or in a theme park," Payne said.

The taxis will run on demand, summoned by an app, and there will be a fee to use them.

"We want to show there's a viable businesses case for this service," Payne said. "It will be like calling an Uber or a Lyft."

That said, eventually the taxis will be operating without a failsafe driver, and the costs will decrease. Reduced costs leads Payne to an application for which he sees an immediate improvement in operation.

"An ambulance substitute in non-life-threatening situations," he said. "For people who don't have a car, need to see a doctor but really don't

need to be calling an ambulance, which costs \$450 to drive out of the parking area and use for an hour."

Non-emergency ambulance dispatches are not reimbursed, and Payne said Greenville County writes of \$2 million annually in that manner.

"If a \$500,000 investment in one of these vehicles saves us just \$1 million in those calls per year, it's worth it."

"Emergency dispatchers triage the situations already when they take calls, but we have to respond. We could, someday, respond by saying an automated taxi will be by to take you to the clinic, not the emergency room."

Payne said that the vehicles will also serve as reinforcement for safe driving practices.

"They won't go faster than the speed limit, and in a lot of places you have cars going 50 miles per hour in a 30 mile-per-hour zone. Other drivers will see how much faster they're going," he said.

Initial operations used a driver with the automated system running in the back-

ground, comparing the driver's performance to its programming.

"The cars know that a stop sign means a 100 percent stop," Payne said. "If a driver does a rolling stop, the computer knows that wasn't all right and lets the driver know he failed there."

The vehicles are already learning and providing data for programmers. Payne is amused by one of the unintended speedbumps they've hit while driving on the Clemson research park campus.

"The vehicles are programmed to look out for pedestrians, because they'll be on the sidewalks and they can step out into the road," he said. "They were stopping on the campus because instead of planting grass, the campus has these tall shrubs, kind of like sea oats."

"They wave in the wind, they're about 4-to-6 feet tall, and they finally figured out that the car thinks they're people, and they're about to step into the road. It's wondering what to make of it." **CN**

# Today’s predictions offered for tomorrow’s internet

**By Dr. Alan R. Shark**  
executive director  
Public Technology Institute

October has been designated Cyber Security Awareness month and the Department of Homeland Security has issued a series of weekly topical themes.

This week’s theme is “Today’s Predictions for Tomorrow’s Internet.” NACo, in partnership with the Public Technology Institute (PTI), has developed a series of useful checklists and commentaries that are specifically created for the county leader.

This week we will focus on what we can expect in the future — and how counties can help prepare for what lies ahead.

Yogi Berra has been credited with saying the future is not what it used to be, and we can certainly see that play out in the ever-morphing cyber universe. The Internet of Everything (IoE) is here and it is real: Just about everything imaginable is connected. Experts predict that there will be no fewer than 50 billion devices connected to

— and through — the internet by 2050. Some experts say even sooner.

Smart counties, connected devices, digitized records, as well as smart cars and homes have become a new reality. This week’s theme is designed to remind citizens and county leaders that their sensitive, personal information is the fuel that makes smart devices work. While there are tremendous benefits of using these devices, it is critical to understand how to use these cutting-edge innovations in safe and secure ways.

Today’s internet is the super-fast conduit that holds it all together. We must remember that it was initially built for very different reasons within a controlled and trusted environment. Today we marvel at all that we can do with our smart devices and related technologies. And we want even more.

However, there is a growing cloud of concern that hangs over us as we also become more conscious of the vulnerabilities to our secure personal and government information

systems, which includes hacking, fraud, identity theft and extortion.

The fact that one can operate in a completely anonymous environment where we can never be completely certain as to another’s true identity means that we may need to change this paradigm by way of policy, law, and technology. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is working on a presidential order to develop a Trusted Identities in Cyberspace ecosystem.

Despite predictions of the future of the internet we still must be ever-vigilant and adhere to what the experts tell us what we should be doing today.

Here are five necessary actions, as recommended by the Department of Homeland Security

- Keep a clean machine. Keep the security software, operating system and web browser on your devices updated. Keeping the software on your devices up to date will prevent attackers from being able to take advantage of known vulnerabilities.

- Enable stronger authentication. Always enable stronger authentication for an extra layer of security beyond the password that is available on most major email, social media and financial accounts.

Stronger authentication (e.g., multi-factor authentication that can use a one-time code texted to a mobile device) helps verify that a user has authorized access to an online account.

- When in doubt, throw it out. Links in email and online posts are often the way cyber criminals compromise your mobile devices. If it looks suspicious — even if you know the source — it’s best to delete or, if appropriate, mark it as “junk email.”
- Make your passwords long and strong. Use complex passwords with a combination of numbers, symbols and letters. Use unique passwords for different accounts.
- Secure your Wi-Fi network. Your office and home wireless router is the gateway for cybercriminals to access all of your connected devices. Secure

your Wi-Fi network, and your digital devices, by changing the factory-set default password and passwords.

Since the Internet of Everything is getting our attention, Symantec, a NACo and PTI premiere corporate partner, has developed some useful best practices to incorporate when using your personal devices.

## Best practices to consider

- Research the capabilities and security features of an Internet of Everything (IoE) device before purchase.
- Perform an audit of IoE devices used on your network. Some refer to this as “Asset management”. It is amazing how much equipment cannot be accounted for.
- Change the default credentials on devices.
- Use a strong encryption method when setting up Wi-Fi network access.
- Many devices come with a variety of services enabled by default. Disable features and services that are not required.
- Modify the default privacy and security settings of devices according to your requirements.
- Disable or protect remote access to IoE devices when not needed.
- Use wired connections instead of wireless where possible.
- Regularly check the manufacturer’s website for firmware updates.
- Ensure that a hardware outage does not result in an insecure state of the device.

Given all the advances in technology, the consensus remains that default passwords are still the biggest security weakness for devices.

The password most commonly tried by attackers are “admin” and “password.” This means that attackers know what the default passwords are, and that they most likely have not been changed.

And the second greatest weakness remains us. **CN**

**WORD SEARCH**

**GWINNETT COUNTY, Ga.**  
LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS FEATURED COUNTY IN 'BEHIND THE SEAL'  
Created by Mary Ann Barton

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

- AIRPORT:** The county is served by the Hartfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.
- BUFORD DAM:** Congress authorized the construction of the dam in the county in 1950.
- BUTTON:** Incorporated in 1818, the county was named for Button Gwinnett, one of three Georgia signers of the Declaration of Independence.
- DOUG:** Actor Michael Kelly, who plays Doug Stamper on House of Cards is a native of the county.
- LABOR:** According to the state labor department, the county unemployment rate was 4.7 percent in 2016.
- LAWRENCEVILLE:** The county seat is named for Captain James Lawrence, a wounded commander of the Chesapeake during the War of 1812. The expression “Don’t give up the ship!” comes from Lawrence, who gave his crew the battle cry as he lay dying.
- LOCAL REPUBLIC:** Ranked the top restaurant in the county by Yelpers.

- McINTOSH:** When Button Gwinnett failed to win an election, he entangled himself in his last political stand, a fatal duel with Gen. Lachlan McIntosh.
- POPULATION:** With a population of more than 900,000 the county is the second most-populous in Georgia.
- PUBLIX:** The grocery store chain is one of the biggest employers in Gwinnett County.
- RAILROAD:** A railroad line, the Danville and Piedmont Air Line (now Norfolk Southern) was built through the county in 1871.
- TANNERY:** The first major business in the county was the RH Allen Tannery, making leather goods. During the Depression, the tannery employed 2,400.
- TREATY:** The county was created from treaty lands ceded by the Creek and Cherokee Indians.
- UNIVERSITY:** The University of Georgia is less than an hour’s drive from the county on Georgia Highway 316.
- WINN:** The home of Elisha Winn was the first Gwinnett County courthouse.



