

NACO National Association of Counties CountyNews

The Voice of America's Counties

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Transportation bill set for signature

By ROBERT FOGEL
SENIOR LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Congress passed a 27-month surface transportation bill June 29 that will fund the federal highway program at nearly \$39.7 billion for FY13 and \$40.26 billion for FY14. The measure would expire Sept. 30, 2014 and is expected to be signed into law by President Obama.

The final vote for approval was 373–52 in the House and 74–19 in the Senate.

See **TRANSPORTATION** page 6

QuickTakes

States with the Largest Growth in Domestic Product 2011

1. North Dakota
2. Oregon
3. West Virginia
4. Texas
5. Alaska

Source: Bureau of Eco



(AP Photo)

The Waldo Canyon fire burns an entire neighborhood in the foothills of Colorado Springs (El Paso County), Colo. June 26. El Paso County's Clerk and Recorder's Office sent a special escort to retrieve Primary Election ballots from its Citizens Service Center, which had been evacuated the same day. As of June 28, 346 homes on 34 streets had been destroyed in the city.

County officials challenge 'vote-suppressing' laws, actions

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Allegheny County, Pa.'s Board of Elections is challenging the state's new voter identification requirement — one of several elections-related laws across the nation that are coming under fire and scrutiny from county elected officials.

In Florida, most county elections supervisors have suspended a state-mandated purge of non-citizens from the voter rolls on the advice of their state association.

At least 34 states introduced legislation that would require voters to show photo ID in order to vote since 2011, according to the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University Law School.

Significantly in Allegheny County, the three-member elec-

tions board is composed of two County Council members and the county executive. County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and County Councilman John DeFazio voted to sue the state to block full implementation of the ID law in November.

"We want to make voting easier, and this legislation is making it much more difficult to do so," Fitzgerald said. "It's disenfranchising veterans, seniors, young people, minorities, the working poor."

The law requires voters casting ballots in-person to present a valid government-issued ID, such as a driver's license or employee ID, which lists when the credential expires. Many previously acceptable forms of ID — from private colleges and the state's Department of Veterans Affairs — lack expiration dates.

"This is about trying to suppress the vote," Fitzgerald said. However, according to the office of Gov. Tom Corbett (R), studies show that 99 percent of Pennsylvania's eligible voters already have acceptable photo IDs.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania is also suing to block the law. The plaintiffs on whose behalf the ACLU is suing include a 93-year-old Philadelphia woman, born in the South, who never was issued a birth certificate and therefore is unable to obtain a state-issued ID card, the group said.

In Pennsylvania, the Department of Transportation issues a non-driver's-license photo ID that costs \$13.50. To obtain one, an applicant over the age of 18 must present four forms of identifica-

See **VOTER ID** page 5

Farm Bill passes Senate

Rural development funding reinstated

By ERIK JOHNSTON
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The Senate passed the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012, S. 3240, by a vote of 64–35 after voting on 73 amendments June 21.

NACo's priority amendment, S.A. 2445, sponsored by Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), passed by a vote of 55–44. The amendment will reinstate \$150 million in mandatory funding to rural development and beginning farmer-rancher programs.

This includes funding for two rural business development programs, a portion of the backlog of already approved USDA wastewater infrastructure projects, and the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program.

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EPA releases plan to help local governments meet water quality goals » **Page 2**

Proposed public land renewable energy act would direct revenue to counties » **Page 5**

CountyNews Features

EPA releases stormwater, wastewater framework

By Julie Ufner
Associate Legislative Director

WEB* CONTENT

In June, the Environmental Protection Agency released its Integrated Stormwater and Wastewater Planning Approach Framework Plan to help local governments meet water quality goals. Although the plan will not preempt current requirements under existing regulatory or permitting standards, it will allow local governments to prioritize and merge competing requirements for stormwater and wastewater projects. This includes capital investments maintenance and operation requirements.

The framework gives guidelines to states, local governments, utilities and the EPA regional offices on how to set up voluntary integrated management plans. "EPA's framework outlines new flexibility to pursue innovative, cost-saving solutions, like green infrastructure, and will help communities as they develop plans that prioritize their investments in storm and wastewater infrastructure," EPA stated in a press release.

The framework adds to an Oct. 27, 2011 memo, "Achieving Water Quality through Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Plans," which recognized that many local governments face challenging financial conditions and outlined a framework by which local governments could prioritize their stormwater and wastewater investments in a manner that maximizes water quality gains.

**To access the proposal, see the online version at www.naco.org/countynews.*

CORRECTIONS

Information in the photo caption on page 4, June 18, 2012 issue was incomplete. Caige Sothern is featured with the Summer Reading float .

A photo caption in the June 4 issue on page 3 incorrectly identified Utah State Representative Ken Ivory as another WIR General Session speaker.

Medicaid shift means changes for Iowa county mental health departments

By Charlie Ban
Staff Writer

WEB* CONTENT

Iowa's effort to standardize mental health offerings will mean a major change in the way counties provide those services.

The state shifted Medicaid funding from the counties for mental health services as of July 1, depriving them of a source of funding many used to complement their social services departments' budgets. The redesign will focus on ensuring certain minimum services are available to everyone through regional administration of local service delivery, which will begin July 1, 2013. During the intervening year, the state will pay service providers directly for Medicaid-funded services.

Shifting Medicaid funding to a regional level, the state believed, would encourage counties to combine their efforts to take advantage of the economies of scale in providing services, especially in rural areas with lower population density. The law requires the regions be at least three contiguous counties.

The law also establishes a per capita tax of \$47.28 to maintain \$125 million in funding for non-Medicaid mental health services to replace the current property tax system for funding services. That would, however, reduce the amount of funding for those mental health services by approximately \$10 million and be implemented in FY14.

Counties can apply for exemptions from joining a region if they can prove they can meet the minimum standards and can be cost-effective on their own.

The Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC) said the changes would potentially have a greater impact on county operations than any legislation adopted in over a decade.

"The Legislature has been unwilling to provide adequate funding for counties to provide mandated services, and we are skeptical that they will adequately fund the redesigned system," said Linda Hinton, an ISAC government relations manager. "The system in Iowa is unique in that we are faced with 'unfunded' mandates as opposed to

Ahead of the Curve

Sixteen north-central Iowa counties are pooling their mental health service resources, well in advance of the state's mental health redesign that will administer Medicaid-funded mental health service on a regional basis.

They are:

Black Hawk	Bremer	Kossuth
Wright	Grundy	Worth
Butler	Howard	Winnebago
Floyd	Chickasaw	Hancock
Mitchell	Humboldt	Webster County
Cerro Gordo	Pocahontas	(will join in August)

unfunded mandates. Counties cannot generate additional resources to meet the service needs because of a hard dollar cap."

Richard Shults, administrator of the state's mental health and disability services division, said the redesign would provide counties with new tools to be more effective and efficient, and eventually induce them to work cooperatively to provide other mental health services not funded by Medicaid. "When you're in a 99-county situation and you expect all counties regardless of size and population to provide the same services, it's going to be more difficult for some than others," he said. "This isn't an implicit criticism of the counties or the efforts they've made, it's just the reality of the economics."

The mental health and disability services department's final report indicated that funding for non-Medicaid services would drop by \$56 million in the next fiscal year, so the state may supplement the \$122 million to \$125 million the counties raise through property taxes with general fund increases the next five years, starting with \$42 million next year and decreasing in subsequent years.

The Legislature is also negotiating an amount of transition aid to be paid to counties to help fill in the gaps from the redesign, though Shults said that figure wasn't clear yet, a state overview estimated it at around \$20 million.

Black Hawk County and four others planned a regional cooperative for mental health services in 2008, long before the Legislature started tackling the subject. They stated pooling money in 2009 and now have 16 counties in the north-central part of the state on board, with a 17th scheduled to

join in August.

"We run it like a franchise with no central office," said Bob Lincoln, Black Hawk County's community services administrator. "We've been fortunate to be right on track with the changes the Legislature wants to see from counties. It gave us a head start."

The counties pool staff and money to provide the same services throughout the region. Butler County manages the group's finances, reducing the administrative effort needed to track expenses. Although not all services are available yet in each county, every resident of those 16 counties is entitled to the services from a county that does provide the service.

"The challenge is to maintain the uniqueness each of our programs have while standardizing our offerings," Lincoln said. "We want to protect the individual character of our county departments so people don't feel lost in the whole thing."

Lincoln has been fielding calls from and attending meetings with other counties statewide who are planning to follow the Black Hawk group's lead.

Other counties aren't as optimistic about the plan's outlook.

