

County News

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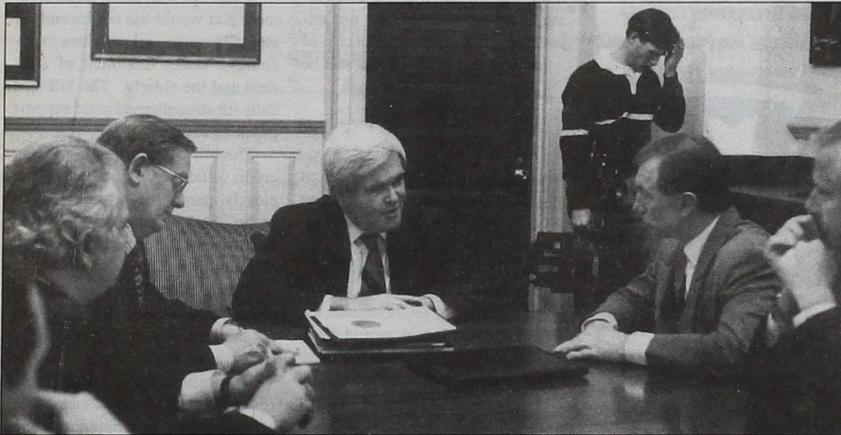


Photo by Traci Dove

House Speaker-elect Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) (center) and NACo President Randy Franke (second from right) discuss local government concerns under the new Republican Congress. Also included in the meeting were (from left) U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) Executive Director Tom Cochran, USCM President Victor Ashe and (far right) NACo Executive Director Larry Naake.

Gingrich plans to return resources, power to state, local communities *Mandate-relief bills targeted for quick action*

By Reginald Todd and Larry Jones

In a highly energized Nov. 29 meeting, Representative Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), future House speaker, told NACo President Randall Franke and U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) President Victor Ashe that he not only wants to see state and local communities assume greater control and flexibility over the services they provide, but he also wants to free up federal resources to assist them.

Gingrich also made it clear that mandate-relief legislation was high on his agenda. He said he would like to see legislation introduced Jan. 4 and acted on in the House within the first or second week after Congress convenes.

To help expedite the passage of the legislation, Gingrich has instructed key members of the House to work with Senate leaders, White House staff, and state and local

groups in an unofficial preconference session in December to craft a bill that can be enacted by both

See **GINGRICH**, page 8

Marian Wright Edelman to speak at Leg. Conference

Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), will be the keynote speaker



Marian Wright Edelman

for the Opening General Session on Sunday, March 5 at 10 a.m. Under her leadership, the Wash-

ington-based CDF has become a strong national voice for children and families. It counts among its strongest voices former CDF board member First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. CDF's mission is to educate the nation about the needs of children and encourage preventive investment in them.

Edelman, a graduate of Spelman College and Yale Law School, began her campaign for children in the mid-1960s when, as the first black woman admitted to the Mississippi

bar, she directed the Legal Defense and Education Fund of the NAACP in Jackson, Miss. In 1968, moved to Washington, D.C., as counsel for the Poor People's March that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. began organizing before his death.

Edelman founded the Washington Research Project, a public interest law firm and the parent body of the Children's Defense Fund. For two years she served as the director of the Cen-

ter for Law and Education at Harvard University, and in 1973 began CDF.

Edelman has received many honorary degrees and awards, including the Albert Schweitzer Humanitarian Prize, and was a MacArthur Foundation Prize Fellow. She is also the author of several books, including *Families in Peril: An Agenda for Social Change* and *The Measure of Our Success: A Letter to My Children and Yours*.

Surgeon general calls for in-school services

By Jill Conley
staff writer

In a lively address to the Third General Session of NACo's 23rd Annual Employment and Human Services Conference in Dallas County, Texas, Nov. 21, U.S. Surgeon General M. Joycelyn Elders, M.D., asked delegates to become "the architects of new health and human service systems" that emphasize collaboration, prevention and education.

"Every community has schools, churches and people. We've got to learn to use these resources in more innovative ways," she said. "And our accountants have got to find ways to make it look right to Washington."

"I've heard collaboration defined as 'an unnatural act between non-consenting adults,'" she went on, "but it is clear that our social service, criminal justice, health care and education professionals must learn to collaborate."

Citing the nation's 12 million children living in poverty and their increasing exposure to violent crime and sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS, Elders stressed the importance of investing in programs

for youths. She proposes providing a full range of health and human services in schools. "School is the only institution we've got to serve as an equalizer for children who can't choose what their home will be like," she said.

Elders, an advocate of comprehensive health education programs beginning in elementary school, explained that America spent \$940 billion last year on what she calls its "sickcare" system, with less than one percent of that going toward "things that keep people healthy." "We are doing too little too late," she said, adding that "through education, we can do more to improve our health than all of the medical research that's been done in the last 100 years."

The surgeon general was candid about her personal conviction that sex education for teenagers is an essential element of comprehensive health education. A nation that reports more than 500,000 teen pregnancies and three million sexually transmitted diseases each year "needs to teach kids how to be responsible rather than legislate morality," she asserts.

She also strongly believes that unwanted pregnancies can and should be prevented through family planning ac-

See **ELDERS**, page 7

The GOP is ready with legislation to fulfill its "Contract With America." **page 2**

Earlier this month, the Securities and Exchange Commission released new rules governing disclosure requirements in the secondary market for municipal bonds. Find out how the rules have changed your reporting requirements. **page 4**

"County Voices" features reactions to November's elections. **page 5**

EPA offers grants program for counties and other local governments to encourage environmental justice. **page 7**

NACo's Research Department continues its "Hats off to" feature on selected Achievement Award winners.



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News from the nation's counties **page 10**

Job market **page 11**

GOP fast-tracking "Contract With America" bills

By Ralph Tabor
public policy director

House Republicans are not waiting until next year to start crafting legislation to carry out their "Contract With America." The leadership, on Nov. 15, released the text and descriptions of 10 draft bills to carry out the program.

The bills will be introduced Jan. 4 and will be assigned to committees for hearings and markups. The GOP leadership is committed to having floor votes on each of the bills during the first 100 days of the new Congress.

The Contract With America includes the following 10 issue areas:

- balanced budget amendment and line-item veto
- crime
- welfare reform
- children
- middle-class tax cuts
- national security
- senior citizens
- capital gains taxes and regulatory changes
- legal reform and product liability, and
- congressional term limits

Budget amendments

Of all the items included in the contract, the proposed balanced budget amendment presents the House GOP leadership with perhaps its easiest job. Confident of passage, they have made the amendment the first item on their agenda.

"We're probably going to vote

on the balanced budget amendment on Jan. 19, and have that as our first smashing victory," said Representative Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), future House speaker.

The reason for such confidence involves simple arithmetic. House proponents of the amendment lost by only 12 votes earlier this year; with Republican ranks swelling by more than 50 seats, proponents and opponents alike expect that some version of the amendment will pass.

But for all the early optimism, hurdles remain. For one thing, the version of the amendment contained in the contract — which would require the federal budget to be in balance by FY2002 — would severely limit Congress' ability to raise taxes as a deficit-closing tool. (See page 6 for amendment text.)

The amendment requires a three-fifths majority in each chamber to approve any tax increase. This requirement could make it virtually impossible to raise taxes as Congress turns from making a balanced budget promise to imposing real-world budgetary pain. Democrats in both the House and Senate claim that they can keep the supermajority vote provision from receiving the requisite two-thirds vote.

A separate plank of the contract is a promise to vote on a bill to provide the president with permanent line-item veto power. Unlike the balanced budget amendment, this proposal requires a simple majority to pass.

While timing is not certain,

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT AND LINE-ITEM VETO

CRIME

WELFARE REFORM

CHILDREN

MIDDLE-CLASS TAX CUTS

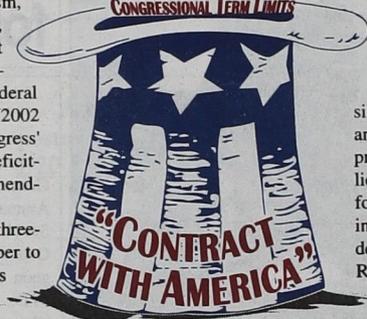
NATIONAL SECURITY

SENIOR CITIZENS

CAPITAL GAINS TAXES AND REGULATORY CHANGES

LEGAL REFORM AND PRODUCT LIABILITY

CONGRESSIONAL TERM LIMITS



House leaders hope to bring a line-item veto bill to the floor the week of Jan. 23.

Republicans in both the House and Senate long have supported the line-item veto as a means of weeding out pork barrel projects from appropriations bills.

But the power of the purse is a zealously guarded prerogative of Congress, and this element of the contract — which would mean a big shift of power from the legislative to the executive branch — is considerably more controversial as a result.

Rewrite anti-crime law

The anti-crime proposals in the GOP plan promise a heated rematch of some of the most bitter fights of the last Congress. Republicans want to strip much of the crime bill of its prevention program spending and add more stringent punishments.

The draft legislation essentially would revoke about \$5 billion dedicated to crime-prevention spending, and transfer the money to prison construction, local law enforcement and, possibly, some police-related prevention programs.

The bill would erase the existing grant programs for police hiring (\$8.8 billion), drug courts (\$1 billion) and crime prevention (\$4 billion), replacing them with a \$10 billion block grant program. These grants are intended primarily for police hiring, equipment and overtime.

County and city officials would be allowed to use the funds for sports leagues or other prevention activities for youth, provided that police organize or participate in the program. The grants cannot be used for drug courts. The changes would not affect authorization for drug treatment for prisoners or for pro-

secuting and deterring crimes against women.

The bill's existing \$7.9 billion prison construction grant program would be replaced with a \$10.5 billion program. Requirements for states to qualify for the money would be more stringent than those in the existing law, putting more pressure on states to adopt strict sentencing laws, known as "truth in sentencing." These changes are not expected to change the overall cost of the crime law, which will still be \$30 billion over six years.

