

2014 NACo Legislative Conference Transportation, economic recovery top NACo agenda

More than 1,500 county officials are expected to lend their voices to the importance of long-term funding for the nation's federal surface transportation program and the important role transportation infrastructure plays in America's economic competitiveness during NACo's 2014 Legislative Conference, March 1–5, at the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Among the special guest speakers scheduled for the conference are Rep. Bill Shuster (R-Pa.), chair of the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee; Sec. Shaun Donovan, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; Sec. Sally Jewell, U.S. Department of Interior; and Sec. Anthony Foxx, U.S. Department of Transportation.

Joining Donovan and Shuster at the Opening Session March 3 will be former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman (R) and Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W. Va.), honorary chairs, No Labels. No Labels is a citizens' movement



of Democrats, Republicans and Independents dedicated to promoting a new politics of problem solving.

Also appearing at the session: Mike Allen, chief White House correspondent, *Politico* and Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), chair, U.S. House Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation, House Natural Resources Committee. Jewell and Foxx will speak at the closing general session on March 4 along with Brad Fitch, president and CEO, Congressional Management Foundation

See CONFERENCE page 7



Photo courtesy of portofmiamitunnel.com press room

The Port of Miami Tunnel project is currently being built by MAT Concessionaire, LLC, in partnership with the Florida Department of Transportation, Miami-Dade County and the City of Miami.

NACo study: Counties face funding challenges in transportation

By EMILIA ISTRATE
RESEARCH DIRECTOR

In preparation of the expiration of the federal surface transportation law this year, NACo has released

significant new research, which shows that counties need a continuing partnership with the federal government and the states in funding the U.S. transportation system.

The Road Ahead: County Transportation Funding and Financing examines the structure of county funding for transportation projects, challenges and examples of funding and financing solutions. The study also analyzes the nature of county ownership and authority over transportation. This research focuses only on roads and bridges, given that other county transportation assets have different funding mechanisms.

As an integral part of the nation's transportation network, counties own 45 percent of all public roads and 39 percent of all bridges. They are involved in road and bridge ownership in 43 states and own and maintain the majority of public roads in 24 states. Kansas counties hold the top spot in terms of roadways ownership, with 81 percent of public roads in the state.

Meanwhile, Iowa counties are responsible for nearly 80 percent

of bridges statewide, the highest share among states.

Inadequate Federal Funding Mechanism

The federal-state-local funding mechanism for transportation has

See ROAD AHEAD page 7

CountyNews Features

County input valued in election commission report

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER



When ice and sleet caused some Travis County, Texas schools to close on Jan. 28, pupils and teachers weren't the only ones left with nowhere to go. A runoff election was being held that day, and polling places at several schools were closed because of the weather. Chaos, however, did not ensue.

"Because we're doing vote centers, and we have every ballot

style in those precincts, we're able to direct voters to other precincts to vote," Michael Winn, the county's director of elections, told *County News* that day.

Creating vote centers, improving voting technology and expanding before-Election Day voting options are among the key recommendations in the recently released *The American Voting Experience: Report and Recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration* (PCEA).

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Not too early to start planning for National County Government Month
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Counties move forward with NextGen 911
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FCC to start trials on retiring traditional landlines, announces new funding for rural broadband

By YEJIN JANG

ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR



On Jan. 30, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued an Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking outlining the requirements for telecommunications service providers to begin experiments in substituting new phone technologies (namely, Internet Protocol-based technologies) for the copper-based traditional landlines that are used today.

SpeedRead » » »

- » FCC seeks experiments in switch from copper-based landlines to IP technologies
- » Commission to decide on proposals in May
- » FCC to fund rural broadband expansion pilots

Telecommunications providers would begin these experiments with intent to discontinue landline services while preserving values inherent in America's communications network like universal service, public safety, competition and consumer protection. In essence, the FCC is collecting proposals from telecommunications providers for transitioning consumers off of copper-based landlines to an Internet, IP-based network which will allow telecommunications carriers to experiment with providing voice and other services using Internet

protocol, delivered over coaxial cable, fiber or wireless technologies.

Telecommunications providers will now start submitting experiment proposals to the FCC. The proposals must ensure the following:

- continued consumer access to 911/E911 emergency services
- In the event of a public safety failure in the course of an experiment, the provider must be able to immediately fix the IP-based service, restore its legacy (copper-based landline) service or provide a comparable service.

- protect cybersecurity
- ensure access for persons with disabilities and
- No consumer should lose access to service or critical functionalities as a result of the experiment.

All proposals will be subject to public comment. The FCC is scheduled to make a decision on submitted proposals at its May 15 meeting.

In addition to outlining principles and conditions for an IP transition experiment, the FCC also intends to provide funding for experiments to extend Internet and Internet-based services to rural areas using unallocated amounts from the Connect America Fund.

The FCC intends to use these experiments to help craft a long-term Connect America mechanism that would ensure that consumers in rural areas have access to the Internet. The FCC is proposing to financially support only those areas that are extremely rural and have minimal access in broadband (subject to a challenge process)—i.e. broadband speeds that are at or below 3 Mbps (download) and 768 Kbps (upload).

The FCC is seeking expressions of interest from entities willing to deploy "robust scalable broadband to high-cost areas" by March 7. (High-cost areas are usually very rural areas). The FCC released a list of census tracts in rural areas potentially suitable for this type of experiment.

The order encourages participation from as many entities as possible including state and regional authorities, municipalities, research

and education networks, and multi-stakeholder groups. Potential applicants need not be an eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) at the time of the application but must obtain ETC designation after being selected for a funding award. This also means that entities selected to receive funding must offer voice telephony service at reasonably comparable rates as part of the experiment.

Expressions of interest should include:

- nature of the submitting entity or entities (telephone provider, municipality, utility, etc.)
- broadband technology to be deployed
- contemplated service offerings and their pricing
- if known, expected state and/or local government participation in — and/or support for — the projects (e.g. expedited permitting, access to rights of way, matching funds, etc.) and
- whether the proposal is expected to require one-time or continued funding and a high-level estimate of the amount requested.

A formal proposal stage will follow the current expression of interest stage.

For more information, contact Yejin Jang at 202.942.4239 or yjang@naco.org.

**To read the FCC rulemaking order, to access FCC's overall description of the rural broadband experiments or to identify the census tracts eligible for rural broadband deployment, please see this article at www.countynews.org.*

Vice President Biden to lead workforce training reform effort

By DARIA DANIEL

ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR



President Barack Obama has released a memorandum instructing Vice President Joe Biden to lead an effort to review and reform federal employment and training programs within existing legislative authority.

Biden will be heading up a task force, as Obama said in his State of the Union Address, "to lead an across-the-board reform of America's training programs to make sure they have one mission: train Americans with the skills employers need, and match them to good jobs that need to be filled right now." He is charged with presenting a plan in six months.

Biden plans to tour local areas in states with promising workforce and economic development practices. NACo is compiling a list to share with Biden's staff for consideration.

If you think your county has a model workforce and economic practice or program that should be included, please send more information with county official is contact information to Daria Daniel, NACo associate legislative director, at ddaniel@naco.org.

The vice president has been meeting with key stakeholders including NACo to get ideas for reform. NACo will be involved in task force activities and will be sharing county best practices in workforce development to assist its efforts.

President Obama is also focused on giving long-term unemployed workers an opportunity for employment. Among his efforts is a

new grant competition through the Department of Labor to support innovative partnerships between states, cities and counties that are helping to prepare and place long-term unemployed adults into good jobs.

According to the Department of Labor's website, the Long-term Unemployed H-1B Ready To Work Partnerships grant program (Ready to Work) will use approximately \$150 million in revenues from the H-1B visa program to support high-performing partnerships between employers, nonprofit organizations and America's public workforce system that will help provide long-term unemployed individuals with the range of services, training and access they need to fill medium- and high-skill jobs. The department expects that a solicitation for applications for these grants will be available in February and awards will be made in mid-2014.

**To view more information on the "Ready to Work" \$150 million grants announcement view this story online at www.countynews.org.*

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Quick Takes

Top States with 2014 U.S. Winter Olympians

1. California (20)
2. Colorado (19)
3. Minnesota (19)
4. New York (18)
5. Wisconsin (15)

Source: Yahoo! Sports, February 2014

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NCGM: Planning ahead yields great returns

2014 Theme echoes president's initiative: Ready and Resilient Counties

By JIM PHILIPPS
MEDIA MANAGER

For much of the country, it's been a brutal winter. Artic cold temperatures, snow measured in feet rather than inches and disruption of transportation systems and personal schedules. If you find yourself thinking about spring and the sunny days just ahead, think too about making plans today to celebrate National County Government Month (NCGM) in April.

It's right around the corner. Carefully planned, NCGM can be a most rewarding experience for county officials, county employees, school children, educators and the public counties serve every day.

Take Wayne County, N.C., for example: For many years, Wayne County schools have actively participated in NCGM through a variety of activities.

"Though the activities may differ from year to year — sometimes we've had mock Board of Commissioner meetings with students playing the parts of commissioners, while other years we've had job-shadowing coupled with a variety of presentations — we have always had a group of lively and engaged students over the years," said Barbara Arntsen, the county's public

information officer. "The students have also eaten lunch with the Board of Commissioners thereby ensuring one-to-one conversations, followed by each student giving a short synopsis of their experience."

Another Hall of Fame-worthy NCGM county — if there were a NCGM Hall of Fame — is Kittitas County, Wash. Over many years the Kittitas County Board of Commissioners office has held an annual coloring-drawing contest for children in grades K-5 in recognition of NCGM.

"Our office usually receives upwards of 500 entries each year and they are hung up throughout the courthouse hallways during National County Government Month," said Julie Kjorsvik, clerk of the board. "Both county employees and the general public thoroughly enjoy taking their time, strolling through the hallways to look at the talent our kids have in Kittitas County. We place each of entries in order of grade and class, so it's easy for families to come and find their students' artwork."

Kjorsvik said she personally enjoys looking at each entry as they arrive.

"I never know how the children will interpret our theme," she said. "For instance the year our theme



Photo courtesy of Oakland County, Mich.

All hands on deck for Oakland County, Mich.'s popular Youth in Government Day program.

was Kittitas County Heroes, we had entries ranging from pictures of school janitors, firefighters, siblings, teachers, doctors, ranchers and veterinarians.

"Our office is continually receiving compliments from both the public and employees when the

artwork is displayed," Kjorsvik continued. "It's the one time a year that the hallways of the courthouse are brightened with the color and creativity from children in our beautiful county."

