

NACO National Association of Counties

CountyNews

The Voice of America's Counties

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'9/11 counties' to mark 10th anniversary



Photo courtesy of Nassau County, N.Y.

The 9/11 Memorial in Nassau County, N.Y.'s Eisenhower Park will be the focal point of one of the county's remembrance events, on Sept. 7, marking the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Ten years after the day it seemed all hell broke loose, county officials and residents of three communities deeply impacted by the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks will pause, reflect and remember.

"In so many ways, it's hard to believe it's been 10 years, in other respects it seems like it was not that long ago," said Pamela Tokar-Ickes, chair of the Board of Commissioners in Somerset County, Pa., where United Flight 93 crashed near Shanksville.

In Arlington County, Va., where

the Pentagon was attacked, Fire Chief Jim Schwartz echoes that sentiment: "It is simply amazing to me that we find ourselves this distant from the event already." A deputy chief at the time, he served as incident commander at the Pentagon in the days following the attack.

And yet for both, in their minds, the day is as vivid as if it were yesterday.

Tokar-Ickes recalls standing on an overlook, viewing the debris field from Flight 93, and contemplating the enormity of the attacks on America. At that still-early stage, it was estimated that as many as

20,000 died at the three attack or crash sites.

"Just feeling numb, just not really believing or absorbing what I was witnessing with my eyes, let alone absorbing what this meant to us as a country and the magnitude of it," she said — that and the "beautiful clear blue sky. I will never forget that."

As Schwartz looked at the "gash" in the west side of the Pentagon that day, where his department's personnel were the first non-military units to respond, he thought about the "juxtaposition" of the symbol of America's military might contrasted with the image its "vulnerability."

In both counties, and in Nassau County, N.Y., the weekend of

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Miami-Dade launches storm surge simulator

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Hurricane winds may churn, but it's the storm surge that can be even deadlier. That's the point Miami-Dade County, Fla. emergency officials want to drive home with a new online Storm Surge Simulator to help residents visualize how they might be affected by various projected surge

levels. Officials chose Aug. 24, the 19th anniversary of the devastating Hurricane Andrew, to launch the site.

Using the website, residents can type in their address, pick the intensity of the hurricane (Category 1–5), click a button for person, home or villa, and the simulator will show, graphically and numerically, the depth of surge that might be expected. Or they can click on a color-coded map of their neighborhood to obtain the same result.

"There's still a lot of people living in evacuation zones who think evacuation orders have something to do with the category of storm or wind speed and things like that," said Curt Sommerhoff, director of Miami-Dade's Department of Emergency Management. "And

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Food, food, everywhere, but few healthy choices

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Apostrophes in grammar indicate possession, and so the Hardee's, McDonald's and Wendy's restaurants in central Mecklenburg County, N.C.'s "food desert" would seem to "own" the territory. If residents aren't eating fast food from them, they're eating something very nutritionally close.

A diet like that, doctors and public health researchers agree, is a major contributor to obesity and

other diet-related health problems.

The Mecklenburg County Community Food Assessment, compiled by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in 2010, found that almost 73,000 of the county's 919,628 residents lived in "food deserts" in the county — in low-income census tracts where a substantial number of residents have limited access to a supermarket or large grocery store.

The federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) defines

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QuickTakes

Counties with the Top Colleges

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- 3 • Orange County, N.Y. — United States Military Academy
- 4 • Hampshire County, Mass. — Amherst College
- 5 • Santa Clara County, Calif. — Stanford University

Source: Forbes, 2011



Letters to the Editor

IHS refuses to pay bills as county's hospital may close

The Indian Health Service (IHS) has refused to pay bills for emergency medical services provided to Indian patients at the Bennett County Hospital in rural Bennett County, S.D. citing a lack of funding.

Charlene Red Thunder, director of Aberdeen Area Indian Health Service, has stated that IHS is not responsible for payment to Bennett County due to federal guidelines that make IHS the payer of last resort. She also says those patients could have gone to the Pine Ridge IHS Hospital for their medical care.

IHS currently owes the Bennett County Hospital over \$880,000 for the past two years and has refused to pay any of it.

If the federal government refuses to provide adequate funding, Bennett County Hospital will be forced to close leaving this rural area with no emergency medical and ambulance services. The closest emergency medical care facility in South Dakota is about 100 miles away.

Bennett County Hospital is a private nonprofit hospital, and its board of directors and the Bennett County Board of Commissioners have requested funding for IHS through the South Dakota congressional delegation for the past 10 years or more. The current crisis occurred when the hospital could not make payroll in May 2011 due to a lack of cash flow.

The South Dakota Department of Health, under the direction of Gov. Dennis Daugaard, provided an emergency grant to make payrolls on a temporary basis, but that is just a stop-gap measure to keep the facility open until Congress makes changes in the IHS budget process.

It is now critical that the Congress address this issue this budget session, or the emergency health services in this rural area will close increasing the risk

of death in emergencies. The Bennett County Hospital can no longer continue to subsidize IHS and the federal government.

Bennett County gave up the hospital many years ago when it could no longer afford to fund it. The hospital is the tip of the iceberg. Bennett County and many other rural counties adjacent to Indian reservations contain tax-exempt Indian trust lands. These trust lands are not on the reservation, but in the adjacent county where Indian people are county citizens and are provided local government services like everyone else. Today, about 45 percent of the population of Bennett County is Indian people living on tax-exempt land.

While these people are our neighbors, friends and relatives, the tax-exempt trust lands provide no property tax income for the county. The county is losing about 40 percent of its tax revenue and is facing a financial crisis of its own. The county can no longer help the hospital financially.

Under an 1831 Supreme Court decision, the federal government is responsible for the needs of Indian people and must now pay its bills, and no longer expect poor rural counties and local medical facilities to subsidize the federal budget. We are not looking for a handout, we are asking the federal government to pay its bills.

If the local hospitals in your county are also suffering losses due to non-payment by IHS, now is the time to contact your congressional delegation and demand that the Congress address this issue and re-prioritize the Bureau of Indian Affairs budget to make Indian health care and IHS payments for emergency health care a top priority.

— Chairman Rolf Kraft
Board of Commissioners
Bennett County, S.D.

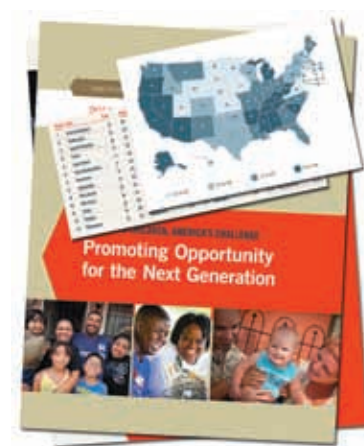
Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2011 Kids Count data book available

By MARILINA SANZ
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count data book is practically the bible on the state of the Nation's children. The annual Kids Count release features 10 key indicators and multiple sub-categories. It compares data across states, but not data from local jurisdictions, which is compiled by the states often using different reporting criteria.

The 2011 Kids Count data shows that of the 10 key indicators, five improved since 2000, three worsened and two could not be compared to 2000 because of changes in the American Community Survey questionnaire. The most significant improvement from 2000 to 2009 was in the number of teens neither in school nor high school graduates, which changed from 11 percent to 6 percent. Not surprisingly, the indicator that worsened the most was the number of children living in poverty, which changed from 12.3 million to 14.7 million.

This year the Kids Count book also included unemployment and foreclosure indicators. The data show that 11 percent of children



had at least one unemployed parent in 2010 and 4 percent were affected by foreclosures in the last four years.

The Data Book ranks states based on their performance across the 10 indicators of child well-being. New Hampshire, Minnesota, and Massachusetts ranked highest, while Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi ranked the lowest. The eight states with the biggest improvements in their rankings between 2000 and the most recent years of data are New York, Maryland, Connecticut, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oregon, Virginia and Wyoming.

The five states with the biggest

drops in their rankings are South Dakota, Maine, West Virginia, Hawaii and Montana.

Regionally, New England states fared very well, with four of the top 10 states. Southern states comprised eight of the lower 10 which includes New Mexico and Nevada. Virginia was the highest-ranked southern state at number 14.

The percentage of children aged 10 to 17 who are either overweight or obese is one subset of health indicators. The latest data used are from 2007, with 32 percent of U.S. children (36 percent of boys, 27 percent of girls) in that category. Minnesota had the lowest rate with 23 percent, and Mississippi had the highest with 44 percent.

This year, NACo President Lenny Eliason's key initiative will focus on "Healthy Counties," a county-by-county public awareness campaign to promote healthy living and lifestyle choices in communities across the country.

The full report can be found online at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>.

NACo rural leaders meet with White House officials

Brookings County, S.D. Commissioner Don Larson and Linn County, Iowa Supervisor Lu Barron were invited by the White House to participate in the Aug. 16 White House Rural Economic Forum in Peosta, Iowa. Larson chairs NACo's Agriculture and Rural Affairs Steering Committee, while Barron is the vice chair of NACo's Rural Action Caucus.

During the event, President Obama announced new initiatives to promote economic growth in rural communities including helping rural small businesses access capital, expanding rural job search and training services, and increasing rural access to health care workers and technology.

Obama was joined at the forum by Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, SBA Administrator Karen Mills and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, who also serves as chair of the White House Rural Council.

Larson participated in the Inno-

vation and Energy breakout session with about 20 farmers, ranchers and other officials. Vilsack moderated the discussion and Obama joined the session.

"This was an excellent opportunity to put forward NACo's rural development priorities directly to the president and his key Cabinet members and staff that are working on rural economic development initiatives," Larson said.

He spoke directly to the president and thanked him for creating the White House Rural Council. He also thanked Vilsack for his strong working relationship with NACo. He encouraged both leaders to continue to work with NACo to identify ways that the federal government can make rural development programs more flexible and user friendly, so that rural leaders can fund local priorities based on their economic strengths.

"NACo continues to be a national leader in working to raise

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In My Opinion ...

The Value of Public Service

By RANDY REID
COUNTY MANAGER
ALACHUA COUNTY, FLA.

We find ourselves today as public sector leaders working in an era of dynamic global economics, stormy political discourse and facing yet another crisis in confidence in our public institutions. Memories of 9/11 sacrifices of public servants have faded as we debate the causes of our national afflictions, diminished financial security and face the current rhetoric frequently condemning the public sector. That said, I continue to feel an undiminished pride in working as a professional in local government. I know my jurisdiction, like the ones many of you work for, have a brighter economic future and are kinder and gentler places because of the personal investment and labor of public employees.

My jurisdiction, perhaps like yours, is blessed with innovative, dedicated and creative public employees, and our community is recognized by the innovation in our programs and excellence of our public academic and health care institutions. Thanks to the actions of our citizens thru public programs, the natural beauty of our countryside remains intact and protected and our economy is rebounding. The collaboration

and work of many people makes these community achievements possible: people in both the private and public sectors. It is folly to think that only the private sector strives for obtainment of excellence or causes our communities to achieve it. The role of public employees and the value of public service is vital to our republic and the success of our communities.

Public sector employees are not the “non producers” of the currently popular Ayn Rand’s *Atlas Shrugged* worldview. The public sector serves a threefold vital role as the provider of public goods, guardians of the commons and promoters of a civic life essential to our communities. Private sector organizations while effective community partners, can be trusted to desire to do so only to the extent they can commercialize it for profit or create positive branding through their actions.

Early in my career as a manager I was influenced by a book, *Reinventing Government*, not with just the examples of change-oriented, transformational management I had learned under my first boss and coauthor, Ted Gaebler, but most of all by five principles outlined in the preface of the book. This book, critical of government bureaucracies, stated that first, as practitioners, we must strive to preserve in this era our fundamental belief in democratic government. Secondly, we must believe that a civilized society cannot

The public sector serves a threefold vital role as the provider of public goods, guardians of the commons and promoters a civic life essential to our communities.

function effectively without “effective” government and we make that effectiveness a reality each day to the degree we can attain it. Thirdly, we must believe that those dedicated employees around us working in government are not the problem as much as the bureaucratic systems in which we are to this day forced to work in that are the principle problem with government. Fourthly, we must believe that neither traditional liberalism nor conservatism has much relevance to the problems that our governments face today and there exists a need for pragmatic and non-ideological solutions. Finally we must commit to provide equal opportunity for all of our citizens to prosper and reach their potential. These thoughts continue to serve me now in this time of public criticism of local government and continue to motivate me through periods of frustration in my public service.

