

NACO National Association of Counties

CountyNews

| The Voice of America's Counties

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Ability to pay, new factor in Clean Water Act compliance

By JULIE UFFNER
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

**WEB*
CONTENT**

EPA has directed its regional offices to consider local financial capacity when developing compliance schedules in order to meet Clean Water Act (CWA) responsibilities. EPA announced a CWA “affordability dialogue” with local governments to its regional offices Jan. 18.

EPA’s memorandum to the regional offices was coupled with a document EPA has titled, “EPA’s Dialogue with Local Government Financial Capability Framework.”

The framework clarifies how a

community’s financial capabilities will be considered when developing compliance schedules to meet CWA responsibilities. Since 2009, local governments have raised serious concerns about the high cost of compliance with several CWA requirements and enforcement actions, such as those in wet weather overflows and storm water management.

The dialogue between local governments and the EPA will play an important role in determining how local governments will invest in water infrastructure, provide essential water and wastewater services, while achieving CWA goals.

“NACo applauds EPA’s acknowledgement that the input of county leaders is critical to achieving the shared goals of the Clean Water Act,” said NACo President Chris Rodgers. “A reasonable balance between the costs to taxpayers and ratepayers, and compliance with CWA regulations must be considered as we work to protect and improve

See EPA DIALOGUE page 7

Tennessee commissioner is life-long student, teacher

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Whitey Hitchcock is many things — a painter, weaver, mushroom hunter — and not least, a commissioner in Anderson County, Tenn.

But that just scratches the surface. A former teacher, he is also the embodiment of a life-long learner, which has influenced his many professional and leisure pursuits.

He believes that being in a constant learning mode makes for a better teacher, one who is able to understand things from a student’s perspective. He shares his thoughts and philosophy in a new, self-published paperback book, “Soul of a Teacher: Be the Hero of Your Own Story.” Hitchcock calls the 194-page tome “part memoir, part philosophy and part epistemology.”

Its target audience is science teachers; but on a broader scale, he says, it should appeal to “a combination of people who are

See HITCHCOCK page 8



Photo courtesy of Whitey Hitchcock

In one of his favorite photos, “fungi forager” Whitey Hitchcock, an Anderson County, Tenn. commissioner, shows off a cauliflower mushroom (*Sparassis courtni*) among others in their natural setting. Mushroom hunting is just one of this perpetual student’s many interests.

Quick Takes

Top 5 Counties for Job Opportunities

- 1 – Pinal County, Ariz.
- 2 – Rockwall County, Texas
- 3 – Kendall County, Ill.
- 4 – Loudoun County, Va.
- 5 – Douglas County, Colo.

CNNMoney.com, November 2012

CountyNews Features

NACo recommends robust mental health care in fight to curb violence

NACo First Vice President Linda Langston joined President Obama during the Jan. 16 White House unveiling of comprehensive proposals to reduce violence in American communities.

As part of his package of legislative proposals and executive actions, the president included a recommendation from NACo and the National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors (NACBHDD) calling for full parity and integration of behavioral health and medical care.

During the nationally televised event, the president announced that

the administration would expedite defining essential health benefit categories, including mental health and substance abuse services that health plans must offer as required under the Affordable Care Act. NACo supports that effort, as well as the president’s intention to make clear to state health officials that expanded Medicaid coverage plans must comply with mental health parity requirements.

NACo has long supported these and other steps that Congress and the administration should take to help prevent future violence in communities. Those steps including

enhancements to behavioral health services, youth development, inmate re-entry and the criminal justice system were all shared earlier with Vice President Joe Biden who led a fast-track high-profile review of comprehensive proposals to curb violence in communities in the wake of the Sandy Hook Elementary School killings.

In addition to Langston, NACo President Chris Rodgers also represented NACo during the Jan. 9 conference call with Biden.

Rodgers and Langston said

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Newtown school shootings serve as catalyst for counties' response on gun violence

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

The December 2012 shootings at a Connecticut elementary school have spurred counties to react to the threat of gun violence with a variety of measures including changes to mental health services, county ordinances and gun buybacks. For many counties, the shootings provided a catalyst to discuss mental health needs and safety.

San Diego County, Calif.'s behavioral health department acted quickly after the shootings, disseminating information to parents on how to talk to their children about what happened. It recommended frank discussion about what happened, while limiting exposure to media coverage of the shootings, to try to mix a return to normalcy and teaching vigilance for the dangers that may accompany mental health problems, and to look out for warning signs.



Photo by Chris Miller

Counties across the country conducted gun buybacks in the wake of the shootings in Newtown, Conn. The Los Angeles County, Calif. Sheriff's Department collected 386 firearms at a buyback held in Compton.

Top economist, Dem official added to Leg. Conference speaker roster

A top economic researcher and a leading Democratic official have been added to NACO's 2013 Legislative Conference speaker line-up. Mark M. Zandi, chief economist of Moody's Analytics, will speak on Monday, March 4, and Rep. James Clyburn, assistant Democratic leader, joins the general session line-up March 5.

As Moody Analytics' chief economist, Zandi directs economic research at the Moody's Corp. subsidiary. Moody's Corp. is a leading provider of economic research, data and analytical tools. Dr. Zandi is a cofounder of *Economy.com*, which Moody's purchased in 2005, and is a frequent guest on CNBC, NPR, CNN and *Meet the Press*.

Dr. Zandi's broad research interests encompass macroeconomics, financial markets and public policy. His recent research has focused on foreclosure mitigation policy and the determinants of mortgage foreclosure and personal bankruptcy; he has analyzed the economic impact of various tax and government spending policies and assessed the appropriate monetary policy response to bubbles in asset markets.

Rep. James E. Clyburn (D-S.C.), assistant Democratic leader, is the number-three Democrat in the



Mark M. Zandi
Moody Analytics chief economist

House and leadership liaison to the Appropriations Committee. He is also one of the Democratic Caucus' primary liaisons to the White House.

As a national leader, he has championed rural communities, supporting the development of regional water projects, community health centers and broadband connections. He has encouraged economic development by securing funding for Empowerment Zones; investing in green technology development such as nuclear, wind, hydrogen and biofuels; and directing 10 percent of Recovery Act funding



Rep. James E. Clyburn (D-S.C.)
House Assistant Democratic Leader

to communities 20 percent under the poverty level for the past 30 years.

When Clyburn came to Congress in 1993, he was elected co-president of his freshman class and quickly rose through leadership ranks. He was elected chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus in 1999, and his reputation as a leader and consensus-builder helped him win a difficult three-way race for House Democratic Caucus vice chair in 2002. Three years later, he was unanimously elected chair of the Democratic Caucus.

He has also served as House Majority Whip.

"It was also an opportunity to touch base with schools and institutions and make sure emergency plans were up to date," said Alfredo Aguirre, San Diego County's behavioral health director. "As for the public at large, it was a chance to remind people to be on the lookout and know they can refer people to us for intervention. It is up to the individual to participate in our programs but we can at least offer our services."

The most publicized response from counties has been to buy guns from residents, the most notable effort by Marin County, Calif.'s District Attorney's office, which netted 856 firearms in two days, including some from neighboring San Francisco, Contra Costa and Sonoma counties.

The county exhausted its \$43,000 budget allocated for the buybacks and had to issue \$68,000 in vouchers. Of that total, 29 guns came during the second day, during which residents were not offered any compensation.

