

NACO National Association of Counties

# CountyNews

The Voice of America's Counties

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES ■ WASHINGTON, D.C.

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## EPA announces stormwater runoff from forest road plan

By JULIE UFFNER  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

**WEB\* CONTENT** The Environmental Protection Agency recently announced that it will revise current stormwater regulations to state that National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits are no longer required for stormwater discharges from forest roads.

At the same time, EPA is requesting information on voluntary best management practices for addressing stormwater runoff from logging and forest roads. The agency is accepting comments on the proposal until June 22.

The notice of intent published in the Federal Register states: "propose

revisions to its Phase I stormwater regulations to specify that stormwater discharges from logging roads are not stormwater discharges associated with industrial activity." According to the notice, Section 402(p) of the Clean Water Act allows the EPA to assess what forest roads (if any) should be regulated.

The EPA requests comment on potential approaches for addressing stormwater discharges from forest roads. The agency also seeks input on examples of:

- successful existing best management program-based state programs, tribal programs, and voluntary certification programs for managing stormwater discharges from forest roads
- how these programs are implemented
- how program accountability is assured
- the costs of implementing those programs, including costs incurred by owners or operators of forest roads as well as the costs incurred by the organizations responsible for implementation and enforcement

See **STORMWATER** page 5



Photo courtesy of Manatee County, Fla.

Showing one fun way to stay healthy is hula-hooper Natalie Johnson, manager, Health & Lifestyle Programs in Manatee County, Fla. The county hosted a series of events during National County Government Month in April that focused on the NCGM theme of "Healthy Counties. Healthy Families." Read more about what counties across the country did to celebrate NCGM on page 4.

## Farm bill heads to Senate; action needed

By ERIC JOHNSTON  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

**WEB\* CONTENT** The full Senate is likely to take up the farm bill this week after members returned from their in-state work week. The Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012 passed the Senate Agriculture Committee April 26.

Overall, the current version reflects county priorities, with one major exception: There is no mandatory funding for rural development programs.

The legislation authorizes a broad range of programs that are critical to counties. These programs assist counties in the development of rural water and wastewater infrastructure, community facilities, broadband expansion, conservation easements, research, nutrition assistance, renewable energy, local and regional food systems, support for new farmers and business development initiatives.

NACO's priority in reauthorization is the rural development title,

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### QuickTakes

#### Most Bicycle-friendly States

1. Washington
2. Minnesota
3. Massachusetts
4. Colorado
5. Oregon

Source: League of American Bicyclists, 2012

## CountyNews Features

## Selby heads WIR; public lands energy policy gets centerstage

By BEVERLY SCHLOTTERBECK  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Americans look to the West for its heritage, majestic scenery, recreational opportunities and abundant natural resources. These competing views, which have defined the West for decades, inevitably collide in America's public lands counties, heirs to millions of acres of federally owned land.

The leaders of the nation's public lands counties met in mid-May at NACO's Western Interstate Region (WIR) Conference in Santa Fe County, N.M. to learn about federal government policies and other trends

impacting their communities. WIR members also elected a new leadership team.

Heading the 2012-2013 WIR Executive Committee is President Jerome Selby, mayor, Kodiak Island Borough, Alaska; Also on the team: John Martin, first vice president, commissioner, Garfield County, Colo.; Lesley Robinson, second vice president, commissioner, Phillips County, Mont. and the newest executive committee member; and Ron Walter, immediate past president, Chelan County, Wash.

They were welcomed by New



Marcillynn Burke, acting assistant secretary for land and minerals management at the Department of the Interior, briefs WIR conference participants on current BLM activities.

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Counties continue to churn out new apps for their smartphone residents » **Page 7**

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County trashes service but gets new businesses in return » **Page 8**

# NACo's 'Counties Work' game receives national recognition



Bill Cramer, NACo marketing director (center), shows off NACo's Gold Circle Award for its "Counties Work" interactive online game. Also pictured are Mike Boa and Francine Hamme from ASAE.

By JIM PHILIPPS  
MEDIA RELATIONS MANAGER

NACo has received a 2012 Gold Circle Award for Innovative Communications from the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) for its online game, Counties Work, which educates students about the role and responsibilities of county government.

The game was created last year by NACo and iCivics — a Web-based education project by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Since its launch last July, the game has been played by more than 250,000 students, grades 6 through 12. In addition, more than 2,500 teachers have downloaded lesson plans created specifically for classrooms.

While playing the game, a student assumes the role of a county official responsible for providing services, dealing with citizen requests, setting and raising revenues, and working within a budget. Along the way, students learn about the various services provided by county departments

— such as road maintenance, law enforcement, courtroom and jail services, parks and recreation and library services — while having to make tough spending and tax levy decisions, and face re-election.

"NACo is deeply honored to receive national recognition from ASAE for our online Counties Work game," said NACo Executive Director Larry E. Naake. "The game has succeeded beyond our imagination in teaching children about county government and the essential services and programs they deliver each day to millions of Americans."

ASAE President and CEO John H. Graham IV said communications is a crucial function for any association.

"Winners of the Gold Circle Award competition have set a high bar of excellence for us in the association community by integrating the fundamentals of effective communications with elements of innovation, creativity, design, technology and metrics to measure the effectiveness of their tactics. Congratulations!" Graham said.

Entries for the Gold Circle Award competition were judged by experienced communication professionals from associations, nonprofits, and for-profit organizations on established criteria for excellence in association communications.

# Counties turn 'red fields' into green

By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER



"Green equals green" is the way officials in Denver talk about a movement to turn distressed commercial real estate into urban parks accompanied by sustainable, mixed-use development. The philosophy: Increasing green space in communities can result in financial investment in formerly "underperforming" vacant land — "red fields."

These are "properties that are underwater financially, properties that are in the red," said Catherine Nagel, executive director of City Parks Alliance (CPA). Her Washington, D.C.-based organization, working with the Speedwell Foundation, has been a key advocate of an initiative called Red Fields to Green Fields (R2G) at the national level.

Miami-Dade County, Fla. and the City and County of Denver are two of 11 jurisdictions nationwide that are participating in the R2G effort to build on research-based concepts of what their communities could accomplish. Counties in the Atlanta metropolitan area also are involved. The Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) evaluated each of the cities, counties or regions for their red-fields-to-green-fields potential.

## How It Works

R2G proposes purchasing abandoned and underutilized properties — at current down-market prices — demolishing them where appropriate, and replacing them with conservation land, parks, infrastructure improvements or other green space, which will attract economic development when the economy rebounds.

In addition to economic benefits, proponents say parks can also address environmental issues related to water quality and runoff, and improve community health by providing trails and other recreational facilities — combating the obesity epidemic.

Georgia Tech's researchers estimated that Miami-Dade's tax base could be increased by an estimated \$59 million per year by converting 312 acres of non-performing real estate to transit-oriented parks, and more than 14,000 jobs per year for five years could be created.

"The strategies that were developed for land acquisition for

this project came out of the research study that asked the question, 'What would you do with \$5 billion,'" said Maria Nardi, who heads Miami-Dade parks' planning division.

The county was well positioned to take advantage of R2G strategies, she said. It already has a parks master plan with an ambitious goal of having green or recreational space within walking distance of each of the county's 2.5 million residents within 50 years.

Nardi's boss, parks Director Jack Kardys, said: "The reason we were invited to participate was because of our open space master plan vision, which is the foundation for the strategy for the Red Fields to Green Fields initiative."

For Denver, Georgia Tech researchers projected a red fields to green fields investment of \$2.5 billion would have a net \$5.1 billion economic impact on the Denver metropolitan area based on acquisition, deconstruction, park construction, management, operations and property sales to market developers. Since the properties studied are currently distressed, it was estimated that land acquisition would be discounted 25 percent below market prices.

This would result in doubling the size of Denver's park system, adding more than 30,000 new jobs and removing 6,650 acres of underutilized or distressed real estate from key areas of the city and county, the study determined.