Response to public sector critics must be viewed as a teachable moment and a time for civic education. In our comments and speeches, we need to recognize with humility our organizational shortcomings and explain those essential inefficiencies within public processes that represent the conflicting yet important values we adhere to as a democracy. Most importantly, we must boldly and unabashedly defend the public sector’s role in defending the “commons” and the competency and value of those individuals employed or called to public service.

I suggest that public employees, whether as a commissioner sitting at the dais or a member of a road construction crew, devote their lives to making local places better places for all our citizens. They are not nameless, faceless bureaucrats living in faraway places. They are your neighbors and your friends. They sit next to you in your place of worship. They have families. They pay taxes. They are the customers in your businesses and the volunteers in your favorite organizations. They are fellow citizens of our community, and it is their honor and passion to serve you. They do not grow rich in doing so, as a narrowing minority continues to do in the private sector, but they serve you well and deserve your respect.

In my experience, our public sector peers start off each morning

with a totally different set of fundamental questions in their minds than our private sector counterparts in community life, who must measure their profit margins and commercial viability. Many of our public employees start every day with the well-being of the entire community in mind and specific issues essential to community prosperity and health with which they must grapple. Sometimes these seem like Don Quixote assaults on society’s broken institutions. They ask important questions and develop strategies to solve increasingly complex community problems.

Questions considered by the private sector are tangential or seek a nexus to community problems only if they can commercialize the opportunity, profit off the commons or assist their corporate branding by association to community building efforts. Corporate loyalty to a specific place is a dying value in today’s global or absentee businesses ownership.

Public employees ask humane questions such as if anyone is going hungry today? Are citizens in danger because of temperature extremes? How can we help keep citizens healthy? Is someone in despair because of illness but

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Advice on surge-predicting tool is available for the asking

STORM SURGE from page 1

truly, they’re all built around storm surge, that most dangerous and damaging part of a hurricane. And we just think this really helps us send that message home.”

More than a half a million people live in Miami-Dade County’s three Hurricane Evacuation Zones, county officials said — 20 percent of the county’s 2.5 million residents.

The site cost was \$2,800 for design time and project coordination, which was funded with a state grant, a county spokeswoman said.

Data for the simulator comes from the National Hurricane Center’s (NHC) Sea, Lake and Overland Surges from Hurricanes (SLOSH) computerized model. It uses data on surge levels such

as estimated heights and winds — based on forward speed, track, pressure and size, according to NHC’s website.

Miami-Dade’s surge simulator includes data only for the county, but several neighboring counties have already called to ask about the system, officials said.

Sommerhoff is quick to point out that residents shouldn’t rely on the site to make evacuation decisions. Before they can launch the site, visitors are greeted with a disclaimer that reads, in part: “This website should not be relied upon to make decisions about protecting persons or property from flooding or storm surge, and should NOT be used to determine whether to evacuate....”

“What we don’t want people to use it for is thinking that they can go on there and go, ‘Oh, 3 feet of



A home in Miami-Dade County, Fla., located in the Leisure City area (red zone on map), could experience a 6-ft. storm surge from a Category 5 hurricane, according to the surge simulator.

storm surge, I can stay home and deal with that.”

“We want people to always listen to public safety officials with

regards to if there’s an evacuation order and you’re in an evacuation zone, we want you to leave,” Sommerhoff said.

For other hurricane-prone communities interested in a tool such as this, he said “feel free to reach out to us.” ... “If we can share it or provide the resources to others who are interested in it, we’d be glad to do that.” The county’s Emergency Management Department can be reached by email at eoc@miamidade.gov.

The Storm Surge Simulator was made possible through a partnership between the county’s Department of Emergency Management and Florida International University’s International Hurricane Research Center and School of Computing and Information Sciences.

Hurricane Andrew was a Category 5 hurricane when it hit south of Miami-Dade in 1992, causing \$27 billion in damage and 23 deaths. The Atlantic hurricane season runs through Nov. 30.

Jail program restores competency, sees savings

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Yavapai County, Ariz. came up with a cheaper, faster way to restore the competency of jail inmates deemed unable to assist in their own defense, after the state shifted the responsibility — and costs — to all counties.

County sheriff, jail and legal staff developed an in-house restoration to competency (RTC) program last year, using their existing contracted correctional health provider. Through intergovernmental agreements, several other Arizona counties participate in the program, paying Yavapai for the services.

The county's former sheriff, Steve Waugh, who retired recently, received a County Courthouse Award from NACo at this year's Annual Conference in Portland,

Ore. for his role in developing the program.

"We have been able to diminish the impact of the RTC cost-shift for our county and also help other local counties," Waugh, who was traveling and couldn't be reached for comment, said in a statement earlier this summer. The county now provides RTC services to Mohave, Coconino, Navajo, La Paz, Yuma, Graham, Gila and Pinal counties, according to a county official, at a fraction of the cost the state charged.

Sheriff Scott Mascher succeeded Waugh and was also involved in starting the program. "We were spending over \$1 million a year trying to get this mental health treatment at Arizona State Hospital" (ASH), he said. "By doing this, we save a tremendous amount of money and get just as good treatment if not better for the inmate — the patient."

SpeedRead » » »

- » County saves 60% on costs of restoration to competency
- » Costs dropped from \$671 per day to \$240 daily
- » Yavapai worked with private correctional health provider

Previously, it cost the county \$671 per day for ASH, a state mental hospital, to provide RTC assessments and services. Using Wexford Health Sources, Inc., the county's correctional health services provider since 2003, the county now pays \$240 per day, and it charges other counties \$250 a day, including a \$10 administration fee.

"It's about a 60 percent savings," said Jack Fields, the deputy county attorney who provides legal counsel to the sheriff's office and helped create the program.

In addition to saving money, the new program also saves time. It's about a 100-mile drive from Prescott, the Yavapai county seat, to Phoenix where ASH is located. Inmates transported there had to be accompanied by two deputies, according to Darius Holmes, Wexford Health's vice president of strategic development, and it could take 60

to 90 days per inmate for ASH for each restoration case. Those assessments and services are now being provided locally in as few as 45 to 50 days, he said.

The state transferred RTC duties to the Arizona's two largest counties, Maricopa and Pima in 2005 and 2007, respectively. And in 2009, program costs were shifted to the state's other 13 counties. Yavapai learned from the in-house programs that Maricopa and Pima developed.

Cmdr. John Russell, Yavapai's jail administrator, said on the way back from visiting Pima County's program, he, Fields and Becky Payne, the jail health services administrator, "basically on the drive back from Tucson, we put the whole program together."

Mascher said Yavapai County has 20 correctional beds available for the program and, on average, 16 to 18 are in use. The beds are not in a separate unit but rather spread throughout the jail population. "We take the program to them, depending on what classification they're in. That way, we don't have to try to support a separate psychological unit," he said.

The goal of RTC programs isn't to cure mental illness, Holmes said, "but it attempts to resolve symptoms or ameliorate them through medications whatever mental illness they might have." The programs also

have an educational component that teaches the defendant about the court process and the specific charges they face — "so they understand what they're accused of ... what their constitutional rights are."

Fields said, "What you don't want to do is put somebody in a position where they'd be in jeopardy of losing their liberty — which is what a criminal trial is about — without being able to fundamentally understand what it is they're accused of and how the process works, and being able to assist in their defense."

"The whole goal is to prepare that person to be able to go in and help their attorney with their defense and understand what is happening," he said. Not everyone can be restored to competency, and the process does not apply to brain-damaged or developmentally disabled persons, he added.

Mascher, the sheriff, said counties nationwide might be able to benefit from programs like Yavapai's.

"Counties ... can look at the millions of dollars they're spending on restoration to competency through state hospitals and state programs, and say, 'Wait a minute, we might be able to do this with our correctional health people within our own facility.' And I think it's something that counties across this country should take some time to see if this will work for them."

Profiles in Service



» David Keen
Chief Financial Officer
NACo

Number of years at NACo: 4

Education: B.A., Virginia Tech University, CPA

The hardest thing I've ever done: being a parent

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: my grandfather, Albert Einstein and Ben Franklin

A dream I have is to: see the 7 Natural Wonders.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: surf (when I can).

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: parasailing.

My favorite way to relax is: fishing.

I'm most proud of: my children, Jared and Spencer.

Every morning I read: *The Wall Street Journal*.

My favorite meal is: surf and turf.

My pet peeve is: people who don't take personal responsibility.

My motto is: "Don't be afraid to fail."

The last book I read was: *The Bourne Objective*.

My favorite movie is: *Braveheart*.

My favorite music is: Classic Rock.

My favorite president is: Ronald Reagan.

GASB releases new proposals for pension accounting

The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) has released proposed improvements to its standards for accounting for and reporting on the pensions that governments provide to their employees.

It is releasing two exposure drafts. The first relates to reporting by governments that provide pensions through a qualified trust, and the second pertains to reporting by the pension plans that administer those benefits. The proposals relate only to accounting and financial reporting and do not apply to how governments approach the funding of their pension plans.

The following discussion takes up the issue of government reporting.

This proposed standard separates how the accounting and financial reporting is determined from how pensions are funded. If this proposal becomes an accounting standard in the future, governments will now be

required to mirror the accounting and financial reporting changes in their funding approaches.

The proposed standards address several issues including establishing definitions of qualifying pension plans, how to determine net pension liability and a discussion of how to measure a government's total pension liability. This latter section discusses the methodology for projecting benefit payments, determining how to include cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) and discounting projected benefits to their present value.

The proposed standard also includes for defined-benefit plans a method for measuring pension expense, cost-sharing for multiple employer pension plans, and requirements for note disclosures and required supplementary information. It also addresses special funding situations. Each of the major sections of the proposed standards

is followed by a series of questions for reviewers. The comments that GASB anticipates should respond directly to these questions.

Responses and comments should be submitted no later than Sept. 30. All comments will be posted and available to the public on the project's portion of the GASB website.

To review the proposals go to: www.gasb.org ► Projects ► Documents for Public Comment. The GASB is also holding three forums for receiving feedback in October and three public hearings. Additional information can be obtained in the exposure draft, which can be found at item 2 on the Web page.

Comments can be submitted by email to director@gasb.org or traditional mail to: Director of Research and Technical Activities, Project No. E-34, Government Accounting Standards Board, 401 Merritt 7, P.O. Box 5116, Norwalk, CT 06856-5166.



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Fla. counties face nullification of gun laws by state

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Whatever work Florida counties have done to tailor their own firearm laws will be for naught Oct. 1, when a new state law takes effect.

H.B. 45, passed in June, pre-empts any local gun or ammunition

ordinances and opens elected and appointed officials to fines of up to \$5,000 if they violate the rules, including mandating a local waiting period for delivering a purchased gun.

“It’s putting a burden on counties that have to go back and go through their laws and ferret out ordinances that could get them in trouble,” said

Cragin Mosteller, communications director for the Florida Association of Counties.

“From the moment it was proposed, we knew it would violate the principle of home rule counties were afforded in 1968 and would interfere with counties’ efforts to protect their citizens, parks and

public spaces, and we have been vocal in our opposition to it while it was under consideration.”

In Palm Beach County, Assistant County Attorney Anne Helfont’s department has worked since Gov. Rick Scott (R) signed the bill June 1 removing firearms-related ordinances, and the final reading of the changes would come to the Board of Commissioners in September.

to regulate firearms, though Helfant said the county’s ordinances since then were not passed in defiance of the state law.

“We weren’t ignoring it, but it hadn’t come to our attention,” she said. “The penalties certainly did, though, when they got so stringent.”

Although Helfant said the effort to undo all of the conflicting ordinances has not been a huge burden on the county attorney’s office, it was time consuming and added to a busy slate of assignments.

