

Board OKs budget, adopts priorities

Reviews new strategic blueprint; Makes changes to election process

By TOM GOODMAN
PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIRECTOR

The NACo Board of Directors approved a \$17 million budget for FY14, key legislative priorities for the coming year and changes to the election process and at its meeting Dec. 6–7 in Linn County, Iowa.

Strategic Blueprint 2014–2015

NACo Executive Director Matt Chase presented NACo's Strategic Blueprint for 2014 – 2015 that includes greater advocacy efforts, an expanded research operation to support advocacy, a new focus on transportation and enhanced programs in community and economic development.

The goals that are part of the blueprint are increased membership and conference attendance and expansion of the number of members who serve on committees.

In addition, a new program, the County Innovation Network

(COIN), will enable NACo members to ask questions of subject matter experts, who are county officials or corporate thought leaders through a managed online network. The network will also allow members to share information and connect with other members and suppliers in an organized marketplace.

Increased revenue for the FY14 budget is expected to come from the U.S. Communities cooperative purchasing program, membership dues and corporate sponsorship. The capital budget for FY14 is \$176,500. This funding will primarily enable the association to purchase network equipment and software.

See **BOARD MEETING** page 4



Photo by Brendan Conway

Santa asks Colin Cahill, 3, what he wants for Christmas at the annual Milwaukee County, Wis. Christmas tree lighting ceremony Dec. 6 at the county courthouse.

Forum explores art of bouncing back

By BEVERLY SCHLOTTERBECK
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Darry Stacey served 23 years as a first responder in his native Oklahoma. He was sworn into office as a new Cleveland County commissioner in January. Five months later his county was hit with two tornadoes, both in his home district.

Between his first responder role and his county leader role, Stacey had a lot to say about how to recover and build resiliency in a community after a disaster hits.

He and NACo President Linda Langston, who watched her Linn County county seat of Cedar Rapids flood to nearly biblical proportions in June 2008, also has much to say about resiliency.

Both leaders along with 17 others brought their hard-learned lessons and advice to NACo members

attending the forum, Resilient Counties: Leadership amid Rapid Change, Dec. 5–6 in Linn County (Cedar Rapids), Iowa.

The two-day event which drew more than a 100 attendees, featured two main speakers, 19 panelists for four panel discussions, a tour of the rebounding Cedar Rapids and a hands-on exercise intended to jump-start the participant's resilient leadership.

The forum was full of lists of lessons learned, like the one proffered by Stacey:

- Top 10 Lessons Learned
- 10. Have a plan
- 9. Relationships
- 8. Communications — cell phones, radio, reverse 911, door-to-door, flyers
- 7. Information — people need

See **RESILIENCY** page 7

New budget deal heads to Senate for final OK

By MARILINA SANZ
AND JESSICA MONAHAN
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTORS

The House by a 332–94 vote Dec. 12 has approved a two-year budget agreement reached earlier last week by Budget Conference Committee chairs, Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.). It next heads to the Senate where it is expected to pass.

The Budget Conference Committee proposal, titled the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013, provides \$63 billion in sequester relief over two years (\$45 billion in FY14 and \$18 billion in FY15). It is split evenly between defense and non-defense discretionary spending.

The agreement brings the funding available for non-defense discretionary programs to \$491.8 billion in FY14 and \$492.4 billion in FY15. The agreement also includes \$85

billion in savings and revenue that will fully offset the sequester relief and reduce the deficit by roughly \$22 billion.

See **BUDGET** page 3

CountyNews Features

INSIDE

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

We've enjoyed bringing you news that's all and only about counties in 2013. We look forward to keeping the fun going in 2014. From the staff at CountyNews, we wish you happy times with family and friends during the holiday season, and nothing but good news in 2014.

Volunteers play significant roles in counties across the country. Read about their contributions in this year-end special report.

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Three qualified immunity cases reach high court

By LISA SORONEN

STATE AND LOCAL LEGAL CENTER



While a recent *Washington Post* article notes that the Supreme Court isn't hearing as many cases as usual this winter, the court has not been shy about taking qualified immunity cases. In November, the court decided to hear two such cases and issued an opinion in a third case

SpeedRead » » »

» Qualified immunity matters to counties because county employees can be sued for money damages in their individual capacities if they violate a person's constitutional or federal statutory rights.

without oral argument. The State and Local Legal Center will file an *amicus* brief in both of the newly granted cases.

Qualified immunity matters to counties because county employees can be sued for money damages in their individual capacities if they violate a person's constitutional or federal statutory rights. Qualified immunity protects government officials from such lawsuits where the law they violated isn't "clearly established." In short, qualified immunity is intended to protect "all but the plainly incompetent or those who knowingly violate the law."

In *Wood v. Moss* pro- and anti-President George W. Bush demonstrators had equal access to the president as his motorcade arrived in Jacksonville, Ore., Oct.

4, 2004. But when the president made an unexpected stop for dinner, Secret Service agents moved the anti-Bush protesters, who were closer to the restaurant than the pro-Bush demonstrators, about one block farther from the president than the pro-Bush demonstrators.

The anti-Bush protesters sued two Secret Service agents claiming they violated their First Amendment rights by discriminating against them because of their viewpoint. The 9th Circuit denied the agents qualified immunity.

The Supreme Court will decide whether the lower court evaluated the qualified immunity question in this case too generally. The 9th Circuit focused on its conclusion that the agents engaged in viewpoint discrimination instead of whether it was clearly established that the anti-Bush protesters could not be moved farther away from the president than the pro-Bush demonstrators.

The court will also decide whether the anti-Bush protesters have adequately claimed viewpoint discrimination when there was an obvious security-based rationale for moving them: they were closer to the president.

In another qualified immunity case, police officers shot and killed Donald Rickard and his passenger after Rickard led police on a high-speed chase from West Memphis, Ark. into Tennessee. Their families sought money damages claiming the officers violated the 4th Amendment by using excessive force. The officers argued they should be granted qualified immunity because their use of force wasn't prohibited by clearly established law. In *Plumhoff v. Rickard* the court will decide whether the lower court properly denied quali-

fied immunity by distinguishing this case, which also arose in 2004, with a later Supreme Court decision from 2007. The court will also decide whether qualified immunity should be denied based on the facts of this case. Rickard wove through traffic on an interstate connecting two states, collided with police vehicles twice and used his vehicle to escape after being surrounded by police officers, nearly hitting at least one officer.

In *Stanton v. Sims* the Supreme Court reversed the 9th Circuit's

refusal to grant qualified immunity to a police officer who kicked open a gate hitting the homeowner while in "hot pursuit" of someone the officer thought committed a misdemeanor.

The 9th Circuit concluded that it was clearly established that a police officer may not enter someone's property without a warrant while in "hot pursuit" of someone suspected only of a misdemeanor. The Supreme Court disagreed describing the state of the law as follows: "[t]o summarize the law at the time [the officer] made

his split-second decision to enter [the homeowner's] yard: Two opinions of this court were equivocal on the lawfulness of his entry; two opinions of the State Court of Appeal affirmatively authorized that entry; the most relevant opinion of the 9th Circuit was readily distinguishable; two Federal District Courts in the 9th Circuit had granted qualified immunity in the wake of that opinion; and the federal and state courts of last resort around the nation were sharply divided."

EPA to regulate fire hydrants

By JULIE UFFNER

ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR



Last month, without fanfare or warning, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that fire hydrants containing lead components would be prohibited as of Jan. 1, 2014.

The proposal will have a long-reaching impact on local governments who own or operate water utilities (and thus have the responsibility over fire hydrants) by making the current stock of hydrants unusable. Hydrants cost approximately \$2,000 each and are often stockpiled by water utilities in case of emergencies.

In January 2011, Congress enacted the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act which amended the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) to reduce the amount of lead in drinking water pipes and other plumbing fixtures. Long-term exposure to lead can adversely impact development in both infants and children.

In EPA's proposal, for the first time, fire hydrants would be covered under the act since they "can be, and are, used in emergency situations to provide drinking water."

Hydrants are made from cast iron with interior components that contain lead. A number of groups have raised concerns with EPA's proposal since fire hydrants are generally used only for short-term emergency drinking water sources and would not meet the long-term exposure threshold. NACo and several other groups have sent a letter of concern to EPA on this proposal.

The proposal is unclear about when the hydrant would have to be replaced—immediately or through a retrofit plan. Nor is the proposal clear on the impact to the industries who manufacture fire hydrants. Can lead-free components be substituted without compromising long-term

safety and stability of fire hydrants? The question remains whether manufacturers can meet the Jan. 1, 2014 deadline in order to keep local governments and utilities compliant.

On Dec. 2, the House unanimously passed the Community Fire Safety Act of 2013 (H.R. 3588). It was introduced on Nov. 21 by Rep. Bill Johnson (R-Ohio) in response to EPA's proposal. The bill would add fire hydrants to the list of allowable devices such as toilets and shower

valves that are exempt from the new lead standards. NACo has joined other organizations in asking the Senate to take up H.R. 3588.

Sen. Pat Toomey (R-Pa.) introduced S. 1779 as a companion bill to H.R. 3588 and is currently looking for Senate cosponsors. Please ask your senator to cosponsor Toomey's bill.

**To read a copy of NACo's letter to the EPA, see this story online at www.countynews.org.*

Major issues remain in year-end EPA regulatory agenda update

The Administration released its biannual Unified Agenda of Federal Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions Nov. 26. The agenda contains expected regulatory actions for all federal agencies including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). EPA clocks in with more than 100 regulations in pre-rule actions, proposed and final rules; rules recently completed and long-term rule-makings. A number of these proposed regulations are of particular importance to counties.

Among the most important to counties, EPA sent a new "Waters of the U.S." (WOUS) definition to the White House Office of Management and Budget for interagency review. WOUS defines which waters are under Clean Water Act (CWA) federal jurisdiction and therefore must follow federal laws. Such changes to WOUS are relevant to counties since counties both regulate and are regulated under CWA.

If the definition changes, so does the scope of CWA programs. Programs impacted through WOUS changes include National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program, Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL), Water Quality Standards and Section 404 permits. NACo has expressed concerns over proposals to broaden WOUS.

Other potential regulations of concern include, but are not limited to, storm water runoff from logging roads, Water Quality Standards Regulatory Clarifications, the NPDES program update rule, Management Standards for Hazardous Waste Pharmaceuticals, new emission standards for solid waste landfills and the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone pollution, among others.

NACo is monitoring these regulations, looking for opportunities to make improvements either through the regulatory process or through targeted legislation.