A waitlist for services might be the only option for Woodbury County, which includes Sioux City. Social Services Coordinator Patty Erickson-Puttmann said the shift would require a full-scale reconfiguration and reprioritization of services and may involve cuts in personnel and services. The shift to the tune of \$5.9 million will go to service providers who are not as cost effective as the county personnel, she said. The waitlist is already operational.

"We don't have a choice—we'll

be lucky to hold things status quo and not remove anyone from services," she said. "We're trying to keep what we have and there won't be room for any additional services."

She said the county's mental health court and school services would likely need to be cut and others would lose important components when in the hands of other providers. For example, the vocational program for the developmentally disabled, funded through Medicaid, would be shifted to a provider that would likely reduce its scope to recreation.

"It's going to have a huge impact on the quality of services they receive," she said. "It would be laughable if it wasn't so disheartening. It will have a huge impact on our disabled population."

**To view the Iowa Mental Health and Disability Services Redesign report, see the online version at www.naco.org/countynews.*

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The Voice of America's Counties

Conservation Title funding takes a hit; rural development programs improved

FARM BILL from page 1

NACo organized a coalition effort of over 185 organizations to successfully support SA 2445.

NACo also worked to support overall passage of the bill, which would save nearly \$24 billion over 10 years out of a total \$969 billion in total spending. The major policy changes were in the commodity title, which included the elimination of direct payments, the counter-cyclical program and the Average Crop Revenue Election program. These were replaced with a new Agriculture Risk Program and increased support for a new a "shallow loss" crop insurance.

The Conservation Title was cut by \$6.44 billion, largely by reducing the Conservation Reserve Program and consolidating 23 existing programs into 13. The bill combines the easement authorities of the Wetlands Reserve Program, Grasslands Reserve Program, and Farmland Protection Program into a new Agricultural Conservation Easement Program in which counties will still be eligible to preserve working agricultural lands.

NACo's efforts to make the Rural Development title work better for county governments was successful as numerous policy changes, such as a new technical assistance component for community facilities, streamlining of applications and a new focus on funding coordinated and strategic regional rural development efforts were included.

The Rural Broadband programs are maintained with the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program reauthorized with no changes. However, the Broadband Access Program changed substantially. The program is amended to have a grant and loan component—similar to the stimulus broadband programs—unlike the previous Farm Bill program that relied solely on loans for broadband expansion.

NACo was successful at making local governments eligible for the program and inserting a provision that will require all applicants to collaborate with their units of local government.

The rural business programs are reorganized and refocused. The Rural Business Opportunity

Grant Program and Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program are consolidated into the Rural Business Development Grants Program. The Value Added Producer Grants program sets aside 10 percent of funds for beginning farmers and ranchers.

The bill also maintains \$800 million in mandatory funding for the Energy Title. The title includes \$241 million over five years for the Rural Energy for America Program, \$193 million for the Biomass Crop Assistance Program, \$216 million for the Bio-refinery Assistance Program, \$130 million for the Biomass Research and Development Program, \$15 million for the Biobased Markets Program, and \$5 million for a Biodiesel Education Program. These programs are administered by USDA Rural Development.

Several other amendments supported by NACo passed during floor debate including S.A. 2299, sponsored by Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), which authorizes a joint study by USDA and U.S. Department of Transportation to examine the transportation issues affecting the

vitality and economic development of rural communities. S.A. 2388, sponsored by Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), will promote the purchase of locally grown agriculture products in school lunches.

Finally, S.A. 2295, sponsored by Sen. Mark Udall (D-Colo.), will increase the authorization for designation and treating of forests that are experiencing declining health due to insect or disease infestation, including those areas devastated by the mountain pine beetle.

NACo successfully defeated several amendments including S.A. 2269 sponsored by Sen. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.) that would have ended loan-guarantee programs, including the Community Facilities Program, which are critical sources of capital for rural county infrastructure projects.

Nutrition programs, which make up close to 80 percent of the bill's overall funding, remain cut by \$4.27 billion after a bipartisan amendment to restore these cuts by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) and Sen. Scott Brown (R-Mass.) failed by a vote of 66–33.

S.A. 2397 by Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii) which would have overturned *Carcieri v. Salazar* thus allowing the secretary of the interior to take lands into trust for tribes recognized after 1934 did not receive a vote. Neither did amendments that would have clarified that federal law does not require water permits for lawful pesticide applications or amendments that would have prevented EPA from moving forward with its "waters of the U.S." guidance proposal.

Action on the farm bill turns to the House. The House Agriculture Committee has scheduled a markup for its version of the bill on July 11. The House would likely push for much higher cuts to nutrition programs and an alternative farm safety net system for southern farmers. The administration has expressed formal support for the Senate bill. The current farm bill expires Sept. 30, and the major question is whether the House can pass a bill before the August recess and allow a conference to come to a compromise before the September deadline.

NACo Prescription Discount Card Program

During the NACo 2012 Annual Conference & Exposition July 13th – 17th in Allegheny County (Pittsburgh), PA, learn how 1,400 counties nationwide have saved their residents more than \$480 million with the NACo Prescription Discount Card Program.

Join us at one of our roundtable sessions to learn more and hear about the new marketing reimbursement fee option:

- Breakfast:** Sunday, July 15, 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.
Room 330 (3rd Floor) David L. Lawrence Convention Center
- Roundtable:** Monday, July 16, 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Room 333 (3rd Floor) David L. Lawrence Convention Center
- Breakfast:** Tuesday, July 17, 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.
Room 330 (3rd Floor) David L. Lawrence Convention Center
- Exhibit Hall:** When you are in the exhibit hall at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, stop by booth #508 and spin the NACo Prescription Discount Card Program wheel!

We would also like to invite you to join us at our reception:

- Reception:** Monday, July 16, 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Off-Site – Westin Convention Center, Penn City Grille, Level 2



To learn more about the program, go to www.naco.org/drugcard or scan the QR code.

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The Voice of America's Counties

NCGM Award program winners announced

By JIM PHILIPPS

MEDIA RELATIONS MANAGER

For the second year, NACo has recognized counties for their outstanding efforts to celebrate National County Government Month (NCGM). Six counties are being honored for conducting effective public awareness programs and events this past April to educate residents about the important functions of their county government.

A team of communications professionals from the National

Association of County Information Officers (NACIO), a NACo affiliate organization, judged the award applications.

The 2012 NCGM Award program winners are:

- First Place (Rural Category) – Wicomico County, Md. “Building Bridges, Building Communities”

- Second Place (Rural Category) – Eagle County, Colo. “Healthy Living in Eagle County”

- First Place (Suburban Category) – Manatee County, Fla. “Manatee County Government Celebrates Healthy Counties, Healthy Families Month”

- Second Place (Suburban Category) – Durham County, N.C. “Durham County Health and Wellness Education Fair”

- First Place (Metropolitan Category) – El Paso County, Colo. “El Paso County Celebrates Healthy Counties, Healthy Families and Student Art Event,” and

- Second Place (Metropolitan Category) – DeKalb County, Ga. “2012 CEO’s Community Hero’s Award, Lunch and Learn Series and Renewable Natural Gas Facility Ribbon Cutting.”

The first-place-winning counties received two free conference registrations to any future NACo conference, including this month’s Annual Conference to be held July 13–17 in Allegheny County (Pittsburgh), Pa., and the second-place-winning counties received one free conference registration. All counties that entered received certificates of appreciation from NACo.

NCGM, celebrated each April, is NACo’s signature public awareness initiative.

Wicomico County, Md.

This was the first time Wicomico County participated in NCGM. Activities included a proclamation; public service announcements on several radio stations; fact sheets, posts on the county executive’s Facebook page; invitations to attend County Government Day during the annual budget meeting; several community forum presentations around the county hosted by the county executive; library events such as “Healthy Cooking, Healthy Families,” health department Lunch-n-Learn events; public works facility tours to showcase recycling and methane collection functions; law enforcement displays of emergency vehicles, and updates on the county’s website to highlight NCGM and showcase photos of current county employees.

Eagle County, Colo.

Eagle County hosted a variety of events and activities surrounding

the theme “Healthy Living in Eagle County.” Events included an Earth Day poster contest; an essay contest for high school students; presentations by Eagle County Public Health and Colorado State University Extension; parade celebrations honoring Week of the Young Child; and a 5k fun run-walk, breakfast and provider fair.

The healthy breakfast foods were donated by local (Colorado) companies, including Noosa Yoghurt, Boulder Granola, and LARABAR. The resource fair featured nearly 30 family-youth service providers from throughout the county, and included free lead screenings for children, car seat checks and CPR-AED training.

Manatee County, Fla.

Manatee County Government, Manatee County Health Department and the Manatee County Clerk of Court’s office hosted more than 50 events to focus on five parameters of health including physical, social, behavioral, environmental and economic health. Events included a Torch Run sponsored by Manatee Sheriff’s Office, a Health Department Farm Stand, a Knee Pain workshop, a horseshoe tournament, many classes and learning opportunities on topics such as water conservation, physical activity, disease prevention and healthy eating, along with several Relay for Life Events.