NACRC elects new board, officers

By WHITNEY BERTRUM
NACRC

More than 100 National Association of County Recorders, Election Officials and Clerks (NACRC) members, vendors and non-members gathered July 14–17 in Portland, Ore., for the 2011 Annual Conference for discussion on the latest issues affecting court administration, clerk to board, vital statistics, elections administration, land records and records management.

Topics included dealing with substance abuse in the office, electronic court systems, microfilm best

practices, parliamentary procedure, election equipment sustainability, as well as the roundtable discussions and a tour of the Multnomah County Elections Office and Recorder’s Office.

The conference featured many well-regarded speakers including Minnesota Secretary of State Mark Ritchie and representatives from the Internal Revenue Service and the Center for Digital Government. Vendors discussed their latest services and products and assisted county officials with finding the best options for their offices.

During the conference, the

association elected the 2011–12 directors and officers, and Carol Foglesong, assistant comptroller, Orange County, Fla., was sworn in as president.

“This strong leadership group looks forward to working together on behalf of the entire membership,” Foglesong said. “We want strong and impactful education and certification programs, while we explore ways to reach members who may not be able to travel to national conferences. Sharing knowledge, practical advice and insight on legislative issues will make our jurisdictions more efficient and effective.”

Two county officials were recognized for their leadership, ingenuity and excellence in office, and dedication to NACRC. The Public Official of the Year Award was presented to Ann Johnsrud, recorder, McKenzie County, N.D. Kathryn L. Burke, recorder, Washoe County, Nev., received the Linda S. Carter Award for Excellence in Government.

the profile of the major economic challenges facing rural counties, including infrastructure, business development and burdensome federal regulations,” Larson said. “We will continue to work with the White House Rural Council and Congress to find solutions to these pressing issues.”

Barron participated in the infrastructure session moderated by LaHood. She emphasized NACo’s Rural Action Caucus priority calling for reauthorization of the surface transportation bill, which is critical to maintaining and expanding county-owned bridges, roads and transit systems.

“Today’s forum was a true cross-section of rural America, including farmers, small business owners and local governments, and it provided

us the opportunity to discuss critical issues facing rural communities and bring them to the attention of the president and key administration officials,” Barron said. “I expressed my constituents’ support on a variety of topics including bipartisan support for reauthorization of the highway bill so we can put people to work.”

The town hall is one in a series of more than 100 events held across the country this summer with senior administration officials in support of the White House Rural Council’s objectives.

The council, established by Obama in June, will provide recommendations for investment in rural areas and will coordinate federal engagement with a variety of rural stakeholders, including agricultural organizations, small businesses, and state, local and tribal governments.

Barron urges passage of new ‘highway bill’

FORUM from page 2

Word Search

Top 20 Counties with Job Growth (2000–2010)

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

- ROCKWALL (Texas) 97.9%
- LOUDOUN (Va.) 75.3%
- WILLIAMSON (Texas) 68.1%
- DOUGLAS (Colo.) 64.5%
- HAMILTON (Ind.) 50.8%
- DELAWARE (Ohio) 49.2%
- DESOTO (Miss.) 48.2%
- UTAH (Utah) 47.1%
- ASCENSION PARISH (La.) 46.6%
- CAMPBELL (Wyo.) 43.9%

- LIVINGSTON PARISH (La.) 42.9%
- LARIMER (Colo.) 41.2%
- PRINCE WILLIAM (Va.) 40.1%
- RUTHERFORD (Tenn.) 37.4%
- WAKE (N.C.) 35.9%
- SARPY (Neb.) 33.9%
- SHELBY (Ala.) 32.6%
- CARVER (Minn.) 32.4%
- HENDRICKS (Ind.) 31%
- CHARLESTON (S.C.) 30.5%

Best Practices Awards, which are given to offices as special recognition in honor of their unique achievements and best practices in their respective fields, were given to County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk’s Office, Los Angeles County, Calif., for “Business Filing and Registration Kiosk” (Court Administration/Clerk to Board Category) and “Recorder Mail Processing” (Records Management Category); to County Clerk’s Office, Harris County, Texas, for “From Blaze to Glory: Recovering from a Major Disaster by Creating a Hybrid Election Plan Based on In-Place Approved Voting Systems — The Harris County 2010 Election” (Election Administration Category); and to County Recorder’s Office, Maricopa County, Ariz., for “Maricopa County Recorder’s Interactive Recording Kiosk” (Land Records Category).

NACRC, a NACo affiliate, is a national association of elected and appointed county administrative officials. For more information, visit www.nacrc.org.



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“Contact Us” provides members with information and answers!

Just use the “Contact Us” feature on the NACo website to e-mail your question to us. It’s in the upper right corner of the NACo website ...

www.NACo.org



NACo National Association of Counties
The Voice of America's Counties

Convenience, store type drive eating habits in food deserts

FOOD DESERT from page 1

“low-income” as having a median family income at or below 80 percent of the area’s median family income, and “limited access” as 500 people or 33 percent of the census tract’s population living more than one mile from a supermarket in an urban area, 10 miles in a rural area.

A University of Pennsylvania study of Leon County, Fla.’s food availability suggested that store type is the most influential factor affecting the availability and affordability of healthy foods.

The report said: “Research has demonstrated that individuals living in low-income and/or predominantly black neighborhoods tend to have limited access to supermarkets that carry a large selection of healthy foods at an affordable price, which may limit the purchasing and consumption of healthy foods,” a sentiment echoed in almost all studies of food deserts.

It isn’t enough to have a supermarket a few miles away, said Allison Mignery, physical activity and nutrition supervisor for Mecklenburg County Health Department, because convenience drives a lot of people’s eating habits.

“There’s plenty of food in these neighborhoods, but it’s hardly what you would call healthy,” she said. “People without cars probably aren’t going to take a bus and then walk a few miles with their groceries.”

The food assessment found only one store that sells fresh produce in 60 census block groups — a very-limited-time farmers market.

The health department has been working with an advisory group, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Food Policy Council, to combat the sizable food desert in the county. The policy council suggested the county and city consider the concentration of restaurants within a neighborhood when granting business permits, among other suggestions.

“The problems can be addressed with grassroots efforts and policy changes and everything in between,” Mignery said.

On the grassroots end of the spectrum, increasing the number of mobile food markets offers an approach to increase the food supply, while minimizing the fixed costs grocers would face on bricks and mortar. Mignery said enabling Women, Infants and Children (WIC) recipients to use their benefits at farmers markets would be a major policy accomplishment, but the state has told her it has no money to contribute to the federal program to start a WIC Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program. In terms of



Photo courtesy of Allison Mignery

Customers examine produce at one of the Black Women’s Health Network Farmers Markets, which are located at churches in food deserts in Mecklenburg County, N.C.

what Mecklenburg County can do on its own, new zoning and land use policies could encourage community gardens and farmers markets.

Pitt County, N.C., east of I-95, is largely rural, and the population in most parts can’t support large grocery stores.

On a lot of the county’s crossroads, country stores are king, and have been for a few generations. Jean Wilkerson, program director for Pitt County’s Communities Putting Prevention to Work initiative, said the food selections in these stores, which are sometimes just large gas stations, have remained somewhat static.

“Lots of white bread, potato chips, macaroni and cheese,” she said. “Shelf life plays a big role — canned food lasts a lot longer, and not everything is guaranteed to sell when maybe 50 people come in all day.”

Wilkerson and her program are working as a matchmaker for the established stores and farmers, in hopes of getting them to do business together. Her efforts are partially funded through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Corner Stores program.

“We are trying to promote to store owners how the farmers markets are popular, how people will

buy their fruit and vegetables,” she said. “We’re helping farmers come up with prices that won’t put store owners at a major disadvantage.”

On the other side of the price predicament is the consumer’s choice — if a bottle of water is \$1.19 and a soft drink can is 99 cents, a thrifty consumer will buy the soft drink to quench his or her thirst. That’s where the education push helps.

“In many ways it’s like a seatbelt or a bike helmet, they had to pass laws to make people use them even though they are in their best interest,” she said.

By feeding students healthier foods in schools, Wilkerson said, it normalizes the food in kids’ eyes and makes them more likely to want it outside of school.

“We’re finding a situation that’s the opposite of what you’d expect — children are encouraging their parents to eat healthier,” she said. “The adults are somewhat set in their ways.”

Trade Wilco, a gas station convenience store, has started stocking fresh fruit and vegetables recently, and Wilkerson said the county has been lobbying the store to include skim milk in its offerings.

Aside from combating the Southern cultural tendency to fry foods, Wilkerson said a different attitude toward pesticides will be necessary if produce continues to proliferate through the area.

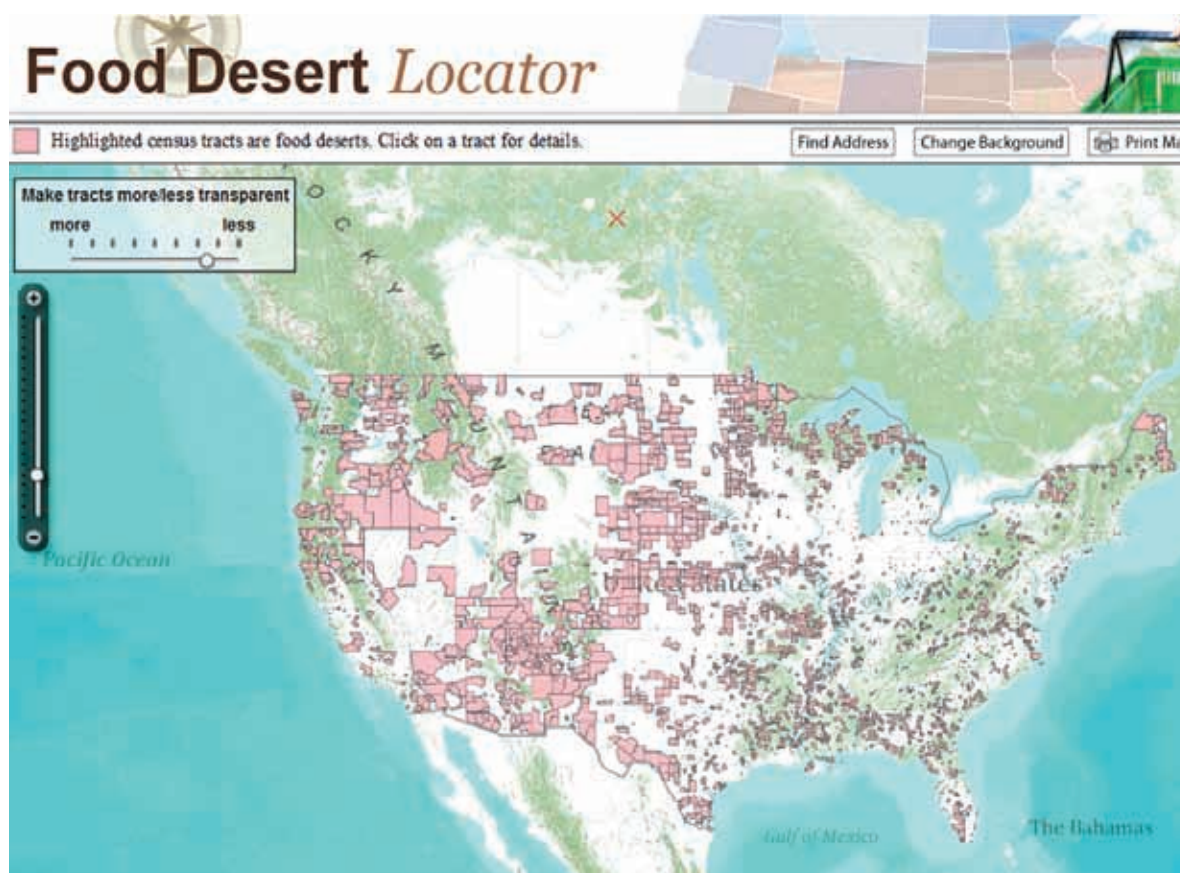
“We need pesticides to keep our crops alive,” she said. So locals tend to be more tolerant of their usage.