# Long shots see value in pitching Amazon

**By Charlie Ban**  
senior staff writer

Would your county build a monorail system to attract Amazon's new headquarters?

Riverside County, California would. It's part of their pitch to the internet giant that announced plans and a request for proposals to for what was billed as a \$5 billion investment with up to 50,000 jobs.

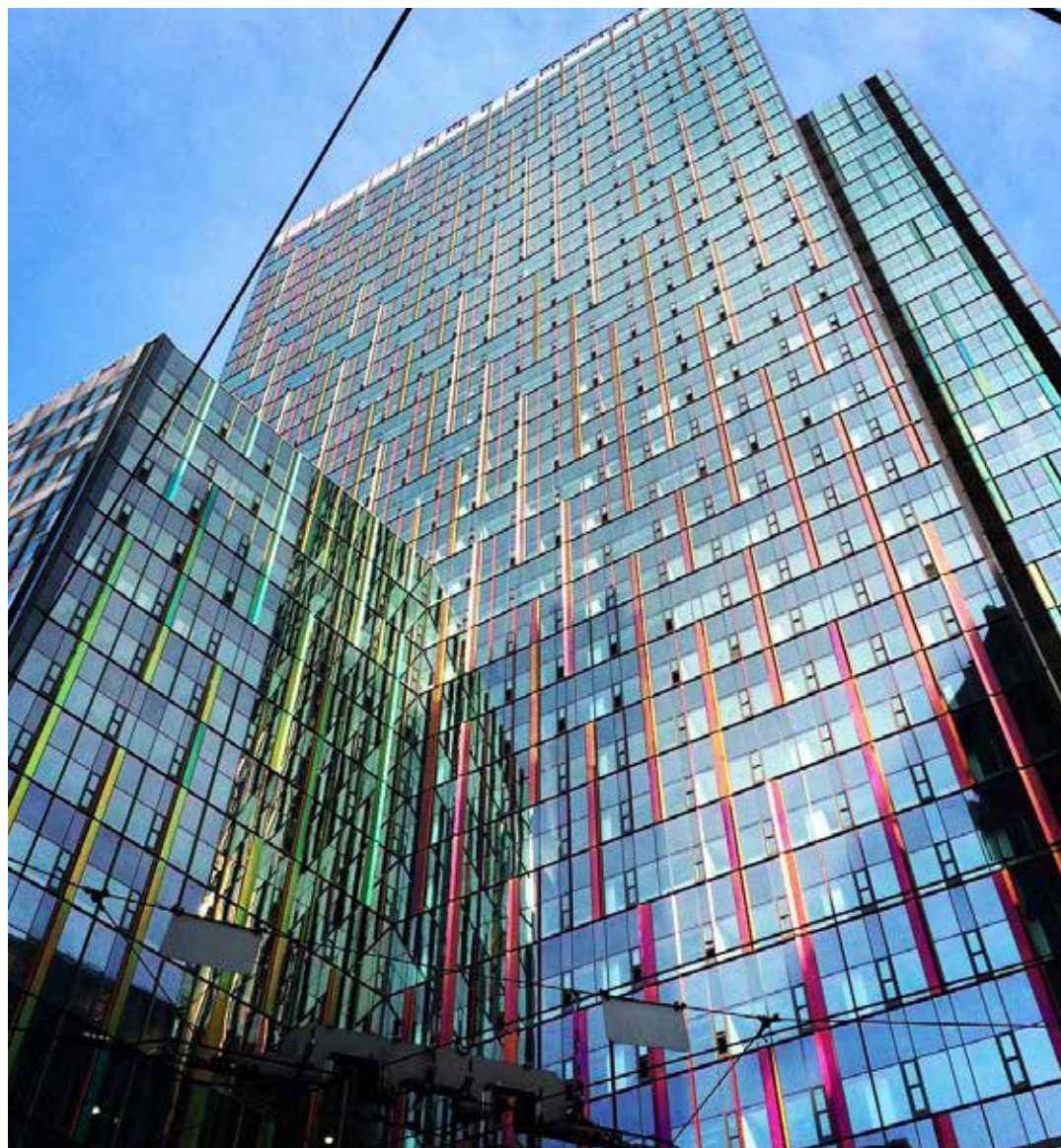
A total of 238 cities and counties responded to Amazon's request for proposals for a competitive process to help select the new headquarters site. It has a lot of them thinking big, and even if they aren't favored, thinking ahead to what is possible and how they can position their assets and resources to land a big one, is a useful exercise.

The RFP reflects a lot of Seattle's qualities, in fact King and Snohomish counties made a pitch to go two-for-two with Amazon headquarters, but that hasn't stopped some counties that don't match the profile from making their case. It outlines a preference for urban and suburban locations in metropolitan areas with more than 1 million people within 30 miles of a population center, mass transit options on site and an international airport within 45 minutes.

But some of the counties that submitted proposals recognize that a long shot for one possible business could put them in view of other suitors.

Charles County, Maryland was one of them, and while the mostly-rural county southeast of Washington, D.C. is both geographically and metaphorically an underdog to its neighbor counties — Prince George's, Howard and Baltimore, which also submitted proposals — the exercise was not without value.

"Our primary objective was not to attract the Amazon headquarters — we know we're a long shot — but we want to keep Charles County



**Amazon's headquarters in King County, Wash.** Photo by chicabrandita/Flickr

on Amazon's radar," said Loretta Freeman-Buster, chief of business development for the county's economic development department. "We were under consideration for a fulfillment center, and we want to show our continued interest."

Charles County is throwing its dart, and even if it doesn't hit the bullseye, the economic development team is hoping it will land somewhere good, or observers who are in a position to help the county will take notice.

"Amazon was fairly specific in terms of what they're looking for, rapid transit is one of those things," said Redevelopment Manager Taylor Yewell. "Rapid transit has been studied for 20 years for Southern Maryland — either light rail or rapid bus transit from the D.C. Metrorail system."

"Other businesses are looking for the same things Ama-

zon wants, commuter rail, if that's something we can make a stronger case for to the Maryland Department of Transportation based on this competitive process to get Amazon, so much the better so when we get opportunities like this in the future. Maybe not in the scale or magnitude, if we have rapid transit in southern Maryland, I think we'll be better positioned to attract companies like this."

Even if the county doesn't woo Amazon's headquarters, the information the county compiled for the proposal will find a second life in the future.

"We had a lot of information, but it was still all-hands-on-deck for five weeks to get this together," Freeman-Buster said. "We have a document that is ready that we can turn around in a day or two when the opportunity arises."

Deputy Director Marcia

Keeth said the process is helping raise Charles County's profile in the Washington, D.C. region and underscores the

"We wanted to create overall awareness of the county for other businesses," she said. "The cost of doing business is lower, we have a highly qualified workforce in and near the county, there are 1.3 million workers nearby. There's a still conversation many of us have on a regular basis trying to explain where Charles County is in the Washington, D.C. region, but we have a lot to offer."

Rural Milam County, Texas, northeast of Austin is hoping to trade on similar proximity, and some available real estate, to land Amazon in another long shot. Being so close to Austin, County Judge Dave Barkemeyer said, would help make the county attractive to Amazon despite lacking a few points outlined in the RFP.