Manatee County used the health emphasis to promote a regional fitness challenge when One Bay hosted the Walk to the Moon Challenge which urged businesses and community groups throughout Tampa Bay to join in walking 238,857 miles — the distance from earth to the moon — during the month.

Durham County, N.C.

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

El Paso County, Colo.

El Paso County celebrated the “Healthy Counties, Healthy Families” theme with a month-long

series of events specifically designed to showcase “good for your health” programs and activities.

Events included a third-grade art contest; a free public health education program in partnership with Kaiser Permanente; a household hazardous waste collection day; a family-centered hiking event; a lunch-and-learn program for county employees; a child abuse prevention and child trauma educational event in partnership with Northwestern University; a water stewardship day that included water-consuming invasive plant removal and water-wise garden preparation also, a community recycling and cleanup event; a free community health event featured information and healthy local food as well as a feature

presentation of a documentary film “Children in Crisis” that focused on the damaging effects of childhood obesity.

DeKalb County, Ga.

Hosted in partnership with the *Champion Newspaper*, the CEO’s Community Hero Awards ceremony honored individuals and organizations making a significant impact in DeKalb County through volunteerism. In honor of NCGM, DeKalb County designated the Vanguard Award in 2011 to recognize an individual or organization whose contributions most exemplify the NCGM theme as established by NACo each year.

See NCGM page 6

FHFA proposes rule for PACE programs

By JULIE UFFNER

ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR



The Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) June 15 released a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPR) concerning Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs. Written comments are due by July 30.

PACE allowed local governments to finance energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements to homes and businesses through property tax assessments. In the summer of 2010 however, PACE programs nationally ground to a halt after questions were raised about the program’s financial viability by the FHFA. The FHFA directed Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac not to purchase any property with a PACE priority lien.

A number of state and local governments challenged the FHFA ruling leading to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California to issue a preliminary injunction requiring the FHFA to release a NPR.

The NPR seeks comments on the FHFA’s proposed rule as well as on potential alternatives. The comment period is 45 days from the June 15 date of publication. The FHFA welcomes comments on all aspects of the NPR.

NACo supports funding for PACE programs and supports their treatment by federal regulators as a traditional tax assessment program with first lien status.

*To view the NPR, see the online version of the story at www.naco.org/countynews.

Profiles in Service



» Stephanie Lynch

Chair, Programs and Services Committee
Commissioner
Caddo Parish, La.

Number of years active in NACo: 8

Years in public service: 8

Occupation: Insurance claims professional and entrepreneur

Education: master’s in public administration in state and local government, Grambling State University; and a B.S. in business administration/finance, University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

The hardest thing I’ve ever done: going from being single with no children, to raising my sister’s three teenage daughters after she died from breast cancer.

Three people (living or dead) I’d invite to dinner: Madam C.J. Walker, Malcolm X and former Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm

A dream I have is to: live on a private island.

You’d be surprised to learn that I: look forward to turning 50 and getting my AARP card.

The most adventurous thing I’ve ever done is: going to Las Vegas. What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas!

My favorite way to relax is: reading.

I’m most proud of: being the granddaughter of Evelyn Lewis and Lela Kelly.

Every morning I read: a variety of online news sources.

My favorite meal is: meatloaf over mashed potatoes, green beans, collard greens, hot water cornbread and peach cobbler.

My pet peeve is: having to deal with people who are dishonest, disrespectful, racist or sexist.

My motto is: “If I can help somebody as I travel along, if I can help somebody with a word or song, if I can help somebody from doing wrong, then my living shall not be in vain.”

The last book I read was: *Woman of Steele* by Bobbie Steele, former president of the Cook County, Ill. Board of Commissioners.

My favorite movie is: a tie between “Happy Feet” and “The Grinch” with Jim Carrey.

My favorite music is: blues and old-school R&B.

My favorite president is: President Barack Obama.

Official likens cost of obtaining voter ID to a ‘poll tax’

VOTER ID from page 1

tion: a Social Security card, a birth certificate or U.S. passport and two forms of proof of residency, according to PennDOT’s website. “You think everyone should go along with this,” DeFazio said. “But there’s a lot of people, older people, even like my mother who’s 96 years old, they never had a driver’s license, they never had a photo ID ... a lot of people fall into that category.” At the county level, Fitzgerald said the law is also an unfunded mandate because it doesn’t provide assistance to the more than 6,000 poll workers who staff elections in the county to prepare them to enforce the new requirement. “Those 6,500 poll workers that we have need to be trained if they’re going to be on the frontlines of denying people the right to vote,” he said. “People are going to be showing up with an ID — ‘Is that ID valid? Oh, it doesn’t have a date on it; it’s student ID or it’s a military ID without an expiration date; we can’t let you vote.’”

DeFazio said: “It’s going to cost the counties a lot of money... and we don’t have definite assurance of getting anything back from the government to take care of that.” Neither gave an estimate of the costs. Laws like Pennsylvania’s might have their biggest impact on Election Day, but Florida’s purge had been playing out in the here-and-now—that is, before it was largely halted. Earlier this year, Gov. Rick Scott (R) ordered that voter lists be purged of non-U.S. citizens. County supervisors of elections were told to use a list provided by the state’s Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, but the list of 2,700 potentially ineligible voters statewide proved unreliable, county elections officials said. “Assupervisors walked through that initial process, they started identifying and recognizing issues with the list itself,” said Vicki Davis, president of the Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections (FSASE) and Martin County supervisor of elections.

Ion Sancho, Leon County’s elections supervisor, said the list was giving false positives—improperly identifying a number of citizens as non-citizens. Elections supervisors were supposed to send letters to potentially ineligible voters giving them 30 days to respond, followed by a period of publicly advertising their names and a 60-day window in which they could contact the elections office, or be dropped, according to Davis. “There’s a lot of fear and trepidation and anger and angst,” Sancho said. “I talked to an elderly individual who received a letter in another county. She didn’t have a card—What was she going to do? She was afraid to respond and she is a citizen. “And so, these individuals have been traumatized. There’s not a whole lot I can do to make them not feel what they’ve been made to feel.” Last month, the U.S. Justice Department (DOJ) questioned the legality of the purge under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 and other statutes. NVRA bars states from implementing any program to remove names of ineligible voters from the official list of eligible voters within 90 days of a federal election. Florida has a primary set for Aug. 14. Ron Labasky is the attorney for the FSASE. In a June 1 letter to elections supervisors, he wrote, in part: “I recommend that Supervi-

Two Wisconsin counties help citizens obtain IDs to vote

Milwaukee and Dane counties in Wisconsin took steps to counteract potential negative impacts of a new voter identification law signed by Gov. Scott Walker (R) in May 2011. Milwaukee County supervisors approved funding late last year to provide up to 5,000 free birth certificates to citizens who couldn’t afford the \$20 fee to obtain them. Eligibility was based on them meeting the criteria to receive a free state ID as set forth in the law, according to Milwaukee County Supervisor Nikiya Harris, who sponsored the local measure as an amendment to the county’s 2012 budget. “Basically I felt like it was a poll tax that would make it so people have to pay just to vote,” she said. “I just didn’t think that was fair to our community that are low-income.” Wisconsin’s voter ID law requires a birth certificate to obtain a driver’s license or state ID, which are acceptable forms of proof of identity to vote. The county budgeted \$100,000 for the program. To date, Harris said about 570 free birth certificates have been issued to those who qualified. In February, Dane County approved a similar program. County Executive Joe Parisi said at the time, “The state’s voter ID law continues to have flaws that could lead to the disenfranchisement of voters — particularly minorities, those who are homeless, the elderly or students. The county’s effort is critical to protecting the integrity of our elections and preserving our citizens’ right to vote.” In March, a state court ruled Wisconsin’s voter ID law unconstitutional, and it is on hold pending further legal challenges.

Word Search

Mobile County, Ala. Facts

Read more about Mobile County in “What’s In a Seal?”