In Pitt County, health department officials are considering pursuing zoning regulations that could affect where fast-food restaurants can operate. A recent study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* provided “some evidence for zoning restrictions on fast food restaurants within about [1.9 miles] of low-income residents but suggest that increased access to food stores may require complementary or alternative strategies to promote dietary behavior change.”

The federal government is taking steps to address food deserts through the HFFI. It’s a partnership among the Treasury, Agriculture (USDA) and Health and Human Services departments with a budget of more than \$400 million to support programs to eliminate food deserts in seven years. That support will come in the form of tax credits and financial assistance to community development financial institutions; loans, grants and promotion for technical assistance to increase fresh food access; and competitive grants to community development corporations that finance grocery stores and farmers markets.

The USDA maintains two mapping databases relating to food supply. The Food Atlas offers demographic data on the county level, including store and restaurant proximity, food prices, availability of food and nutrition assistance programs and basic community characteristics, all based on 2007–2008 data. It is available at <http://maps.ers.usda.gov/FoodAtlas>.

The USDA also maintains a map of census tracts identified as food deserts, available at www.ers.usda.gov/data/fooddesert.



Map out food deserts locally, statewide and nationally at www.ers.usda.gov/data/fooddesert/fooddesert.html.

Survey: Counties providing innovative digital services

By CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Palm Beach County, Fla.; Washoe County, Nev.; Pueblo County, Colo.; and Nevada County, Calif. were first place winners in the 2011 Digital Counties Survey, which recognizes leading examples of counties using information and communications technology. The Center for Digital Government and Digital Communities program, in partnership with NACo, identify the best electronic practices among counties nationwide, regardless of size.

"This survey identifies the very best examples of how counties are aligning technology to support strategic priorities and create crucial operational and administrative efficiencies," said Larry Naake, NACo executive director. "Especially important during these tough economic times, counties across the country are using innovative technologies to reduce county operations costs and enhance service delivery."

Top 10 winners were selected in four population categories. First-place winners in each category emphasized IT initiatives and projects that cut costs and helped their agencies cope with shrinking work forces.

Palm Beach County, Fla. took first place in the 500,000 or more population category.

"We were very excited to hear the news," said Steve Bordelon, director of information systems services for Palm Beach County.

Bordelon said the win was partially due to the county's success at connecting schools to less expensive broadband. The county owns roughly 350 miles of fiber optic cable and gave city schools access to it at wholesale prices, enabling the schools to cut their broadband expenses in half.

Washoe County, Nev. clinched first place in the 250,000 to 499,999 population category. Cory Casazza, county CIO, said he was gratified to reach first place given that his department's IT budget had been reduced by nearly 45 percent since 2006.

"We started out a few years ago just trying to keep the lights on and realized in order for us to succeed and take the county somewhere, we needed to find a way to not only keep the lights on, but add value," he said.

Information technology provided that value when switching to open source products helped prevent layoffs. Washoe County saved \$250,000 by transitioning to an open source voice-over-IP system. Casazza's team also implemented an open source help-desk ticketing system that saved about \$40,000. Casazza added that several other changes to the county's technology have led to further savings.

First place in the 150,000 to 249,999 population category went to Pueblo County, Colo. Dan Mauro, Pueblo County's information systems director, gave much of the credit to the county's redesigned Web portal. The website highlights e-government services available in the region. A citizen can look up any service he or she might need within the Pueblo County area on the county's portal. The county is also in the process of deploying a function that will inform Pueblo County-area citizens of every

service available to them simply by entering their address.

The top spot in the less than 150,000 population category went to Nevada County, Calif. Policies set by the county's Board of Supervisors explicitly articulated the importance of maintaining IT during the economic downturn. The county's progress in consolidating facilities is evidence of the program's success. This is attributed to the county's transition of 1.5 million documents to Microsoft SharePoint, its deployment of cloud-based software, video conferencing infrastructure and the reduction of 85 physical servers.

This year's survey was underwritten by Hyland Software, developers of OnBase; Insight Public Sector, Inc.; Juniper Networks; McAfee; Quest Software, Inc.; and Sprint.

For more information on the survey, visit www.digitalcommunities.com/survey/counties.

2011 Digital Counties Survey Winners

500,000 or more population

- 1st – Palm Beach County, Fla.
- 2nd – San Diego County, Calif.
- 3rd – Montgomery County, Md.
- 4th – Oakland County, Mich.
- 4th – Tulsa County, Okla.
- 5th – Fairfax County, Va.
- 5th – Hennepin County, Minn.
- 6th – Prince George's County, Md.
- 7th – Orange County, Fla.
- 8th – Orange County, Calif.
- 8th – Westchester County, N.Y.
- 9th – Fulton County, Ga.
- 9th – King County, Wash.
- 9th – Los Angeles County, Calif.
- 10th – Anne Arundel County, Md.
- 10th – Bexar County, Texas

250–499,999 population

- 1st – Washoe County, Nev.
- 2nd – Dakota County, Minn.
- 3rd – Chesterfield County, Va.
- 4th – Douglas County, Colo.
- 4th – Washtenaw County, Mich.
- 5th – Dutchess County, N.Y.
- 5th – Horry County, S.C.
- 6th – Loudoun County, Va.
- 7th – Placer County, Calif.
- 8th – Clackamas County, Ore.
- 9th – Guilford County, N.C.
- 9th – Howard County, Md.

- 9th – Leon County, Fla.
- 10th – Hamilton County, Ind.

150,000–249,999 population

- 1st – Pueblo County, Colo.
- 2nd – Lackawanna County, Pa.
- 3rd – Arlington County, Va.
- 4th – Sussex County, N.J.
- 5th – Yuma County, Ariz.
- 6th – Gaston County, N.C.
- 7th – Cumberland County, Pa.
- 8th – Doña Ana County, N.M.
- 9th – Boone County, Mo.
- 9th – St. Tammany Parish, La.
- 10th – Hall County, Ga.

Less than 150,000 population

- 1st – Nevada County, Calif.
- 2nd – Napa County, Calif.
- 2nd – Roanoke County, Va.
- 3rd – Olmsted County, Minn.
- 4th – Martin County, Fla.
- 5th – Moore County, N.C.
- 5th – Pitkin County, Colo.
- 6th – Charles County, Md.
- 7th – Franklin County, Va.
- 7th – Gloucester County, Va.
- 8th – Columbia County, Ga.
- 9th – Albemarle County, Va.
- 10th – Bay County, Mich.

GFOA announces winners of Awards for Excellence in Government Finance

Arlington County, Va. and Los Angeles County are among the winners of the 2011 Awards for Excellence in Government Finance, sponsored by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). The awards recognize contributions to the practice of government finance that exemplify outstanding financial management with practical, documented work that offers leadership to the profession and promotes improved public finance.

This year's winning entries encompass innovations in areas of capital financing and debt administration, economic development, e-government and technology.

Office of the Treasurer, Arlington County, Va.

One System for All Taxes: Automated Tax Management in Arlington County

Arlington County, Va. has put in place a single, integrated system to administer all county taxes. Treasurer's assessment and collection enterprise (ACE) system approaches tax collection in a new way, based on the idea of the tax-paying entity, rather than separate systems and processes for each tax — the norm for local government.

ACE was initially conceived in 2004 by County Treasurer Frank O'Leary as a holistic system based upon the concept of the "tax-paying entity." Its eventual creation was a collaborative effort of the offices of treasurer and commissioner of revenue, the Department of Management and Finance, the Department of Technology Services, and private contractor FAST Enterprises. The result: a single system that replaces nine prior archaic systems that lacked any coordination.

ACE replaced a dozen 25-year-old mainframe, Access and Excel-based systems with a single, integrated, off-the-shelf software program and a new cashing system. ACE also connects with more than 50 other county systems, external customers and service providers.

The system has improved service to county residents and provided for more cost-effective, accurate and efficient delivery of services.

"ACE is a wonderful model for municipalities throughout the nation — a tremendous breakthrough," said Jeffrey Esser, executive director, GFOA.

O'Leary accepted the award "on behalf of all those who have worked so hard to make this system possible."

The Community Development Commission of Los Angeles County, Calif.

From Paper to the Web: Streamlining Grants Management in Los Angeles

Developed in response to increasing administrative costs and staff reductions, the Los Angeles Community Development Commission's (CDC) paperless grants management system allows paperless efficiency in all aspects of managing the CDC's Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), federal stimulus grants and local grants.

The comprehensive, integrated Web-based system provides the CDC with real-time access to financial information on projects that use CDBG funds. It is also linked to the county CDC's financial system, which allows internal and external users to submit payment requests electronically and track project expenditures in real time. Not just another database, the grants management system automatically tracks the work in different stages of grant management and notifies users of impending deadlines.

"We are proud to be the recipients of this prestigious award," said Sean Rogan, executive director of the L.A. County CDC. "Recognition from an international agency of this caliber is a testament to the fine work my staff performs daily, and to our dedication to improving the processes of the public sector."

For more information about the GFOA's Awards for Excellence in Government Finance, please visit www.gfoa.org, email AwardsforExcellence@gfoa.org, or call 312.977.9700.

Board adopts variety of resolutions in Portland



NACo members adopted platform changes, reaffirmed dozens of expired policy positions and adopted new policy during the Annual Business Meeting July 19 at the Annual Conference in Multnomah County, Ore. Following are the new policy positions.

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Supporting the White House Rural Council

Issue: Improvement of Rural Policy.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports the President's decision to create the White House Rural Council and pledges to work with Council Chairman Tom Vilsack, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, to bring forward the perspective of rural counties to the council.

■ Opposing Efforts to Move Rural Housing Programs from USDA to HUD

Issue: Access to rural housing programs.

Adopted Policy: NACo opposes efforts to move the U.S. Department of Agriculture's housing programs to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

■ Supporting Foreign Aid Reform

Issue: U.S. foreign aid.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports legislation to reform foreign aid by eliminating waste and promoting fair, free market programs that will benefit American farmers, ranchers and rural counties.

ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND LAND USE

■ Supporting Ratification of the United Nations' Convention on the Law of the Sea

Issue: The United States is NOT allowed to participate in deliberations which affect the national security, environmental concerns relating to the use of the seas, and to economic development for U.S. coastal communities.

Adopted Policy: NACo strongly supports the ratification of the

United Nation's Convention on the Law of the Sea.

■ Changes to the Oil Pollution Act

Issue: Updating federal oil spill and emergency response policy.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports federal legislation and policies to strengthen local government involvement under the Oil Pollution Act (OPA). NACo supports requiring federal agencies who oversee OPA to consult and coordinate with local governments in environmental protection, oil spill contingency planning, training and implementation of OPA processes.

■ Conservation Easement Tax Incentives

Issue: Continuation of enhanced federal tax deduction for donations of conservation easements.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports continuation of the enhanced federal tax deduction for donations of conservation and trail easements to facilitate their use by counties, special districts and other units of local government as a land planning, conservation and management tool.

■ Supporting of Special Redevelopment and Smart Growth Zones

Issue: The federal government should support holistic implementation of county and other local government plans for neighborhood redevelopment and smart growth.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties calls on Congress to create special economic zones to receive specific federal incentives, such as, but not limited to, tax-preferred bonds, for the purpose of livable, walkable, green developments, and communities.

FINANCE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

■ Supporting Renewal of the Build America Bonds and Recovery Zone Bonds Programs

Issue: Renewal of bond financing programs for counties.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports resurrecting direct subsidy bonds (e.g. Build America Bonds and Recovery Zone Bonds programs) as financing options for county governments.

■ Dissolution of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC)

Issue: H.R. 672, as reported from the House Committee on Administration on June 2, 2011,



Photos by David Hathcox

Vance County, N.C. Commissioner Terry Edward Garrison presents the Labor and Employment Steering Committee policy report.

would eliminate the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) and place its duties under the Federal Election Commission (FEC).

Adopted Policy: NACo opposes the termination of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission and transfer of its functions to the Federal Election Commission. NACo supports efforts by Congress through its oversight and appropriations responsibilities to resolve any significant federal concerns relating to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. Should the functions of the EAC be transferred to the FEC or elsewhere, current levels of NACo representation on federal election advisory boards should be maintained.