Involving the local news media is key to a successful NCGM program.

According to Julia Ruffin, liaison to the Oakland County, Mich. Board of Commissioners, the feedback the county's program receives year after year has been positive.

"We are able to obtain media

See NCGM 2014 page 10

Resources for Your NCGM Celebration

A booklet full of ideas to celebrate NCGM is available on the NACo website under the Learn About Counties section. The booklet contains suggested community activities, a draft proclamation, a sample news release and media outreach strategies. Also on the NCGM Web page, you will find free downloads for logos, banners and posters with the 2014 theme and blank space for your county to localize and "make it your own."

NACo wants to know about the activities and programs you have planned so they can be shared with other counties. Please use the online form on the NACo website or contact Jim Philipps at 202.942.4220 or jphilipps@naco.org. Be sure to send your proclamations, photos and videos of your county's celebrations. Those files can be uploaded via the online form as well or sent directly to Philipps.

In Case You Missed It

News to Use From Past County News

» Registration Opens for County Leaders Forum: Resilient Counties

Registration is now open for the next NACo Resilient Counties Forum: Growing Stronger Places, May 1-2, in San Francisco. The forum is part of NACo President Linda Langston's presidential initiative.

To register, visit www.naco.org/resiliencyforum.

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Counties evolve 911 in the Internet, smartphone age

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER



Union County, N.C. has launched a new generation of 911 technology that allows mobile phone callers to send images and video to the county's emergency communications center.

It's already proved its value several times since it debuted Dec. 6 last year, including helping to locate an attempted suicide victim, according to Larry Brinker, the county's director of emergency communications.

SpeedRead » » »

- » Union County, N.C. residents can send images, video to 911
- » Next Generation 911 will facilitate wider adoption of such technology
- » 17 Illinois counties developing NextGen system based on secure Internet Protocol

A caller to 911 uploaded a photo of a friend who had tried to cut his wrists. "We sent a picture to EMS so that they could look at the wounds, and then we sent to picture to law enforcement so they could keep a lookout for the person," he said.

"They were successful of finding him within a couple of hours of the call."

Here's how it works. A mobile phone or smartphone caller dials 911; if they have additional content to transmit with the call, the call taker sends them a link via text message. After clicking it, they can upload an image or short video from their phone. It all occurs while still on the phone with the 911 operator.

"As for incoming text and video, it's all controlled by the dispatcher, because you can't send in anything until I as the dispatcher send you a link," Brinker said. That prevents random data from being transmitted without proper identifying information.

As the migration from landline to mobile-only phone users continues, 911 call centers — public safety answering points (PSAP), in industry lingo — will need to be able to receive their communications seamlessly.

Generically speaking, Union County's is "next generation 911" (NG9-1-1) technology — or more accurately a "new" generation, according to officials with the National Emergency Number Association

(NENA), the NG9-1-1 standards-setting entity. NG9-1-1 has a specific definition and established technical standards, which lay a foundation for more widespread adoption of systems like Union County's. NENA, working with industry and governments, began developing the technical requirements for Next Gen 9-1-1 more than a decade ago.

The Federal Communications Commission defines NG9-1-1 as a system architecture to enable a transition to a broadband digital, Internet Protocol (IP)-based foundation for the delivery of multimedia 911 "calls" or "events," as they're coming to be known — since they won't strictly be traditional voice calls. That information could include automatic-crash-notification data from cars equipped to transmit it, sensory alarms and building monitoring data, all of which could aid in emergency response.

"From a county perspective, next generation 911 provides a great deal of opportunity," said NENA CEO Brian Fontes. "Ultimately, I believe that the operational cost associated with the provision of next generation 911 will be less than the current process where each PSAP is provisioned to accept 911 calls."

That's what's happening in rural southern Illinois, where a collaboration that began with three counties in 2006 has grown to include 17 counties. The Counties of Southern Illinois Next Generation 9-1-1 Project, CSI

“It is imperative that public safety keep current with the technology that consumers have at their fingertips.”

for short, consists of Alexander, Clay, Franklin, Gallatin, Jackson, Jefferson Johnson, Massac, Perry Pulaski, Randolph, Richland, Saline, Union, Wabash, White and Williamson counties. They range in population from 5,600 (Gallatin) to 66,000 (Williamson).

Pat Lustig, Jackson County 911 director, is the project manager.

"We were all stuck in old technology and we need to transition to new technology," he said. The counties created CSI as a nonprofit entity to execute their plans.

The new technology is too expensive for most local 911 systems to pursue on their own. "Obviously it takes money to do this," Lustig said. "One of the reasons that we

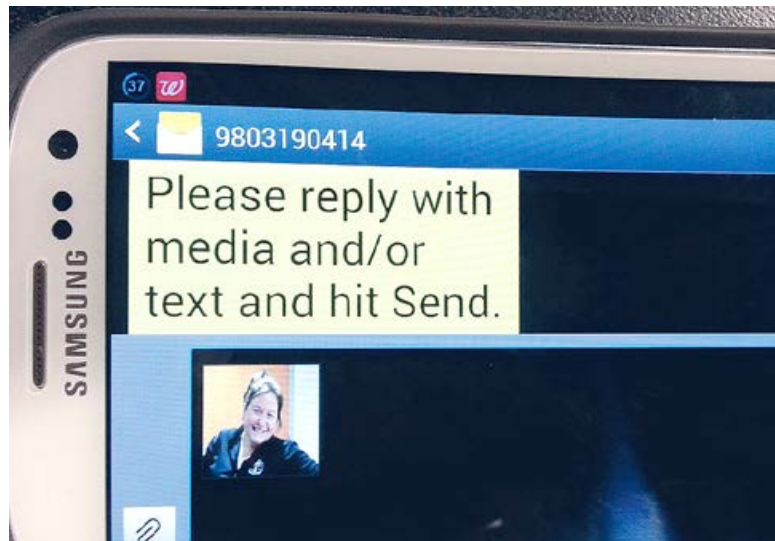


Photo courtesy of Union County, N.C.

911 callers in Union County, N.C. can use their smartphones to send photos or video to the county's emergency communications center.

collectively pooled our resources and went together is it's so expensive. My four centers, it was going to cost me about \$200,000 per center — \$800,000 — almost a million dollars to do this by myself."

Instead of purchasing separate NG9-1-1 equipment to serve each county, CSI is buying two redundant systems that will be connected through a secure IP network — sort of a private Internet — which has ability to receive incoming data from the public-facing Web and other interconnections. In the event of a major emergency, the region would have more than 60 dispatchers available to handle calls instead of each county's four or fewer.

CSI received a \$600,000 federal COPS grant to help get the project off the ground, and it has benefited from several federal and state grants. The group also worked with a local telecommunications company, Clearwave Communications, which received a 2008 federal stimulus grant of \$45 million to help expand broadband access in rural America, providing the backbone infrastructure which the counties lease.

Jackson County's most populous city is Carbondale, home to the main campus of Southern Illinois University (SIU), which has provided technical assistance to the project. "This new technology is based on geospatial data, so our data for each county had to be in a certain format," Lustig said. The consortium contracted with SIU's GIS department to format the data.

Each county contributes to the project on a prorated basis, depending on population. Lustig said some counties have paid in as little as \$25,000. "I'm at \$117,000," he added, "but it was going to cost me \$800,000 to do this (alone). I think it's a win-win for my county."

The project still has some state

ever done it before."

Connecting the partnering counties' PSAPs is a first but significant step in the move towards NG9-1-1. It won't immediately provide the capability for the public to send media-rich content to 911, but it creates a framework to enable it in the future. In the meantime, the counties get a system that expands their capacity to handle calls region-wide, not just locally.

Fontes applauds efforts like CSI's. "It is imperative that public safety keep current with the technology that consumers have at their fingertips. If there is a disconnect between the citizens of the county and the technology that the county has for public safety," he said, "then there's a missed opportunity to better serve that public in their most critical times of need."

**See this story online at www.countynews.org for more information about Next Generation 911 and the Illinois counties' project.*

Profiles in Service



► Loren Grosskopf

Commissioner
Park County, Wyo.

Number of years active in NACo: two

Years in public service: three

Occupation: semi-retired CPA (in my county commissioner's prior life)

Education: B.S. and M.S. in accounting

The hardest thing I've ever done: participate in my father's funeral

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: my father, John Wayne and Charlton Heston

A dream I have is to: visit the Arctic.

You'd be surprised to learn that: I have visited six of the seven continents.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: visit Istanbul, Turkey and then hunt ibex in Kyrgyzstan by myself.

My favorite way to relax is: being outdoors playing.

I'm most proud of: my family and my personal accomplishments equally.

Every morning I read: our daily newspaper and dozens of emails.

My favorite meal is: grilled ribeye beef steak with sweet potato fries.

My pet peeve is: loud side conversations during meetings.

My motto is: "Every man dies...not every man lives."

My favorite movie is: *Field of Dreams*.

My favorite music is: '60s music.

My favorite president is: Ronald Reagan.

Two counties prepare for voting machine obsolescence

ELECTIONS from page 1

And county commissioners should pay heed, according to Dana DeBeauvoir, Travis County clerk. "When it comes time for counties to buy (new voting equipment) in the next one to five years, you're going to find many commissioner courts or ... at higher levels who balk and say, 'No we're not going to spend multi-millions of dollars this time around. We're going to look for something else,'" she predicted.

Two county elections officials served on the 10-member PCEA: Tammy Patrick, federal compliance officer for the Maricopa County (Ariz.) Elections Department, and Larry Lomax, retired Clark County, Nev. registrar of voters.

The PCEA's other recommendations include:

- increasing the use of schools as polling places, and addressing student-security concerns by having Election Day coincide with teacher in-service training days, when the kids are off
- continuing the trend toward allowing online voter registration and
- recognizing and addressing the "impending crisis" in voting technology as machines bought 10 years ago wear out and require replacement with no federal aid foreseen.

For years, county elections officials have warned that voting machines bought with money from the 2002 federal Help America Vote



Photo courtesy of Travis County Clerk's Office

A Travis County, Texas voter uses one of county's Vote Centers, where any registered voter can cast their ballot, regardless of their home precinct.

Act (HAVA) are nearing the end of their useful life.

"The standards that voting equipment is being built and certified and tested to currently were written in 2005," Patrick said.

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC), created by HAVA, is supposed to certify all new voting technology. But the commission has been without members since 2011 because of congressional partisan wrangling over whether the panel is still needed.