"We got a number of semi-automatics and two sawed-off shotguns, which are pretty much only going to be used to kill people," said Rob Guidi, chief district attorney investigator for the Marin County D.A.'s office.

Skeptics say it's unlikely that people with nefarious plans would surrender their weapons, but Guidi points out that any gun taken off the street is a positive step toward reducing gun violence.

"A lot of criminals don't buy their guns legally, they steal them during burglaries," he said. "These buybacks reduce the supply of guns floating around and make it a lot less likely that someone's hunting rifle that they inherited and never use is going to wind up in the wrong person's hands."

In Cook County, Ill., County Board President Toni Preckwinkle introduced an ordinance that would require a gun owner to inform the sheriff's office within 48 hours of losing a gun, or face a fine of at least \$1,000. A similar statute is on the books within the Chicago city limits. She had earlier introduced a tax on bullets and guns in her recent county budget, the so-called "violence tax," though those measures were dropped.

Miami-Dade County, Fla. Mayor Carlos Gimenez convened a roundtable discussion among law enforcement and school officials in the county's municipalities to coordinate responses to similar threats.

Hillsborough and Pinellas counties closed "gun show loopholes," which allows private sellers at gun shows or flea markets to sell guns without conducting a background check or delaying the sale for a waiting period.

In Hennepin County, Minn., Sheriff Rich Stanek hopes to upgrade access to public mental health court records to give law enforcement officers more information when responding to emergency calls or performing background checks.

Hennepin County already operates a mental health crisis service — Community Outreach for Psychiatric Emergencies (COPE) — that works with law enforcement to diffuse situations and provide immediate clinical assessments.

Kay Pitkin, the county's human services program manager, said roughly a third of their 10,000 COPE calls annually involve a

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Unresolved federal budget issues continue to cloud county horizons

By MARILINA SANZ
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

At least one fiscal cliff deadline has faded to the background for now. The House postponed an expected debt ceiling fight Jan. 23 when it voted to suspend enforcement of the federal debt limit until May. Nonetheless, counties remain at significant financial risk as negotiations get underway to deal with the nation's fiscal woes.

The New Year's Day deal that avoided the fiscal cliff was only a temporary solution and put off the sequestration deadline until March 1, right as the nation's

counties gather in Washington, D.C. for NACo's Legislative Conference.

This deadline is most dangerous for counties because at stake are mandatory cuts to domestic discretionary and defense programs, and possibly harmful changes to Medicaid. The current agreement avoided Medicaid cuts, but that may not be the case in future negotiations.

Also on the horizon: The Continuing Resolution, which provided temporary funding for the current fiscal year, expires

See **BUDGET ISSUES** page 5

Chris Rodgers: Don't cut off health care coverage for inmates

MENTAL HEALTH from page 1

county governments play a critical role in behavioral health, juvenile justice and the criminal justice system. During the call with the vice president, they detailed several ways the current systems and processes can be improved, and offered specific executive and legislative actions that can be taken to avert future violence in communities.

One of the key actions outlined by Rodgers would be to harmonize federal regulations so that eligible individuals who are in custody, but not yet convicted, can maintain federal health insurance coverage and benefits.

"Disjointed federal and state policies that cut off benefits for some who enter county jails can cause dangerous gaps in coverage — particularly prescription drug coverage and behavioral health and substance use treatment — for those who need it," Rodgers said. "These shortsighted regulations make encounters with the justice system far more likely to send troubled individuals through the revolving door of the system, rather than a gateway to recovery and health."

Rodgers and Langston also discussed how amending the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act to cover behavioral health providers would improve the ability of county behavioral health and substance use treatment providers to coordinate care for their clients.

The HITECH Act, enacted in 2009 as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, gives incentive payments to health care providers to implement electronic health records, in order to improve care coordination among providers and thereby improve quality and drive down costs due to unnecessary tests and treatments.

Unfortunately, Rodgers and Langston said, behavioral health providers were not included in the law, which means that medical care providers will not be able to share their patients' records with their mental health providers with the same efficiency.

"County behavioral health providers play a crucial role in the public health system, and excluding them from the HITECH Act incentives undermines the goal of greater integration of behavioral health into the health care system," Langston said. "As this discussion moves forward, NACo will continue to be engaged in the dialogue and offer ideas to build a

more integrated public health and mental health system, a smarter justice and corrections system, and safer more resilient families and communities."

Across the country, counties own and operate 750 behavioral health authorities and 2,920 jails with more than 13 million admissions and releases each year.

"As this discussion moves forward," Rodgers said, "and with Congress expected to debate many of the president's legislative recommendations over the next year, NACo will continue to be engaged in the dialogue and offer ideas to build more integrated and efficient public health, criminal justice, juvenile justice and mental health systems."

Profiles in Service



» Michael Jeanes

NACo Board Member
Clerk of the Superior Court
Maricopa County, Ariz.

Number of years active in NACo: 10

Years in public service: 32

Occupation: clerk of the superior court

Education: masters, public administration, Arizona State University

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr.

A dream I have is to: ensure the development of the people within my organization to make certain the organization's continuing success long after I retire.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: grow orchids.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: sky diving — jumping at 10,000 feet.

My favorite way to relax is: sitting on the patio with my wife and drinking a cup of coffee.

I'm most proud of: 1) as clerk, in 2007, leading one of the first court clerk's offices in the country to have a completely electronic record (no paper files) and 2) being a father to my three sons.

Every morning I read: *Foxnews.com* and the *Arizona Republic*.

My favorite meal is: filet mignon and a sweet potato.

My pet peeve is: people who don't take responsibility for their own actions.

My motto is: "Doing the right thing is never the wrong thing to do." — Harvey Mackay.

The last book I read was: *Pushing the Envelope* by Harvey Mackay.

My favorite movie is: *A Christmas Carol* (with George C. Scott as Scrooge.)

My favorite music is: country.

My favorite president is: Ronald Reagan.

Resolutions or Platform Changes

for the NACo Legislative Conference

Due:
February 1
5 p.m. EST



The NACo resolutions process provides the membership with the ability to create national policies affecting county governments. The process is intended to be as open as possible in order to allow participation from the entire membership. There are, however, some guidelines to ensure that the process is a relatively orderly one.

These guidelines can be found on NACo's website under "Legislation & Policy." Download the document using this url: www.naco.org/legislation/Documents/NACo-PolicyProcess-2013.pdf

For more information or to submit a resolution, contact NACo's Legislative Affairs Department at 202.393.6226.



Resources and information vital to counties and local governance are just a click away.

Go online to access the Legislative Blog (The Pulse), County News, publications, webinars, grants, and more.

www.NACo.org

EPA announces final emission rules on boilers

By JULIE UFNER

ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR



EPA's final emission rules on boilers, and solid waste incinerators, announced in December, have been significantly modified since originally proposed in March 2011 due to the complexity of the types of boilers and fuels used. The rules set pollution emission limits.

When first proposed, a large number of boilers within the U.S., including those at county facilities, would have fallen under the rule. Now, of the 1.5 billion boilers in the U.S. less than 1 percent would need to meet numerical standards, while 13 percent would need to follow certain work practices such as annual tune-ups.

Definition of Boiler Classes

Rules may vary depending on the class or subcategory of the boiler. The two subcategories of most interest to counties are major-source and area-source facilities.

A major-source facility emits 10 or more tons per year of any single air pollutant or 25 tons or more per

year of a combination of pollutants. Major-source boilers can be found in industrial facilities such as paper mills or refineries. They can also be found in commercial facilities such as universities or warehouses.