■ Increased Reporting Requirements in the Use of Federal Funds

Issue: Federal legislation seeking to foster transparency and accountability in the use of federal funds at the state and local government level through increased reporting requirements.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports transparency and accountability in the use of taxpayer funds. However, NACo opposes legislation that results in an unfunded mandate for county government due to increased administrative costs with no financial assistance to comply with requirements. Furthermore, NACo opposes legislation that does not seek the input of state and local governments to assist in creating a practical reporting process that can be viewed as a national solution rather than a Federal solution.

HEALTH

■ Endorsing the Vision and Goals of the National Prevention Strategy

Issue: Support for the National Prevention Strategy

Adopted Policy: NACo endorses the overarching vision and goal of the National Prevention Strategy and will support actions and promote policies that support its effective implementation across all levels of government and in communities.

HUMAN SERVICES AND EDUCATION

■ Indian Child Welfare Notices

Issue: Cost of Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) notices.

Adopted Policy: Amend the notice provisions of the ICWA statute section 25 U.S.C. 1912 from registered mail with return receipt requested to certified mail.

■ Establishment of an Office of Rural Education Policy in the Department of Education

Issue: An office within the Department of Education representing rural schools.

Adopted Policy: NACo strongly supports the establishment of an Office of Rural Education inside the Department of Education.

■ Social Services Block Grant

Issue: The House Budget Resolution proposed to eliminate the Social Services Block Grant.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties strongly supports the Social Services Block

Grant and opposes any efforts to eliminate or reduce its funding.

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

■ Supporting Public Health Workforce Programs

Issue: Public Health Workforce Programs.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports workforce policies and funding priorities for public health workforce programs, which are responsive to both the supply of public health workers and the demand for their skills in urban and rural areas, to ensure that programs are appropriately tailored to the unique configuration of needs and resources in each state and in each local jurisdiction.

■ Infrastructure Funding for Local One-Stop Centers

Issue: Dedicated infrastructure funding for local One-Stop Career Centers.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports providing dedicated infrastructure funding for the facilities and operations of Local One-Stop Career Centers.

PUBLIC LANDS

■ Opposing Delay in Issuance of Oil and Gas Drilling Permits

Issue: Issuance of drilling permits in Gulf area and waters.

Adopted Policy: NACo strongly supports domestic energy production and recognizes that U.S. independence from foreign oil also requires expanded alternative and renewable resources and U.S. independence from foreign oil. NACo urges the Obama administration to safely and thoughtfully release permits in a timely fashion, so as to begin to overcome the devastation to our economy.

■ Opposing Proposed Forest Service Planning Rule

Issue: Withholding Support for the U.S. Forest Service Proposed Planning Rule as Published in 76 Federal Register 8480.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties urges the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Forest Service to not adopt the Forest Service Proposed Planning Rule in its current version [see 76 FR 8480 (36 CFR Part 219)], until it is substantially revised to prohibit de facto wilderness management and instead provide for (1) coordination and

Public Lands Steering Committee offers 10 new policy positions

RESOLUTIONS from page 8

cooperation with elected county officials, (2) consistency with local government plans and policies, (3) forest planning and decision making at the most local level of the Forest Service agency structure, (4) sound discretion and practical judgment on the part of local unit forest supervisors, (5) active management to reduce fire regime condition class to local government desired levels, (6) active management to reduce invasive species and insect infestation, (7) enhanced economic and social sustainability, (8) emphasis on habitat management over species management and (9) emphasis on multiple use management and commodity production.

■ Rescinding Bureau of Land Management's "Master Leasing Plan" Oil and Gas Reform Leasing Reform

Issue: Rescind the BLM Master Leasing Plan Instruction Memorandum and Related Guidance.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties strongly urges DOI Secretary and National BLM Director to immediately rescind BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 2010-117 and all related guidance, because they attempt to implement so-called "Master Leasing Plan" reforms that unlawfully override duly established BLM Resource Management Plans (RMPs) without local government input.

■ Supporting S.1061 & H.R.1996 "The Government Litigation Savings Act"

Issue: Accountability and transparency regarding payments made under the Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA).

Adopted Policy: NACo supports S.1061 & H.R.1996 as the passage of these bills would:

Continue to provide a mechanism to assure fair and equal access to public funds for individuals, small businesses and non-profit organizations with limited financial resources to assure their ability to participate in the justice system of these United States.

Help restore accountability and transparency on how federal funds are being spent by reestablishing a provision for reporting to Congress on expenditures under the EAJA.

Restrict the amount of Equal Access to Justice Act dollars that can be applied for to reimburse successful individual and small entities for legal expenses in ac-



Tillamook County, Ore. Commissioner Tim Josi (l) reports on proposed policy from the Public Lands Steering Committee. Also pictured is Ryan Yates, NACo associate legislative director for public lands.

tions brought against the Federal Government.

Restrict the eligibility to apply for reimbursement of legal expenses for those individuals and entities without the assets necessary to bring legal action against the Federal government.

Urge Congress to adopt an asset limit for applicants consistent with the congressional intent of the EAJA.

■ Opposing Executive Branch Efforts to Create New "De facto" Wilderness Areas

Issue: Providing accountability in the designation of national monuments and wilderness areas.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties opposes Executive Branch efforts (such as Secretary Salazar's Secretarial Order 3310) which call for the designation of de facto wilderness or management for non-impairment without congressional approval. NACo also supports legislation to amend the Antiquities Act (such as the National Monument Designation Transparency and Accountability Act) to provide transparency and accountability in the designation of national monuments. Federal consultation with state, county, and tribal government should be required prior to the development and designation of any national monument.

■ Revising Contract Cancellation Policy for Forest Service Stewardship Contracts

Issue: Forest stewardship projects.

Adopted Policy: NACo urges Congress to amend PL 108-7 to direct the Forest Service to maintain a single source contract cancellation liability contingency fund within the agency of appropriations not obligated as opposed to current policy which requires such a contingency as a component of each stewardship contract awarded.

■ Japan Reconstruction Aid to Include Manufactured Wood Products Generated from Federal Forests in Accordance with the Northwest Forest Plan

Issue: Manufactured Wood Products to Japan as Reconstruction Aid.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports including manufactured

wood products from the federal forests of the Northwest in any aid package offered to the Japanese government, or as a result of action taken by the United Nations, will assist in rebuilding domestic communities while assisting a key ally of the United States.

■ Using Federal Timber after Domestic Declaration of Disaster

Issue: Supporting federal law changes to increase the flow of federal timber for domestic reconstruction purposes (after the declaration of emergency) improves economies and community sustainability.

Adopted Policy: The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act should be amended to include provisions to require that reconstruction materials originate from federal forest lands, specifically sections 307, 315, 316, 323, 421, and 683. When federal dollars are allocated for disaster relief, changes to these sections would benefit schools and roads in counties with federal forest lands.

■ Supporting Increased Domestic Oil and Gas on Public Lands

Issue: Our national dependence on foreign fuel threatens the livelihood of America's farmers and ranchers.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports the development and implementation of a comprehensive national energy policy, which includes conservation, efficiency, exploration and research and provides for the domestic production of traditional and renewable energy sources by removing the

road blocks that require years to get an application to drill, mine or extract minerals from federal land, with concurrence with local government review and approval.

■ Calling for Membership on Landscape Conservation Cooperatives Steering Committees to Include County Elected Official(s)

Issue: County membership on Landscape Conservation Cooperatives.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports the expansion of LCC Steering Committees to include at least one elected county official on each Steering Committee, and preferably one from each state in those eco-regions which are multi-state.

TRANSPORTATION

■ Flexible Transit Funding

Issue: Lack of flexibility that denies local transit operators from using federal funds to provide service for special events.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties supports amending Title 49 and revising federal transit regulations to allow more flexibility for transit operators in the spending of federal transit funds when providing service for local special events.

■ Maintaining Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Designation Threshold Levels

Issue: Maintaining current Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) designation threshold levels.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) opposes legislation or regulation directing the MPO population threshold to be raised from its current level of 50,000 people.

■ Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA)

Issue: Support expansion of the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) during reauthorization of surface transportation legislation.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports expanding the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) of 1998 which is a financing mechanism that allows local jurisdictions that dedicate a portion of locally-based funding streams to infrastructure improvements to leverage Federal financing to speed the completion of eligible transportation projects.



Taney County, Mo. Commissioner Jim Strafuss reports on the Telecommunications and Technology Steering Committee's resolutions.

Permanent Flight 93 memorial to be dedicated in Somerset County, Pa.

9/11 from page 1

Sept. 9 through 11, and the days before, will bring ceremonies of remembrance marking the 10th anniversary of the attacks.

"Given the context of the changes that we have seen here in the county, and obviously the mood of the country, it's certainly an opportunity for healing on many different levels," Tokar-Ickes said.

Somerset County, Pa.

On Sept. 10, Vice President Joe Biden is scheduled to help dedicate Phase 1 of the permanent memorial at the Flight 93 crash site. President Barack and First Lady Michelle Obama are scheduled to visit the site on Sept. 11.

Since 9/11, a temporary memorial sprang up organically as locals and visitors brought tributes to the site, including angels made of slate, benches donated by a church and a 40-foot section of chain-link fence that would become festooned with remembrances. According to the U.S. National Park Service, more than 35,000 tributes have been left at the site over the years.

Phase 1 will leave the resting place of the crash victims untouched, and visitors will be able to view it from a Memorial Plaza where the names of the 40 passengers and crew will be inscribed in stone. Eventually, the memorial will include a visitor center with interpretive exhibits, expected to be completed in 2014. The third phase, a 93-foot Tower of Voices, including 40 wind chimes is scheduled for the final phase — a landmark visible from nearby highways.

It's a fitting tribute to the 40 passengers and crew members who were heroes in their own right, Tokar-Ickes said — by preventing a third attack, perhaps on the U.S. Capitol.

"While I take nothing away from the heroism and the patriotism of that day (in New York and at the Pentagon), I will say once again, those actions were prompted by their desire to see their loved ones,"

she said of those on Flight 93, "their desire to see their families. It was really prompted by love, and they were just trying to get back home."

For her rural county, the new memorial will bring an estimated 250,000 to 300,000 visitors in its first few years, she said. It will test the county's infrastructure and perhaps identify needs that require addressing.

Arlington County, Va.

In Arlington County, there will also be observances and events throughout the 9/11 weekend. Schwartz said the centerpiece will be an evening ceremony Sept. 10 at the U.S. Air Force Memorial, which overlooks the Pentagon 9/11 Memorial. Speakers will include a representative of the 9/11 Victims' Families Foundation and the lighting of 184 candles, one for each victim.

Arlington is also working on constructing a tribute — not a memorial, Schwartz stressed — to be located at the county fire station from which the first local responders to the Pentagon were dispatched.

It will incorporate a section of World Trade Center steel and Pentagon stone that were presented to the county.

"We're building a tribute that will recognize the bond of brother and sisterhood between the fire departments of New York and Arlington County in the 9/11 response," he said. The county hopes to begin construction within the next year.

Nassau County, N.Y.

In addition to the activities in New York City, Nassau County, N.Y. will host a Remembrance Ceremony on the evening of Sept. 7 at its 9/11 Memorial at Eisenhower Park. It features two towers of aluminum pillars, representing the World Trade Center towers, rising 30 feet above a fountain — and contains two pieces of steel recovered from the World Trade Center.

Names of the 344 Nassau

County residents who lost their lives in the attacks will be read by family members.

"We hold this annual ceremony to honor the innocent victims of the September 11th attacks on our nation," County Executive Edward Mangano said. "It is important for our community to have a common location where families can grieve, and where people can come and reflect so that we never forget the friends and neighbors who died that September morning."

"Nearly 10 Septembers have come and gone, yet time does not diminish the pain and the loss of that day, nor dull the meaning of this remembrance ceremony," he said.



Image courtesy of bioLINIA and Paul Murdoch Architects

An artist's rendering depicts the Wall of Names and Ceremonial Gateway at the Flight 93 Memorial in Somerset County, Pa. This, the first phase of a larger memorial, will be dedicated on Sept. 10.