"We just ignored those," he said. "We have other things that do qualify us."

That creativity will be necessary for the county regardless. That region's economic health has been unsteady since the closure of an Alcoa smelting plant nine years ago.

"(Amazon) would fulfill the need, in spades, of what we need in economic development," he said. "We have to do bold things to get industry back, and this was an opportunity to make a statement, get some publicity and let people know Milam County is open for business."

Specifically open on the 30,000 acre Alcoa property, which has power lines crossing over the plot and an large aquifer underneath.

"If it weren't for the large property that's available, we probably wouldn't have been available to the magnitude that the Amazon RFP was looking for," he said.

That opportunity is even more crucial with the demise of a coal-fire power plant that announced its impending closure days before the Amazon proposal went out.

"That will affect a third of our tax base," Barkemeyer said. "Hopefully this will attract interest pretty widely. If we aren't successful with Amazon, we're expecting the publicity will get the attention of other industries."

Like in Charles County, Barkemeyer was motivated by the way Milam County stakeholders came together when the opportunity to pitch for Amazon arose.

"Local businesses and economic organizations chipped in, pooled their resources, we were able to finance a consultant to help us put this together, and we found out we had some friends who offered some advice to help us position ourselves," he said. "It was a team effort, and I was proud of how we cooperated to put this together." **CN**



## PROFILES IN SERVICE

**GARY MOORE**  
Chair  
Transportation Steering Committee  
Chair  
NACo/NLC Joint Opioid Task Force  
Judge Executive  
Boone County, Kentucky

**Number of years involved in NACo:** 17

**Years in public service:** 19

**Occupation:** County judge executive

**The hardest thing I've ever done was:** Deal with the death of my parents.

**Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner:** Abraham Lincoln, Ronald Reagan and Jeff Bezos.

**A dream I have is to:** Travel the world and learn about various cultures.

**The most adventurous thing I've ever done is:** Run for Congress in 2012 against the odds. I lost that election, but I am blessed to continue my undefeated run as judge executive.

**My favorite way to relax is to:** Listen to good music while lying by the pool.

**I'm most proud of:** My wonderful family — my wife, children and grandchildren.

**Every morning I read:** Online news and too many emails.

**My favorite meal is:** Thanksgiving dinner— turkey, mashed potatoes, yams and pumpkin

**You'd be surprised to learn that I:**  
Am wild and crazy in a dune buggy.



MOORE

pie for dessert.

**My pet peeve is:** Uninformed people taking a position without having the facts.

**My motto is:** Making Boone County a great place to live, to work and to raise a family.

**The last book I read was:** *Dreamland* — a must-read about the opioid epidemic.

**My favorite movie is:** *The Godfather*.

**My favorite music:** Classic rock — The Eagles, Rod Stewart and The Bee Gees.

**My favorite U.S. President is:** Abraham Lincoln.

**My county is a NACo member because:** Being an elected county official is a great responsibility and challenge. I am encouraged by learning best practices, sharing frustrations and celebrating victories with other county leaders at NACo.

## New publication compiles state-specific county challenges

NACo's Counties Futures Lab recently released *2017 Top County Challenges Across the States*. The publication features information from the August NACo-NCCAE Knowledge Management Forum, where 29 executive directors and staff members from 17 state associations of counties met to discuss the future of county governments in their respective states. The discussion included a variety of issues; the most mentioned included preemption, decreasing county revenues, increasing state mandates, justice reform and jails, elections and the opioid crisis.

The report lays out several examples of how these issues specifically impact counties. For instance, in North Dakota, \$3 billion in transportation funding previously provided by the state to counties has



been reduced to zero. The state of Minnesota has been pushing human services programs on counties, increasing counties' human services expenditures without the needed funding.

Nine county jails in Washington state are over capacity, while medium-sized and large counties are required by state law to continue investing in largely empty juvenile detention halls. Many counties,

especially in Arizona, lack the resources to upgrade election systems. Finally, several associations cited the opioid epidemic as one of their largest challenges due to its impact on public health.

The report also summarizes the event's educational sessions and gives key takeaways for each one. These sessions included discussions on service sharing in an environment of fiscal constraints, broadband deployment in rural counties and managing a retiring county workforce. **CN**

For more information and a full summary on the NACo-NCCAE Knowledge Management Forum, visit [www.naco.org/2017-KMF](http://www.naco.org/2017-KMF). For other management and operational issues, please visit the Counties Futures Lab at [www.naco.org/lab](http://www.naco.org/lab).

## CN SPOTLIGHT



Harrison County, W.Va. Commissioner Ron Watson introduces Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) who dropped by NACo's dinner-briefing Oct. 19 for a delegation of West Virginia county officials who were meeting with White House officials the next day. At the briefing — one of several scheduled this year — NACo outlined its policy priorities for the county officials. Photo by Brian Namey



# Counties can help update info for 2020 Census

The decennial census is an integral part of American democracy. In fact, it is constitutionally mandated. Every decade, the U.S. Census Bureau is required to conduct the census. While many are aware that the census serves to collect data on population information, some may not know of the many uses of the data.

For counties and their residents, the data can serve essential functions such as apportioning representation, determining eligibility for federal programs and allocating approximately \$600 billion dollars a year in federal funding.



At the local level, it is used to draw voting precincts, school districts and legislative districts. Programs like the American Community Survey rely on decennial census information to

improve the accuracy and quality of their data. Public and private entities alike rely on ACS and decennial census data to help drive important decisions like where to start a new business, or where the next school may be needed.

Although it serves many critical functions, participation in the census has declined in recent decades. To maintain high-quality data, it is important that all levels of government encourage their constituents to participate. Counties may assist by participating in the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program.

This program was established to allow local governments to review and provide updates to the U.S. Census Bureau's master list of addresses in advance of the 2020 Census. To participate, the highest elected official in the county needs to return completed LUCA forms to the U.S. Census Bureau by Dec. 15. Links to the forms may be found at [www.naco.org/Census2020](http://www.naco.org/Census2020).

Population levels and demographics are ever changing. Local government leaders live in the communities they serve, and interact with their residents every day. Thus, they have an active heartbeat of their commu-

nity and can provide accurate information to the U.S. Census Bureau, which would otherwise be difficult and costly to collect. Incorrect information, such as an undercounted population, can have negative consequences that may last a decade.

As the 2020 Census nears, counties can also engage federal representatives to explain the significance of the census to their communities. By working closely together with the federal government, county governments can ensure that the U.S. Census Bureau has the support it needs to fulfill its mandate. **CN**

## Nearly 30 percent of U.S. recyclables are exported overseas

From **RECYCLING** page 1

More than \$5.6 billion in "scrap commodities" were exported from the United States to China last year, according to the Institute of Scrap Recycling (ISRI). The ban, the group said, will have a "devastating impact...on the global recycling industry." It notes that the scrap plastics ban includes "polymers of ethylene, styrene, vinyl chloride and PET (polyethylene terephthalate)."

Sarah Grimm, waste reduction specialist with Lane County, Oregon, said contaminants cause problems all along the recycling journey. "Food, liquids, oil or hazardous chemicals can contaminate paper and other materials in recycling bins making whole batches of materials compressed in recycling trucks unusable." Other types of contaminants, she said, include plastic bags, film plastics, liquids, food, soiled packaging, plastic clamshells, garden hoses, wire hangers, textiles, diapers, electronics and batteries.