Welfare reform

The GOP draft Personal Responsibility Act is both more stringent and more sweeping than legislation proposed by President Clinton earlier this year. While Clinton's plan focused almost solely on redirecting the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Program, the Republican proposal would limit eligibility and cap spending on an array of programs — AFDC, SSI, housing and nutrition programs.

The bill's main thrust is to give states greater control over benefit programs, work programs, and AFDC payments and requirements. Under the bill, the structure for AFDC payments will drastically change.

Mothers under the age of 18 may no longer receive AFDC payments for children born out of wedlock, and mothers who are ages 18, 19 and 20 can be prohibited by the states from receiving AFDC payments and housing benefits. Mothers must also establish paternity as a condition for receiving AFDC payments, except in cases of rape or incest.

To reduce the amount of time families are on welfare, states must begin moving welfare recipients into work programs if they have received welfare for two years if at least one year has been spent in a work program.

To further limit the length of time on AFDC, states must drop families from the program after they have received a total of five years of AFDC benefits.

The bill allows states to design their own work programs and determine who will be required to participate. Welfare recipients must work an average of 35 hours a week or enroll in work training programs. By the year 2001, 1.5 million AFDC recipients will be required to work.

Spending limits

The bill caps the spending growth of several major welfare programs — AFDC, SSI and public housing, and consolidates 10 nutrition programs, including food stamps, the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program, and the school lunch programs, into one discretionary block grant to states.

Finally, the bill grants greater

flexibility to states, allowing them to design their own work programs and determine who participates in them. The bill also allows to opt out of the current AFDC Program by converting their share of AFDC payments into fixed annual block grants.

Children and families

The proposed Family Reinforcement Act would use tax incentives and stiffer criminal penalties to encourage better treatment of children and the elderly. The bill also calls for strengthened child support payment laws.

The bill would offer a \$500 tax credit to take care of a dependent, elderly parent or grandparent at home. A tax credit of \$5,000 would be provided for expenses involved in adopting a child.

The tax incentives would cost about \$8 billion for the elder-care tax credit and about \$1 billion for the child adoption credit.

To strengthen child support enforcement laws, the measure would encourage the development of uniform national child support court orders.

State and county officials say that such a uniform document could make it easier for government agencies to track parents who move across state lines while owing child support payments.

Middle-class tax cuts

At least one provision in the contract could cause more competition than controversy between the parties: the promise to cut middle-class taxes.

In a political climate where Democrats and Republicans alike are hoping to score points with the electorate, the ground is fertile for a tax-cut bidding war where each side attempts to outdo the other. The potential pitfalls of such a situation are not lost on some members of Congress.

"It would start with a middle-class tax cut, but then all the lobbyists come in and there's a lot of middle-class small strip oil owners in Bakersfield, Calif. and Houston, Texas, and then you've got middle-class farmers who want relief and all of a sudden ... it could really get out of control," said Representative Robert T. Matsui (D-Calif.), a member of the House Ways and Means Committee.

"The real danger that we face is that a bidding war will occur between the Senate and the House, Republicans and Democrats, and between Congress and the president," said Matsui.

House Republicans are opening the bidding with three tax breaks that they say will benefit the middle class. They promise to give every family a \$500-per-child tax credit that would be available to families

See *CONTRACT*, page 6

Letter to the Editor

November 17, 1994

Dear County News,

A belated congratulations on your Sept. 28 stories and photographs on the forest fires in Idaho. The firsthand, in-depth reporting gave the reader a great overview of THE topic the national media have ignored: the burden that counties shoulder in so-called "national issues."

It is an overview of which most of us not from the West probably were not aware. And it shows the diversity of responsibilities among counties across the country.

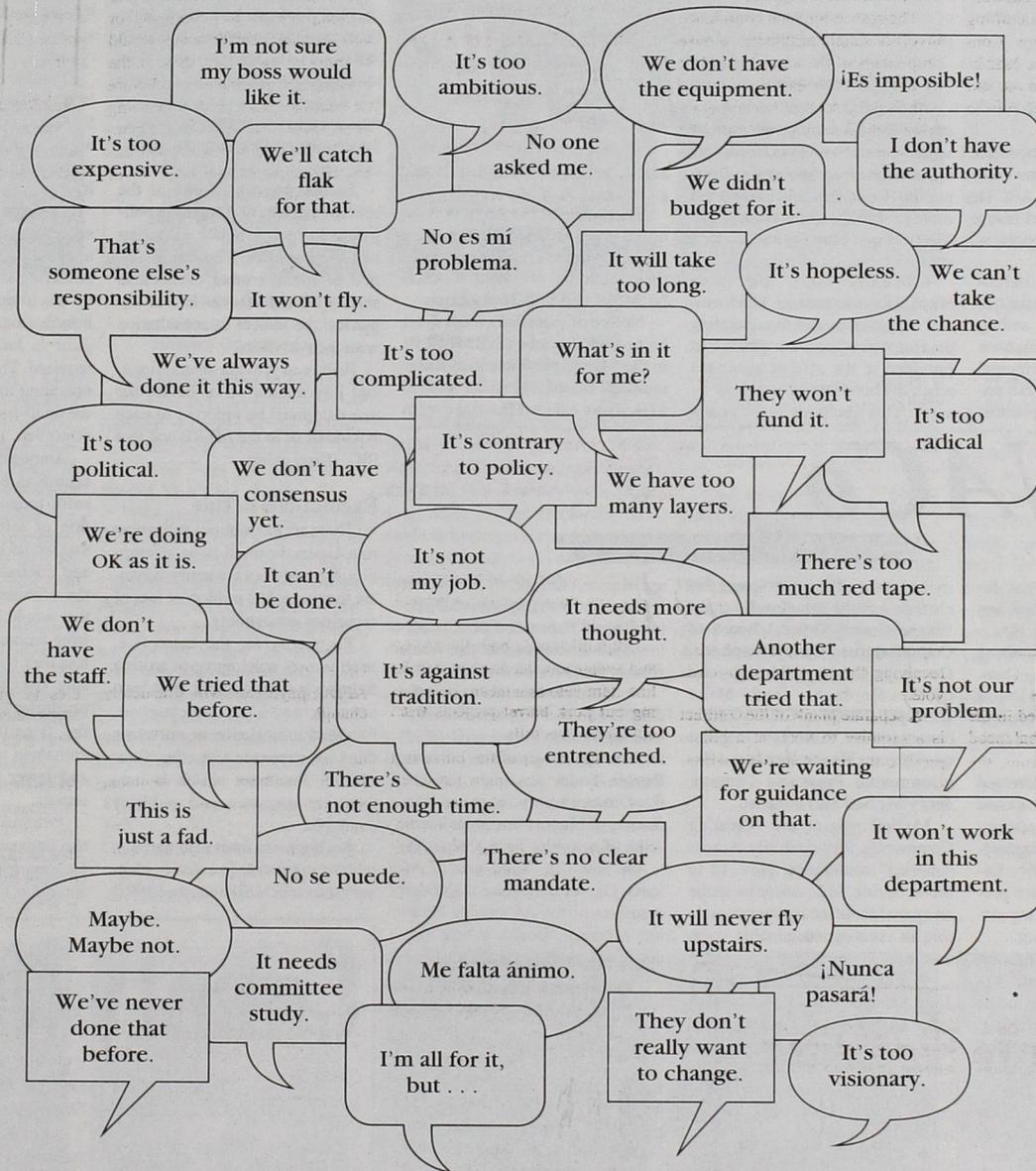
Great job.

Dick Davis, director
Public Information Office
Mercer County, Pa.

County News invites Letters to the Editor

If you have a compliment, complaint or different point of view, let us know. Please include a phone number with your letter. Mail or fax to: County News, NACo, 440 First St., N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2080, 202/393-2630.

50 Reasons Not To Change



How many times do we hear these excuses? There are at least 50 reasons not to change. But there is at least one good reason to change - because it's the right thing to do!

Stop.
Look inward.
Listen.
To yourself.
To others.

We applaud the efforts to reinvent government. Embracing change is exciting. It can cut costs and improve efficiency. Nothing is more rewarding than empowering people to turn red tape into results.

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New rules approved for municipal securities market

By Ruth M. Wallick

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), on Nov. 10, approved amendments to Rule 15c2-12 that differ significantly from those that were proposed in March of this year. Rule 15c2-12 outlines disclosure requirements in the secondary market for municipal securities.

NACo and nine other groups representing market participants consulted extensively with the SEC in recent months and achieved many of the changes that they sought in the final rule.

The amendments prohibit a broker, dealer or municipal securities dealer from purchasing or selling municipal securities that have been issued in an aggregate principal amount of \$1 million or more unless the broker has determined that

an issuer, or another party that is obligated to repay the securities, has agreed in a written agreement or contract to provide certain information. Following is a description of the information that must be provided.

New requirements

Annual financial and operating information must be provided to each Nationally Recognized Municipal Securities Information Repository (NRMSIR) and a State Information Depository (SID), if one exists in the issuer's state.

Currently there are three NRMSIRs in existence. The financial information and the operating data must be of the same type as that provided in the official statement when the bonds were originally issued. This includes information

about the issuer and other "obligated" parties, if relevant.

The financial information does not have to be audited, but if audited financial statements are prepared, they must be provided to each NRMSIR and SID, if any exists.

Notice of material events must be provided to each NRMSIR or to the Municipal Securities Rule-making Board (MSRB) and to SID, if any exists. Material events

are events that could have an adverse effect on the holders of securities.

The amendments to the rule list 11 material events such as principal and interest payment delinquencies; unscheduled draws on debt service reserves or credit enhancements; and adverse tax opinions or events affecting the tax-exempt status of bonds, bond calls, rating changes and others.