An area-source facility releases 10 or fewer tons of a single air pollutant per year and less than 25 tons of any combination of air pollutants. Many of the boilers covered by the area-source rule can be found at commercial and industrial facilities such as apartments, restaurants, malls, hospitals, nursing homes, schools and municipal buildings. Not covered by the rule are area-source boilers running on natural gas. These account for a significant proportion of the country's boilers — 1.3 million according to EPA estimates.

Subsequently, the area-source standard covers approximately 183,000 boilers located at 92,000 area-source facilities. Of the 183,000 covered units, approximately 182,400 (more than 99 percent) need only to conduct periodic tune-ups, and some of these also need to perform a one-time energy assessment. Approximately 600 coal-burning units that represent the

largest of these sources, are required to meet emission limits.

Commercial and Industrial Solid Waste Incineration Units

Under the Clean Air Act (CAA), Section 129 requires emission standards for nine pollutants from incinerators. Both large and small sources fall under the same requirements. The nine regulated pollutants

include: cadmium, carbon monoxide, dioxins and furans, hydrogen chloride, lead, mercury, oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter and sulfur dioxide.

Commercial and industrial solid waste incineration units are used to burn solid waste at an industrial or commercial facility. This includes units used to dispose of solid waste, energy recovery units, waste-burning kilns and small remote incinerators.

The final rule affects 106 existing sources located at 76 facilities. The EPA projects an additional incinerator and five additional small remote incinerators to be subject to this rule over the next five years.

**To read or download the emission rules for area-source boilers or incinerators, and to see a map of the locations of major-source boilers, see this story online at www.naco.org/countynews.*

Counties still at risk post-fiscal cliff

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March 27. A government shutdown could be avoided if Congress passes another resolution or an omnibus appropriations bill. An omnibus bill is reportedly ready to go; however, congressional leaders have not indicated how they intend to move forward.

The new debt limit legislation passed last week doesn't include funding reductions, but the House did add language stating that congressional salaries would be suspended if an FY14 budget resolution is not

adopted by April 15, the deadline set in the 1974 budget law (P.L. 93-344). House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) plans to proceed with a budget resolution that will include instructions, known as reconciliation, to authorizing committees on deficit reductions and tax reform. It remains to be seen, however, if the pay incentive will result in a budget agreement with the Senate. Both chambers have been far apart in recent years and reluctant to compromise.

As President Obama prepares to deliver the State of the Union address Feb. 12, this uncertainty is affecting

the federal budget cycle for the next fiscal year. The president is supposed to present his proposed budget for FY14 on Feb. 4. However, in a letter to Ryan earlier this month, OMB Acting Director Jeffrey Zients said that release of the budget would be delayed but did not indicate for how long. Some speculate the delay could stretch into March.

** To access NACo's latest presentation on the debt ceiling debate and its impact on counties, see this story in the online County News: www.naco.org/countynews.*

FORT WORTH: City of Cowboys & Culture

Fort Worth once was a rough-and-tumble frontier town, dusty and lawless, home to the brave and the brawling, the soldier, the frontiersman, the outlaw. Today, Fort Worth is the one of the largest cities in Texas and the 16th-largest city in the United States. Much of the flavor and attitudes that are the history of Tarrant County live on. The frontier has changed, but not the pioneering spirit.

Tarrant County is now home to a diverse spectrum of businesses and lifestyles. Cattle and agriculture, as well as aerospace companies and defense contractors, play a major role in the economic foundation of the County. Tarrant County's western heritage sits side by side with its internationally renowned Cultural District. It's a destination shaped by a commitment to its downtown revitalization and urban renewal, a dedication to its world-renowned cultural arts district, rich pride in its Western heritage and a loyalty to major-league sports and family attractions.

Cowboys and Culture rarely combine in such a harmonious mix, but Fort Worth is a rare city that celebrates both in BIG Texas style. Cowboys and Culture isn't just a tagline, it's a way of life for our citizens and provides a completely unique guest experience.

Nowhere else can you find the western heritage that is so quintessentially Texas, beautifully preserved and honored through our Stockyards National Historic District and Sundance Square in Downtown.

The "Fort Worth Herd" takes a daily stroll in our Stockyards National Historic District.



Our Cultural District is home to five world class museums, in a park-like green-space, within walking distance of one another. All are internationally renowned in their own right: the Kimbell Art Museum, the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History and the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame.



The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

With our proximity to major league attractions like Texas Motor Speedway, Rangers Ballpark, Cowboys Stadium and Six Flags, there is never a lack of things to do and see. And our reputation for being safe and friendly makes us a perfect getaway for families as well. We hope you will take the time to enjoy our heritage and join us in our pioneering spirit.

See it all in Fort Worth!
at the
2013 NACo
Annual Conference
July 19-22, 2013



Mental health first aid gains traction with counties

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER



Aides to the Fairfax County, Va. Board of Supervisors will receive 12 hours of first aid training this month. That may sound fairly routine, but the training has nothing to do with splints, bandages or CPR.

The 10-member board's support staff to will join the hundreds of county residents and employees who have taken Mental Health First Aid USA (MHFA-USA) classes, taught by trainers from the county's Community Services Board. Nationwide, counties as geographically diverse as Sedgwick County, Kan.; Fresno County, Calif.; Clackamas County, Ore. and Fulton County, Ga. also offer or have offered the program.

During the training, certified instructors teach the common warning signs and risk factors for mental health problems — such as depression, anxiety disorders, psychoses (delusions, hallucinations), eating disorders and conditions caused by substance abuse — and how to respond to or help someone experiencing them.

Bryan Gibb, a trainer of trainers with the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare (NCCBH), explains the similarities to “regular” first aid.

“We do not teach people how to diagnose or treat mental illness any more than first aid teaches you how to put in a breathing tube or diagnose hypertension in someone,” he said.

Rather, Mental Health First Aid teaches a five-step action plan for individuals to provide help to someone who may be in crisis. The steps are known by the acronym ALGEE, shorthand for:

- Assess for risk of suicide or harm
- Listen nonjudgmentally
- Give reassurance and information
- Encourage appropriate professional help, and
- Encourage self-help and other support strategies.

NCCBH coordinates the program nationally along with the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the Missouri Department of Mental Health.

Fairfax County began offering the training in November 2011, according to Belinda Buescher, a spokeswoman for the Fairfax Community Services Board (CSB), which provides services for people with mental illness, substance use



Photo courtesy of Mental Health Association of Montgomery County, Md.

Jessica Fuchs (l) and Jack Kenney of the Mental Health Association of Montgomery County, Md. introduce an exercise to a mental health first aid class that simulates auditory hallucinations—hearing voices. Students later play the roles and discuss their reactions.

disorders, and intellectual and developmental disabilities. Since then, about 500 people have been trained, some 350 county employees among them.

Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova decided it was time

... the person interacts with a group while another trainee whispers messages into the “psychotic” person’s ear...

for County Board office staff to do likewise. “This program is immensely helpful in preparing our staff to connect people with the services they need,” she said. In Fairfax, county employees can take the classes for free; the instruction is offered to the general public for \$25. Gibb said many jurisdictions subsidize the cost of the training, which he valued at about \$250. Sedgwick County charges \$85; in Clackamas County it’s \$200 for the general public, \$100 for county employees.

Leslie Roberts is a trainer with Fairfax CSB, she said oftentimes, when people encounter someone exhibiting signs of mental illness, they respond fearfully.