SWANA is asking state agencies to communicate with counties about the ban and also asking that they contact industry partners, generators and other interested parties. SWANA is also advising that local governments renew efforts to encourage waste reduction and

develop alternative domestic markets for recycled materials.

In Wisconsin, the state's Department of Natural Resources has created a PowerPoint presentation for counties. In Waukesha County, Rebecca Mattano, solid waste supervisor, said "at this time, Waukesha County has not felt the ripple effect of this ban but we are anticipating tightening markets."

How did the ban come about in July? "One of the things we have been told," Biderman said, "is that there is a movie called *Plastic China*, which was seen by Chinese President Xi." The film is a look at how much plastic waste is polluting China. "And this apparently was a significant motivator in the issuance of the July prohibition," Biderman added. The documentary, by Wang Jiuliang, looks at a family who spends its days sorting and recycling mountains of plastic waste. Xi mentioned the environment 89 times in a speech he made recently.

How will the ban impact the United States, the largest exporter of waste and scrap? The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality said that "considering the unprecedented challenges China's actions have caused, processors may not be able to find alternative markets for some of the mixed paper or plastics being collect-

ed for recycling. In such circumstances, DEQ may approve requests for disposal of materials where no markets exist or costs for recycling are prohibitive. This will be the first time in Oregon's decades of strong recycling programs where this may occur on a large scale."

Recycled materials exported from the United States to China last year included 13.2 million tons of scrap paper valued at \$1.9 billion and 1.42 million tons of scrap plastic valued at \$495 million. According to ISRI, roughly 30 percent of recyclables in the United States are exported overseas due to insuf-

ficient domestic demand.

China has used the recyclables as a low-cost source of raw materials for its manufacturing sector. Its waste and scrap imports climbed from \$12 billion to \$42 billion from 2005 to 2011, an increase of 246 percent, according to United Nations Comtrade.

In addition to harming recycling efforts — and jobs — in the United States, ocean freight companies could also see a drop in their business; after dropping off Chinese exports in the United States, those ships often return to China with trash from the United States.

"More than 155,000 direct jobs are supported by the U.S. industry's export activities, earning an average wage of almost \$76,000 and contributing more than \$3 billion to federal, state and local taxes," said ISRI President Robin Wiener. "A ban on imports of scrap commodities into China would be catastrophic to the recycling industry."

Lane County's Grimm noted that consumers "have the most power to change the situation by choosing, requesting and purchasing post-consumer recycled content packaging and products." **CN**



Bales of recycled wastepaper wait to be loaded onto ships bound for China.



# CAPITAL LOOP

## Senate approves 2018 budget blueprint

On Oct. 19, the Senate approved a budget blueprint for FY 2018 allowing lawmakers to pursue a tax code overhaul through the budget reconciliation process.

## VA sends bill to Congress to overhaul the Choice Program

The Veterans Coordinated Access and Rewarding Experiences (CARE) Act submitted to the House and Senate Veterans Affairs committees

Oct. 16, would replace the current 30-day/40-mile rule with more personalized and flexible decision-making, according to the VA.

## EPA "Sue and Settle" directive issued by Administrator Pruitt

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt issued a directive designed to end the agency's practice of "sue and settle," and improve transparency and public participation in EPA consent decrees and settlement agreements.



## GWINNETT COUNTY, GEORGIA

Introduced in: 2017

Gwinnett County updated its seal, logo and slogan in October 2017 behind a unified rebranding effort to be more reflective of Gwinnett's much larger, more diverse residential population and business community in a more urban-suburban environment since the seal was introduced in 1988.



The new seal's kaleidoscopic imagery represents the county's three major river basins, and the county government's position as a nexus of the unique people, place and promise of Gwinnett County.

The color variations are the connections among schools, businesses, nonprofit organizations, civic institutions, cities and the County.

The Board of Commissioners said in its resolution announcing the new seal: "(it) reflects the desired image of the county as a manifestation of the American dream in a

business-friendly environment catering to our unique blend of an international community of various ages, education levels, professional skills and life perspectives, who belong to numerous religious organizations, who preserve divergent cultural practices, who attend harmonious community events and who pursue distinct professional, intellectual and educational endeavors.

"The heart of the kaleidoscope forms a unifying crest, a symbol of our integrity and a token of the county's unwavering mission to make life better for the people of Gwinnett County."

## CN SPOTLIGHT



Lawrence County, Pa. auctioned decorated pumpkins to raise money for the Department of Juvenile Corrections' Community Garden Project, which teaches juvenile offenders accountability and gives them a chance to work off victim restitution, fines and community service hours. The winning pumpkin, created by the Sheriff's Department, Rat-A-Tat-Tat Puddy Cat, is pictured at the top. Photos courtesy of Lawrence County.

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



# House budget bill cuts SALT deduction

The House-passed FY2018 budget resolution clears the way for comprehensive tax reform efforts this fall. The resolution cleared the House on a 216 to 212 vote Oct. 26 and explicitly calls for an elimination of the SALT deduction to offset other costs associated with tax reform.

The slim margin of victory holds hope for groups pressing to preserve the deduction. "The razor-thin margin is a clear and unmistakable signal that there's growing support in Congress to take SALT off the table," Americans Against Double Taxation said in a statement. NACo is a co-founder of the coalition.

"If there's this much opposition to a secret plan with no details, we expect opposition to grow once a concrete proposal takes shape and members fully understand the impact that a full or partial elimination of SALT has on homeowners, home values, public services, infrastructure investment, and the continuing ability of state and local governments to determine their own appropriate mix of revenue sources," the statement continued.

Americans Against Double Taxation is dedicated to protecting the state and local tax deduction, a federal tax deduction claimed by 44 million American taxpayers that supports vital investments in infrastructure, public safety, home ownership and education.

The GOP is expected to release its tax reform plan Nov. 1. **CN**

To learn more about Americans Against Double Taxation and its members, go to <http://bit.ly/2fXsRac>

You can also see the impact eliminating SALT would have on the average taxpayer in your zip code by viewing the new SALT calculator at <http://bit.ly/2h7GdOw>

Item	Assumptions
Filing Status	Married
Exemptions	2
Dependents	2
Zip Code	84111
State	UT
City	Salt Lake City
County	Salt Lake

Adjusted Gross Income	\$59,618.50
State and Local Income Tax Paid	\$8,424.77
Sales Tax Paid	\$975.00
Property Tax Amount	\$3,137.08
Mortgage Interest Paid	\$8,237.04
Charitable Giving	\$17,530.00



## Government Finance Officers Association

Note: If results for a zip code show as "N/A", this means no available data for that zip code was provided in the Statistics of Income (SOI) by the IRS.