Neal Kelley, Orange County, Calif.'s registrar of voters, said his county's electronic voting system is still running on Microsoft's Windows 2000, and he's been buying up spare parts in anticipation that they'll cease being made. "We just were able to push the state to allow us to upgrade to Windows 7," he added. Kelley is also first vice president of the National Association of County Recorders, Election Of-

ficials and Clerks, a NACo affiliate, and a member of the EAC's Board of Advisors and Standards Board.

The report singled out Travis County and Los Angeles County for their "promising collaborations" to develop new voting systems at the local or state level that could set standards for future technologies.

DeBeauvoir said elections officials need less expensive off-the-shelf hardware and software-only solutions. For example, she said an off-the-shelf, tablet-like device might cost about \$300 apiece, if competitively bid on a state contract. "The boxes that you see now that are touch-button or touch-screen are in the neighborhood of \$3,000."

Travis County has formed an alliance of elections officials, academics (Rice University, Berkeley) and industry representatives (Microsoft Research), among others, to design a cheaper, more adaptable new voting system from scratch called STAR-Vote; the acronym stands for Secure, Transparent, Auditable and Reliable.

L.A. County Registrar Dean Logansaid, "There has been a shrinking of the market and a stifling of research and development in terms of voting systems in the last two decades." That's why his county has undertaken a Voting Systems Assessment Project that is working with Silicon Valley to create a "prototype ballot marking device" that stakeholders are currently testing.

The over-arching goal is to not be dependent on vendors or industry proprietary systems.

Maggie Toulouse Oliver, Berna-lillo County, N.M. clerk, testified before the commission that the county began using vote centers in 2012, after county clerks successfully lobbied the State Legislature for enabling legislation the previous year. That first year, by using 69 vote centers versus 179 traditional polling places, the county saved \$1 million — 20 to 30 percent of Oliver's overall budget for elections, she said. Ninety-two percent of voters surveyed said they preferred the experience to traditional precinct voting.

Cook County Clerk David Orr strongly endorsed scheduling elections on weekends or holidays, which he told the commission would expand the pool of available poll workers and "enhance elections authorities' ability to use important brick-and-mortar assets, public buildings."

Speaking of holidays, Patrick said after the report came out one election administrator told her "it felt like Christmas."

"They were so pleased to have this document from the presidential commission that seemed to validate and legitimize many of their concerns."

**See this story online at www.countynews.org to hear the Cook County testimony, to access the full report and a PCEA Election Toolkit.*

PCEA report recommends half-hour maximum wait to vote

Created by presidential Executive Order 13639, the Presidential Commission on Election Administration (PCEA) had as part of its mission to recommend ways "to ensure that all eligible voters have the opportunity to cast their ballots without undue delay." This was in response to the long lines and waiting times that some voters experienced in the 2012 presidential election.

The report concluded that "no citizen should have to wait in line for more than 30 minutes to vote," and that this could be accomplished by implementing or expanding best practices such as vote centers, early voting and online registration, among others.

That's a laudable goal, said one elections official who agrees in theory, if not entirely in practice. Mark Andersen, elections supervisor, Bay County, Fla., is a "standards person" and is "all for" the report, but he said there should be some caveats. "We need to be careful ... just because you waited in line 35 minutes is not a legal challenge or a legal failure," he said "That's where we have to be cautious about how we address — and the way we move on — the report."

The commission understands that "one size does not fit all," said Tammy Patrick, federal compliance officer for the Maricopa County (Ariz.) Elections Department and a member of the commission.

A bipartisan panel, the PCEA was co-chaired by lawyers for past Republican and Democrat presidential campaigns and held hearings during a six-month period last year. Among the resources it created is an Election Toolkit to help local election officials better allocate staff and equipment to help avoid long lines.

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Growing counties need transportation investment

By JOHN HORSLEY

NACO PAST PRESIDENT 1986–1987

(Note: This is the second installment of a two-part series that looks at how population growth, commuting and employment patterns have reshaped the need for spending on transportation in the nation's counties, and how these most significant players in the intergovernmental system are meeting the challenge.)

County Transportation Funding Solutions

Local Government Transportation Ballot Measures, especially those for transit improvements, are generally meeting with success. According to the Washington D.C.-based Center for Transportation Excellence, in 2012, 17 states placed 62 transportation ballot measures before the voters. Forty-nine won and 13 lost for a success rate of 79 percent. In 2013, eight states placed 15 measures on the ballot. Eleven won and 4 lost, for a success rate of 73 percent.

Below are some examples of what counties are doing in several states to meet their needs.

Texas

Texas in part, has gone to tolling to meet its metropolitan traffic needs.

In the Dallas-Tarrant County Metroplex, the North Texas Toll Way Authority operates six expressways now and has several others under

construction valued in the billions. The Harris County Toll Road Authority operates five toll roads in the Houston area and has others planned. The Fort Bend County Toll Road Authority operates two toll roads.

Tolling authorities have been established to operate four additional toll roads, and seven regional mobility authorities have been created to expedite the approval of toll facilities in other parts of the state.

El Paso County, Texas is meeting its needs in other ways. On Dec. 24, 2013, the El Paso County Commissioners Court approved more than \$400 million in transportation improvement projects. Funding comes from an increase in vehicle registration fees, the Texas Department of Transportation (DOT) and Transportation Reinvestment Zones. The projects include \$263 million in new construction in the city of El Paso and \$125.5 million outside the city limits.

California

California, in part, has gone to voter-approved sales tax measures to fund transportation. Between 1984 and 1992, 18 self-help counties in California passed local transportation ballot measures to increase their local sales taxes by one-half cent. To succeed, these measures had to win by a two-thirds majority. Since that



Photo courtesy of Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority

Pasco County, Fla. commissioners are funding a plan to build 33 miles of elevated toll ways similar to the Selmon Expressway (pictured above) under operation in nearby Hillsborough County.

period, many of these urban counties have gone back to their voters and won approval for a second round of projects.

California has also turned to tolls to fund projects in several of its largest counties. Four toll facilities are being operated in Orange County by its Transportation Corridor agencies. Two toll roads are being operated in San Diego County — the I-15 Express Lanes and the South Bay Ex-

pressway — and more are planned. Two toll ways are being operated in Los Angeles County — Metro Express Lanes on Routes 10 and 110, and in the San Francisco Bay Area there are five major toll bridges including the Golden Gate Bridge, as well as the I-680 Express Lanes.

Florida

Florida counties, in partnership with the Florida DOT, are meeting

their needs in several ways. Brevard County, for example, is pledging revenues generated by a local option fuel tax to fund projects using \$90 million in revenue bonds. Alachua County has issued \$60 million in public improvement revenue bonds, which are secured by a pledge of the county's share of its local option half-cent sales tax.

In Hillsborough County, the Tampa-Hillsborough Expressway Authority uses tolls to operate the Selmon Expressway, Brandon Parkway and Meridian Avenue. It is also studying the concept of Bus Toll Lanes. The Pasco County commissioners passed a resolution last December to continue work on plans to build 33 miles of elevated expressway funded through tolls, to connect U.S. 19 with U.S. 301. The project, possibly to be built as a public-private partnership, would be similar to the elevated Selmon Expressway already in operation in nearby Hillsborough County. Movement of traffic around the urban areas of Polk County has been improved by the construction of the Polk County Parkway (U.S. 570) a toll facility operated by the Florida Department of Transportation.

South Carolina

In 2006, Horry County (Myrtle Beach) voters authorized a one-cent sales tax for seven years that will generate \$425 million and fund 15 road projects including the completion of the U.S. 17 Bypass and the S.C. 707 Overpass.

In the months ahead, NACo plans to share success stories from other counties on how they are finding ways to fund the transportation needs of their communities.

Reality show inspires county to improve wellness

By CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Now that January is over, some New Year's resolutions are a not-so-distant memory. That's not the case for Madison County, Idaho employees.

The fourth installment of the Madison County Biggest Loser Wellness Program kicked off Jan. 9 and runs through early April. This time, however, there is a catch: participants must keep the weight off for two months following the competition before they can claim their prize.

Created in 2013, the challenge has held three competitions with 105 participants and nearly 1,000 pounds lost between them.

Kirk Mace, director of Madison County's Juvenile Probation Department, serves as chair of the county employee committee and coordinates programs like the wellness program. Previously, the program was more about documenting food, diet and exercise with no real

SpeedRead » » »

- » The Madison County Biggest Loser Wellness program started January 2013 with three competitions throughout the year with 105 participants and nearly 1,000 pounds lost
- » All employees who lose 5 percent of their body weight receive a paid day off with the top three receiving an additional cash prize

challenge or competition. Thus the Madison County Biggest Loser program was born to ramp up the motivation factor.

"I've personally lost 70 pounds in the past 18 months," Mace said. "The program is not just about competition, but motivating your co-workers and implementing lifestyle changes that stick."

A change is what Jarred Young, chief juvenile justice probation

officer, was definitely looking for. Young started dieting a little over a year ago and participated in the first Biggest Loser Challenge.

"It was the heaviest I had ever been," Young said. "I wanted to make the change for myself and stick with it."

For Young, a combination of factors led to his successful weight loss — a successful diet with the South Beach Diet program and support from his co-workers who decided to compete in the Biggest Loser challenge together. Because of the whole office involvement, sugary and fatty snacks such as donuts and sodas were replaced with healthier alternatives like vegetables and water.

"You tend to spend eight to nine hours with your co-workers most days, so supporting each other is key," Young said. "When lunchtime comes around and you're tempted to eat fast food, you turn it down and eat a salad instead."

The Biggest Loser Wellness Program has a weekly weigh-in at the

juvenile probation office. Currently, there are 45 participants, including Young. For the first time, spouses of county employees are invited to participate.

Participants pay a \$10 fee, the only expense for the program. All participants who lose 5 percent or more of their body weight, and keep it off for the two months after the competition, will receive eight hours of vacation time. The top three weight loss participants will receive an additional cash prize.

"Local businesses have been very generous with donations," Mace said. "These prizes are great motivators during the dog-days of the competition."

Mace adds that the health benefit is obviously the primary benefit, but working for a paid day off and a chance at other prizes is also satisfying.

"Getting county commissioners to buy in is key," Mace added. "Elected officials and department heads are a huge support and gets more employees participating."

Inadequate share for locals in federal transportation funding

ROAD AHEAD from page 1

become increasingly inadequate. Based on Federal Highway Administration data, the share of federal and state funding to local governments for highways decreased by 10 percent between 1998 and 2011. The latest federal surface transportation law, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), further skewed the allocation of funds away from local governments.