The occurrence of one of the specified events will create an obligation to send a notice to one or more repositories. The determination of whether other events also should be reported is left to the parties, the issuers in consultation with their advisors.

Failure to provide annual financial information on or before the due date must be reported to each NRMSIR or to the MSRB and to a SID, if any exists.

and SID, if any, notice of a material event.

The final official statement must also identify the persons from whom the information can be obtained. Securities of 18 months or less are also exempted if the issuer agrees to make material event disclosures.

Finally, the rule does not apply to securities in denominations of \$100,000 or more that are sold to no more than 35 sophisticated investors for investment to maturity.

The new rule will apply to all securities offerings occurring on or after July 3, 1995. Material events occurring after that date must also be disclosed, but annual financial information for fiscal years ending prior to Jan. 1, 1996 will not be required. The limited financial and operating information required for the small-issuer exemption will take effect Jan. 1, 1996.

Among the changes that differed significantly from the rule as originally proposed were the elimination of information requirements that would have specified the form and content of issuer disclosures, the elimination of a requirement that would have prevented dealers from recommending securities unless they had read all of the disclosure documents submitted to repositories by issuers, elimination of the "significant obligor concept" contained in the original proposal, and fewer requirements on small issuers.

(Wallick is legislative counsel to the Federal Liaison Center of the Government Finance Officers Association.)

NACo on the move

While in Dallas, Texas for NACo's Employment Policy and Human Services Conference, NACo President **Randy Franke**, along with Dallas County (Texas) Commissioner **Jim Jackson** and Dallas County Treasurer **Bill Melton**, met with the editorial board of the *Dallas Morning News*.

Last month, Franke addressed delegates at both the California and Oregon state association meetings. Also attending the California meeting was Associate Legislative Director **Diane Shea**, who gave presentations on flow control legislation and the Clean Water Act.

At the Oregon meeting, Associate Legislative Director **Jeff Arnold** gave an update on Payments In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) legislation. Arnold also spoke at state association meetings in Nevada, Washington and Colorado.

Doug Bovin, NACo's first vice president and **Randy Johnson**, NACo's third vice president, were in San Francisco, Calif., Nov. 17-19, for a meeting of the Public Technology, Inc. Urban Consortium.

Several county officials were in Washington, Nov. 15, for a roundtable discussion on the Department of Housing and Urban Development's community viability

program. The participants included: **Arthur Blackwell**, chair, Wayne County (Mich.) Board of Commissioners; **Cheryl Stephens**, Cuyahoga County (Ohio) director of development; and **Mike Gillespie**, Madison County (Ala.) commissioner. Associate Legislative Director **Haron Battle** and Environmental Programs Director **Jerry McNeil** also attended.

McNeil was at the "Creating Community Sustainability Across America" conference, Nov. 18 in Silver Spring, Md., where he spoke on a panel about local government's role in creating sustainable communities.

Former NACo President **John Stroger** was a guest speaker at the annual meeting of state advisory commissions on intergovernmental relations in Chicago, Ill., Nov. 17-19. NACo Research Director **Sharon Lawrence** also attended the meeting.

County Service Representative **Kaye Braaten** and Membership Coordinator **Susan Parrish** were in Sioux City for the Iowa State Association of Counties meeting, Nov. 16-18, to promote the benefits of NACo membership.

Marion Berry, special assistant for agricultural trade and food

assistance, Office of Domestic Policy, met with Legislative Director **Ralph Tabor** and NACo Fellow **Phil Rosenlund** at the White House, Nov. 15, on the farm bill.

Unfunded mandates was the subject of a meeting between Representative **Rob Portman** (R-Ohio) and NACo Legislative Director **Reggie Todd**, Associate Legislative Director **Larry Jones** and Conference of Mayors President **Victor Ashe** (Knoxville, Tenn.), Nov. 15.

On Nov. 22, Todd was in Atlanta, Ga. for a meeting with other members of the Affordable Housing Advisory Board, where they discussed plans to create a nationwide clearinghouse for federally owned property.

Local government officials from Costa Rica spoke with Associate Legislative Director **Haron Battle** and Research Associate **Mary Bewig** at NACo headquarters, Nov. 14, about economic development and the role of county government in the United States.

Last month, Associate Legislative Director **Bob Fogel** met with the staff of Senator **Larry Pressler** (R-S.D.) on telecommunications legislation and with the staff of Senator **John Chafee** (R-R.I.) on highway issues.



From the courthouse to the Capitol



The number of county officials moving from the courthouse to Capitol Hill keeps growing. *County News* has found more names to add to the initial list run in the Nov. 21 issue.

The following are all Republicans that were elected to the House of Representatives:

California

San Diego County Supervisor
Brian P. Bilbray

New Jersey

Passaic County Freeholder
William Martini

Ohio

Lake County Prosecuting Attorney
Steve LaTourette

County News

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c o u n t y v o i c e s

What impact will the November elections have on the relationship between federal, state and county government?



Randy Franke (R)
Commissioner, Marion County, Ore.
NACo President

"Early indications are that there will be a new working relationship between other local levels of government and a closer working relationship with Congress. They're talking about issues of priority that have been priorities for counties for years, such as unfunded mandates and decentralizing power back to the local level. ... This is music to local government's ears.

"As we look at a more balanced federalism, that would heighten the importance of the relationship between counties and the governors. ... If there's a history of not working together, it could be an area that would be a problem, something counties need to attend to, and it would heighten the importance of state associations.

"Everything sounds good so far, but the proof is in the eating of the pudding and we'll see how it tastes."

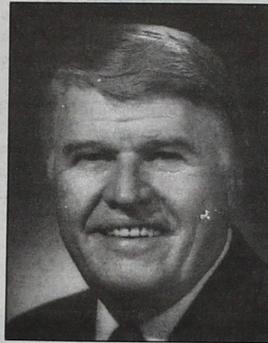


C. Vernon Gray (D)
Council Member
Howard County, Md.

"There are going to be lots of challenges and opportunities as we redefine the roles of the federal, state and local governments, and how those roles are going to be funded. That's the crunch.

"Unfortunately, it appears that there's going to be a reduction of funds, and we're in no position to follow the approach of the '80s when Reagan, as part of his tax decrease, turned over programs to the states without any money. At that time, states were able to increase taxes to pay for those unfunded mandates.

"State governments don't have the revenues they had in the '80s. They can't afford to raise taxes now."



Dick Cecil (R)
Councilman
New Castle County, Del.
President, National Conference of Republican County Officials

"I think Gingrich will move fairly quickly on the 'Contract with America.' The Republicans figure this is the best shot they've had in a long time. ... [The electorate] has said you better perform. ... The onus is on the Republicans or they'll be gone in a couple of years.

"[County government] will stand as good a chance under Republicans as they did with Democrats," but "it's hard to tell until they put some flesh on the bones.

"I think unfunded mandates will be something the Republican leadership will look at. ... I think we'll do fairly well on that."



Mike Gillespie (D)
Commission Chairman
Madison County, Ala.

"We will see our mandate bill. I don't think we'll see comprehensive health care ... which is good or bad, depending on your point of view.

"One concern I have ... I hope that the human side of politics won't get lost—especially for people like us who are so close to these issues. That's why I believe it's incumbent upon NACo to get together with the newly elected officials [to explain our positions]. We have an opportunity and an obligation to do so."



Katie Dixon (R)
Recorder
Salt Lake County, Utah

"I think counties will fare very well if the Republicans move very slowly. ... If you throw too many changes too quickly at the public, they won't like it.

"[Counties will also fare well] if [Congress] stops the mandates and hands some of the money back because [counties] know their own needs. ... They've got to work more as partners, not as Big Brother. ... If you can do it on the local level, you're much better off.

"We are the most undertaxed nation in the world. Taxes are going to have to go up. I don't think we can pay off the deficit without it."



Carolyn Meline (D)
Commissioner
Bannock County, Idaho

"We've come a long way on the mandates issue with Senator Kempthorne's proposal. Hopefully, they [the new Congress] will continue. ... I think after all the words are thrown, Congress will settle down and realize that we can't dump it all on state and local governments."



Rebecca Jackson (R)
Clerk
Jefferson County, Ky.

"It's not all great news, not all bad—fewer federal mandates, and at the same time, fewer federal dollars. ... Less government is better. It gives us more latitude in solving problems.

"I don't think we'll see any radical impact in the first 100 days of a Republican Congress. ... Over the long haul, we'll see some change. ... We won't see a federal mandate for health care. I think we'll see the lack of unfunded federal mandates."



Liane Levitan (D)
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Ga.

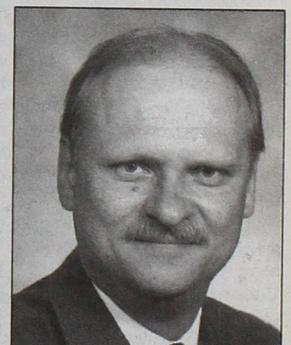
"I think we'll see positive movement toward passage of unfunded mandate-relief legislation with this new Congress.

"I also think there'll be definite changes in terms of cutbacks ... the cuts that are being discussed will affect us [counties] the most. And we're not in any position to give up much."



John Kelly (R)
Supervisor
Essex County, N.Y.

"There's no question there'll have to be some cuts. I don't mind cuts as long as they're well distributed. ... There might be some restructuring in our social services programs. ... I'd like to see some designation that deals with rural America, legislation that guarantees a percent of the total pot goes to rural areas."



Robert Janiszewski (D)
County Executive
Hudson County, N.J.

"There is no Republican or no Democratic way to sweep the streets. Performing our job as local government officials will not change. Our problems are common ones that I'm sure we will all join together to resolve. As a Democrat, I personally view the changes as a challenge to do even better by my constituency."

CONTRACT from page 2

that earn up to \$200,000 a year, but would not be available to poor families who earn too little to pay taxes. The proposal would cost \$107 billion over five years.