Current Plan	
Adjusted Gross Income	\$59,618.50
Standard Deduction	\$0.00
Itemized Deduction	\$37,328.89
<b>State and Local Taxes</b>	
Income Tax	\$8,424.77
Sales Tax	\$0.00
Real Estate Tax	\$3,137.08
Mortgage Interest	\$8,237.04
Charitable Donations	\$17,530.00
Exemptions	\$16,200.00
Taxable Income	\$6,089.61
Child Tax Credit	\$2,000.00
Tax	-\$1,391.04
Effective Rate	-2.33%

Proposed Plan (NO SALT)	
Adjusted Gross Income	\$59,618.50
Standard Deduction	\$0.00
Itemized Deduction	\$25,767.04
<b>State and Local Taxes</b>	
Income Tax	\$0.00
Sales Tax	\$0.00
Real Estate Tax	\$0.00
Mortgage Interest	\$8,237.04
Charitable Donations	\$17,530.00
Exemptions	\$0.00
Taxable Income	\$33,851.46
Child Tax Credit	\$2,000.00
Tax	\$2,062.18
Effective Rate	3.46%

Change in Tax Under Proposed Plan **\$ 3,453.21**

This is a sample result from the GFOA calculator. The calculator assesses the impact of the proposed "Big Six" tax reform framework compared with current law on individuals and families who own homes. Customizing the fields in blue will calculate the change in taxes resulting from the proposed plan, which eliminates the SALT deduction, for the average homeowner in any zip code in the United States.



## BRIGHT IDEAS | ARAPAHOE COUNTY, Colorado

# Human Services, IT Collaboration Boosts Service

### PROBLEM:

As its caseloads increased, Arapahoe County, Colorado's Human Services Department had long wait times and errors in application forms, causing the county to hire temporary workers to pick up the slack.

### SOLUTION:

The county created its own software that scans and digitizes documents and prioritizes work based on the case's due date, dramatically slashing wait times, error rates and overtime costs.

Several years ago, Arapahoe County, Colorado's Department of Human Services found that it was handling caseloads that had ballooned to about 105,000 clients from approximately 45,000. As the caseloads grew, customer wait times increased and errors on applications multiplied, costing the county overtime pay for temporary staff.

In 2014, the Human Services Department asked the IT Department to develop software to streamline the workflow. The new software, HSConnects, used best practices from the Human Services Department.

"We automated the best practices is what we've done," said Bob Prevost, deputy director of the Human Services Department. "We sat in a room for

four months and white-boarded every process." They slashed 20 redundancies in their system during the process.

Three IT staffers developed a prototype in three months and launched HSConnects Feb. 20, 2015. The software reads the state's program systems to find when a case is due, which documents should be routed. The program prioritizes work by due date for each case. HSConnects makes sure that the most pressing case is first in line.

Before they began using the new software, applications for everything from food assistance to Colorado's Medicaid program took an average of 25 minutes; that time shrunk by 92 percent after clients and employees began using the new software. In addition to seeing processing times



Nidia James, business associate with the Arapahoe County, Colorado, Human Services Department, enters a document through a high-speed scanner to digitize the paperwork. Nina Paulson, Community and Child Support Services supervisor, looks on. Photo courtesy of Arapahoe County.

shrink, errors on applications went from about 30 percent to nearly zero.

In addition to saving time and reducing errors, the county saved 4 million sheets of paper in the past two years and nearly \$1.5 million it had spent on overtime costs for temps.

Arapahoe County earned the 2016 C-Stat Distinguished Performance Award from the Colorado Department of Human Services for outstanding performance, and a NACo Achievement Award.

Now Arapahoe County is sharing its HSConnects work-

flow management system with Adams, El Paso and Pueblo counties through a multicounty project thanks to more than \$800,000 in federal and state funding.

"Customers in Adams, El Paso and Pueblo counties will applaud the improved customer service HSConnects will bring to them," said Arapahoe County Commissioner Nancy Sharpe. "We are so proud of this software and it is a win for us when we get to help other counties to be more successful."

"Our partnership with other

counties was very helpful in securing our grant," she said. "El Paso County's leadership was fantastic and hiring a grant writer was the key to our successful grant application."

Bessen said that use of the software will continue to grow. "We have seven or eight counties in the queue at the moment," he said. Prevost noted that 55 percent of the state will be on the system eventually and will be interconnected, which will come in handy if residents move across county lines.

"HSConnects will assist our partner counties to achieve accurate and timely administration of programs and will provide a single door approach to link services across programs and our organizations, thus allowing customers seamless access and no duplication," Cheryl Ternes, director of Arapahoe County Department of Human Services, said. "The future of HSConnects holds many more opportunities for counties, including data analytics and holistic customized assessments of the services a family may need." **CN**

## ON THE MOVE

### NACo STAFF

- Earlier this month **Hadi Sedigh**, associate legislative director, was a panelist discussing the implications of federal policy on the opioid epidemic at a briefing sponsored by Duke University, Beyond Talking Points: Opioid Epidemic as a National Emergency and the Federal Response, held in Washington, D.C.
- **Kevan Stone**, associate legislative director for transportation, spoke at the Mississippi Association of Supervisors Conference, held in Warren County (Vicksburg), Oct. 17-19.
- **Matt Chase**, NACo executive director, addressed the County Administrative Officers Association of California conference in Monterey County (Carmel), Oct. 25.



Sedigh

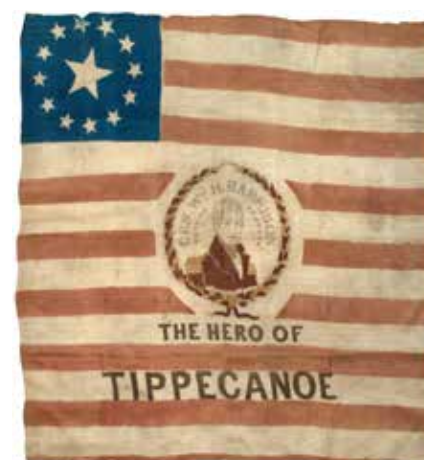


Stone

New NACo★  
Member

GET TO  
KNOW...

Tippecanoe  
County, Ind



### Welcome, Tippecanoe County, Ind.

You may recognize the name Tippecanoe from the famous presidential campaign slogan used by William Henry Harrison, then the governor of Indiana, "Tippecanoe and Tyler too!" The 1811 Battle of Tippecanoe between American forces led by Harrison and Native American warriors resulted in a victory for Harrison, thus earning him the nickname, "Old Tippecanoe." Today, the county is home to **Perdue University**, home of the Boilermakers, and the second largest university student body in Indiana.



# MONEYMATTERS%

## Many Americans Appear to Have a Discouraged Outlook on Retirement

Only 21 percent of future retirees say life in retirement will be better, and 28 percent of recent retirees say life is worse in retirement, according to a new Nationwide Retirement Institute survey. Retirees who say life is worse in retirement cite income (78 percent) and cost of living (76 percent) as the top reasons why.

The 1,012 American adults age 50 or older surveyed online by Harris Poll also are concerned about a variety of possible changes to Social Security — and most aren't banking on Social Security to last. In fact, 78 percent of future retirees worry that Social Security funding will run out in their lifetime — the highest this sentiment has been in the last four years. Plus, about half of older Americans (52 percent) expect Social Security benefit cuts under the current administration.

Taken as a whole, the survey shows undercurrents in three areas that relate to the broader negativity: future retirees' expectations differ from current retirement realities; health care costs continue to be a driving concern; and many future retirees do not understand basic elements of the Social Security program, which can complicate appropriate planning.

### Expectations differ

Key differences exist between older Americans' retirement expectations and the realities of most current retirees, especially as they relate to Social Security benefits. On average, future retirees expect to wait until age 65 to collect Social Security benefits, while most current retirees say they began receiving them at age 62 on average, suggesting a disconnect in planning between the two groups.

For example, future retirees expect to receive \$1,578 in

monthly Social Security benefits, which is more than the \$1,487 average monthly benefits of recent retirees and the \$1,308 of those who retired more than 10 years ago.

