

FY15 appropriations process in full swing *County priorities at stake*

By HADI SEDIGH
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The annual federal appropriations process, which begins each year with the release of the president's budget request, is in full swing. President Barack Obama's budget request was released on March 4, and appropriations committees in the House and Senate have been holding preliminary hearings on

several of the 12 spending bills that are typically passed through Congress each year.

Senate Appropriations Chair Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) plans to begin the process of moving these bills through her committee in May, and the chamber's Majority Leader Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.) has set aside two weeks in June and two

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Derailed broadband project leaves rural counties still hopeful

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

It's ironic. The FCC recently live-streamed a workshop on rural broadband from Washington, D.C., but one of the most interested

people in rural northern California had to wait for a mailed DVD to watch it all the way through.

Jim Moorehead, chairman of the Broadband Alliance of Mendocino County, was able to view only parts of the five hours of presentations "live" at his home. His satellite Internet connection kept dropping out.

"It is rather ironic, isn't it? If we had adequate broadband we could have watched the proceedings easily," Moorehead said. "However, if we had adequate broadband, we probably wouldn't have an interest in watching the proceedings." He estimates that 50 percent of the county has only dialup access.

Residents of Mendocino and Sonoma counties' more sparsely populated areas — particularly along the Pacific coast — are hungry for broadband. Discontent with an information "dirt road," they want an onramp to the superhighway. Unfortunately, it doesn't appear that their need for speed will be met anytime soon — despite ambitious state

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Cybersecurity symposium stresses employee training



Photo by Charlie Ban

Commission Chairwoman Mary Ann Borgeson and Commissioner Chris Rodgers, Douglas County, Neb., and Maui County, Hawaii Councilman Riki Hokama listen to how officials can create a culture of cybersecurity in their counties. Douglas County served as host for the second National Cybersecurity Symposium April 9–11. Borgeson serves as chairwoman of the NACo Cybersecurity Task Force; Rodgers is NACo's immediate past president and Hokama is NACo's first vice president.

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

One day after word of the "Heartbleed" bug hit the news, county elected officials and information technology personnel gathered in Douglas County, Neb. to discuss cybersecurity and the role counties play in safeguarding data.

The second National Cyber Symposium is a legacy of one of NACo Past President Chris Rodgers' initiatives, and catered to elected officials and information technology professionals with two separate programming tracks.

The message for elected officials: Regardless of how much equipment and software a county purchases, several presenters said, cybersecurity defense is only as good as personnel are well-trained.

"If it comes down to upgrading equipment and training staff, train your staff," said Scott Williams, IT director for Marshall County, Iowa. "You can have all these pieces in place, but if one person

does something dumb, it's all for nothing."

In short, actions people can take — completing training exercises, forming and following policies — can have a greater impact than investing in new equipment.

Andrew Dolan, director of government affairs for the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center, admitted that even trained cybersecurity professionals can fall victim if they aren't careful.

"I get a ton of emails every day and I honestly don't think I could always tell the difference between an 'I' and a lowercase 'L' in an email address," he said. "For a truly well-designed phishing email, there is very little defense, the best chance is to train your users."

Ralph Johnson explained that there is a balance that comes with sharing information, and that effective cybersecurity depends on the confidentiality, availability and integrity of information. Johnson is the chief information security and privacy officer for King County, Wash.

"Some information doesn't need to be confidential, otherwise you wouldn't be putting it on a public website," he said. "It does, however, have to be accessible to the public. That's the reason you have that information online."

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President’s budget consolidates DHS state, local grants

By YEJIN JANG
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

President Obama’s recently released FY15 budget proposes the consolidation of U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) state and local preparedness grant programs into one grant program, called the National Preparedness Grant Program (NPGP).

Not included in the consolidation are the Emergency Management Performance Grants and fire grants. While the president’s budget has suggested this type of consolidation in two previous budget proposals this year, DHS has submitted legislative language to accompany the consolidation proposal.

NACo has identified the following concerns with the proposed legislative language:

- The definition of “unit of local government” would be expanded to include nonprofit organizations, transit agencies and port areas
- Local governments could no longer be direct FEMA grantees; counties would be considered as “subgrantees” under one state application
- “State-centric” program application and administration
- Uncertainty around mandatory pass-through to local governments, and
- Consolidation of the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) into the NPGP.

The administration for the NPGP relies heavily on states as states are the only eligible entities that are able to apply for grants under the NPGP.

Currently, counties can apply directly to FEMA for grants like the pre-disaster mitigation grant program. Under the proposed language for the NPGP, counties would not be able to directly apply to FEMA but must coordinate their request under the state’s application.

DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson appeared before the House Appropriations Committee’s

Subcommittee on Homeland Security on March 11 and was questioned by Rep. David Price (D-N.C.) about the rationale for proposing the NPGP consolidation.

Johnson acknowledged the opposition to the consolidation and cited increased efficiency of federal oversight as a justification for the proposal. He also said he was

inclined to defer to the judgment of FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate, who was said to be a “big believer” in the consolidation of the grant programs.

On March 18, NACo, joined by members from several local government, emergency management and law enforcement groups, met with both majority and minor-

ity staff on the House Homeland Security Committee’s Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications regarding the consolidation of these programs. The coalition reiterated concerns over state-centric program administration and changing the definition of “unit of local government.”

Given that midterm elections are on the horizon, it is unlikely that this proposal will be implemented this year. NACo supports a collaborative effort between states and all levels of local government regarding priority funding decisions within DHS funding. NACo will continue to monitor the progress of the NPGP proposal.

Transportation takes center stage at RAC fly-in

By ARTHUR SCOTT
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

This year’s Rural Action Caucus (RAC) fly-in brought together more than 20 RAC members to discuss pressing rural county issues.

Representing 13 states, RAC members met with over 60 members of Congress and committee staff to emphasize RAC’s priorities and the impact of federal policy on rural counties.

RAC members met with

Administration officials from the U.S. Department of Transportation to discuss rural county issues surrounding surface transportation reauthorization. With counties owning and operating over 44 percent of the nation’s highways and bridges, NACo — including the Rural Action Caucus — is pushing for a long-term reauthorization bill that helps facilitate funding directly to state and local government while expanding opportunities for rural areas.

Shortly after RAC members met separately with Sen. David Vitter (R-La.) and the U.S. Department of Transportation representatives, Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee (EPW), held a press conference to outline plans and priorities for MAP-21 reauthorization, in which the following also participated: Vitter, ranking member of EPW; Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.), chairman of the

Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee; and Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), ranking member of the Subcommittee.

RAC members also met with rural development representatives at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to discuss regional rural innovation, community and economic development and the new White House “Made in Rural America” exporting initiative. The group was joined by Lillian Salerno, administrator for USDA’s Rural Business Cooperative; Doug O’Brien, deputy undersecretary for USDA rural development; and Colleen Landkamer, USDA rural development Minnesota state director.

RAC’s 2014 Priorities

Reauthorization of the Current Surface Transportation Law (MAP-21)

Counties own and maintain more than 1.8 million miles (or 44 percent) of America’s public road miles and over 45 percent of America’s bridges. The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) reauthorization should provide long-term certainty and focus on environmental and project streamlining.

Secure funding for Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Forest Payments to Counties (Secure Rural Schools Program)

The Payment in Lieu of Taxes program (PILT) is currently unfunded for years FY15 and beyond. Additionally, the expiration of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) provides significant financial uncertainty for many county governments. RAC will work with NACo’s Public Lands Steering Committee and Western Interstate Region to support long-term, mandatory funding for PILT and future timber revenue sharing payments to counties.

Oppose efforts to eliminate or limit the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds

Tax-exempt bonds were written in the first tax code in 1913 and are a well-established financing tool that is predominately issued by state and local governments for governmental infrastructure and capital needs purposes. RAC will work to protect this financing tool that is critical to rural public projects such as the construction or improvement of schools, streets, highways, hospitals, bridges, water and sewer systems, ports and other public works.

Renewed focus on improving Rural Health and Substance Abuse programs with a focus on rural veterans and youth

RAC will work with NACo’s Health Steering Committee to protect Medicaid, which is critical to the rural health care system. Substance abuse issues, especially among the nation’s youths and returning rural veterans are a major concern of rural counties, and their impacts on rural health will be highlighted. RAC will focus on supporting the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant, which is critical to state and local efforts in this issue area.

