

NACO National Association of Counties

# CountyNews

The Voice of America's Counties

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES ■ WASHINGTON, D.C.

VOL. 44, NO. 23 ■ December 3, 2012

## HHS releases proposed rules fleshing out health law

By PAUL BEDDOE  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

**WEB\*  
CONTENT**

In the first of what is expected to be a post-election flood of new regulations implementing aspects of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released details of three new regulatory proposals on Nov. 20.

The rules govern market reforms designed to protect consumers, essential health benefits and new workplace wellness programs. Comments are due Dec. 26 with full implementation set for Jan. 1, 2014.

The first proposed regulation prohibits health insurance plans

from denying coverage to individuals due to pre-existing or chronic conditions. Insurers would only be allowed to charge different premiums based on age, tobacco use, family size and geography. Denying coverage because of a pre-existing condition or charging higher premiums due to current or past health problems, gender,

See **HEALTH** page 4

## Immigration reform could see new effort

By MARILINA SANZ  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

With the continued emergence of the Hispanic vote, prospects for immigration reform in the first session of the 113th Congress are on the rise. President Barack Obama wants to make this a priority next year, and a growing number of Republican leaders are saying it is time to act. Bipartisan agreement is key to comprehensive reform. No major immigration bill has been enacted without it.

There is a difference of opinion on whether reform should be comprehensive or incremental, with the president, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) and Majority Whip Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) preferring the comprehensive approach. House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) has also declared that he wants to see immigration taken up next year, but is leaning toward incremental steps.

NACo supports comprehensive immigration reform. NACo President Chris Rodgers has reappointed an immigration reform task force. Its goals include educating Congress on NACo's views on immigration and keeping its members

See **REFORM** page 2



Photo courtesy of Office of Communications, Fulton County, Ga.

Roy Brooks, NACo Large Urban County Caucus (LUCC) vice-chair and Tarrant County, Texas commissioner (l), greets Stan Batemon, St. Clair, Ala. commission chair, at LUCC's Annual Planning Meeting in Fulton County, Ga. as John Eaves, commission chairman of the host county, looks on. The meeting to set the LUCC agenda for the next year was held in Atlanta Nov. 28-30.

### Quick Takes

#### Best of the Web 2012

Outstanding government websites

- 1 - Orange County, Fla.
- 2 - Pinellas County, Fla.
- 3 - Alameda County, Calif.
- 4 - Miami-Dade County, Fla.
- 5 - Chesterfield County, Va.

centerdigitalgov.com

## CountyNews Features

## Counties challenge hospitals' tax exemptions

By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Cash-strapped budgets are leading counties — East and West — to more closely scrutinize tax exemptions granted to hospitals providing charity care.

In Douglas County, Ore., the county assessor's office recently denied Mercy Medical Center's bid to extend the nonprofit hospital's tax exemption to four new properties it acquired, valued at least \$16 million, according to Assessor Susan Acree. The hospital's appeal of the decision is pending.

Allegheny County, Pa. Councilman John DeFazio has scheduled

a public hearing on Dec. 5 about taxation and UPMC, the medical conglomerate that is the county's largest property owner, value-wise. In 2002, its holdings were assessed at \$1.6 billion. Heightened interest in its tax exemptions follows a series of newspaper investigative reports about 86 percent of the medical system's 656 acres being tax-exempt.

"There's been a lot of newspaper articles on this subject," DeFazio said at the council's Nov. 8 meeting. "People have been asking a lot of questions ... about the tax-free properties. I think it would be good

See **EXEMPTIONS** page 7

### INSIDE



Virginia county supervisors take a lesson from students ► [Page 7](#)

National County Government Month to highlight 'Smart Justice' ► [Page 2](#)

Survey shows technology benefits for county recorders, assessors ► [Page 3](#)

Former county officials in Congress spearhead election reform ► [Page 5](#)



# 'Smart Justice' theme announced for 2013 NCGM

By JIM PHILIPPS  
MEDIA RELATIONS MANAGER



NACo President Chris Rodgers recently announced that the April 2013 theme for National County Government Month (NCGM) will be "Smart Justice: Creating Safer Communities."

The theme complements one of Rodgers' NACo presidential initiatives, Smart Justice, which aims to highlight innovative county government justice system policies and practices among the nation's counties.

Since 1991, NACo has encouraged counties to actively promote county government services and programs, first during National County Government Week. It was later expanded to a monthlong observance.

"I am encouraging counties to link the 2013 theme — "Smart Justice: Creating Safer Communities"—to as many National County Government Month activities as possible," Rodgers said. "Counties run the nation's local justice systems, and National County Government Month is the perfect opportunity for leaders in county government to reach out to communities we

serve and educate them about our law enforcement efforts and how our court and jail systems operate."

Rodgers said counties with innovative programs and services associated with their local justice system should be highlighted under the Smart Justice theme as well, such as pre-trial services, post-release service coordination, justice and mental health collaboration, supportive housing and employment services.

Popular NCGM events include holding public tours of county facilities; talking to students, community organizations and business leaders about county programs and services; holding essay and art contests; and sponsoring county family day events on the courthouse

See NCGM page 8

## 2012 award winners provide glimpse of how counties go 'all in' to celebrate NCGM

The 2012 National County Government theme was "Healthy Counties, Healthy Families."

- **Wicomico County, Md.** held several community forum presentations around the county hosted by the county executive. These included library events such as "Healthy Cooking, Healthy Families" and health department lunch-and-learn events. The county conducted tours of public works facilities to showcase recycling and methane collection functions and displayed law enforcement and emergency vehicles.

- **Eagle County, Colo.** hosted a variety of events and activities surrounding its 2012 theme, "Healthy Living in Eagle County." Events included an Earth Day poster contest; an essay contest for high school students; presentations by Eagle County Public Health and Colorado State University Extension; parade celebrations honoring Week of the Young Child; and a 5k fun run-walk, breakfast and a provider fair. Healthy breakfast foods were donated by local companies. The resource fair featured nearly 30 family-youth service providers from throughout the county, and included free lead screenings for children, car seat checks and CPR-defibrillator training.

- **Manatee County, Fla.** hosted more than 50 events to focus on five parameters of health including physical, social, behavioral, environmental and economic health. Events included a torch run sponsored by Manatee County Sheriff's Office, a health department farm stand, a knee pain workshop, a horseshoe tournament, many classes and learning opportunities on topics such as water conservation, physical activity, disease prevention and healthy eating, along with several Relay for Life Events.

- **Durham County, N.C.** hosted a lunchtime health and wellness fair. The health department

had a booth about smoking cessation that informed citizens about the county's upcoming enforcement of a smoking ordinance to create smoke-free zones; Cooperative Extension provided nutrition and 4-H Program booths; 70-80 people including county employees and local college students took part in a "flash mob" to promote healthy movement; the county manager highlighted a goal of the county strategic plan: Health and Well-being for All; and a nutritionist shared how much movement people should strive to complete each week to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

- **El Paso County, Colo.** celebrated the "Healthy Counties, Healthy Families" theme with a month-long series of events specifically designed to showcase "good for your health" programs and activities. Events included a third-grade art contest; a free public health education program in partnership with Kaiser Permanente; a household hazardous waste collection day; a family-centered hiking event; a lunch-and-learn program for county employees; a child abuse prevention and child trauma educational event in partnership with Northwestern University; a water stewardship day that included water-consuming invasive plant removal and water-wise garden preparation and a community recycling and cleanup event. A free community health event featured information and healthy local food as well as a feature presentation of a documentary film "Children in Crisis" that focused on the damaging effects of childhood obesity.

- **DeKalb County, Ga.** hosted in partnership with *The Champion* newspaper, and the CEO's Community Hero Awards ceremony honored individuals and organizations making a significant impact in DeKalb County through volunteerism. The county held lunch-and-learn sessions focused on physical, mental or financial health.

## Immigration reform a priority in Obama's second term

REFORM from page 1

informed on what is going on in Washington. The task force is co-chaired by Mary Rose Wilcox, supervisor, Maricopa County, Ariz., and Walter Tejada, county board member, Arlington County, Va. Angel Estrada, freeholder, Union County, N.J. is the vice chair.

"The president and Congress have a great opportunity to fix our broken immigration system in a bipartisan fashion," Rodgers said. "With leaders such as Mary Rose, Walter and Angel, our immigration reform task force will ensure that county interests are well represented in the debate."

The Senate is expected to act first. Sens. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) worked on a framework for comprehensive reform several years ago and may revive that effort. Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) is taking a leadership role, citing the need for reform for economic reasons. New senators, such as Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.), may also play a key role. When Flake was in the House, he responsored comprehensive reform with Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-Ill.) several years ago.

In addition to immigration advocates, there are many other stakeholders in the debate, including the faith community, businesses and unions. Several of NACo's sister organizations, particularly the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors have similar policies in support of comprehensive immigration reform. In fact, state and local groups worked with Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) on a provision that would have given grants to states and local governments for education and health related to legalization.

While immigration reform, regardless of whether it is comprehensive or in stages, is complex, there are several key issues that will be included. First, any bill that is enacted will include some form of enhanced enforcement. Second, everybody agrees that the system is broken and legal immigration itself needs to be reformed, although the issues about visa reform are not without controversy.