While local governments own 43 percent of the federal-aid highways system, local areas receive a sub-allocation that is equal to 16 percent of federal National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) and the Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding for federal-aid highways. A combination of federal budget cuts, the effect of the recession on state government budgets and reliance on a fixed gas tax for state and federal highway funding all contribute to a widening gap in the transportation funding available to counties.

Locally, counties face their own problems from rapidly rising construction costs and heavy traffic volumes to limitations on their ability to raise revenue for transportation projects.

Fast-growing industries, such as oil and gas or agriculture, cause heavy traffic that strains county transportation systems. For example, counties in South Dakota experienced a rapid rise in agricultural expansion accompanied by additional heavy traffic on county roads not suited for overweight trucks.

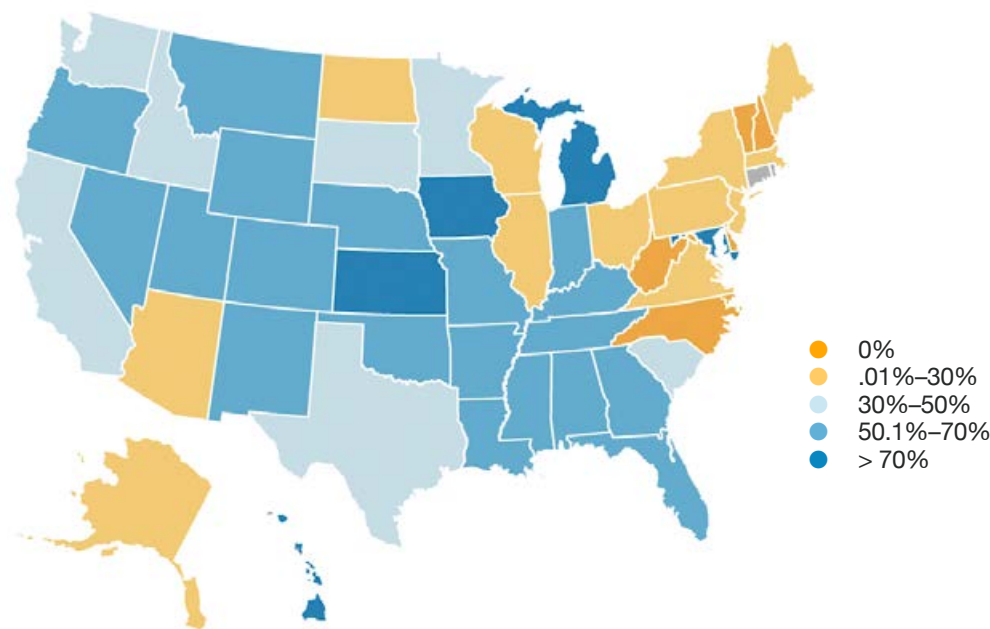
The state has a system of fees for overweight trucks, but the funding flows to school districts, instead of offsetting the costly repairs necessary for county roads. Furthermore, while 46 counties in South Dakota implemented a wheel tax, the state caps the tax at \$4 per wheel that can only be collected on four wheels, not all the 18 wheels of the semi-trailer trucks that cause the most damage to county roads.

Local Revenue Sources often Constrained

As creatures of the state, counties' ability to fund transportation is deeply linked with the state funding and state willingness to allow counties to develop their own funding sources. Many states have imposed numerous limitations on counties to raise their own revenues for transportation, either through property taxes, local gas taxes or other options.

Forty-three states have some type of limitation on the property taxes collected by counties, including 38

County Owned Roads, Share of Statewide Public Roads, 2011



Note: Connecticut and Rhode Island are marked in gray because they do not have county governments. They are not included in this study.

Source: NACo analysis of U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), FHWA, Highway Performance Monitoring System data, 2011

The Road Ahead County Transportation Funding and Financing



For the full report, the companion interactive data tool for the Road Ahead and individual state profiles, see www.naco.org/countytransportation.

The reader can access transportation funding data and information for counties in each of the 48 states with county governments: county ownership and financial authority over roads and bridges, funding sources, challenges and solutions with funding and financing transportation.

states that impose statutory limitations on property tax rate, property tax assessments or both. Only 12 states authorize counties to collect their own local gas taxes, which are limited to a maximum rate in most cases and often involve additional approvals for implementation.

With all these challenges, counties try to find funding and financing solutions, but they are not sufficient to cover all the needs of their transportation systems. Counties have been supplementing transportation funds with their own general funds and local option sales taxes to pay for transportation projects. For example, in November 2013, residents in Gwinnett County, Ga. approved the latest special purpose local option sales tax (SPLOST) referendum, which would result in \$498 million county funding over the following three years.

The county dedicated 70 percent

of this additional funding to roads, bridges, drainage, sidewalks, intersection improvements and other transportation projects.

In partnership with states and other local governments, counties have implemented modernization and cost-saving measures to streamline processes and save money. Pennsylvania counties, together with Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), are at the forefront, with initiatives such as the Bridge Bundling, the Modular Bridge and the Agility programs. For example, in the Bridge Bundling program, PennDOT proposes to counties projects that combine multiple bridges with similar designs in a bundled project for repair or replacement. PennDOT manages the project in a single contract, and counties are responsible for maintenance of the bridges after the completion of the project.

The delivery of projects was reduced from five years to one year, and the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania estimates that the construction savings from the program would be 10 percent or more.

Global competition and an increasing backlog of needs at all levels of government require strong federal-state-local and public-private collaboration and solutions. A seamless network of roads and bridges needs consistency in construction and maintenance across the entire U.S. surface transportation system. All levels of government participating in this responsibility must also share funding and grant counties the ability to generate additional revenues. This requires all owners of roads and bridges to work together to maintain and improve the U.S. transportation network.

Hill speakers to address NACo committees at conference

CONFERENCE from page 1

From Congress, Reps. Chaka Fattah (D-Pa.) and Michael Turner (R-Ohio) will participate in a meeting of the Large Urban County Caucus and Rep. Adrian Smith (R-Neb.) will speak at the Rural Action Caucus meeting.

A special highlight of the conference will be a March 4 rally on Capitol Hill where county officials, joined by members of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives, will press Congress to pass a multi-year surface transportation bill that provides long-term certainty and increases funding for transportation infrastructure.

NACo Policy Committee Meetings

NACo policy committee guest speakers from the White House, Capitol Hill and federal agencies will brief county leaders on March 1 and 2 on issues such as cybersecurity, Internet sales tax, broadband, agriculture and rural development, the Affordable Care Act (including Medicaid), community and economic development, justice and public safety, and immigration reform.

Confirmed speakers include Rep. Adrian Smith (R-Neb.); Tricia A. Schmitt, senior budget examiner, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President; Lynn Overmann, senior advisor to the U.S. Chief Technology Officer, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy; Victor Mendez, acting deputy secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation and other representatives from federal agencies.

In addition to carrying the county government message to Capitol Hill, county officials will participate in a variety of educational workshops such as Innovative Transportation and Infrastructure Financing; Advancing Economic Resilience through Workforce Preparedness Efforts; Managing Costs and Improving Public Safety; Cybersecurity Workforce Development for Counties and Flood Mapping and Biggert-Waters: Why Data Matters.

* See this story online to download copies of NACo's policy committee agendas and conference schedule.

2014 NACo Second Vice President Candidate: Allan F. Angel

■ Why are you interested in serving as a NACo officer?

I have been fortunate to serve NACo on a number of committees, and that experience has called me to a leadership role. I want to take the ideas of many and transform them into workable solutions that can benefit our members. With collaboration, innovation and persistence, NACo's voice will continue to be the heart and drive of our members. However, we need to build our strength in maintaining a strong, delegation of our membership in order to accomplish our values and goals that this organization sets forth with changes in leadership and the natural process that happens in every election. I truly believe these are the reasons I want to become a NACo officer.

■ What do you consider to have been your most important contribution to the National Association of Counties to date; to your state association of counties?

- Running for NACo 2nd vice president, 2013
- Task Force chair, NACo Dental Program
- Driving across the country for 3 days and 2,800 miles from Delaware to Reno to demonstrate a commitment to attend a NACo conference

- Working with Caremark/CVS prescription discount card program (Champion Award recipient in 2010)

- Lead the dental discount card pilot program as Delaware Association of Counties president

■ What do you consider to be the two or three most important challenges facing NACo in the near future on which the officers, Executive Committee, Board of Directors should focus? Why?

The election process: Develop a handbook "Procedures, Rules and Regulations for 2nd Vice President," a book of guidance for NACo leadership and overhaul the system. In the last 10 years as a NACo member, we had 3-4 elections with major selections based on gender, race, political party, outside interference for candidates running, pre-selection of those who should run for 2nd vice president or would want them to win, changes the way states vote, as in the last election held. Now we're making changes in the middle of the process. If we are to keep NACo strong we must discuss and change our election process so that every candidate has a chance to participate equally to represent NACo.

Unfunded federal mandates cripple the ability of local budgets



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to meet fiduciary responsibilities. This cost shifting is without regard to our county and its constituents. With the continued revenue deficiencies that we are experiencing, we need new and innovative enhancers to help offset federal and state short falls.

Membership retention is a critical issue because it impacts our ability to have a strong NACo voice to be heard in Washington, D.C. as well providing value service for our constituents as their representatives.

■ What do you consider to be the two or three most important issues local officials are facing in their counties that should be on the NACo agenda? Why?

Veteran Services: Coming from a military family living next to major Air Force base with the pending end of our military engagement in Afghanistan and the requisite downsizing of our military will generate opportunities and challenges for job creation as well as medical services for our returning heroes. Having worked for two Veterans Hospitals and served in the armed services myself, I have seen the broken promises for past returning troops and funding cuts in programs. We must not forget why they preserve our freedoms.

Growth of our aging population: Senior citizens may outnumber the rest of the population and the group will have greater public demands on services.

Code Purple: The homeless in sub-freezing weather have no shelters to go to. There are centers for men, but not women and families. I am presently involved in our community in trying to help the homeless to get state agency's 211 communications to help find a place for a homeless person during a Code Purple call. Yes, these will be in states that often have cold

weather, so it may not pertain to warm climate states.

■ What measures would you recommend to increase and retain NACo membership and to encourage broad participation in NACo by elected officials and employees of NACo member counties? What specific role would you be willing to assume to help build and sustain membership in NACo?

Establish an alternate Board member position. The alternate would substitute for any full member unable to attend a conference or meeting. This proposal would help in participation and communication and keep our membership strong by strengthening our goal of "being there" for the discussion and a vote.