(For more information, contact Julie Uffner, juffner@naco.org)

In Case You Missed It

News to Use From Past County News

» Healthy Counties Forum: Improving Health in a Climate of Change

Join the Healthy Counties Advisory Board in San Diego County, Calif., Jan. 30–31, 2014, to discuss how to drive changes in your counties through Accountable Care Communities by collaborating and prioritizing community needs. This day-and-a-half forum will help counties develop the tools to sustain healthier communities.

For more information, visit the Healthy Counties Initiative page at www.naco.org » County Solutions » Healthy Counties Initiative or contact Emmanuelle St. Jean at estjean@naco.org or 202.942.4267.

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Tax exemptions for muni-bond interest remain intact for now

BUDGET from page 1

The budget agreement would affect counties in several ways.

By smoothing out an impending dip in federal discretionary spending, it prevents a second round of cuts to programs of interest to counties such as payment in lieu of taxes (PILT), the Community Development Block Grant and justice and public safety programs.

The bill also has a Senate provision that establishes a deficit-neutral reserve fund for PILT and Secure Rural Schools, thereby indicating the importance of those programs to Congress.

The agreement does not include cuts to entitlement programs such as Medicaid or the Social Services Block Grant. In fact, it allows states to recoup costs from beneficiary-liability settlements, collect medical child support when health insurance is available from a non-custodial parent and allows states to delay payment of prenatal and preventive pediatric payments when a third party is responsible.

These provisions are designed to make it easier for states and counties with Medicaid and child support responsibilities to recover program costs.

SpeedRead » » »

- » No second round of cuts to PILT, CDBG, justice and public safety programs
- » Recouping Medicaid and child care costs should be easier
- » Tax reform not expected in 2014

The tax exemption for municipal bond interest and the federal deduction for state and local taxes remain intact for now. At one point, some thought that an overhaul of the federal tax code could be included in the budget deal. In recent weeks, however, it became clear that tax reform was going to be punted into 2014.

Earlier this year, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) announced that, beginning in July 2014, all airport operators would be responsible for monitoring all passengers as they leave secured boarding areas known as “sterile areas” — imposing a new cost on affected airports. The budget proposal addresses this is-

sue by requiring TSA to continue monitoring airport exit lanes at airports currently receiving this service.

One issue that will still impact some counties will affect those who issued Build America Bonds (BAB). Since the agreement only deals with discretionary spending but leaves the cuts to mandatory spending in place, the reduction in the subsidy payment for BAB issuers that began earlier this year remains unchanged.

Furthermore, the budget deal extends the cuts to mandatory spending for two years which, absent any future change, also extends the reduction in the subsidy payments to BAB issuers into 2022 and 2023 as well.

The bill provides more certainty by restoring regular order to the budget process. If both chambers are successful, the appropriations committees will be able to work on FY14 spending bills in advance of the Jan. 15, 2014 deadline — the date the current Continuing Resolution expires.

The bill identifies several spending cuts and measures that will raise

non-tax revenue, among which are:

- expanding the use of the Treasury Offset Program to all states so they can recover certain unemployment-insurance debts
- repealing the Ultra-Deepwater and Unconventional Natural Gas and Other Petroleum Resources Research Program — a research and development program created in 2005
- making permanent a requirement that states receiving mineral revenue payments help defray the costs of managing mineral leases that generate revenue
- approving the U.S.-Mexico Trans-boundary Agreement, which sets up a framework to explore, develop and share revenue from hydrocarbon resources
- limiting the amount of interest payable to lessees on federal oil and gas royalty overpayments
- rescinding all available funds in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) Petroleum Account and permanently repealing the federal government's authority to accept oil through the royalty-in-kind program to fill the SPR
- increasing federal-employee

retirement contributions by 1.3 percent, affecting employees hired after Dec. 31, 2013 with less than five years of service

• raising the premiums that private companies can pay the federal government to guarantee their pension benefits

• modifying the annual cost-of-living adjustment for working-age military retirees by making adjustments equal to inflation minus 1 percent — not affecting service members who retired because of disability or injury

• reducing the compensation guaranty agencies receive for rehabilitating a loan from the Federal Family Education Loan program, beginning July 1, 2014

• eliminating the mandatory spending for payments to nonprofit student-loan services, instead ensuring they be paid in the same manner as other student-loan servicers

• increasing TSA fees and simplifying how fees are assessed

• repealing the requirement that the Maritime Administration reimburse other federal agencies for the extra costs associated with shipping food aid on U.S. ships

• allowing the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection to continue collecting user fees through FY23

• limiting the amount a contractor can charge the federal government for an employee's compensation to \$487,000

• canceling a portion of unobligated balances in the Justice Department's Assets Forfeiture Fund and the Treasury Department's Forfeiture Fund and

• allowing the Natural Resources Conservation Service to charge a fee for providing technical and financial assistance on the development of individualized, site-specific conservation plans.

In addition, the bill requires the president to reduce \$28 billion in additional spending by sequestering mandatory budgetary resources in 2022 and 2023.

LUCC holds first County Innovations Symposium in New York City

By JIM PHILIPPS

MEDIA RELATIONS MANAGER



The first NACo Large Urban County Caucus (LUCC) Innovations Symposium was held Dec. 11–13 in New York City to engage county leaders from the nation's largest counties on policies and innovative programs important to counties.

The three-day event brought together more than three dozen county leaders from 18 states and global and national thought leaders, policy makers, foundations and

corporations for in-depth policy and best practice discussions. The meetings focused on priority county issues including health care, justice system reforms, sustainable transportation or infrastructure systems and disaster preparedness and recovery strategies.

Each panel featured presentations from national experts followed by roundtable discussions among county leaders exploring effective and innovative local and regional best practices.

Special guest speakers included Molly Ward, special assistant to the president and deputy director for the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs; Gillian Sealy, director, Clinton Health Matters Initiative, Clinton Foundation; Vincent Schiraldi, probation commissioner, New York City; Matt Alsdorf, director of Criminal Justice, Laura and John Arnold Foundation, and Bruce Katz, vice president, Brookings Institution and founding director of Brookings' Metropolitan Policy Program.

During the event, NACo released a report highlighting a variety of innovative county programs.

“The symposium was an informative exchange of ideas on the most important issues facing America's counties,” said LUCC Chair Roy Brooks, commissioner, Tarrant County, Texas. “It offered a special opportunity for county leaders to listen to national policy experts, private sector leaders and charitable foundations committed to finding innovative ways to meet and exceed the needs of the American people through local government.”

**See this story online at www.countynews.org to view the report released at the innovations symposium.*

CountyNews

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 (202) 393-6226 • FAX (202) 393-2630
 Published biweekly except August by:
 National Association of Counties
 Research Foundation, Inc.
 25 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
 STE. 500, Washington, D.C. 20001
 (202) 393-6226 | FAX (202) 393-2630
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POSTMASTER: send address changes to
 County News, 25 Massachusetts Ave. N.W.,
 Ste. 500, Washington, D.C. 20001
 (USPS 704-620) ■ (ISSN: 0744-9798)
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Quick Takes

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- 2 – North Carolina
- 3 – Michigan
- 4 – Pennsylvania
- 5 – Wisconsin

National Christmas Tree Association

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Board of Directors approves five changes to NACo election process

BOARD MEETING from page 1

Three new grants from the Ford Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Public Welfare Foundation are part of the budget. The budget projects that the association will end the year with a \$40,000 surplus.

NACo is expected to end FY13 with a \$200,000 surplus. Its positive financial situation is the result of a renegotiated contract with Nationwide Retirement Solutions for the deferred compensation program. In addition, conference attendance and grant activity increased during the year, and U.S. Communities grew by 9 percent.

NACo Election Changes

The changes to the election process focused on voting credentials, candidates speaking at steering committee meetings, use of the NACo logo and informing candidates about election procedures. The changes resulted from the work of the Election Review Committee, which was appointed by NACo President Linda Langston in August.

Langston said she appointed the committee to review the elec-



All photos by Bev Schlotterbeck

NACo President Linda Langston opens the Board of Directors fall meeting, held in Linn County, Iowa, Dec. 5-6. Also pictured (from left): Matt Chase, executive director; NACo Second Vice President Sallie Clark; Northeast Region Representative Joe Giles; and Karen McRunnel, Board of Directors liaison.

tions process to determine what could be improved and updated. The areas reviewed by the committee were the credentials process, the guidelines for candidates

for second vice president, voting at the conference and bylaws changes.

The committee produced 23 recommendations. The five approved by the Board are:

- the credentials form be sent to the Chief Elected Official and clerk in all member counties and to all Annual Conference registrants
- the credentials form be signed by the Chief Elected Official or a registered delegate to the Annual Conference
- candidates should not be permitted to campaign at steering committee meetings and that a

candidate forum should be added to the schedule of the Annual Conference

- candidates are not permitted to use any trademarked, registered or copyrighted NACo digital property and
- a webinar in early February to go over the rules with candidates and other interested parties.

The Board sent the remaining recommendations back to the committee for further review. The Board directed the committee to use the discussion and suggestions of the executive committee and Board members as a guide in its further deliberations. The commit-

tee was asked to produce the next phase of recommendations by the 2014 Legislative Conference.

Former NACo President and Athens County, Ohio Commissioner Lenny Eliason chairs the committee. Other members of the committee are Ron Houseman, NACo midwest region director and commissioner, Taney County, Mo.; Joan Garner, commissioner, Fulton County, Ga.; Cindy Bobbitt, commissioner, Grant County, Okla.; Manny Ruiz, supervisor, Santa Cruz County, Ariz.; Doug Hill, executive director, County

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Erie County, Pa. Commissioner Joe Giles, Northeast Region representative to the executive committee, receives a standing ovation from his fellow NACo Board members for his 32 years of service to NACo. The fall meeting was his final meeting.

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NACo Board members review and discuss the 2014-2015 Strategic Blueprint. Pictured are (l-r): Commissioner Elizabeth Stefanics, Santa Fe County, N.M.; Commission Chair Edward Michael, Cibola County, N.M.; Commissioner Larry White, Escambia County, Ala.; and Supervisor Efren Carrillo, Sonoma County, Calif.

GASBE is reviewing pension standards

BOARD MEETING from page 4

Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania; and Todd McGee, communications director, North Carolina Association of County Commissioners.

2014 Legislative Priorities

The key legislative priorities are:

- protect the federal-state-local partnership for Medicaid
- support the key federal investments in programs that promote local job creation and economic growth
- protect county revenue and investment strategies
- support federal land revenue sharing and the payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) programs
- oppose unfunded and under-funded mandates
- promote county priorities within immigration reform
- support rural development and the Farm Bill and
- support county priorities in the reauthorization of the surface transportation bill (MAP-21).