FRANK R. LAUTENBERG
NEW JERSEY

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC
WORKS

United States Senate

August 9, 2011

Dear County Official:

This year we mark the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, a day that changed America forever. To commemorate this occasion and pay tribute to those we lost, I introduced the enclosed resolution establishing a national Moment of Remembrance at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on September 11, 2011. In an overwhelming demonstration of unity, the Senate unanimously passed the resolution with the co-sponsorship of all 100 United States Senators. I write to request that you join us in making this Moment of Remembrance a symbol of solidarity throughout your county and across the country.

During the Moment of Remembrance, every person across the country is called upon to stop and remember those we lost in the September 11th attacks. The Moment of Remembrance will take place for one full minute at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time on September 11, 2011, and cities, counties and towns, firehouses, churches and other institutions across the country are called upon to sound sirens and ring bells during that minute. These sirens and bells will be a signal for each person to stop and remember the people we lost and demonstrate the perseverance the American people have shown since that fateful day.

I hope you will participate by:

- Working with and contacting firehouses, police, churches, and other institutions in your municipality to sound sirens and ring bells for one minute at 1:00 p.m.;
- Passing a resolution or issuing a proclamation recognizing the Moment of Remembrance; (Note: See sample resolution on page 11)
- Hosting an event to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the September 11th attacks that includes the Moment of Remembrance; and
- Notifying your constituents of the forthcoming Moment of Remembrance by noting it on your website and through local papers, social media and other outreach mechanisms.

I have created a website for the Moment of Remembrance where you can get more information: www.lautenberg.senate.gov/stopandremember. You can also contact my office at stopandremember@lautenberg.senate.gov or 202.224.3224 for additional information.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Lautenberg

In Case You Missed It ...

News to Use from Past County News

► Energy Project Grants Available

The U.S. Department of Energy is offering \$27 million in funding to reduce non-hardware costs associated with solar energy projects. This includes \$12.5 million in challenge grants to help counties and cities streamline permitting processes, and \$15 million to improve information technology and local zoning and building codes. For the solicitation and more information on the challenge, visit <https://eere-exchange.energy.gov> or contact Jared Lang at jang@naco.org or 202.942.4224.

Public employees plan better futures for their communities

PUBLIC SECTOR *from page 3*

unable to afford treatment? Is a veteran feeling lost and isolated? Does a victim of violent crime need assistance? Can a nonprofit organization help tend to those in need? Did a person’s race prevent them from renting a home?

Public employees plan for a better future for their communities. They plan for the benefits of their citizens and preservation of historical places while balancing the impact of new development. We ask what our communities will look like in 50 years. Are we building safe structures? Can we grow in a way that creates a sustainable

future? What will transportation look like as gasoline costs increase? Can we use energy more wisely? Will there be farms here in the future or only houses? Will future generations have access to our beautiful wild spaces?

Public employees ask if precious natural systems and our environment that undergirds our communities are safe. Are our water supplies and air quality healthy? Are we safe from exposure to dangerous toxins? How do we dispose of dangerous chemicals? How can we assist parents prevent childhood obesity?

Public employees ask questions out of concern for our citizens’

quality of life and public safety. This quality-of-life focus is a clear responsibility of the public realm and makes for sustainable and resilient businesses and neighborhoods. How can we improve our transportation infrastructure? How can we pay for a park or fire station? How can we encourage business retention? Can we recycle more and limit non-renewable resource use? How do we best respond to the devastation of a fire, a hurricane, a medical emergency? How do we make our neighborhoods safe? Are there safe alternatives to jail and long-term incarceration?

Public employees ask if we have responsibly enhanced our

democratic ideals and sufficiently gathered citizen concerns on important issues. Have we made our government more accessible to all people? Have we responded to citizen questions in a helpful and timely way? Are we providing civic education opportunities and forums for civic conversations, as well as formal public hearings and processes? Do we properly engage citizens in problem solving or have we made them only consumers of our services?

As ethical public managers and employees we need to listen to our critics closely and respectfully as citizens and concentrate on fiscal accountability, effective

governance and outstanding performance at each of our public tasks and responsibilities. We must, however, never dismiss the fact that what we do as public employees is essential to the functioning of our communities and the welfare of our citizenry. If we work hard, treat our peers and our citizens with respect and civility, we can answer any question and respond to any challenge our communities face. We can bring honor back to public service and attract a new generation to public service.

(This article was originally published by the Alliance for Innovation in its August issue of Transformations.)

SAMPLE Moment of Remembrance Resolution

(Insert Name of County)
Joining the National Moment of Remembrance of the 10th Anniversary of September 11th

WHEREAS, the governing body of *(insert name of municipality)* expresses their support of the United State’s Senate regarding coming together as a Nation and ceasing all work or other activity for a moment of remembrance beginning at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on September 11, 2011, in honor of the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks committed against the United States on September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, at 8:46 a.m., on September 11, 2001, hijacked American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the upper portion of the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City, New York; and

WHEREAS, 17 minutes later, at 9:03 a.m., hijacked United Airlines Flight 175 crashed into the South Tower of the World Trade Center; and

WHEREAS, at 9:37 a.m., the west wall of the Pentagon was hit by hijacked American Airlines Flight 77, the impact of which caused immediate and catastrophic damage to the headquarters of the Department of Defense; and

WHEREAS, at approximately 10:00 a.m., the passengers and crew of hijacked United Airlines Flight 93 acted heroically to retake control of the airplane and thwart the taking of additional American lives by crashing the airliner in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, and, in doing so, gave their lives to save countless others; and

WHEREAS, nearly 3,000 innocent civilians were killed in the heinous attacks of September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, tens of thousands of individuals narrowly escaped the attacks at the Pentagon and World Trade Center and, as witnesses to this tragedy, are forever changed; and

WHEREAS, countless fire departments, police departments, first responders, governmental officials, workers, emergency medical personnel, and volunteers responded immediately and heroically to those horrific events; and

WHEREAS, the Fire Department of New York suffered 343 fatalities on September 11, 2001, the largest loss of life of any emergency response agency in United States history; and

WHEREAS, the Port Authority Police Department suffered 37 fatalities in the attacks, the largest loss of life of any police force in United States history in a single day; and

WHEREAS, the New York Police Department suffered 23 fatalities as a result of the terrorist attacks; and

WHEREAS, the impact of that day on public health continues through 2011, as nearly 90,000 people are at risk of or suffering from negative health effects as a result of the events of September 11, 2001, including 14,000 workers and 2,400 community residents who are sick, and tens of thousands of others whose health is being monitored; and

WHEREAS, 10 years later, the people of the United States and people around the world continue to mourn the tremendous loss of innocent life on that fateful day; and

WHEREAS, 10 years later, thousands of men and women in the United States Armed Forces remain in harm’s way defending the United States against those who seek to threaten the United States; and

WHEREAS, on the 10th anniversary of this tragic day, the thoughts of the people of the United States are with all of the victims of the events of September 11, 2001 and their families; and

WHEREAS, the lives of Americans were changed forever on September 11, 2001, when events threatened the American way of life; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, Congress and the President joined together to designate September 11 as a National Day of Service and Remembrance under the Serve America Act (Public Law 111–13; 123 Stat. 1460); and

WHEREAS, in September 2009 and 2010, President Obama issued Proclamation 8413 (74 Fed. Reg. 47045) and Proclamation 8559 (75 Fed. Reg. 56463) proclaiming September 11, 2009, and September 11, 2010, respectively, as Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance; and

WHEREAS, September 11 will never, and should never, be just another day in the hearts and minds of all people of the United States;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the governing body of *(insert the name of municipality)*:

(1) recognizes September 11, 2011, as a day of solemn commemoration of the events of September 11, 2001, and a day to come together as a Nation; and

(2) offers its deepest and most sincere condolences to the families, friends, and loved ones of the innocent victims of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks; and

(3) honors the heroic service, actions, and sacrifices of first responders, law enforcement personnel, State and local officials, volunteers, and countless others who aided the innocent victims of those attacks and, in doing so, bravely risked and often gave their own lives; and

(4) recognizes the valiant service, actions, and sacrifices of United States personnel, including members of the United States Armed Forces, the United States intelligence agencies, the United States diplomatic service, homeland security and law enforcement personnel, and their families, who have given so much, including their lives and well-being, to support the cause of freedom and defend the security of the United States; and

(5) reaffirms that the people of the United States will never forget the challenges our country endured on and since September 11, 2001, and will work tirelessly to defeat those who attacked the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that on the 10th anniversary of this tragic day in United States history the governing body of the *(insert the name of municipality)* calls upon all of the people and institutions of the United States to observe a moment of remembrance on September 11, 2011, including (i) media outlets; (ii) houses of worship; (iii) military organizations; (iv) veterans organizations; (v) airlines; (vi) airports; (vii) railroads; (viii) sports teams; (ix) the Federal Government; (x) State and local governments; (xi) police, fire, and other public institutions; (xii) educational institutions; (xiii) businesses; and (xiv) other public and private institutions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the governing body of *(insert name of municipality)* encourages the observance of the moment of remembrance to last for 1 minute beginning at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time by, to the maximum extent practicable ceasing all work or other activity; and marking the moment in an appropriate manner, including by ringing bells, blowing whistles, or sounding sirens.

Play NACo's "Counties Work"

an online interactive game for students and teachers

New interactive, online game where students (and you) can run a virtual county

Just log on to
www.naco.org/CountiesWork
and let the games begin!



Add the link to your website so more can play.

Created by NACo and iCivics, Inc., with support from CVS/Caremark

Model Programs From the Nation's Counties

Los Angeles County, Calif.

Sheriff's Program Gets Kids on Bikes, Right Path

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Mobility defines most children's lives — crawling, walking, getting rides to practice or the mall, commuting to work, earning a driver's license, riding bikes with friends — but for many at-risk youths, hoping for any set of wheels is a stretch.

Los Angeles County, Calif.'s Bicycle Education and Registration (BEAR) program is getting those kids where they need to go, and loading them up with some knowledge in the process.

Sheriff's Dep. Ken Yanecko has spent 17 years as a bicycle cop and seen far too many preventable accidents, too many helmet-less cyclists suffering head injuries and a skyrocketing rash of bike thefts.

The catalyst for the BEAR program, however, came not from an interest in safety, but rather concern for an atrophied bike registration system that left the most populated county in the country without a way to register bicycles. With high-end bicycles costing upwards of \$4,000, and the aggregate cost of bicycle theft rivaling a thief's take at a bank robbery, it was time for the L.A. Sheriff's Office to get into the

game. After building an all-new registration database, Yanecko paired it with a youth program, called BEAR Cub.

In 2008, he began teaching the Cub classes in the city of West Hollywood, collaborating with the county sheriff's youth association. Although it is open to all children, Yanecko focused it on children from low-income housing or program homes, particularly from Compton.

Though the program typically serves kids between 8–18, those as young as five can participate, as long as adults are involved with them over the course of the classes.

Over five weeks, he teaches a series of two-hour lessons: team building, bicycle education and repair, rules of the road, and bicycle laws, helmet safety and decision making. Throughout these classes, students refurbish bicycles confiscated by the sheriff's office from suspects (found without registration markings.) Yanecko has a wholesale deal with a local bike shop for mechanical supplies, and a bicycle manufacturing company supplies bicycle parts, plus helmets, at below cost, often discontinued or prior years' models for this equipment. Before using



Photo courtesy of Dep. Ken Yanecko

A Los Angeles County, Calif. sheriff's deputy checks a participant's bike equipment during a Bicycle Education and Registration class.

the bikes in classes, their mechanical integrity must pass muster in the bicycle repair shop vocational course in the department's custody division.

At the end of the five-week course, each student takes home the bike he or she polished into working order, along with a new helmet and supplies for the bike. The cost per student for the supplies, which Yanecko pegs at \$200, ends up being closer to \$30, thanks to

those donations and deals.

"So many people remember getting their first bike, and if we can give it to these kids, we have a lot more of an active role in defining one of their memorable experiences that they'll carry with them for life," he said.

Yanecko started the program as a part-time assignment, but it now devours 40 hours of his work week. A lot of his focus isn't so much on the bicycle education as it is providing

a consistent structure for kids who might not be used to it.