## Planned Denver Park Sets Example

A park under development in Councilman Paul Lopez' district predates Denver's involvement in the R2G effort, but serves as an example of the initiative's goals, and attracted R2G's notice. It's being developed on the site of a former dilapidated trailer park. The Trust for Public Land helped the county acquire the property.

"When funders from different organizations see people on the ground being active like this, they want to get involved," Lopez said. His council district has an average of 4 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, while in more "well-to-do" areas of the city and county the ratio can reach 20 acres per 1,000 residents.

City Parks Alliance's Nagel said R2G projects that will move to the pilot stage are ones compatible with the localities' existing plans. "So the idea behind the pilots is to look at where the vacant properties are in relation to plans or initiatives that have already been approved by local governments and that already

have some investment, so that they would help spur the development of those projects.

"The pilots would demonstrate how a program like this could benefit communities of different sizes in different regions of the country and really help solve some of the local issues," she added — "whether that is related to water, whether it's related to workforce development, whether its related to bringing people back into the downtown part of the city."

## Not Limited to Large Urban Areas

While most of the localities studied are large urban areas, they need not be to apply R2G's lessons, according to Mike Messner of the Speedwell Foundation, a key funder of the Georgia Tech research. "If any city's got a dead mall, it's applicable," he said.

The Georgia Tech studies were funded by \$1 million to \$1.5 million from various sources — most of it from Speedwell — such as Trust for Public Land, Messner said, and he

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## CountyNews

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## CORRECTION

A story in the May 21 issue of County News, "New Mexico county lands desirable ghost town," incorrectly stated that Lea County, N.M. shares a border Mexico.

# Pushback against federal policies evident at conference

WIR from page 1

Mexico Lt. Gov. John Sanchez and heard from a number of speakers in general sessions and workshops including a dynamic, engaging and entertaining economist and futurist, Lowell Catlett, from New Mexico State University; the acting assistant secretary for land and minerals management at the Department of the Interior, Marcilynn A. Burke; US Bank Senior Vice President Michael Orzechowski; the deputy undersecretary for natural resources and environment at the Department of Agriculture, Butch Blazer; and the leader of a re-emerging Sagebrush rebellion centered in Utah, State Rep. Ken Ivory (R).

Dan Fine, an associate at New Mexico Tech's Center for Energy Policy in Lea County, is coordinating the effort.

Ivory led a successful effort in Utah for legislation that directs the federal government to return all public lands to the state. Utah House Bill 148, the Transfer of Public Lands Act, demands that the federal government return 20 million acres of public lands to the state by Jan. 1, 2015. It exempts national parks, certain national monuments and congressionally designated wilderness areas, but not wilderness areas established by federal executive order. If the federal government refuses to "extinguish title" to the lands, the state is prepared to take its case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Ivory bases his argument on a series of 19th century laws and Supreme Court rulings that eventually led the federal government to return its holdings to all states east of Colorado and to Hawaii, leaving a "Federal Fault Line," where on one side states control more than 95 percent of their land, while states on the other side control less than 50 percent.

He cited an 1845 Supreme Court ruling, *Pollard v. Hagan*, which he says confirms the federal government's obligation to "extinguish title" to public lands.

When it was first signed into law in March, H.B. 148 was slammed by the Obama administration as a political stunt. Yet, several states considered following Utah's lead. The Arizona Legislature passed and sent a similar bill to Gov. Jan Brewer (R) for her signature, but Brewer vetoed the measure. Another effort in Colorado also failed.

Ivory said recent Supreme Court rulings bolster Utah's case, and current economic conditions drive the effort to free up the "trillions of dollars in abundant natural resources" that are tied up in Utah's public lands. At the end of his research-rich presentation, he urged the audience to:

- study the subject of public lands and state sovereignty
- share with family, friends and others what they learned
- ask elected representatives at all levels of government if they understand where the line stands



US Bank Senior Vice President Michael Orzechowski says outlook for U.S. economy is very uncertain.

The pushback against the federal government and its public lands policies, always an undercurrent at WIR conferences, surfaced outright in remarks by Sanchez and Ivory. Sanchez, who cited the state's revenue boost from oil and gas production—a third of its general fund comes from energy production taxes—said counties should be allowed to maximize the resources they have. Local control must be restored, he said, in order to "bring the country back to what it once was."

During his remarks, Sanchez also mentioned that oil- and gas-producing counties such as Lea County in southeast New Mexico are in the vanguard of a new national association representing oil and gas producing counties.



Photos by Bev Schlotterbeck

NACo President Lenny Eliason swears in the new members of WIR's Executive Committee (from left): Immediate Past President Ron Walter, commissioner, Chelan County, Wash.; Second Vice President Lesley Robinson, commissioner, Phillips County, Mont.; First Vice President John Martin, commissioner, Garfield County, Colo.; President Jerome Selby, mayor, Kodiak Island Borough, Alaska; and Eliason.



At WIR's Opening General Session, New Mexico State University's Lowell Catlett extolled the vision of Abraham Lincoln, who during the midst of the Civil War, signed legislation establishing the land grant university system, which is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year.

between the states and the federal government, and

- commit to cultivate a national, non-partisan dialogue regarding "where the line" stands between state and federal jurisdiction.

While Ivory bemoaned the natural resources and energy wealth lying fallow on public lands, Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management Marcilynn A. Burke, who was the May 17 luncheon speaker, painted a wholly different portrait of resource activity on the nation's public lands.

Revenues from onshore and offshore gas and oil production royalties in 2011 totaled \$8.9 billion and represent one of the federal government's largest non-tax revenue sources. Of

that, onshore royalties from oil and gas production totaled \$2.7 billion, half of which is returned to the state where production was generated.

The pace of oil and gas development on public lands can be gauged by the number of leases and drilling permits awarded. There are 50,000 oil and gas leases on 39 million acres of public lands, half of which are inactive, she said. There have also been 7,000 drilling applications approved, but none have been implemented.

Meanwhile on the cleaner energy front, Burke said she expects to reach a goal of 10,000 renewable megawatts of electricity on public lands three years earlier than anticipated by the 2005 Energy Policy Act, which had set a goal of 10,000 renewable

megawatts by 2015. The U.S. Interior Department is drafting regulations now to establish a competitive leasing program for wind and solar projects on public lands, she said.

She spoke about the productive cooperation the Bureau of Land Management has received from local governments in its efforts to protect sage grouse habitat, and asked for county help in implementing BLM's new Master Leasing Plan for oil and gas sites.

"BLM," she said, "takes partnership with counties, NACo and state associations very seriously."

The promise of new jobs, energy independence and a needed nudge to the economy are driving calls for more oil and gas production. Not unsurprisingly, job creation is among the factors that could trip up the recovery from the Great Recession, said US Bank's Orzechowski, who walked the May 18 general session audience through a jungle of economic scenarios that could affect the condition of the U.S. economy. Orzechowski said that slow growth in jobs, the housing market, consumer confidence and rising fuel costs could stall the recovery. New regulatory changes and new agencies under Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act also add to the nation's economic uncertainty.

Into the mix, he warned conference attendees of possible new regulations from the Securities and Exchange Commission that would tighten the rules governing money market funds and threaten their ability to fund infrastructure projects and short-term money management.

## Profiles in Service

"Profiles in Service" will be back next issue. If you are interested in being featured, please email Christopher Johnson, editorial assistant, for a questionnaire at [cjohnson@naco.org](mailto:cjohnson@naco.org).

# Counties reach out to communities during National County Government Month

**A popular Government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or, perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance: And a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.**

— James Madison,  
*letter to W.T. Barry, August 4, 1822*

By JIM PHILIPPS  
MEDIA RELATIONS MANAGER

James Madison argued in 1822 information is essential for a popular and effective government. That's why it's critical that counties remain committed, creative and aggressive in informing the communities they serve about the role and responsibilities of county government, and the essential services and programs available. During the month of April, hundreds of counties did just that during the 2012 National County Government Month.