The Board meeting included presentations by Emilia Istrate, NACo research director, on upcoming projects; Bert Jarreau, NACo chief innovation officer, on the COIN program and David Vaudt, chairman of Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB). Vaudt said GASB is reviewing pension standards and other post-employment benefits.

Vaudt encouraged county officials to contact him with feedback. "The board (GASB) will make much, much better decisions when it hears how stakeholders feel about the rules," he said.

The Board meeting was the last one for Erie County (Pa.) Commissioner Joe Giles, who had been involved with NACo for 32 years and is retiring this year. Giles was the Northeast region representative and in that capacity served on the NACo Executive Committee.



Past NACo presidents, Commissioner Karen Miller (l), Boone County, Mo., and Commissioner Betty Lou Ward, Wake County, N.C., review the day's agenda for the Board meeting.



Photo by Karon Harden

Next Generation NACo Network partnered with Hawkeye Area Community Action Inc. to pack more than 4,500 pounds of food for area residents in Linn County, Iowa during NACo's Fall Board Meeting. Filling the cartons are: (l-r) Commissioner Ray Jeffers, Person County, N.C.; Dekalb County, Ga. CEO Lee May and Supervisor Efrén Carrillo, Sonoma County, Calif. Commissioner Mary Ann Borgeson, Douglas County, Neb., and Supervisor Ben Rogers, Linn County, Iowa also participated in the volunteer event.

>_SAVE-THE-DATE_|

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App connects concerned friends to suicide prevention resources

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

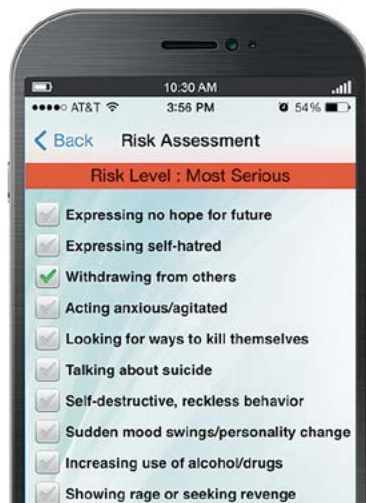
There's a time and a place for pamphlets.

Sure. But not when somebody's life is at risk.

Paying attention to the more visible ways young people get information, Ulster County's health department created a smartphone app that helps teenagers, or anyone, determine the best course for addressing someone they think is considering suicide.

"There are brief discussions in classroom settings and formal talks about it, pamphlets at a doctor's office, but they hadn't changed in decades," said County Executive Mike Hein. "Our community college president put it best when he said that they had information available for people considering suicide or people who were worried someone was thinking about it, but the information was hard to find. You had to go searching on a website. He told me, 'I realized we were just checking off a box,' not addressing the problem."

The Ulster County SPEAK app, which stands for "suicide prevention



education awareness kit," aims to improve on traditional suicide prevention outreach by delivering information in a popular medium. It's the first county-created suicide prevention app in New York, Hein said, and possibly the country. Similar apps have been developed and aimed at college students.

"For good or bad, kids have a phone with them all the time," Hein said. "This is how they get their information, and since it's an app, we can get statistics about whether people are using it."

The interface offers information

specific to young adults, veterans and adults — and more general information about warning signs, what to say to someone who may be suicidal and additional resources. Every screen on the app includes a "call for help" option that will retrieve a phone number to a national suicide hotline or an Ulster County crisis hotline for veterans.

The app's warning signs list allows users to check symptoms they've seen, including "withdrawing from others," "sudden mood swings and personality change" and "showing rage or seeking revenge." Each option can be selected and a corresponding risk level will display, with appropriate actions someone can take in response.

"It's not only designed for the individual in crisis, it's for the 16-year-old kid at a lunch table who sees something wrong with his friend, doesn't know what it means," Hein said. "A lot of younger people don't know for sure if someone's behavior is indicative of suicidal tendencies. They don't have to, because they can access that information privately, discreetly."

The app also features video messages from a veteran, teenager and

adult speaking frankly about the nuances that come with interacting with someone considering suicide.

"They're designed to be imperfect, real, they'll resonate," Hein said. "You can't get a bunch of 16 year olds in a room and think a guy in a suit is going to have the same impact as someone who is recognizable."

Initial estimates for developing the app were close to \$100,000, but with the help of an Ulster County developer and the expertise of the county's health department (which includes mental health), the cost dropped to \$7,000, which was covered by a grant from the state's mental health office. The app debuted for Apple devices in

November, with an Android version due out in January. Hein said the app's code will be open to any county that wants to adapt it for their local specifications.

In Ohio, the Lucas County Suicide Prevention Coalition debuted the app "RUOK" in October. It includes a GPS tracker that will locate the closest crisis hotline in Ohio and Michigan, making it a useful tool for "students whose cell phone area code does not match their current location." Beyond the basic information about warning signs and steps to help a friend, it can connect users to specific GLBT and veterans mental health resources. It was adapted from the Ohio State University's suicide prevention app.

DID YOU KNOW?

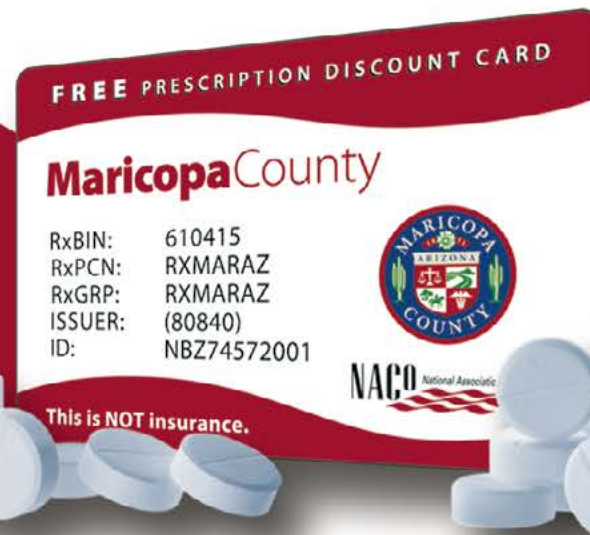
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Regionalism is a key asset in planning for emergencies

RESILIENCY from page 1

to know what to do, what to do next. Hold press conferences, town hall meetings; get on the radio; be available in-person.

6. N.I.M.S. (National Incident Management System) — Know it, know about the chain of command, staging, incident command centers, for example.

5. NGOs — Play a huge part in recovery and assistance. Churches first. I reached out to churches and the Salvation Army at the start.

4. Document!!! — start immediately. Be familiar with FEMA forms. A bit of advice “FEMA is not necessarily a 4-letter word.”

3. Debris Removal — Do your research beforehand. If possible, have a contract already in place. Be ready for the long term. Know what FEMA will pay for.

2. Remember the little things — Porta-Potties; sweep the streets for nails immediately before rescue vehicles go in; lights, generators, counseling for victims and first responders.

1. Fellow commissioners

Langston, too, presented a list of steps to recovery and resilience during the panel, “Lessons from County Leaders: Partnering to Confront Change.” Her steps included:

- communication and honesty
- relationships — before, during and after
- continuous risk assessment
- adaptability and continuous learning
- self-care
- story telling.



All photos by Bev Schlotterbeck

Ken Burris, former FEMA chief operating officer, keynotes the opening session at the Resilient Counties Forum. Burris is now CEO for Witt O'Brien's.

And bit of advice she offered — “You need to know when to shut up and get out of the way” — was echoed by Black Hawk County, Iowa Commissioner Frank Magsamen when he suggested that “elected officials aren't always the best to be out there in front of the camera.”

Black Hawk County, north of Linn County, also experienced significant flooding in 2008. His county has created a Long Term Recovery Committee to help individuals get back on their feet.

Bolstering “Resilient Counties” is the focus of Langston's term as NACo president. The Cedar Rapids forum is the first of two forums scheduled to support her initiative.

A common theme that emerged

from the panel discussions and speeches spotlighted the critical nature of relationships at all stages of resiliency, disaster response and recovery. “Resilient communities have broad sets of relationships,” noted Les Garner, president and CEO of the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation.

Sean O'Brien, Barnstable County, Mass., coordinator for the Regional Emergency Planning Committee, leveraged a Nextel phone relationship between a sheriff and a fire chief in Barnstable County, in the early 2000s that led eventually to the regionalization of emergency response and recovery systems in the county that is home to Cape Cod.



Hennepin County, Minn. Commissioner Randy Johnson asks a question during the panel discussion on leveraging technology to prepare for threats. Johnson is a past NACo president.

“In the old days, there were 15 communities setting up 15 command centers; 15 fire chiefs trying to get same resources; 31 shelters set up,” O'Brien related at the panel on professional leadership in disaster situations.

After 9/11, officials began to question why the county wasn't

regionalized. Regionalization was a sensitive subject for the home-rule towns and cities in the county, but O'Brien said he knew about the two first responders from two different communities who were in contact via the old Nextel two-way phones.

See RESILIENCY page 8

Resilient Counties Panelists

Lessons from County Leaders: Partnering to Confront Change

- Linda Langston, NACo president, Linn County, Iowa supervisor
- Frank Magsamen, Black Hawk County, Iowa supervisor
- Jane Hague, King County, Wash. councilmember, and
- Darryl Stacy, Oklahoma County, Okla. commissioner

Professional Leadership in Disaster Situations

- Rusty Russell, Madison County, Iowa director of emergency management
- Judson Freed, Ramsey County, Minn. director of emergency management and homeland security
- Sean O'Brien, Barnstable County, Mass. coordinator, Regional Emergency Planning Committee

Leveraging Technology Tools to Prepare for Threats

- Lori Cary-Kothera, operations manager, Science and Geospatial Solutions Division, NOAA Coastal Services Center
- Jason Hutchens, Solution sales engagement manager, public safety (Central Region), Motorola Solutions
- Rob Welton, national business manager, enterprise security, Siemens

Local Philanthropic, Business and Economic Development Engagement in Recovery Efforts

- Les Garner, president and CEO, Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation
- Karla Twedt-Ball, vice president for programs, Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation
- Robin Barnes, executive VP and COO, Greater New Orleans, Inc.
- Lon Olejniczak, senior VP, Transamerica;
- Cindy Dietz, director of corporate communications, Rockwell Collins



King County, Wash. Councilmember Jane Hague explains how King County tackled the threat of massive flooding in 2009 of its Green River Valley. Massive mitigation response protected the area that supported more than 130,000 jobs. Hague is a past NACo president.