"A lot of these kids have been let down by men in their lives, so I make it a point to be at least a half-hour early so they know they can rely on me," he said.

Yanecko believes the connection he feels with the students, even over the course of just 10 hours, breaks down the barrier between the kids and law enforcement. With any luck, that influence will keep them from behavior that eventually leads them into rehabilitation or custodial programs in the future.

"You see their guard come down as you work with them," he said. "We had one kid who was kind of small, but wore a hooded sweatshirt and had a hardened look on his face. After a few classes, the hood came off, he was wearing short sleeves, literally opening up before our eyes."

"It has all worked better than we could have imagined."

Model Programs from the Nation's Counties highlights Award-winning programs. For more information on this NACo Achievement Award winner, visit NACo's Web site, www.naco.org ► Research & Publications ► Find Solutions.

Financial Services News

U.S. Communities Touts New and Refreshed Contracts

As counties and other public agencies struggle to implement cost-cutting practices, NACo is working with its purchasing alliance to find ways to save even more procurement dollars. By using cooperative purchasing, public agencies can achieve savings both on the cost of bidding and on the cost of products and services.

The newest offering is an extensive food service contract awarded by North Carolina State University to Premier. The Premier Foodservice Program is a proven, 15-year program that offers an aggressive national distribution through a partnership with US Foodservice.

U.S. Communities participants have access to manufacturer agreements that provide discounts up to 20 percent. In addition, participants have access to technology and cost-management solutions, member

satisfaction and communication, and foodservice operational excellence. Categories of food and food services include dry grocery, frozen grocery, center of the plate, beverages, fresh produce, milk and other dairy products, disposables and nutritional supplements. See all contract details at www.uscommunities.org/premier-usfoodservice.

Maricopa County, Ariz. has awarded a refreshed Maintenance, Repair and Operating (MRO) supplies contract to The Home Depot, HD Supply Facilities Maintenance and Applied Industrial Technologies. The contract was competitively solicited and awarded on Aug. 1, and is available for use by participating agencies nationwide, effective immediately. The new contract provides enhanced features from the previous contract, including deeper discounts, improved rebate structure, additional

maintenance, repair and operating supplies, industrial supplies and enhanced services.

U.S. Communities will be conducting webinars on each of the awarded supplier partners under the new MRO contract. U.S. Communities-registered agencies may sign up for webinars taking place Aug. 30, Sept. 1 and Sept. 12 by going to www.uscommunities.org/news-events/webinar.aspx.

The city of Charlotte, N.C. acts as the lead public agency for U.S. Communities' auto parts and supplies solicitation. This contract was re-solicited this year and awarded to CARQUEST. The contract is available beginning Sept. 1 to all public agencies and nonprofits. This revised offering provides significantly expanded parts for fleet automobiles and small trucks, as well as specialty products for other

fleet vehicles.

U.S. Communities is presently soliciting contracts for flooring products and accessories, installation and related services, as well as public safety and emergency preparedness equipment and related services. For details on these upcoming solicitations, visit www.uscommunities.org/news-events/current-solicitations.aspx.

NACo co-founded and co-owns the U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance. NACo partners with the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities, the Association of School Business Officials International and the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing to bring vibrant, cost-effective contracts to public and nonprofit agencies across the United States. More than 45,000 agencies use these contracts and save over \$300 million in aggregate every year.

The U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance regularly re-solicits contracts in order to secure better pricing, better terms and conditions and better offerings from the supplier community. In addition, the program looks for new products and services that can be offered to local agencies nationally. The program presently offers 20 contracts delivered through 29 suppliers to public agencies and nonprofit organizations in all states.

For information on U.S. Communities and other NACo cost-saving programs, contact Steve Swendiman at sswendiman@naco.org, Lisa Cole at lc@naco.org, Jim Sawyer at jsawyer@naco.org or Peter Torvik at ptorvik@naco.org.

(Financial Services News was written by Steve Swendiman, managing director/CEO, NACo Financial Services Center.)

News From the Nation's Counties

► ALASKA

The **FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH** Assembly may change the **definition of "guest house"** in borough zoning to bar creative property owners from building second, rentable homes on their property.

As is, the zoning code has only loose rules on what a guest house is and what it can be used for. The rules only say guest homes must be smaller — as little as a square foot smaller — than the main building. It also doesn't say whether the property can be rented out.

Some home owners have used the law to put a full-fledged second home on multi-acre rural residential lots, a move that has drawn some complaints from neighbors.

The proposed ordinance would limit the size of guest homes to half of the square footage of the primary home and bar it from being rented, the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* reported.

► ARIZONA

• **Two electric-vehicle charging stations** are being installed in the parking lots at each of eight **PIMA COUNTY** libraries this summer as part of a pilot program.

They'll be ready for use by electric car operators in early September.

Under an agreement with ECOtality, Pima County can keep the charging stations and take on the maintenance costs, or have them removed at no cost to the county at the end of the pilot in December 2012, the *Tucson Citizen* reported.

The stations are "supplemental" charging stations and are not meant to fully charge a vehicle. The vehicles that will use the stations would be routinely topped off at vehicle owners' home charging stations.

• Flooding threats have spurred **COCONINO COUNTY** to offer **free weather radios** to residents.

County Supervisor Mandy Metzger said the radios can get the word out about flooding faster than the reverse 911 system the county had been using. She said the reverse 911 system took 35 minutes to warn residents about recent flooding, yet flood waters reached homes within 15 minutes of National Weather Service warnings.

The weather radios emit an alert

signal when the weather bureau issues a flood warning, watch or advisory, the *Arizona Daily Sun* reported.

► CALIFORNIA

SONOMA COUNTY Supervisor and NACo Past President Valerie Brown announced she **will not run for re-election** next year.

Brown called her decision an "incredibly painful" one and said it was based on demands of the upcoming campaign, including debates and precinct walking. At the same time Brown thanked her county and Board of Supervisors colleagues, the *Press Democrat* reported.

"You taught me how to be a good public official. You taught me how to be a good public servant," she said. "This experience wouldn't have been the same without you."

Brown was appointed to the Board of Supervisors in August 2002 by then Gov. Gray Davis to fill a vacant seat. She then won election the following November for a two-year term and has successfully defended her seat.

Brown represented eastern Sonoma County in the state Assembly from 1992 to 1998. She was also elected to the Sonoma City Council in 1990 and served as mayor in 1991.

► GEORGIA

• **GWINNETT COUNTY** is implementing a **countywide volunteer program**, aiming to log 1 million volunteer hours per year by 2015. The Volunteer Gwinnett program was developed in response to an Engage Gwinnett committee recommendation to involve residents in volunteer activities to support government operations and potentially save money.

The program will offer an easy way for interested residents to read about available volunteer opportunities and sign up online, and include a standardized training and registration process along with events to recognize volunteers for their service. In addition, each county department, agency and office has designated staff to manage its volunteer opportunities and volunteers.

• Five mayors and county commissioners from across the Atlanta region agreed on a **\$6.14 billion**



Photo courtesy of El Paso County, Colo.

► COLORADO

Leonard Spivey, a World War II pilot, addresses the **EL PASO COUNTY** Board of Commissioners using an electronic voice modulator at its Aug. 11 meeting. He is part of a contingent of the **381st Bombardment Group** that was honored.

Amy Lathen, chair of the commission, presented a resolution heralding the World War II veterans and representatives for the nearly 300 combat missions they successfully executed between June 1943 and April 1945, which contributed to the war's end. More than 22,000 tons of bombs were unleashed during these missions — including precision attacks on enemy shipyards and aircraft factories in central Germany.

"The words 'thank you' just don't mean enough," Lathen said. "We are so very grateful for your service to this nation and to future generations, who will continue to enjoy the freedoms that you helped preserve."

list of transportation projects to be built across 10 counties, and paid for by the region as a whole if approved in a 2012 referendum.

The list marks the first time that Atlanta regional leaders have divided up a major transportation funding plan for the region, deciding how much goes to roads and transit based on their discretion.

The projects will get built only if voters approve a 1 percent sales tax to pay for them in a referendum next year, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported.

► IOWA

• **Old license plates** are now being sold as scrap metal to bring revenue to **BLACK HAWK COUNTY**.

County Treasurer Rita Schmidt recently began looking into the alternative means of disposal. About a decade ago, the county collected revenue from the plates, Schmidt said. More recently, however, they were given to a company that came and picked them up.

About 1,500 pounds worth of

license plates collected over the past few months brought \$800 at the scrap yard, the *Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier* reported.

• The **WOODBURY COUNTY** Board of Supervisors has added a little bite to its **ban of firearms** and other dangerous weapons in county buildings.

Violators can now be charged with trespassing if they don't disarm when entering three buildings, including the county courthouse and law enforcement center, KTIV TV reported.

► MARYLAND

• **CECIL COUNTY** commissioners want to make it perfectly clear:

PlanMaryland should not supercede the county's own comprehensive plan.

The commissioners sent a formal letter of opposition to state officials regarding a proposal for a **statewide growth plan** to be adopted this fall. Many of the county's objections are based on

procedural issues the state used in formulating PlanMaryland. The county also faults the plan for its focus on the Baltimore-Washington corridor, instead of rural areas of Maryland.

"They would lavish money on the Baltimore-Washington corridor and starve the rest of the state if this plan is adopted as proposed," said Anthony DiGiacomo, county senior planner, according to the *Cecil Whig*. "The state's Smart Growth approach is equal to 'no growth' in the rural areas of Maryland."

He believes the result of PlanMaryland would be to drive low-density sprawl into rural Maryland.

• Proposed new animal regulations for **CHARLES COUNTY** include **stricter controls on pit bulls**, bulldogs and other "pit bull terrier-type" breeds, deeming them "potentially dangerous," a label previously reserved for animals that had attacked or threatened a person or animal.

As potentially dangerous animals under the law, owners of pit bull-type dogs would have to have the dogs microchipped and report the microchip number to Charles County Animal Control, according to *Southern Maryland News*.

Owners allowing the dog outside would have to fence off all or part of their yards, then create a smaller, locked and secure enclosure for the dog that does not touch the outer fence. If outside the secure kennel, an owner would have to leash and accompany the dog, even inside the outer fence. The owner also would have to hang a prominent sign warning "dangerous dog" at every entrance to the area and notify animal control if the dog runs at large.

► NEW JERSEY

ESSEX COUNTY and the Newark Alliance have put together a team of government, industry and nonprofits to create a five-year master plan to deploy commercial-fleet **battery-powered electric vans**, trucks and tractors in a four-county region. The other counties are **HUDSON, MIDDLESEX** and **UNION**.

The coalition will determine what infrastructure such as charging stations is needed in the region surrounding Port Newark, Port Elizabeth and Newark Airport.

"I want Essex County to be the frontrunner of introducing infrastructure that supports electric-powered vehicles and encouraging

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www.naco.org



Research News

County Parks Offer Year-round Programs for Kids

As the school year begins, many county parks and recreation departments are wrapping up summer activities. But just because the summer is nearly over doesn't mean the county departments are closing up shop. Despite budget cuts, many counties continue to offer fun and educational programs all year long.

Riders of all ages can continue to enjoy summer through a new public pump track for bicycles in Maricopa County, Ariz.

A pump track is a continuous loop that contains serious bumps and banked corners that allow riders to maneuver the course without pedaling.

Forward momentum is maintained by "pumping" the bike through the roller sections. These types of tracks helps cyclists of all ages learn how to balance and



maneuver their bikes to prepare for the terrain they may encounter during their rides.

Thanks to 86 yards of dirt left behind from an event hosted at the park earlier in the year, park staff was able to create the track for local riders in collaboration with local cyclists at little cost.

In Mecklenburg County, N.C., children with physical disabilities

and their families can participate in an outdoor program called Orienteering for Winners on Wheels. The program focuses on the essential skills of orienteering and a customized orienteering course combining permanent and temporary features.