Promote Rural County Priorities within Immigration Reform

NACo members urge policymakers to consider the financial impact of immigration on county governments. Counties are required by law to provide health, public safety and education services for these populations. RAC supports comprehensive immigration reform that includes a modernized legal immigration system, establishes a temporary worker program, provides an earned path to citizenship and enhances border security.

Authorization of long-term Farm Bill with a focus on Rural Development

RAC works with NACo’s Agriculture and Rural Affairs Steering Committee to raise the profile of NACo’s Farm Bill priorities, which included support for renewable energy, young or beginning farmers and flexibly funded rural development programs that encourage regional innovation. RAC also focused on protecting appropriations for USDA Rural Development programs that benefit rural counties and their citizens.

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Quick Takes

WORST ALLERGY COUNTIES (BASED ON POLLEN COUNT)

- 1 – Natrona County, Wyo.
- 2 – Laramie County, Wyo.
- 3 – City and County of Denver, Colo.
- 4 – Sedgwick County, Kan.
- 5 – El Paso County, Colo.

pollen.com, April 2014

FY15 appropriations process targets Oct. 1 completion date

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weeks in July for floor consideration of the spending bills. In the House, Appropriations Chair Hal Rogers (R-Ky.) intends to pass all 12 spending bills before the August recess.

If appropriations leaders in both chambers adhere to these planned timelines, the FY15 appropriations process should be completed before the beginning of the new fiscal year on Oct. 1. Of course, recent history invites skepticism of the ability of congressional leaders to complete the appropriations process in regular order without resorting to short-term fixes such as continuing resolutions, and as the nation witnessed last October, partisan gridlock in the appropriations process can lead to a shutdown of the federal government.

That said, there is some hope that this year's appropriations process will be less contentious. Following the shutdown, Congress passed the Bipartisan Budget Act (P.L. 113-67), which set overall spending levels for FY14 and FY15. Because this overall funding level — \$1.01 trillion for FY15 — has already been set, perhaps the great-

est point of contention between Democrats and Republicans in annual appropriations has been resolved, boosting the prospects for an increasingly rare "regular order" appropriations process.

Whether the FY15 appropriations process is completed in regular order, the fate of many programs of importance to counties will be determined through this process. The president's budget request proposed significant changes to various county priority programs, and lawmakers in the House and Senate have begun circulating "Dear Colleague" letters in support of a number of these programs. In the coming months, NACo will work closely with counties and lawmakers in Congress to support county priorities in this year's appropriations process, including the following programs:

Tax-Exempt Status of Municipal Bonds

Although the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds will not be changed through the appropriations process, the president's budget has once again proposed a 28 percent cap on the value of

certain tax benefits, including the tax-exempt interest of municipal bonds. Any changes to the taxation of municipal bonds would likely occur through reforms to the tax code, which are not likely to occur this year, but proposals to cap or eliminate tax-exempt municipal bonds continue to pose a threat to counties.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development

The president's budget request would cut funding for rural development programs under USDA — a priority for the nation's rural counties — to \$2.5 billion, which is a \$456 million decrease from the FY14 funding level. The proposed cuts would be achieved in part through the elimination of Water and Waste Disposal and Community Facilities guaranteed loans (funded at \$50 million and \$75 million in FY14, respectively).

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) Program

The president's budget request proposes another year of mandatory funding for PILT, at \$442

million. In FY14, funding for PILT was not included in the omnibus appropriations measure (P.L. 113-76), creating great concern among counties who rely on PILT funding to offset losses in tax revenue due to the presence of federal land in their jurisdictions. Ultimately, FY14 PILT funding was included in the five-year farm bill (P.L. 113-79) signed into law in February. Counties continue to urge lawmakers to provide full funding for PILT in FY15 and beyond.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The president's budget proposes a \$200 million cut to CDBG, which is administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and assists counties across the country in improving housing and living conditions for low- and moderate-income residents. CDBG was funded at \$3 billion in FY14. Lawmakers in the House and Senate have recently circulated, with the support of county leaders, "Dear Colleague" appropriations letters urging a funding level of \$3.3 billion for CDBG in FY15.

State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP)

The president's budget has proposed the elimination of SCAAP, which is a Department of Justice program that reimburses state and local governments, including counties, for the costs of incarcerating undocumented immigrants. "Dear Colleague" letters circulated in the House have urged appropriations leaders to fund SCAAP at \$255 million or more in FY15.

Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act (SRS)

The president's budget proposes a five-year reauthorization of SRS, with mandatory funding. However, the proposal sharply reduces funding for the program over those five years, from roughly \$279 million in FY14 to \$101 million in FY18. The program was funded at \$300 million in FY13. SRS funding replaces lost revenues to counties and schools because of dramatically reduced timber harvests on federal lands.

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CDBG, HOME highlight National Community Development Week

By **DARIA DANIEL**
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Communities will recognize the importance of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program during National Community Development Week (CD Week), April 21–26. The week-long recognition brings together citizens, government officials, local businesses, the media and nonprofit agencies through events that highlight the work of the programs in the community and visual tours of funded projects. CDBG funds help counties address housing, community and economic development, water,

infrastructure and human service needs, and HOME assists counties in funding affordable housing for low-income families. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the CDBG program. To commemorate this, NACo designed a 40th anniversary CDBG poster and postcards that were given to members at the NACo Legislative Conference to use for CD Week. NACo encourages county officials to have activities in their counties during CD Week to help bring national attention to both the CDBG and HOME programs, particularly the need for increased program funding. Congress will be in recess that week, so please consider the following suggestions:

- invite your congressional members to your CD Week activities or to view a project funded by CDBG or HOME that week
- schedule a meeting with your congressional representatives in their district offices to discuss the need for CDBG and HOME program funding, and
- send their district offices information about CDBG and HOME-funded projects and how funding cuts in recent years have affected

your county. National Community Development Week started 28 years ago and initially focused solely on CDBG but has been expanded in recent years to focus on HOME too. Both programs have been cut in recent years — CDBG by 25 percent since 2010 and HOME by 45 percent — and National CD Week provides the opportunity for communities to invite congressional members and their staff to learn more about the

programs accomplishments of the programs and visit projects and meet people who have benefitted from the programs. The CDBG Coalition, a coalition of national organizations including NACo that represent local elected officials, CDBG grantees and local nonprofit organizations, is working to increase funding for both programs and many of its local agencies and organizations will participate in National CD Week activities.

County to open low income dental clinic

By **CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON**
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Access to dental care can be problematic for low-income residents across the country. Even those who qualify for Medicaid often have trouble finding the right provider who will accept their coverage. The Washtenaw County, Mich. Board of Commissioners recently voted to approve the opening of the Washtenaw County Dental Clinic in January 2015. The 11-seat clinic will provide care for up to 6,000 residents annually whose household income is twice the federal poverty level and who are either covered by Medicaid or do not have dental insurance. “With the help of our partners, we are thrilled to see this project become a reality,” said Ellen Rabinowitz, acting health officer. “This clinic will fill the void and the impact will be tremendous.” Washtenaw Public Health and Saint Joseph Mercy Health System along with the Michigan Community Dental Clinics will work together to operate the facility. Saint Joseph Mercy is providing the space for the clinic and the Washtenaw County Health Plan will contribute startup costs. Michigan Community Dental Clinics operate 22 dental offices throughout the state and will handle day-to-day operations of the new facility while working closely with Washtenaw County Public Health. “Community clinics run by county health departments can access additional federal matching funds to supplement the reimburse-

ments and provide a sustainable cash flow,” Rabinowitz added. Washtenaw County already has a number of community dental clinics that provide care to Medicaid patients, but the need in the county outweighs the available services. With the new clinic, care will be made more accessible to everyone. There are an estimated 18,000 Washtenaw County residents who are covered by Medicaid dental coverage, and an additional 16,000 are expected to become eligible through the Affordable Care Act. Renovations to prepare the space to become a dental clinic are expected to cost \$1.5 million, which will be provided by the Board of Commissioners. Commission Chair Yousef Rabhi said that the funding will come from public health reserves and other reserve funds. Michigan Community Dental Clinics is expected to pay back the \$1.5 million during a 15-year agreement making the project cost-neutral to the county over the course of the contract.