Develop a NACo Alumni group: composed of former elected officials in an advisory capacity to retain demonstrated leadership skills, organizational commitment, and professional relationships. We lose good people through either retirements or elections whose experiences are lost who could aid us in keeping the NACo voice strong!

Create a Data Library: composed of "BEST PRACTICE SCENARIO" of policies, ordinances, opinions, services, request for proposals, citizens programs, etc. We can learn from the mistakes of others because we won't live long enough to make them ourselves.

Value Programs: Continue to add more programs like the prescription and dental discount programs, eyeglasses, hearing aids, diabetic supplies, etc.

Membership is the reason we are an organization. It's only as strong as the value and input we provide to its members. Communication is second in having active participation. However we all know that money, dues are issues with economic downturns. I would commit myself to reaching out to former member counties to remind them of NACo's added value programs and ongoing legislative priorities, research, education and technical assistance. We help promote empowerment of our county leaders, assist in cost-saving effective services and most importantly a solid dedicated staff to aid you in any critical problem.

Allan Angel

Please describe your public service experience, including all elected and appointed positions in local or other levels of government.

- Kent County Levy Court Commissioner, 2005 – present
- Kent County Levy Court Administration Committee Chairman, 2007–present
- Capital School District School Board, 1997–98
- Capital School District School Board, 1999–2004 (President 2001–2003)
- Delaware State Board of Education Standards Committee 1993–95
- Kent County Conservation District Board of Directors 2005–2007
- Delaware Board of Massage & Body Works 1999–2004 (Chairman 2001–03)
- Kent County and Greater Dover Delaware Convention and Visitors Bureau Board (2010–present)
- Kent County Tourism Board (2008–present)

Please list all NACo service, including steering and standing committees, executive committee, task forces, caucuses and affiliates. For each, list the year(s) of service, and any leadership positions held.

- NACo Board of Directors: Board member, 2010–present
- Telecommunications & Technology Steering Committee: member 2005–present; vice chair, 2008–2012; chair, 2009
- Membership Committee: member 2008–present
- Program & Services Committee; member, 2008–present
- Presidential Initiative Planning Committee: member 2009–11
- Technology Committee: member, 2009–10
- Information Technology Committee: member 2011–present; Essential County Technology Subcommittee: member 2009–present
- Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) Subcommittee: member 2009–present

- Executive Committee Regional Representative; Northeastern member, 2010–present

- NACo Electronic Green Government Network: member, 2010

- NACo Ambassador Program, 2012–present

- Veterans & Military Services Committee: member, 2013–present

- NACo Dental Program Task Force Chair: 2009–10

Please list all state county association service, such as Board of Directors, committees, and task forces, the year(s) of service, and leadership positions held.

- Delaware Association of Counties: 2nd vice president 2008–09; 1st vice president, 2009–10; president 2010–11

- Chaired dental card kick-off pilot program for Kent County, 2010

2014 NACo Second Vice President Candidate: Bryan Desloge

■ Why are you interested in serving as a NACo officer?

During my tenure as a commissioner and as Florida Association of Counties president I have worked to advocate for the return of civility to public policymaking. I feel strongly that NACo is in a unique position to positively shape public discourse. By focusing on the strength of diversity within a civil debate, we have opportunities to create real solutions to the challenges facing our communities and nation. The theme of "Civility. Opportunity. Diversity" is emblematic of my broader commitment to collaborate with leaders of every background to promote sensible solutions to our biggest challenges. I hope to bring my passion for civil discourse to a national setting to show that through thoughtful debate, solutions can be identified and opportunities seized.

A few years ago, during contract negotiations with the city of Tallahassee, I proposed merging our fire (city) and EMS (county). For our community this was a common sense solution that would save tax dollars and provide better services for our citizens. Staff from both entities outlined the obstacles, the red tape and the myriad of things that could go wrong. Yet one day, I and a city commissioner stepped away from the "can not's" to discuss the best solution for our tax payers.

We agreed that the argument couldn't be about what was best for the "county" or what was best for the "city" but instead what was best for our shared taxpayers. Both of us agreed that without question it was to merge the two city's fire and our county EMS services. On the surface this seemed a simple yet efficient and cost-saving solution for both the county and the city. Once the big solution was identified, we could then move forward together and overcome the obstacles ahead. This kind of intergovernmental collaboration for the common good opened my eyes to the opportunity for more of these programs and ignited my passion to encourage more collaboration and discussion nationwide.

Despite the very visible problems our country faces, my experiences have taught me to be an optimist. I believe public service is a privilege and a call to action for those committed to civil discourse, honest leadership and upholding

the values that unite every citizen. I have great faith in our ability to solve the challenges that confront us, and I am more confident than ever that NACo has a vital, constructive role to play in addressing those challenges. It is with this in mind that I humbly submit my name as a candidate for NACo's 2nd vice president.

■ What do you consider to have been your most important contribution to the National Association of Counties to date; to your state association of counties?

Through my activity in NACo, the idea that civility can be taught and used in controversial debates is expanding with new programs starting in California and other large urban areas. They are exploring ways to bring the Village Square to their areas. The Village Square is a non-profit started by me and others to bring a civil discourse to the challenges facing our communities. Last year, I was interviewed by CNN on behalf of NACo where I had the opportunity to discuss the importance of civility in policy dialogue and I hope to continue to advance programs over the coming years.

In addition, I have been able to bring my expertise in business and government to my role on the NACo Financial Services Corporation Advisory Committee and hope to continue to grow NACo's



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financial sustainability within NACo leadership.

Through my passion for service and professional experience I have also brought tangible results to the Florida Association of Counties. When I became president we focused on having 100% membership and we achieved that goal. We are looking at our tried-and-true programs as well as new ventures to increase our financial sustainability. This has brought in new revenues and partnerships to the association and ultimately many of Florida's counties.

■ What do you consider to be the two or three most important challenges facing NACo in the near future on which the officers-executive committee-Board of Directors should focus? Why?

Regardless of whether or not your county is involved in NACo you are receiving the benefit of their advocacy work in Washington. In addition, counties not involved are missing out on endless educational opportunities as well as the expertise of NACo's talented staff. We must find a way to articulate the value of NACo to states and counties, boroughs and parishes, to reach 100% membership and to increase our knowledge base to better serve our communities.

In Florida, our association advocacy team collaborates with not only our contract lobbyists but staff and contract lobbyists for individual counties, like-minded organizations such as the Small County Coalition, the Florida League of Cities and the Florida School Boards Association. Combining these resources makes the fight for home rule hard to ignore in the State Capitol. It was once estimated that in Florida it was a value of more than \$25 million in combined efforts. Florida has now started collaborating more closely with the legislative expertise at NACo and I'd like to see that collaboration extend so that states, counties, boroughs and parishes are working together to increase the power of home rule

and stop unfunded mandates. NACo has started this not only through increased communications between counties but by also investing in a research arm that will add the power of facts, numbers and statistics to our advocacy arsenal. I hope to continue these collaborations and grow them to truly harness the power of NACo in Washington.

Dues are no longer the answer to financial stability in associations. I look forward to working with the state associations and the NACo team to bring in more partners and programs to increase revenues at NACo and the benefits of NACo membership to our nation's local communities. Such partnership opportunities should be created in a manner that boosts NACo and state revenue potentials while protecting the autonomy of existing and developing state programs. We must continue on a path of financial sustainability so that we can accomplish the NACo mission.

■ What do you consider to be the two or three most important issues local officials are facing in their counties that should be on the NACo agenda? Why?

Our elected officials should truly represent that face of America. Florida is a diverse state with many countries, ethnicities and cultures represented every day. Yet so many

See **DESLOGE** page 10

Bryan Desloge

Please describe your public service experience, including all elected and appointed positions in local or other levels of government.

- Leon County Commission (District IV): Elected in 2006, 2008 & 2012
 - » Appointed to Congressman Alan Boyd's Congressional Health Care Committee (2007-08)
- Governor of Florida Appointments:
 - » Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend (Chair)
 - » Florida Substance Abuse and Mental Health Authority
- Leon County Appointments:
 - » Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency
 - » Downtown Improvement Authority
 - » Tourist Development Council
 - » Community Service Highlights:
 - » Florida Blood Services: Executive Board of Directors (2009 – present)

- Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce: Past Chair
- FSU College of Business, Board of Governors
- Girls and Boys Town: Past Executive Board
- Capital Regional Medical Center & Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare: Clinical Ethics Committee
- Village Square: Founding Member & current Co-Chair

Please list all NACo service, including steering and standing committees, Executive Committee, task forces, caucuses and affiliates. For each, list the year(s) of service, and any leadership positions held.

- NACo Board of Directors (Appointed in 2012)
- Financial Services Corporation Advisory Committee (Reappointed 2013)
- Vice Chair of Behavioral Health Subcommittee (Appointed 2013)

- 2007 Graduate of NACo's County Leadership Institute

Please list all state county association service, such as Board of Directors, committees, and task forces, the year(s) of service, and leadership positions held.

- President, Florida Association of Counties (2012 – present)
- Chair, Legislative Executive Committee (2010 – present)
- Vice Chair, FAC Health & Human Services Committee (2008-10)
- FAC Presidential Advocacy Award winner in 2009 & 2010
- 2012 Graduate of the FAC Advanced County Commissioner Program
- 2009 Graduate of the FAC Certified County Commissioner Program
- FAC Board of Directors (2010 – present)
- Finance & Audit Committee (2010-11)
- Enterprise Committee (2011-12)
- FCF Board of Directors (2011-12)

NCGM planning resources are available at NACo's website

NCGM 2014 from page 3

coverage before the event, during the event and after the event," Ruffin said. "Last year we were invited to appear on a local network Sunday

Desloge: Candidate for NACo second vice president

DESLOGE from page 9

of our boards do not reflect our communities. Increasing diversity and encouraging public service is an obligation each of us has and it is something that we must do deliberately. In my time as FAC president I have made sure when appointing our leadership positions that we were diverse — including gender, race, population and regions. Who will serve when we leave? We must make sure that we are educating the younger generation on the privilege and duty it is to serve and give back to our communities.

For the past eight years, the majority of our communities have been asked to do more with less. How can we leverage the expertise of more than 3,000 counties, boroughs and parishes to increase our efficiency while also improving services? NACo is the perfect organization to work with us to find better ways to share best practices so that ground-breaking programs in one county can be adapted to work for others.

■ What measures would you recommend to increase and retain NACo membership and to encourage broad participation in NACo by elected officials and employees of NACo member counties? What specific role would you be willing to assume to help build and sustain membership in NACo?

Every member of NACo should be working to increase NACo membership by sharing with others NACo's benefits of best practices, advocacy and education. In addition, NACo must help provide that tool by better and more concisely articulating the value proposition of membership.