Public expectations can outstrip counties' ability to deliver



All photos by Bev Schlotterbeck

Commissioner George Hartwick III, Dauphin County, Pa., questions panelists during the Resilient Counties forum.

RESILIENCY from page 7

He turned to them to lead a new effort to regionalize emergency services and planning. The Regional Emergency Planning Committee was formed in 2002. Operations during emergencies now are run out of an Multi-agency Co-ordination Center, or MAC. In turf-sensitive Barnstable County, "we don't call it a county emergency management center. We named it something else that everyone can live with."

In the meantime, regional planning has blossomed. There's no longer 31 shelters, for example. The number's down to six.

"I can't tell you," O'Brien said,

"how important it is to exploit one little Nextel relationship."

Resiliency rides on relationships, but the term is difficult to define, said Ken Burris, former FEMA chief operating officer, now CEO for Witt O'Brien's, a global preparedness, crisis management, and disaster response and recovery consulting company.

Burris keyed the forum's opening session, relating some critical insights about expectations in the wake of a disaster. "It's almost impossible to return the community to a pre-event condition as fast as the people would like," he said.

In addition, people also expect

help from government. "Social expectations have grown. Even at the very smallest levels of the crisis people expect officials to step in and give them something," he said. The social expectations reflect the fact that resiliency is a lot more than rebuilding the public infrastructure, he added.

Some may bemoan expectation of help from government, but government is involved in a big way in responding to and helping with re-

covery from disasters of all natures. Remarks from Jason Hutchens on the technology panel underscore the level of federal government involvement. The Presidential Policy Directive/PPD-8: National Preparedness is driving grants in the emergency management sphere, Hutchens said. County leaders should familiarize themselves with the directive as well as with the State Fusion Centers.

According to the Department of

Homeland Security, state and major urban area fusion centers serve as focal points within the state and local environment for the receipt, analysis, gathering, and sharing of threat-related information between the federal government and state, local, tribal, territorial (SLTT) and private sector partners.

Hutchens told county leaders to

See **RESILIENCY** page 9



Forum participants broke into small groups to assess their existing network of emergency responders and other stakeholders in the public, private sector. Pictured here (from left): Tracey Marshall, treasurer, Cass County, Iowa; Joel Rohne, IT-GIS director, Worth County, Iowa; Wayne Chizek, GIS director, Marshall County, Iowa; and Donald Kampman, IT-GIS director, Grundy County, Iowa.

Tips and advice from Resilient Counties presenters

- Set goals that are accomplishable

— KEN BURRIS
FORMER FEMA CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

- Time and date story, e.g. "As of x time on this date, such and such is the case." Social media moves stories fast

— BURRIS

- "Know when to shut up and get out of the way"

— FRANK MAGSAMEN
BLACK HAWK COUNTY, IOWA COMMISSIONER

- "Risk assessment is continuous"

— LINDA LANGSTON
LINN COUNTY, IOWA SUPERVISOR AND NACO PRESIDENT

- "Mitigation can avoid a disaster"

— JANE HAGUE, KING COUNTY, WASH.
COUNCILMEMBER AND NACO PAST PRESIDENT

- "Involve NGOs—churches and nonprofits"

— DARRY STACEY
OKLAHOMA COUNTY, OKLA. COMMISSIONER

- "Use PIO systems because the elected officials aren't always the best to be out there in front of the cameras"

— MAGSAMEN

- Share costs—"Back where I live there are eight jurisdictions, each with a bomb robot. Look to develop regional agreements for shared capital equipment to avoid situations like that"

— BURRIS

- Be familiar with FEMA forms

— STACEY

- "Become familiar with Presidential Policy Directive/PPD-8 and State Fusion Centers"

— JASON HUTCHENS
SOLUTION SALES ENGAGEMENT MANAGER,
PUBLIC SAFETY, MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS

- "Do not expect that the federal government is going to come in and rescue you"

— LANGSTON

- "Can't build relationships while in a crisis mode"

— LON OLEJNICZAK
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, TRANSAMERICA

- "Use satellite (communication) as redundant back up. Make sure you have hard copy maps of your community"

— ROB WELTON
NATIONAL BUSINESS MANAGER,
ENTERPRISE SECURITY, SIEMENS

- "Research debris removal"

— STACEY

- "In a disaster, even if you have the best relationships, you need to realize that things are going to be a lot of work and it's going to be really hard"

— LES GARNER
PRESIDENT & CEO OF THE GREATER
CEDAR RAPIDS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

- "Get in the game. Get in early and learn the process"

— HUTCHENS



David Miller wrapped up the forum with a speech showcasing his experiences as the administrator of Iowa's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division, where he served as the governor's representative during a number of federally declared disasters including the 2008 flood in Linn County. He is now FEMA associate administrator for the Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration.

STATE → TO → STATE

★ INDIANA ★ VIRGINIA ★

Indiana



When the Indiana General Assembly reconvenes Jan. 6, elected officials from the state's 92 counties will be looking to the Association of Indiana Counties (AIC) to represent their interests.

Before peering into his crystal ball, David Bottorff, AIC's executive director, reflected on successes from last year's long session, when the state's two-year budget was crafted.

"We had sought for years for the state to not divert gas tax money to other state services, but to keep it in the funding formula for roads," he said. "That benefited the state road system ... and local units of government as well, and then we also were able to get a portion of

the sales tax dedicated for roads as well, both state and local."

The budget Gov. Mike Pence (R) signed last May increased state transportation spending by \$210 million a year by dedicating 1 percent of state sales tax revenue and 100 percent of gas tax proceeds to roads.

"We were very happy with the outcome of that," Bottorff added.

Looking ahead, he said pluses and minuses loom on the horizon when state lawmakers return to Indianapolis next month for their 10-week short session, which occurs every other year.

"The governor has said he wants to continue to find new ways to invest in infrastructure, even though he had some accomplishments last session, he still has that as a high

priority for the state and for the locals. So that's a positive for us going into session, to have that on the agenda," Bottorff said.

On the flip side, Pence wants to eliminate or phase out the state's business personal property tax. "That's almost \$1 billion for local units of government in Indiana," Bottorff said. In addition to counties, it would also affect cities and towns, school corporations, townships and libraries.

"We rely on that assessed value to be taxed to generate property [tax revenue], and so if that's phased out or eliminated, obviously that's a huge concern for us, especially if there's no replacement revenue."

He said the governor has promised that "local units of government would not be unduly harmed. But AIC will continue to defend the tax.

Legislative action aside, Hoosiers, especially those in rural counties, continue to face stagnant or declining populations. "I think really it's all generated by economic development or job creation — the difficulty of rural areas to attract new jobs," Bottorff said.

Virginia



If the fact that something doesn't happen is reason to celebrate, Virginia's 95 counties should be passing around the bubbly over the last session. In this Dillon Rule state, beating back the Legislature is both a reason to celebrate and a matter of survival.

Jim Campbell, Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) executive director, identified several serious efforts that would have significantly changed the way Virginia's counties could do business. First up was a measure to eliminate local business taxes. It was the second time around for this idea, which also appeared in the 2012 session. "The proposal expanded the state sales tax base and eliminated state exemptions, Campbell said.

"It eliminated a county's ability to levy the BPOL (Business and Professional Occupational License tax), the M&T (Machinery and Tools) tax and Merchants Capital tax. These local taxes make up \$900 million in local revenue."

Another item on the association's agenda was a proposal to devolve transportation maintenance costs to localities. In Virginia, the state has responsibilities for road con-

struction, repair and maintenance. "We opposed devolution in 2012 and 2013 and worked to find a workable solution in meeting the Commonwealth's transportation initiatives," Campbell said. Eventually, the General Assembly passed a major overhaul to the state's transportation funding mechanisms. "We hear many groups discussing

devolution in 2013 and 2014, but we hold steadfast that transportation is a core function of state government in Virginia."

Going forward, Virginia's counties face pension reform and education funding issues — both arising out of legislation passed in the 2013 legislative session.

The attack on local government authority in tax and revenue matters and underfunded liabilities for teacher pension programs are likely to continue as persistent challenges to counties, Campbell said. (Counties fund schools in Virginia)

Waiting in the wings are tax reform, election funding, budget mandates and public safety funding.

Despite these challenges, the change due in the governor's mansion in Richmond is another cause for celebration, he said.

"I'm excited to be participating in our governor-elect's transition teams that will be focusing on legislative initiatives," Campbell said. VACo is involved in many new transition groups that are establishing legislative priorities for Governor-elect Terry McAuliffe (D). "We are also excited to be working with a much more moderate leadership in the Virginia House of Delegates. New committee chairmen reflect deeper understanding of the traditional roles and funding of state and local governments."

(Beverly Schlotterbeck and Charles Taylor, County News staff, contributed to this report.)

Profiles in Service



» Anthony Dimas Jr.

Member, Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee

Director of Homeland Security & Emergency Management • McKinley County, N.M.

Number of years active in NACo: Four

Years in public service: 11

Occupation: Public Safety

Education: B.A. in Criminology with a minor in Psychology, University of New Mexico

The hardest thing I've ever done: (also the most rewarding) working and going to college full time and graduating with honors.

People (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: George Washington.

A dream I have is to: see all my kids graduate from college.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: I have four children and one grandchild.

My favorite way to relax is: surfing the net, reading, online gaming.

I'm most proud of: my children.

Every morning I read: *Albuquerque Journal*, *The Gallup Independent*, *USA Today* and watch Good Morning America.

My favorite meal is: breakfast, it has to include red or green chiles.

My pet peeve is: people who are not on time, dress inappropriately for the occasion at hand.

My motto is: "Lead by example, do the right thing and always be fair."

The last book I read was: *Trust Works* by Ken Blanchard.

My favorite movies are: *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

My favorite music is: classic rock.

My favorite president is: George Washington — the founding father of our country.

COUNTY MANAGEMENT



IN INDIANA, THERE ARE
303 county board members and county executives.

1 is an elected county executive

IN VIRGINIA, THERE ARE
556 elected county board members and county executives.

3 are elected county executives

Next resiliency forum set for May in San Francisco

RESILIENCY from page 8

"get in the game, get in early and learn the process." Hutchens, who is the central region solution sales engagement manager for Motorola Solutions, was a presenter on the panel, Leveraging Technology Tool to Prepare for Threats.

Another panel explored the role of local philanthropic, business and economic development engagement in recovery efforts. Not only funding but network links and volunteer assistance can be generated by strong ties to these community sectors. For example, in Cedar Rapids, aviation corporation Rockwell Collins

provided office space to displaced businesses and agencies. Transamerica, another large employer in Linn County, donated 14,000 employee volunteer hours to help in the clean-up after the 2008 flood.