Another provision would remove current limitations on establishing individual retirement accounts (IRAs). Republicans say such a move would raise about \$5 billion as more individuals become eligible to establish IRAs and pay income tax on the amount put into the IRA.

A third proposal would take a step toward reducing the so-called marriage penalty that results in some married couples paying more than two single people who live together. The contract estimates it would cost \$2 billion a year to reduce the effect of the penalty.

National security

House Republicans aim to reverse policies that they believe have weakened the nation's defenses and sent American troops into ill-defined and poorly conceived peacekeeping missions abroad.

A draft bill titled the National Security Restoration Act lays out a new, GOP-led agenda for U.S. defense and foreign policy. It strikes at policies that they see as either dangerous or extravagant, including the deployment of U.S. soldiers in places such as Somalia and Haiti, where they argue there was no "vital national security interest to protect."

The bill would restore Clinton Administration cuts in defense

spending and reinstate a prohibition against using savings from defense to pay for domestic programs. The bill also restricts the use of U.S. troops in United Nations-sponsored peacekeeping missions.

The bill would create a 12-member blue ribbon commission to recommend by May 1, 1996, changes in U.S. force structure and any funding increases needed to eliminate shortfalls.

In documents detailing the budgetary impact of the contract, House Republicans maintain that defense can be strengthened at "no cost." But even if they succeed in simply holding the line against future cuts, it would mark a significant departure from Clinton's long-range Pentagon spending plan.

When adjusted for inflation, his FY95 defense request amounts to a reduction in real purchasing power of less than one percent from the FY94 defense appropriation. He is expected to ask Congress early next year for an FY96 defense request that would amount to an inflation-adjusted reduction of nearly six percent.

The Republican draft bill also would restore to the congressional budget process so-called fire walls, which are intended to prevent Congress from cutting defense to pay for domestic programs.

Senior citizens

The proposals put forward in the Senior Citizens Equity Act were very popular in the 1994 congress-

sional elections and contributed to Republican wins in many states. Both the House and Senate are expected to act early on the legislation.

The draft bill would repeal a 1993 law that raised taxes on wealthier recipients. It requires individuals with incomes of more than \$34,000 and couples with incomes of more than \$44,000 to pay taxes on 85 percent of their Social Security benefits.

Previously, the tax was on 50 percent of benefits. The 1993 law allows people with incomes below a threshold level to continue paying at the 50 percent rate.

"What the law amounted to was a middle-class tax increase," said Martin Corry, a lobbyist with the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). "It was very unpopular with many AARP members." His organization estimates that the tax affects about 5.5 million senior citizens.

Another provision would increase the amount that senior citizens between the ages of 65 and 69 can earn — from \$11,160 to \$30,000 — without losing any benefits. This provision, which has been around for many years, has become more popular recently as increasing numbers of seniors work beyond retirement age and lobby to keep more of their benefits.

AARP estimates that 10 percent of senior citizens between 65 and 69 have earnings that result in a drop in benefits.

The House bill also would allow senior citizens to make tax-free withdrawals from their IRAs, 401(k) plans and pension funds to buy long-term care insurance.

AARP estimates that a relatively small number of senior citizens — mostly the more affluent — would benefit from such a change.

The GOP staff on the House Budget Committee estimates the cost of all of the provisions to be \$25.1 billion over five years. That consists of \$17 billion for phasing out the 1993 Social Security tax increase, \$6.8 billion for raising the earning limits, and \$1.3 billion for instituting the long-term care plan.

Capital gains/Regulatory changes

According to the GOP release, the "Job Creation and Wage Enhancement Act includes a variety of tax, law changes and federal bureaucrats reforms designed to enhance private property rights and economic liberty and make government more accountable for the burdens it imposes on American workers."

One of the major provisions in the bill deals with unfunded federal mandates and is similar to legislation approved by the House Government Operations Committee at the end of the last Congress.

Probably the most contentious provision in the bill is the proposed 50 percent reduction in the capital gains tax. The debate is as much about budget scoring as about the merits of the proposal and who would benefit. Republican claims that the change would increase revenues is being heavily criticized by White House budget director Alice Rivlin and other Administration officials.

Other provisions in the bill would:

- increase the value of investment depreciation to equal the full value of original investment
- allow small businesses to deduct the first \$25,000 worth of investment each year
- clarify the home office deduction
- empower taxpayers to designate a portion of their tax liability to a public debt-reduction fund
- require federal agencies to assess the risk and cost of each imposed regulation
- force federal agencies to publicly announce the cost of their policies
- reduce the paperwork burden imposed on American business by five percent
- limit the government's ability to impose undue burdens on private property owners, and
- require federal agencies to complete regulatory impact analyses.

Legal reforms

Republican members of Congress have long pointed to the rising

number of lawsuits as an impediment to economic competitiveness. They argue that the "litigation explosion" forces companies to take products off the market and hurts individuals through higher consumer and insurance costs.

Now, for the first time in years, those who would overhaul the civil justice system are cautiously optimistic that the new Congress can pass legislation to cut down on lawsuits and reduce damage awards. The tort reform proposal aims to discourage frivolous lawsuits and limit liability for sellers and manufacturers.

The measure also would set new federal and state standards in product liability cases. The cornerstone of the GOP language would limit punitive damage awards which seek to punish particularly negligent defendants — those who act out of malice.

Under the draft measure, punitive damage awards would be limited to three times the plaintiff's award for monetary losses. In cases involving minor injuries, they would be capped at \$250,000.

The measure aims to discourage frivolous lawsuits by applying the "loser pays rule" in federal suits brought by residents of different states. Since most civil suits are filed in state court, the provision has limited scope. Under the provision, the person who loses a case pays the winner's attorneys fees. Payments, however, could not exceed the loser's attorneys fees.

Congressional term limits

The Republicans are proposing two separate resolutions calling for a constitutional amendment to limit the number of terms senators and representatives can serve. One resolution would limit the number of Senate terms to two and the number of House terms to six. The other resolution also limits senators to two terms, but it limits representatives to three terms.

Despite GOP endorsement, the immediate prospects for passing an amendment remain shaky. Candidates signing the contract only pledged to support a floor vote, not necessarily to back the proposal itself. Those who support term limits are split between a 12-year or six-year cutoff for House members. The public's appetite for term limits also may have been satisfied by the large number (30) of House incumbents losing in the election.

Term limits are under a legal cloud with some courts ruling that the U.S. Constitution lays out the sole requirements for congressional service. The Supreme Court, on Nov. 29, heard a case involving Arkansas' congressional term limits, and it is expected to rule on the case by summer. If the justices strike down the state-passed restrictions, term limits activists would have to pursue their goal through a constitutional amendment.

Draft Balanced Budget Amendment

Following is the text of the joint resolution House Republicans expect to introduce on the constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget.

"Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), that the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several states within seven years after the date of its submission for ratification:

Amendment

"Section 1. Prior to each fiscal year, Congress shall, by law, adopt a statement of receipts and outlays for such fiscal year in which total outlays are not greater than total receipts. Congress may, by law, amend that statement provided revised outlays are not greater than revised receipts. Congress may

provide in that statement for a specific excess of outlays over receipts by a vote directed solely to that subject in which three-fifths of the whole number of each House agree to such excess. Congress and the President shall ensure that actual outlays do not exceed the outlays set forth in such statement.

"Section 2. No bill to increase receipts shall become law unless approved by a three-fifths majority of the whole number of each House of Congress.

"Section 3. Prior to each fiscal year, the President shall transmit to Congress a proposed statement of receipts and outlays for such fiscal year consistent with the provisions of this Article.

"Section 4. Congress may waive the provisions of this Article for any fiscal year in which a declaration of war is in effect. The provisions of this Article may be waived for any fiscal year in which the United States faces an imminent and serious military threat to national security and is so declared by a joint resolution, adopted by a majority of the whole number of each House, which becomes law.

"Section 5. Total receipts shall include all receipts of the United States except those derived from borrowing and total outlays shall include all outlays of the United States except those for the repayment of debt principal.

"Section 6. The amount of Federal public debt as of the first day of the second fiscal year beginning after the ratification of this Article shall become a permanent limit on such debt and there shall be no increase in such amount unless three-fifths of the whole number of each House of Congress shall have passed a bill approving such increase and such bill has become law.

"Section 7. All votes taken by the House of Representatives or the Senate under this Article shall be roll call votes.

"Section 8. Congress shall enforce and implement this Article by appropriate legislation.

"Section 9. This Article shall take effect for the fiscal year 2002 or for the second fiscal year beginning after its ratification, whichever is later."

EPA offers environmental justice grants

The EPA is offering a small grants program that will make \$3 million available to counties, local governments and non-profit organizations. The purpose of the Environmental Justice Small Grants Program is to provide financial assistance and stimulate a public purpose by supporting projects to any affected community groups (i.e., counties, local governments, schools, churches and other non-profits). These groups must be working on or planning projects to address environmental justice issues.

The EPA defines environmental justice as "the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures and income concerning the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies." Fair treatment means that no racial, ethnic or socioeconomic group should bear a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequences of industrial, municipal and commercial enterprises, and from the execution of federal, state and local laws and regulations.

To be a recipient, the project must include one or more of the following objectives:

- Identify the necessary improvements in communication and coordination among existing community-based/grass-roots organizations and local, state and federal environmental programs. Facilitate communication, information exchange and partnerships among stakeholders to ad-

dress environmental injustices (for example, workshops, awareness conferences, community newsletter, etc.).

- Motivate the general public to be more conscious of their local environmental justice issues or problems and encourage the community to take action to address these issues (for example, reforestation efforts, radon awareness building and outreach, stream monitoring, and reclamation).

- Develop and demonstrate an environmental justice practice, method or technique that has wide application and addresses an environmental justice issue that is a high priority.