In Florida, I have lobbied and succeeded at 100% membership in our state association and am now working to increase Florida's NACo membership to 100%. We are well on our way.

morning news program."

Particularly popular is the Oakland County's Youth in Government Day program, which brings board members in direct contact with students, educators and parents. Commissioners work closely with the students on that day giving students their undivided attention to talk about county government,

answer questions and share insight about a variety of issues.

"One year, a parent from another county read in the newspaper that we were hosting the Youth in Government Day program," Ruffin said. "She and her teen attended. They thought it was a great program."

It's not too late to begin planning your NCGM events. This year's

NCGM theme is "Ready and Resilient Counties: Prepare. Respond. Thrive." The theme complements NACo President Linda Langston's focus on how counties prepare and respond to natural disasters and emergencies or any situation that counties may face, such as economic recovery or public health and safety challenges.

You can highlight how your county prepares and responds to such occurrences. Your county may be preparing by addressing housing, transportation, veterans or homeless issues. You may have done outreach efforts to build new relationships for economic development or advanced new emergency management work.



The graphic features a vertical strip of white stars on a dark blue background on the left. The main text is centered and reads: "NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT MONTH" in a serif font, followed by "APRIL 2014" in a larger, bold serif font. To the right of the text is the NACo logo, which includes the letters "NACo" in a stylized font and the full name "National Association of Counties" below it, accompanied by a red wavy line graphic. The background of the graphic is a soft-focus image of a field with tall grass and a rainbow in the sky.

NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT MONTH APRIL 2014

NACo National Association of Counties

National County Government Month (NCGM), held each April, is an excellent opportunity for your county to highlight effective county programs and raise public awareness and understanding about the various services provided to the community. This year's theme is:

**Ready and Resilient Counties:
Prepare.
Respond.
Thrive.**

Be sure to check out the National County Government Month Media Resources Kit on the NACo website under About Counties/What Counties Do/National County Government Month. This is your one-stop online shop for NCGM design templates to produce your county's own posters, flyers, banners, proclamations and buttons.

Contact Jim Philipps for more information at jphilipps@naco.org or 202.942.4220.

STATE ➡ TO ➡ STATE

★ COLORADO ★ TENNESSEE ★

What issues are driving state associations' legislative agendas? What are the latest and most persistent challenges your county colleagues in other states are facing? What looks to be looming on the horizon?

State-to-State, a County News feature will explore these questions and help keep you in touch with your fellow leaders across the country.

Colorado



Transportation funding, reimbursing county reserves for wildfire-fighting and flood costs, and legalized marijuana are among the issues Colorado counties are watching as the General Assembly enters the ninth week of its 2014 session.

Colorado Counties Inc. (CCI), the state's association of counties, has a legislative agenda focused primarily on issues related to local finances and disaster response, Executive Director John "Chip" Taylor said.

County commissioners have pursued legislative remedies regarding access to and repayment of emergency reserves, as well as flexibility in the use of county reserves to address unanticipated needs. Some counties have used reserve funds for fire and flood response. But the state's taxpayer bill of rights (TABOR) law requires those reserves to be replenished the following year after they were tapped into.

"We're asking for a couple of years to pay that back," Taylor said, "and we're pleased that even the strong TABOR supporters have said, 'We see that didn't work exactly like we thought it would, and we're open to making it work better.'"

Though it's now legal to sell marijuana to adults in the state, Taylor called the issue "the ongoing conversation that won't go away."

"One of the things that we're asking is consideration of what the impact is on neighboring jurisdictions," he said. "If Denver authorizes [retail marijuana sales] and Douglas County doesn't, do we have a lot of traffic now coming up from Douglas County for recreational purchases? What kind of impacts do they have? Should we be considering that in our implementation going forward?"

On the natural resource front, he said the issue of diverting water in the state from west of

COUNTY MANAGEMENT



IN COLORADO'S 64 COUNTIES, THERE ARE

218 county board members and executives.
1 is an elected county executive.

IN TENNESSEE'S 95 COUNTIES, THERE ARE

1,744 county board members and executives.
95 are elected county executives.

the Rockies — where most of the snow falls — to the growing Front Range region — where most of the state's population lives — is a continuing source of friction. The West Slope drains into the Colorado River, and the state has water obligations under eight different interstate river compacts.

The completion of a statewide water plan, expected this spring, may offer solutions. Meanwhile, the snowpack in northern Colorado is currently above normal, but southern counties continue to cope with the same drought conditions as neighboring states in the Southwest.

"The potential for a win-win scenario seems more dependent on Mother Nature than any amount of legislative will," Taylor said.

Tennessee



The second year of the Tennessee Legislature's 108th General Assembly, which convened in mid-January, could be as short as the first, said David Connor, executive director of the Tennessee Counties Services Association. Assembly leaders are talking about adjourning in mid-April as they did last year, when they set a record for the shortest session in 20 years. "It does make for an intense type of pace," Connor said.

Tennessee counties have several major pieces of legislation at stake in this year's session: bills to increase reimbursement to county jails for housing state felons; an initiative to reduce the local funding match to draw down state money for bridge repairs and a comprehensive reform of the 911 surcharge.

As an association, TCSA is

supporting several bills that may provide some relief to the cost of operating county jails. One bill in particular would increase the reimbursement rate, now capped at \$37 per day per inmate, for housing state prisoners in county jails over the next few years, Connor said.

Relief for county highway departments also ranks high on TCSA's legislative agenda. "Tennessee has a state bridge grant program that is an 80-20 state and local match program. Many counties, particularly poor, rural counties with little tax base, have had difficulty raising the 20 percent local match to draw the state funds down," he said. "The bill moving this year would create a two-year window when the county match would be reduced to 2 percent and allow that to be met with in-kind contributions."

Another potential boost to a county's bottom line is major restructuring of emergency communications (e-911) surcharges making its way through the Legislature. The state has differing rates for commercial and residential landlines, cell phones and pre-paid wireless, Connor explained. The legislation would replace those different rates with one flat rate that can be used for 911 (including voice over Internet for example) and re-balances the way revenue has been distributed returning more to local 911 districts.

Tennessee is among the hand-

ful of states, mostly in the South, where counties help fund K-12 schools. Over the past several years, the state has reformed its educational system and as a result has seen significant growth in student achievement, Connor said. That's the hopeful news. But on the flip side, the very success of the reform is driving calls for additional services, prompting a "little leeriness among counties about funding resources for the new initiatives."

Meanwhile, Tennessee is facing challenges with economic sustainability in rural areas, particularly in West Tennessee, Connor said, a traditionally rural, agricultural area facing the usual suspects of a declining and aging population.

"As one of our mayors put it, 'Our county's only export is its youth.' This creates challenges for recruiting industry and providing adequate health care options for an aging population."

Transportation, too, registers as a high-pain challenge for Tennessee's counties that are primarily dependent on flat state gas tax that hasn't been increased since 1988.

"As costs of operation — asphalt, oil, equipment fuel — have seen dramatic inflation, the source of revenue for these costs and services has been flat," Connor said.

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

Congresswoman pursues D.C.-to-county career path

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Call it a reverse migration, if you will. Rep. Gloria Negrete McLeod (D-Calif.) wants to trade Capitol Hill for the San Bernardino County Board room.

The freshman Democrat from California's 35th District plans to run for a seat on the Board of Supervisors being vacated by Supervisor Gary Ovitt, who is not seeking re-election.

"I have chosen to seek election to the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors and not reelection to Congress," Negrete McLeod said in a statement.

"This was a decision not made lightly. However my desire to represent this community locally,

where I have lived for more than 40 years, and where I have long served as an elected official, won out," she added.

March 7 is the filing deadline in California to run in the June 3 primary.

Negrete McLeod, 72, was elected in 2012 after besting six-term Democrat Joe Baca by 12 points in a primary runoff. Previously, she had served in the California Legislature, both as an assembly member and as a senator.

There had been speculation that she would run for the local office. Last month, Rep. Mark Takano (D-Calif.), one of her House colleagues, told *Roll Call* that Negrete McLeod was "keeping all her options open."

Gregg Fishman, communications coordinator at the California

State Association of Counties, said he knew of several examples of former state lawmakers who have subsequently won supervisors' races, including former NACo President Valerie Brown, and one notable return from Congress to local politics. Yvonne Brathwaite Burke served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1973 to 1978 and later went on to become a Los Angeles County supervisor from 1992 to 2008.

A desire to be closer to her family might also play into Negrete McLeod's decision. She and her husband, Gilbert L. McLeod, a retired police lieutenant, have 10 children, 25 grandchildren and 29 great-grandchildren, according to her campaign.

Her congressional district is considered a "safe" Democratic seat. President Obama carried the district with 67 percent of the vote in 2012.



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County Innovations and Solutions

Carver County, Minn.

Promoting Mental Health Services Multiplies Effectiveness

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Help was there, but not everyone knew where “there” was.

When Carver County, Minn. saw almost as many suicide deaths in the first half of 2012 (eight) as it had in all of 2011(nine), mental health officials took a look at what their departments offered. Carver County, along with adjacent Scott County, already had a crisis team, one that had been responding to suicide attempts and threats since 1993. What local schools pointed out, after losing two students in 2012 to suicide, was that not everybody knew what resources were available to treat mental health problems, or how to access them.

The counties developed the Carver County Mental Health Consortium in response, planning to be more proactive in promoting

existing mental health services and bringing mental health issues into public discussion.

“It wasn’t a matter of adding additional services, we already had so much in place,” said Melanie Warm, Carver County’s Crisis Program supervisor. “It was a matter of letting people know what we offered was available.”

In effect, that meant repackaging available services for different audiences, audiences who weren’t aware of the counties’ offerings.

The group of administrators from mental health service organizations, law enforcement, schools and churches solicited input from community members who had been directly affected by recent suicides, a group that eventually served as an advisory council for the administrators.

The group got off to a fast start in May 2012, immediately planning

“In the end, awareness will help save lives, but it will ultimately make the process of undergoing mental health care less expensive and inefficient

an educational forum, and saw, in that planning, how the consortium would make a difference.

“Putting together this forum, we were using a more organized approach to using mental health services than we had before, instead of every department independently planning a response,” she said. “That way had always started out for the best, but in the end it winds up haphazard. This was coordinated.”

The first community forum, featuring the executive director of Suicide Awareness Voices in Education, drew more than 200 people.

In addition to what those attendees learned, Warm said the very act of organizing it made the two counties’ mental health services more visible in their communities.