The forum ended with a luncheon address by David Miller, associate administrator for federal insurance and mitigation administration, FEMA, who reminded participants that — when it comes to emergency management and resiliency, "it's not emergency planning, it's community planning."

The next Resilient Counties Forum will be held in San Francisco, May 1–2, 2014.



Volunteers and Counties

Perhaps the spirit of generosity shines most brightly during winter's holiday season, but its reflection can be found throughout the entire year in hundreds of county programs, staffed by volunteers.

This special report, in the spirit of the holiday season, highlights how volunteers play critical roles in many areas and generously contribute their time and talents to the well-being, security and resiliency of the counties they serve.

No conscripts needed when veterans lend a hand to fellow veterans

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER



Barre Shepp does it to keep his mind sharp and his body active. That's why this Vietnam-era U.S. Navy veteran volunteers his time as mentor coordinator for the York County, Pa. Veterans Treatment Court.

He recruits and supervises volunteers to form a mentorship bond with veterans charged with crimes in an effort to divert them from jails.

"By staying active, I like to think that I'm doing okay for 71, health-wise and mind-wise," Shepp said. "When you stay active, when you stay engaged, it keeps you young, it keeps you healthy."

He was the county's veterans affairs director for 22 years before retiring in 2007, but he continues to serve the veterans' community. He recently participated in Veteran Mentor Boot Camp training in Washington, D.C. at a conference called Vet Court Con.

See VETS page 13



Photo by Sandy Britt, Montgomery County, Tenn. veterans service officer

Montgomery County (Tenn.) Veterans Transportation Service volunteers Wes Westerman (l) and Richard Herman (r) help support Richard Archer after returning from medical appointments in Nashville in 2009. The transportation service is an all-volunteer operation.

Volunteers keep Multnomah County, Ore. community justice running

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Call Multnomah County, Ore.'s Department of Community Justice and chances are a volunteer will pick up the phone.

In the offices, they're doing administrative work, teaching classes, leading exercise sessions or facilitating 12-step meetings.

For the department, which has almost 500 permanent employees, 140 volunteers are allowing staff members to do what only they have been trained to do, while getting a chance to contribute to the community or gain valuable experience.

"They provide supplemental experience and programming that we don't have the resources or capacity to provide," said Stephanie Bolson, the department's volunteer and

intern coordinator. "For example, our records techs and administrators are stretched pretty thin, so having additional support allows them to focus on their core functions."

It's a mix of interns, general volunteers and pro bono workers who have specific skills. Some are adults or retirees with time or experience to offer.

"They can provide any service we can find a need for, there's almost no limitation to what they can provide," she said. "There are organizations that provide yoga instruction in schools and they're willing to do it in our facility. We wouldn't otherwise hire a yoga instructor."

What looks like a cost-saving measure, Bolson said, is just as much a fulfillment of the department's mission.

"We're providing intangibles," she said. "It wouldn't be 'community

justice if members of that community were not involved. When people, especially youths, see people volunteering to spend time with them, to help them, they can understand a lot more clearly that their neighbors care about them. That's not something we can measure, but the more we've involved with the community, the better the outcomes."

It's also a two-way street. The department gets help, but it also gets input and perspective from the community.

With a robust internship program, the department keeps potential full-time hires connected to the department and allows students to work toward their degrees.

"By nature, an internship is a hindrance to an organization because they can't do the same kind of work the paid staff members are doing," Bolson said. "But we can train the

next generation and again, bring in new perspective and members of the community to make this true community justice."

They include graduate, undergraduate and associates-level students. For many, it's dipping a toe into the justice world, seeing what it is all about.

"It's also an opportunity for people who want to get into the field, or think they want to get into the field, but don't have any paid experience," Bolson said. "It's good for them and it's good for us to have them. And we like to hire from our volunteers when possible."

Portland State University sends the most interns to the department out of the 12 colleges in the area. Danielle McGurkin coordinates internships for the undergraduate

See JUSTICE page 12

VOLUNTEERS



NEARLY **64.5** MILLION people volunteered through or for an organization in 2012.

HIGHEST AND LOWEST NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS (BY AGE-GROUP)

AGES 20-24
19%

AGES 35-44
32%

Parents with children under the age of 18 volunteer

34 PERCENT of the time compared to **24 PERCENT** of those without children.

Source: Dept. of Labor - Bureau of Labor Statistics



Volunteers and Counties

Volunteer committees help fix health disparities, relationship with municipalities

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

A massive volunteer effort to improve the health of Fulton County, Ga. residents may have had the byproduct of strengthening the county's relationship with its municipalities.

“There was a craving for health information, but people shied away from government help.”

Inspired by fair-but-middling scores on the County Health Rankings, the county began recruiting volunteers to form seven health promotion action coalitions (HPAC) to examine the conditions surrounding major health concerns that were prevalent in the county and make recommendations for policies to address them, a group that totals almost 400 people.

But when program manager Nazeera Dawood reached out to some of the 14 municipalities that compose the county to recruit volunteers, she got responses that, while they included interest in

her public health project, trended toward surprise.

“Some of the mayors were surprised we were asking them for input from them,” Dawood said. “One of them said ‘In eight years, this is the first time the county has asked ‘what do you need?’”

With those municipalities recruiting volunteers from their residents, Dawood hoped to build the coalitions from the public, noting, “the solutions weren’t going to be found in a board room.”

Though the county health department provided technical expertise, it left it up to the coalitions, most between 45 and 90 members each, to address several topics:

- asthma
- diabetes
- heart health
- interfaith issues
- child safety
- protection from secondhand smoke and
- women’s health.

Advisory council member Marshall Kreuter said the way the smoke-free coalition got a non-smoking ordinance passed by the County Commission demonstrated the success in the HPAC approach.

“You have regular citizens standing in front of commissioners speaking directly to political



Photo courtesy of Fulton County, Ga.

Fulton County, Ga. volunteers lead a health promotion action coalition meeting.

people, helps alert them to that set of circumstances,” he said. “Commissioners heard people, their residents, showing data that smoke-free ordinances didn’t affect restaurant sales and improved the health of citizens without spending money; it had an impact.

“It showed the volunteers the kind of power they had in determining how circumstances affect health.”

Dawood also found that in addition to gleaning information from volunteers in the coalition, the county could also disseminate

information to communities through the volunteers, who were trusted leaders in their communities.

“There was a craving for health information, but people shied away from government help,” she said. “There was a distrustfulness,” that the county could circumvent by using volunteers as the messengers.

The discussions would talk about the health conditions, but they’d naturally move on to the contributing factors — the built environment, economics and social structures. Coalitions comprised a wide variety of participants, from city managers to laymen. They brainstormed about changing culture and brought in ideas bereft of technical buzzwords that haunted earlier policy discussions. “There were people without degrees, but they had something to contribute,” Dawood said. “A 92-year-old woman’s perspective was as valuable as a trained health professional’s. By bringing in people who weren’t spending their days deep in these issues, the coalitions were talking about the issue on the street level. It was genuine feedback, and it was fresh.”

The Rev. Mel Fareed serves as co-chairman of the interfaith coalition, which he estimates boasts almost 130 members.

“It’s a diversified approach to making a healthy community,” he said. “Our churches, our mosques or temples, they are an excellent place to start promoting good health because faith organizations have tremendous outreach. They are already community leaders.”

Fareed became involved in HPAC as a board member when a protégé of his told him about the coalitions forming. A heart attack in 2006 had made him keenly aware of how important a healthy lifestyle was, and he said the message is easy to send through the faith communities.

“We promote a balance of physical, mental and spiritual life,” he said. “And we’re a good way to get information back from our parishioners. When people don’t have a source of nutritious food in their neighborhood, they talk about it in their church community, and that’s a good way to find food deserts.”

Kreuter is retired from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and saw the way the county used volunteers as a better way to evaluate health conditions.

In an urban area with drastic health disparities, “you could look at data all you want and develop theories that the data support, but then you talk to the people who are actually part of that environment and the answers you get are nothing close to what you expected,” he said. “The problem they identify is completely different than what you thought it would be.”

“It’s easy to say having access to walking trails would impact people’s health, but when you hear that those trails are unsafe, that changes your approach to one that involves public safety.”

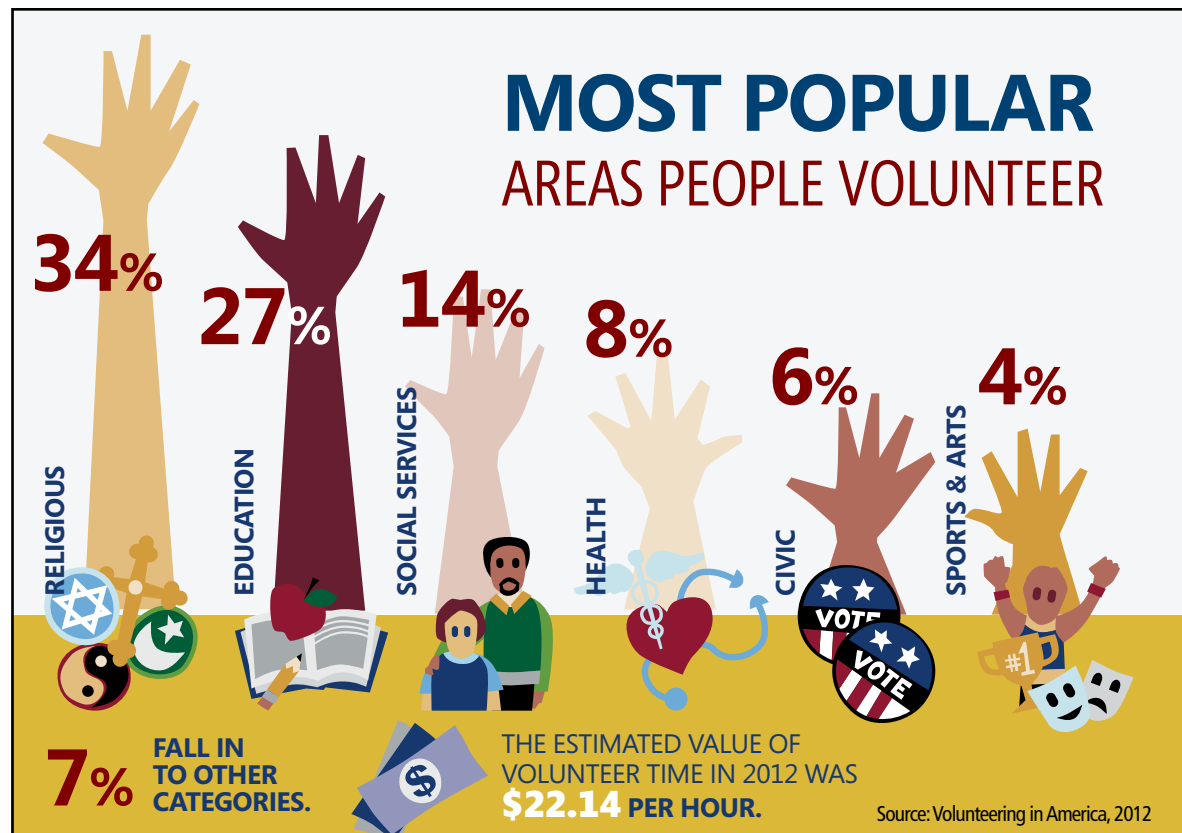
As the coalitions developed to the point where they could seek funding for projects, their volunteer composition worked in their favor.