Many activities were wrapped around this year's theme: Healthy Counties, Healthy Families. The theme fit nicely with NACo President Lenny Eliason's 2011–12 "Healthy Counties" presidential initiative that is urging counties to promote healthy living and lifestyle choices.

In New Hampshire, the association of counties sponsored a breakfast hosting the governor and the state's executive councilors.

"This year we highlighted the breakfast with a presentation about the healthy county programs run by Sullivan County," said Betsy Miller, executive director, New Hampshire Association of Counties. "Later that day at a meeting of the governor and council, a proclamation was awarded to the New Hampshire Association of Counties in celebration of New Hampshire counties and what they do for New Hampshire citizens."

Wayne County, N.C. celebrated NCGM by having students attend a Board of Commissioners meeting and shadow department managers. Student experiences included attending the senior games, inspecting a restaurant, measuring conservation tillage and fencing, inspecting a lagoon cover, riding a fire truck and visiting the landfill. In addition, the board hosted a luncheon for the students during which students related their experiences during the job shadowing.

In Arizona, the Association of

Arizona Counties (AACo) and the County Supervisors Association of Arizona (CSAA) promoted NCGM heavily to counties via newsletters, board agenda item discussions, websites, and office posters.

They reported much NCGM activity in the Grand Canyon State: Apache County held an open house and elder appreciation day; Coconino County issued a proclamation and held a special off-site court session in Tuba City to familiarize the native American community with the legal system; and Gila County sponsored a four-week Healthy Activity Challenge for its employees and held daily prize drawings for county employees who were wearing their "County Government Works" badge.

Maricopa County's health department coordinated with AACo to promote all of its April events under the NCGM banner; Mohave County issued a proclamation; Pima County's library system hosted a Healthy Kids Day; and Pinal County launched a veterans' resources page, held a series of diabetes education and prevention classes at various locations, and visited several schools within the county to discuss programs, services, hours and locations of public health programs.

To top it all off, Gov. Jan Brewer (R), a former Maricopa County supervisor, issued a proclamation recognizing April as Arizona's County Government Month, specifically recognizing the work of Arizona county governments in regards to public health.

In Broward County, Fla., a "County Government Works" display was set up in the main lobby of the government building. Broward created a special webpage featuring NCGM activities, and passed a NCGM proclamation. County residents were invited to "get their hands dirty" and learn how to start their own vegetable



Photo courtesy of Manatee County, Fla.

Wendy Nebrija (left), volunteer media chair, Manatee County, Fla. Substance Abuse Coalition, and Rita Chamberlain, coalition coordinator (seated), promote healthy living during the county's observance of National County Government Month. Several county departments, including the Health Department, Commuter Services and a host of local businesses staffed booths under a big tent.

## 2012 NCGM Participants

- Adams County, Wisc.
- Aiken County, S.C.
- Angelina County, Texas
- Anne Arundel County, Md.
- Apache County, Ariz.
- Arizona Association of Counties
- Association of County Commissions of Alabama
- Association of Minnesota Counties
- Atchison County, Kan.
- Athens County, Ohio
- Baltimore County, Md.
- Bladen County, N.C.
- Blount County, Tenn.
- Broward County, Fla.
- Caddo Parish, La.
- California State Association of Counties
- Cape May County, N.J.
- Carbon County, Pa.
- Carver County, Minn.
- Chatham County, Ga.
- Chester County, Pa.
- Cobb County, Ga.
- Coconino County, Ariz.
- Codrington County, S.D.
- County Commissioners Association of Ohio
- County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania
- County Commissioners' Association of West Virginia
- County Supervisors Association of Arizona
- Curry County, N.M.
- Custer County, Neb.
- DeKalb County, Ga.
- Douglas County, Ga.
- Douglas County, Neb.
- Durham County, N.C.
- Eagle County, Colo.
- Ector County, Texas
- Edgecombe County, N.C.
- El Paso County, Colo.
- Elmore County, Ala.
- Florida Association of Counties
- Freestone County, Texas
- Fulton County, Ga.
- Geauga County, Ohio
- Gila County, Ariz.
- Gwinnett County, Ga.
- Hampton County, S.C.
- Hays County, Texas
- Hyland Software (NACo Premier Member)
- Indiana County, Pa.
- Island County, Wash.
- Iowa State Association of Counties
- Kentucky Association of Counties
- Kitsap County, Wash.
- Kittitas County, Wash.
- Larimer County, Colo.
- Lee County, Iowa
- Linn County, Iowa
- Logan County, Ohio
- Lowndes County, Miss.
- Macomb County, Mich.
- Manatee County, Fla.
- Manistee County, Mich.
- Maricopa County, Ariz.
- Marion County, Ore.
- Marshall County, W.Va.
- Missouri Association of Counties
- Mohave County, Ariz.
- Monmouth County, N.J.
- Monroe County, Ind.
- Monroe County, Pa.
- Montana Association of Counties
- Montmorency County, Mich.
- Morrow County, Ohio
- Muskegon County, Mich.
- Napa County, Calif.
- New Hampshire Association of Counties
- New Jersey Association of Counties
- New Mexico Association of Counties
- New York State Association of Counties
- Newaygo County, Mich.
- North Carolina Association of County Commissioners
- North Dakota Association of Counties
- Nueces County, Texas
- Oakland County, Mich.
- Osceola County, Fla.
- Oswego County, N.Y.
- Pierce County, N.D.
- Pima County, Ariz.
- Pinal County, Ariz.
- Pitt County, N.C.
- Pondera County, Mont.
- Pontotoc County, Okla.
- Refugio County, Texas
- Richmond County, N.C.
- Robeson County, N.C.
- Rockland County, N.Y.
- St. James Parish, La.
- St. Mary's County, Md.
- San Diego County, Calif.
- San Juan County, N.M.
- San Luis Obispo County, Calif.
- Sarasota County, Fla.
- Scotts Bluff County, Neb.
- Sheboygan County, Wis.
- Snohomish County, Wash.
- Somerset County, N.J.
- South Dakota Association of County Commissioners
- Tama County, Iowa
- Tarrant County, Texas
- Taylor County, Ky.
- Texas Association of Counties
- Trumbull County, Ohio
- Upshur County, W. Va.
- Virginia Association of Counties
- Wake County, N.C.
- Washington State Association of Counties
- Wayne County, N.C.
- Whitfield County, Ga.
- Whitley County, Ind.
- Whitman County, Wash.
- Wicomico County, Md.
- Wisconsin Counties Association
- York County, Neb.
- Yuma County, Ariz.

See NCGM page 8

# Farm bill includes improved program for broadband

FARM BILL from page 1

and the current version heading to the Senate floor makes important policy changes that will benefit county governments, such as a new technical assistance component for community facilities, an improved broadband program, streamlining of applications and a new focus on funding the strategic rural development priorities of localities and their larger regions.

The 2008 farm bill included \$150 million in mandatory funding for rural water-wastewater infrastructure and two rural business programs, and NACo is working to reinstate funding through an amendment on the Senate floor.

Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio)

introduced and discussed an amendment during the Senate Agriculture Committee mark-up that would have directed a portion of funds in excess of the \$23 billion the committee has committed to savings to provide mandatory funding for key rural development accounts.

NACo and its coalition partners are working to identify additional senators who will commit to working to reinstate mandatory funding for rural development programs.

**Action Needed:** Please call your senators and urge them to pass the farm bill and support any

amendment that will use some of the savings above the \$23 billion target to reinstate mandatory funding to rural development programs.

*\*For talking points and a full analysis of the bill, read this story in our online edition at [www.naco.org/countynews](http://www.naco.org/countynews).*

## Logging road runoff targeted

STORMWATER from page 1

- the demonstrable successes of these programs; and
- the lessons learned in implementing such programs.