The differences don't stop there. Most American adults age 50 or older anticipate spending their benefits on living expenses such as groceries (84 percent) and housing (61 percent). Future retirees expect to spend 29 percent on housing, 23 percent on groceries and 20 percent on health care. However, retirees are somewhat more likely to say they spend their benefits paying health care costs (59 percent) than they do for housing (56 percent).

### Health care costs a cause for concern

One-in-three retirees (34 percent) say health problems are interfering with their retirement. Among those who report problems, 75 percent say health problems occurred sooner than expected, with most of those (65 percent) saying their health issues emerged more than five years earlier than anticipated. In addition, the expenses associated with health care keep about a quarter of retirees (24 percent) from living the retirement they expected.

"The average American claiming Social Security at 62 could spend about 64 percent of their monthly Social Security benefits on health care costs," Ambrozy said. "That's why it's so important to consider optimizing Social Security. Too many retirees need the money, but few are maximizing their benefit."

### Reining in expectations

Consumer expectations may also be too high. More than half of future retirees (53

percent) and 59 percent of recent retirees expect Social Security to cover half or more of their expenses in retirement. However, the Social Security Administration notes the program is designed to replace 40 percent of the average retiree's pre-retirement income. About a quarter of current retirees say their Social Security payments are either less or much less than expected (25 percent of recent retirees and 23 percent of those retired for 10-plus years).

The survey indicates that while older Americans perceive they understand Social Security, a moderate lack of knowledge exists about the basic facts of the program. For example, 91 percent of older adults don't know what factors determine the maximum Social Security benefit an individual can receive.

Tools such as Social Security calculators can help close consumers' knowledge gaps. More than two-in-five future retirees (41 percent) used a Social Security calculator to help estimate their benefits.

The Nationwide *Social Security 360 Analyzer* provides a comprehensive look at Social Security filing strategies and helps position Social Security in the context of an individual's or family's retirement income needs. **CN**

For more information visit [www.nationwidefinancial.com/ssinsights](http://www.nationwidefinancial.com/ssinsights)

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*Social Security 360 Analyzer is a service mark of Nationwide Life Insurance Company. Nationwide, the Nationwide N and Eagle, © 2017 Nationwide*

## N.J. county collects supplies for Puerto Rico

By Mary Ann Barton  
senior staff writer

The Burlington County, New Jersey, Board of Chosen Freeholders recently completed a collection drive for victims of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, asking for donations of everything from flashlights to baby food.

The island, a territory of the United States, took a direct hit Sept. 16 by the deadly Category 5 hurricane. The population continues to suffer a month later with problems getting food, water and electricity back up and running.

Burlington County Freeholder Ryan Peters organized the collection drive, which ran Oct. 12-27.

"Burlington County stands in solidarity with those affected by Hurricane Maria," said Peters. "The people of Puerto Rico need our help. I ask that our Burlington County residents, local businesses and the community-at-large come together to assist those who need our support throughout the weeks and months to come."

The Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders partnered with the State of New Jersey and its Office of Emergency Management, the Center for Hispanic Policy, Research and Development and the Governor's Office of Volunteerism on the drive.

The Center for Hispanic Policy, Research and Development is led by Westhampton Township Deputy Mayor Abraham Lopez, who recently saw the hurricane's devastation for himself while visiting Puerto Rico.

"What I witnessed was hard to bear," Lopez said. "Crumbling and life-threatening infrastructure deficiencies, people drinking and bathing from rain water, and rationing crackers to make food last."

"Not all was gloom," he said. "I also witnessed our fellow citizens' hard work to restart



Thursday, October 12, 2017 - Friday, October 27, 2017

The Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders is partnering with the State of New Jersey and its Office of Emergency Management, the Center for Hispanic Policy, Research and Development and the Governor's Office of Volunteerism to host a collection drive for the Hurricane Maria victims in Puerto Rico.

Every donation is appreciated. Thank you for showing your support.

### We are collecting the following items:

Baby Food, Batteries, Canned Goods, Cleaning Supplies, Diapers, Feminine Hygiene Products, First Aid Kits, Flashlights, Hand Sanitizer, Laundry Soap, Leather Work Gloves, New Underwear & Socks, Baby Bed Pillows & Blankets, Toys.

NEW, NOT USED, ITEMS ONLY PLEASE

### Find a Donation Bin Near You!

Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders, 100 Park Avenue, Suite 100, Marlton, NJ 08053  
Burlington County Public Safety Building, 100 Park Avenue, Suite 100, Marlton, NJ 08053  
Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders, 100 Park Avenue, Suite 100, Marlton, NJ 08053  
Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders, 100 Park Avenue, Suite 100, Marlton, NJ 08053  
Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders, 100 Park Avenue, Suite 100, Marlton, NJ 08053  
Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders, 100 Park Avenue, Suite 100, Marlton, NJ 08053  
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Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders, 100 Park Avenue, Suite 100, Marlton, NJ 08053  
Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders, 100 Park Avenue, Suite 100, Marlton, NJ 08053  
Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders, 100 Park Avenue, Suite 100, Marlton, NJ 08053

their lives, help neighbors and reopen businesses. Our fellow Americans in Puerto Rico are resilient and will certainly see this through, ensuring that Puerto Rico shall rise."

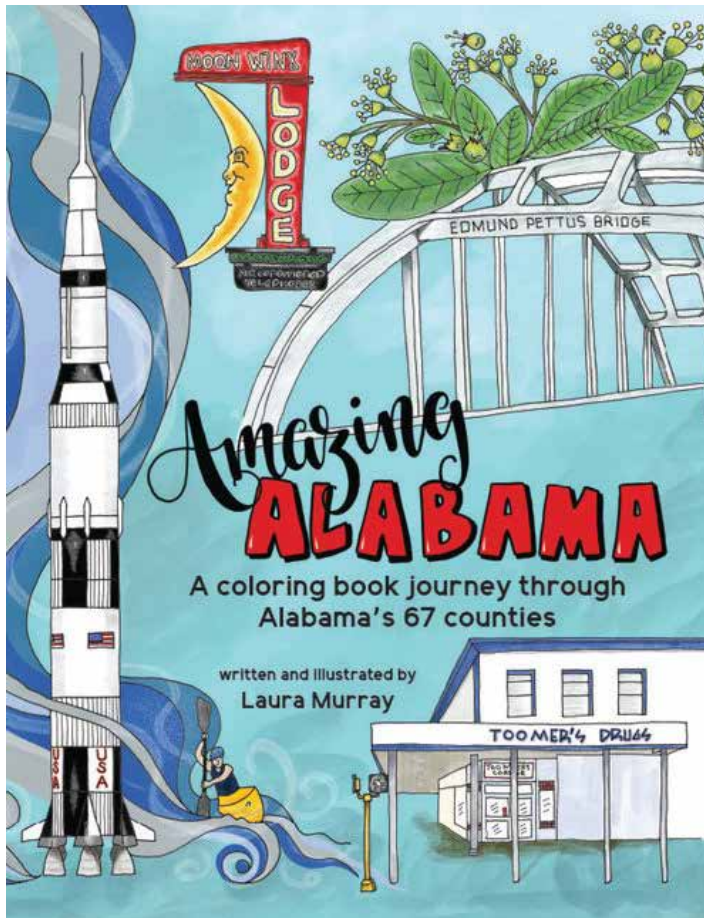
"I'm honored to work with Freeholder Ryan Peters on this most important and literally life-saving initiative and am proud to be a resident of a county that stands with those who need us most," Lopez said.