One of the most difficult issues will be a path to legalization and eventual citizenship for the undocumented. While there

seems to be growing agreement that this issue must be solved, there are many obstacles. For example, some previous proposals included a provision that individuals seeking legalization would have to leave the country to apply for it, presumably at a border consulate.

Regardless of the final details about legalization, there are two possible starting points for negotiations. One is the DREAM Act, which would give a path to citizenship to individuals who entered the country before the age of 16 and would also allow states to qualify those students for in-state tuition. The DREAM Act passed the House in 2010 but failed to clear the Senate. Since then, several states have taken action to allow in-state tuition, and the Obama administration has allowed those students to stay in the country.

The second starting point of negotiation could be the "AgJobs" bill, which would establish a pilot program for agricultural workers and their families that could lead to citizenship.

## CountyNews

The Voice of America's Counties

**President** | Chris Rodgers  
**Publisher** | Matthew Chase  
**Public Affairs Director** | Tom Goodman  
**Executive Editor** | Beverly Anne Schlotterbeck  
**Senior Staff Writer** | Charles Taylor  
**Staff Writer** | Charlie Ban  
**Graphic Artist** | Jack Hernandez  
**Editorial Assistant** | Christopher Johnson

**ADVERTISING STAFF**  
**Job Market/Classifieds representative**  
Christopher Johnson

**National Accounts representative**  
Beverly Schlotterbeck  
(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  
**E-mail** | cnews@naco.org

**Online address** | www.countynews.org

The appearance of paid advertisements in County News in no way implies support or endorsement by the National Association of Counties for any of the products, services or messages advertised. Periodicals postage paid at Washington D.C. and other offices.

Mail subscriptions are \$100 per year for non-members. \$60 per year for non-members purchasing multiple copies. Educational institution rate, \$50 per year. Member county supplemental subscriptions are \$20 each. Send payment with order and address changes to NACo, 25 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

**POSTMASTER: send address changes to**

County News, 25 Massachusetts Ave. N.W.,  
Ste. 500, Washington, D.C. 20001  
(USPS 704-620) ■ (ISSN: 0744-9798)

© National Association of Counties  
Research Foundation, Inc.

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



# Survey sheds light on U.S. counties' use of technology

A national survey on the departmental processes and use of technology among county tax, assessment and records management officials, to be published this month, shows that counties want to integrate systems and that online access to records has reduced foot-traffic in county offices.

The objective of the research was to investigate the views and needs of county officials and to compare, where appropriate, this year's results with those obtained last year. The survey captured general information about departmental processes and services as well as county officials' views on and ratings of various technology systems, and their features and benefits.

The survey was conducted by the NACo and Thomson Reuters, the provider of GRM Tax, GRM Valuation and GRM Recorder software systems (formerly Manatron).

Rachel Bryant, a spokeswoman for Thomson Reuters, said the study reveals how technology is being used by counties to increase productivity and improve customer service. "It also showed that there may be a trend in the increase of property values and the recording of real estate property in larger counties across the country," she said.

Bryant also noted that a majority of respondents expressed a desire for the integration of systems between the tax, assessment and recorders' offices. "It appears that data is being entered and analyzed twice or even three different times in some counties," she added. "Integrated technology, providing a single database across the county, can remedy this situation. Counties who have implemented this approach have experienced cost-saving results, increased accuracy and productivity, and enhanced service to citizens."

NACo Executive Director Matt Chase touched on two other issues the research affirmed. "First, the reduction of foot-traffic in county offices regardless of size seems to be mostly due to greater online public access to tax, assessment and records data, and the ability to transact business online in all of those areas," he said. The second, is the aging of systems. "Survey responses indicate that more than 60 percent of systems in use today are eight years old or older," Chase said. "And, while system replacement is a function of budgets, on average, 15 percent of counties indicate that they are planning to purchase or develop new systems within the next 24 months."

He added that survey responses came from a representative cross-section of U.S. counties, with populations of less than 10,000 to more than two million. "When compared to NACo's size-grouping guidelines, responding counties

offered an objective representation of the average population range of counties across the United States."

The research data was collected during the summer of 2012 through surveys sent to more than 7,000 tax, assessment and recording officials

in counties across the country. The research was completed in association with the National Association of County Collectors, Treasurers and Finance Officers (NACCTFO), the International Association of Assessing Officers

(IAAO), and the National Association of County Recorders, Election Officials and Clerks (NACRC).

Complete results of the Thomson Reuters-NACo County Research Study will soon be available on the organizations' respective websites.

**STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

**18 YEARS**

**21 YEARS**

**LOOKING OUT FOR COUNTY EMPLOYEES AS A PLAN SPONSOR**

**LOOKING OUT FOR EMPLOYEES AND THEIR PLAN SPONSORS**

**You know your employees. And Nationwide® Retirement Solutions knows how to design a personalized plan to help meet your needs.** That's why we're committed to understanding your retirement plan goals and working strategically, side by side, to help ensure your satisfaction. Our experienced team of nearly 900 associates is 100% dedicated to the public sector, too. And that means they're 100% dedicated to you.

**Success starts with a quality partnership. Let us partner with you today.**

Contact Rebecca Gill at  
**1-614-854-3966**  
**GILLR4@nationwide.com**  
**NRSforU.com/plansponsor**

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

**Nationwide®**  
 Retirement Solutions

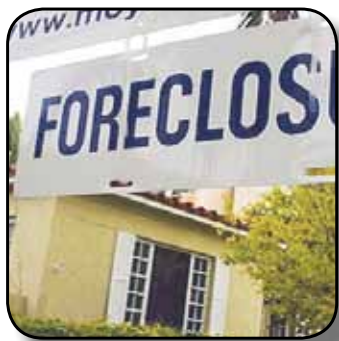
Nationwide Retirement Solutions (Nationwide) makes payments to the National Association of Counties (NACo), NACo RMA LLC and the NACo Financial Services Center Partnership (FSC) for services and endorsements that NACo provides for all its members generally related to Nationwide's products and services sold exclusively in public sector retirement markets. More detail about these payments is available at [www.nrsforu.com](http://www.nrsforu.com). NACo RMA and NACo RMA LLC are each a Registered Municipal Advisor and do not recommend the purchase or sale of securities and do not hold or maintain funds or securities. NACo RMA and NACo RMA LLC act as third party marketplaces/sponsors. NACo RMA receives fees from NRS for such services. Thirty-seven state associations of counties are members of NACo RMA LLC and as such receive quarterly distributions from it. NACo RMA and NACo RMA LLC are NACo affiliates of Nationwide Investment Services Corp. or Nationwide Retirement Solutions. Retirement Specialists are registered representatives of Nationwide Investment Services Corporation, Member FINRA. In MI only, Nationwide Investment Svc., Corporation. © 2012 Nationwide Retirement Solutions. Nationwide, the Nationwide mark, Nationwide ProAccount, and On Your Side are service marks of Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company.

NRM-897340-NX (11/12)



# Foreclosures down in areas but caution remains

By MEGHAN LEVINE  
JUSTICE ASSOCIATE



The number of homes lost to foreclosure has yet to drop to pre-housing crisis levels; however, the number of existing home sales have risen 11 percent in the past year, according to the National Association of Realtors (NAR).

According to CoreLogic's National Foreclosure Report, the number of homes lost to foreclosure in September 2012 was half the number lost during September 2010, when the foreclosure crisis peaked. The NAR also reports that in each of its four regions throughout the country both the number of existing home sales and the median price of those homes rose in the past year.

Counties across America are seeing those trends play out at the local level, thanks, in part, to programs and services they have offered. Following are examples from Michigan and Florida, two states that were hit hard by the foreclosure crisis.

To prevent mortgage foreclosures

and delinquent tax foreclosures, Washtenaw County, Mich. has implemented a number of preventive programs that are producing positive results.

County Treasurer Catherine McClary said her office has helped residents modify predatory loans, worked with banks to minimize the number of strategic defaults and collect bank liens, ramped up a series of financial literacy programs, hired a social worker to assist residents who have become property-tax-delinquent and assisted those residents with plans to repay taxes in arrears.

"Delinquent taxes serve as a leading economic indicator to let you know what's going to happen three to four years down the road," she said.

In 2012, the amount of delinquent taxes in Washtenaw County dropped by 20 percent overall, a statistic McClary said is being borne out across the state. She believes that bodes well for the future. In addition, the number of mortgage foreclosures in Washtenaw County appears to be falling to pre-housing crisis levels. In 2006, there were 700 mortgage foreclosures, down from approximately 1,200 to 1,500 foreclosures per year between 2007 and 2011. Estimates for 2012 predict roughly 750 mortgage foreclosures.

In Florida, St. Johns County's Foreclosure Intervention Program began with a pilot using State Housing Initiatives Partnership funds. The county partnered with a local nonprofit, the St. Johns Housing Partnership, to administer a program that provides residents with local, no-cost foreclosure intervention help.

The county worked with a nonprofit and legal-aid to create a Foreclosure Intervention Partnership that was recognized in 2009 with a Regional Award for Excellence in Affordable Housing by the Florida Regional Counsel and accolades from the Florida Housing Finance Corporation and several other agencies and organizations. As a result of the partnership, of the 1,401 homeowners counseled since 2007, 145 — or 10 percent — were referred for legal assistance, and 417 (30 percent) foreclosures were prevented.