For the past couple of decades, forest and logging roads have been exempt from 402 permitting requirements under EPA's Silvicultural activities rule. However, this long-standing determination was thrown on its head after the 9th Circuit Court said in *Northwest Environmental Defense Center (NEDC) v. Brown* that logging road culverts and ditches that discharge to a "water of the U.S." are point sources "associated with industrial activity" and should be regulated under the NPDES permit program.

Some of the roads in question in *NEDC v. Brown* were, in fact, county-owned roads, used for other purposes other than logging. Interested parties have requested the U.S. Supreme Court review *NEDC v. Brown*. It is uncertain how the notice of intent will impact the Supreme Court's decision to hear the case; however, a number of Capitol Hill insiders speculate the announcement is a way to convince the Supreme Court not to take the case and thus, leave the possibility of regulating said roads in the future.

NACo supports continuation of the Silvicultural rule. Additionally, NACo has requested EPA set up a conference call for NACo members to explain this proposal. Further details will be forthcoming.

For more information, contact Julie Ufner at 202.942.4269 or [jufner@naco.org](mailto:jufner@naco.org).

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# Trash or treasure? Counties explore waste management

By CINDY WASSER

COMMUNITY SERVICES ASSISTANT

Fifty-five county officials met on May 24–25 in Broward County, Fla. to discuss turning their waste into revenue and increasing recycling rates. Waste management, a vital county government function, has received increased attention recently.

With U.S. landfills reaching capacity and the cost of waste disposal rising, county officials across the country are taking notice. Fortunately, new technologies and waste-diversion strategies are being developed to meet these formidable challenges.

The 2012 County Forum on Innovative Waste Management provided an opportunity for county elected officials and staff to explore emerging technologies, consider policy options for generating revenue from their waste stream, and share county government success stories.

Forum participants included elected officials, recycling coordinators, solid waste directors, industry representatives and consultants interested in helping forward-thinking counties move toward a zero-waste



Photo by Jared Lang

Participants in NACo's Waste Management Forum in Broward County, Fla. May 24–25 examine machinery that sorts plastic, paper and aluminum recyclables at the Reuter Materials Recovery Facility.

future.

Forum sessions explored re-vamping waste-collection fee structures, generating energy from waste and selling it to the electric grid, developing county compost collection, and strategies for local governments to expand the market for recycled materials.

"The forum was a great opportunity for county officials and staff to learn from experts in the field and their own colleagues," said Gregg Goslin, commissioner, Cook County, Ill., and chair of NACo's Green Government Initiative Advisory Board. "Participants left with new knowledge and are eager

to pursue new strategies in waste diversion."

Keynote speaker Chaz Miller, director of state programs at the National Solid Wastes Management Association, said the amount of waste generated in the U.S. is declining not because of the economy, but because of technological advance-

ments that are changing the way information flows. For example, Miller noted that Americans are using significantly less office paper than in the past.

Susan Robinson, Waste Management's director of federal public affairs, and Santa Barbara County, Calif. Supervisor Salud Carbajal presented new technologies being deployed in counties to divert waste and move toward a zero-waste future.

Attendees also toured two waste facilities in Broward County — the Wheelabrator Waste-to-Energy Facility and the Reuter Materials Recovery Facility.

"We were honored to host NACo in Broward County," said Kristin Jacobs, the county's vice-mayor. "Our county has been especially forward-thinking and collaborative with regard to waste management for several decades, and I hope participants benefited from seeing our technologies first-hand."

For more information about NACo's Green Government Initiative and resources related to county waste management, visit [www.naco.org/wmforum](http://www.naco.org/wmforum).



## Commissioners Cup Golf Tournament



**When:** Thursday, July 12, 2012  
**Where:** North Park Golf Course  
**Format:** Team Scramble  
**Registration:** 12:00 noon  
**Cost:** \$100 (Cash or Check)  
**Shotgun Start:** 1:00 p.m.  
**19th Hole/Prizes:** 5:30–6:30 p.m.

For more information,  
 contact Bev Schlotterbeck:  
[bschlott@naco.org](mailto:bschlott@naco.org)

Sponsored by WON Leadership Network

# Counties continue to roll out smartphone applications

By CHARLIE BAN  
STAFF WRITER

As smartphone use increases across demographics, counties are continuing to take advantage of the popularity of mobile applications to deliver information and service to residents.

The services provided by some apps could mean the difference between life and death such as Lee County, Fla.'s hurricane evacuation app — LeeEvac.

The LeeEvac app provides real-time disaster information along with official disaster evacuation routes and additional information such as shelters for evacuating families.

The smartphone's GPS device locates the phone's position, retrieves information from the county appraiser's database and identifies the storm surge zone.

"Social research shows us people aren't good with maps anymore — they can't find themselves," said Gerald Campbell, Lee County

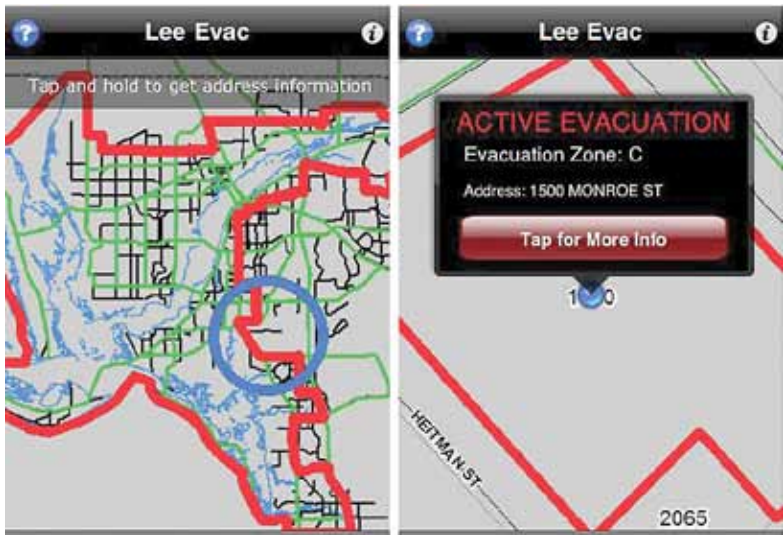
Emergency Management's chief of planning. "If we take that step out and use the GPS to help the people find themselves on a map, that takes out a major obstacle for them getting to safety."

That geographical ignorance, he said, may be a symptom of younger generations' dependence on technology. Thus, he said, delivering information this way could make the difference in ensuring those people have a chance to get to safety.

"That's how they access information these days, so we're playing to our audience," he said.

Once the county orders an evacuation, the app alerts the user if his or her phone is in an area to be evacuated. A link to the emergency management department's website lists nearby shelters and directions to them.

Of course, times of disaster, like a hurricane, are often accompanied by overwhelming cell phone usage, but Campbell thinks the department's policy of declaring emergencies on the early side will



Screenshots from Lee County, Fla.'s LeeEvac smartphone app demonstrate its functionality.

get the app's warnings out ahead of any service interruptions.

Less dangerous than emergency weather conditions, but even more certain, are taxes, and the Pulaski County Ark. assessor's office developed an app to help make reporting personal property taxes easier.

The county's assessment application was the first in the state and from what Assessor Janet Troutman Ward gathered from talking to Apple, which distributes the free app via its app store, the first in the nation.

Residents can review and change their personal property inventories — non-real estate property including vehicles, boats and planes — using the app and submit it to the county in a matter of

minutes, saving them a trip to the assessor's office.

Ward said an average of 5,000 people have performed their assessments each month since the app's January debut, which has made her office a lot less hectic.

"Right now (in mid-May) our office is usually overrun with people trying to file before the deadline (May 31)," she said. "If people can simply check off their assessments on their smartphones or tablets, it relieves a lot of the work we'd have to do."

The app also allows users to access their real estate assessments, but not alter their records. Pulaski County previously developed assessments online and by phone.