The county set up nine collection boxes and put up flyers to let residents know what was needed. The county stipulated that items donated must be new. In addition to baby food and flashlights, the items collected included batteries, canned goods, cleaning supplies, diapers, feminine hygiene products, hand sanitizer, first aid items, leather work gloves, underwear and socks, pillows and blankets and toiletries.

"Our hearts go out to those in Puerto Rico impacted by the overwhelming devastation," Peters said. "In times like this, hope is what keeps us going. The very fabric of our community here in Burlington County is built on this belief. Any donations we can provide symbolize that hope. Please spread the word and assist us in supporting victims of Hurricane Maria." **CN**



# NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION



Alabama author Laura Murray has created a coloring book about Alabama's counties called "Amazing Alabama: A Coloring Book Journey Through Our 67 Counties."

## ALABAMA

Alabama's counties are featured in a new coloring book by local author Laura Murray. In her book, *Amazing Alabama: A Coloring Book Journey Through Our 67 Counties*, Murray, whose background is in marketing and graphic design, features an illustration of each county's iconic as well as lesser-known sites with companion text. The author said she has always collected coloring books and got the idea for creating her own after she couldn't find one at last year's Alabama Book Festival. The book is debuting as the state is celebrating its bicentennial. Murray is currently working on a county-by-county coloring book of Georgia, which has 159 counties. She said her goal is to do a book for all 50 states.

## CALIFORNIA

Gov. Jerry Brown (D) sided with counties Oct. 15 when he vetoed S.B. 649, dealing a blow to telecom companies that wanted to **loosen restrictions on siting "small cell" devices on public property**. "I believe that the interest which localities have in managing rights of way requires a more balanced solution than the one achieved in this bill," Brown said in a letter to the members of the California Senate. The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) had lobbied heavily against the proposed legislation.

More than 120 county employees **lost their homes** in **SONOMA COUNTY** due to the wildfires that devastated the region earlier this month,

*The Press Democrat* reported. "The work is just beginning on recovery and rebuilding," said Supervisor Susan Gorin, who also lost her home in the fires. "We are going through this together." She made her comments at the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors meeting.

Gorin said the county's protracted housing crisis was "very real" already but has "just been exploded" by thousands of people who were affected by the fires.

## COLORADO

In a joint effort with Habitat for Humanity and the Roaring Fork School District, **PITKIN COUNTY** is moving forward with plans to build **affordable housing on school land**, according to *The Aspen Times*. The project is estimated to cost \$15.7 million; the sale of 27 condos will raise about \$8 million.

The school district is contributing land valued at \$3.2 million. The county dipped into a fund dedicated to affordable housing to contribute \$2.75 million. In return, 12 of the condos will be reserved for sale to people who work in the county.

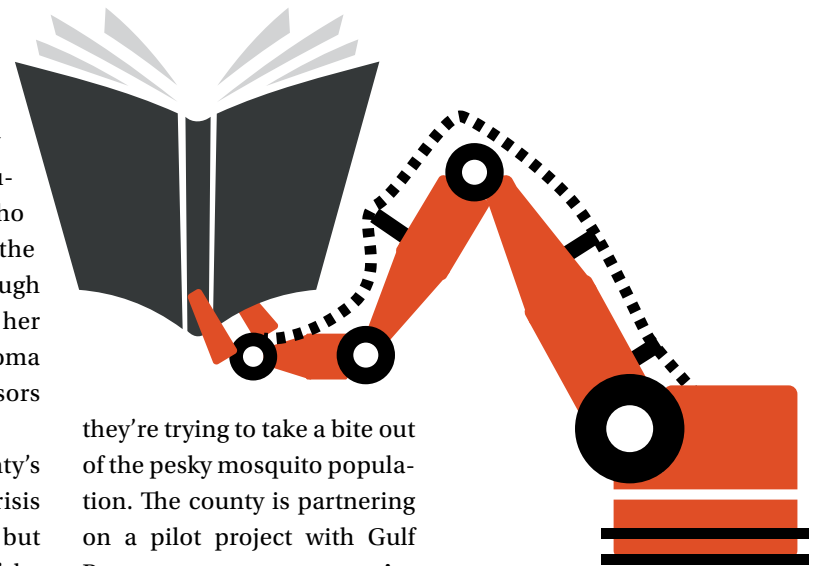
Habitat is contributing \$1.75 million.

## DELAWARE

This library goes way beyond books, computer stations and periodicals. **NEW CASTLE COUNTY** recently celebrated the opening of a **new library** — Route 9 Library and Innovation Center. The \$32 million facility was designed to encourage entrepreneurship in the county, with learning labs for video editing, animation and robotics. In addition to books, the library will also offer learning areas including a maker lab, STEM room, as well as the Black Box Theater and Eatery. The center was built with county and state funds.

## FLORIDA

In **ESCAMBIA COUNTY**,



they're trying to take a bite out of the pesky mosquito population. The county is partnering on a pilot project with Gulf Power to **mount mosquito traps on public light poles**. The devices use UV light and CO2 to attract mosquitoes before a vacuum eliminates the critters. Testing will start with devices mounted to about 30 light poles around the area including the Escambia County Equestrian Center. Gulf Power also plans to offer the mosquito control units to customers next year.

Diseases that are spread to people by mosquitoes include Zika virus, West Nile virus, Chikungunya virus, dengue and malaria.

## NEVADA

Following the Oct. 1 shooting at the Mandalay Bay hotel, **CLARK COUNTY** has expedited plans to **install 700 steel bollards** between sidewalks and the Las Vegas Strip. The Bollards are strong enough to stop a flatbed truck traveling at 55 miles per hour, county staff told the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. They should take two months to install. In 2015, a car running onto the sidewalk killed one pedestrian and injured 35 others.





## OHIO

**CUYAHOGA COUNTY** will fine landlords who do not register their rental properties. Property registration with county auditors in counties with more than 200,000 residents has been required since 2006, yet many unregistered properties remain in Cuyahoga County.

With fines of up to \$150 per property, the county could reap \$3 million next year, *The Plain Dealer* reported, but because owners only need to register property once, fine revenue will decline. Of the 12 counties where registration is required, seven do not impose fines, three do and two, including Cuyahoga, are in the process of refining their policies.



Clackamas County Chair Jim Bernard (left) and Commissioner Ken Humberston help build sleeping pods for the county's homeless veterans. Photo courtesy of Clackamas County

## OREGON

**CLACKMAS COUNTY** commissioners and volunteers went to work building the frames for the first set of tiny houses that will shelter veterans while they progress to permanent housing. By the end of one morning of work,

nine frames were complete.

It was the first step of what will be 30 8-foot-by-12-foot units on 1.5 acres the county owns. Nearly 700 trusses were reused from a music festival

stage, the *Lake Oswego Review* reported.

## PENNSYLVANIA

**CHESTER COUNTY** residents combined their efforts

to walk 1 billion steps in 2017, doing so three months before a challenge deadline.

The County Commissioners and health department launched WalkWorks ChesCo! in April to promote, educate and empower county residents to adopt healthier lifestyles. A website allows users to track their daily steps and programming supports and promotes walking groups and coordinates walking challenges.

The county celebrated the milestone at the commissioners' public sunshine meeting. The county entered the program in the Healthiest Cities and Counties Challenge, a partnership established between the Aetna Foundation, the American Public Health Association and NACo.