Still, despite these positive signs, housing foreclosures remain a major issue for counties and impose significant costs on borrowers and local and county governments. The website RealtyTrac estimated that in September 2012, one in every 730 housing units received a foreclosure filing.

In addition, in a survey of 919

## Manufactured homes on the rise

Since bottoming out in 2009, one portion of the housing market, manufactured homes, is back on the rise — especially in rural areas where manufactured and mobile homes remain significant contributors to a county's housing stock.

Manufactured housing makes up approximately 6.7 percent of the nation's housing stock (8.7 million homes) with two out of every three manufactured homes located in rural areas.

Since 1989, 21.5 percent of all new single-family homes sold were manufactured, and 73 percent of manufactured home households earn less than \$50,000. Manufactured homes accounted for 71 percent of all new homes sold for under \$125,000 in 2011 and 14 percent of all new single family homes sold in 2011.

Without accounting for land costs, the average cost per square foot of a manufactured home is approximately half the cost of a site-built home per square foot (\$41.45 per square foot versus \$84.07 per square foot).

counties for a report titled, "Election 2012 Housing Health Check," the local housing markets in 65 percent of the 580 counties surveyed showed at least three of the five key metrics used appear worse off than four years ago: average home prices, unemployment, foreclosure inventory, foreclosure starts and share of distressed sales.

The same report also showed that average home prices remained at lower levels than those seen four years ago in 72 percent of counties surveyed.

Industry watchers remain cautiously optimistic that the housing market will continue to show signs of improvement, but many counties are still struggling with the effects of the housing crisis.

For some, the lower property values caused by foreclosed homes have resulted in a smaller tax base. For borrowers, foreclosure has been linked with increased risk for several mental and physical health conditions — and homelessness, and it can damage one's credit score to the point where obtaining an alternate housing option is no longer possible.

"While the worst of the foreclosure problem is in the rearview mirror for a narrow majority of counties, others are still working

through rising levels of foreclosure activity, inventory, and distressed sales as they continue to clear the wreckage left behind by a bursting housing bubble," according to Daren Blomquist, vice president at RealtyTrac.

## ACA new rules explained in proposals from HHS

HEALTH from page 1

occupation and small employer size or industry would all be prohibited. The rule would allow young adults to buy a catastrophic coverage plan in the individual market.

The second proposed rule sets out the new essential health benefits standards — a core set of benefits that would give consumers a consistent way to compare health plans in the individual and small group markets, according to an HHS statement. Cindy Mann, the Medicaid program's director, issued a companion "Dear State Medicaid Director" letter on implementing the essential health benefits in Medicaid to states.

The third proposed rule expands workplace wellness programs to promote employee health and help rein in health care spending. At the same time, the proposal seeks to protect individuals from unfair underwriting practices that could otherwise reduce benefits based on health status.

\*See this story at [www.naco.org/countynews](http://www.naco.org/countynews) for more information on the Affordable Care Act regulations.

## Profiles in Service



» Mary Ann Borgeson

NACo Board Member  
Commissioner  
Douglas County, Neb.

**Years affiliated with NACo:** 18

**Years in public service:** 18

**Occupation:** Douglas County commissioner

**Education:** Bachelor's degree, University of Nebraska at Omaha

**The hardest thing I've ever done:** watching my husband go through bilateral lung cancer

**Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner:** Princess Di, Mother Teresa and Sean Connery

**A dream I have is to:** own my own business.

**You'd be surprised to learn that I:** was a junior Olympian in basketball.

**The most adventurous thing I've ever done is:** deep-sea fishing.

**My favorite way to relax is:** getting a massage.

**I'm most proud of:** my family.

**Every morning I read:** online newspapers.

**My favorite meal is:** anything Chinese.

**My pet peeve is:** kids wearing their pants down at their knees.

**My motto is:** "Happiness depends on what you give not on what you get."

**The last book I read was:** "Everything Is Normal until Proven Otherwise" by Karl W. Dennis and Ira S. Lourie.

**My favorite movie is:** *Lovely Still*.

**My favorite music is:** country.

**My favorite president is:** Teddy Roosevelt.

## In Case You Missed It

### News to use from past County News

#### » NACo Produces Complete Election Analysis

As the administration and Congress turn their attention to the critical issues facing the country, the outcome of the 2012 elections will have a significant impact on many of the decisions that will be made.

NACo has prepared a comprehensive analysis on the election, which is now available at [www.naco.org/legislation/Documents/2012-NACo-Election-Analysis.pdf](http://www.naco.org/legislation/Documents/2012-NACo-Election-Analysis.pdf).

For more information, contact Ed Rosado, legislative director, at 202.942.4271 or [erosado@naco.org](mailto:erosado@naco.org).



# Two elections reform bills introduced in Congress

By Mike Belarmino  
Associate Legislative Director

Citing Election Day problems across the nation, Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.) wants to make voting faster and more accessible for all voters.

The former New Castle County, Del. county executive introduced the Fair, Accurate, Secure and Timely (FAST) Voting Act of 2012 on Nov. 15.

It would create a competitive grant program similar to the U.S. Department of Education's of Race to the Top, encouraging states to aggressively pursue election reforms. States that show the most comprehensive and promising reform plans would earn a greater portion of the grant funding.

"As a former county executive, I know how hard local officials work to run our elections. We owe it to them to provide the federal resources they need to do their jobs," Coons said.

"I introduced the FAST Voting Act to jumpstart states' election-reform efforts and to ensure that the

long lines and other voting issues we saw this November don't happen again," he added. "Long lines are a form of voter disenfranchisement, a polling place running out of ballots is a form of voter suppression, and making it harder for citizens to vote is a violation of voters' civil rights. The American people deserve better."

Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-Va.), a former Fairfax County supervisor, introduced the bill in the House. Neither measure had attracted GOP cosponsors as of Nov. 30, but a bipartisan bill is the goal.

"We have reached out to members on both sides of the aisle and fully expect to secure a number of Republican co-sponsors," Connolly said.

The FAST Voting Act (S.3635 and H.R.6590) authorizes a federal program that would award grants based on how well applicant states are able to improve access to the polls in at least nine specified ways, including:

- offering flexible registration opportunities, including same-day registration

- providing early voting, at a minimum of nine of the 10 calendar days preceding an election
  - allowing absentee voting, including no-excuse absentee voting
  - creating contingency plans for voting in the event of a natural or other disaster
  - providing assistance to voters who do not speak English as a primary language
  - providing assistance to voters with disabilities, including visual impairment
  - enabling effective access to voting for members of the armed services
  - providing formal training of election officials, including state and county administrators and volunteers, and
  - auditing and reducing waiting times at polling stations.
- The program also requires an assessment of steps a state has taken to eliminate statutory, regulatory, procedural and other barriers to expedited voting and accessible voter registration.

Coons introduced the bill the week after the general election saw long lines and voting issues in more than a dozen states, including Florida, Pennsylvania, Colorado, Ohio, New York, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Virginia, South Carolina, Montana, Tennessee, Hawaii, Arizona and Rhode Island.

Connolly said a number of polling places in Virginia were faced with long lines. "That is unacceptable, and Virginia and many other states can do better."

"The 2000 presidential election exposed the deep, structural problems that plague our voting system," he said. "Twelve years later, our troubles appear to have worsened, not improved."

In other elections-related legislation, Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.) introduced the Streamlining and Improving Methods at Polling Locations and Early (SIMPLE) Voting Act, also on Nov. 15. It seeks to address the long voting lines experienced on Election Day as well as enhance the ability of citizens to cast their ballots.

Among other provisions, the SIMPLE Voting Act would require states to provide for a minimum of 15 days of early voting in federal elections and to have contingency plans in place to resolve situations in which long lines develop.

(Charles Taylor, senior staff writer, contributed to this report.)

# NACo members see risks, opportunities firsthand in Israel



Photo courtesy of Project Interchange

Posed before the Western Wall in Jerusalem are (front row, l-r) Paula Brooks, Franklin County, Ohio commissioner and vice-chair of NACo's International Economic Development Task Force; NACo First Vice President Linda Langston, supervisor, Linn County, Iowa; (back row) John Wilson, judge-executive, Garrard County, Ky.; and Larry Phillips, councilmember, King County, Wash.

By Charles Taylor  
Senior Staff Writer

Singing the "The Star Spangled Banner" is the closest most county officials will ever come to "rockets' red glare."

That was not the case for an American delegation that recently visited Israel, which included two NACo officials: First Vice President Linda Langston, a Linn County, Iowa supervisor, and Paula Brooks, a Franklin County, Ohio commissioner and a vice-chair of NACo's International Economic Development Task Force.

They were among 10 state and local officials who participated in Project Interchange, an educational institute sponsored by AJC (American Jewish Committee).

Their visit, Nov. 11-18, came during a tense time in the Middle East. One day before they arrived, an Israeli army vehicle was fired upon by Palestinian militants near the Gaza Strip; Israel's retaliatory strike killed four Palestinians and wounded 25 others.

"The trip would have been fascinating in any event," Langston said; "however, living in the situation that occurred while we were there really raised the stakes exponentially. So we saw in real live time, I think, what many Israelis have lived through most of their lives."

A scheduled visit to Sderot, an Israeli town less than a mile from Gaza, was cancelled due to the

barrage of heavy rocket attacks into Israel from Gaza. As a result of the attacks, the group experienced warning sirens in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, but dealt calmly with the situation, according to project officials.