"The app is convenient for busy people," Ward said. "It keeps us

on the cutting edge and helps us serve the taxpayers by making something like an assessment less obtrusive to their regular schedules."

In Ventura County, Calif., the transportation commission tired of the expense involved in updating bicycle lane maps every few years.

"The problem was getting them into people's hands," said Steve DeGeorge, the commission's planning and technology director. "Hard copies are expensive to update, and we were looking for an easier way to do that."

By overlaying the county's 350 miles of bike lanes over a Google Map base, the app illustrates the most bike-friendly roads. In addition, the app allows cyclists to track themselves, recording their average speed and distance traveled.

"We want them to have fun with it," DeGeorge said. "We've listened to comments from users and are trying to make it a worthwhile app."

Some updates in the works include markers on the map indicating points of interest throughout the county and the grades of the hills covered by bike lanes.

"It would be a mistake to load it up too much," he said. "We don't want to slow the app down by overloading it."

*\*For links to a variety of county-produced smartphone applications, read this story online at [www.naco.org/countynews](http://www.naco.org/countynews).*

## Word Search

### Warren County, N.C. Facts

Read more about Warren County in "What's In A Seal?" on page 10.

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

- BERGER (Senator in N.C. Senate)
- BRAGG (Confederate general, author born in Macon)
- BUNKER HILL (Revolutionary War battle in which Joseph Warren was killed)
- BUTE (Warren County formed from part of this county)
- DEMOCRATIC (County has more Democrats than Republicans)
- MACON (Speaker of U.S. House of Representatives 1801–1807)
- MILLER (N.C. governor 1814–1817 from Warren)

- NORLINA (city in Warren)
- SOUL CITY (planned community that failed)
- TURNER (N.C. governor 1802–1805 from Warren)
- WARREN (physician and general in American Revolutionary War, county's namesake)
- WARRENTON (city in Warren)
- WRAY (rep. in N.C. House of Representatives)

Created by: Christopher Johnson

# Returning troops to be focus of NACo Annual town hall session

By JIM SAWYER  
FINANCIAL SERVICES CORPORATION DIRECTOR  
AND  
MAEGHAN GILMORE  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR

The troops are coming home to our counties after admirably serving the country in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many will be looking for jobs, some will seek counseling services, and others will need assistance with their families.

County leaders celebrate the troops' homecoming, but even though they are leaving the war, the war doesn't necessarily leave them. Counties throughout the nation are providing innovative programs and services in health and human service planning, delivery, coordination and outreach to benefit the nation's

military, veterans and their families.

Join NACo President Lenny Eliason, Past-President Glen Whitley and the Veterans and Military Service Task Force at the NACo Annual Conference in Allegheny County, Pa. as they conduct a NACo Town Hall session that will provide insight into the lives of the country's combat veterans and the issues they face when they come home.

Town Hall participants will view "Another Kind of Valor," a powerful docudrama written and produced by Dan Weisburd, to understand the issues facing veterans returning to civilian life and the role that counties play to aid in the transition.

The NACo Town Hall will focus on the effects of war on returning troops, veterans and their families, how to engage and work with

veterans and their families, and community resources available for veterans and their families.

The session will also explore how to build a community-based military care network, via NACo's Network of Care program, to deliver the highest level of care for behavioral health, social services and community integration to eliminate gaps in support, reduce duplication of services and significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the community network to support service members and their families.

Please join your colleagues at NACo's Town Hall on Monday, July 16 and share how your county supports its military, veterans and families so counties can all be ready to help them. The troops have given their best, now it's our turn.

# N.C. county dumps trash pickup, spurs new businesses

By CHARLIE BAN  
STAFF WRITER

When Hyde County, N.C. wanted to dump its garbage collection, it needed a substitute service in case residents didn't want to haul their own refuse. Into the trash compactor stepped small businesses, with the county's help.

Sparsely populated but vast along the coast with Oraco Island tacking on additional transportation costs for refuse pickup, Hyde County was spending more on trash collection than education, a fact that put a target on the service.

The county's economic development, planning and public works departments, along with the North Carolina Rural Center, offered a "trash training workshop" to entrepreneurs in July 2011, presenting several eight-hour classes covering small business fundamentals and specifics of waste collection techniques and regulations.

"It was a great chance for the county to recruit a handful of businesses to replace a crucial service," county spokeswoman Megan Shaw said. "We let them know there was going to be a demand for those kinds of entrepreneurs in Hyde County."

Bryson Cahoon owned a family farm in Hyde County, but when he heard about the workshop, he saw an opportunity to start a side business with friend Ryan Berry. He thinks the county's decision to stop offering curbside service was great for him and his partner, but also in terms of giving residents more choice.

"I knew a lot of the business basics from my agribusiness degree, but the classes about the industry were helpful," he said. "They gave us a lot of examples of how other trash businesses work and what kind of things we'd have to do. It made it pretty easy to start up."

Shaw said representatives from seven budding trash collection businesses attended the workshops. Although the county would not endorse any particular contractor, it did distribute the list of attendees to help residents choose a contractor if they went that route for trash pickup.

The businesses fill a gap left when the county ceased its curbside pickup service, which had been an extra \$35 billed onto residents' water bills. After county-provided curbside service was cut at the end of 2011, it saved nearly \$400,000. Some of that money has been redirected to upgrade recycling facilities at the

trash collection centers throughout the county. With an increase in recycling, Shaw said the county hopes to generate some revenue.

In addition, the competition among the various businesses has cut curbside service fees to around \$20, approximately \$15 less than what the county was charging.

"It's been a great way to give back to the economy and keep services going," Swan said.

The North Carolina Association of County Commissioners awarded Hyde County a 2011 Outstanding County Program Award for this program.

## Counties nationwide celebrate NCGM in their own way

NCGM from page 4

garden at an interactive gardening demonstration to promote the "Healthy Counties, Healthy Families" theme.

Whitley County, Ind. offered each elementary school and each high school an opportunity to visit the county commissioners at the government center and courthouse. "For those schools that were not able to make that visit, we went to the schools and talked about county government and answered their questions," Commissioner Tom Rethlake said. "We had contact with 321 students."

Pierce County, N.D. held a pancake and sausage breakfast on April 13. The county boards

of Curry County, N.M., Kitsap County, Wash., Whitman County, Wash., Monroe County, Pa., and Island County, Wash. issued NCGM proclamations. The California State Association of Counties produced a series of County Government Works videos.

In Manatee County, Fla., the County Health Department and the County Clerk of Court's office hosted a series of events to focus on five parameters of health including physical, social, behavioral, environmental and economic health. Some of the events included a Torch Run sponsored by Manatee Sheriff's Office, a Health Department Farm Stand, a knee-pain workshop, a horseshoe tournament, and many

classes and learning opportunities on various healthy lifestyle topics.

Pondera County, Mont. commissioners sponsored two events with the help of their local extension office and some financial resources donated by the Front Range Counties Farm Bureau: educational outreach about how to permit resale of private water for development, and how to successfully complete the Montana gravel permit process.

So was James Madison correct about the link between a popular government and information? The latest Gallup Annual Governance Poll may hold some clues.

Gallup found that more than two-thirds of Americans (68 percent) have a great deal or fair

amount of confidence in their local governments to handle local problems, and a solid majority (57 percent) feel the same way about their state government.

Especially interesting for counties, Gallup found, is that "confidence in state government matched confidence in local government as recently as 2008 (67 percent state vs. 69 percent local); however, the former fell sharply in 2009 (to 51 percent) as statehouses across the country began to grapple with major budgetary problems, and it has yet to fully recover."

What about the federal government? Gallup found that, "Americans' persistent high confidence in local government contrasts with their generally diminishing confi-

dence in the legislative (down to 31 percent) and executive branches (down to 47 percent) over the past five or so years."