Forrest County, Miss. found a way to not only honor the history of a once-vibrant railroad system, but also to provide citizens with a walking trail to connect many of the area's attractions for the whole family. The Longleaf Trace Rails-Trail follows barren railroad tracks to connect many entertainment and educational venues such as the old train depot, the zoo and soon-to-be university. More than just a walking path, the trails also include areas for horseback riding, roller-blading, jogging, walking and biking. Activities centers at the

trailhead, and other locations also provide a venue for family activities.

Summer activities can continue in Orangeburg County, S.C. with the addition of the Orangeburg County Aquatic Park. The facility includes an indoor swimming pool, a warm-water therapeutic pool and a full fitness center. A full-sized gymnasium houses basketball, volleyball, indoor soccer, gymnastics and multiple pre-school activities and programs including a supervised child watch area.

In addition to meeting space for community events, there is also an outdoor seasonal water park with a "lazy river," two family fun slides and a separate tot pool with its own slide. Through a partnership with the YMCA of Columbia for staffing, programming and maintenance, the facility is self-supporting and requires

no public funding to operate.

The Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve in Orange County, Calif. offers a chance for volunteers to learn about planting and seeding native species, and removing invasive, non-native plants. The Parks Second Sundays Habitat Restoration Program gives the small county staff of five people assistance in maintaining the preserve. Each second Sunday, these monthly three-hour events host more than 100 volunteers looking to explore the preserve and help in the restoration efforts. The activities of the volunteers vary month-to-month depending on what is needed, but all participants are able to learn about restoration activities while also giving back to the community.

(Research News was written by Kathryn Murphy, senior research associate.)

Fake horse rescue trains emergency responders for the real thing

NEWS FROM *from page 14*

corporations and businesses to replace trucks that run on diesel fuel with those that run on electricity or batteries," County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo Jr. said.

►NEW YORK

A **nondenominational invocation** read by the legislature clerk will now begin **BROOME COUNTY** Legislature meetings, instead of a nondenominational prayer by a legislator, as had been the practice. The invocation will be followed by a moment of silence, WICZ TV reported.

The practice came under scrutiny because one legislator's prayers were more Christian-based than nondenominational.

"I'm confident that this format will show respect to all faiths," said Jerry Marinich, legislature chairman, according to the *Press and Sun-Bulletin*.

►NORTH CAROLINA

Armed with one stone, **GASTON COUNTY** commissioners have their slingshot aimed at two birds: **policing uninsured drivers** and nabbing illegal immigrants.

They're considering a measure similar to one in Dallas, which allows vehicles to be towed or impounded if the driver, pulled over for a violation, has no proof of insurance, the *Gaston Gazette* reported.

Commissioner Joe Carpenter said he and his colleagues initially were intrigued by the prospect of

protecting insured drivers from losses, should they be involved in a crash with an uninsured driver. But in Dallas, "They found that about 90 percent of the impounded cars were actually being driven by illegal immigrants," he said. "So it's kind of addressing two things."

Commissioners want the State Legislature to pass a law that includes a proof-of-insurance requirement, or to give localities the option to do so.

►OKLAHOMA

OKLAHOMA COUNTY Assessor Leonard Sullivan has a message for state government leaders: "With the 'State Rainy Day Fund' getting a \$219 million deposit, now is the time for the State of Oklahoma to start paying the more than \$40 million **debt it owes to county government** caused by the failure of the state to pay for previously approved tax-break plans for businesses."

Further, he questioned how the state can insist the legislature is balancing the budget. "No they are not. They are ignoring reimbursements due county government."

►PENNSYLVANIA

The Richard King Mellon Foundation has awarded a \$500,000 grant to the Redevelopment Authority of **ALLEGHENY COUNTY** (RAAC) to develop Phase 1 of the Allegheny County Sports & Athletic Complex, to be built on a **78-acre brownfield site**.

The county expects to take ownership of the property this fall through



Photo courtesy of Miami-Dade County, Fla.

►FLORIDA

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY Fire Rescue Department (MDFR) hoist a mock-up of a horse during a recent **Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue training exercise**.

Team members and personnel from Miami International Airport Operations and the Miami Animal Import Center and various commercial entities trained to develop relationships and identified response issues concerning animals imported through the airport.

The course included rescue scenarios that MDFR firefighters can potentially encounter when dealing with the transport of large animals on aircraft. This is the first time that this type of training was conducted at any of the three Veterinary Service's Import Quarantine Facilities.

a donation from the Sports Legacy Foundation. RAAC also continues to actively seek the remaining funding needed to complete all phases of the development.

►VIRGINIA

LOUISA COUNTY officials aren't sure how long it will take

to assess all damages from the uncharacteristically strong — for the East Coast — **earthquake** that was centered in their county Aug. 23. The afternoon quake measured 5.8 on the Richter scale.

"There are families that have had their foundations moved six inches and are living in homes that

are likely unsafe," Richard Havasy, a county supervisor told *The Daily Progress*. "For some, they're just not the kind of people that contact the government to get things fixed. For others, they just don't know what to do or who to contact."

A State Farm spokesperson said of the more than 800,000 homeowners' policies it has in Virginia about 6,500 have earthquake coverage.

►CONGRATULATIONS

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) has recognized **LOUDOUN COUNTY, Va.** and **MARIN COUNTY, Ca.** with certificates of achievement for their superior performance management efforts.

Certificates of excellence went to the counties of: **ALACHUA (Fla.)**, **FAIRFAX (Va.)**, **MIAMI-DADE (Fla.)**, **SANTA BARBARA (Calif.)** and the City and County of **SAN FRANCISCO**.

The program, under the auspices of ICMA's Center for Performance Measurement, recognizes commitment to continuous learning and improvement, an ICMA official said. It measures activities such as reporting of performance data to the public through budgets and newsletters, and staff training efforts.

(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 e-mail ctaylor@naco.org or cban@naco.org.)

The H.R. Doctor Is In

The Third Space

Speaking at the NACo Annual Conference in Multnomah County, Ore. gave the HR Doctor the chance to spend a week exploring the Portland area with the beautiful HR Daughter Elyse. She has been hard at work in her new job with the city of Portland for several months and now knows her way around the area, as well as the city government. I got to meet some of her colleagues and her new Portland network of friends and organizations.

There are landmarks which help shape the image of the area which go way beyond the abortive television comedy "Portlandia." The beauty of the area was stunning, including the Columbia River Gorge, spectacular waterfalls like Multnomah Falls, and the International Rose Test Garden. There is even a driving route through farm areas famous for growing Oregon's wonderful strawberries, blueberries and other fruits called the "Fruit Loop."

The beauty, however, went far

beyond the green setting, the cool weather, light drizzle and the occasional guest appearance by the sun. It was easy to feel at home in Portland with a well-developed and extensively utilized transit system, micro-breweries and coffee places on virtually every block. There were family-run restaurants and well-organized food trucks. Music was also in great supply.

However, this is not an article in support of the Chamber of Commerce, but rather a brief look at another landmark in Portland which is a metaphor for much of what is going on in our lives as 21st century Americans. That is a visit to Powell's Bookstore.

Nearly half of the books sold in America are now sold online, with *Amazon.com* accounting for about 28 percent of the sales and Barnes and Noble on the way to e-selling about 20 percent. There is a decline in small locally owned bookshops, just as there has been a decline in



The idea of a personal Third Space retreat can be much more than a physical retreat.

music shops and, apparently other than in Portland, small coffee shops. Many have been "Starbuck'ed" out of existence. Powell's is a wonderful exception.

It is so big that a map is provided to help with navigation through the multi-stories of the building. There is also an iPhone application to help the reader in search of a particular book with guidance to the floor, aisle and shelf where the book may be found.

This e-app gives us a new combination meaning to the word "browser" — both a human book lover and her e-browser assistant. When I couldn't find any books on science, I was gently pointed to another large building across the street full of works about the arts and sciences.

The Economist magazine recently looked at the decline in bookstores as a factor not only of the rise of e-commerce, but also of tough economic times and corporate mega-conglomerates. The magazine commented that especially in rural America, the arrival of a corporate chain outlet can have a particular positive aspect marking our modern lives. It offers a Third Space. The Third Space usually represents a physical place which doesn't require you to sit alone in the closet in your home, which has been remodeled and is now called the computer room nor does it require you to travel to get downtown in a place which may not have a real urban style downtown. It provides a place for real social networking — not the Facebook kind — although ironically they likely offer Internet

connectivity. With the continued decline in local bookstores and other parts of the local cultural environment, coupled with a loss of privacy, we will all be looking for and longing for Third Spaces in our lives as one form of retreat.

A prior HR Doctor article titled "Retreating" looked at the positive role played in our lives by having a private retreat. The HR Doctor's mini-farm near Ocala, Fla. named, not coincidentally, "Sanctuary," represents the fulfillment of a dream. It is a place removed from urban stressors, a place for quiet contemplation, re-energizing and for the pursuit of hobbies and passions.

That place for many may be a room in their home, if not a country retreat like Camp David for presidents, "Checkers" for Sir Winston Churchill, or a home in Hartford for Mark Twain. The venue is not as important as the concept of private space in a world increasingly prone to the interruption or disruption of our privacy. The Third Space idea offers another way to have some rather safe interpersonal engaging place right near our homes.

The idea of a personal Third Space retreat can be much more than a physical retreat. It can be a retreat for the spirit. It can be getting lost in a compelling book, in listening to, or better yet, playing music. It can be

a hobby like painting or gardening. There is no end to the possibilities.

This author is a personal fan and frequent user of shopping sites such as *Amazon.com*. But there is something quite magical about going to a place such as Powell's and spending part of an afternoon slowly moving between book sections and taking in something which cannot be duplicated online. That something is the sights, the feel and even the odor of hundreds of thousands of books calling out to be touched, opened up and purchased.

The same sense of enjoyment was clear on the part of the many other visitors to Powell's — all in good spirits and all reverently taking in the magic of the place.

It is important to step back from the hustle and hassle of daily life in a crowded urban environment and lament the decline in small bookstores. But as their number diminishes, they become all the more treasured as places for human contact and strong customer service. Ironically, it may be that great customer service which helps insure that Third Spaces become widespread physical places of sanctuary and engagement for all of us.

Phil Rosenberg

Phil Rosenberg
The HR Doctor • www.hrdr.net

What's in a Seal?



» Volusia County, Fla.
www.volusia.org

Volusia County is named after the community of Volusia, which today is a tiny, unincorporated community on the east bank of the St. Johns River. However, when Volusia County was carved from Orange County by the Florida legislature in 1854, the community was a prosperous steamboat landing and the largest town in the county. The population of Volusia County at that time barely exceeded 600 people.

The community of Volusia began as a trading post sometime in the first or second decade of the 1800s. It was located where an Indian trail intersected with the St. Johns River. When commercial steamships started to travel up and down the St. Johns, the community grew and was listed as one of four post offices in the county. With the introduction of regional railroad systems in the 1880s, the community of Volusia was bypassed, and thus, its era of prosperity ended.

The origin of the word "Volusia" is of some debate. There are three possibilities: the name derives from a word meaning "Land of the Euchee (Indians);" the name was taken from the name of a British plantation or the name is derived from the last name of one of the employees at the trading post. Despite serious effort by amateur and professional historians, no one has ever discovered a historic document which has provided the definitive answer.

The seal shows a sunrise along the St. Johns River.

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

NACo on the Move

» NACo Staff

Erik Johnston, associate legislative director, spoke about NACo's Farm Bill priorities, which include support for beginning and young farmers, at the Drake Forum on America's New Farmers, Aug. 16-17, in Polk County (Des Moines), Iowa.

On the Move is compiled by Christopher Johnson, editorial assistant.



Erik Johnston

Job Market & Classifieds

► COUNTY MANAGER – LINCOLN COUNTY, N.M.

Salary: DOQ.

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners seeks to hire a new county manager. The detailed position announcement with desired qualifications and procedure for applying is at www.lincolncountynm.net. Deadline for applications is Sept. 9.

Hire Quality Staff

Get rate schedules for the Job Market/Classifieds both online and in print.

Visit www.naco.org ► Programs & Services ► Hire Quality Staff for more information, or contact Christopher Johnson at 202.942.4256 or cjohnson@naco.org.