On a trip back from the Palestinian city of Ramallah, there was a skirmish at a checkpoint between the West Bank and Jerusalem. "Some very angry young men were throwing rocks and whatever they could put their hands on at the Israeli guards at the checkpoint," Langston recalled. "That was, I think, one of the scarier moments. Because those are situations that can very quickly go bad or be just fine, and as it turned out we were just fine." The bus — close enough that passengers could make eye contact with the militants — took a detour.

The unscheduled excitement aside, Langston and Brooks said the trip — with its seminars, meetings with government officials and business leaders — spurred lots of dialogue and ideas about how counties can work with Israeli interests and vice versa.

"I think they are hopeful for ways that they can interface not always just in what you would think of as the classic markets — the New Yorks, the D.C.s, the L.A.s — they were clearly interested in trying to develop relationships with other parts of the community," she said.

See ISRAEL page 8

## Word Search

### Johnson County, Kan. Facts

Learn more about this featured county in 'What's in a Seal?'

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

- BLEEDING KANSAS** (series of violent political confrontations on slavery 1854-1861)
- DRY** (prohibition or "dry" county until 1986)
- LANESFIELD** (historic school built in 1869)
- LENEXA** (city in Johnson County)
- OLATHE** (county seat)

- OVERLAND PARK** (most populous city)
- SHAWNEE** (Indian tribe)
- SUNFLOWER** (symbol in seal for the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant)
- THOMAS JOHNSON** (Methodist minister county named after)
- WILD BILL** (renowned gunfighter)

Created by Christopher Johnson



# Libraries develop novel ideas for reaching customers

By CHARLIE BAN  
STAFF WRITER

**WEB\* CONTENT** It makes sense that libraries, the vault of knowledge and information, also serve as incubators for creative ideas for how their resources can be shared.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services honors 10 libraries and museums annually with the National Medal for Museum and Library Service, and the two county libraries recognized demonstrate creative approaches to offering their services.

For the Contra Costa County Library in California, getting the library's resources to residents meant thinking outside of the building. The county, east of San Francisco, has a large number of commuters who wind up unable to reach the library during its operating hours, which are shrinking anyway thanks to budget pressures.

"We ended up being unable to serve much of our population, so we had to figure out how to extend service delivery without decreasing the services we offered," said



Contra Costa County, Calif. residents try out two of the county library's innovations that bring its resources out of its buildings: an automated book vending machine and QR codes that, when scanned by a smartphone, let a user access the county's mobile website, including a selection of downloadable digital books and audiobooks.

Cathy Sanford, the deputy county librarian. "We had to reach out to them since they couldn't get to us."

They developed what Sanford calls the "Go suite," three ways residents could use the library

without visiting the library. The library departed from convention in developing these programs.

"We wanted to be in a position to tell software developers what we wanted to do, not the other way



Photo courtesy of the Contra Costa County Library

around," she said. "And then we had technology we could share with other libraries."

The library buys bus advertisements that feature QR codes which, when scanned by a smartphone, allow commuters to access the library's collection of audio books for download. Its name — "Snap and Go."

"People want instant access, and we can give it to them on the bus," Sanford said. "We try to focus on getting services to people wherever they are."

"Discover and Go," takes library patrons beyond books and opens doors to cultural experiences with more than 40 partners in the San Francisco Bay area. This online tool allows users to make reservations for tickets at museums, zoos and arts venues ranging from the Charles M. Shultz Museum to the Golden State Model Railroad Museum.

Since the program debuted in January 2011, more than 100,000 passes have been distributed, and the library is hoping to extend its network into southern California.

Another innovation is Library-a-Go-Go machines, which dispense and accept returned library books, similar to Redbox DVD machines. Each machine can hold approximately 400 books and are available in two transit centers and one shopping center in a part of the county without a library.

In North Carolina, the Cumberland County Library diversified beyond just books to bring its offerings to its residents. Surrounding Fayetteville, Cumberland County

contains the Fort Bragg Army installation, and with it many military spouses and recent military retirees who might need help with job training or searching.

Workforce development has marked a lot of the library's outreach efforts, which Library Director Jody Risacher said vary to suit the strengths of the job seeker.

"Not everyone learns the same way, in classes, so we offer one-on-one instruction," she said. "We adapt to people's needs."

She said a pair of business partners was able to learn everything they needed to start an online craft business using information and classes at the library.

Twice-yearly job fairs are also successful, with 65 of nearly 800 attendees finding jobs on the spot, according to feedback from library surveys.

On top of the library's early literacy programs, Risacher prides her library on promoting literacy later in life, beyond when people have teachers focusing on it.

"Librari-Con," a name created using the suffix associated with popular art conventions, such as ComiCon, brought almost 900 comic book fans to the library in September.

"Comic books are recognized more and more as literature," Risacher said. "It brought a part of the population into the library that often drifts away for a while."

*\*See this story at [www.naco.org/countynews](http://www.naco.org/countynews) to find out more about Contra Costa County's "Go suite" of programs.*

## Forum explores changes in health care delivery, effect on counties

**WEB\* CONTENT** More than 50 county government leaders from across the country participated in NACo's 2012 Healthy Counties Forum, hosted by DeKalb and Fulton counties in Atlanta Nov. 27-28.

They gathered to examine broad health care policy and system changes; discuss the implications of those policy changes for county health care delivery systems; highlight successful examples of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funded projects, and explore key issues for counties concerning the Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act.

"The country is heading into a period of significant change in national, state and local health policies affecting every family in America," said Roy Brooks, commissioner, Tarrant County, Texas and Healthy Counties Initiative Advisory Board chair. "Counties are on the front lines of delivering health services to the communities we serve. The Healthy Counties Forum in Atlanta is an important part of our efforts

through NACo to be sure counties continue to provide health care services as effectively as possible."

The forum featured a variety of speakers including Dr. Karen Minyard, director and associate research professor, Georgia Health Policy Center, Georgia State University; Trisha Hardy, director of child wellness, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta; and a panel presentation from the CDC. The forum also featured a tour of Grady Memorial Hospital and presentations by key hospital staff.

Fulton County Commissioner Joan Garner said the forum was especially timely as counties begin to prepare for the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. She is also a member of NACo's Health Steering Committee and Healthy Counties Advisory Board.

Garner said: "Fulton has been on the forefront of local healthcare reform by establishing a policy that addresses the social determinants of health and health care disparities within our communities and developing model healthcare facilities that serve as one-stop-shops for

citizens which include primary care, dental care, behavioral health, workforce development, libraries, childcare and community gardens."

Other county speakers included Lenny Eliason, NACo immediate past president and vice chair, Healthy Counties Advisory Board; and Larry Johnson, commissioner, DeKalb County and chair of NACo's Health Steering Committee.

Johnson said he was pleased that NACo held the forum in the metro Atlanta area.

"This is a great opportunity for participants from across the country to get information on the changing landscape of health care," he said. "As chair of the NACo Health Steering Committee and former vice chair of the Healthy Counties Advisory Board, we are providing access to up-to-date information to representatives from member counties to take back and continue to work of improving the health outcomes for the residents."

*\* See the online version of this story at [www.naco.org/countynews](http://www.naco.org/countynews) for a link to the full forum agenda.*



# County benefits from student service projects

By CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON  
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT



The Frederick County, Va. Board of Supervisors needs look no further than to the next generation for fresh ideas about county government.

Since 1997, select seniors from three county high schools—James Wood, Sherando and Millbrook—have been showcased their plans for improving county government through the schools' Government Service Learning program. The students present the results of their class projects to the Board of Supervisors, and the county has adopted some of their ideas.

"The civic engagement of the students and the agencies they work with help the county immensely," said Frederick County administrator John Riley, who helps facilitate the county's role in the class. "Students gain real-world experience and the county potentially benefits from their ideas." The students also receive course credit for the class.

To date, more than 517 students have presented 135 projects to the board, and the board has adopted more than 20 of the student's proposals. These include a method to ensure safety and preservation of historical court documents, a new-voter video for students turning 18 and an Internet safety informational video for incoming ninth graders.

The class includes meetings at the county administration building where students hear a brief history



Photo courtesy of Tara Woolever

Walter Banks, information technology director, Frederick County, Va., explains the role of the department to a group of students during the Government Service Learning orientation.

of local government and meet with county agencies to discuss potential projects. They are then assigned projects based on interest and begin an internship that lasts nearly five months.

Students are able to identify a community problem through their research and interaction with their agency. After months of preparation, they present their projects at a community forum to the Board of Supervisors. The school board,

teachers and parents attend the presentations, which are also broadcast on a government TV channel for the public.

This past May, 51 seniors presented 15 projects ranging from rerouting traffic at a local high school to helping the county get a much-needed 12th fire station.

The rerouting project was done by three students who assessed road conditions that make entering and exiting the school grounds dif-

ficult for vehicles and pedestrians. They devised a plan that would make drop-offs and pick-ups safer for buses and parents, while also improving the safety for students walking and biking to school.

The service learning program was funded by grants until 1999, when the School Board incorporated it into its curriculum. The costs come out of the annual school budget.

Enrollees must complete an

application process to be accepted into the program and have good attendance, good grades and a responsible attitude. Students begin their first project over the summer—designing a Veteran's Day program for the community. They work in committees to invite and interview veterans, collect donations, plan decorations, write a program and publicize the event.