Evidently, despite all the economic challenges facing government at all levels, Americans overwhelmingly remain confident in their local government. This should serve as incentive for all counties to continue to carry the flag for local government in the communities they serve. The best vehicle to accomplish this is through NACo and National County Government Month.

More information is available in the National County Government Month section of the NACo website. NCGM Award winners will be announced soon.

## REMINDER

### Resolutions or Platform Changes for the NACo Annual Conference Due June 13 • 5 p.m. EDT

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 at:  
[www.naco.org/legislation/Documents/NACoPolicyProcess.pdf](http://www.naco.org/legislation/Documents/NACoPolicyProcess.pdf) (members-only document).

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



## Federal legislation could jumpstart red fields to green fields initiatives

GREEN from page 2

approached the City Parks Alliance about creating the initiative. While he is very pro-parks, Messner, a hedge fund manager, said he sees the issue "more from a financial perspective."

"The Federal Reserve is trying to stimulate the economy, stimulating it by low interest rates," he said. "Low interest rates are protecting bad investments, a lot of which are in real estate, and it's not getting anything moving. It's keeping capital stuck in bad real estate."

He and other R2G adherents also are advocating for different approaches at the federal level. Nardi said federal dollars are available, but "it's a matter of lobbying for the reallocation to civic initiatives like this one where parks really become

the catalyst for economic vitality in a community."

### What the Feds Can Do

The City Parks Alliance has presented findings of the RTG research studies to Obama administration domestic policy officials, who have been receptive to the concept, and Messner said a House bill under consideration would also help cities and counties pursue their R2G plans. The Restore Our Neighborhoods Act (H.R. 4210) is a bipartisan House bill sponsored by Reps. Marcia Fudge (D) and Steven LaTourette (R) of Ohio. It would provide up to \$4 billion for states and establish land banks to issue 30-year bonds to finance demolition of vacant, foreclosed and abandoned homes nationwide.

Amy Harmon, a Denver real

estate developer with Urban Market Partners LLC, is a member of Denver's R2G team and lobbied in Washington along with teams from the other states — advocating for Congress to allocate funds already approved to become resources for these kinds of projects.

"I think we're already seeing some of these outcomes, and they may not be 100 percent red fields to green fields-stamped projects," she said, "but the spirit of what started under the red fields to green fields initiative has certainly taken root, and I believe it's a more holistic approach to urban development."

\*For more information and short videos on Miami-Dade and Denver's Red Fields to Green Fields initiatives, see the online version of this story at [www.naco.org/countynews](http://www.naco.org/countynews).



## News From the Nation's Counties

### ► ALABAMA

A federal appeals court rejected an attempt by **SHELBY COUNTY** to strike down a key provision of the **1965 Voting Rights Act**.

The county argued that Congress overstepped its constitutional authority when it renewed Section 5 of the act in 2006. Section 5 requires states, counties and townships with a history of voter discrimination to get approval from the Justice Department or the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia before changing their election laws.

In court documents, Shelby County argued it shouldn't have to get prior approval for election-law changes because Section 5 applies only to jurisdictions that show "unremitting and ingenious defiance" of the Voting Rights Act.

County officials also said there's no evidence they engaged in a "systematic campaign of voting discrimination and gamesmanship."

A panel of judges ruled 2-1 that Congress acted justifiably based on evidence of continued voter discrimination in several parts of the country 47 years after the Voting Rights Act was passed, according to the *Montgomery Advertiser*. The county could seek a rehearing or appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.



### ► MARYLAND

**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY**'s Department of Public Works and Transportation has **employed goats** to combat invasive plant species. Goats graze on dense, unruly vegetation in areas where mechanical methods (lawn mowers or weed whackers) and chemical methods (herbicides) have been unsuccessful.

A portable electric fence was installed to contain the goats and 24-hour supervision was provided for the duration of the treatment. The goats worked in herds of 25-30 and were on-site for approximately one week.

Herds grazed all day, clearing approximately a quarter of an acre per day, per herd. However this can vary depending on many factors including density, location and vegetation species. This practice has been used successfully in other areas of the state, as well as throughout the country.

### ► COLORADO

Aurora's City Council will re-examine the possibility of **becoming a city and county government**, beginning a potentially lengthy process that would eventually require statewide approval.

Colorado's third-most populous city sits in **ARAPAHOE, ADAMS and DOUGLAS COUNTIES**, with each county governed by its own board of commissioners.

Statewide, only **DENVER** and **BROOMFIELD** have combined city and county governments.

Several steps would have to be completed. The council would have to first agree to place the question on a ballot and have Aurora citizens vote on it. The city would need the state legislature to place the question on a statewide ballot during an even-year election and have Coloradans decide whether to amend the state constitution, designating Aurora as a city and county, the *Denver Post* reported.

A decade ago, a similar proposal garnered little interest from voters.

### ► FLORIDA

After two swings and misses, **PASCO COUNTY** is again trying to set **speed limits** on the Anclote River, along with the city

of Tarpon Springs, with which it splits jurisdiction of the waterway. The governments want to set slow-speed, minimum-wake zones before boaters get into open water.

Pasco commissioners unsuccessfully attempted to pass speed-limit-related resolutions or ordinances twice since 2007.

Now the two municipalities are closer than ever to victory on the matter after coming together to flesh out and submit a joint application to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the *Pasco Tribune* reported. The state agency has the final say on boating speed limits.

### ► INDIANA

Each of **ALLEN COUNTY**'s 229 non-police vehicles will have **global positioning system (GPS)** units installed this June.

The GPS units will monitor the vehicles' movements to determine if the vehicles are being used for personal business. The county provides take-home vehicles to 49 officials and employees in addition to 180 "pool" cars and trucks used on an as-needed basis. Each vehicle costs the county about \$55 per month in maintenance, \$200 for fuel and about \$1,000 per year in

insurance, in addition to the initial purchase price.

Public-safety vehicles are exempt, the *News-Sentinel* reported, because take-home police cars are considered a crime deterrent even when driven for personal use.

### ► MARYLAND

**WASHINGTON COUNTY** is again extending a **stimulus program for the construction of new homes**.

The commissioners agreed to continue the program for 12 months past its expiration date of June 30. Under the program, the first \$9,000 of excise tax on a residential building-permit application is waived, and each home builder will be allowed a maximum of 30 qualifying residential units.

Between March 2011 and April 2012, 269 permits with excise-tax credits under the program were issued. The credited excise-tax amount was about \$1.13 million, or 78 percent of the excise tax due to the county during that period, according to the *Herald Mail*.

A written summary of the program estimated that 151 new homes constructed under the 2011 stimulus program, if sold for \$250,000 each, would generate about \$360,000 a year in property-tax revenue.

### ► MICHIGAN

A new sentencing program in **INGHAM COUNTY** will put offenders on county and city roadways **cleaning up animal remains**.

D.A.R.T., or the Dead Animal Recovery Team, will use a special trailer that will be equipped with scoop shovels, gloves and reflector vests. No highways will be used for this program.

Those sentenced to do this will be supervised by a volunteer deputy from the department's mounted or motor units division, who will drive the vehicle and pull the trailer. Currently, if a carcass is a road hazard Ingham County Animal Control is called, but other than that the remains are left to birds and other scavengers, according to the *Lansing State Journal*.

The D.A.R.T. trailer and equipment were paid for from the Inmate Booking Fee account, an account that all inmates pay into when lodged at the jail.

### ► OHIO

• **CUYAHOGA COUNTY** Councilman Dave Greenspan has proposed dedicating more than \$1 million a year to programs and scholarships that could help the county's **90,000 military veterans**.

A Veterans Services Fund would receive money left unspent each year by the county's Veterans Services Commission. The commission receives about \$7.5 million a year from a percentage of property tax collections, according to the *Plain Dealer*. Over the last four years, the commission has returned an average of \$1.2 million to the county's general fund.