“This takes the fear out of it

and gives people just hands-on education about how they could intervene and help someone to get them to either an intervention or treatment or a therapist,” she said.

The classes are highly interactive, Gibb said — including a simulation of someone having a psychotic episode who is hearing voices (the person interacts with a group while another trainee whispers messages into the “psychotic” person’s ear).

“We take the action plan and apply it to various different scenarios, both crisis and non-crisis situations,” he said.

To become a certified trainer, a person must undergo five days of instruction, offered several times a year throughout the U.S., at a cost of \$2,000 per student, according to MHFA-USA.

The concept originated in Australia and gained traction in the United States about five years ago, said Linda Rosenberg, CEO and executive director of NCCBH, also known as The National Council. A colleague in New Zealand mentioned the program to her around the time Missouri and Maryland were also becoming interested in the concept. She believes the program is helping to de-stigmatize mental illness.

“If you remember back, 30 years ago, people didn’t talk about having cancer. And now we have pink ribbons and runs for breast cancer,”

she said. “We talk about things like pancreatic and lung cancer, and the need for funding for research. Well, we have to do the same thing around mental illness.”

Sedgwick County was an early adopter — offering the program since 2008 — and will conduct its next training in February, said Jason Scheck coordinates the program there. Among those who have taken the classes in the past are hospital and school personnel, members of faith communities and state policymakers.

He said trainees leave the classes with increased mental health literacy and a greater sense of confidence that they can help a person deal with a mental health problem. “It

just helps overcome that stigma or fear of saying the wrong thing and encourages people to do those basic things like listen, provide support.

“We’ve had people in the days and weeks following the training make very appropriate referrals to our mental health center for people who were really at risk of hospitalization or suicide,” he said. “So, I think we have seen referrals from our graduates that have been really on-target and possibly life-saving.”

**See this story online at www.naco.org/countynews for a video about Fairfax County’s program and links to more information about Mental Health First Aid USA.*

New alignments on immigration reform continue to crop up

By MARILINA SANZ
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

New congressional alliances are being forged in an attempt to pass meaningful immigration reform this year.

While it is expected that the timeline may slip a bit because of the debate on gun violence, immigration continues to be among the top three agenda items in the Senate.

This means that immigration will be a timely topic for the congressional visits NACo is planning for Tuesday and Wednesday, March 4 and 5, of the Legislative Conference.

NACo will be working with its sister organizations the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, on pressing for reform.

The decision by Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) to remain as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee is seen as a very positive sign. Leahy has always been a stalwart supporter of comprehensive reform and has always worked well with counties on these issues.

In the last two weeks, there have been some interesting developments.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the AFL-CIO announced that they will be working together trying to bring about comprehensive reform. Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), who

are considered potential rivals for the 2016 presidential nomination, are working together to introduce bills that could pass both chambers, even if they are not bundled as a massive comprehensive package.

Just as there was a Senate Gang of Eight in deficit reduction, there is now a Gang of Eight on immigration. The four Democratic members are Michael Bennett (Colo.), Dick Durbin (Ill.), Bob Menendez (N.J.) and Chuck Schumer (N.Y.). The four Republican members are Jeff Flake (Ariz.), Lindsey Graham (S.C.), Mike Lee (Utah) and John McCain (Ariz.). Durbin, Schumer, Graham and Lee are members of the Judiciary Committee.

The committee also has two members who are former county officials, Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), one of the Senate’s experts on immigration, and Chris Coons (D-Del.).

The House Judiciary Committee has two new members who have expressed an interest in working in a bipartisan manner: Reps. Raul Labrador (R-Idaho) and Luis Guterierrez (D-Ill.). Guterierrez is considered one of the lead voices on immigration. Two freshman Democratic members with interest in immigration have also been added to the committee roster: Reps. Hakeem Jeffries (N.Y.) and Joe Garcia (Fla.). Rep. Zoe Lofgren (Calif.), a former county supervisor, is the ranking Democrat for the immigration subcommittee.

Compliance checks curb teen substance abuse

By **CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON**
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT



A teen using a fake ID to buy alcohol is a common occurrence that often leads to disastrous results. An initiative in Chesterfield County, Va. is trying to curb that.

Funded by federal grants, “Compliance Checks: A Community Approach,” was initiated by Substance Abuse Free Environment, Inc. (SAFE), a community

coalition working in partnership with Chesterfield County police. The initiative is designed to help significantly lower cases of underage teens being sold alcohol by stores throughout the county.

Most of SAFE’s undercover underage buyers have been participants in the SAFE-sponsored Teen Citizen Academy held by the Chesterfield Police Department during the summer. In addition to learning many aspects of police work, participants are trained by the Virginia Department of Alco-

holic Beverage Control to serve as underage buyers.

First, stores are called to inform them that SAFE is conducting underage stings in the area during a certain day of the week. Then the 17–19-year-old buyers go into area stores to attempt to purchase alcohol. The store clerk must ask for their identification and also be able to spot a fake ID. Failure to do so results in the store clerk being cited by police. Selling alcohol to a minor is a Class 1 misdemeanor in Virginia and is punishable with up

to a year in jail and a \$2,500 fine.

Traditional compliance checks are designed to catch and penalize offenders. Although negative consequences are important, SAFE uses a tactic to catch the stores doing good by including recognition for stores that do not sell to minors with full-page ads in community papers. SAFE agents also give immediate recognition to clerks, thanking them for refusing the sale and offering a small reward such as a movie or food gift card.

Between 2007 and 2012, SAFE’s

strategy paid big dividends. Its increased compliance checks, clerks and stores that complied, and community partnerships resulted in a 75 percent decrease in sales of alcohol to minors from supermarkets, convenience stores and gas stations.

“When we started in 2007, the non-compliance rate in off-premises stores for selling to underage buyers was 28 percent. The non-compliance rate now is 2.5 percent,” said Wayne Frith, executive director of SAFE. “We have nearly 300 outlets in the county, and our goal is to do at least two checks per outlet this coming year.”

Awareness of compliance checks has resulted in drops in teen alcohol consumption. Since the beginning compliance checks, drinking has dropped 30 percent among 10th graders, and binge drinking has dropped by 25 percent among both 8th and 10th graders, according to Frith.

“When a community finds its values, there is nothing it cannot change. The success of the underage compliance check initiative is clear evidence of that truth,” Frith said.

** To find out more about SAFE and the Compliance Check initiative, see this story at www.naco.org/countynews.*

County recognized for electronics recycling

By **RESA DIMINO**
STATE ELECTRONIC CHALLENGE

AND **CINDY WASSER**
COUNTY SOLUTIONS ASSOCIATE

Counties can well-positioned to mitigate environmental impacts of computer and office equipment by compromising their purchase, use and end-of-life management to “green” practices. And, DuPage County, Ill. has been a recognized leader in successful electronics management.

Electronics “greening” and recycling has been a priority since 2008, when county leaders updated their environmental policy to direct

staff to purchase energy-saving equipment, particularly ENERGY STAR-rated products or those with auto shut-off or energy-saving options, and establish processes for recycling waste electronics. The policy update reflected the county Board’s commitment to “recycling waste materials, reducing energy consumption and investigating opportunities to cut back resource use.”

Since 2011, DuPage County has participated in the national State Electronic Challenge (SEC), a free, voluntary program that offers sources to local governments and others, to purchase greener electronic products, reduce the impacts of electronic products

during use and safely manage obsolete electronics. SEC partners have access to extensive online resources, one-on-one technical assistance, and exclusive webinars and networking opportunities for peer exchange. SEC partners also have an opportunity to receive annual recognition and awards for their purchasing and recycling achievements.