This project helps students learn the importance of collaboration, deadlines and community interaction, according to Tara Woolever, Frederick County Schools supervisor of social science, health and wellness, who oversees the program.

During the fall semester, Virginia and U.S. Government are taught using a blended model. This includes field trips to experience each level of government. Students visit the White House, U.S. Department of Education and Federal Reserve in January. Students also meet with state representatives and visit the Governor's Mansion in Richmond, Va.

Woolever believes other counties could easily replicate such a program.

"County boards should work with their high schools to create a program like this," she said. "It takes some effort, but the reward is potential ideas that could benefit the county and its residents."

For more information, contact Tara Woolever at [woolever@frederick.k12.va.us](mailto:woolever@frederick.k12.va.us).

\*See this story at [www.naco.org/countynews](http://www.naco.org/countynews) to learn more about Frederick County's program.

## Nonprofit hospitals face greater scrutiny from cash-strapped counties

EXEMPTIONS from page 1

a good idea to have this meeting and air it out properly in front of everybody."

A Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision last spring is also fueling counties' renewed interest in taking a closer look at tax exemptions. It overturned at 1997 state law that diminished localities' flexibility in determining tax-exempt status. Brad Korinski is general counsel for the Allegheny County controller's office. He said that law defined public in a way that provided "a bullet-proof vest for these large nonprofits not to pay taxes."

The state Supreme Court's ruling in *Eitz Chaim of Bobov, Inc. v. Pike County Board of Assessment Appeals, et al.* gives counties greater leeway to re-apply the "test for purely public charities" that existed before

the 1997 law gave the state more leverage, he added. The test has five criteria for tax-exempt institutions:

- advances a charitable purpose
- donates or renders gratuitously a substantial portion of its services
- benefits a substantial and indefinite class of persons who are legitimate subjects of charity
- relieves the government of some of its burden, and
- operates entirely free from private profit motive.

In a *Taxpayer Alert*, Korinski's boss, Controller Chelsa Wagner, wrote that the ruling "gives our local governments the tool we have long awaited to finally challenge these loopholes."

Korinski said policing tax exemptions is a growing problem for many urban areas, and taxpayers are looking for fairness. "We've had a reassessment of property

... policing tax exemptions is a growing problem for many urban areas, and taxpayers are looking for fairness.

taxes ... with your average citizen having to bear more of a property tax burden. It's only natural, I think, for folks to look toward these large, large nonprofits to say what are you contributing?"

Back in Oregon, Douglas County Assessor Susan Acree said Mercy Hospital is appealing her office's denial its request for an expanded tax exemption. She said as hospitals buy up other properties, such as

medical facilities and physicians' practices, it becomes more challenging to separate nonprofit from for-profit.

"There are so many umbrella accounts they're trying for exemptions; each one needs to qualify on its own," she said. "There's been leases and subleases that other taxable entities were involved in, and there wasn't a correct linkage between all of them."

Last year, Clackamas County, Ore. Assessor Bob Vroman's office tried to keep \$2 million worth of a hospital's medical imaging equipment on the tax rolls, arguing that that it wasn't providing charity care but rather enriching private physicians' practices. Its owner, Providence Health, appealed and won. It cost the county about \$160,000 in tax revenues over four years.

"There aren't really any quantitative guidelines in statute that give you a guideline of what kind of threshold an organization needs to meet," he said. "Do they have to do 3 percent of their revenue; do they have to do 5, 8? What constitutes enough public benefit, and how do you actually determine that amount of service?"

Not to single out hospitals, he added that exemptions for nonprofits need more scrutiny in general.

"I think you continually need to reevaluate along those guidelines of who's actually benefiting from programs, are those program still meeting the need for which that public policy was made, and are they still applicable; are they still affordable? And those kinds of things are, I think, important questions we always need to be asking about our systems."



# Grant gives counties chance to tackle PTSD treatment

By CHARLIE BAN  
STAFF WRITER

A single gunshot makes an indelible mark in the memory of anyone who hears it. The flurry of them in combat can build a wall that people who haven't experienced the same thing likely cannot penetrate.

There is no one right way to treat a mental illness like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). That truism has led to several approaches to combat it, and three counties in New York are starting two-year pilot programs to bring peer mentors to their veterans who suffer

from PTSD.

A state grant gives \$200,000 for two years to Jefferson, Rensselaer and Saratoga counties. Suffolk also received a grant through the program, and has formed a task force to study the increased incidence of suicide among veterans. Students at the State University of New York-Albany School of Social Work will evaluate the programs starting in 2013.

Tim Ruetten, Jefferson County's coordinator of mental health, said research on peer-to-peer support for veterans is sparse, but the approach is sound. If nothing else, it

allows veterans to spend time with someone who understands their experiences. The county is contracting out program administration.

"They provide camaraderie," he said. "When they are discharged (from the military), they lose contact with a culture that saturates you."

Although the volunteers are given training, focusing on confidentiality, identifying PTSD, engagement skills and suicide prevention protocols, Ruetten said the program will be non-clinical.

"We don't want to create counselors, there are plenty of clinical approaches available," he said. "This will be a way for a veteran to find an advocate, a buddy, and someone who is able to help streamline them into treatment if that's where it needs to go."

The U.S. departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs both support clinics in Jefferson County, which includes Fort Drum, but Ruetten said the program will serve to add diversity in the treatment offerings available. And it will give retired combat veterans an opportunity to lend their help to their brothers and sisters in arms.

Much of the funding will go to advertisement for the program and data collection to assess its efficacy.

Saratoga County has a similar program, though Director of Veterans Service Andrew Davis compares it to a support group sponsor.

"Anytime someone needs some

help, they can call their mentor," he said.

Davis said the crucial part of Saratoga County's program is its lack of formality, which he said will attract a segment of the veteran

population that has become wary of institutional care.

"A lot of veterans don't trust that setting," he said. "We want to avoid Veterans Administration or storefront setting."

## NCGM planning materials available January 2013

NCGM from page 2

or administrative building grounds. Many counties hold media events, write newspaper columns, or appear on local radio and TV shows to discuss new county programs or highlight existing ones.

NACo is currently developing free media resources to assist counties in celebrating NCGM. The resources will include a comprehensive planning and tips booklet specific to the April 2013 Smart Justice theme as well as a media resources kit which will include digital templates to create your own county's NCGM buttons, posters, flyers, banners, proclamations and news releases. The templates will be specially designed for the April 2013 "Smart Justice" theme.

The NCGM planning booklet and media resources kit will be available by the end of January.

A popular feature of NCGM is the NACo National County Government Month Award program.



The purpose of the award program, now in its third year, is to encourage counties to participate in NCGM and nationally recognize counties that sponsor outstanding programs during the month of April.

National Association of County Information Officers (NACIO)—a NACo affiliate—will again judge the 2013 award entries. Contest details will be available in January.

For information about how your county can get started today in planning NCGM events, contact Jim Philipps at 202.942.4220 or [jphilipps@naco.org](mailto:jphilipps@naco.org).

## PTSD Statistics

According to the Veterans Administration, about 60 percent of men and 50 percent of women experience at least one trauma in their lives, with about 7-8 percent suffering from PTSD at some point in their lives, with more women suffering at twice the rate of men. About 5.2 million adults have PTSD during a given year.

Among veterans of recent conflicts, PTSD has been found to occur in:

- Iraq and Afghan War veterans- between 11 and 20 percent
- Gulf War (Desert Storm) Veterans- as many as 10 percent
- Vietnam War Veterans- as many as 30 percent

NACo  
Green Government  
Initiative e-publication

## Emerging Sustainability Strategies in America's Counties

Learn about emerging sustainability programs in counties that increase efficiency and economic development efforts.

To learn more visit  
[www.naco.org/sustainabilitystrategies](http://www.naco.org/sustainabilitystrategies)  
or email Cindy Wasser at  
[cwasser@naco.org](mailto:cwasser@naco.org)



## Counties foresee partnerships with Israel

ISRAEL from page 5

"I think that there is a great opportunity for economic development and trade and tourism."

Brooks, with her interest in international economic development, said Israel has a robust technology sector, its own equivalent of Silicon Valley. The nation has one of the highest percentages of venture capitalists in the world, she said — "And why? Because venture capitalists are used to taking risks, they're used to seeking out people that surmount risk, and certainly the Israelis know how to do that."

She said counties can learn a lot from Israel about day-to-day security issues and about developing small and technology businesses, and any other business model. Both women also saw opportunities in the area of cybersecurity.

Brooks recounted a visit to the lab of an Israeli company that had assembled a team from around the world who were tracking "almost every minute" outside attempts to hack into clients' accounts or other computer infrastructure.

"I think that a collaboration between our security companies here in the U.S. and the Israeli specialists would frankly yield not only jobs here but protection to the businesses that we know we must protect from those cyber-attacks," she said. "Those are only going to grow. The world is getting smaller and smaller by the moment, and we can learn a lot from the Israelis."

Project Interchange is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year.

Since its inception, it has brought more 6,000 leaders to Israel from more than 72 countries. The program was funded entirely by Project Interchange without taxpayer dollars, a project spokeswoman said. Other participants included officials from Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, Nebraska and New Mexico.