- Teach about risk reduction and pollution prevention, and seek technical experts to demonstrate how to access, analyze and interpret public environmental data (for example, Geographic Information Systems and other data bases).

For grant purposes, environmental justice projects or activities should be designed to enhance critical thinking, problem-solving and active participation of the affected communities in the decision-making processes. Environmental justice should engage and motivate individuals to weigh various issues to make informed and responsible decision as they work to address environmental injustices.

There is no cost-sharing with this grant and the maximum amount is

\$20,000. Preapplications must be postmarked to later than Saturday, Feb. 4, 1995.

Preapplications will serve as the sole basis for evaluation and recommendation for funding and must be mailed to your EPA Regional Office. The EPA expects awards to be made by May 31, 1995.

The preapplication package is available from your EPA regional office or through NACo by calling Lou Witt at 202/942-4261.

ELDERS from page 1

activities. "We have the know-how. We have the resources. We need to make the commitment," she said. "If we can prevent pregnancies, we won't need abortion, adoption or orphanages."

However, while more abortions are being performed in the United States than any other industrialized nation, funding for family planning activities is becoming more scarce. In fact, the Department of Health and Human Services' 1994 budget for family planning is less than it was in 1982, according to Elders.

"You may have heard people call me the 'Queen of Condoms,'" she said, adding, "And, frankly, if I thought it would make people wear them, I'd put the crown on my head and sleep in it."

Elders also expressed her concern about the rising number of children



Photo by Jill Conley

U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders chats informally with NACo President Randy Franke before addressing the Third General Session of NACo's Employment and Human Services Conference.

who are victims or perpetrators of violent crimes and those who partici-

pate in gang activities. Here again she proposed schools as the best re-

source for solutions and asked delegates to encourage their school systems to incorporate conflict resolution courses into their curriculum and to provide after-school, summer and daycare. "We must look at our schools as a resource," she said.

Elders concluded her address by acknowledging county government's leadership role in building the kinds of partnerships and programs that make a difference in the lives of children and society as a whole. Offering her support in the challenge ahead, she shared the advice given to her by the bishop of her church before she went Washington to assume her post as surgeon general.

"When you're dancing with a bear, you can't sit down when you get tired," he said. "You've got to wait 'til the bear gets tired."

What about them?



Public employees can help their families plan for the unexpected, by signing up for the universal life insurance option offered within the National Association of Counties Deferred Compensation Program. The insurance is underwritten by Providian Corp. (formerly Capital Holding).

The program's savings and life insurance options can help employees replace lost income should they retire or die. The options represent key elements in your plan for financial security.

For family peace of mind, ask about the universal life insurance option. Contact your local representative of PEBSCO (Public Employees Benefit Services Corporation), Plan Administrator of choice for the NACo Program. Or, call 1-800-545-4730.



1994 Achievement Award Winners

Hats off to ... counties responding to emergencies

Washington County, Md., for implementing a Medical Priority Dispatch System in its 9-1-1 Center. The program carefully trains dispatchers to accurately prioritize emergency medical calls, send the appropriate emergency medical service response, and provide patient care instructions until the EMS unit arrives. The program helps the 9-1-1 caller to become a first responder by providing early treatment for the patient.

Glynn County, Ga., for its citizen's handbook for emergency preparedness. Presented in an easy-to-read format, the handbook provides a summary of emergency procedures that should be followed for major and minor emergencies, everything from insect stings to hurricanes. The books are distributed at

area shopping malls.

Charleston County, S.C., for using a single-staffed paramedic unit, called the Quick Response Vehicle (QRV), in situations where ambulance transport is not likely to be needed. The QRV roves the central metro area where nearly 60 percent of calls for service originate, greatly reducing response time. The use of this vehicle has freed up the full-sized ambulances for more serious calls requiring patient transport.

San Bernardino County, Calif., for its "Getting There" tracking service for the aged and disabled to ensure that these residents with special needs get appropriate services during emergencies. Each client is ranked as "critical," "urgent" or "moderate"



depending on his or her level of impairment, social isolation, availability of informal support services, and dependence on medication or life support apparatus. The tracking system was successfully used following the 1992 Landers earthquake.

Arlington County, Va., for ini-

tiating a public/private partnership with a cellular telephone company to provide cellular service — important for the safety and convenience of commuters — in an underground subway tunnel. By partnering with the private company, the county reduced its costs 90 percent. Police, fire and emergency medical personnel can now communicate in the tunnels, on the station platforms, and in the train cars.

Clark County, Wash., for working to reduce the risk of fire for county residents in unincorporated areas, most of which are still wilderness. A comprehensive legislative package including land use planning, building codes, fire codes and road standards will protect homeowners in areas subject to wildfire. This is the state's first com-

prehensive urban interface fire protection legislation.

Los Angeles County, Calif., for its emergency fraud hotline following the 1994 Northridge earthquake. The hotline was established to take complaints from citizens on price gouging and other earthquake-related fraud. The toll-free line received more than 1,300 calls, and investigators in the Department of Consumer Affairs provided support to prosecutorial agencies, including serving hearing notices on businesses and landlords who violated consumer rights.

(For more information on these and other Achievement Award-winning programs, call Mary Bewig, research associate, at 202/942-4226.)

GINGRICH from page 1

houses and signed by the president.

He is, however, interested in passing a stronger bill than the ones reported by House and Senate committees earlier this year.

In the Senate, Senator Robert Dole (R-Kan.), who will take over as Senate majority leader next year, has urged similar cooperation. He wants unfunded mandate-relief legislation to be the first bill on the Senate floor. He has instructed Senator Dirk Kempthorne (R-Idaho) to draft the bill as S. 1 and be prepared to move it immediately.



Photo by Tom Goodman

NACo President Randy Franke explains importance of making unfunded mandates a top priority in new congressional session.

Renewed Federalism

During his wide-ranging discussions with Franke and Ashe, Gingrich also expressed a desire to work with state and local officials in sorting out the responsibilities of each level of government and the services that each will be expected to provide.

As programs are turned over to states and localities, Gingrich would like to identify federal resources that could be returned to assist them in providing the services called for in the program.

For example, he identified the alcohol excise tax, which adds about \$8 billion a year to the federal treasury, as one example of revenues that might be turned over to state and local governments. Both Franke and Ashe were impressed by Rep. Gingrich's sensitivity to the need to return resources with responsibilities.

NACo and the new majority

In discussing future plans for involving NACo and other public interest groups in the development and implementation of the GOP legislative agenda, Gingrich urged Franke and Ashe to be "as bold as you want to be" about submitting recommendations for decentralizing federal responsibilities.

He urged them to consider the

following questions: 1) What existing impediments, budgetary and regulatory, are restricting local governments' ability to do their jobs? 2) How would they radically transform the way the nation deals with poverty-related social problems? and 3) What sources of funding could be identified that should be sent back to local governments?

Gingrich also invited Franke and Ashe to participate in monthly meetings of the House Republican leadership and members.

Concerns raised about balanced budget amendment

During their discussion, Franke and Ashe emphasized that while NACo and USCM are supportive of decentralization and increased flexibility, counties and cities are concerned that drastic cuts will occur in federally assisted state and local programs under the proposed balanced budget amendment, which is included in the House Republican's "Contract With America."

According to a recent *New York Times* article, some \$700 billion to \$800 billion in reductions must be achieved over the next five years,

and more than \$1 trillion in the next seven years to achieve this goal.

Under the contract, a balanced budget would be achieved without raising taxes by cutting Social Security and by increasing defense spending. Gingrich responded by indicating that under the balanced budget proposal, there would be a seven-year transition and reiterated his desire to return resources to state and local governments to help absorb the impact of the cuts.

Other Republican agenda items

In addition to a balanced budget amendment, the new leadership's agenda also calls for another constitutional amendment setting term limits for members of Congress. Gingrich also mentioned welfare reform, a middle-class tax cut, amending the crime bill that passed earlier this year to stiffen penalties for violent offenders, and other legislation that he will push to get enacted within the first 100 days after Congress convenes. Regarding the crime bill, Franke referenced a proposal in the Contract With America that would substan-

tially reduce funding for prevention programs and use a block grant approach to distribute the remaining funds. He stressed that "any block grant for crime must include maximum discretion to local governments to address not only punishment but prevention."

Follow-up meeting on mandate relief

Pleased to hear that all sides would be involved in crafting a stronger bill that would move early next year, Franke and Ashe next met with the key leaders who will spearhead efforts to pass a new mandate-relief bill.

Sen. Kempthorne and Representative William Clinger (R-Pa.), who is expected to be named the new chairman of the House Government Operations Committee, confirmed that they are working together to develop similar bills to expedite passage of legislation early next year.

Clinger and Kempthorne said they would use legislation (S. 993/H.R. 5128) adopted by committees earlier this year as a basis for developing new bills.

Stronger mandate-relief provisions being considered

A number of provisions are being considered to strengthen the legislation: requiring appropriations to pay for any new mandate, prohibiting federal agencies from enforcing any new mandate unless adequate funds are provided to state and local governments, requiring a supermajority to impose any new mandate on state and local governments, lowering the threshold that triggers coverage from \$50 million to \$25 million, expanding mandate-relief legislation to cover conference reports, and removing a provision that would terminate the legislation in three years.

Under the bills approved by com-

mittees earlier in the year, before floor action can take place on a new mandate proposal in either house, the Congressional Budget Office would be required to prepare a cost estimate on any bill expected to cost state and local governments \$50 million or more on an annual basis, funds would have to be authorized, and the funding source (new taxes or cuts in federal spending) would have to be identified to pay for the mandate.

"Making mandate relief a top priority in the new Congress is great news for counties and other local governments and the citizens they serve."

Randy Franke
NACo president

If these requirements were not met, a point of order could be raised to prevent floor action. A majority vote would be required to waive the requirements and thereby impose the cost of a new mandate on state and local governments.