The County Council hasn't specified how the money would be used. "The language is left open, able to support those organizations that support veterans," Greenspan said. "We have a whole bunch of opportunities there to put these funds to use for veterans."

• **LAWRENCE COUNTY** wants to be a player in the international economic development arena. That's the impetus behind its efforts to obtain an **EB-5 classification** from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services — for itself and surrounding counties.

The Immigrant Investor Program, also known as EB-5, was created by Congress in 1990 to stimulate the U.S. economy through job creation and capital investment by foreign investors.

"We are focusing on southern Ohio in its entirety," Viviane Vallance, associate executive director of Lawrence Economic Development

Corp., told the *Ironton Tribune*. "It opens up the opportunity for foreign investment."

County development officials hope to apply for the EB-5 this month with the goal that the classification be applicable to a number of counties in the Appalachian southeastern part of Ohio.

### ► OKLAHOMA

Court officials and child advocates in **GARFIELD** and **MAJOR COUNTIES** are collaborating to expand the reach of **Court Appointed Special Advocates** in the area, *The Enid News* reported.

Under an agreement, the two counties' CASA advocates will serve on court cases in each others' jurisdictions.

Tim Haworth, Major County associate district judge, said under state law the county didn't have enough CASA cases on its own to warrant a program. "The only way for us to have a CASA program was for us to be a satellite program of another county," he said.

### ► PENNSYLVANIA

Following state and federal changes in terminology, the **LUZERNE COUNTY** Council has voted to drop the official **use of the word "retardation."**

Members voted to change the name of the Luzerne-Wyoming Counties Mental Health/Mental Retardation Program by replacing "Mental Retardation Program" with "Development Services," according to the *Standard Speaker*.

Late last year, Gov. Tom Corbett (R) signed the Words Do Matter bill, changing the reference to retardation in a state law to "intellectual disability." Two years ago, President Obama signed law removing the words "retarded" and "retardation" from federal health, education and labor laws.

### ► OREGON

• **COWLITZ COUNTY**'s commissioners have decided not to join two neighboring counties in calling for continued U.S. Forest Service **management of Mount St. Helens**.

Cowlitz commissioners say they were prepared to vote with **LEWIS** and **SKAMANIA COUNTIES**, but several residents swayed them not to do so.

Backers of a plan to make the volcano a national park said a vote by Cowlitz would derail a National Park Service study of the volcano that they've requested from U.S. Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler (R).

# The H.R. Doctor Is In

## Arrogance Cuts Both Ways

The size of an ego is the major characteristic to success or failure in life for a human being. The bigger the ego the greater the arrogance. The greater an individual's arrogance the less sensitive he or she will be to the needs and feelings of others. Their interpersonal relationships will suffer, and they will more likely fail in their marriages and roles as parents and neighbors. The same will hold true for their success, or lack of it at work.

Arrogance is a favorite target of the HR Doctor. It is public enemy number one. If there is a plus side to moderate arrogance, it is that it can be a driver of our self-confidence and willingness to try new things and experience new adventures. It helps make us explorers.

The Greeks referred to an arrogance overdose as "hubris" or arrogant pride. This overdose is the real source of danger to the survival of our species, our country, and each of us as individuals. We see ourselves as bigger, smarter and more adaptable than other species

and entitled to dominate them. This lack of humility will ironically get in the way of our survival.

Over the centuries, however, a fascinating phenomenon has developed to counteract hubris. The more we create better and larger instruments to extend our vision, the more we come to appreciate how small we really are in the great scheme of the incredibly large universe. This shocking revelation can help put our institutions and us in our place as we realize our frailties.

Four hundred years ago, when Galileo turned his very small telescope towards Jupiter, he began a revolution that changed some of the arrogance of the church and of the rest of the establishment from thinking that the earth was the center of the universe. It became easier and safer to ask questions and consider new possibilities about the universe.

The more our telescopes grow in sophistication, the more wonders we bring into sight and the more insight we gain into the relative insignificance of the human spe-

cies. The largest of Galileo's several telescopes could magnify something about 30 times. The telescope sitting in my home observatory today can best that by more than tenfold.

**Arrogance is a favorite target of the HR Doctor. It is public enemy number one.**

The same improvement is true when we look at the opposite end of the viewing spectrum by developing larger and more powerful microscopes and large particle colliders. As we look down there, we theorize and observe evidence of a sub-atomic world which bears an interesting resemblance to what is up there in the cosmos. We see strange new particles and we begin to think about what they might be.

When we bring into sight new mysteries and beauties, our own human insight grows. The greatest

telescope of all time, the Hubble Space Telescope, has created in the past 20 years imagination-bending photos and readings. These have continued to challenge our thinking and beliefs. An instrument designed to answer our questions has raised new questions and changed some of our ideas.

The same is true of the success of the search for "exo-planets." These are planets circling stars other than the sun. As I write this article, about 770 such planets have been discovered. A great many more await us. It is humbling indeed to move from "we are the universe" to "we are one small planet in a much greater existence."

The HR Doctor is looking forward to the first communication from intelligent exo-beings. I hope to invite one over to the house for dinner and conversation. Perhaps there will be public administration consulting opportunities available on Proxima Centauri—the nearest star other than the sun.


This expansion in thinking and

discovering is a direct consequence of our "explorer" selves and the development of instruments to continue our growth. The Hubble's successor, the James Webb Space Telescope, is now scheduled to be launched in 2018. It will be able to collect five times more light than the Hubble. It will open windows of imagination and awe in ways we cannot anticipate.

Instruments like the Webb Telescope and the Hadron Collider in Switzerland represent our greatest defense against our real enemy—hubris. They should receive the kind of funding and encouragement that the Department of Defense receives. They will make possible breakthroughs to enrich our lives for many generations. The importance of this human advancement opportunity transcends many times the narrower concerns absorbed in balancing the budget "*uber alles*."

Balancing the budget is very important indeed, but stifling our imagination and exploration is diminishing to each of us, to our country and to our species. The cutting back of our exploration genius deserves a new perspective on the essential purpose of any government—to create a future better than the past for us all.

Dear budget cutters, perhaps you can recall the gigantic budget overrun of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Congress authorized \$2,500 for the project, but the final reckoning totaled nearly \$39,000. Do we remember this financial management failure when we think of the Corps of Discovery or do we revel in and celebrate all that their work meant to the future of the USA?

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

## Budget pressure in Oregon forces inmate release

NEWS FROM *from page 9*

"I'm afraid [a vote for the resolution] puts a nail in the coffin of the study," a resident told commissioners.

• **JOSEPHINE COUNTY** isn't just handing out pink slips to employees, it's also distributing **get-out-of-jail-free cards** to inmates after voters rejected a property tax levy May 15.

The county will release up to 75 inmates and cut 125 positions, 70 of them in the sheriff's office, *The Oregonian* reported.

Josephine has the state's lowest county tax rate, 58 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Voters rejected a four-year increase in the levy to \$1.99; the state average is \$2.81. It failed 57 percent to 43 percent.

The county (pop. 82,700) is one of several in the state that are trying to fill budget holes after last year's expiration a federal law that sent millions of dollars to rural counties each year to offset losses in timber revenue on federal lands.

"We're the first of the dominoes to fall," Sheriff Gil Gilbertson told the Associated Press.

### ► VIRGINIA

• Future requests made to **ACCOMACK COUNTY** under the state's **Freedom of Information Act** will be posted on the county website, along with the county's response, following a board vote to institute the policy, the *Eastern Shore News* reported.

County Administrator Steve Miner held a refresher course for all county departments on the act's requirements, and passed out to employees and the Board of Supervisors a 2012 handbook put out by the Library of Virginia.

• The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has affirmed a lower federal court's dismissal of local business' challenge to **ARLINGTON COUNTY's sign ordinance**.

The court agreed with Arlington that its ordinance is content-neutral, and that its 60-square-foot limit on business signs is reasonable.