“You don’t build it and then they come,” Dawood said. “You build it with them, and that cooperation carries a lot of credibility.”

As HPAC strives to become a tax-exempt nonprofit organization that can raise money, that kind of grassroots foundation and governance will be crucial.

Dawood said giving the coalition members the power to influence policy gave them motivation and the feel of having a role in the county.

“You need a genuine smile and a handshake and an assurance they have a place,” she said. “It’s walking the walk and that’s what the municipalities wanted to see from us. We followed through with our word and they appreciated that.”





Volunteers and Counties

Plan for disaster volunteers before they 'go rogue'

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

The title of a California report about local governments and post-disaster volunteers sums it up in three words: "They Will Come."

But will your county be ready when they arrive — unannounced and unexpected — at the scene of a natural or manmade disaster? "They" are known variously as spontaneous, unaffiliated or convergent volunteers, the ones who just show up.

A hurricane hits. A train derailed. Floodwaters rise. Terrorists attack.

"You see this on TV. You see the suffering and everybody wants to do something," said Jeri Bush, division director of Leon County, Fla.'s Volunteer Center. "They don't know what to do, but they want to do something. They're going to show up no matter what, and so we know that we have to be prepared to receive them."

Bush, a 20-plus-years veteran of managing volunteers in emergencies, has responded to tornadoes in Oklahoma and managed spontaneous volunteers in New York City after the 9/11 attacks.

"When no one is expecting them," said Bryan Desloge, a Leon



Photo courtesy of Leon County, Fla.

Tom Quillin (center), chief, Leon County, Fla. Emergency Medical Services, holds a directional sign at the opening of the county's state-of-the-art Emergency Management Facility as Commissioner Bryan Desloge (r) and EMS staff look on. Coordination of volunteers is a component of disaster response in the county.

County commissioner, "these 'spontaneous volunteers' create additional challenges for responders focused on meeting immediate needs and may even unwittingly place themselves in harm's way."

Bush said years ago emergency management's view wasn't favorable

to using spontaneous volunteers. "They knew that people would come, and they didn't want them to become the disaster within the disaster."

"What we realized was that government can't do this by themselves, so we need our citizens to become engaged. So we set up this

process for getting them out into the field according to skill sets," she added.

County volunteer managers, experienced in disaster response, say the best way to deal with unaffiliated volunteers is to have a system in place to accommodate and process them, such as a Volunteer Reception Center (VRC). It can be a physical location or it can be virtual, if the disaster makes a meeting place unfeasible, according to Greg Castano,

Arlington County, Va.'s volunteer services program coordinator.

VRCs enable spontaneous volunteers to be deployed in a structured environment that has pre-existing relationships with nonprofits and other emergency services providers. Volunteers are processed to determine their skills and are assigned to tasks or agencies appropriate to their expertise.

Bush said Leon County's VRC does quick screening interviews, gives a safety briefing and provides identification bracelets that let official county responders know they are approved. The volunteers' names are entered into a database. As for liability, she said it rests with the requesting agency. "If I send 50 volunteers to America's Second Harvest to unload trucks and sort food, that is under their liability."

Arlington County has a Volunteer Emergency Support Team (VEST) that helps operate the VRC, Castano said. VEST members are also used as "preparedness ambassadors."

"It's a model whereby volunteers canvass communities and help to inform them as to how to be more prepared in emergencies," he said — including being prepared to volunteer. In order to offer help, it's important to make preparations for one's own family, particularly if a volunteer responder is going to be away from home for an extended period of time.

See **DISASTER** page 13

Justice volunteers commit to six months

JUSTICE from page 10

department of criminology and criminal justice.

Since 2008, 31 CCJ undergraduates have been interns for DCJ, essentially paying the university to volunteer their time to the county.

"It's worth it because of the mentoring they receive, the networking they're exposed to and the general professional development they experience," McGurrin said. "The work they get to do is practical and truly comparable to an entry-level employee. They actually end up getting more mentoring than most entry-level employees would."

Internships require a 10-week screening process, in addition to the six-month commitment to the county. That the students, whose internship requirements would be over in less than three months, pursue the program is an endorsement of its value, McGurrin said.

"The students know upfront that

it will be a major commitment, eight months from start to finish, but they are getting opportunities to do things other interns can't do elsewhere," she said. "DCJ is outstanding about marrying theory and practice and from an academic perspective, that's the gold standard."

For non-academic volunteers, there are also high-level, high-involvement opportunities. Many of the volunteer positions are focused on youth services. With one paid bilingual teacher, the many bilingual students, most of whom Bolson said are in the country illegally as part of the drug trade and are unable to be remanded to custody of a relative, are left with little interaction or instruction with the teacher. Volunteer bilingual teachers' assistants, however, are helping manage the classes.

"The youth are here for an extended period of time," she said. "As much as we can do to provide them with an education, we can."

She also hopes to debut foster

grandparent program to recruit mentors for young boys.

In addition to linking up with online volunteer resources and community groups, the department presents its volunteer offerings as it would paid positions, listing responsibilities and requirements on its website. Most volunteers, and interns, commit to six months of at least eight hours a week. Background investigations add two weeks to the application period.

"Many interns complete that time much earlier, but they still have to stick around," Bolson said. "It takes three months to train some probation interns, with all of the systems and procedures they have to learn, so it would be a shame to train them and then they go."

The volunteer and internship program are currently on a rolling application schedule with monthly orientations, but Bolson is working to divide that among four annual deadlines and orientation periods.

Disaster Volunteer Resources

In communities that don't have county-run or -affiliated volunteer programs, citizens interested in volunteering during times of disaster can be matched with agencies through state or local chapters of National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD).

VOAD is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership organization where emergency-aid-providing agency and corporate partners share knowledge and resources throughout the disaster cycle — preparation, response and recovery — to help disaster survivors and their communities.

Nikki Beneke, national communications chair for VOAD, said the organization refers a lot spontaneous volunteers to local nonprofit VOAD organizations.

She said most local government emergency managers in her area, Dallas, Texas, sit on the local VOAD as associate members — "so they have that opportunity to meet everybody up front and know who everyone is."

Following is a list of resources on managing unaffiliated volunteers:

- Managing Spontaneous Volunteers in Times of Disaster: The Synergy of Structure and Good Intentions — www.fema.gov/pdf/donations/ManagingSpontaneousVolunteers.pdf
- Unaffiliated Volunteer Management — www.volunteerflorida.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/UVM_2004season.pdf



Volunteers and Counties

Get Plugged into Volunteer Programs in Local Government

NAVPLG.org

National Association of Volunteer Programs in Local Government

The National Association of Volunteer Programs in Local Government (NAVPLG) is your go-to resource for learning, networking and connecting around the unique needs of volunteer programs within the structure of local governments.

At last year's NACo Annual Conference, Leon County, Fla. Commissioner and NACo Board Member Bryan Desloge commented at a NAVPLG education session, "Volunteerism is what makes a good community a great community."

By creating local volunteer and engagement opportunities, you create opportunities for your volunteers to promote and highlight the important work of your local government. Volunteerism is one place where everyone can agree, regardless of political affiliation or opinion.

NAVPLG President Lee Ann Harvey sees the association's relationship with NACo as the perfect avenue for supporting the work of county elected officials with innovative and creative ideas for using volunteers. The *Volunteer Toolbox*, a NACo publication and collaboration with NAVPLG, serves as the perfect guidebook for creating, improving and sustaining volunteerism in your community. The toolbox is one of the many ways that NAVPLG helps to advocate for volunteer programming in local government and is a resource and how-to guide for establishing and managing successful government volunteer programs and initiatives.

Gwinnett County, Ga. staff and commissioners used NAVPLG (known as "navplug") as a resource for reaching out and connecting with other model volunteer programs as their community launched Volunteer Gwinnett, a 2013 NACo Achievement Award winner. Gwinnett County's newly centralized and expanded volunteer program was designed to involve more residents in volunteer activities associated with County government. Charlotte

Nash, chair, Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners, is a big supporter. "By making good use of volunteers, local governments can provide more than just the bare essentials. We can spend tax dollars wisely while giving residents and businesses more ways to play an active part in helping build a stronger, more vibrant community."

This past summer, at the National Conference for Volunteering & Service: Service Unites, NAVPLG convened local government volunteer practitioners and representatives in Washington, D.C. to share best practices and to learn from each other through work sessions and a panel discussion at the association's annual meeting. Topics included creative funding arrangements, the community planning process and volunteer partnership development. This annual event opportunity, one of NAVPLG's many resource offerings, is instrumental to the membership's development and for the field's ongoing growth and success.

NAVPLG also provides local governments with a means to recognize the policy makers and practitioners who make volunteerism work in their communities. NAVPLG's New Volunteer Administrator, Innovative Volunteer Program and Outstanding Volunteer Administrator awards recognize those working behind the scenes to make government volunteer programming successful.

NAVPLG's affiliation with NACo helps to bring greater visibility to volunteer management as a profession and is a ringing endorsement of the field's importance to communities and to the operation of local government.

In 2014, get plugged in. NAVPLG membership and the network are here to help you tap into the power of volunteerism in your community.

For more information, visit www.navplg.org.

Veterans serve in many volunteer roles

VETS from page 10

Though not all counties have them, veterans courts are one of the primary organized efforts in which veterans are recruited to help other vets to navigate the criminal justice system, and, hopefully, get help for the condition that landed them in trouble — whether housing for homeless vets, rehab for substance abusers, or treatment for medical conditions or behavioral disorders.

"We have about 25 mentors right now, and I've got about three to four that have expressed a desire that I'm going to make contact with," Shepp said. "I just conducted a class for four new people about three weeks ago. So we'll be putting together another training class here shortly."