Kempthorne and Clinger have both pledged to continue to work with the president and Democratic leaders in Congress in crafting the strengthening amendments and a new bipartisan bill.

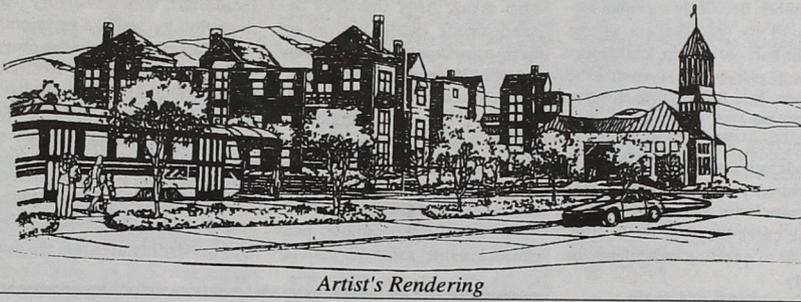
Franke told both leaders that "NACo would continue to work with them to pass the strongest mandate-relief bill that can be signed into law. Making mandate relief a top priority in the new Congress is great news for counties and other local governments and the citizens they serve," Franke said. "We welcome the first step toward restructuring the federal system."

(Todd is NACo legislative director and Jones is an associate legislative director.)

Trandominiums: an innovative problem solver

By Supervisor Rod Diridon
Santa Clara County, Calif.

ALMADEN LAKE VILLAGE JOINT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT



Artist's Rendering

Santa Clara County, Calif., or "Silicon Valley" as it is more widely known, has an exciting project in the works: a "trandominium" development. Trandominium is a term coined from the words "transit" and "condominium" and is meant to signify medium-to-high-density dwellings built at or near rail stations.

Think about it. Several condominiums or rental units buffered by a ring of lower-rise townhouses constructed in the sizable park-and-ride lots serving light rail and commuter rail lines. The ground level would be reserved for transit system users' and residents' parking. The second floor could include convenience stores, laundries and other services, with the upper floors devoted to homes.

Such projects would generate revenue for the transit district, provide new riders for the transit system, and enhance the environment around the station and the park-and-ride lot.

How it works

Developers bid competitively for construction of the first trandominium project in Santa Clara County — the first such project in the nation — on a long-term lease basis.

The cost of building and maintaining the facilities will be borne

by the future residents. Since the land is already owned by the transit district, the housing can be moderately priced and particularly attractive to first-time homeowners, as well as "empty nesters" who want to cash in their big homes and avoid yard maintenance and other work associated with home ownership.

A small percentage of subsidized housing will be mixed with the market-priced housing. The ability of residents to use light rail and CalTrain commuter rail vehicles as "horizontal elevators" from their homes to work, recreation, shopping, libraries and entertainment, should prove an attractive package to potential buyers.

The need for affordable housing and commutes is critical in Santa Clara County. One side ef-

fect of the dynamic growth of Silicon Valley is a severe housing shortage. Land suitable for development is scarce. Santa Clara County and the 15 cities within it have agreed not to expand further into farm, watershed and viewshed lands.

In addition, over the years, the county's larger cities have zoned land for industrial and commercial development because it creates more tax revenue than does residential zoning. This has left many industrial and commercial employees with a great need for affordable housing. Finding that it does not exist, people have had to find housing farther and farther from Silicon Valley, causing longer commutes, increased air pollution, traffic congestion and higher fuel consumption.

The trandominium concept al-

lows residents to live closer to jobs and commute to those jobs on transit, thereby reducing pollution, congestion and excess energy use. The transit system's tax subsidy will be reduced by revenue from increased ridership and by rental income from leasing the air rights above the park-and-ride lots.

Time frame

In early 1990, the trandominium concept was explored to examine the potential for high-density residential development at stations along the southern portion of our Guadalupe Corridor Light Rail Line. The first study identified 10 potential sites. The second study recommended the preferred site for the first project.

In early 1991, the trandominium concept was reviewed by

a developer's forum and in December 1991, the Request for Qualifications was issued. Responses from four development teams were reviewed in February 1992 by the transportation agency's selection committee.

The request for proposals was issued on May 1, 1992, and after extensive negotiations, on Feb. 23, 1993, the Almaden Lake Village Associates team was chosen to develop the project. The development, called Almaden Lake Village, is now being built on 7.1 acres of land leased from the transportation district to the County of Santa Clara, with completion scheduled by spring of 1996.

The advantages, as we make the transition to transit as our primary mode of home-to-work travel, could be overwhelming.

Indeed, trandominiums could create tens of thousands of relatively affordable dwelling units at current and planned rail stations in Santa Clara Valley. With completion of the county's \$7 billion Transit Master Plan, T2010, we expect more than 100 park-and-ride lots associated with more than 100 miles of light and heavy rail. These sites will yield more than 50,000 dwelling units.

(Rod Diridon is currently chair of the American Public Transit Association, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors and the Santa Clara County Transit District Board of Supervisors.)

Evans to head Wyoming association

The Wyoming County Commissioners Association (WCCA) announced the hiring of Joseph M. Evans as its new executive director, according to Clyde Gephart, WCCA president.

Evans was selected from a field of more than 70 applicants. He will replace B.G. "Jerry" Michie, who is retiring, Jan. 1, 1995.

Michie, a former county official and state legislator from Carbon

County, is leaving after serving as WCCA's director for more than 13 years. In 1992, he was elected president of the National Council of County Association Executives, the first person from Wyoming to be selected for that office.

Evans has served in Wyoming state government for the past 18 years in a variety of positions. Most of those positions involved working with local government. He most

recently worked as a business development officer with the Wyoming Department of Commerce assisting cities, towns and counties in economic development work.

A Wyoming native, he holds both a B.A. and M.S. from the University of Wyoming. He is also certified by both the National Development Council and the American Economic Development Council in economic development.

NACRC offers CPO credits at Leg. Conference

All members and potential members of the National Association of County Recorders, Elections Officials and Clerks (NACRC) should consider attending NACo's Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., March 3-7, 1995.

On Friday, March 3, NACRC is offering all-day special tours for Certified Public Officials (CPO) credits.

One tour, arranged by Mary Patton, court administration interest chair, will be to the offices of John Frey, Fairfax County (Va.) Circuit Court clerk. Frey's office holds George and Martha Washington's will and land grants from the 1730s, including Lord Fairfax's.

This tour also includes a trip to Frey's new records center, located

one mile from the courthouse. This tour offers credits in Court Administration, Land Records and Records Management.

The second tour, arranged by Ernie Hawkins, election interest chair, is for election officials and will visit three Washington, D.C. offices: the Federal Election Commission, the Washington, D.C. Elections Office, and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. This tour offers credit for Campaign Finance, Voter Registration and Outreach.

(For more information, call Mary Harkrader, NACRC president, Peoria County (Ill.) clerk, at 309/672-6059. For a NACo Legislative Conference brochure and

registration form, call Horacio Gavilan at 202/942-4220.)

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Voter panels: antidote for campaign distortions

By Neal R. Peirce
Washington Post Writers Group

(Neal Peirce is a syndicated columnist who writes about local government issues. His columns do not reflect the opinions of County News or the National Association of Counties.)

Are Americans satisfied with a midterm election season being described as the most bitterly negative in modern political history?

Is there a chance they'd like a debate more constructive than this fall's barrage of campaign ads evoking fear of violent crime, touting the death penalty, urging more prisons and longer sentences, attacking taxes, immigrants, welfare cheats, and check-kiting congressmen?

It's hard to tell when virtually every major candidate, Republican or Democrat, seems to have succumbed to the bill of goods sold them by the pollsters and campaign consultants. The political handlers are saying that voters are in such a surly mood that constructive ideas are a waste of time, that nothing but fear or outrage will pierce the public consciousness.

The obvious solution is a more reasoned conversation — to query voters not just about their fears but what kinds of solutions they'd like to see applied to public prob-

lems. To engage them, in short, in the public debate. It's an idea foreign to the gatekeepers of the media barrage. But in "civic journalism" efforts spread around the country this fall — from Boston to Charlotte, St. Petersburg to San Francisco — newspaper and broadcasters have been going first to ordinary citizens, to get their judgments on critical issues. In some cases they put citizens on the air to question candidates directly.

The Illinois Voter Project — spearheaded by the League of Women Voters and the University of Chicago — is one of '94's most fascinating efforts.

Two panels of voters — one from Chicago, one from its suburbs — were selected from the pool of citizens responding to a baseline survey — balanced carefully across age, race, ethnic group and income. The panels' members ranged from a retired secretary to a zoo animal keeper, a building engineer to a police trainer.

The two 14-person panels quickly agreed that crime, education and taxes are the top issues that Governor Jim Edgar (R) and his challenger, State Comptroller Dawn Clark Netsch (D), should be tackling in their campaign.

Then the panels plunged into hours of listening to, and questioning, experts in criminology,

child care, taxation, schooling and other areas. After that they debated among themselves to set their priorities of where they thought Illinois should be headed.

Their conclusions, the *Chicago Tribune's* Charles Madigan reported, were a world apart from "traditional politics, with its sound bites, easy promises, bickering and poll-driven proposals."

On crime, for example, both panels brushed aside the popular

intervention programs such as Head Start, with mandatory participation by welfare recipients. As for actual criminals, the group said all should expect "swift and certain sanctions," but with a difference: real prison time for violent criminals, community-based sentencing, restitution included, for non-violent offenders.

And while Chicago suburbanites are supposed to be bitterly and irresistibly anti-tax, the sub-

urban panel actually came up with a way to fund several social and economic development programs it suggested — first re-engineering the state government to cut employee rolls 10 percent, then a one percent hike in the state income tax.

The ordinary folks' common sense makes one wonder — do the campaign consultants understand how much smarter people are than the automatons they design their ads for? "In their focus groups," suggests Richard C. Harwood, one of the country's most thoughtful public opinion analysts, "the consultants look for

hot buttons. They hear crime: they assume people want tougher sentences. I wonder how much they really talk to people about their lives as opposed to what might work in a political campaign."