By **LISA SORONEN**
STATE AND LOCAL LEGAL CENTER DIRECTOR

The Supreme Court struck down aggregate limits on individual contributions to candidates for federal office, political parties and political action committees. The high court’s decision in *McCutcheon v. FEC* will likely impact the dozen or so states that place aggregate limits on individual campaign contributions to candidates for state office. A cursory glance at state campaign finance laws regulating local elections indicates that states generally have not adopted aggregate caps — meaning this decision will not affect contributions to local elections. Federal law allows individuals to make “aggregate” contributions of \$123,200 per two-year election cycle to candidates (up to \$48,600) and non-candidate committees (up to \$74,600). The plaintiff, Shaun McCutcheon, did not object to the \$5,200 “base” contribution limits to federal candidates. Rather, he wanted to contribute to more candidates but was prevented from doing so by the aggregate limit. In a 5–4 opinion written by Chief Justice John Roberts, the Supreme Court rejected the Federal Election Commission’s argument that the aggregate limits were permissible under

the First Amendment because they prevent quid pro quo corruption. “If there is no corruption concern in giving nine candidates up to \$5,200 each, it is difficult to understand how a tenth candidate can be regarded as corruptible if given \$1,801, and all others corruptible if given a dime.”

Critics of the court’s decision note that only the wealthy will benefit from it. Lawrence Hurley of Reuters reported that according to the Center for Responsive Politics fewer than 600 donors nationwide gave the maximum allowable amounts to federal candidates in 2012.

Profiles in Service



Harold Blattie
NACo Board Member
Montana Association of Counties

- Number of years active in NACo:** 17
- Years in public service:** 38
- Occupation:** executive director, Montana Association of Counties
- Education:** Northern College and Eastern Montana College
- The hardest thing I’ve ever done:** bury our adult son
- Three people (living or dead) I’d invite to dinner:** my grandparents whom I never knew
- A dream I have is to:** be a vagabond traveling the world aimlessly.
- You’d be surprised to learn that:** I am a member of MENSA.
- The most adventurous thing I’ve ever done is:** get married at 19 which was 44 years ago.
- My favorite way to relax is:** work. I love what I do. Next would be to travel.
- I’m most proud of:** my family and my life’s journey which has blessed me with a wonderful life.
- Every morning I read:** every online version of Montana newspapers.
- My favorite meal is:** meat. I am an unabashed carnivore.
- My pet peeve is:** hypocrisy.
- My motto is:** “hard work makes good luck.”
- My favorite movie is:** *Doctor Zhivago*.
- My favorite music is:** country.
- My favorite President is:** Ronald Reagan.

In Case You Missed It

News to Use From Past County News

► **Registration open for NACo’s Juvenile Justice Forum, May 7–9**

Join NACo in Cook County, Ill., May 7–9, as county leaders and experts from across the country discuss reforms that make the juvenile justice system more fair and effective, examples of where these reforms are working and how the MacArthur Foundation’s Models for Change Initiative can help your county improve public safety. To register, visit www.naco.org/programs/csd/Pages/Models-for-Change.aspx.

Counties blame big cable, telecom for thwarting broadband expansion

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and federal goals to have broadband widely available by 2020. Incumbent service providers have shied away from extending their fiber-optic networks, citing high costs and limited returns on investments.

"They want it both ways," said Dan Hamburg, a Mendocino County supervisor and former member of Congress. "They don't want to provide service and they don't want anybody else to provide service, because some day they *might* want to provide service."

A deal, supported by the counties, that promised reliable, fiber-optic Internet service to the region fell apart recently. The Golden Bear Broadband Project would have brought high-speed Internet to about 3,500 residents of the two counties and a total of 150,000 rural households in a 16-county region.

The death knell for the project was the state Public Utilities Commission's denial of a \$119 million grant from a special fund designed to expand broadband services to unserved and underserved areas.

Sonoma County Supervisor Efren Carrillo called it "a devastating blow." Hamburg was slightly more optimistic. "We're not done by any means," he said. "It's not a fatal blow because we're still just as determined to get broadband to people in our rural county."

Moorehead blames the incum-

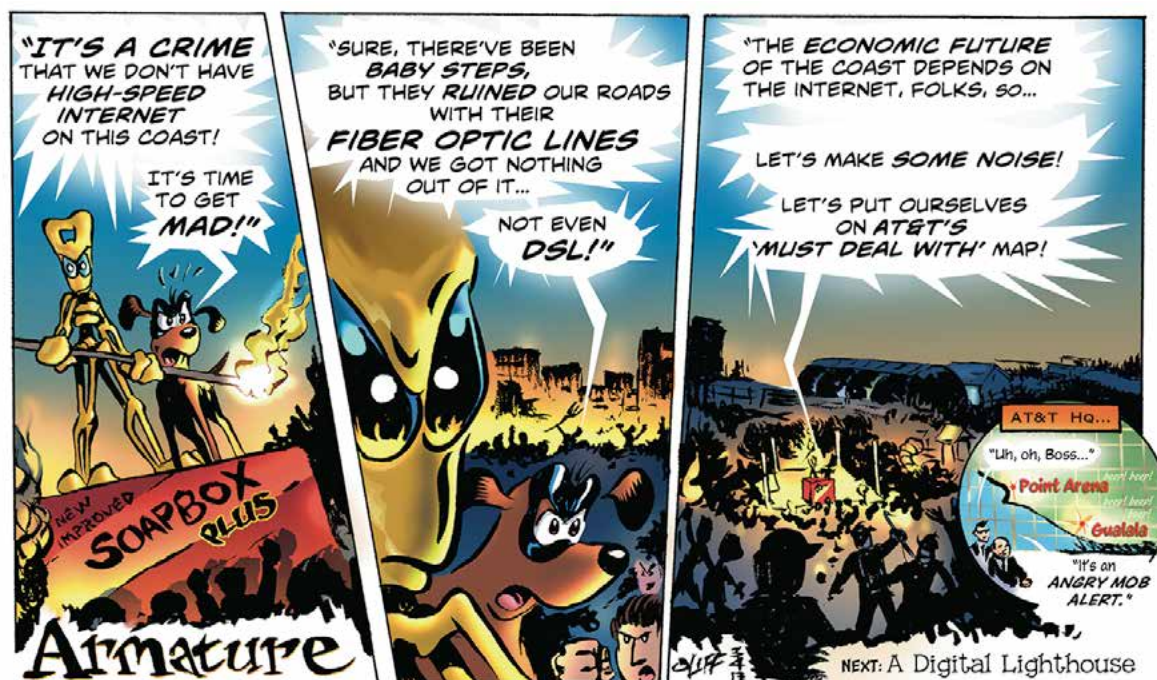
bent service providers, telephone and cable companies, for throwing up roadblocks. AT&T, Comcast and Verizon, among others, all opposed the project as unnecessary — using their proprietary coverage data to argue that the areas included in the proposed Golden Bear proposal already have access to broadband, said Steven Sharpe, an analyst for Sonoma County's Economic Development Board who worked on the project.

Even a 16-county region is challenged to overcome industry clout in Sacramento or Washington, D.C. Though the counties comprise about 27 percent of California's land mass, they represent only 2.5 percent of the state's population.

"The economics of building rural broadband networks are not attractive to private investors, and I understand that," Moorehead said. "I owned a business, and I didn't do things where I was going to lose money." But existing providers are also eligible to apply for state grants to expand access.

"They've chosen not to apply for the funds — fine," he said. "That means that others can apply. When we applied for the funds for the Golden Bear project, seven of these carriers filed formal challenges at the CPUC."

Both counties and their regional partners see broadband access as an economic development necessity. The region has a large agriculture



Images by Steve Oliff/Olyoptics, used with permission.

This cartoon, which the *Independent Coast Observer* ran last year, sums up sentiments in the "Mendonoma" region — coastal Mendocino and Sonoma counties in California — about the lack of broadband availability. At the time, the Golden Bear Broadband project held out hope of connecting residents of these largely rural, underserved counties.

industry, wineries, pasture land, forests and cattle, and tourism is big in the area. "A lot of these businesses are required to file reports online now," Sharpe said. "Many can't do it."