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

ALABAMA (became part of in 1819)
BAYOU LE BATRE (town in county)
BRITISH (occupied Mobile 1763–1780)
CHOCTAW (occupied Mobile in early 18th Century)
CITRONELLE (town in county)
COURTHOUSE FIRE (occurred in 1823, 1840 and 1872)
DISTRICTS (governed by three county district commissioners)
FLORIDA (county part of and ruled during the Revolutionary War by Spain)

FRENCH (first occupied Mobile 1702–1763)
HOLMES (Gov. in 1812 who declared county by proclamation)
MISSISSIPPI (became part of in 1812)
PADDLERS (Mobile translation in Choctaw)
SOUTHWESTERN (corner of state where located)
SPANISH (occupied Mobile 1780–1813)
THEODORE (town in county)
Created by Christopher Johnson

Heck, Heinrich introduce Public Lands Renewable Energy Act

By RYAN YATES
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Reps. Joe Heck (R-Nev.) and Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) have introduced legislation that would extend royalties and lease income to states and counties from solar and wind projects developed on federal lands. The Public Lands Renewable Energy Act, H.R. 5991, would also continue the 25 percent county revenue-sharing agreement for geothermal development on federal lands, provided by the Energy Policy Act of 2005. NACo recently held a joint advocacy fly-in with The Wilderness Society to promote the passage of H.R. 5991 and its companion bill, S. 1775. A diverse group of elected county officials from North Carolina to Washington joined

renewable energy, wildlife and conservation advocates to encourage swift congressional action on the legislation. Similar to existing revenue-sharing models for energy development, the act would share revenues with states and counties, while providing reinvestment in the Bureau of Land Management renewable energy programs and sharing critical funds to sustain wildlife and recreational uses of nearby land. Revenue-sharing arrangements with local governments are needed to support county operations impacted by local energy development and production. Counties nationwide have federal lands within their boundaries that have been developed or are suitable for

alternative energy development. Counties have historically been indispensable advocates for the development of alternative energy production in the United States. Future revenue-sharing dollars would contribute to the delivery of critical governmental services and the development of much-needed capital improvement projects such as road maintenance, public safety and law enforcement, conservation easements, capital for leveraging federal and state resources, and the critical stabilization of operations budgets in tough economic times. NACo strongly urges members to contact their U.S. representatives and encourage co-sponsoring H.R. 5991. For more information, contact Ryan Yates at ryates@naco.org or 202.942.4207.

Counties under more scrutiny seek guidance on ethics policies

By JACQUELINE BYERS
DIRECTOR, RESEARCH AND OUTREACH

In recent months, the NACo Research Division has received numerous requests for information on model county ethics codes.

Many counties are finding that in this era of closer government scrutiny county residents are expressing greater concern about the activities of their county officials. Even though certain activities are completely legal, they can often be perceived as improprieties by casual observers. If the county has no written ethics code or ordinance, it can be very difficult to demonstrate that specific conduct is within ethical boundaries.

Among the activities that are receiving closer scrutiny are allegations of nepotism, conflicts of interest and misuse of government property or authority. In many of

these cases, the public is seeing an action that it believes is contrary to the public interest.

A few counties have tackled this issue and established strong ethics commissions. These include Miami-Dade County and Palm Beach County, Fla., Baltimore and Montgomery counties in Maryland, New Castle County, Del. and DuPage County, Ill. Each of these programs establishes ethical guidelines and provides information to county officials that can prevent unprofessional or inappropriate activities.

At least two studies may be helpful to counties looking at establishing or updating their codes of ethics. The first, written by Robert Wechsler, director of research for City Ethics (cityethics.org), can be downloaded electronically. The publication, *Local Government Ethics Programs*, is available free from the

City Ethics website.

The second publication, written by Betty Hudson of the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government, is called *County Ethics Ordinances, An Analysis and Comparison for Gwinnett County, Ga.* and was released in 2008. This publication can be found at www.cviog.uga.edu/free-downloads/county-ethics-ordinances.pdf.

Finally, in 1991, NACo established a Model Code of Ethics for an Ethical County Official. Although not binding or enforceable in any way, it is a solid reminder of how good government stewards should conduct themselves.

(Robert Wechsler, writes the City Ethics blog at www.cityethics.org. City Ethics is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, founded in 2000, that provides information and advice on local government ethics issues nationwide.)

Model Code of Ethics

Preamble

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is committed to the highest standards of conduct by and among county officials in the performance of their public duties. Individual and collective adherence to high ethical standards by public officials is central to the maintenance of public trust and confidence in government.

While county officials agree on the need for proper conduct, they may experience personal conflict or differing view of values or loyalties.

In such cases the principles contained in this Code of Ethics provide valuable guidance in reaching decisions which are governed, ultimately, by the dictates of the individual conscience of the public official and his or her commitment to the public good.

Certain of these ethical principles are best expressed as positive statements: actions which should be taken; courses which should be followed; goals which should permeate both public and private conduct. Other principles are expressed as negative statements: actions to be avoided and conduct to be condemned.

The Code of Ethics for County Officials has been created by and for elected county officials. However, these principles apply to the day-to-day conduct of both elected and appointed officials and employees of county government.

NACo recognizes that this Code of Ethics should serve as a valuable reference guide for all those in whom the public has placed its trust.

Ethical Principles

The ethical county official should:

- Properly administer the affairs of the county.
- Promote decisions which only benefit the public interest.
- Actively promote public confidence in county government.

- Keep safe all funds and other properties of the county.
- Conduct and perform the duties of the office diligently and promptly dispose of the business of the county.
- Maintain a positive image to pass constant public scrutiny.
- Evaluate all decisions so that the best service or product is obtained at a minimal cost without sacrificing quality and fiscal responsibility.
- Inject the prestige of the office into everyday dealings with the public employees and associates.
- Maintain a respectful attitude toward employees, other public officials, colleagues and associates.
- Effectively and efficiently work with governmental agencies, political subdivisions and other organizations in order to further the interest of the county.
- Faithfully comply with all laws and regulations applicable to the county and impartially apply them to everyone.

The ethical county official should not:

- Engage in outside interests that are not compatible with the impartial and objective performance of his or her duties.
- Improperly influence or attempt to influence other officials to act in his or her own benefit.
- Accept anything of value from any source which is offered to influence his or her action as a public official.
- The ethical county official accepts the responsibility that his or her mission is that of servant and steward to the public.

Published by the National Association of Counties (NACo) – 1991 The Code of Ethics is intended for information and reference purposes only.

Transit gets over \$10.5 billion in FY13, FY14

TRANSPORTATION from page 1

NACo scored several important victories. The off-system bridge program, which has funneled \$650 million annually to bridges not on the federal-aid system, mainly county-owned bridges, is retained. A number of proposed changes to the Metropolitan Planning (MPO) planning process title, including a Senate approach that changed the process dramatically and in some cases eliminated certain regions, were rejected and much of the current MPO planning language was continued. The population threshold for MPOs remains at 50,000 and rural regions get new authority in the planning process.

A series of provisions relating to project or environmental streamlining were adopted, which should lead to a faster approval process for federally funded highway and bridge projects on county highways.

The transportation enhancement program is reduced substantially, though metropolitan areas over 200,000 fare better than smaller communities.

The transit program is funded at \$10.58 billion in FY13 and \$10.7 billion in FY14. The program keeps its basic structure

with some reforms. Urban areas over 200,000 cannot use funds for operating expenses, and a Senate provision providing these communities with flexibility on this issue was not included in the final bill.

Areas under 200,000 can continue to use their formula funds for operating assistance. A separate bus program is maintained. The New Starts program streamlines the approval process to accelerate project delivery. The Elderly and Disabled and New Freedom programs are consolidated and the rural formula program is maintained with a slight increase in funding.

Non-transportation provisions in the conference report include a one-year extension of the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program, Secure Rural Schools and Counties Program, and the Restore Act that sends 80 percent of the Clean Water Act penalty fines from the BP Deep Horizon oil spills to five affected Gulf Coast states. The conference report also includes a five-year reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance program.

Not included in the final legislation were any provisions addressing the Keystone Pipeline or the regulation of coal ash, two controversial items included in the House bill.

NCGM awards embrace healthy counties theme

NCGM from page 4

The Lunch and Learn series consisted of five sessions focused on physical, mental or financial health and included sessions such as Mind, Body and Spirit, looked at the role each element played in the losing weight; Financial Peace of Mind—Manage Your Money, which covered the principles of money management; and Healthy Children, Low Cost Insurance, provided information on low-cost health insurance for children and application assistance to qualified applicants.

All of the winning entries used various promotional, media relations and social media strategies to promote their ambitious NCGM activities.

To read the full NCGM Awards program entries and see how these counties effectively

planned, promoted and executed their NCGM celebrations, visit www.naco.org/2002NCGM.

For more information about NCGM and the NCGM Awards program contact Jim Philipps at 202.942.4220 or jphilipps@naco.org.

Check it out!

When you see the "web" icon in a story, there's more information available in the online edition of County News at www.naco.org/countynews.



NACo, CSH aim to end cycle of homelessness, incarceration

By MEGHAN LEVINE
JUSTICE ASSOCIATE

In an effort to end the cycle of homelessness and incarceration, NACo and the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) have partnered to assist counties in their efforts to design, develop, launch and strengthen new and existing supportive housing initiatives.