“DuPage County has been committed to reducing our environmental impact in a fiscally responsible way,” said Board Chairman Dan Cronin. “The State Electronics Challenge verifies that our green initiatives are making an impact on the environment.”

County staff used SEC resources to develop and implement a green electronics program and identify cost-saving growth opportunities. For example, SEC data was used to build the case for double-sided printing to the County Board’s Technology Committee. The county recently adopted a policy requiring the purchase of printers, copiers and imaging devices with duplex capabilities that default to double-sided printing.

The DuPage County initiative is a collaboration between the IT Department and the Department of Economic Development and Planning — the agency charged with environmental initiatives in the county. The two departments work as a team to identify opportunities, build the fiscal and operational case to pursue those opportunities, and then implement.

Through participation in SEC, DuPage County has developed a consistent model for tracking and reporting its achievements. In 2011, the county’s SEC program eliminated nearly 7,000 pounds of solid waste, nearly 3,000 pounds of hazardous waste and another 25 pounds of toxic materials such as

lead and mercury. The program has also reduced more than 380 tons of greenhouse gases — the equivalent of taking more than 250 cars off the road every year.

Those efforts earned DuPage County an SEC Silver Award in 2011. Their recent commitment to duplex printing makes the county a contender for the SEC Gold Award in 2012.

“We’re particularly proud that we reduced our energy use equivalent to powering 172 homes annually. This is exactly the kind of result we were hoping to achieve through responsible electronics management,” Cronin said.

Dialogue will explore setting benchmarks for affordability

EPA DIALOGUE from page 1

water quality in communities across the country.”

Within the dialogue, EPA and local government representatives (including those from NACo) will focus on the following topics associated with how a community’s financial capability is assessed and considered when developing schedules to meet CWA objectives:

- how to expand the use of benchmark indicators of household, community and utility affordability such as increasing arrearages, late payments, disconnection notices, service terminations and uncollectable accounts
- how to meet the obligations of the CWA by utilizing flexibilities in the statute and implementing regulations to prioritize necessary investments
- how rate structures present both limitations and opportunities
- how innovative financing

tools, including public-private partnerships, are related to affordability

- how to facilitate consistent policy implementation at EPA Regional Offices, and

- how other community factors, including obligations under the Safe Drinking Water Act, should be considered when developing appropriate compliance schedules.

NACo, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities are directly involved in these conversations with EPA.

NACo welcomes feedback from its members on both the scope of EPA’s affordability dialogue and specific county examples on CWA obligations and their associated costs.

** To access a copy of the EPA Financial Capability Framework memo, see this story online at www.naco.org/countynews.*

Ambassador's Corner



» **Marc Hamlin**

**County Clerk
Brazos County, Texas**

Elected officials serve on numerous boards and committees during their tenure and I have found the Ambassadors Program with NACo to be the most rewarding. I feel the purpose of the program is to benefit new members and first-time conference attendees to NACo enabling them to access the plethora of programs and services available. I have also received feedback from new NACo members and first-time conference attendees stating that the interaction of the Ambassadors was vital to understanding NACo.

The education, legislative and cost-saving programs are abundant, and readily available for all member counties. As I educated myself as to the role NACo has in Washington — to better prepare my understanding so I could be knowledgeable and better help county officials — I was delighted to discover how Brazos County could enhance the opportunities available with NACo.

The greatest benefit is the newly formed relationships that allow each public servant to interact with like-minded people with a common goal. NACo is truly the “Voice of America’s Counties!”

Hitchcock values ‘beginner mode’ brought about by life-long learning

HITCHCOCK *from page 1*

trying to live a meaningful life with a spiritual component.”

“There are so many things that I had learned along the way teaching,” said Hitchcock, whose first name is Harry, “and I kind of wanted to make a record of it.

“With all the changes that are taking place now in education, there are multiple people just struggling and disillusioned and discouraged. And I said, well, maybe we can give them a little hope and another way of looking at it.”

Hitchcock, 66, is in his second term as a commissioner in Anderson County, population 75,129 and home to Oak Ridge. He turned to teaching late in life — at age 48. Before that, he had worked variously as a professional forester, certified addictions counselor — and as a strength and conditioning coach for

way that I could have some influence on the direction of education in the area; but as a teacher, being on the school board wasn’t an option,” he explained. “So I ran for commission to try to make some difference in education by having a public platform.”

Beginning again... and again

When Hitchcock was a teacher, he decided to try to learn one new thing every year — “because that would keep me in a beginner mode.” He felt it helped him as a teacher to meet his students on their own terms, since in many ways, they too, were beginners: learning new information. It gave him empathy for the frustrations they might face.

He once invited a graduate student in mycology, the study of mushrooms and other fungi, to speak to his science class, and he became interested in the subject. She told him about a group of mushroom hunters in Asheville, N.C, a couple of hours drive away. He joined. His interest “snowballed,” and he’s been scouring the woods for nearly 20 years now.

“What I like is that you’ll never know everything,” he said. “So there’s always something to learn every time you go out. It changed my focus from looking at

the trees as a forester to looking at a much smaller part of the forest where most of the life is there.”

Mushrooms fascinate him because of their biological diversity — “There are so many colors, so many forms.” But scientifically, he’s intrigued by the essential two research questions: “Why here and not there, and why now and not then?” He’s found chanterelles — which he enjoys for their “apricotty flavor — morels and lobster mushrooms, among many others.

But his search continues for the illusive Hen of the Woods (not to be confused with the Chicken of the Woods) mushroom. “It’s the only good edible mushroom in the southeastern United States that I’ve never found,” he said. They can grow to a weight of 25 to 30 pounds — big enough for sharing.

Captain Ahab-like, he adds, “It’s like that white whale; I just want to find it. I’ll feel incomplete until I do.”

Finding His Creativity

Not content to rest on his mo-rels, Hitchcock — who as a child never thought he was creative —



Photos courtesy of Whitey Hitchcock

Harry “Whitey” Hitchcock, an Anderson County, Tenn. commissioner, pauses for a photo during a 2005 visit to the Redwood National and State Parks in California. A former teacher and avid nature lover, Hitchcock counts bachelor’s and master’s degrees in forestry among his academic credentials.

“I think I fill a certain niche with my perspectives that maybe is a little different. As the woman who made pickles was saying once, you have to think outside the jar.”

Pat Summitt’s winning Lady Vols basketball team at the University of Tennessee, one of his alma maters. His academic degrees include a B.S. in forestry from U.T. and a doctorate in education, with an emphasis on exercise physiology. It was while serving in the Air Force in Japan during the Vietnam War era that he picked up the nickname Whitey — because of his white-blond hair. Now, some folks call him “Dr. Whitey.”

In his 40s, he was working as a substance abuse counselor for the Veterans Administration in Birmingham, Ala. But he longed to share his life experiences with others in a way that might be helpful.

“I found that most of the things that I had done in my life had some component of teaching,” he said. He applied to a program for mid-career professionals who wanted to become teachers and obtained his certification.

Just before running for office, he taught high school ecology and anatomy in the county. In fact, it was his love of education that led him to run for commissioner.

“I felt like there might be some

learned to paint watercolors of mushrooms. He has painted 20 to 30 mushrooms that he’s framed and also made into greeting cards.