Worst of all, says Harwood, Americans today are distraught, do feel cut off, do want to be part of the process of putting their country back together. "The political consultants don't realize this is real for people, it's serious, it affects their daily lives, and that it's not just a game of winning political campaigns."

Maybe we should ask citizen panels to write some of the ads for campaign seasons. Who says a complex thought — like locking up the dangerous even while disciplining the non-violent in their own communities — can't be conveyed in 30 seconds?

Instead we get airborne monstrosities like ads in which California Governor Pete Wilson calls his opponent soft on rapists and child molesters, or Ohio Senate candidate Mike Dewine boasts "I went after rapists and drug dealers."

Illinois may be a little better off. Several League panel members, Project Director Joan Beaubaire reports, are to be on the questioning panel when Edgar and Netsch meet in their sole televised debate Oct. 19.

(c) 1994, Washington Post Writers Group

The ordinary folks' common sense makes one wonder — do the campaign consultants understand how much smarter people are than the automatons they design their ads for?

cures of more cops and more prisons. Why, they asked, would Illinois want to build more prisons when it's already constructed \$500 million worth of jails since the late 1970s, with no appreciable impact on crime?

The suburban panel's No. 1 solution was to "emphasize reading, writing and critical thinking skills and provide alternative educational programs (such as apprenticeship programs) to prepare students to enter the work force of tomorrow and create options other than crime."

The city panel, on a parallel track, suggested expanded early

urban panel actually came up with a way to fund several social and economic development programs it suggested — first re-engineering the state government to cut employee rolls 10 percent, then a one percent hike in the state income tax.

The ordinary folks' common sense makes one wonder — do the campaign consultants understand how much smarter people are than the automatons they design their ads for? "In their focus groups," suggests Richard C. Harwood, one of the country's most thoughtful public opinion analysts, "the consultants look for

recyclables." More than 330 operating MRFs were invited to participate in the awards program.

NORTH CAROLINA

• Frank Bonner, along with his wife Grace, were recently honored by the members of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) as recipients of the 1994 Award for Outstanding Board Member of a Regional Development Organization.

Bonner, a **BEAUFORT COUNTY** commissioner, and his wife, the former mayor of Aurora, currently serve on the executive board of the Mid-East Commission in Washington, and both have served as the organization's chairman.

NADO members are multi-county planning and development organizations that focus on creating and retaining jobs in small cities and rural areas. The individuals who participate in the association's activities are pro-

fessional staff members, local elected officials, and citizen representatives who serve on the boards of organizations such as the Mid-East Commission.

Midwest

MINNESOTA

• Government, social service agencies, educational institutions, and public and private funders and foundations have joined together to make services more accessible to children and families in **RAMSEY COUNTY**.

The Saint Paul/Ramsey Cour. Children's Initiative will open nine family centers over the next year which will offer a broad range of supportive services.

By coordinating services and collaborative efforts, the centers hope to boost child health and development, and improve school readiness and family functioning.

Continued on page 11

We invite readers to submit items for "News from the nation's counties." Mail to us: c/o County News, 440 First St., N.W., Washington, DC 20001 or FAX to: 202/393-2630.

News from the nation's counties

North

PENNSYLVANIA

• **BUTLER COUNTY** is expanding curbside recycling into rural municipalities with a new "first week recycling service." During the first five weekdays of each month, commingled recyclables are collected in lieu of regular garbage collection.

The county, which is served entirely by private waste collection companies, began a pilot for the program involving several hundred households during 1993. It has now been expanded to seven municipalities and is slated to begin in 12 additional areas during 1995.

"Our goal," said Mark Burd, waste management department director, "has been to establish a sustainable method for providing recycling collection in areas with moderate to low population density."

The system allows companies to use existing collection vehicles, labor and routes to provide the additional service. By doing so, there is no increase in cost for the collection of materials.

The program has been successful in achieving a recycling rate

of approximately 17 percent and officials have noted a decrease in the amount of solid waste placed out for disposal.

South

MARYLAND

• The **BALTIMORE COUNTY** Public Library's (BCPL) new Window On the World service gives computer users access from their home, school or office to the library's catalog of materials as well as access to the Internet via Sailor, Maryland's online information network.

Window On the World allows the public to access a vast network of electronic information 24 hours a day. Users can connect to BCPL's computer system and find out which public libraries have particular items and whether they're available. Users can also search files of approximately 2,500 local government agencies and community organizations, fax articles, and browse through other library catalogs throughout Maryland and the United States.

Other services that the library will be offering in the near future include full Internet accounts, the

ability for customers to place their own holds on materials, and access to an electronic encyclopedia and full-text magazine articles.

• **MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S** Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), the Recycling Center, has received the 1994 Award from *Solid Waste Technologies* magazine.

The center was evaluated by a panel of recycling experts in the following categories: Operations, Marketing, Engineering/Design, Health & Safety, Public Information, and Integration.

The magazine said the facility "excelled in operations, managing more than 23,000 tons of commingled recyclables in its July 1992 to June 1993 fiscal year. [It] managed this tonnage with less than 16 full-time workers, producing the most efficient tons processed per employee record in the awards program."

Presented for the first time this year, the award was developed by the publication "to recognize MRFs that excel in operational performance and to establish benchmarks for future achievements in the processing of

Notices . . . notices . . . notices

CONFERENCES

Learn how to prepare a design that will ensure static and seismic slope stability for cover and liner elements of landfills, ponds and disposal facilities at "Static and Seismic Slope for Waste Containment Facilities," a conference sponsored by the University of Wisconsin's College of Engineering, Jan. 4-6, 1995 in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

The agenda provides for an intensely focused course of instruction on the complicated geotechnical assessment of environmental containment system design, providing the attendee with both practical and useful information. The course fee is \$875.

For more information, contact:

Philip R. O'Leary, program director, The Wisconsin Center, 702 Langdon St., Madison, WI 53706, phone: 800/462-0876 or 608/262-0493.

IAQ Publications, Inc. is sponsoring the Indoor Environment '95 Conference and Exhibition, "Strategies for the New Era of Regulation," May 1-3, 1995 in Baltimore, Md.

The meeting will bring together business leaders and public officials to share their forecasts on future legislative initiatives, industry trends and market opportunities.

For more information, contact: IAQ Publications, Inc., 2 Wisconsin Circle, Suite 430, Chevy Chase, MD 20815; phone: 301/913-0115, fax: 301/913-0119.

Save Outdoor Sculpture!

(SOS!), a joint project of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution and the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property, will host eight workshops, February through November 1995, titled "The Preservation of Outdoor Sculpture and Monuments."

SOS! has also put together a fundraising kit for people trying to underwrite the costs of professional treatment of outdoor sculpture and ongoing maintenance.

For more information, contact: National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property, 3299 K St., N.W., Suite 403, Washington, DC 20007, phone: 202/625-1495 or 800/421-1381, fax: 202/625-1485.

PUBLICATIONS

The Center for Civic Education has released a new publication, titled "National Standards for Civics and Government," for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. The standards, which are voluntary, specify what students should know and be able to do in the field of civics and government.

This publication helps schools develop competent and responsible citizens who possess a commitment to the fundamental values and principles that are essential to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy. The cost is \$12.

To order, contact: Center for Civic Education, 5146 Douglas Fir Rd., Calabasas, CA 91302-1467, phone: 800/350-4223.

AWARDS

The National Council for Ur-

ban Economic Development is accepting applications for its 1994 National Economic Development Awards, which will be presented at its Annual Conference, April 23-26, 1995, in Dallas, Texas.

The awards program recognizes and encourages outstanding achievements in the economic development field. The awards also bring public and professional recognition to individuals, projects and programs which have made significant contributions to the revitalization of the nation's cities. The deadline for applications is Dec. 15, and the entry fee is \$35 for members and \$70 for non-members.

For more information, contact: Jenny Murphy, the National Council for Urban Economic Development, National Economic Development Awards, 1730 K St. N.W., Suite 915, Washington, DC 20006, phone: 202/223-4735.

association work or management desired. Salary negotiable, depending on qualifications. Apply to Ed Ferguson, National Association of Counties, 440 First Street N.W., Washington DC, 20001, by December 31, 1994. E.O.E.

MANAGER, UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY, GA.: Population: 90,000. Created by citizen referendum and Georgia legislation in 1990, Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County is Georgia's smallest SMSA located just 65 miles east of Atlanta. Regional Center of northeast Georgia for professional, legal, medical, retail, and leisure services. Home of 30,000 students attending the University of Georgia — America's oldest state-chartered university. With an aggressive annual growth rate of about 17%, Athens-Clarke County boasts a stable and diverse economy, with unemployment rates under 4%, and growth in both manufacturing and service businesses above national averages. Tourism attracts nearly 340,000 visitors annually with an estimated spending of more than \$132M. Citizens just passed a \$60M capital program and

Job market

ACADEMY COORDINATOR, ACADEMY FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT — WASHINGTON, D.C.:

The Academy for State and Local Government, a non-profit public foundation operated by the Council of State Governments, International City/County Management Association, National Association of Counties, National Conference of State Legislatures, National Governors' Association, National League of Cities and US Conference of Mayors, is seeking a person to coordinate and represent their collective activities. This highly sensitive hands-on position requires excellent judgement, strong interpersonal skills, and an ability to effect change through consensus building. Bac. deg. in urban affairs, pub. pol., pol. sci., journalism, or a related field, plus six years of rel. post grad. work exp. with a public interest group, state or local govt., or related org. and demo. exp. working effectively with boards and committees; current/relevant pol. and/or leg. issues; and strong comm. skills. Recruit. range is \$40-60k. Qual. app. should submit a resume and sal. req. by Dec. 31, 1994 to: National Governors' Association, Personnel Department, Suite 267, Position #391, 444 N. Capitol

Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. AA/EEO. Minority Candidates are encourage to apply.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR — CHARLOTTE COUNTY, FLA.:

Population: 118,682. A fast growing retirement community located on the west coast of Florida. The County's population increased 89% between 1980 and 1990, creating major infrastructure needs and concerns about maintaining environmental quality. Charlotte County is currently undertaking a major sewer expansion program and other major public works projects including construction of a jail, new County courthouse, parks and roads. Full-service position recognized by ICMA. Salary negotiable DOQ, within a range of \$90,000 to \$115,000, plus an excellent fringe benefit program. \$199M budget. 810 employees. Reports to five-member Board of County Commissioners, elected by-district for four-year, staggered terms. Requires bachelor's degree in public or business administration or related field. Requires five years experience in government, business or industry; demonstrated experience managing a large and complex organization, utility experience and solid financial and budgetary skills; knowledge of TQM, land use and labor negotiations. Resumes should be sent by January 23, 1995 to James L. Mercer, President, The Mercer Group, Inc., 990 Hammond Drive, Suite 510, Atlanta, GA 30328. IN ACCORDANCE WITH FLORIDA'S OPEN RECORDS LAWS, RESUMES AND ALL APPLICATION MATERIALS ARE SUBJECT TO PUBLIC DISCLOSURE. Equal Opportunity Employer.