NACo and CSH will use their partnership to explore the Frequent Users Systems Engagement (FUSE) model. FUSE relies on data to help identify frequent users of homeless shelters, crisis centers, emergency rooms and jails; engages policymakers to shift resources towards permanent housing and support services; and recruits individuals to participate in programs that help them achieve housing stability and avoid returns to crisis services or institutions.

Each year, approximately 13 million individuals are booked



Photo by Becky Melang, Corporation for Supportive Housing

NACo First Vice President Chris Rodgers (center right), a Douglas County, Neb. commissioner, and Ramsey County, Minn. Commissioner Jim McDonough, participate in a panel discussion about the role elected officials can play in supportive housing policy. The discussion was part of a forum by NACo and the Corporation for Supportive Housing, Creating Supportive Housing Initiatives in Your County, June 7–8 in Hennepin County, Minn.

in county jails and more than seven million are released, many returning to the streets — a cycle that often leaves a person with serious, chronic health care needs.

Because a significant portion of this population lacks health care coverage, the cost of their care often falls to county-funded health and human services agencies.

Most recently, NACo and CSH brought together more than 60 county government officials and key staff from across the country to participate in an educational forum, “Creating Supportive Housing Initiatives in Your County.” It was conducted June 7–8 in Hennepin County, Minn. and highlighted how data-driven problem solving, policy and systems reform, and targeted housing and services can aid counties in their efforts to implement supportive housing initiatives. Participants hailed from 15 states, 25 NACo-member counties and included several members of NACo leadership.

In addition to this forum, NACo conducted a webinar in May titled “Linking Justice-Involved Individuals with Supportive Housing.” The webinar provided an overview of supportive housing initiatives, the FUSE model and how each can be adopted in other counties. A recording of the webinar is available at www.naco.org/programs/csd/Pages/2012SupportiveHousingForum.aspx.

NACo has also been working with CSH and a number of member counties to hold monthly supportive housing working group phone conferences. These meetings serve as an educational resource, provide technical assistance and engage participants in a national network of individuals who are actively engaged in the development of a number of supportive housing efforts at various stages. Some of these participating counties include Bexar County, Texas, which recently formed a workgroup and is in the process of conducting a cross-system data match to identify frequent users, and Dakota County, Minn., which through the work of a regional partnership with Hennepin and Ramsey counties, has begun a plan to end homelessness throughout the region.

Contact Meghan Levine at mlevine@naco.org or 202.942.4279 for copies of forum presentations and materials, as well as with any questions regarding NACo’s supportive housing programming or partnership with CSH.

Beyer installed as NACE president

Richie Beyer, county engineer, Elmore County, Ala., was elected president of The National Association of County Engineers (NACE) 2012 Annual Management and Technical Conference, held in Lexington, Ky.

Beyer has worked in county engineering for 17 years, serving as Elmore County engineer since 2003. With a county population of approximately 80,000, he is responsible for 800 miles of paved roads, 200 miles of unpaved roads and 127 bridge structures.

He earned his B.S. in civil engineering from Florida State University and is a registered professional engineer in Alabama, Florida and Georgia. He also served on the board of directors for the Association of County Engineers of Alabama (ACEA) from 2003–2009, including serving one year as its president, and currently serves on the NACo Transportation Steering Committee.

Nearly 400 delegates and speakers and 200 exhibitors attended the NACE Conference April 1–5. Highlights of the opening ceremonies included remarks from NACo President Lenny Eliason and Kentucky Transportation Secretary Mike Hancock. The keynote presentation was given by Victor Mendez, administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.



Photo courtesy of NACE

(From left) NACE Executive Director Brian Roberts, President Richie Beyer, U.S. Department of Transportation Administrator Victor Mendez, Past President Mark Craft and President-elect Mark Servi.

Other officers elected or installed included:

- Mark K. Servi, highway commissioner, Barron County, Wis. as president-elect, and the following, all registered professional engineers (P.E.):
- Ramon D. Gavarrete, county engineer, Highlands County, Fla., secretary-treasurer
- Dennis McCall, Butler County, Ala., Southeast Region vice president

- Duane J. Ratermann, county engineer, Knox County, Ill., North Central Region vice president

- David Brand, county engineer, Madison County, Ohio, Northeast Region vice president

- George A. Johnson, director of transportation and land management agency, Riverside County, Calif., Western Region vice president, and

- Brian Keierleber, county engineer, Buchanan County, Iowa, South

Central Region vice president.

Susan G. Miller, county engineer, Freeborn County, Minn. was selected as Rural County Engineer of the Year, and Phillip M. Demery, transportation and public works director, Sonoma County, Calif., was selected as Urban County Engineer of the Year. David L. Reinke, Jr., engineer, St. Clair County Road Commission, Mich. was selected the Project/Program Manager of the Year.



News From the Nation's Counties

► ALABAMA

The **CULLMAN COUNTY** sheriff wants to change a 1939 state law that allows sheriffs to **keep a part of the money** given to them for feeding prisoners.

Sheriff Mike Rainey told the *Cullman Times* he wants the County Commission to take over the account.

He said he has received \$295,294 from federal, state and local sources to feed prisoners at the county jail and in the juvenile detention program since March 2011. As of May, \$16,662 was left, which the law would allow Rainey to keep as personal income. The state provides sheriffs with \$1.75 per day to feed each inmate. The federal government funds inmates housed in state facilities at \$3 per day.

Currently 55 of the state's 67 sheriffs use the system set up by law. The others have given oversight of the accounts to county officials. State lawmakers have tried unsuccessfully to change the law.

► CALIFORNIA

A community effort to keep **Annadel State Park open** got a big boost from Sonoma County's Board of Supervisors.

The board gave county staff the authority to enter into a one-year agreement with the state allowing the county to take over operations of the popular 5,000-acre park. The deal keeps the park open past a July 1 deadline when dozens statewide are slated to close for budget reasons.

It also represents an unprecedented role for the county in state park management, one Supervisor Valerie Brown said could extend past June 2013, when the agreement is set to expire.

"I can't imagine the state gets in a better financial position to take it back," she said.

It will cost \$277,737 to operate Annadel for a year. The money has been raised through private donations and a one-time payment of \$50,000 from state parks, which also has committed to retaining a supervising park ranger at Annadel, an in-kind value of \$100,000.

The county plans to install a day-use parking area to prevent people from parking outside the gates and walking or biking into Annadel for free, the *Press Democrat* reported.

Brown acknowledged feeling some "anxiety" over the county's shouldering more of the financial burden with state parks. She said she hopes the state eventually will provide more "taxpayer money" toward helping the county.

► COLORADO

The manager of its land use department's long-range policy team told **BOULDER COUNTY's** planning commission it **can't permanently ban hydraulic fracturing** in unincorporated parts of the county.

The commission is considering updates to the county's comprehensive plan provisions relating to oil and gas exploration and production, some of which are more than 30 years old. That work, expected to be followed by proposed revisions to the land use code's regulations about oil and gas drilling operations, is being done while the county is in the midst of a temporary moratorium — set to expire next February — on processing applications for new oil and gas drilling, the *Daily Camera* reported.

► GEORGIA

In an effort to expand access to health care, and reduce health disparities and dependency on emergency room services, **FULTON COUNTY** opened a **new health center** that integrates the county health, and housing and human services departments with the West End Medical Center. The Adamsville Regional Health Center also offers day care for parents receiving services.

► MICHIGAN

• **GENESEE COUNTY** gave **dog owners** an amnesty option if they didn't have licenses, but now they're playing "ruff!"

The county is assigning 18 full-time enforcers from the animal control department to go door-to-door finding dogs without licenses in an effort that could raise more than \$250,000 in fees this summer. They will sell licenses or write tickets on the spot, though tickets can be dismissed if owners produce a rabies certificate and \$40 within 10 days, the *Flint Journal* reported.

More than 1,700 dog owners in Genesee County bought licenses during a two-week amnesty when delinquent fees were waived.

• After a judge dissolved her own restraining order to delay its completion, **INGHAM COUNTY** is preparing to open a **new emergency dispatch center**.

Union officials representing 9-1-1 dispatchers still are concerned about the launch. The Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 141, which represents dispatchers, said the training they have received is inadequate to staff the new center. County officials say the 50 or more dispatchers are already experienced



Photo courtesy of Dallas County Jail

Dallas County Jail inmates take computer classes to prepare for working in the new digital print shop, a partnership between the jail and a local college.

► TEXAS

A partnership between the **DALLAS COUNTY** Jail and El Centro College allows **inmates to earn college credit** taking graphic design classes in the jail's digital print shop, *The Dallas Morning News* reported.

The new program will supply Dallas County departments and nonprofits with low-cost business cards, brochures, magnets, decals and other items.