“It’s proactive, and when you have an organization making things happen — a big event in the county — people take notice more than if you just waited for someone to call you,” she said. “We were getting out in the community and starting conversations. And parents support each other and that turns out to be a good way to spread the word about what we can offer.”

As the consortium continued, planning a second forum featuring the director of the Older Adults Program at the National Alliance for Mental Illness, the group’s strategy for trying to shatter stigma took shape.

“It’s not like we’re asking people to go to a support group,” Warm said. “They are low-pressure, or no-pressure learning opportunities and that’s where they find out that education and awareness erase stigmas associated with mental

health issues. We haven’t seen any reluctance to participate so far.”

A third forum, scheduled for March 2014, aimed at fostering early identification of mental health issues, will focus on parents and teachers, who have the best perspective from which to observe adolescents.

“In the end, awareness will help save lives, but it will ultimately make the process of undergoing mental health care less expensive and inefficient,” Warm said. “If we can encourage people to seek help in a non-emergency, they can avoid a higher level of care like emergency room visits and inpatient psychiatric evaluations.”

Since the consortium started, the Carver/Scott Mental Health Crisis team has seen its call volume cut in half (from 650 calls in 2011). Because the consortium uses county meeting space and staff, costs are limited to incidentals while holding forums.

County Innovations and Solutions highlights award-winning programs.

WORD SEARCH

Accomack County, Va. Facts

Learn more about this featured county in “What’s in a Seal?”

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Created by Christopher Johnson

Financial Services News

Target-date Funds Can Help Make Retirement Saving Easier

Many investors planning for their retirement are looking for one thing: something easier. That’s one reason target-date funds were developed. The investor just picks the fund with the date closest to his or her anticipated retirement date or close to when they think they will need or want the money. Those dates are the key to selecting and participating in target-date funds.

Let’s back up and define *target-date funds*, which may also be known as lifecycle or age-based funds. As the name implies, target-date funds are investment options — usually mutual funds — with portfolios that become more conservative as the target date approaches. This asset allocation strategy aligns well with the needs of retirement

investors, individuals who tend to tolerate less risk as their retirement date approaches. As “funds of funds,” target-date funds have diversification built in, which can help investors reduce their exposure to market risk.

Like other funds, target-date funds are subject to market risk and loss, and loss of principal can occur at any time, including before, at or after the target date.

Target destination funds are designed for people who plan to withdraw retirement funds during or near a specific year after retirement, but, as in all investing, there is no guarantee that target date funds will provide enough income for retirement. The funds become more conservative the closer they

get to the “target date” since the management strategy over time reallocates equity exposure to a higher percentage of fixed investments.

Frequently, the target date is part of the fund name; for example, The ABC 2025 Fund. The beauty in this is that it conveys to a potential investor which fund may be right for their needs.

The automatic asset allocation and diversification combined with ease of selecting a fund by the date in its name has made target-date funds attractive for employers and participants of supplemental retirement programs such as 457(b) deferred compensation plans.



News From the Nation's Counties

► CALIFORNIA

A federal appeals court's ruling against **SAN DIEGO COUNTY's concealed gun restrictions** could affect many counties in the state with similar ordinances.

In a 2-1 ruling, a panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the county's permit requirements because they denied responsible, law-abiding citizens the right to carry concealed handguns in public for self-defense. The court said San Diego's policy was too restrictive under the Second Amendment because it required applicants to show a specific concern for personal safety.

California generally prohibits carrying guns, whether loaded or not, in public locations, but residents may apply for a license to carry a concealed weapon in the city or county where they live

or work. To obtain licenses in San Diego County, residents must show "good moral character," complete a training course and establish they have valid reasons for needing the gun, the *Los Angeles Times* reported.

► COLORADO

• **GARFIELD COUNTY** plans to **sue the Colorado Department of Revenue (DOR)**, saying the county should not have had to refund several million dollars in sales taxes related to a 2010 court settlement against the state in a case brought by Noble Energy Co. "The county was not a party to this lawsuit and therefore is not obligated to pay this judgment," Garfield County Attorney Frank Hutfless said.

Hutfless said the DOR is required to obtain approval from the State Legislature to fund legal judgments.

Using sales taxes that had already been remitted to the county and other local tax entities was illegal, he said.

Since 2010, the county and entities including the Garfield County Public Library District and the county's Emergency Communications Authority, have either had to return, or had withheld by the state, more than \$5 million in sales taxes, which has hurt those departments, the *Post Independent* reported.

The pending lawsuit could be filed in state district court or could go directly to the Colorado Supreme Court, a remedy allowed local jurisdictions whenever an action is taken against the state, Hutfless said.

• Recent violent attacks around the nation have prompted **MESA COUNTY to train managers and supervisors** to recognize and help protect against their happening in county offices.

The county has hired a police psychologist who studies violent crimes to teach county employees how to prevent them from happening in the workplace. The training involved case studies of workplace violence incidents, KJCT News reported.

"You don't want to wait until something happens and say 'Oh my God, we could've done this, we could have done that.' This is being proactive and I think it's a very good step forward," said Mesa County Commissioner John Justman.

► FLORIDA

• **BROWARD COUNTY's** Records, Taxes and Treasury Division will commemorate a decade of paperless, **fully electronic official records document recording** this spring. The county expects to exceed 1 million electronically recorded documents by this summer. Official records include deeds, mortgages, satisfaction of mortgages, agreements, liens, notices and other documents that affect property ownership in the county.

Broward County has one of the largest and busiest recording offices in the United States and realized that a more automated recording process would offer opportunities for ongoing improvements into the future. Approximately 60 percent of the county's records volume is now done electronically.

• **LEVY COUNTY** commissioners **rejected a proposal by the Williston Atheists** to build a structure outside of the county's courthouse where monuments of

the Ten Commandments and a veterans memorial are currently.

The commissioners said the plans for the 1,500-pound granite bench included incomplete quotations, which violated the county's regulations for monuments, according to the Christian News Network.

► ILLINOIS

Sellers of **electronic cigarettes** in much of suburban **COOK COUNTY** would have to move them behind the counter just like ordinary smokes under new regulations introduced by the County Board.

The ordinance would ban the sale of e-cigarettes to minors, a step that would mimic a state law that went into effect Jan. 1, and ban the sale of e-cigarettes within 500 feet of a school, child-care center or children's recreation area, the *Chicago Tribune* reported. The new law would apply in most suburbs with populations of fewer than 25,000 and in unincorporated areas, with violations triggering fines ranging from \$250 to \$1,000. The Chicago City Council recently approved a similar measure.

► KENTUCKY

Inmates at the **DAVIESS COUNTY** Detention Center are **making their own mattresses**, saving the jail roughly \$10,000 annually and helping the inmates learn new skills.

In summer 2013, the detention center invested in a used commercial sewing machine and turned a storage room in the 699-bed facility into a mini-sewing factory that produces mattresses for its inmates. As many as 200 mattresses have been ripped up and destroyed by inmates annually. Replacing those mattresses cost \$100 each, or about \$20,000 annually.

Now teams of state prisoners learn to cut the vinyl, operate the sewing machine and assemble mattresses, costing the Daviess County jail about \$50 per mattress. Two inmates can pump out 20 mattresses in an eight-hour day.

► MICHIGAN

• **WAYNE, OAKLAND and MACOMB counties** are trying to figure out how to refinance and regionalize Detroit's **massive and troubled water system**, upon which most of their residents rely for water service. The system is billions of dollars in debt and dealing with almost-daily water main breaks.

Detroit's negotiators proposed a deal that, in effect, requires suburban water and sewerage customers to subsidize the system's cost to supply the large fraction of Detroit's customers—estimated at 40 percent—who can't or won't pay their bills, according to the *Detroit Free Press*.

Many local communities have long-term contracts with the Detroit Water & Sewerage Department—including many that won't expire until 2043, so leaving the system remains unrealistic.

The latest proposal from Detroit's bankruptcy negotiators demands a \$47 million annual payment for 40 years in return for putting suburban representatives on the board of a new authority that would operate the system, still to be owned by Detroit.

► MINNESOTA

Counties could be free to **publish public notices on their websites**, rather than in a newspaper, if state legislation passes allowing such a change.

As it stands, counties are free to publish public notices on their websites, but notices, such as public hearings, proceedings and summaries, must also be published in an official newspaper.

The bill, was introduced in the Minnesota Senate during the 2013 legislative session and is still on the docket this year, the *Pope County Tribune* reported. The **POPE COUNTY** Board passed a resolution in support of that legislation, in response to a request from the **Association of Minnesota Counties**.

► NEVADA

CLARK COUNTY is moving forward to set a framework for **permitting medical marijuana** dispensaries.

"It's important for us to have as much control over this as possible and not cede it to the state," Commissioner Mary Beth Scow said at a recent County Commission meeting. "Do it by (special) use permit so it's on a case-by-case basis so we're seeing exactly where these are," the *Las Vegas Sun* reported.

The state's medical marijuana law takes effect April 1. The state Division of Public and Behavioral Health will accept applications for 10 days and then have 90 days to decide whether to issue the license. Applicants must comply with local ordinances.

NACo on the Move

► NACo and County Officials

• Franklin County, Ohio Commissioner **Paula Brooks**, chair of NACo's International Economic Development Task Force, has been appointed to the Built Systems Natural Resources and Agriculture subgroups on the White House Task Force for Climate Preparedness and Resilience. Both groups are composed of elected officials from across the U.S. who will provide recommendations to the Administration on how to be prepared for economic the economic impacts of climate change.



Paula Brooks

Broward County, Fla. Commissioner **Kristin Jacobs** has been appointed co-chair of the Built Systems Transportation, Water, Energy and Facilities Infrastructure subgroup of the White House Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, and Santa Barbara County, Calif. Supervisor **Salud Carbajal** has been appointed to the Built Systems Transportation, water, Energy and Facilities Infrastructure and the Communities Human Health and Community Development subgroups on the White House Task Force for Climate Preparedness and Resilience.



Kristin Jacobs



Salud Carbajal

• NACo Second Vice President **Sallie Clark** spoke about Why Counties Matter, legislative priorities and the Resilient Counties Presidential Initiative at the West Virginia Association of Counties 2014 Annual Conference in Kanawha County Feb. 9.

► NACo Staff

• **Julie Ufner**, associate legislative director, spoke about NACo's 2014 environment and energy priorities at the 2014 National Conference of Regions in Washington, D.C. Feb. 10.

► Coming Up

• **Andrew Goldschmidt**, membership marketing director, will be exhibiting on behalf of membership recruitment and retention at the Police Jury Association of Louisiana Annual Convention Feb. 26-28.