Added Hamburg: "If we don't get a broadband infrastructure our counties are never going to grow—in fact our counties are not even going to be able to sustain their existing population base."

Moorehead said despite Golden Bear's demise, the counties remain encouraged; as a result of their efforts, they've raised their profile with the CPUC and Legislature. "We've already accomplished something really big," he said. "We intend for this to move ahead, with or without CPUC funding."

Furthermore, Sharpe added that incumbent carriers are "beginning to show some interest ... because of

the noise that we've made and the noise that Mendocino County has made...." Other counties that would benefit are Butte, Colusa, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity and Yolo.

In Washington, FCC Chairman Thomas Wheeler has initiated several steps to "ensure that the Internet remains a platform for innovation, economic growth, and free expression." Some 20 states currently restrict the ability of local governments to create their own broadband systems.

A January federal appeals court ruling in *Verizon v. FCC* held that the FCC has "authority to enact measures encouraging the deployment of broadband infrastructure." Shortly thereafter, Wheeler said in a statement, "the Commission will look for opportunities to enhance

Internet access competition. One obvious candidate for close examination ... [is] legal restrictions on the ability of cities and towns to offer broadband services to consumers in their communities."

Moorehead is encouraged that the FCC "appears to be thinking outside the box." Meanwhile, rural northern California counties are more united than ever before in their efforts to gain wider access to broadband. Four counties, Marin, Mendocino, Napa and Sonoma have applied to the CPUC to form the North Bay-North Coast Broadband Consortium to advance broadband infrastructure in the counties.

"We'll continue to lobby both at the legislative level and at the CPUC level to serve our counties," Hamburg said. "We feel that that's a good partnership and that these four counties have a lot in common."

Online financial tools help state, local governments

Not sure what financing options are available to your small or mid-sized county? Want to learn about the latest regulations governing the municipal debt market? Then you need to meet EMMA.

EMMA is the nickname for the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board's (MSRB) Electronic Municipal Market Access website, a resource for evaluating municipal finance options, complying with disclosure requirements and communicating with investors.

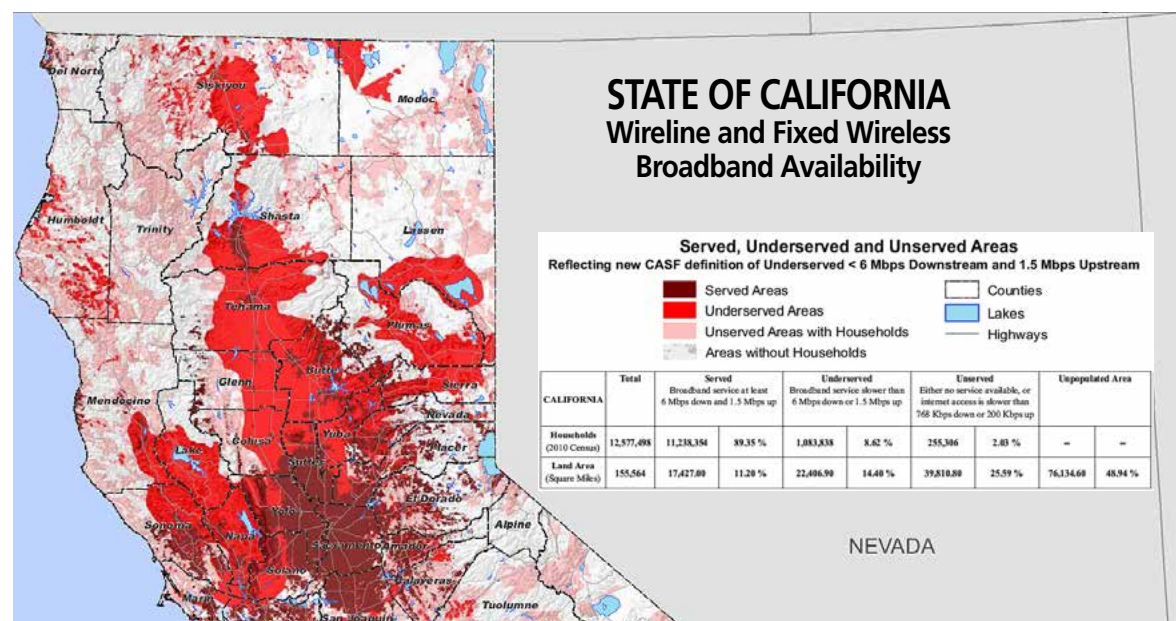
EMMA's online platform provides free public access to financial disclosure documents and trade data on more than 1.2 million outstanding municipal bonds. Municipal borrowers file their disclosures and other information on EMMA to make them available to investors.

MSRB's "Putting EMMA to Work for You" campaign seeks to raise awareness by small to mid-

sized municipal issuers about the importance of communicating with their investors on an ongoing basis. Through a combination of local seminars and webcasts, the MSRB plans to reach all 50 states over the next two years.

At each outreach session, the MSRB provides practical guidance and tips about how issuers can use the EMMA website to their advantage to communicate with investors and comply with their disclosure obligations. The MSRB's goal is to contribute to improved financial disclosure practices and enhanced transparency for the municipal market.

State and local governments and related organizations can schedule a session with their group by contacting Ritta McLaughlin, the MSRB's chief education officer, at 703.797.6714 or rmclaughlin@msrb.org.



This California Public Utilities Commission map shows that rural Mendocino and Sonoma counties are largely unserved or underserved by broadband Internet.



NACO National Association of Counties

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and Idea Marketplace

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America's PrepareAthon! encourages community resiliency

By GWEN CAMP

FEMA INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY
PREPAREDNESS DIVISION DIRECTOR



With disasters becoming a more frequent part of our lives, the importance of emergency planning and preparation has never been more evident.

Now is the time to keep preparedness in the forefront of everyone's mind by practicing simple, specific actions to stay safe before, during and after a disaster. That is the goal of America's PrepareAthon!

This national initiative, conducted every spring and fall, is a community-based campaign for action to increase local preparedness and resilience for disasters. The campaign offers individuals, organizations and communities free resources for discussing and practicing safety measures and actions to improve preparedness.

Leaders know that their communities are better prepared to withstand a disaster and can recover more quickly if the whole community is involved. Awareness campaigns, public education and more frequent severe weather have increased awareness, but still have

2014 FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Awards

FEMA has announced that the application period for the 2014 Individual and Community Preparedness Awards is now open. The awards highlight innovative local practices and achievements by recognizing individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions toward making their communities safer, stronger, better prepared and more resilient.

To be considered for this year's awards, all submissions must be received by May 30, at 11:59 p.m. EDT, and must feature program activities taking place between Jan. 1, 2013 and May 30, 2014. Winners will be announced in fall 2014, and will be FEMA's honored guests at a community preparedness roundtable event. The winner of the Preparing the Whole Community category will receive the John D. Solomon Whole Community Preparedness Award.

Please visit www.ready.gov/citizen-corps/citizen-corps-awards for more information about the awards and instructions for submitting an application.

not prompted many Americans to take action to increase their personal safety during a disaster or emergency.

Nearly 70 percent of Americans have not participated in a preparedness drill or exercise, aside from a fire drill at their workplace, school or home in the past two years. However, we have seen that communities are better prepared to withstand an emergency

and recover more quickly when everyone is involved. America's PrepareAthon! provides a hazard-specific focus and clear step-by-step guidance, using social networks to promote involvement and encourage widespread discussion about preparedness and support for local events.

This spring, America's PrepareAthon! activities will focus on preparing organizations and

individuals for tornadoes, hurricanes, floods and wildfires.

On April 30, join hundreds of thousands of people who have already committed to reshaping the meaning of preparedness. For this first national day of action, you too can participate by registering your community for America's PrepareAthon! and taking small steps to prepare for the disasters that impact your community.

Here's how to join:

- Register: Participate in *America's PrepareAthon!* at www.ready.gov/prepare

- Be Smart: Download guides to learn how to prepare for a tornado, hurricane, flood or wildfire

- Take Part: Plan activities and host a local event

- Prepare: Practice a drill or have a discussion about preparedness, and

- Share: Promote your activities, events and best practices with national preparedness community members.