"All the printing presses and machines were bought with the money from the jail's commissary," Sheriff Lupe Valdez said. "In addition, all the money we make selling these printed products will go straight back into the program. There is no profit; we simply want to recoup the money it took to lease the machines."

professionals who staff the two other dispatch centers, and they have been sufficiently trained to staff the new center. Before the center opens, officials say, dispatchers will receive a final course of "refresher training," as was originally planned.

At the request of dispatchers, Ingham County Circuit Judge Joyce Draganchuk issued a temporary restraining order to delay the opening of the center. Draganchuk said there were no state standards regulating the training of 9-1-1 emergency dispatchers, and it would be very difficult to oversee that training as a judge.

Once the center opens, county officials say it will save taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars annually because of its reduced staffing, according to the *Lansing State Journal*.

► NORTH CAROLINA

State aviation officials want **HYDE COUNTY** to become home to a test range for **research on drone aircraft**.

The state Division of Aviation wants to establish a site where private companies and research institutions could test unmanned aircraft with cameras and other devices, the Associated Press reported. Remote-controlled aircraft have been used by the military in Iraq and Afghanistan, and some county law enforcement departments also use them.

"The potential is just unlimited," said Hyde County manager Mazie Swindell-Smith, whose commissioners have endorsed the idea.

Officials are seeking a permit from the Federal Aviation Administration to become one of six locations around the country to study drones. Kyle Snyder of North Carolina State University's NextGen Air Transportation Center said a test range could spur research and development worth billions of dollars.

► NORTH DAKOTA

The state's oil boom, while bringing benefits, is straining the **WARD COUNTY** sheriff's resources due to the influx of new industry workers.

Sheriff Steve Kukowski told local officials **traffic citations are up 500 percent**. "You can sit at an intersection and write red-light tickets practically all day," *The Minot Daily News* reported.

He told officials of cities his officers patrol that transient workers are making so much money that tickets are being treated as a cost of doing business. An officer told him about one traffic stop. "For 20 bucks, this ain't nothing. Where I come from that cost a lot of money," the scofflaw told the officer. "Just give me a punch card and every time you stop me, you can punch it."

Kukowski said his office has

about 1,700 outstanding warrants at any given time, and the offenders can be difficult to locate.

► OHIO

• **DEFIANCE COUNTY** has been designated a **Purple Heart Community**. In addition to the proclamation, veterans were honored with a parade in early June.

The Purple Heart Ceremony was reminiscent of events that took place in the early 20th century at the steps of the county courthouse. A Purple Heart Flag presented by members of the Military Order of the Purple Heart was raised at the event.

Retired Marine Maj. Gen. Lawrence Livingston, one of the region's most decorated veterans, thanked the county and its Veterans Office in a letter, saying, "There are still Americans in the heartland who strongly support our veterans."

• The **SUMMIT COUNTY** Council recently passed an ordinance making property owners responsible for the county Sheriff's Office's costs whenever it must remove chemicals and equipment used to **manufacture methamphetamine** and other illegal drugs.

Cleanup costs may not exceed \$1,200 for a first occurrence, including a \$200 administrative charge, *Akron.com* reported. If the owner doesn't pay, the county's fiscal officer can enter a lien in the amount owed on the property, to be collected as other taxes and assessments.

The ordinance applies to residential properties, hotels, motor vehicles, and abandoned and vacant commercial or residential properties.

► SOUTH CAROLINA

DORCHESTER COUNTY's **newest public park** has a lot going for it, not least its earnings potential.

"The entire canvas is a blank slate that can actually pay for itself, in my opinion," said Tom O'Rourke, Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission executive director, who was consulted on the purchase. "Canoe and paddleboat rentals, shelter rentals, festivals, weddings, there's so many resources out there."

The county voted recently to buy the property for \$1.35 million; it was formerly slated for residential development and had been in bank receivership, according to *The Post and Courier*.

And the 83-acre tract also might have some hidden historical value. The property possibly once held Gen. William Moultrie's "lost fort," a significant regional Revolutionary

Model Programs From the Nation's Counties

McHenry County, Ill.

Diagnostic Survey Alerts Residents to Heart-health Threats

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

WEB* CONTENT Too many people find out too late that their hearts don't act their age, in fact they seem a lot older.

When McHenry County, Ill. performed a community health study to satisfy a state mandate in 2006, the results mirrored the national trend — cardiovascular disease was at the top of the list of residents' concerns.

The health department set a goal of reducing the death rate among McHenry County residents to 20 percent by 2017. Several intermediate targets would help make that happen including reducing high cholesterol to 17 percent from a 30 percent 2006 baseline, reducing high blood pressure to 16 percent from 22 percent in 2006, and increasing the proportion of adults at a healthy weight to 60 percent, from the 39 percent baseline.

Making people aware of their risk factors, though, involves battling everything from youthful nonchalance to ignorance and disinterest.

"It takes years and years until some people start to show symptoms," said health department spokeswoman Debra Quackenbush. "It's a silent killer, and people won't realize they have some risk factors until they check."

The things people do to their bodies, either through stress levels, drugs and alcohol use or contributory ailments alter their hearts' function. Raising awareness of these deviations from the physical average became the health department's priority, and an assessment tool for people to measure their heart's age became the crucial part of the department's outreach program.

"It's a key piece in the health process because it's something they can take to their doctors and get guidance and direction to improve," she said. "For a lot of people it's a great first step to saving their own lives."



Photo courtesy of McHenry County, Ill.

A McHenry County, Ill. volunteer administers a heart-age assessment to a participant at the county American Heart Association Walk at Three Oaks Recreation Center, Crystal Lake, Ill.

The heart age tool uses indicators from the Framingham Heart Study's "risk score" model, including age, gender, body mass index, diabetes status and blood pressure, all quantified. Diabetes adds five years to the women's heart ages and three for men's, smoking adds four. One of the Framingham researchers approved the county's adaptation.

"People take the test and see they had a heart age 15 to 20 years

older than their biological age and it's a wakeup call," Quackenbush said. "It can be overwhelming, so we make sure to include lots of educational materials so people don't feel lost or resign themselves to dying early. There are small changes they can make every day."

Included with the heart age surveys, quick tips for losing weight and quitting smoking served as the first lessons in how respondents

could alter their fortunes.

The health department received liability coverage from the state's attorney's office to help recruit volunteers from the county's medical reserve corps to help administer the tests. Officials set out to screen 1,000 residents out of the county's 308,000. It has hit that goal for two years, distributing screenings through various partner organizations, including hospitals, and the Illinois Migrant Council.

"We're trying to reach populations that aren't attending health fairs or seeing their doctors and we see a lot of that with the Hispanic population," Quackenbush said. "We're trying to combat that by going to churches and bringing interpreters along to make it more friendly."

Most of the program's costs have been in-house, with staff time used to prepare the materials, but volunteers to do the work.

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

**See this story online at www.naco.org/countynews to find links to the heart-age assessment tool.*

More counties seek taxes from Fannie and Freddie

NEWS FROM *from page 8*

War site that archeologists are trying to locate.

► WEST VIRGINIA

Agencies in KANAWHA COUNTY have saved nearly \$1 million on fuel costs over the past decade, thanks to a bulk fuel purchasing program: \$581,499 in gas and \$359,425 in diesel, the *Charleston Daily Mail* reported.

In 2002, the Kanawha County Commission and officials with the Kanawha Valley Regional Transportation Authority (KRT) looked at ways to save money through cooperative purchasing, aiming for a set price that was not subject to market fluctuations.

The Kanawha County assessor's office, sheriff's department, Parks and Recreation Commission, and several volunteer fire departments are among those that purchase fuel from KRT.

Filling stations needed to be strategically located throughout the county to serve participating agencies for the program to be successful.

► OF INTEREST TO COUNTY RECORDERS

HERNANDO COUNTY, Fla. and DEKALB COUNTY, Ga. are each suing Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac over unpaid property transfer taxes.

Hernando County Clerk of Circuit Court Karen Nicolai wants the lawsuit to become a class-action suit involving other Florida counties, according to the *Tampa Tribune*. The suit seeks an unspecified amount in damages, though estimates put the figure in the hundreds of thousands.

DeKalb County is initially seeking \$40,000 for losses over five years, but DeKalb County Clerk John Acardo told the *Daily Chronicle* he is looking at older records and would pursue interest on the late payments. He also said WHITE-SIDE, WILL and WINNEBAGO counties might join the suit.

(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.)

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Research News

Counties Find Innovative Ways to Serve Residents



The current economic downturn has required county elected officials and staff to cut budgets while still serving residents as best as possible. Elected officials and employees have stepped up to the challenge by designing innovative ways to more efficiently serve residents.