Judge Rebecca Nightengale hears the veterans court docket in Tulsa County, Okla. In addition to using volunteers to work with court "participants" as she calls them, the participants themselves must fulfill a volunteer service requirement before exiting the program.

"They're required to do give-back hours, which means they volunteer 40 hours of their time with a nonprofit," she explained.

"We have one of our veterans, when he comes to court he always brings a book with him. He's extremely learned, 72 years old, he has multiple degrees. We now have him mentoring another guy in our court who has a literacy issue," Nightengale said. "So one of our participants now volunteers his time by mentoring another participant in the court to help him to read so he can get his GED."

In other counties, particularly those with veterans services officers, vets can serve in a variety of volunteer roles.

Maria Wetherall, veteran services director for Ramsey County, Minn., said her office has been approached by public health about recruiting veterans as volunteers to participate in a program called Minnesota Responds, a medical reserve corps that responds to medical emergencies.

"They approached me because of the training that the military gives to corpsmen and individuals that work in those

roles that support 'medical' in the (service) branches," she said.

"When they said that, I immediately thought, 'Yeah, good idea.' Because there are oftentimes veterans that are seeking opportunities to give back and want to stay involved, want to keep their training current," she added.

Habitat for Humanity has also reached out to Wetherall. The charity would like to involve more veterans in its home-construction efforts.

"You can kind of see that veterans in general have a strong interest in volunteering and bringing their experience to the service of people back home in their communities," she said, "and I think we see that here in Ramsey County every single day."

In many states, it's a requirement that county veteran services officers be veterans themselves. Wetherall is (Navy), and so is Jim Young (Army) in Vernon County, Wis. He also serves on NACo's Veterans and Military Services Committee.

His office recruits veterans to provide transportation to other vets who lack ways to get to appointments at one of three VA hospitals — in Tomah 55 miles from his

office in Viroqua, the county seat, in Madison 100 miles away or in Milwaukee, a 200-mile drive.

"I have volunteer drivers who are veterans or the spouses of veterans, and they use their own [personal vehicles] and are reimbursed mileage and a meal." He finds volunteer drivers — currently he has seven — by networking with veteran-serving organizations such as VFWs and American Legions.

For folks like Young, Wetherall and Shepp, it's rewarding to be able to help veterans who have already given so much to continue to do so.

"I guess when you retire," said Shepp, "you're supposed to go quietly into the night and become one of these old retired guys, sitting around, doing whatever. But my 22 years working with the veterans of York County — I love the vets. I love the friendship that I developed with a lot of these guys, the camaraderie, and I like staying involved."

**To learn more about county veterans services officers, contact the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers, a NACo affiliate, at www.nacvo.org.*

Protocol for disaster volunteers promotes safety, organization

DISASTER from page 12

A big part of managing "future" unaffiliated volunteers is to get them affiliated before a disaster happens, Castano said. That involves community outreach and constantly promoting and publicizing the existence of the VRC as a place where citizens can preregister their skills and interests.

"The affiliation part is important," he added, "because we also have some ability to do some checking on the individuals, be it a background check, be it a criminal record check. But it allows us to vet folks a little bit more, so that if we are going to send them out as a representative of the county, essentially, we've at least done some due diligence on the individual."

When establishing a VRC, FEMA advises implementing a Volunteer Annex (sometimes called Emergency Support Function) in your county's Emergency Operations Plan.

"Create a Volunteer Coordination Team that will be activated and responsible for collecting, identifying, in-processing, assigning, accounting for and tracking and release of the spontaneous volunteers," FEMA wrote in an Aug. 19 publication, part of its Coffee Break Training series (this one on VRCs).

"At the VRC, distribute 'go kits' that include office supplies, forms, lists, maps and special equipment. Forms and job aids can be used to help in emergency registration/orientation, interviews, data entry and coordination, volunteer identification, safety training, public information, and even job training."

Most importantly, Bush said, once a system for managing volunteers is established, practice it.

"If you don't exercise this and you don't plan for this, you have no business in the middle of a disaster setting anything up, because you're just going to create a bigger problem, chaos within in chaos. We like to say ours is organized chaos."



News From the Nation's Counties

► **ALABAMA**

JEFFERSON COUNTY has closed the sale of nearly \$1.8 billion in new debt and **emerged from the nation's second-largest municipal bankruptcy.**

The county filed for bankruptcy in 2011, citing more than \$4.2 billion in debt. It had been the nation's largest municipal bankruptcy until Detroit filed this year, citing \$18 billion in debt. A federal judge approved Jefferson County's plan to exit bankruptcy last month, but it was conditioned on closing on the new debt, the Associated Press reported.

► **CALIFORNIA**

• **FRESNO COUNTY** supervisors voted to **assign the coroner's role to the sheriff** as of Jan. 1, 2014.

The coroner's position was created in 1978 because the sheriff at that time convinced supervisors that there was a conflict of interest for him to hold both offices, the *Fresno Bee* reported. A majority of current supervisors said Sheriff Margaret Mims and her department can handle the job fairly, impartially — and do it more efficiently than it is currently being done. The change also gives the coroner's other duty, as public administrator, to the district attorney's office.

• The **SANDIEGO COUNTY** Board of Supervisors approved coupling the region's emergency response system with a **smartphone app** that would notify people with CPR training when someone in their immediate vicinity is suffering sudden cardiac arrest.

The PulsePoint smartphone app would use information from the county's existing 911 system to notify nearby CPR-trained bystanders, such as off-duty firefighters, police officers, nurses and lifeguards, and direct them to the nearest automated external defibrillator, CBS8 News reported.

The app will use location-based services built into phones to send a map of the victim's location to a CPR provider in seconds. The data could also help identify areas that lack defibrillator access.

► **KANSAS**

A campaign against the state's mortgage registration fee could mean **major losses for county revenues**, to the tune of \$47 million a year.

Realtors and bankers are targeting the fee for repeal, saying it discriminates against people who

need to borrow money to buy homes or business property.

County officials say they will have to raise property taxes to make up for the lost revenue, the *Wichita Eagle* reported.

The fee is based on the amount of money borrowed in the mortgage, 26 cents on every \$100 borrowed. Of that, 25 cents goes to the county and a penny goes to the Heritage Trust Fund, which provides matching funds to preserve historic buildings.

SEDGWICK COUNTY Register of Deeds Bill Meek said that while neighboring states don't have a registration fee, most charge a "transfer tax" any time a property changes hands that amounts to about the same thing.

By his accounting, the total price of registering a \$100,000 mortgage is about \$676 in Kansas, compared to \$342 in Missouri, \$678 in Iowa, \$845 in Nebraska and \$1,532 in Colorado communities that charge a local tax on property transfers.

► **MARYLAND**

• **PRINCE GEORGE'S** and **MONTGOMERY counties'** councils voted to **raise their minimum wages** to \$11.50, far above the national \$7.25 rate. The Washington, D.C. City Council also approved a matching minimum wage increase.

Prince George's County Executive Rushern L. Baker III said he favors leaving the matter to the Maryland General Assembly and Gov. Martin O'Malley (D) for statewide action so the move doesn't hamstring the county's competitiveness in luring retailers, *The Washington Post* reported. The bill would increase the minimum wage to \$9.55 in October 2015 and \$10.75 in October 2016. In October 2017, it would reach \$11.50.

The Montgomery bill would add an \$8.40 step in October 2014.

• **Seized marijuana** will keep a new **HARFORD COUNTY Sheriff's Office** helicopter in the air.

Asset forfeiture from convicted drug dealers that will fund the \$125,000-a-year cost to operate the aircraft.

It will help deputies search for missing people, track down criminals and uncover hidden marijuana-growing operations. A sheriff's office aviation unit will staff the helicopters, which will be deployed as needed, according to *Havre de Grace Patch*.

• **HOWARD COUNTY** opened the county's first **school-**

based wellness center. Students at one elementary school can walk down the hallway to receive lab tests, health assessments, immunizations, physicals for camp or sports, management of chronic medical problems and immediate treatment for illnesses and injuries.

Administrators tout it as a faster treatment option than doctors' office visits and easier on parents' schedules.

No enrolled students will be turned away from the center because of an inability to pay, the *Baltimore Sun* reported, and bills will be sent to insurance companies for reimbursement. If a student has a primary care provider, the center will coordinate care with the provider with a sliding scale of fees based on family income.

The center is staffed full-time by the county health department and will include a pediatric nurse practitioner, a medical office assistant, a licensed social worker and a part-time pediatrician.

► **MICHIGAN**

• Applicants for jobs with **GENESEE COUNTY** may no longer be asked on initial applications if they've been **convicted of a felony or misdemeanor.**

By removing the questions, the county can still carry out background checks and decide to take the convictions into consideration, but workers would be given the opportunity to show they are still qualified for the job or that their conviction is not related to job duties.

As of mid-December, the Board of Commissioners was still considering the change.

The county currently asks applicants about past criminal convictions on initial applications but does not exclude job candidates from consideration based solely on the existence of a criminal record, the *Flint Journal* reported.

Elsewhere in Michigan, Detroit adopted a similar policy to what the county is considering in 2010, and **SAGINAW** and **MUSKEGON counties** have also done so.

► **NEW JERSEY**

MIDDLESEX and **UNION counties** have reached an agreement to **share the services of a DNA analyst.** Larger Middlesex (pop. 810,000) hired the analyst who will work out of the Union County prosecutor's forensic lab. Union County's population is 536,000.

Seventy-five percent of the

analyst's time will be spent evaluating and cataloguing DNA and forensic evidence for Middlesex County, while Union County investigators will get the remaining 25 percent, according to NJ.com.

Grace Park, acting Union County prosecutor, said "leveraging the resources of our forensics laboratory to aid in Middlesex County's investigations will greatly benefit both counties."

► **NORTH CAROLINA**

• **BUNCOMBE COUNTY** commissioners recently approved a resolution committing the county to **reducing carbon emissions** from county facilities by 2 percent a year up to a total of 80 percent.

It also calls for support of energy efficiency projects — recommended in an audit of county facilities — over the next five years

that would cost almost \$847,000 to perform and save the county \$173,500 a year.

The resolution says, in part, that decreasing energy use would help the nation wean itself off dependence on foreign energy sources from countries hostile to the United States.

• **ONSLOW COUNTY** is slated to have some **6,000 solar panels** installed at a closed landfill that's part of a landfill gas-to-energy system recently installed by Onslow Power Producers (OPP).