As a local leader, you can coordinate or sponsor a community-wide event for America's PrepareAthon! Many local communities already hold safety fairs, community training and outreach events focused on preparedness

topics at various times of the year. Use the America's PrepareAthon! brand and materials to connect your event with the national campaign, or launch a new event focused on the hazard most likely to affect your residents. Local Citizen Corps Councils and Community Emergency Response Teams can leverage their networks to support a community-wide effort.

America's PrepareAthon! is an opportunity to highlight your daily work and enhance preparedness in your community.

While local implementation is not fully dependent on the efforts of a single office or agency, as a local leader, you play an essential role as a facilitator of community preparedness by bringing together community partners and motivating, coordinating and promoting participation.

You can take the lead in implementing America's PrepareAthon! and get your whole community on board. Together, let's help prepare the nation...one community at a time.

**For more information about America's PrepareAthon!, visit www.ready.gov/prepare and join the Twitter discussion @PrepareAthon, #PrepareAthon.*

Cyber forum attorney: Dispose of unnecessary data records — they are a needless risk

CYBER FORUM from page 1

Department of Homeland Security program lead Erin Meehan said it amounts to a confidence issue.

"Citizens, when they see their public website down, can be distressed," she said.

Attorney Lucie Huger, who works with data breaches, examined the legal side of protecting data, boiling it down to the practical act of minimizing risk.

"If you don't need the data any longer, dispose of it properly," she said, drawing allusions to the television show *Hoarders*. "Data maintained, stored and collected, is data at risk."

In the event of a secured-data breach, Huger advised counties to have an attorney assemble the necessary personnel. "You can keep discussions within attorney-client privilege," she said.

She emphasized the importance of reviewing contracts with IT vendors to ensure they have cyberliability insurance, data security personnel on staff and that any notices of data breaches that happen on their watch are approved

SpeedRead » » »

- » Cybersecurity measures are a cost of doing business
- » Install all software patches and updates
- » Train employees to follow cybersecurity protocol

first by the county.

Huger also advised counties to explain to all employees "who needs to know" and how important it is to tell them in the event of a cybersecurity breach. "Sometimes people sit on this information, hoping it will go away," she said. "The first 24-48 hours after a breach are important because you might have a chance to mitigate it. Have a clear policy where people are to go."

Exploring legalities of breaches involves defining "reportable breach," which may involve checking those criteria in several different states.

"States have different definitions for personal information, breach and notification timelines," she said. "And your job isn't over

after sending out a breach notice — you might have to set up call centers to handle inquiries, depending on the number of people who are affected."

On the technical side, Dolan warned against letting updates and patches lapse for content management systems.

"That's where we have seen more local governments get breached in the last 18 months than any other vector," he said.

In fact, updating already purchased software and installing patches does a lot of the work to protect users from exploitable bugs in that software.

When Story County, Iowa Supervisor Wayne Clinton asked how counties could justify spending money on cybersecurity versus public safety, Khanna Group managing partner Gopal Khanna responded that it should just be considered a cost of doing business.

Nebraska State CIO Brenda Decker sympathized.

"It's very hard to convince someone who is handing out money to give me some to protect against something that may or

may not be happening," she said. "Remember Y2K? When the bad thing didn't happen, we had to explain why it was important to continue."

Peoria County, Ill. CIO Mark Little spoke from experience about changing a culture of cybersecurity and said that buy-in from leaders was crucial to getting rank-and-file county employees to fall in line. He advocated establishing consistent password standards across all county departments.

"The best way to establish a new culture is to make sure it's part of the onboarding process for new hires," he said. "Let employees know why they need to protect data."

Marshall County, Iowa IT Director Scott Williams said counties need to strike a balance between security and employees' happiness. "You can be completely protected, but you won't be connected to the Internet," he said. "Will your citizens be happy if you aren't offering online services?"

He advised counties to inventory their data assets, limit IT privileges to what people need to do their jobs, and to work across

several levels of government — local, state and federal — to protect information systems, because "the enemy has more resources than your county does," he said. He stressed that state CIOs are great resources for county governments.

He also advised county leaders who have personal relationships with vendors to side with their own IT personnel in any disagreements.

In the end, Williams said, cybersecurity, behind its technical jargon, is basic risk management.

"You make risk-management decisions all the time, so just apply it to cybersecurity threats. And do it ahead of time, not when a threat exposes itself. People make bad, knee-jerk reactions when they wind up on the front page."

Khanna said that to provoke real cybersecurity innovation, counties should mine the experience of their front-line IT workers.

"The subject-matter experts," he said.

Dolan concurred.

"One of the ways you can help your IT directors is to put your support behind them, let them do what they need to do," he said.

Counties Lead the Way in Juvenile Justice Reform

Op-Ed

By CARMEN DAUGHERTY

POLICY DIRECTOR,
CAMPAIGN FOR YOUTH JUSTICE

Each year, approximately 100,000 youths are placed in adult jails and prisons across the country. Thousands of these youths sit in county detention facilities awaiting trial. The majority sit in cells for non-violent offenses.

In fact, the FBI's most recent arrest data shows that of the estimated youth arrests in 2011, only a small fraction — 4.6 percent — were for offenses that fall under the bureau's Violent Crime Index.

Over the last decade, states and counties have realized the harmful effects of placing kids in adult facilities. In the last eight years, over 20 states have enacted legislation to remove kids from the adult criminal justice system.

While state lawmakers have surely spearheaded the legislation removing youths from all stages of the adult criminal justice system, numerous counties, both large and small,

across all regions of the country, have rallied behind their lawmakers and these popular, bipartisan reforms.

Dangers Youths Face in Adult Jails and Prisons

Youths inside adult prisons and jails often experience a variety of dangers. These include physical and sexual abuse, mental health erosion, and a dearth of drug treatment and educational services.

The widespread consensus among correctional, mental health and juvenile detention organizations is that adult facilities are simply not equipped to safely detain youths.

Research shows that youths are not safe in adult detention facilities, and more than any other population, are at the highest risk of sexual victimization.

A recent Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) report, which surveyed adult jails and prisons across the country, states that youths ages 16 to 17 who reported sexual victimization by other inmates revealed that two-thirds were victimized more than once (65.5 percent).



Carmen Daugherty

An estimated 78.6 percent experienced physical force or threat of force. More than a quarter were injured in at least one of the incidents. And fewer than one in six (15.4 percent) reported an incident to someone at the facility, a family member or friend. Even more striking in the recent BJS report, among young inmates ages 16 to 17 who reported experiencing staff sexual misconduct, three-quarters (75.8 percent) were victimized more than once.

An estimated 43.7 percent said that staff used force or threat of force, and fewer than one in 10 (9 percent)

reported the staff sexual misconduct to someone at the facility, a family member or a friend.

One step taken by corrections staff to protect youths from the physical dangers of an adult corrections facility is to place them in solitary confinement. County jails are often faced with this dilemma because of the small size of their facilities, but solitary confinement puts youths at additional risk. In 2012, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry adopted a policy that states that no child should be placed in solitary confinement.

Youths face highly consequential harm in adult jails; harm that can cause severe, prolonged effects which ultimately interfere with the successful rehabilitation of a youthful offender.

NACO as a Leader in Juvenile Justice Reform

In 2013, NACO adopted the following policy statement: "NACO opposes trying and sentencing youth in the adult criminal court, except in the case of a chronic and violent of-

fender, and then only at the discretion of a juvenile court judge. It is harmful to public safety, as well as young offenders, to confine youth in adult jails, where they are eight times more likely to commit suicide, five times more likely to be sexually assaulted, and, upon release, much more likely to re-offend than youth in juvenile detention. NACO supports the reform of state laws that inappropriately send far too many youth under the age of 18, including first-time and non-violent offenders into the adult criminal justice system."

With such strong policy on this issue, counties are poised to lead efforts to reform the juvenile justice system, however, without ample resources funneled to the county level, it will be difficult to truly rehabilitate youths. States must recognize the importance of county-led reform and provide assistance such as fiscal resources to improve community-based options for court-involved youths and close-to-home initiatives. Counties can, and should, continue to lead the way in keeping youths safe and out of adult jails

COIN

COUNTY INNOVATION NETWORK
A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN NACO AND SOLUTIONIZE

NACO National Association of Counties

Is Your County an Innovation Hub?