The assessment department in King County, Wash. re-engineered its annual property revaluation notice program to increase efficiency and improve customer service. By changing the size of the paper used to print the evaluation, the department was able to save money on printing and postage. Evaluation notices were reduced to postcards for owners with only one piece of property in the county.

The department also created a new system to more efficiently send notices to owners with multiple properties. These owners were no longer mailed separate evaluations of each property, but instead receive a full sheet of assessments for all of the properties owned. The new process reduces printing costs and staff

time and saved the department more than \$110,000 on postage. Savings are only expected to increase as the online notification system, which was piloted with government agencies and large commercial accounts, expands to allow residents to opt in to an electronic notification system.

A new online tool in Cook County, Ill. combines information across county offices to provide residents with comprehensive information regarding property taxes. Spearheaded by the treasurer's office, the Property Tax Portal combines information from the county treasurer's office, the assessor's office, the clerk's office, the recorder of deeds and the Board of Review. Residents can search by address or property index number to view recent assessments, property tax rates, property tax payments, information on the appeals process and more.

"We are making one of the most crucial areas of county government—information about people's homes and property—more sensitive to their needs, more convenient for their use, more efficient and more

transparent for all of our residents," Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said.

In addition to providing more comprehensive information online, counties are seeking to improve the experience of residents when visiting a county office. In Macomb County, Mich., the vital records section of the clerk's office saw an increase in transactions during lunch hours with visitors experiencing long wait times. In response, the county created its Fast Pass system to increase efficiency and customer satisfaction.

The Fast Pass system allows residents to schedule an appointment on the county clerk's website including the type of service needed and an option to pay for the service online. After checking in at the office, staff is alerted that the appointment has arrived and collects the already prepared documents. Not only did this decrease wait times for residents, but it also improved work flow for staff as the document preparation for the scheduled appointments is completed during slower times instead of during the lunch rush.

In response to an increase in unpaid court fines, Jefferson County, Texas implemented its CHAMP program to ensure that residents actually pay their fines. The initiative established an adjudication system that educates the public on paying court fines. In addition to sending letters highlighting the methods of payment for fines, the county created an educational DVD that is shown while residents are waiting to meet with the judge. The short video explains why the court is mandated to do payment plans and how the defendant can pay their fines. The video also provides an overview of courtroom etiquette, the court process and frequently asked questions.

After court hearings, residents meet with a clerk to review all the information provided and establish a payment process before leaving the courthouse. Not only were residents better educated on the court process, but, less than six months after full implementation, the county saw \$93,500 more in revenue than during the same period a year earlier.

With forecasts of declining revenue and budget cuts, the Marriage Bureau of New Castle County, Del. started an expansion program to increase revenue while surpassing its current level of service. Using

constituent input and opinion data, the Marriage Bureau was able to identify ways it could create better marriage ceremonies while simultaneously increasing revenue. Through the new program, the bureau began offering additional services such as ceremony witnesses, photographs, DVDs, gift certificates and name-change kits.

Through a program developed in-house, residents could access a new online portal for license applications and even view live broadcasts of wedding ceremonies.

This program has facilitated the integration of online requests, simplified records search and

maintenance, and allows for mobile license issuance. Couples are now able to receive instant information regarding their licensing and product order information. By responding to resident needs and improving efficiency, the program led to a 56 percent increase in revenue and a 28 percent decrease in non-wage expenses since implementation.

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

**To learn more about the Cook County and Macomb County programs, see the online version at www.naco.org/countynews.*

Financial Services News

Network of Care Aggregates County-specific Health Data

NACo's Network of Care for Public Health (NOCPH) provides elected policy makers with easy-to-use information about what is going on in their communities regarding key health indicators, using the best population-based health data available.

The NOCPH is a county-specific Web platform that aggregates health data from many sources and arrays it in a series of locally based health indicators.

County Health Rankings information and Healthy People 2020 goals are integrated into the platform and heavy use is made of information available in U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Health Information Data Warehouse. Data from other state and local sources is also used. The data is matched with suggested interventions and model practices to make it easier for local leaders to effect positive change.

GIS technology provides geographic overlays for analysis and comparisons within and among jurisdictions. All of the information is then placed into a local Web portal in a format that is easy to use and understand.

The NOCHC provides the online platform so that counties can:

- identify and prioritize the

community's public health challenges through Community Health Indicators, drawing data broadly from the County Health Rankings, Healthy People 2020, the HHS data warehouse and other sources

- research and identify locally driven public health interventions and model practices

- recruit public participation and organize the community online, a community calendar, task force builder, social networking and a bulletin board

- communicate with and engage the public over time, such as providing updates on local policy and programmatic action, and encouraging individuals to use the Personal Health Record, Medical Library and Legislate modules on the site, and

- measure public health progress and outcomes via the dashboard of Community Health Indicators.

To learn more about NACo's Network of Care for Public Health, please contact Jim Sawyer, NACo Financial Services Center, at 202.661.8868 or jsawyer@naco.org, or Bruce Bronzan, Trilogy Integrated Resources at 415.458.5900 or bbronzan@trilogyr.com.

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

NACo on the Move

» NACo Officers and Officials

NACo President **Lenny Eliason** spoke about Counties Work and NACo membership at the Hawaii State Association of Counties Annual Conference in Honolulu County June 21.

» NACo Staff

• **Jacqueline Byers**, director of research and outreach, led the discussion for a panel on state-local-tribal and urban-rural uses of the American Community Survey at the workshop, "The Benefits and Burdens of the American Community Survey," conducted by the National Research Council of the National Academies in Washington, D.C. June 15.

• **Michael Belarmino**, associate legislative director, was a panelist and spoke about NACo, how state and local governments work together, and the basics of county government structure and operations at the Security Industry Association's annual Government Summit in Washington, D.C. June 19.

• **Paul Beddoe**, associate legislative director, gave a legislative report to the New Mexico Association of Counties (NMAC) health care affiliate meeting at NMAC's Annual Conference in San Miguel County June 21.



Michael Belarmino

On the Move is compiled by Christopher Johnson.

Keep up with NACo online ...

www.naco.org



The H.R. Doctor Is In

The Fourth of July – Continuing the Journey

The Fourth of July is a time of fireworks, barbeques, red, white and blue decorations, parades and flying the American flag. Most people are also pleased to have the day off from work — a paid day off for public employees. For many, that is the essence of the holiday. Some others recognize the anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence as well. The Fourth of July is a much more important commemoration than we may think or than we may have been taught in history classes.

I offer the view that the Fourth of July is a celebration of journeys. They are journeys in the literal and in the figurative senses. They are journeys over time and journeys

in the development of ideas and concepts. In this view, this holiday is a time of immense importance as a milestone in the history of our species.

In a way, the Fourth of July marks the end of a long journey of debate and discussion about relationships in the New World between colonists and the “Mother Country,” England. A critical decision point had been reached redefining the economic and political relationships for the colonists, and a time of imagination had been entered as they looked forward to what could possibly come to exist in a land of immense natural wealth and many shared hopes, fears and beliefs.

Although there have always



been, and there will remain, massive differences of opinion on many issues in the country, the signing of the Declaration of Independence by colonial representatives created a significant consensus. We’ve come to look at the signing of the Declaration as the moment of the

birth of the country. It really was a significant waypoint in a much bigger set of journeys.

The first Fourth of July celebrated west of the Mississippi River occurred in 1804 as Lewis and Clark’s Corps of Discovery got an extra ration of alcohol and fired off their cannon. The day and the alcohol helped them rejoice about the birth of the new country. They were also looking at an incredible journey lying ahead and, as the very name of the expedition announced, what extraordinary discoveries they might make.

Imagine traveling back to July 4, 1826 and witnessing the deaths, within hours of each other, of two of the most important figures in the founding of the nation; Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. These “Founding Fathers” were able to look back over two generations of the growth and development of their country. They would have noted intense arguments, revolts and national expansion. They participated in the emergence of the institutions which form the basic structure of the American government.

They could look back at 50 years of an awakening of all that America could become, especially as they focused on the power of compromise and long-term vision. Indeed, their vision of consensus through compromise and abiding optimism made America the role model for the world that it has always been.

A generation later some of the same basic concepts that created and guided American development were still very evident, when on July 4, 1857 the collection of poems called the “Leaves of Grass” by Walt Whitman was published. Even then there was recognition of a balance needed between the beauty and harmony of nature, and the compulsion to exploit and tinker with it.

Whitman also ventured into a restatement of another basic principle in America’s national philosophy: that is the importance of resistance against attempts by a central government to impinge on personal freedom or to tell the populace what to do and not do.

See H.R. DOC page 12

Job Market & Classifieds

► ZONING/PLANNING/BUILDING DIRECTOR – BERNALILLO COUNTY, N.M.