The H.R. Doctor Is In

Pete Seeger – Rest in Peace

I write this while traveling in a busy airport. People are moving all over in this hectic place as though they were members of an ant colony. I just looked at my mobile phone and found messages from both daughters and other people letting me know that my hero of 50 years passed away last night. Despite the noise I find myself oblivious to what is going on around me. I stood in sadness, thinking of why this wonderful man had such a powerful impact on my life.

Pete Seeger was a master folksinger, musician, teacher, inspirer and mentor. He was also a historian and philosopher. Of course, he also made the five string banjo famous as a truly American musical instrument.

I know that when Pete looked in the mirror he saw the reflection of someone who was at the same time the epitome of humility, bravery, caring and inspiration to others. As a young student, I had the chance to join Pete, a mutual friend, the great Japanese political scientist Dr. Haru Fukui and my beautiful new spouse Charlotte for a private dinner. I could hardly speak in his presence when I realized that someone who

had inspired me to play and sing folk music and to choose a career in public service was actually sitting right across the table.

Instead of the semi-articulate conversation of a graduate student taking doctoral coursework, all I could do was drool and babble despite my wife's regular interventions to answer questions Pete asked me. He was clearly concerned and encouraging about my future and how I hoped to someday contribute and serve others.

Thank you Pete for making *We Shall Overcome*, *Where Have All the Flowers Gone*, *This Land is Your Land*, *Turn, Turn, Turn (To Everything There is a Season)* and many hundreds of other songs important to people like me. Thank you for sending songs to the world's children to inspire them to enjoy life and to make a difference. Thank you for standing up against racism and sexism, evil wars and environmental degradation.

You had the courage to openly oppose the arrogance and bullying

of Joseph McCarthy and others who attempted through intimidation to silence the differing opinions of others. Thank you for teaching us the importance of history and pride in the ideals that make us so very proud of our amazing country.

Pete made a profound difference in my life and the lives of my two beautiful HR daughters. He also taught me to play the banjo, however roughly.

Pete sang a hymn written in 1868 called *How Can I Keep from Singing?*

One of the lines says "...through all the tumult and the strife I hear that music ringing. It sounds an echo in my soul. How can I keep from singing?"

The physical Pete Seeger may be gone, but the spirit of what he stood for and the kind of person he was will always sound an echo in my soul.



Phil Rosenberg
The HR Doctor • www.hrdtr.net

Heroin deaths up in southwest Pennsylvania county

NEWS FROM *from page 14*

►NEW YORK

• Sex offenders on probation in **HERKIMER** and **ONEIDA** counties soon will have to submit to **polygraph testing**. Officials said it will enhance treatment and supervision of those individuals, the *Utica Observer Dispatch* reported.

The state has recommended the lie-detector tests as a condition for probation departments to continue

receiving funds from the State Aid Plan and Block Grant, which funds individual programs within probation departments.

In Herkimer County, each test would cost \$250; the offender would pay, if able, otherwise the cost would be borne by the county's probation department.

David Tomidy, director of Oneida County's Probation Department, said polygraph results won't be used against probationers in court. "A lot of people continue to deny their issues. This could put an end to that," he said. "This would be strictly for treatment and supervision."

• **STEBEN, CHEMUNG** and **SCHUYLER** counties are collaborating on a six-month study on **improving 911 services**.

Steben is taking the lead in a \$3.1 million study that will explore ways the county can use its broadband connections to improve emergency dispatch connections with neighboring counties, the *Star Gazette* reported. Jack Wheeler, Steuben County deputy manager, said the study is being funded by a U.S. Department of Homeland Security grant and state 911 fees.

►NORTH CAROLINA

The cost of **providing employees' health insurance** in **BRUNSWICK COUNTY** is projected to increase by about 25 percent next fiscal year — \$2.5 million — unless the county finds other coverage options, according to the *Star News*.

Most of the increase is the result of new procedures to obtain risk management insurance for catastrophic claims. And additional costs are a consequence of national health care reform, the Affordable

Care Act (ACA), county officials said.

Brunswick commissioners' Chairman Phil Norris said the ACA is "certainly a piece of the puzzle."

►OHIO

• Renewable energy is paying off for **PAULDING** and **VAN WERT** counties. They are about \$2.7 million richer thanks to **payments from a wind farm** with turbines in each county.

The Blue Creek Wind Farm in northwest Ohio has 37 wind turbines in Paulding County and 115 in Van Wert County, *Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly* reported.

Ohio doesn't tax the personal property of renewable-energy projects that generate 5 megawatts of power or more. Instead, wind-farm operators make a payment in lieu of taxes to local schools and governments.

Van Wert County received almost \$2.1 million, while Paulding got \$666,000.

• Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine has awarded more than **\$3.8 million in new demolition grants** to 87 counties. The money comes from a reallocation of unrequested funds from DeWine's Moving Ohio Forward Program, funded from the national mortgage settlement reached in 2012.

The program makes grants to demolish abandoned, blighted homes in an effort to stabilize neighborhoods and remove public safety hazards. It also requires that a lead entity, such as a land bank or local government, apply for the funds on behalf of participating counties.

►PENNSYLVANIA

A **spike in drug overdose deaths** in **WASHINGTON COUNTY** has prompted the formation of a "working group" to devise a county-wide education action plan designed to curb the trend.

Coroner Timothy Warco said heroin laced with the synthetic painkiller fentanyl could have caused five or more of the 58 drug overdose deaths in the county in 2013. "In the last four or five months I've investigated five deaths where the decedent had a syringe in the body," he told the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*.

Officials said the county had only two drug-overdose deaths in 1992, with single-digit totals in the 1990s rising to the 20s in the 2000s.

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

What's in a Seal?

► **Accomack County, Va.**
www.co.accomack.va.us



Accomack County was established in the Virginia Colony in 1634. It is one of the eight original counties of Virginia. The Eastern Shore county's name comes from a Native American word meaning "the other shore."

In 1642, the name of the county was changed to Northampton. In 1663, Northampton was divided into two counties. The northern county took the name Accomack while the southern retained Northampton.

The first sheriff in the United States, William Stone, was appointed to serve Accomack County in 1634.

In 1670, the Virginia Colony's Royal Governor William Berkeley abolished Accomack County, but the Virginia General Assembly re-created it in 1671.

Unlike most of Virginia, during the Civil War, the county was not under Confederate control, but held by the forces of the U.S. government.

The seal shows an Indian headdress, symbolizing the native Accawmacke nation. It also shows a ship signifying John Smith and the English settlers who visited in 1608. The Assateague Lighthouse is pictured as well.

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

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NACo deferred comp program offers target-date fund option

FS NEWS from page 13

Other Factors to Consider

Some funds use the year as an end date, meaning the fund is managed to achieve its investment objective at the target date. Other managers use the year to indicate an assumed retirement date, but manage the fund to help an investor *through* retirement, which may be another 20 years to 30 years. These significantly different objectives can lead to completely different outcomes at the target date.

The continuum in which the asset mix goes from aggressive to conservative is known as its “glide path,” which may be unique to the fund’s manager. Glide paths are the “special sauce” that gives a

fund its own flavor — and potential outcome.

Companies that offer funds of funds tend to invest in their own funds. This investing strategy can lead to a certain bias based on the philosophy of the fund company. In addition, investors pay a proportionate share of underlying funds’ fees in addition to those of the target-date fund itself. However, as a 2013 study conducted by Morningstar reveals, as assets have continued to flow into target-date funds over the past seven years, fees have been falling.

Plan sponsors considering adding target-date funds to their deferred compensation plan and participants considering investing in them have resources to help them make their decision. Before invest-

ing in any fund, investors should carefully consider its investment objectives, risks, and charges and expenses. The fund prospectus contains this and other important information. In addition, the prospectus explains the target-date fund’s glide path and what its target date means.

As always, remember that while asset allocation and diversification historically have worked well for long-term investors and retirement plan participants, no investing strategy can assure a profit or prevent a loss in a declining market.

The NACo Deferred Compensation Program offers counties the option of including a target-date fund series in their investment menus. Public employers interested

in getting more information about the opportunities available through the NACo program should contact Lisa Coleby email at lcoble@nacorma.org or by phone at 202.942.4270.

Public employees who are interested in learning more about participation in the NACo Deferred

Compensation Program should contact the Nationwide retirement specialist serving their county, or call Nationwide at 877.677.3678.

(Financial Services News was written by Bob Beasley, communications consultant, Nationwide Retirement Solutions.)

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NACo National Association of Counties

2014 Legislative Conference

March 1–5 | Washington, D.C.

Stop by the Social Media Tech Room

Strategy • Analytics • Education • Tools

Stop by the **Social Media Tech Room (Cardozo room at the Terrace level)** to experience one-on-one learning with a fellow county official or NACo staff, who will show you how simple it is to get started and answer your questions. Browse social media applications and learn how they can help you and your county. The Social Media Tech Room will be open a few hours each day from Saturday through Tuesday. Contact Matthew Fellows at mfellows@naco.org or [@NACoTweets](https://twitter.com/NACoTweets) using [#NACoLeg](https://twitter.com/NACoLeg).



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Job Market & Classifieds

■ ASSISTANT HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT – SIOUX FALLS, S.D.

Salary: \$2,233–\$2,405 biweekly; DOQ.

Minnehaha County in Sioux Falls, South Dakota invites applications for an Assistant Highway Superintendent to perform a variety of professional administrative, technical, and engineering work in the construction and maintenance of County road and bridge systems. Provide leadership to supervisors and staff to carry out the department’s vision of “transportation excellence” and it’s mission, goals, and policies. Assist in the coordination of the County highway divisions including administration, engineering, road construction and

maintenance, bridge construction and maintenance, sign maintenance and traffic control, fleet maintenance, and right-of-way conservation.

Requires bachelor’s degree in civil engineering and five years of progressively responsible engineering work experience. Master’s degree and 8 yrs of experience preferred. Minnehaha County offers a competitive benefits package including health, dental, and life insurance, a generous paid time off program, extended sick leave, retirement, and an employee assistance program. For a full list of qualifications and the application process visit: <http://jobs.minnehahacounty.org>.

Position deadlines March 4 at 5 p.m. EO/AA Employer. Contact HR with questions at 605.367.4337.

NACo JOBS-ONLINE



Good employees are crucial to getting the job done!

Through Jobs Online, NACo provides a method for counties to find the right person to fill that key vacancy. Job seekers can also find this section very helpful.

www.naco.org/programs/jobsonline