- Does your County take risks by embracing new technology before most other counties do?
- Does your County implement innovative solutions to reduce the cost of county operations and enhance service delivery to its county residents?
- Does your County provide shared services to its municipalities and other counties?
- Does your County reduce knowledge risks for all other counties by enabling them to make more informed decisions to implement innovative solutions?

Then help use your expertise to answer County government's questions online by registering with the County Innovation Network (COIN) and **become a Helping Hand** at

www.countyinnovation.us.



County Innovations and Solutions

Iowa State Association of Counties

Health Care Privacy Law Begets Inter-county Network

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

When Iowa counties set up a computerized mental health records system to ensure patient confidentiality, they set themselves up to improve their mental health service delivery years down the road and prepare for a statewide reorganization they didn't see coming.

The passage of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Title II in 1996 prompted counties to set up their own Microsoft Access databases for their patient records, though each of the 99 counties' systems were different.

"There were 120,000 transaction slips coming through each month," said Robin Harlow, the Iowa State Association of Counties's (ISAC) technology and research manager.



“... Counties share the costs, they're getting a product at a much lower cost than if they had to purchase their own system..”

By 2003, ISAC built infrastructure for a central Web-based electronic transaction clearinghouse, one that could replace 99 disparate databases with a uniform system. Initially the clearinghouse was ahead of the mental health providers, and Harlow said the counties had to wait until providers caught up and upgraded their systems.

"Just to handle electronic exchanges of health information for counties," said Scott Williams, information technology director for Marshall County. "As they

went along, additional reporting requirements came up and they had to add pieces and it became pretty clear they had to create a more comprehensive system for managing mental health records."

ISAC received a total of \$1.1 million from a state grant, legislative appropriation, and money from a community case management technical assistance program to develop what became the fully functional County Services Network (CSN), which debuted in 2010 for 15 counties. By 2013, 96 counties were integrated into the system, and two more are scheduled to be locked in July 1. The remaining county, Polk, which will draw data from the system, but not export its own.

"Counties that didn't have the resources to implement the HIPAA security policies, by putting it at the state association level, they can do it all," Harlow said.

"Counties share the costs, they're getting a product at a much lower cost than if they had to purchase their own system. And we can provide greater security of that data; before we had all those 99 different confidential databases. We brought that all in-house, and we secured the barn, rather than trying to secure the farm."

Jill Eaton, who serves as the central point of coordination for Marshall County's mental health services, gave her input as the program developed and has seen significant improvements in what her department can do. She said her peers across the state have given the database a lot of support.

"It's pretty invaluable," she said. "It's enabled us to serve clients much better, because the time we spent doing administrative work before has gotten a lot shorter."

Patient portability has also improved dramatically.

"If we have a person from another part of the state, say Scott

County, that we're serving and we need to find a new provider, we can put in some criteria and find things immediately, whereas before we'd be calling and trying to find things out," she said. "We'll see that Scott County has entered the rate they'd contracted for his care. Before we had some providers charging different rates to different counties, a lot of phone calls back and forth. It's just really streamlined the system."

In addition to getting two of the final three counties on board, July 1 will mark Iowa's transition

from a county-provided mental health services delivery system to a regional system comprising several counties. That transition, Eaton said, will be dramatically easier thanks to the CSN.

"Without a whole lot of effort, we'll be able to join the new region," she said. "It will just change the records: You belonged to this county? Now you belong to this region. That would have just been a monumental task if we were going to do something like that with our original databases. I just don't think it could happen, honestly."

Research News

Keeping Up with County Population Trends

The U.S. Census Bureau released the 2013 county population estimates in March, allowing a closer look at population changes on a local level.

NACo's previous analysis of 2013 state and regional trends revealed that U.S. population continued to grow between 2012 and 2013 overall, but at a slightly slower rate than in the previous year. Population expansion at the county level shows wider variation within state or regional trends, often driven by the local economic climate.

The population slowdown happened in almost half of all the counties across the country. More than half of counties in 14 states — including Alaska, New Hampshire and Pennsylvania — experienced slower population growth in 2013 than in the previous year. Alaska had the largest share of boroughs undergoing a population slowdown, with 16 out of the total 19 witnessing a deceleration.

But counties saw population expansion in 2013 and at the lower end of growth rates, stabilization.

Consistent with regional findings, many of the fastest growing counties were counties in the South and Midwest. Most often, these are small counties (with fewer than 50,000 residents) with expanding oil industries; of the 30 fastest growing counties in 2013, nine of them are

located in North Dakota and 11 are in Texas.

Population trends in counties with declining populations showed signs towards stabilization. Almost 70 percent of counties that saw their population shrink between 2011 and 2012 declined less, and in some cases grew in 2013.

Looking at the bottom 50 counties, population contracted by 4 percent on average in 2012. However, the following year, the population in these 50 counties stopped declining, remaining virtually the same as in 2012. For the most part, these 50 counties are small counties scattered throughout the West, Midwest and parts of the South.

These local population trends show that counties are in the midst of rapid population changes.

While population growth comes on the heels of economic expansion, counties often cannot keep up with the needs of their communities and infrastructure due to the current structure of the county funding.

Counties are creatures of the state, so often funds for essential services such as maintenance of roads and bridges depend on state support. As county population patterns keep changing, counties have to adapt to deliver services to their residents.

(Research News was written by Anya Nowakowski, research associate.)

WORD SEARCH

Caroline County, Md. Facts

M Y C N T L U Y I Q R D S B D V R I W T
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AGRICULTURE (staple of the county's economy for more than 300 years)

CAROLINE EDEN (county named after)

DENTON (county seat)

DORCHESTER (south adjacent county)

GEORGE CALVERT (father of Caroline Eden)

KENT (northeast adjacent Delaware county)

QUEEN ANNE (northwest adjacent county)

SUSSEX (southeast adjacent Delaware county)

TALBOT (west adjacent county)

TEN (number of schools in county)

TIMES RECORD (local newspaper)

Created by Christopher Johnson



News From the Nation's Counties

► CALIFORNIA

• Elected officials in **LOS ANGELES COUNTY** and the California Legislature are launching a new push to **crack down on pimps** who sell underage girls and boys for sex and the customers who purchase their services.

County officials announced that signs would go up around the region over the next few months on billboards and public transit bearing messages like, "Teens sold for sex aren't prostitutes. They're rape victims."

The Board of Supervisors also voted to back four bills in the Legislature dubbed the "War on Child Sex Trafficking package," the *Los Angeles Times* reported.

• San Jose's dwindling police roster has **SANTA CLARA COUNTY** considering **offering the services of sheriff's deputies** to help temporarily cope with manpower shortages thanks to layoffs. The San Jose police department has dropped to 970 officers from 1,400 in 2011.

The Board of Supervisors will reach out to San Jose city officials to facilitate an effort that would use unspent police funds to pay for help from sheriff's deputies. The move would be to temporarily cope with the ongoing exodus until San Jose's own force is replenished.

The deputies could target areas of the city near stretches already patrolled by the county, such as transit lines and unincorporated pockets, according to the *San Jose Mercury News*. The city could also tap the county's investigators to help solve crimes, comparing it with the current contract agreement between county and city fire departments for bordering areas.

► COLORADO

• **LARIMER COUNTY**'s first retail **recreational marijuana store** opened for business April 16. Choice Organics received clearance from county building inspectors to occupy the store's newly constructed facilities in an unincorporated part of the county. The recreational side of the business will be in the same building as Choice Organics' medical marijuana center but will have a separate entrance, according to *The Coloradoan*.

Anyone age 21 and older may visit the recreational pot store. A state-issued medical marijuana registry card is needed to access the medical side of the business, which has been open since January 2011.



► WASHINGTON

Brides and grooms to-be, the **KING COUNTY** Wastewater Treatment Division has a deal for you. In a Facebook post, the agency said its Brightwater Center, part of its **wastewater treatment plant, is available to host weddings**.

"Need a place to party? With a full catering kitchen, state-of-the-art AV equipment, dance floor, ample parking, beautiful outdoor grounds, and room for up to 260 people, our LEED Platinum certified Brightwater Center has everything you need for your wedding reception or special event," the social media blurb proclaimed.

An indoor wedding event will set you back \$2,000 for an eight-hour rental, including set up and clean up. You can move it outdoors for one-fifth that amount, \$400.