Other county commissioners in the delegation were Councilmember Larry Phillips, King County, Wash., and Judge-Executive John Wilson, Garrard County, Ky. Some of the participants were recommended by NACo; for others, the project sought nominations within the officials' own communities.

"These officials represent a diverse set of states and constituencies from across the United States," said Sam Witkin, executive director of Project Interchange, "but they share a common interest in job creation, high tech innovation, and immigrant and minority communities."

### CORRECTION

Kenyon Smutherman's name was misspelled in the article, "Mentees learn inner workings of county parks and recreation," published in the Oct. 22, 2012 issue of County News.



# The H.R. Doctor Is In

## Federal Budget Blob – Revisited

*Recall seven years ago. A time before the tea party, housing crisis or Wall Street being “occupied.” The most serious risk to retirement dreams was — and still is — the one-two punch of the continued propensity to rack up long-term debt, coupled with the immaturity of federal elected officials. Let’s revisit the Federal Budget Blob... (This column was originally published in February 2006.)*

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) recently released what is described as “intermediate projections” of the shape of the federal budget. Intermediate, in this case, means projecting back an entire generation and forward an entire generation. Unfortunately, the “shape” of that budget is very similar to the 1950s horror classic, *The Blob*. It is growing, consuming our precious life force, and it doesn’t seem to move in any visionary direction.

The main challenge lying ahead

between 2006 and 2046 is clear from even a rapid fly-over of those projections. It is the growing impact of cost escalation in health care for an aging population.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, in 1966 — 40 years ago — Medicare and Medicaid programs consumed 2 percent of the federal budget. Today that “consumption” stands at 22 percent. Forty years from now — that’s only one grandchild away for many readers — that percentage will grow to 35 percent. Granted, the entire budget will grow dramatically, but the percentage share of the budget attributed to federal health care commitments in the form of these two programs will gobble up a very substantial portion indeed.

Everyone in county government, not to mention our colleagues in cities, school districts and special districts, completely understands what is generally not well understood: Local elected officials have very limited discretion over the amounts of money available in the



overall budget of the agency.

In the case of the federal government, there are mandates for entitlement programs such as Medicare and Medicaid as well as several others, including government employee pension plans. Two in particular will be mentioned in this article. The first of those is Social Security, which occupied 15 percent of the federal budget during the HR Doctor’s 1966 junior year at UCLA. It stands at 21 percent today, and according to the CBO projections, will be 20 percent a generation from now. As any director of budgeting will be the first to tell you, more than half of the budget is committed to Social Security and Medicare-Medicaid alone.

But wait. That’s not all. The other entitlement area of interest is our escalating national debt. Each of us receives numerous, and apparently, totally irresistible credit card offers each week in the mail. In the case of most of us, we take those solicitations and lovingly place them in the nearest trash can — after shredding them, I hope, in the name of identity theft protection. However, the number of television commercials for credit counseling companies reminds us that many people lose control of their willpower when they get a credit card.

In the case of the federal government, it appears as though we are also dealing with an entity unable to resist the urge to spend. Making at least the minimum monthly payments on the world’s largest credit card debt — the national debt — reflects not only a financial burden for generations to come, but a budget mandate today. It reflects a long-term psychological deficit in our federal-level ability to control spending. Interest on the national debt was 7 percent a generation ago. It is 11 percent today and is projected by CBO to rise to 26 percent of the federal budget by the time my beautiful HR daughters are considering retirement.

If this projection is anywhere

near correct, about 80 percent or more of the federal budget in 2046 will be consumed by these three mandated expenditure areas. That doesn’t leave much for anything else.

The estimated 76 percent of the federal budget that was available for other areas in 1966, will turn into 19 percent by 2046.

By the way, 2046 may seem so very far off that it’s not necessary to even worry about today. The view that this is decades away, and “things will happen to take care of the problem” is administrative malpractice. In reality, the CBO projection represents a wake-up call. We must hear the alarm going off even though we seem to have a national hearing deficiency when it comes to warnings about things like a fuel crisis, climate change and an uncontrolled national debt.

**The biggest discretionary area in the federal government is, arguably, not discretionary at all. It is defense spending.**

The biggest discretionary area in the federal government is, arguably, not discretionary at all. It is defense spending. Today it stands at 18 percent says the CBO says. For the statistically curious, defense expenditure stood at 76 percent of the budget in 1966. The CBO projection for 2046 is that defense will take up a mere 5 percent of the budget.

Imagine presiding over a federal cabinet meeting in 2046 where the entire defense establishment voluntarily says, “Madame President, we don’t need any more than 5 percent of the budget. Thank you. We are satisfied.”

The odds are very significant that the world of 2046 will be at least as challenging in terms of national defense as the world of today. The HR Doctor believes that an assumption of 5 percent of the budget for defense is closer to an exercise in romance fiction writing than it is in statistical accuracy. But even if it is 5 percent, that means that all other federal programs from school lunches to operating

the National Park Service, NASA, the Centers for Disease Control, payments in lieu of taxes to local governments, highway expenditures, and on and on, will be limited to about 14 percent of the federal budget. That will be half of what it is today. Highly unlikely.

With the current models of federal, state and local relationships in place, federal financial paralysis inevitably will drag cities, counties, school boards and special districts right along with it.

From this author’s own experience as a county chief administrative officer as well as a department head in cities and counties and a special district, the need for a re-balancing of the role of the federal government in relation to the rest of American public administration is greater than ever and will be still greater as the clock moves towards 2046.

Rather than just do a narrative imitation of Chicken Little, some modest suggestions for that re-balancing were made recently in a prior article entitled, “The Disaster within a Disaster.” Those suggestions were derived from direct experience watching FEMA as it attempted to work and play well with others following the recent proliferation of hurricanes. That did not go very well.

The HR Doctor attributes a lot of that to a warped relationship between local governments and their larger, and allegedly richer, relatives in Washington D.C. Once again, the best time to create a positive leadership vision and action toward an effective and understandable national health care policy is now, not prior to the 2046 general election.

This generation’s gift to the next one should be a legacy of action in the name of greater public service and fiscal responsibility. The current generation certainly also owes a debt to prior generations not to squander our precious wealth and resources — natural and human. If we don’t act more responsibly, the result of our failure to lead for the long term will be an unimagined indebtedness for our children.

On that somber note, the HR Doctor will be leaving now. There is a sale going on!

*Phil Rosenberg*

Phil Rosenberg  
The HR Doctor • [www.hrdr.net](http://www.hrdr.net)

## NACo on the Move

### » NACo Officers and Officials

• NACo Past President **Valerie Brown** spoke about NACo and the benefits of being a member at the California State Association of Counties Newly Elected Officials training in Los Angeles County (Long Beach) Nov. 26–27.

### » NACo Staff



Yejin Jang

• **Yejin Jang** is the new grassroots coordinator in the legislative department assisting NACo lobbyists in advocacy efforts. She previously held the position before graduating from Villanova School of Law in 2011.

• **Paul Beddoe**, associate legislative director, spoke on public health priorities and the outlook for the Affordable Care Act implementation and federal deficit negotiations at the Washington State

Association of Public Health Officials and Local Health Boards Alliance meetings at the Washington State Association of Counties conference in Chelan County Nov. 14.

### » Coming Up

• **Ilene Goldberg**, membership coordinator, will be exhibiting on behalf of membership recruitment and retention at the County Commissioners Association of Ohio Annual Conference in Franklin County Dec. 9–11. She will also be at the Nebraska Association of County Officials Annual Conference in Buffalo County Dec. 12–14.

*On the Move is compiled by Christopher Johnson.*

Keep up with NACo online ...

**[www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org)**







# News From the Nation's Counties

## ► ALABAMA

**CHILTON COUNTY** will give the **Chilton Medical Center** almost a million dollars to reopen.

The county's only hospital shut down last month because it couldn't meet payroll, according to the *Associated Press*. The hospital's board asked the county for help, to which the commissioners unanimously agreed to give the board about \$960,000 to reopen the hospital for a trial period. The hospital's reopen date has not been set.

## ► CALIFORNIA

A state Supreme Court ruling will force counties to **repay fees from property taxes** to cities dating back six years.

Counties must refund the administrative fees they collected for administering the Education Revenue Augmentation Fund, money they distribute on behalf of the state. The court found the fund to be exempt from administrative fees under state law. The initial suit was filed against **LOS ANGELES COUNTY**, which is expected to owe around \$10 million to its cities, the *Los Angeles Times* reported.

Most counties used the same interpretation of the law. The court will reconvene in the coming months to determine exactly how many back payments counties will be required to pay.

## ► COLORADO

Gov. John Hickenlooper (D) has appointed **EL PASO COUNTY** Commissioner Sallie Clark to the **Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice**. The 21-member panel investigates alternatives to incarceration, the causes of recidivism and cost-effective crime-prevention programs.

The commission's annual reports are used by state lawmakers and the governor to develop policies and legislation on a wide variety of issues related to criminal justice.

Clark serves on NACo's Justice and Public Safety Committee, leading the court subcommittee.

## ► GEORGIA

**RICHMOND** and **COLUMBIA** counties are planning to install additional **adaptive traffic lights** that adjust their timing based on the flow of traffic.

The counties began testing the technology in 2009. The signals detect the number of cars on a road and communicate with other signals in the area—unlike ordinary computerized signals that set a fixed interval for green and red lights,

depending on the time of day.