DIRECTOR OF DATA PROCESSING SERVICES (DPS) — CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CALIF.:

(Martinez, Calif.) Salary open DOQ. Contra Costa County's DPS Div. oper. as a service bureau to Cnty. depts., providing serv. incl.: applic. develop., system oper./maint. on a number of hardware platforms, E-mail and other office automation, trng. in pers. comp. software, and consult. rel. to design/acquis. and implement. of automated systems. The County has an IBM ES9000 mainframe as a central enterprise server with AS400s, RS6000 Sun & Tandem midsize computers running add'l. systems. The Dir. is appt. by/rpts. to the County Administrator and supv. a staff of 80 with a budg. of \$7.6 million. Should have at least 5 yrs. admin./supv. exp. in d/p systems analysis, programming or computer oper. for med. to large-scale comp. systems and a BA/BS in d/p, comp. sciences or rel. field (add'l exp. can be substituted for

deg.). Send res. by 12/30/94 to NORMAN ROBERTS & ASSOCIATES, INC., Attn: Norm Roberts, Pres., 1800 Century Park East, #430, Los Angeles, CA 90067-1507 or FAX to 310/552-1113. AA/EEO/ADA.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, IOWA STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES:

The Iowa State Association of Counties, in Des Moines, Iowa, is seeking a proven professional to direct the association. The position requires a demonstrated commitment to public service at the local government level and the ability to manage a diverse association representing Iowa's 99 counties and 14 affiliates. Specific skills required are: knowledge and experience in participatory management, financial management, communications, technical services, advocacy and benefit programs. Ability to interact with county and state officials and general public essential. Requires a BA degree in public administration, public policy, business administration, political science or related field; an advanced degree is desirable. Five years' experience in

News from from previous page

"It is our hope that this effort by the Children's Initiative will replace the extended families and neighborhood support systems of the past with a central location for the same kind of help and attention that young families still need today," said Kathleen Vellenga, project coordinator.

that prohibits state agencies from promulgating regulations that impose new mandates on local governments, except under certain limited conditions (i.e., the mandate is required by federal or state law, the agency consults with the affected local governments by "any means practicable," and the funds necessary to finance implementation of the mandate are provided by the state).

The executive order also requires each agency to develop a process for obtaining the "meaningful and timely input" of local

officials in its rulemaking programs. Prior to the formal approval of a rule, the agencies will be directed, as well, to submit information about the fruits of the consultation on that regulation to the Office of State Planning and Budgeting.

In addition, the order states that the agencies must consider waiving statutory or regulatory requirements, with the goal in mind of "increasing opportunities for utilizing flexible policy approaches at the local level, in cases in which the proposed waiver is consistent with the applicable state policy objectives and is otherwise appropriate."

The governor is not alone in his concern over mandates. Since early 1993, the Colorado Legislative Council has been publishing the "Colorado Mandate Watch." Modeled after the National Conference of State Legislatures' "Mandate Monitor," it tracks both federal and state legislative proposals which contain possible unfunded mandates on local governments. (Source: Colorado Division of Local Government, The State-Local Connection, October 1994.)

West

COLORADO

Governor Roy Romer issued an executive order late last month

Keep the Home Fires Burning
Build a secure future with U.S. Savings Bonds, a competitive, safe investment. Buy them where you bank or work.





Washington Hilton & Towers
Washington, D.C.
March 3-7, 1995

Return completed form to:
NACo
Conference Registration Center
P.O. Box 26307
Akron, OH 44319

1995 Legislative Conference

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION
POSTMARK DEADLINE - FEBRUARY 3, 1995

Please type or print clearly all applicable information requested below. Information following asterisks (*) will appear on the conference badge. Please make a copy of this form for your records.

*Name _____ *Name _____ Mr/Mrs/Ms _____
(Last) (First)
*Title _____ *County _____
Address _____
City _____ *State _____ Zip _____ *Nickname _____
Telephone () _____ Fax () _____ (PLEASE INCLUDE FAX #)
TO RECEIVE CONFIRMATION

REGISTRATION FEES: Check box that applies	Earlybird postmarked by 1/20	Advance postmarked after 1/20 & ON-SITE
Member county attendee	<input type="checkbox"/> \$275	<input type="checkbox"/> \$325
Non-member county attendee	<input type="checkbox"/> 325	<input type="checkbox"/> 375
Other government attendee	<input type="checkbox"/> 300	<input type="checkbox"/> 350
Other private sector	<input type="checkbox"/> 350	<input type="checkbox"/> 400
Spouse	<input type="checkbox"/> 50	<input type="checkbox"/> 75
Youth	<input type="checkbox"/> 30	<input type="checkbox"/> 50

AFFILIATE INFORMATION - Check box that applies

NACRC NACCA NCECE NACHFA
 NACP NACTFO NACE WIR
 NACHO WON NACTEP NCCAE
 NACA NACHSA NABCO NACAP
 NACITA NACCED NACIO ICMA
 NACPRO NACIRO NACS NACMHD

POLITICAL AFFILIATION

Republican Democrat Independent

TOTAL \$ _____ \$ _____
Spouse Full Name _____ Youth Full Name(s) _____

PAYMENT METHOD: Select one CHECK VISA/MASTERCARD P.O. or VOUCHER MONEY ORDER

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION: Select one VISA MasterCard

Card Number: _____ Exp Date: _____
Cardholder's Name: _____ Signature: _____

PAYMENT POLICY - Conference registration fee **MUST** accompany this form and must be received before a registration can be processed. Send a check voucher, county purchase order, made payable to the National Association of Counties. Purchase order only will hold registration. Purchase order must be paid before conference badge will be issued.

CANCELLATION POLICY - Refund of conference registration fee, less an administrative fee of \$50 (or 1/2 of spouse/youth fee), will be made if written notice of conference registration cancellation is postmarked no later than **February 3, 1995**. Cancellation requests postmarked **February 3** or later will be subject to an administrative fee equal to one-half of the registration fee.

NOTE: ALL REGISTRATION FORMS POSTMARKED AFTER FEB. 3, 1995 WILL BE PROCESSED AT THE ON-SITE REGISTRATION DESK.

HOTEL RESERVATION

HOUSING REGISTRATION - Housing reservations must be made by completing this form.

Room Reservation Name _____ Arrival Date ____/____/____ AM
Roommate Name _____ Departure Date ____/____/____ PM

Do you have a special housing request? Suites? _____
Please describe any special disability or handicap needs? _____

PLEASE CHECK YOUR DESIRED HOTEL

Indicate first choice with 1. Then number other choices from 2 to 6 in the order of preference. If first choice is unavailable, reservation will be made at the next available hotel according to your ranking. Each reservation requires a one-night's deposit.

HOTEL	SGL	DBL	HOTEL	SGL	DBL
- Hilton (Hdq) Standard	\$109	\$129	- Washington Sofitel	\$125	\$145
- Hilton - Moderate	129	149	- Courtyard Marriott	110	110
- Hilton - Deluxe	149	159	- Ritz Carlton	146	146

PLEASE NOTE: The Hilton will make every effort to place those requesting or receiving a higher rate in a higher room category (larger room size).

Office Use Only

Date Rec'd. _____
Check No. _____
Amt. of check _____
Total _____
Date entered _____
Entered by _____

Please check one of the following: _____ 1 person, 1 bed _____ 2 persons, 1 bed _____ 2 persons, 2 beds

HOUSING DEPOSIT - Your room reservation can be guaranteed by either of the following methods:

1. Complete Credit Card Authorization below. This is fast and easy; your room will be reserved and guaranteed.
2. Send no payment now. We will reserve your room and send you an acknowledgement of your room reservation that will instruct you to pay the hotel directly in order to guarantee your room. Your room will not be guaranteed until the hotel receives your payment.

NOTE: The NACo Conference Registration Center will send you an acknowledgement within two weeks of receipt of this form. The hotel will also send you an acknowledgement after your credit card is confirmed or payment is received. Do not send payments for hotel reservations to NACo Registration; send them to the hotel indicated on your acknowledgement.

CREDIT CARD AUTHORIZATION MasterCard Visa American Express

Card Number _____ Exp. Date ____/____/____
Cardholder's Name _____

The NACo Housing Center is authorized to use the above card to guarantee my hotel reservation. I understand that one night's room charge will be billed through this card if I fail to arrive for my assigned housing at the confirmed date, or if I depart earlier than I have confirmed, unless I have canceled my reservation with the hotel at least 48 hours in advance.