Susan Tallarico, director of Brightwater Environmental Education & Community Center, told KIRO-TV that smells are not an issue. Brightwater Wastewater Treatment Facility is a "zero odor" facility: all of the processing is contained and there is no odor in nearby areas, she said.

• **SAN MIGUEL COUNTY** is the first local government in its region to move forward with the creation of a **regional transit authority**, one is possible by the end of the year if the county's five towns agree.

The authority would connect residents in Telluride, Mountain Village, Ophir, Norwood and Sawpit with a network of bus shuttles.

San Miguel County already offers a bus shuttle between Norwood and Telluride, but officials say the shuttle program has not fully addressed the county's need for a unified public transportation system between towns.

► KANSAS

Both chambers of the Kansas Legislature gave final approval to a bill that would **nullify city and county gun restrictions** and ensure that it's legal across the state to openly carry firearms. It's a measure the National Rifle Association sees as a nationwide model for stripping local officials of their gun-regulating power.

The measure goes next to Gov. Sam Brownback (R). He hasn't said whether he'll sign it, but he's a strong supporter of gun rights and has signed other measures backed

by the NRA and the Kansas State Rifle Association.

Kansas law doesn't expressly forbid the open carrying of firearms, and the attorney general's office has in the past told local officials that some restrictions are allowed. The Unified Government of **WYANDOTTE COUNTY** and Kansas City, Kan. has prohibited the practice, but the bill would sweep any such ban away, except to allow cities and counties to prevent openly carried weapons inside public buildings.

The measure also would prevent cities and counties from enacting restrictions on the sale of firearms and ammunition, or imposing rules on how guns must be stored and transported. Existing ordinances would be void, and local governments could not use tax dollars for gun buy-back programs.

► MARYLAND

HOWARD COUNTY and the Columbia Association will perform a **bike share feasibility study** and are seeking input not only on the idea but also where it might be the most effective.

An online survey and public

meeting will offer chances for input. Stations around the county would offer six to 20 bicycles available for public use at each site. Users could walk, ride or drive to the closest station, use a bike to get to their destination, then drop it off at another station or return it to the original spot.

Users of bike share programs typically become members, either for the day, month or year. Under some systems, the first 30 minutes of a ride are free, with a sliding scale for the minutes following, the *Baltimore Sun* reported.

► MICHIGAN

• A partnership involving the secretary of state and clerks in **MACOMB** and **KALAMAZOO counties** will offer expanded online **campaign-finance information for local candidates** and ballot questions.

The public already has access to campaign finance reports of statewide candidates through the secretary of state's website, but reports filed by local candidates in Kalamazoo County, for example, can only be seen by going through paper filings, the *Kalamazoo Gazette* reported. The program also will allow candidates for local office to file their campaign finance reports electronically instead of turning in hard copies.

• **OTTAWA COUNTY** parks officials are turning to goats to try to **get rid of invasive species** at several of its properties.

Starting in May, the parks department will use goats to graze on invasive species in several parks. It's believed to be the first project of its kind in Michigan, a county parks official told *The Grand Rapids Press*.

Goats are seen as a cost-effective alternative to herbicides, and allow for access to locations where mowers or machinery might not otherwise be able to reach. They may be able to eliminate 90 percent of invasive woody plants over a three-year period. The program will cost \$5,500 this year — a one-time \$3,000 cost for fencing along with another \$2,500 — that will be spent annually to lease the goats.

► NEW YORK

SUFFOLK COUNTY Executive Steve Bellone has signed into law a measure that **raises the legal age to buy tobacco products** and e-cigarettes from 19 to 21. It takes effect Jan. 1, 2015.

The law was sponsored by Legislator William Spencer, a physician,

and the County Legislature passed it on a vote of 10–8 in March.

Stores that violate the law will face fines of \$300 to \$1,000 for the first offense, *Newsday* reported, and up to \$500 to \$1,500 for second violations.

► OREGON

• County commissioners have until May 1 to enact one-year, **medical marijuana dispensary moratoriums** to comply with state law.

Senate Bill 1531, which legalized medical pot dispensaries in the state, also allows counties to enforce a 12-month ban that will expire May 1, 2015.

As of April 18, **COLUMBIA, DESCHUTES, DOUGLAS, JACKSON, LINCOLN, MALHEUR, MARION, UMATILLA, WHEELER** and **YAMHILL counties** had passed bans temporarily keeping dispensaries out of unincorporated areas of those counties.

• Six pesticide and plant biotechnology firms have amassed quite a campaign war chest — donating \$455,000 to fight a measure on the May ballot in **JACKSON COUNTY** to ban some **genetically modified (GMO) crops**.

The companies have a huge fundraising lead over supporters of the measure: Two political action committees, GMO-Free Jackson County and Our Family Farms Coalition, had raised \$102,368.

If the measure passes, the companies—including Monsanto, Bayer CropScience, BASF Plant Science and Dow AgroSciences — stand to lose money, opponents say. They add that it could set a precedent and provide momentum for statewide efforts to ban GMO agriculture or require GMO products to be labeled as such.

► UTAH

A judge has ordered the **DAVIS COUNTY** jail to stop **seizing money from inmates' personal accounts** to cover their lodging and medical expenses.

In his ruling, Judge Michael G. Allphin wrote that the payments — known as Pay to Stay — are a form of restitution that requires court authorization.

A public defender raised the issue about a year ago, after inmates started complaining that their personal accounts were being drained in so-called "account sweeps."

Davis County Attorney Troy

The H.R. Doctor Is In

Send Grandma Back to Work

Two major domestic policy debates are swirling around in the politics of America. Both reflect long-term issues as well as differing political philosophies. Both are relevant to each of us, not to mention the people next door. Each has practical impacts on our day-to-day lives, yet each has long-term and strategic importance. While both are being discussed simultaneously, there is a clear connection not often mentioned.

The first is the debate over Social Security and its future. This is a debate fired by predictions of impending financial failure of the system and how that will affect

retirement and the lives of millions of Americans. Demographics reflect there are fewer workers able to support the system's economics. Likewise, we get to live longer, that is, if we can afford our drugs.

The lack of any clear decisive action and the presence of difficult options, like raising the retirement age or reducing cost-of-living increases, has provoked a dearth of action in Congress and contributed to the popularity of the phrase "kicking the can down the road."

The second issue is the debate over raising the minimum wage from \$7.25 per hour to more than \$10 per hour. Here the debate, which

“ For about two-thirds of all elderly women on average, over 60 percent of their total family income is derived from their Social Security benefits.

also affects millions of people at the very low end of the earnings ladder, centers around how a single person, let alone a family head, can live out the American dream at about \$15,000 a year, assuming they work a 40 hour week, 52 weeks per year. Of course \$7.25 an hour is the gross wage. Subtracted out of that amount comes such deductions as income tax and, ironically, Social Security contributions.

On the other side of the debate is the dispute as to whether raising the minimum wage would reduce the number of new jobs created and therefore harm the larger economy. Would it cause many employers to freeze hiring, cut back on future

expansion plans, or perhaps go out of business?

Let us put the two together in a search for a solution. About one in 10 Americans over 65 is considered poor. This means that their earnings are below the poverty threshold of about \$11,000 per year for an individual or \$14,000 for a couple.

Social Security is absolutely critical to the economic survival of these millions of senior citizens — especially female senior citizens. About 30 percent have virtually no income other than Social Security. These elderly women receive about \$13,100 per year.

For about two-thirds of all elderly women on average, over 60 percent of their total family income is derived from their Social Security benefits.

Women who are single, perhaps widowed, divorced or never married, are even more reliant on Social Security than their average friends. Clearly, Social Security has been, and will remain America's primary tool to raise people above the minimum threshold of poverty and apply

to them a degree of dignity in their senior years.

Those involved in the debate over cutting Social Security benefits might well consider how they might live their lives if their income was limited to the amount they might receive in benefits. Perhaps if the pay of members of Congress were restricted to a total income equal to Social Security benefits, the tenor of the discussion would change dramatically.