Once, he and his wife, Ellen, a clinical social worker, were watching a TV program about spinning yarn, so he learned to do that. “From there, I got interested in dyeing, because some mushrooms make dyes,” he said. That eventually led him to a craft center, where he learned to weave. His creations include place mats, table runners and some purses for his wife. He sells some items, along with mushrooms, at local farmers’ markets.

“A lot of this just flows one thing into another,” Hitchcock said. “I find it plays over onto my role on the commission too,” where he is one of 16 county commissioners. “I think I fill a certain niche with my perspectives that maybe is a little different. As the woman who made pickles was saying once, you have to think outside the jar,” he joked.

Outside the jar, box or whatever container, Hitchcock often shared this advice with his students about “Commitment & Failure,” the title of one of the chapters in his book, and still abides by it today:

“You don’t know what your best is until you have failed while totally committed,” he said. “And the operative word here is totally committed. Otherwise you get a false sense of how good you are or a false sense of how short you come up from where you want to be.”

Word Search

Williamsburg County, S.C. Facts

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

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

ANGLICAN – established religion in county in colonial era
BERKELEY – bordering county
BLACK RIVER – location of county
CLARENDON – bordering county
FLAX – used to make cloth
FLORENCE – bordering county
GEORGETOWN – bordering county
HEMP – introduced to township in 1730s

INDIGO – derived from a plant as dye, helped township thrive
KINGSTREE – county seat
KING WILLIAM – county named after
MARION – bordering county
PEE DEE – northeast region of S.C.
WILLIAMSBURG – township before becoming county in 1871

Created by Christopher Johnson

What's in a Seal?



» Williamsburg County, S.C.

www.williamsburgcounty.sc.gov

Williamsburg County, located in the southern tip of the Pee Dee River region, holds treasures of historical interest dating back to the early 1700s.

In 1730, Gov. Robert Johnson proposed a "Township Plan," marking the beginning of Williamsburg County. This plan was proposed to stimulate the economy of the province to provide protection for coastal settlers. The township, which was laid out on the bank of the Black River, was named Williamsburg in honor of the Protestant king William of Orange.

Williamsburg's success was largely attributable to the raising and processing of indigo. Eliza Lucas Pickney was credited with making the indigo plant a commercial success in the county. From indigo, came wealth and prosperity to the area. Hemp and flax were other fine quality products introduced in the 1730s.

A settlement, existing on Black Mingo (later referred to as Will-town), had a "Meeting House" for dissenters in what later became Williamsburg County. In 1736, the first Williamsburg Presbyterian Meeting House was built. This Meeting House was the mother church for a wide area embracing several states.

One of the first impressions that the county offers to people entering the area is the beauty of live oak trees. The trees, many of which line the streets of the county seat Kingstree, are an important part of the local heritage. While Kingstree's history is most often associated with the white pine that gave the town its name, today the emphasis is turning to the many live oak trees that are part of the town's beauty and charm.

The county's seal symbolizes the original courthouse, located on Main Street. The courthouse, a Robert Mill design, was built in 1823. From 1953–1954, the courthouse's interior and exterior were substantially remodeled, but the building still reflects much of Mills' original vision.

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

Only very small number of mentally ill are violent

NEWTOWN from page 2

suicidal person, and a much smaller proportion is homicidal. The COPE teams can be summoned by police or called directly by the public.

"We've found people stockpiling things—explosives, weapons—and feel like in the end we've diffused a dangerous situation," she said. "The number of seriously depressed people who are violent and dangerous to other people is very small."

Of the COPE calls that come from the public, about 10 percent end up requiring police intervention.

"Things like Newtown get people to pay attention, now we have a platform to talk about things like this that were previously done in the background," she said. "It also points out that when state and

federal funding, and health insurance funding is exhausted, it's county governments that are left to pay for these mental health services."

Meanwhile, the county's school mental health program brings licensed mental health workers into 80 Minneapolis public schools to stage early interventions with students, based on consultations with school administrators. Based on their findings, the program is reaching a population in need.

"We're finding kids with emotional problems early," said Mark Sander, a clinical psychologist with the county. "More than half had never had mental health services; half of them were found to be severely emotionally disturbed, meaning they're at risk for out-of-home placement in the next year."

Research News

Flu Season Strikes Early



The flu season is here and reports say it's not leaving anytime soon. Influenza, commonly known as the flu, is hitting counties hard this year with some counties calling it a "public health emergency."

The unanticipated early arrival of the flu virus has caused some complications in the supply and demand for flu shots. Many county health clinics and other local providers are running low on the vaccine — with many having placed refill orders with suppliers, and some locations establishing wait lists.

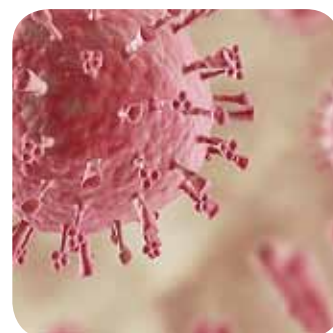
At the first of the year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that 47 states have a widespread flu outbreak. Widespread flu activity means more than 50 percent of counties or sub-regions within a particular state are reporting flu-like symptoms. Many county residents do not always report their conditions to a doctor or clinic, which means the total number of individuals who have contacted the virus could be higher than reported.

Tom Frieden, M.D., director, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry at the CDC, told reporters during a conference call, "The only thing predictable about the flu is that it is unpredictable."

While county health departments generally expect annual flu outbreaks, the flu hit some counties earlier than in previous years. In Ohio, the labs at Memorial Hospital of Union County have found 164 cases of the flu virus since the start of flu season, nearly a third more cases than in the past two flu seasons. In December alone, the lab found 98 cases of the flu virus.

Montana was one of the last states that CDC moved from regional flu activity to widespread activity. Missoula City-County Health Department reported an increase in demand for the flu vaccine. The City-County Health Department has confirmed 101 cases of the flu and 22 hospitalizations this season. Similarly, Flathead County, Mont. Health Department has confirmed 92 cases of flu so far this year.

In Delaware County, Pa., 384 lab-confirmed cases of flu have



been recorded since mid-January, up from 254 as of Jan. 5.

Prince William County, Va. has seen an increase in students with flu-like symptoms. Two schools in the county are getting hit hard with the flu virus, with approximately 10 percent of the schools' population out sick with the flu.

The Winnebago County Health Department in Ill. is more attentively tracking seasonal flu information

from schools and day care centers this year with the help of a new online program designed by a local agency. Schools and day care centers can log into the health department's Web page to report instances where flu-like symptoms have played a role in the child's absence. Before the program was implemented, health department staff had to manually enter the data based on faxes and phone calls they received from schools and child care staff.

The CDC, and state and local health departments have used social media and other resources to send information about flu prevention.

**See this story online at www.naco.org/countynews for access to graphs tracking the influenza outbreak.*

(Research News was written by Katie Bess, research assistant.)

Limerick Corner

When then-NACo President B. Glen Whitley attended an Iowa State Association of Counties board dinner in 2011, he was honored with a custom limerick composed by ISAC and NACo Board member Grant Veeder.

Veeder, Black Hawk County auditor and commissioner of elections, got his start at limericking in 2002, when as a new ISAC president he dedicated a limerick to his predecessor. His career was launched. He became ISAC's limerick laureate, on tap to honor guests at ISAC events.