## SOUTH CAROLINA

A U.S. Bankruptcy Court ruling will put the **Charleston Naval Hospital** in **CHARLESTON COUNTY's** hands for \$33 million, for which it will likely house county services including voter registration, social services, drug and alcohol treatment and the disability board.

The county signed a \$30 million lease agreement that developers used as collateral to secure loans and buy the hospital property. The county backed out of the lease deal in 2016 after delays, complaints from contractors about unpaid bills and demands for more funding from the developers. With the anchor tenant for the project gone and a lack of other tenants, lenders quickly foreclosed, *The Post and Courier* reported.

## UTAH

After years of voluntarily prosecuting class A misdemeanors, the City of Provo will move hundreds of those cases to **UTAH COUNTY**. The county handles all felony cases. Multiple legal and potential legal issues between

the county and city have increased the city attorney's office's workload. Commission Chairman Bill Lee told the *Daily Herald* there had not yet been time yet to dig into the implications, including possible costs to the county for taking on more workload.

## WASHINGTON

• **A KING COUNTY** Superior Court judge ruled that an initiative that would allow voters to decide the fate of **safe injection sites** is invalid and won't appear on the February special election ballot.

Initiative 27 would have prohibited funding and operating safe injection sites, which King County calls Community Health Engagement Locations and plans to staff with nurses and addiction counselors. Based on the recommendation of its opioid addiction task force, the county plans to open one site in Seattle and another outside of the city.

Judge Veronica Alcega-Galván said the initiative would infringe on the power of the county's Board of Health, the *Seattle Times* reported.

• **SPOKANE COUNTY**, with some exceptions, will **no longer ask job applicants about their criminal record**, and will run criminal background checks on candidates until after the county has determined the applicant is otherwise qualified for the position. Departments dealing with public safety — such as the Spokane County Sheriff's Office, detention services, and court systems — are excluded from the policy.

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

## FLORIDA

Thanks to a \$200,000 grant from the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, **LAKE COUNTY** will offer **840 bear-proof trash cans to residents** at \$40 a can, first-come, first-serve. The trash cans have proven popular, with more than 300 residents signing up so far, the *Orlando Sentinel* reported. "The distribution of carts is timely, as bears are most active during the fall months," said Mary Hamilton, county Environmental Services manager. Residents can trade in their old trash cans if they get one of the bear-proof ones. Previously, some residents took matters into their own hands and had drilled holes and added clips to their trash cans to keep the bears out. Bears have enormous appetites, eating about 30,000 calories a day. Authorities received about 400 calls about bears from residents in Lake County last year. Florida black bear is estimated to number about 3,000, according to Defenders of Wildlife.

Black bear cubs like the one will find it tougher to chow down in Florida's Lake County thanks to bear-proof trash cans. Photo courtesy of USFWS/Orsulak





## the HR DOCTOR

with Philpot & Winkler

New technology brings new benefits — and new problems.

Smart phones and news apps are bringing more immediate news to employees in the workplace. According to a 2016 study by the Pew Research Center, 38 percent of “adults often get news online, either from news websites or apps (28 percent), on social media (18 percent) or both.”

This immediacy of information, from a variety of media outlets, combined with controversial issues, evoke strong opinions — so strong that employees might share with co-workers.

How much is too much opinion sharing? When has an employee crossed the line? In the private sector, employers have more freedom to fire an employee for what they say. Conversely, in the public sector, there are several things to consider before reprimands or discipline, including free speech and conduct policies.

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states “Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech.”

Most employees know the First Amendment does not provide them with a right to criticize another employee’s religion or tell a sexually explicit joke, as such comments would be considered discrimination and harassment issues. But what about sharing an opinion on a social issue, discussing an election, posting a partisan social media post or hanging a political cartoon in a cubicle?

First, let’s consider the case law.

In the case *Pickering v. Board of Education* (1968), Justice Thurgood Marshall, writing for the Supreme Court, noted “the problem in any case is to arrive at a balance between the interests of the [employee], as a citizen, in commenting upon matters

of public concern and the interest of the State, as an employer, in promoting the efficiency of the public services it performs through its employees.

“Where the employee’s comments, though critical of his employer, neither impeded his work performance nor interfered with the operation of his employer, the dismissal of the employee was a violation of his Free Speech rights.”

Government employees can raise an issue that may be a public concern, where public concern is defined as speech that relates to a matter of political, social or other concern to the community, rather than simply an opinion.

Several years later in *Connick v. Meyers* (1983), the court referred back to *Pickering* and its emphasis on a public employee’s right, as a citizen, to comment on matters of public concern.

But the term “public concern” has its limits, and it does not include an employee’s comments to colleagues regarding internal office issues such as questioning confidence in leadership, discussing office morale or promoting the creation of a grievance committee.

Finally, in the case *Garcetti v. Caballos* (2006), the Supreme Court again emphasized that the

...there are few bright line rules that employers can rely on to determine whether particular comments can be disciplined or not.

First Amendment protects the rights of public employees when they speak as citizens on a matter of public concern. When a public employee makes statements as part of her official duties, she is not speaking as a citizen and her statements are not insulated from discipline. The court specifically cautions, however that whether comments are made within the workspace does not itself decide the question of First Amendment protection.

While there are numerous cases in the circuit and district courts further refining the meaning of “public concern” and the weights of the interests to be balanced, what the Supreme Court tells us in these three cases is that there are few bright line rules that employers can rely on to determine whether particular comments can be disciplined or not. Rather, many employee statements thought to warrant

discipline will fall in a gray area, shaped by the context in which they are made.

What does this mean to you and your county? As always, it is important to review your policies and employee handbook to identify the guidelines employees receive upon hire.

These policies may be found under many names including code of ethics, code of conduct, communication, political activity or social media.

Maybe your policy indicates employees shall not use their official authority or position to influence or attempt to influence another employee to take part in a political activity.

Perhaps it prohibits displaying literature, badges, stickers, signs or other items of political advertising on behalf of any party, committee, agency, candidate for political office, political issue or partisan issue in the workplace.

Another important consideration is whether there are any exceptions to the policies, such as elected officials and their chief deputies who may display their own campaign items?

When it comes to employee speech regarding public issues, the important question for public employers is how employee speech affects the

workplace. Such effects include the diminishing of an employee’s ability to perform their official duties, the erosion of working relationships with colleagues, and the disruption of an efficient workplace.

As social media expands the reach of our communications, employees have more ways to share opinions and comments on social issues, sometimes without thinking about who can see them and how they might respond. More ways to share means more ways to affect relationships or raise serious questions regarding performance.

As the Supreme Court cases show, context matters. Thus, public information officers or employees who may be called upon to testify on behalf of the organization may be under additional scrutiny given their interface with the public and the need for them to be able to project trustworthiness or objectivity. Employers should have candid conversations with employees about public perception and public scrutiny and their roles with the county organization.

Creating a culture of honesty, open communication and respect improves employee collaboration and teamwork. Employees with friends in the workplace is also an indicator of high employee engagement, and friends often feel free to discuss political, controversial or divisive issues.

Finally, counties encourage civic engagement and the responsibility of citizens to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and to participate in the tasks that support the governmental systems of democracy. Therefore, reminding public sector employees of the limits of the First Amendment in the workplace is a complicated issue.

It is important for supervisors to create and maintain a work environment where employees do not feel their ability to communicate is diminished due to a difference of opinion with a co-worker on a political issue. Discussion of social issues is important to engaged citizens, but if the discussion can’t be civil and respectful, the water cooler may not be the place for the discussion. **CN**