The lights, which cost \$20,000–\$30,000 each, and the expansion, are being funded by the counties' 1 percent sales tax for transportation projects, the *Augusta Chronicle* reported.

## ► KENTUCKY

All-terrain vehicle riders may soon converge on **PIKE COUNTY** if talks to establish **trails on 3,000 acres** come to fruition. Judge-Executive Wayne T. Rutherford announced that the county is in talks with land companies about the possible establishment of the trails.

The county wants to establish a seven-mile loop trail, from which other trails could potentially branch off to reach small towns nearby, the *Appalachian News-Express* reported.

## ► MICHIGAN

• A recommendation by the Muskegon/Oceana Workforce Development Board and a waiver from the Michigan Workforce Development Agency would allow **MUSKEGON COUNTY** to become the one-stop operator for providing **employment-training direct services**, dislocated worker services and other programs for adult and youth workers.

County staff members estimate the potential savings of about \$880,000 with reductions in employee benefit costs, staffing level and duplication of services currently being provided through contracted agencies. That money would be directed into programming and provide needed services to the community, the *Muskegon Chronicle* reported.

Counties in Michigan used to be required to provide their services through contracts, but Gov. Rick Snyder (R) offered a one-stop operator certification option to counties to consolidate services in-house.

• **OAKLAND COUNTY**'s job market may get a boost from a new **memorandum of understanding** with a major Chinese city.

Deputy County Executive Matt Gibb recently signed an agreement with officials from Haian City in Jiangsu Province—usually a sign of private investment taking place outside of China.

Oakland County already has a strong foreign business presence, with 850 foreign-owned firms from 37 countries. It also makes an impressive case for Chinese investment. More than 25 percent of the approximately 44,500 Chinese residents in Michigan live in Oakland



Photo by Jim Lowney, Union County, N.J.

Christopher Hudak, Union County, N.J. freeholder (r), speaks with Naomi Johnson, a FEMA policy analyst, at one of the agency's disaster recovery centers in the county. The local and federal response to Superstorm Sandy continued into late November.

## ► NEW JERSEY

The **UNION COUNTY** Board of Chosen Freeholders recently informed county residents whose homes suffered any flooding or structural damage that they could be eligible for a **reduction to their property tax assessment**.

"Hurricane Sandy dealt Union County a devastating blow," Freeholder Chairman Alexander Mirabella said. "We are diligently seeking new avenues of relief for our residents and this is one that we encourage them to take advantage of."

County, with two dozen Chinese firms operating there.

Most of the county's 28 public school districts offer Mandarin language, culture or both. The American Chinese School of Greater Detroit is located in Birmingham, Mich.

## ► MISSOURI

An investigation initiated by **BOONE COUNTY**'s recorder ended with the guilty plea by the former head of a mortgage services firm responsible for more than a million **fraudulent signatures on real estate documents**, the *Columbia Daily Tribune* reported.

Boone County Recorder of Deeds Bettie Johnson and her staff brought suspicious mortgage and foreclosure documents to the attention of the Missouri Attorney General's Office.

According to an affidavit from Johnson, in June 2011 she attended a conference where a report identified suspicious signatures on mortgage documents. She had her staff search for documents signed by the same person—a "Linda Green," whose signature was forged by other employees of the company—and turned over the documents to the attorney general.

**JACKSON COUNTY** assisted in the investigation.

## ► NEVADA

• The **owner of the state's first legal brothel**—the Mustang Ranch—is now the newest member of the **STOREY COUNTY** Board of Commissioners

Lance Gilman easily won the seat with 62 percent of the vote in last month's election, the Associated Press reported.

In 2003, he bought the famed bordello from the federal government, which had seized the establishment in 1999 in a federal fraud and racketeering case. He moved the pink stucco buildings that once housed the brothel closer to his Wild Horse brothel, eventually consolidating the two under the Mustang Ranch brand.

Prostitution was legalized in Nevada in 1972.

• An enhancement to **WASHOE COUNTY**'s alert notification system will allow emergency management officials to better target warnings. It's called Code Red.

"If the incident commander in the field decides to contact residents in a neighborhood, they can quickly be reached not only on their home

phone, but also on their cellular telephone," Aaron Kenneston of Washoe County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security told KTVN-TV news.

The county designed the system to contact only those who are in imminent danger, and it can call some 50,000 people per hour.

"Often we don't want mass evacuations when we're trying to bring fire trucks and police cruisers into the area," Kenneston said, "so it's all about targeting the right citizens as quickly as possible."

## ► NEW YORK

Electricians and plumbers in **WESTCHESTER COUNTY** won't have to obtain a home-improvement license from the county to **install solar panels** for their customers. The county's Board of Legislators recently exempted those trades' practitioners from a requirement to obtain a two-year contractor license costing \$300, *The Journal News* reported.

"We currently require them to have certification as a home-improvement contractor," said Legislator Catherine Borgia, who introduced the measure. She called the additional licensing an added expense that "doesn't provide any greater level of expertise."

The legislation does require that solar installers be certified by the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners.

Legislator Michael Kaplowitz said, "We're trying to broaden the opportunity for those who want to come into the market."

## ► OREGON

A public-private partnership may be the way forward as **MULTNOMAH COUNTY** commissioners seek to rebuild or renovate the county's **103-year-old courthouse**. County Board members are discussing a possible joint venture with Partnerships British Columbia in Canada *The Oregonian* reported.

"The advantage of this approach is that it can save considerable amounts of time and money," Commissioner Judy Shiprack said. "It only makes sense to at least pursue this."

She said the model is new in the U.S. but added that it appears feasible, citing a public-private partnership in California that is building a new state courthouse. Under that agreement, a company will design, build, operate and maintain a new courthouse in Long Beach. The



## Research News

# Planning for the Future of County Government

With workforce challenges brought about by the retirement of baby boomers, the economic downturn and the unique job functions in county government, counties across the country are implementing new programs to address these issues.

The registrar-recorder and county clerk's office in Los Angeles County recognized that retention of employees and success of the office is linked to employee skills and satisfaction.

Through a partnership with California State University, Northridge, the office offered educational programs at no cost to the employees. After conducting an educational needs assessment to gauge interest, the partnership offered master's degree programs in public administration and public sector management, as well as various certification programs. Employees gained valuable management skills and certification, and the opportunity for advancement within the county office.

The wastewater department in Johnson County, Kan. created a succession-planning tool to train staff to fill positions within the



department. The program targets existing employees who exhibit leadership potential to prepare them for internal promotion. The succession-planning program was designed to attract and retain future managers and to ensure they receive the training necessary to assume greater responsibility over time.

By using the county's human resources training program for other departments, employees who meet minimum qualifications can take courses including conflict resolution, leadership and ethics, and business writing. A year after implementing the program, three employees have been promoted to leadership

positions.

Orange County, Calif. saw a unique need for training county park rangers. While rangers need law enforcement training, they also require instruction for other roles such as land steward, customer service representative and nature ambassador. To solve this problem, the parks department partnered with Santa Ana College to provide a county park ranger program to both current Orange County park rangers and prospective rangers from across the country.

At the Orange County Parks Ranger Academy, students acquire training and college credit in topics such as customer service, emergency response, CPR and basic fire suppression. The rigorous program includes 260 hours of instruction and a cumulative exam score of at least 70 percent. Although not guaranteed a position upon graduation, students are equipped with all skills necessary to apply. It is the only county or regional park ranger academy in the United States, ac-

cording to county officials.

Henrico County, Va. implemented the Preparing Employees for the Workforce of Tomorrow program to provide leadership and decision-making skills to all employees. In today's county government environment, successful employees at every level must exhibit these skills rather than just managerial staff.

By looking to other organizations, the county identified key core competencies required for county staff including communication and customer service, and offered training and development for all staff. Through this program, supervisors were able to encourage specific trainings and provide targeted coaching to help employees advance. It focuses on current job duties and performance expectations, and also helps to chart a plan for professional growth, which is the key to retaining high performers.

Another key to retaining county employees is to allow them flexibility in completing tasks.

In Hennepin County, Minn.,

the Human Services and Public Health Department implemented a Results Only Work Environment (ROWE) program to encourage employees to work on a schedule that works best for them. In this environment, employees determine how they work best as a team and as individuals in order to meet the needs of the customers they serve.

Employees are able to streamline processes, use technology and achieve a balance between their professional and personal lives. They are not bound by rules and expectations of the traditional work environment, and are encouraged to develop and implement innovative ideas to provide better services to clients and customers.

Although employees maintain a traditional work schedule and tasks, the essential requirements of a job determine when the work may occur to achieve a work-life balance and improve staff morale.

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

## What's in a Seal?

» Johnson County, Kan.  
[www.jocogov.org](http://www.jocogov.org)



Johnson County was one of the first counties established in the Kansas Territory Aug. 28, 1855. It was named for Thomas Johnson, a Methodist minister who established the Shawnee Indian Mission in 1829. The renowned gunfighter Wild Bill Hickok settled for a time in the county, becoming constable of Monticello Township in 1858.

Johnson County was also the site of many battles between abolitionists and pro-slavery advocates during the period known as "Bleeding Kansas."