Meanwhile, Whitley was so taken with Veeder's witty rhyming that he invited him to compose limericks at NACo Board meetings, as well. Since then, Veeder has accumulated a substantial body of work, and County News will be sharing his rhymes with its readers over the next few months in Limerick Corner. We hope you enjoy them and are likewise inspired to compose your own.

This is the limerick that started it all:

**Glen Whitley
ISAC Board Dinner, Des Moines • March 23, 2011**

We're happy to welcome B. Glen
The man on whom NACo depends.
His accent infects us
Because he's from Texas
We hope that he comes back again.

The all new NACo e-newsletter presented by County News is out!

All the great content that you're used to plus more ... links to current and upcoming events, national job openings, and featured articles.

E-mail cnews@naco.org if you haven't signed up yet.





News From the Nation's Counties

► CALIFORNIA

The federal judge considering **SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY's nudity ban** rejected arguments that simply disrobing in public was protected political speech akin to flag-burning.

U.S. District Court Judge Edward Chen said it takes more than simply disrobing in public to make a political statement.

A new law requiring the covering of "genitals, perineum, and anal region" is set to go into effect on Feb. 1. A narrowly divided Board of Supervisors passed it in December after residents and visitors to the city's renowned Castro District complained about what they called unsightly and unsanitary nudity, the Associated Press reported.

Public nudity activists filed a federal lawsuit seeking to invalidate the law, arguing the government-ordered cover-up violates their First Amendment rights to express their political views.

The public nudity debate in San Francisco began about two years ago when the Board of Supervisors passed legislation requiring nudists to place clothing or a towel between them and public benches and restaurant seating areas.



Image courtesy of Bexar County, Texas

► TEXAS

BEXAR COUNTY plans to launch a **bookless public library system**, and it could look very familiar to aficionados of a certain brand of computer, tablet or music player.

The all-digital branches will be called BiblioTechs. "If you want to get an idea what it looks like, go into an Apple store," County Judge Nelson Wolff told the *San Antonio Express-News*.

Wolff and Commissioner Sergio "Chico" Rodriguez said the pilot branch will offer residents thousands of electronic titles; access to desktop, laptop and tablet computers; and e-readers that can be checked out by patrons.

It shouldn't be seen as a replacement to the traditional library, Wolff said, adding that extensive growth in the unincorporated areas of the county has resulted in greater distances between patrons and libraries, as well as a desire for more city-like services. The Commissioners Court approved the proposal Jan. 15.

► ILLINOIS

COOK COUNTY is close to creating the **largest land bank** in the nation, in terms of geography. Its creation is considered the next step in addressing the foreclosure crisis and similar efforts to form such organizations are under way around the country.

A land bank collects properties that have been foreclosed upon because their property taxes have not been paid, clears the title and sells it for redevelopment, to restore the land to the tax rolls.

Nearly 200,000 housing units are vacant in Cook County, according to an Urban Land Institute report. The ordinance creating the land bank is expected to pass the full board, after which it could take a year to begin assembling properties, the *Chicago Tribune* reported.

► MAINE

The town of Livermore Falls is considering **seceding** from **ANDROSCOGGIN COUNTY** and joining **FRANKLIN COUNTY**.

The Select Board in the community of roughly 3,500 residents voted to investigate the possibility of switching counties. Livermore Falls is on the border between the counties and about 15 miles closer to the Franklin County seat than to

the Androscoggin County seat. The town would save money transporting criminal defendants to and from jails and courts. Franklin County Board Chairman Clyde Barker said he opposes the move because it would increase his county's costs, the Associated Press reported.

► MARYLAND

• The recent revival of a high school athlete with the help of an automated external defibrillator has prompted **HARFORD COUNTY** Council President Billy Boniface to push for **more AEDs** throughout the county.

Boniface plans to introduce a bill in February to require AEDs at swimming pools open to the public and private swim clubs, noting he has been urged by the parents of a 5-year-old **ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY** boy who drowned in a pool, to pass the legislation locally.

He also wants more AEDs in county government buildings which doesn't require legislation, the *Baltimore Sun* reported.

Boniface plans to talk to the county risk management department about the issue.

• **HOWARD COUNTY** Executive Ken Ulman issued an

executive order **banning the sale of high-sugar drinks** such as soda in parks, libraries and other county properties, and at county-sponsored events.

The sales and distribution ban — which mirrors efforts nationally and may be adopted by Baltimore City — aims to reduce childhood obesity and raise awareness among parents and adults about the health hazards of sugary drinks.

Under the order, all beverages procured, served or sold by county departments must meet the new standards, which limit the number of calories per serving for soft drinks, artificially sweetened drinks, milk and milk substitutes, and fruit- and vegetable-based drinks. Sweetened beverages must have fewer than 5 calories per serving.

The *Baltimore Sun* also reported that the executive order also requires the county health department to review the beverage standards at least every three years.

► MISSOURI

ST. LOUIS COUNTY is considering **extending its smoking ban** to more places, including casinos and all drinking establishments.

The County Council is creating a committee of local business own-

ers to discuss it before it goes any further, KMOX News reported.

The smoking ban passed in 2009 allowed for some bars to be grandfathered in, but this pension would change that, ending those exemptions.

► NEVADA

DOUGLAS COUNTY is the state's first **certified Connected Community**. The designation was conferred by Connect Nevada, the state affiliate of Connected Nation, a nonprofit advocating for widespread broadband access.

The county is the second community in the nation — after **CHARLEVOIX COUNTY**, Mich. — to earn the certification.

Douglas County's certification came after seven months of the county's local Technology Team working with Connect Nevada to assess the broadband landscape, identify gaps, and establish actionable goals and objectives.

To become certified, the county conducted a detailed assessment of its broadband capabilities. The county scored 109 points; only 100 points are required for Connect Nevada certification, the *Nevada Appeal* reported.

► NEW YORK

• **NASSAU COUNTY** Executive Edward P. Mangano has announced a program that enables the county's partners in the Neighborhood Stabilization Program to use federal funds to **rehabilitate foreclosed houses** into affordable homes for purchase by first-time buyers.

"This program reclaims foreclosed homes, assists first-time homebuyers and helps stabilize residential neighborhoods by maintaining home values," he said.

Once renovated, these homes may not be sold above the appraised value. The county may assist with

the purchase price of the home, by subsidizing the purchaser with funds from the state's Affordable Housing Corp. up to \$40,000.

Those applying must meet income guidelines and live in the home for up to 15 years (depending on the level of subsidy). They also cannot have had foreclosures in the last five years or bankruptcies in the last three years; and must have the resources to qualify for a fixed rate mortgage.

• **ALLEGANY COUNTY** legislators oppose state lawmakers' proposal to **expand early voting**. A New York State Assembly bill would require county boards of elections to set up five polling places, open from 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., seven days a week, during early voting. It would allow voting during two weeks before a general election and one week before a primary.

"The Board of Elections already has a difficult time lining up a sufficient number of election inspectors for elections as they currently exist," county officials said. "It will be nearly impossible to get election inspectors to work seven days straight for a primary and 14 days straight for a general election."

County Legislator David Pullen said, "It really is a solution to a non-problem in Allegany County and yet it's going to be horrendously expensive." He said it could end up costing the county more than \$135,000 for the general election — not counting any of the other elections.

► OHIO

Two northwestern Ohio counties are looking to market their services to 20 other counties that need to **digitize or convert records to microfilm**.

The clerks of court in **LUCAS**

See **NEWS FROM** page 11

Job Market & Classifieds

► COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR – ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLA.