The same is true of the minimum wage \$15,000 per year. Assuming a person works only one job and only 40 hours — which for many people is an understatement of their situation — their \$15,000 in gross income would fall dramatically to probably not too far from the defined threshold of poverty. Even at 10 dollars an hour, 40 hour work weeks, and working 52 weeks a year, the gross income of these minimum wage earners would “skyrocket” to about \$20,800. Imagine life for millions of senior citizens receiving Social Security if they had to find

See H.R. DOC page 20

What's in a Seal?

► Caroline County, Md.
www.carolinemd.org



Caroline County was created in 1774 from parts of Dorchester and Queen Anne's counties. The county derives its name from Lady Caroline Eden, wife of Maryland's last colonial governor, Robert Eden.

The county is one of only a handful of counties in the U.S. that has existed for more than 300 years solely dependent on an agriculturally based economy. This distinction along with being landlocked provided unique challenges for its seemingly isolated residents.

The seal is oval in shape and features parts of the Calvert coat of arms assigned to George Calvert of Yorkshire, England. George's son, Cecil, was granted the charter to Maryland in June 1632, and the family coat of arms thus became closely associated with the Province of Maryland.

The scroll and motto in Latin means “Land of Pleasant Living,” indicative of Caroline County's welcome to all, as established in planter's homes and manor houses. The meaning of the bars in the shield: “The six vertical pieces (or pales), into which the Calvert Shield is divided would represent palings for palisades, and constitute the heraldic symbol of a stockade or fortification, which would be appropriate to one who had fortified a town or successfully stormed a hostile fort. The diagonal band, or bend, was held to represent either a swordbelt or a sealing ladder.”

The crown immediately above the shield is an earl's coronet. The full-face position of the helmet above the coronet indicates the exercise of government by an absolute ruler over a free state or country. Above the helmet is a ducal coronet from which rises two spears or lances with pennons attached. The pennons display the Calvert colors, gold and black.

The present seal and flag of Caroline County were officially adopted by the Caroline County Commissioners on July 3, 1984.

The history of the Caroline County Seal was written by the late Max Chambers. Chambers was editor of the *Preston News and Farmer* and longtime member of the Caroline County Historical Society.

(If you would like your county's seal featured, please contact Christopher Johnson at 202.942.4256 or cjohnson@naco.org.)

Chelan County sues Bank of America

NEWS FROM *from page 18*

Rawlings said that by seizing the payments without a court order and even before sentencing, inmates were denied the chance to object to that part of their punishment or seek exemptions for poverty.

The practice began after a 2007 state law empowered counties to collect payments from inmates to shift jail costs away from taxpayers, according to the *Salt Lake Tribune*.

► PENNSYLVANIA

ALLEGHENY COUNTY has launched a free, **non-emergency notification service** that allows people to sign up for alerts on county topics in a variety of formats.

Users of Allegheny Alerts can sign up for information from the Parks Department, county nursing homes and, eventually, from additional departments.

“Our goal is to provide information that can help you better plan your workdays, weekends, holidays and outings,” County Executive Rich Fitzgerald said. “This is also accessible on smartphones and, yes, there's an app for it too.”

To register, users are asked to provide some basic information that will be kept confidential and not used for any other purpose. Once an account is created, users can choose their interests and how — and where — they want the information sent.

► WASHINGTON

CHELAN COUNTY is suing Bank of America, its former bank, in an attempt to recover more than \$600,000 the county lost in an **international cyber-theft** last year.

Hackers believed to be based in Russia or Central Asia stole pass-

word information from Cascade Medical Center in Leavenworth — a nonprofit hospital for which the county handles accounts, the Associated Press reported.

In a lawsuit, filed in federal court in Spokane, the county claims that Bank of America processed at least \$603,000 in unauthorized payments even after the treasurer had informed it of the breach.

(News From the Nation's Counties is compiled by Charles Taylor and Charlie Ban, staff writers. If you have an item for News From, please email ctaylor@naco.org or cban@naco.org.)

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Financial Services News

New Contracts Help Counties Save

Counties have even more ways to save money through several new contracts recently awarded through U.S. Communities Government Purchase Alliance.

Offender-monitoring products, services and solutions are now available through BI Incorporated.

This exclusive contract was awarded through a competitive solicitation process conducted by the City and County of Denver. Through this new contract, BI offers location monitoring equipment and services, full-service electronic monitoring offices, installer programs, offender

reentry programs and offender-pay programs to support agency staff. These products and services enable agencies to curb future crime, reduce recidivism, enhance public safety and conserve local resources.

As a way to maximize savings on traffic and parking solutions,

TAPCO, Traffic & Parking Control Co., Inc., has been awarded a three-year contract to provide traffic control products through U.S. Communities. This exclusive contract was awarded through a competitive solicitation process conducted by lead public agency Barron County, Wis. The contract delivers solutions and services that will help counties maximize savings on traffic and parking expenditures, make roadways safer and drive procurement efficiency. Through this contract, TAPCO provides over 12,000 discounted products along with custom services to meet the traffic and safety needs of counties.

Another new contract, through Kronos, helps control labor costs, minimize compliance risk and improve workforce productivity. Kronos is a leader in workforce management solutions that enable organizations to more effectively manage their largest and most controllable expense—their employees. The workforce management contract delivers an automated solution for tracking employees' time, attendance, absences, schedules, HR and payroll so counties can control labor costs and minimize risk. This exclusive, three-year contract was

awarded through a competitive solicitation process conducted by lead public agency Harford County, Md. Public Schools.

U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance is a government purchasing cooperative that reduces the cost of goods and services by aggregating the purchasing power of public agencies nationwide. U.S. Communities provides world-class procurement resources and solutions to local and state government agencies, school districts (K-12), higher education and nonprofits.

NACo is a sponsor and exclusive founder of U.S. Communities. More than 55,000 government entities in the United States are registered to use the program. For nearly 20 years, U.S. Communities has provided significant hard-dollar savings on commodities and services, as well as soft-dollar savings on avoided administrative costs to public agencies nationwide.

For more information, please visit the U.S. Communities website www.uscommunities.org or contact Sarah Lindsay at slindsay@naco.org.

(Financial Services News was written by Sarah Lindsay, marketing specialist, NACo Financial Services.)

Pay Congress the minimum wage

H.R. DOC from page 19

and pay the full market price for health insurance, not to mention other essentials of life like food, shelter and utility bills.

Oops, sorry. I just started mentioning this other domestic policy subject of expanded health insurance. To do so only adds to the continuing policy debate on medical care for uninsured and poor people. I apologize, although

in reality these three subjects are tightly woven together.

Perhaps the tenor of the minimum wage debate in Congress would also change if members couldn't rely on any income of more than the current \$7.25 minimum wage. I suspect it would.

Taking all of this into consideration, it would probably make sense to merge the two issues together. Here is a modest suggestion: create a national mandate that every

grandma and grandpa receiving Social Security benefits close to the poverty line be required to go back to work at minimum-wage jobs. Imagine the value of boosting full-time working grandma's income from the Social Security average to about \$20,000 dollars annually. It is likely that we could also create a new federal department to enforce the mandate. It could be called the Department of Granny Management. No employee in the department, including the Secretary of Granny Management, would be allowed to earn more than the minimum wage.

Phil Rosenberg

Phil Rosenberg
The HR Grandpa • www.hrdr.net

NACo on the Move

► NACo Officers and Officials

• Lemhi County, Idaho Commissioner and WIR Board Member **Robert Cope** has been appointed by the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture to the Bureau of Land Management's National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board. Cope, former chair of the Environment, Energy and Land Use Steering Committee and regional representative on NACo's executive committee, will serve a three-year term for natural resources management.

• NACo President **Linda Langston** spoke about legislative priorities and her resilient counties presidential initiative at the Utah Association of Counties Management Conference in Salt Lake County April 16 and the Association County Commissioners of Georgia Annual Conference in Chatham County April 13.

► Coming Up

• **Andrew Goldschmidt**, director of membership marketing, will be exhibiting on behalf of membership recruitment and retention at the Illinois Association of Counties Spring Conference in Sangamon County April 28–30.

On the Move is compiled by Christopher Johnson



Robert Cope

NETWORK WITH NACo

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Find out how this 4-time Iditarod champion started out in the world of sled racing and how a fascination at a young age led to where he is today, educating our youth on the humanitarian care of animals.



Check out the latest schedule and Plan your participation at www.naco.org!