The county will receive profit-sharing payments from OPP, which is funding the project, and will receive a license fee of \$10,000 for each solar site, *The Daily News* reported. The gas-to-energy system

See NEWS FROM page 15

WORD SEARCH

Christmas Town Traditions

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

BETHLEHEM (Lehigh and Northampton County, Pa. – downtown wrapped in 5,500 strands of lights)

CHRISTMAS (Orange County, Fla. – fully-decorated 25-foot-tall evergreen tree can be seen all year)

CHRISTMAS VALLEY (Lake County, Ore. – concludes its annual holiday parade by serving 400 cookies, more than the towns population)

EVERGREEN (Conecuh County, Ala. – adorns downtown sidewalks with more than 30 christmas trees)

JOY (Mercer County, Ill. – processes more than 12,800 cards through the town's mail system because of special postmark)

NOEL (Mcdonald County, Mo. – floats a locally cut cedar tree atop a 144-square-foot raft to create a festive reflection in the elk river)

NORTH POLE (Fairbanks North Star Borough, Alaska – trucks in 2.2 million pounds of ice to create festive winter sculptures)

RUDOLPH (Wood County, Wis. – 40 street signs in feature a silhouette of rudolph all year)

SANTA CLAUS (Spencer County, Ind. – recruits 150 elves to reply to 11,000 letters to santa)

SNOWFLAKE (Navajo County, Ariz. – serves up to 1,000 cups of hot cocoa after the annual holiday parade)

Financial Services News

Online Toolkit Helps with Pension Funding Changes



The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) has released a new online toolkit that will help preparers and auditors of state and local government pension plans

to implement new accounting and financial reporting standards. The toolkit provides guidance on how plan administrators can effectively comply with the new rules. It includes the following resources:

- a video addressing the top implementation issues facing pension plans
- a podcast discussing the types of pension plans that will

be affected by Statement 67 and the most significant changes to accounting and financial reporting

- a background document answering frequently asked questions regarding Statement 67 and Statement No. 68, Accounting and Financial Reporting for Pensions
- a fact sheet answering frequently asked questions specifically related to Statement No. 67
- an article identifying several areas plan administrators and public officials should consider as they plan, prepare and collaborate when implementing the new standards
- a "Setting the Record Straight" document addressing misperceptions about the new standards and
- the executive summary and the full text of GASB Statement 67.

The new standards include Statement No. 67, Financial Reporting for Pension Plans, which applies to financial reporting by most pension plans and Statement No. 68, Accounting and Financial Reporting for Pensions, which applies to financial reporting by most governments that provide

their employees with pension benefits. Some highlights of the new rules include the redefined pension plan to reflect the principal actions associated with the pension arrangement — shaping pensions, collecting and handling assets reserved for pensions, and paying benefits to plan members as they come due.

In addition, the Government Finance Officers Association has put together an Elected Official's Guide to the new pension accounting requirements. These changes to how state and local governments account for the cost of pension benefits in their financial statements are clearly explained for those with little or no expertise in pension accounting in the new guide: An Elected Official's Guide: The New Pension Accounting.

** See this story at www.countynews.org to learn more about the new pension toolkit.*

(Financial Services News was written by Mary Bell, director, NACo Financial Services Corporation. Kelly Boggs, FSC intern, also contributed to this report.)

Sale of county-owned land mineral rights could fatten Pa. counties' coffers

NEWS FROM *from page 14*

draws fuel from one active and two closed landfills.

Scott Bost, the county's director of solid waste, said the project costs the county nothing, will bring in revenue, creates green power for the area and "puts Onslow County on the map again."

► PENNSYLVANIA

County governments in the western part of the state are looking below ground to raise money; they're considering leasing out public land or mineral rights for shale gas drilling.

As BEAVER COUNTY

struggles with its finances, commissioners are marketing county land, including 1,400 acres in its largest park, for drilling, according to the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. Last month, ALLEGHENY COUNTY received a proposal to drill underneath Deer Lakes Park. Officials in WASHINGTON and BUTLER counties are also eyeing potential shale gas profits.

"There's an opportunity for money, but on the other hand, we're stewards of this land," said Doug Hill, executive director of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania. "I wouldn't say there's a county saying, 'OK, we need cash. Let's go and sign a lease.'

A lot of this is exploration, seeing if it's a good fit for the county."

► SOUTH CAROLINA

A proposed bill in the South Carolina House would let counties allow voters to decide whether they want to raise their own gas taxes. The money would stay in the county to improve roads.

The state currently collects a gas tax of about 16 cents a gallon, which hasn't been raised since 1987.

State legislators have rejected bills to increase the state gas tax, but figuring out how to pay for needed road and bridge improvements is one of their biggest issues, according to WBTW News. The Legislature convenes in January.

Under the proposed legislation, county leaders could establish a local-option gas tax, up to 2 cents per gallon, and set how long it would remain in effect. Then the question would be put to the voters.

• ORANGEBURG COUNTY and several others are coming out against legislation that would limit counties' control over trash.

A so-called "flow control" bill cleared the House last session. If the Senate approves it, local governments would be barred from requiring residents and haulers to use government-owned landfills, *The Times and Democrat* reported.

Orangeburg Councilman Willie B. Owens said, "For years we've spent money on getting a dump site and meeting specific regulations by [the state], and now we have companies that have come into the state and have grown — and have enough money to fight us, and they want to take over our dumping process."

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

NACo on the Move

» NACo Officers, County Officials

• NACo President **Linda Langston** spoke about NACo at the Association of Minnesota Counties annual conference in Hennepin County Dec. 9.

• NACo Second Vice President **Sallie Clark** spoke about "Why Counties Matter?" at the Colorado Counties, Inc. Annual Conference in El Paso County Dec. 2.

• Franklin County, Ohio Commissioner **Paula Brooks**, chair of NACo's International Economic Development Task Force, discussed the importance of the manufacturing industry to counties at the White House Mayors Manufacturing Summit Dec. 5 in Washington, D.C.



Paula Brooks

» NACo Staff

• **Andrew Goldschmidt**, membership director, spoke about NACo at the Nebraska Association of County Officials Annual Conference in Douglas County Dec. 13.



Alyssum Pohl

• **Alyssum Pohl**, NOAA Digital Coast fellow, gave a presentation on the Digital Coast website, highlighting tools including the Sea Level Rise Viewer, Coastal County Snapshots and the Marine Cadastre at NOAA in Silver Spring, Md. Dec. 6.

• **Paul Beddoe**, deputy legislative director, participated in a roundtable discussion on health care in county jails and a walk-through of the health unit at the Berrien County, Mich. jail Nov. 26.

On the Move is compiled by Christopher Johnson.

What's in a Seal?



» Sedgwick County, Kan.
www.sedgwickcounty.org

Originally a camping ground of the Osage and Wichita Indian tribes, Sedgwick County, Kan. is thought to be a place of discovery for such explorers as Francisco Coronado and Kit Carson.

The earliest European settler to the region was M. DuTissenet, a Frenchman operating under the direction of the governor of Louisiana, in 1719. DuTissenet brought with him soldiers, traders and hunters who soon populated and transformed the region from prairie to a land of opportunity.

Sedgwick County was officially established nearly 150 years later on Feb. 26, 1867, and bears the name of Civil War hero Gen. John Sedgwick of the Union Army who was killed during the battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse in Virginia. The county was a prohibition or "dry" county until the Kansas Constitution was amended in 1986 and voters approved the sale of alcohol.

The seal shows an Indian, representing the tribes, with wheat and sunflowers on each side of the border.

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

Research News

Counties Boost Exports on the Ground

U.S. exports hit a record high in October, helping the growth of the economy and driving down the trade deficit. This has been a recurrent story over the last several years.

Export growth has played a large part in the nation's recovery, accounting for 37 percent of U.S. economic output growth between 2009 and 2012. County economies were part of this trend, as they are the fundamental blocks of regional economies, states and the nation. Counties have actively contributed to the success of U.S. exports by developing initiatives designed to help local businesses increase their exports to international markets and create jobs in their local economies.

All county economies export, but their export profiles differ reflecting the strengths of each county economy. Recent data released by the Brookings Institution offers insight into the export profiles of counties.

While 48 percent of the 2012 U.S. exports were produced in large county economies, exports mattered more for small county economies, being responsible for almost 20 percent of the economic output in

these county economies. Businesses located in medium-sized counties produced 42 percent of the manufacturing exports, while 62 percent of service exports came from large county economies.

Counties have been proactive in helping their businesses export, grow and create jobs in their communities. For example, Franklin County, Ohio has an EcoPartnership with Hefei, China designed to foster the development of solutions to environmental and energy challenges. The partners will develop this exchange together with universities and the private sector in their communities.

In 2009, Riverside County, Calif. created the Riverside County Office of Foreign Trade, part of the county's economic development agency. The office assists local businesses in their export and import activities with the objective of creating new jobs and investment within the county.

The county office has been very active in reaching out to foreign trade partners; by 2013, the county had reached agreements with several countries, including Japan, Canada,

Croatia and Australia. The county is working on a bilateral trade agreement with several African nations including Kenya.

The NACo International Economic Development Task Force fa-

cilitates the dialogue on international economic development initiatives among counties and with other stakeholders including states, the private sector and the federal government. Counties are an important partner

in the U.S. efforts to grow exports and help local businesses create jobs at home.

(Research News was written by Benjamin Kirby, research intern.)

The H.R. Doctor Is In

An HR Doctor Holiday Card

'Twas the night before Christmas
And throughout County Hall
Not a bureaucrat was stirring
No sounds heard at all



The janitor's night off, the alarm systems set
The beacons for security and decoration met
The ambient light kept the stars out of sight
No Bethlehem star could be seen on that night

Those bringing gifts were turned back at the door
No gifts could be given, auditors hired galore
No risk of polluting the ethics machine
Even frankincense and myrrh would have to be screened

While Christmas and Chanukah often meet in December

We seem to forget what we all should remember
Of friendship and family, of futures so bright
Of civil behavior and doing what's right

The holidays tell us of great lessons learned
A safer and better world to be earned
Give gratitude and joy — the greatest gifts, we believe
It's better to give than it is to receive

With Love and Best Wishes for a "Service to Others" Holiday Season...

— Phil Rosenberg, HR Doctor
Charlotte Rosenberg, HR Spouse
Elyse Rosenberg, HR Daughter
Rachel Brown, HR Doctor Daughter
Evie Brown, HR Grand-Toddler



www.hrd.net



Attend NACo's 2014 Legislative Conference
March 1–5 ★ Washington Hilton, Washington, D.C.

REGISTER NOW FOR EARLY-BIRD RATE!

Go to www.naco.org/legislativeconference