Salary: \$123,779 – \$150,000 annually; DOQ.

Escambia County is seeking a County Administrator to provide executive leadership and overall direction to the county's departments and administer and carry out the directives and policies of a five (5) member Board of County Commissioners.

Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in Public Administration-Business Administration or closely related field

and at least seven (7) years of responsible executive level experience in public (government) or private sector management with at least three years overseeing an organization of similar size. Executive level is defined as director, president, vice president, local government administration at the level of bureau chief, department head, assistant city or county administrator, city or county administrator, or manager.

To apply, visit www.myescombiamia.com/jobs.EOE/V. Close Date: Wednesday, Feb. 20.

The H.R. Doctor Is In

'Jury Duty' — a Gifted Obligation

Imagine coming home late after a hard day of serving the public, perhaps including an evening meeting, and being greeted by your family and a tail-wagging canine. You breathe a deep sigh and say, "So great to be home. What a day. Everything seemed to go wrong." Then you go over to the pile of mail and sort out the unsolicited credit card offers, the catalogs and the bills. And there it is — a summons for jury duty.

Executives in public service were frequently excused from jury duty by virtue of their occupation in an earlier time in the history of the world. That is much less true now. You may be a police officer, firefighter, attorney, engineer, or elected or appointed official, but you still may well receive a summons and spend a lovely day in the jury assembly room.

There you are likely to spend most of the day thumbing through a large supply of paperback books donated or rejected by the staff of the clerk of courts or gladly sent over from the

library, which has been looking for a place to send them.

If you are lucky, you have brought an ample supply of your own magazines, books, e-books, a laptop computer or an iPad. Hopefully, you brought extra batteries rather than fight over the two available wall sockets to plug in your charger. In the room with a hundred of your new best friends, you may even spot an acquaintance with whom you can spend hours in idle chatter.

The jury duty experience begins with an extended roll call of the names of all those who were sent a summons, along with a briefing by clerk of the court staff telling us how important we are while thanking us repeatedly for avoiding a bench warrant by showing up as required by the summons. At some point a judge, perhaps the newest one on the bench, arrives and swears everyone in. There follows a lesson in civics.

The lesson is particularly valuable in a society where schools value



football and test-taking preparation more than they do course work in civic responsibility and government. It is incredible how what we take for granted and whine about is something rarely experienced in human history.

One of the core principles behind the Magna Carta Libertatum (The Great Charter of Liberty) of 1215 is the notion that people should have the right to more objective justice than what is dispensed arbitrarily by a warlord or monarch. The Magna Carta sets forth a right to justice under the law as determined by peers.

The same amazing right to trial by jury is set forth in the U.S. Constitution. This wonderful document represents a blueprint for our

governance and for the prevention of tyrannical rule. More than 200 years later it still remains viable, the behavior of Congress notwithstanding.

There is no mention in the Constitution of most of the government officers we see today. No mention of county or city commissioners, managers, county chief administrative officers or most cabinet members at the federal level. Shockingly, there is not even one mention of the office of director of human resources. The Constitution does, however, include the importance of the jury.

The people in the court of clerks office are correct. Jury duty holds a most esteemed position in the history of democracy. It deserves to be honored and sought out rather than accepted or rather tolerated amidst grumbles and fidgeting.

In my own recent jury duty experience with nearly 200 people all clutching their summonses, there came a time when everyone who wished to speak to the judge to seek approval of an excuse not to serve was invited to form a neat line in the center of the room. A great migration to the center then occurred

reminiscent of the annual migrations on Africa's Serengeti Plains.

After all rulings on the requests were completed, we all settled down for the day, being interrupted periodically as some names were called to form a pool in this or that courtroom. Finally, at the end of the day, word came that no more prospective jurors were needed. "The people" thanked and excused us. We were told that our obligation to serve had been met for at least a year.

As we all hastily exited the jury assembly room and tried to remember where we had parked our cars, I recalled some other extraordinary things we take for granted and should not. The precious gifts of family and good friends are high on that list.

None of us should fail to appreciate those gifts or delay that appreciation until it is perhaps too late. The same is true of that great gift we have — America and our obligations to do our duty.

Phil Rosenberg
The HR Doctor • www.hrdr.net

S. Dakota county targets mountain pine beetle

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and **WOOD** counties recently received a \$90,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Development's Local Government Innovation Fund to study the feasibility of such a venture.

"Instead of every county around us going out and getting their own imaging equipment — especially the small counties that can't afford it — they can hire us," Bernie Quilter, Lucas County clerk of courts, told *The Toledo Blade*. "There's no reason why every county has to have all this equipment. We can just do it, and I think we'd be cheaper than a vendor."

► SOUTH DAKOTA

PENNINGTON COUNTY is moving ahead with its effort to fight the **mountain pine beetle** despite the lack of promised federal funding. The county has budgeted close to \$300,000 for beetle suppression efforts this year, including \$125,000 from the federal government that has yet to arrive.

Some 11,000 beetle-infested trees have been cut down in the county, according to KOTA-TV news.

About 3,800 beetle-damaged

trees which could fall onto roadways, are in the process of being removed.

► WISCONSIN

A new Early Childhood Initiative office is the next step in **DANE COUNTY**'s commitment to **closing the achievement gap**. The office, opened recently, is part of the county's partnership with the United Way of Dane County to create a birth-to-four-year-old kindergarten program.

"The achievement gap cannot be closed by the schools alone, and this office will coordinate the community response that is needed to help address this problem," County Executive Joe Parisi said.

Children will receive regular in-home visits from staff, and together, children and their parents will be taught valuable developmental skills, county officials said. Parents and their kids can also attend regular events that reinforce the work they do together at home.

(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 cbn@naco.org.)

Financial Services News

New U.S. Communities Contract Offers Clean, Green Products

AmSan-CleanSource has been awarded the new U.S. Communities cleaning supplies contract through a competitive solicitation process conducted by lead public agency Fresno Unified School District, Calif. AmSan-CleanSource is a leading supplier of janitorial, cleaning and facility maintenance supply products.

AmSan-CleanSource has multiple distribution centers across North America. It is committed to delivering janitorial solutions, products and industry experts, focused on the needs of local government to create a long-term, cost-saving cleaning program that maintains a healthy environment while improving operational costs, productivity and human resource savings.

The new U.S. Communities program offers local governments a full line of certified and environmentally preferable chemical

products, tools and equipment — certified products by independent third parties such as Green Seal, Environmental Choice, Design for the Environment and EcoLogo. "Green" solutions can be found for products such as floor care, general purpose cleaners, industrial cleaners, restroom towels and tissue, cleaning equipment and many other categories.

AmSan-CleanSource will work with local governments to develop green solutions designed to reduce the environmental impact of cleaning processes while promoting a safer and healthier indoor environment.

U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance is a government purchasing cooperative that reduces the cost of goods and services by aggregating the purchasing power of public agencies nationwide. It provides world-class procurement resources and solutions to local and

state government agencies, school districts (K-12), higher education and nonprofits. Participants have access to a broad line of competitively solicited contracts with best-in-class national suppliers.

U.S. Communities is the only government cooperative purchasing organization to be founded by NACo, the National League of Cities, the Association of School Business Officials International, the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

For more information about U.S. Communities and the various products and services offered to local governments, please contact Jim Sawyer, NACo Financial Services Center at 202.661.8868 or jsawyer@naco.org.

(Financial Services News was written by Jim Sawyer, director, NACo Financial Services Corporation.)

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