Salary: DOQ.

Bernalillo County is seeking a qualified individual to serve as a Zoning/Planning/Building Director who will direct and oversee the operations of the Zoning/Planning/Building Department in adherence with applicable laws, regulations and policies in order to ensure appropriate uses of land, safe buildings, and orderly development within the unincorporated areas of Bernalillo County. The director reports to the Deputy County Manager.

Minimum Qualifications include Bachelor’s Degree in Planning, Architecture, Engineering, or closely related field; advanced degree preferable are strongly encouraged to apply. Minimum of eight (8) years’ directly applicable work experience, including a minimum of three (3) years in a management capacity, involving city or county zoning, planning or code enforcement and requiring research, analysis, and project development activities.

Must have the ability to review, analyze and interpret pertinent federal, state and local zoning/planning/building laws, regulations, policies and procedures in terms of impact on assigned area. Must have the ability to research and analyze complex issues, develop project plans, conduct surveys and develop policy proposals.

Bernalillo County is an equal opportunity employer, offering a great work environment, challenging career opportunities, professional training and competitive compensation.

For more information regarding the job description, salary and closing dates visit the Bernalillo County website at www.bernco.gov and refer to the section on job postings. Apply online or in person at Bernalillo County

Human Resources Department, One Civic Plaza, 4th Floor, Albuquerque, NM 87102.

All applicants must complete the county employment application.

► BUDGET DIRECTOR – BERNALILLO COUNTY, N.M.

Salary: DOQ.

Bernalillo County is seeking a qualified individual to serve as a Budget Director who will direct and oversee the operations. Responsible for the preparation of the annual county budget, disbursement of County funds, bond issue analysis, investment analysis, pre-auditing County expenditures and supervising the payroll process and accounts payable. Serve as County Economist forecasting revenue and tax rates.

Minimum Qualifications include Bachelor’s Degree in Business/Public Administration/Economics with a minimum of 45 semester hours in accounting/finance/budgeting/economics plus eight (8) years’ directly applicable work experience in a professional capacity in budget, economics, finance or accounting, including four (4) years working in a management capacity. Master’s Degree in Business Administration, Certified Public Accountant (CPA) or Certified Management Accountant (CMA) preferred. Must have thorough knowledge of budgeting, auditing and financial forecasting principles, practices, and theory, and their application to governmental fiscal problems. Bernalillo County is an equal opportunity employer, offering a great work environment, challenging career opportunities, professional training and competitive compensation.

For more information regarding the job description, salary and closing dates visit the Bernalillo County website at www.bernco.gov and refer to the section on job postings. Apply online or in person at Bernalillo County

Human Resources Department, One Civic Plaza, 4th Floor, Albuquerque, NM, 87102.

All applicants must complete the county employment application.

► DEPARTMENTAL HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER – MONTEREY COUNTY, CALIF.

Salary: \$80,980 – \$110,541 annually; DOQ.

Monterey County’s Human Resources Department seeking qualified candidates for leadership position.

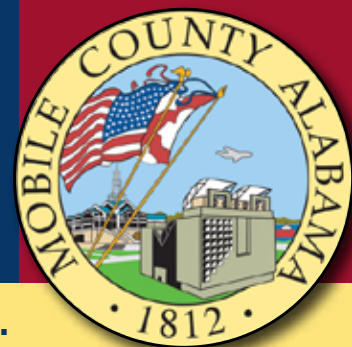
Position: The Human Resources management position in the Department of Social and Employment Services (DSES) will work in a merit system environment administering compliance with Local Agency Personnel Standards and the State of California Merit System Services practices, procedures and employment testing, and other Federal, State and local policies, rules and regulations, in addition to County Human Resources programs, policies and procedures. Responsible for the DSES’s day-to-day coordination, management, supervision, implementation, and evaluation of all Human Resources functional areas.

Qualifications: Demonstrated history of proven Human Resources progressively responsible management experience, including at least 3 years of Public Sector experience and in a merit system environment being highly desirable.

To Apply: View the complete brochure and submit on-line employment application materials at www.co.monterey.ca.us/personnel. Open until filled. Priority screening date: All application materials must be received in the Human Resources Department by Friday, July 6 for a guaranteed review. Applications received after this date will be considered on an as-needed basis until the position is filled. EOE.

What’s in a Seal?

► Mobile County, Ala.
www.mobilecounty.org



On Dec. 18, 1812, Mobile County was created by proclamation of the governor of what was then the Mississippi Territory. The county became part of Alabama, when statehood was granted Dec. 14, 1819.

The name “Mobile” honors the tribe of Indians known as the Maubila tribe. The area of the county has a long and storied history, having been a territory under five different flags.

The county seal features the Government Plaza, a 581,000-square-foot building housing a 12-story administration tower and a 9-story judicial tower, connected by a 50,000-square-foot glass-enclosed atrium. It was the first government structure in the United States to combine county and municipal governments and the court system in one space.

Both Government Plaza and Mobile County’s official seal evoke a nautical feel appropriate to Mobile’s status as a major U.S. seaport. The background includes the Mobile Convention Center that sits at the Mobile River and seaport, a short boat ride to Mobile Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. Flying overhead are the American and Alabama state flags. A boat emphasizes the water theme, and an airplane pays tribute to the county’s growing aerospace industry.

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

Waypoints celebrated along road to America's freedom

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In one of his poems, Whitman cautioned the states to "resist much, obey little." He stated that once unquestioned obedience occurs, people and institutions become fully enslaved.

Whitman went on to talk about what could be thought of as the importance of respect and the broadening of protections under the law which we enjoy in this country. He wrote "whomever degrades another, degrades me." Much of our country's continuing journey as the world's melting pot has been a search for the creation of opportunity without the entitlement to success. In other words, no person deserves to be degraded, or as we might say now, bullied, sexually harassed or threatened with violence. However, none of us have a license guaranteeing success without contribution.

Another stop in the Fourth of July journey occurred in 1917. This one had the earmarks of debt repayment. The debt was of extreme importance to the American victory in the Revolutionary War. In 1917, the first contingent of American troops arrived in France during World War I. Although it would be months until the "doughboys" had sufficient strength and training to make a substantial impact on the war's outcome, nonetheless, the arriving Yanks staged a parade in Paris to the rejoicing and tears of the populace. Their destination was Lafayette's Tomb.

The commander of the parading troops, Col. Charles Stanton, spoke at the tomb in simple and eloquent words about that debt repayment. He said, "Lafayette, we are here!" I'm sure General Lafayette would have appreciated the help and support of the United States in securing French freedom as much as the Americans appreciated what the French did at a time of great American need over a century and a quarter earlier.

The arrival of the troops also signaled that America itself had "arrived" as a 20th century world power. This was a world in the midst of replacing animal power with machine power, an agriculture-based economy with a mass-production one, and a local economy with a national and world economy. Much was changing. Much would continue to change.

Two more stops will be mentioned in this article. Many other waypoints could have been included. On July 4, 1997 the first interplanetary remote-controlled rover landed on Mars. It had journeyed 120 million miles. The rover hit the surface at 40 miles per hour. It bounced in its

balloon-like covering 16 times before it finally came to rest. This landing is a metaphor for all the bouncing and impacts we often make politically and socially in the United States as we progress in our continuing national journey.

The rover was really a mother ship. After landing, it released

the small Sojourner vehicle to go explore and send back reports. Like a microchip version of the Lewis and Clark expedition, it was an extension of all of us to travel off to see what might be "out there." It really didn't matter that its surface travels covered only 171 feet. It had extended our concepts of optimism

and adventure to the surface of another planet.

The final waypoint in this article occurs within your very own family and inside yourself. It is the waypoint marked by whether you, your children and your community carry on the journey toward many more Fourths of July. May the next 236

years be as full of wonder, peace and good stewardship for our planet. May we care for and be civil toward each other.

Enjoy a spectacular holiday.



Phil Rosenberg
The HR Doctor • www.hrdr.net

Three Exciting Leadership Programs offered at NACo's Annual Conference

Coming to Pittsburgh?

Don't miss out on **THREE** action packed workshops that will help you become a more effective **LEADER!**

The workshops will feature a renowned political strategist, as well as a nationally recognized expert in governance and leadership.

Leadership Series Workshops:

- **Translating Aspirations, Visions and Intentions into Reality**
Sunday, July 15, 10:45 a.m. – Noon
- **Messages That Resonate: Speaking with One Voice About Our Values**
Sunday, July 15, 10:45 a.m. – Noon
- **Leadership: Awakening the Best in People**
Monday, July 16, 10:45 a.m. – Noon

For more information, please contact
Karon Harden at kharden@naco.org
or 202.942.4277.