The U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 school desegregation ruling and its impact in Kansas City, Mo. contributed to increased migration to Johnson County and furthered the county's reputation as a destination for quality public schools and as a good location for families. This growth slowed slightly in the 1970s, however beginning in the mid-1980s the pace of growth increased significantly, with the county adding 100,000 residents each decade between the 1990 census and 2010 census.

The seal shows a sunflower that symbolizes the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant, known as the world's largest smokeless powder (propellant) plant, built in 1941. Wheat surrounds the seal with the county name along the top and state on the bottom.

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

## King County, Wash. to ice cold-case unit

NEWS FROM *from page 10*

state will own the building and pay the private company to cover its operating costs for 35 years.

### ► SOUTH DAKOTA

When two counties share parts of a single city, it just makes sense to cooperate. That seems to be the prevailing attitude in **MINNEHAHA** and **LINCOLN** counties. Starting in January, Minnehaha will provide **human resources support** to Lincoln, according to the *Argus Leader*. Both counties include parts of Sioux Falls, the state's largest city.

"With Sioux Falls being such a significant factor in Lincoln County, it is mandatory that we begin working together more and more," said Dick Kelly, Minnehaha County Commission chairman. "This is not the end."

Under the agreement, which takes effect in January, Lincoln County will reimburse Minnehaha County about \$34 per hour for work provided by a human resources generalist and \$58.35 per hour for work provided by the HR director.

The agreement runs through December 2013 and is renewable by mutual consent.

### ► UTAH

**SALT LAKE COUNTY** has begun a pilot **Crosswalk Flag Program** with the installation of flag holders and flags at four locations. Pedestrians take orange flags from one end of the crosswalk to increase their visibility as they cross the street and then return them to a holder across the street.

The pilot program relies on sponsors — schools, PTAs, businesses or individuals — to adopt a crosswalk and ensure flags are available for pedestrians.

Salt Lake County Public Works Operations Division will use an approval and implementation process that includes formal requests for flags, review of traffic and pedestrian counts and, if approved, installation of flag holders and an initial supply of flags.

When new flags are needed, the sponsor can provide its own or get a new supply from the county at a cost to be determined.

### ► VIRGINIA

**Controlled narcotic substances** have been stolen from **SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY** ambulances at least five times this year. To stem the thefts, county ambulances will soon be outfitted with electronic

locking systems.

Fire Chief Chris Eudailey hoped to have electronic keys issued to approximately 100 paid and volunteer emergency responders with advanced life-support training by Dec. 1.

The technology cost the county about \$41,000, *The Free Lance-Star* reported.

Eudailey said the keys won't necessarily eliminate thefts, but will let Fire, Rescue and Emergency Management officials know who opens the drug lockboxes in the county's 25 ambulances and when.

### ► WASHINGTON

The **KING COUNTY** Sheriff's **cold-case unit is closing** at the end of the year. Sheriff-elect John Urquhart said federal dollars are running out, and the county simply can't afford to keep it alive.

"Loss of the funding is a real blow, and it means some cases will likely go unsolved," Urquhart told *The Seattle Times*. A \$500,000 federal grant is running out after three years

*(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](mailto:ctaylor@naco.org) or [cban@naco.org](mailto:cban@naco.org).)*



# Model Programs From the Nation's Counties

El Paso County, Colo.

## Weed-control Effort Puts County in Touch with Property Owners

By CHARLIE BAN

STAFF WRITER



Controlling invasive and non-native plant species is an imprecise effort.

For county-owned land, it's a simple matter of finding and eradicating the offending plants. When they pop up on private property, though, the task falls to the county to persuade the landowners to follow through to destroy the plants.

Failure to do so is like partial nuclear disarmament in the botanical world — the threat remains. El Paso County, Colo. is trying to systematically eliminate species on the state's list of noxious weeds, the term for non-native and invasive plants. Colorado has allowed local governments to implement their own management programs.

"They know no boundaries; it's an ongoing problem," said Kathy Andrew, the county's environ-

mental services manager. "A lot of people don't realize how significant the problem is, what it does to the land, agriculture. Some are poisonous to livestock and pets."

Plants like that come into the county as welcomed exotic gifts or stowaway seeds on machinery transported from elsewhere. They take root and have carte blanche to spread without their native controls, in the form of animals and insects that eat them, and diseases.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates these species cost the national economy \$123 billion in damages and losses annually. In early 2009, the county adopted its noxious weed notification program to reorganize what had been a haphazard approach.

Plants are classified by the severity of their impact and the degree to which they must be controlled. The most vulnerable are prioritized for eradication.



Photo courtesy of El Paso County, Colo.

An El Paso County, Colo. worker sprays noxious weeds with a herbicide to help control them from spreading.

County-owned land and rights of way are examined first. Then data from earlier assessments leads inspectors to private land that can

be observed from a distance. If a noxious plant is spotted, the community services department sends a certified letter to the property owner identifying the plant and notifying the owner of its presence.

"We let the homeowners know how significant the problem is and how thorough our effort to eradicate it is," Andrew said. "Lots of people don't know these plants are as threatening as they are."

The letter includes a fact sheet on the particular species of plant and instructions for how to destroy it. Some can be mowed, others must be dug out or killed with herbicides.

The county returns to those properties annually to ensure the plants have not returned. It also has

the authority to place a lien on the offending property, though Andrew said it has not yet come to that.

"With a lot of people, we're drawing up three- or four-year plans," Andrew said. "It's a comprehensive effort. We go to the nth degree to make sure we can work with the property owners, we want it to be a cooperative process so we can avoid a heavy-handed approach."

The county spent \$2,500 in 2010 on postage for the certified letters. Staff members spent 670 hours mapping, writing notification letters and interacting with property owners. Because money is already allocated to treat noxious weeds, the roughly \$30,000 spent in 2010 to treat weeds is not part of the program costs.

Over the program's three years, the number of notification letters sent to property owners has increased steadily — to 480 in 2011 from 231 in 2009. Andrew expects a 30 percent increase in 2012.

"The more we get the word out there, the more eyes we have looking out for these plants," she said. "The best way to find them is to educate the people who will be seeing them every day. Once they realize these plants are such a threat, they tend to be helpful."

*Model Programs from the Nation's Counties highlights award-winning programs.*

*\*See this story online at [www.naco.org/countynews](http://www.naco.org/countynews) to see Colorado's list of noxious plants.*

## Financial Services News

### New Data Available on Public Pensions

Public pension plans continue to garner headlines — many of them not complimentary. There are two recent sources of data that can help put this information in perspective.

The U.S. Census Bureau just released its 2011 annual survey of public pensions. This data looks annually at the financial activity and the membership information included in these state and local plans.

Many such plans have been in financial trouble due to multiple factors including underfunding and lack of investment growth. The census report breaks down the data into revenue, expenditures, cash and investments, and membership by each state or local plan.

According to the 2011 survey, the latest data available, all state and local public-employee retirement systems held more than \$3 trillion in assets, which is a 13.2 percent increase from 2010. The survey also compares the amount of investment holdings for

these plans, which include:

- an increase in corporate stocks by 12.5 percent,
- a decrease in corporate bonds by 0.2 percent,
- an increase in foreign and international securities by 24 percent and
- an increase in government securities by 3.8 percent. In 2011, the total revenue for all state and local plans increased by 30.6 percent to \$616.1 billion.

Investment earnings contributed nearly 78 percent to this growth followed by government contributions (15.6 percent), and finally, employee contributions (6.5 percent). Employee contributions increased by 3 percent to \$40.3 billion in 2011. Total payments, which consists of benefits, withdrawals and other payments, increased by 8.5 percent to \$232 billion for these plans. For more information, including an individual breakdown by state, go to [www.census.gov/govs/retire](http://www.census.gov/govs/retire).

In comparison, the Pew Center on the States has used its own data to rank the individual state plans to give a side-by-side comparison of each plan and the stability or trouble each plan faces. The first report was in 2010, and this summer it released an update that showed states were \$1.38 trillion short on retirement funding for their plans.

Due to these numbers, a majority of states have made major changes to their pension plans and retirement systems to shore up some stability for public employees retirement. More changes are expected to continue to take place in public retirement plans throughout the next few years. For more information on the Pew research, go to [www.pewstates.org/issues/retirement-328283](http://www.pewstates.org/issues/retirement-328283).

*(Financial Services News was written by Mary Bell, director, NACo Financial Services Corporation.)*

## Job Market & Classifieds

### ►COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR – COUNTY OF BATH, VA.

Salary: DOQ.

Bath County, Va., located in the beautiful Alleghany Highlands, is seeking a highly motivated public administrator to serve as its chief administrative officer. The County Administrator is appointed by, and reports to, a five member Board of Supervisors elected by districts. An undergraduate degree in public administration, business administration, or political science, and five to eight years' experience as a County Administrator, City or Town Manager or Senior Assistant is required. A master's degree in public administration

or an I.C.M.A. credentialed manager designation is highly desirable.

Salary commensurate with education and experience; excellent benefit package.

Interested individuals are requested to submit a resume along with a completed Commonwealth of Virginia Employment Application, which can be obtained online, to: William G. O'Brien Interim County Administrator County of Bath P.O. Box 309 Warm Springs, VA 24484 Application process remains open until position is filled. Please contact the County Administrator's Office at 540.839.7221, to obtain a complete job description. Equal Opportunity Employer.