The business, Wag More Dogs, had painted a dog-themed mural on the side of its business that faced a dog park. The business said it was art; the county said it was advertising.

The county contended that the owner of Wag More Dogs, a dog

day care and pet-grooming business, sought an unfair advantage over her competitors by not complying with the sign ordinance, which regulates the type, size and placement of commercial signs.

### OF INTEREST TO COUNTY RECORDERS

Another county has taken aim at **MERS**, this time **ST. CLAIR COUNTY, ILL.** which filed a civil suit against more than a score of banks—from the Bank of America to local operations—and MERS Corp. alleging they created a scheme to evade county fees and shield property transfer records from the public.

The suit says the banks created database company Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems to avoid the payment of fees to the county's recorder of deeds by having MERS assume the mortgage titles.

Through the system, the banks can avoid publicly recording mortgage transfers, even if those mortgages are transferred multiple times as banks sell the loans among each other, the *Post-Dispatch* reported.

Meanwhile, a judge did not dismiss a lawsuit against Bank of America and MERS brought by

Texas counties, Bloomberg news reported. The counties are seeking damages and an injunction limiting future filings by MERS. **DALLAS COUNTY** filed the initial complaint in September 2011 and revised the suit the next month to represent all other Texas counties in which a deed of trust has been filed identifying MERS as a beneficiary.

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

## NACo on the Move

### » NACo Officers and Officials

**Bob Fogel**, senior legislative director, spoke on the reauthorization of the federal surface transportation program at the Alabama Association of County Engineers Annual Conference in Baldwin County May 16.

### » Coming Up

**Andrew Goldschmidt**, membership marketing director, and **Tony Jamison**, membership assistant, will be exhibiting on behalf of membership recruitment and retention at the New Jersey Association of Counties Annual Conference in Atlantic County June 5–8.

## Research News

# Hoarding Intervention: A County's Role

Thanks to TV shows such as "Hoarders" on A&E, "Hoarding: Buried Alive" on TLC and "Confessions: Animal Hoarding" on Animal Planet, interest in hoarding has spiked among the general public, and while it may seem dramatized on television, hoarding is a real issue that affects people's lives and families.

Hoarding is defined as "the acquisition of, and failure to discard a large number of possessions in a residence which appear to be useless or of limited value. Living spaces, furniture, appliances and utilities are sufficiently cluttered as to prevent their intended use, which could pose a significant risk to health, safety or the maintenance of housing."

Hoarding can be a health or safety hazard to the resident or to the community. When that happens, various county government agencies and departments are often called upon to assist in a number of ways when a hoarding case is reported.

Fairfax County, Va. officials have created a task force comprising more than 15 agencies including the Department of Code Compliance,

the Fire and Rescue Department, the Department of Family Services and the Department of Health. When a report is received by the Fairfax County Interagency Hoarding Committee, an investigation is launched and the proper services can be given to assist those in the hoarding situation. This can range from mental health services to an intervention from adult and child protective services. In some cases, hoarding poses a danger to fire departments because of blocked doorways and halls if a fire were to break out in the home.

"Every fire department in the country has a standard protocol procedure when they go to a house fire," said Mike Congleton, chair of the task force and a manager in the Department of Code Compliance. "They all attack them the same way. If a house is filled with combustibles, it's going to burn differently."

Hoarding can not only violate fire prevention codes, but also maintenance, health and safety codes, zoning ordinances and animal control regulations.

The Cuyahoga County, Ohio Hoarding Connection is a group of

more than 20 public, nonprofit and private sector organizations working to provide support and advice, educate, develop best practices and assist in identifying needed resources for individuals who hoard. It has a comprehensive website filled with many resources including "dos and don'ts" for how to speak with a loved one about hoarding, signs of hoarding, and where to go for assistance. Similar task forces can be found in Orange County, Calif., Montgomery County, Md., Sedgewick County, Kan. and Tompkins County, N.Y.

Most of these task forces deal with those who have a problem with hoarding possessions, but another problem that faces counties is that of animal hoarding. Last month, more than 40 dogs were seized from

a Henderson County, N.C. home by the Henderson County Animal Enforcement Unit.

"The conditions our deputies found at the home are horrible," said Capt. Frank Stout, spokesman for the Henderson County Sheriff's Office. County ordinances state that properties must not harbor more than 10 dogs.

Although authorities are not pressing charges in the case because the owner suffers from multiple health conditions and was in the hospital at the time of the investigation, in many situations the county prosecutor's office must get involved regarding animal cruelty charges against owners.

Though every county handles animal hoarding cases differently, there is awareness on the part of

the criminal justice system that often there are mental health issues at play. David Soares, Albany County, N.Y. district attorney, said his office has a special victims unit that encompasses animal hoarding cases. Most offenders are given three years of probation to make sure they are no longer collecting animals.

Because counties are the first responders in animal hoarding cases, many have valuable information about animal hoarding on their websites along with resources for those who are animal hoarders or those who suspect their neighbors may have an animal-hoarding problem.

*(Research News was written by Sarah Sunderman, research associate.)*

## Financial Services News

# Recipe for Food Service Success: Save Time, Cut Costs, Increase Efficiency

County food service operations are facing unprecedented pressure to reduce costs, enhance value and improve overall quality of food served. Food costs are up, budgets are tight, and the public is looking for healthier food options.

In an effort to help address these concerns, U.S. Communities added a Food Products and Related Supplies contract to the growing list of competitively bid cooperative contracts offered through the program.

Sponsored nationally by NACo, U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance is a cooperative that reduces the cost of goods and services by aggregating the purchasing power of public agencies nationwide.

North Carolina State University served as the lead public agency for the contract, while other U.S. Communities Advisory Board member organizations participated as part of the evaluation team. Ultimately, Premier Inc., in conjunction with the alliance's food service distributor, U.S. Foodservice, was awarded the contract for food service program solutions.

On average, the contract offers 5 percent savings over traditionally procured food service contracts. And, by using Premier's contracted

manufacturer agreements (CMA) with more than 190 vendors, food-service organizations will benefit from discounts of up to 20 percent on more than 32,000 products. Rebates and incentives allow even greater savings, depending on factors such as average delivery size and payment schedules. CMAs also protect against inflation, since Premier negotiates a price-change clause that determines a price cap as well as frequency and rationale for price changes during the term of the agreement.

"We wanted to make sure the contract included top national brands at competitive prices, attractive rebates and incentives, low shipping costs and technical support to help participants easily review and manage their inventories, spend histories and menu planning," said Patty Ziegenhorn, executive director, university food service administration, Emory University.

Ziegenhorn participated on the committee that wrote the food

service RFP, evaluated the bids and ultimately awarded the contract to Premier.

In addition to saving money, the U.S. Communities food service contract helps organizations save time and costs associated with obtaining quotes, administering contracts with individual manufacturers and managing the program.

By piggybacking on the competitive bid award made to Premier by North Carolina State University, U.S. Communities participants can access more than 300,000 foodservice products through Premier's broad-line food service distributor, US Foodservice, without having to go through the RFP process.

To learn more, visit [www.uscommunities.org/premier-usfoodservice](http://www.uscommunities.org/premier-usfoodservice) or contact Jim Sawyer, NACo Financial Services Corporation, at 202.661.8868 or [jsawyer@naco.org](mailto:jsawyer@naco.org).

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

## What's in a Seal?

» Warren County, N.C.  
[www.warrencountync.com](http://www.warrencountync.com)



Warren County was formed in 1779 from the northern half of Bute County. It was named for Joseph Warren of Massachusetts, a physician and general in the American Revolutionary War who was killed at the Battle of Bunker Hill. In 1881, parts of Warren County, Franklin County and Granville County were combined to form Vance County.

Warren County was the home of Soul City, a planned community and was also the site of the Warren County PCB landfill beginning in 1982. It was involved in a long environmental justice struggle to remove dangerous pollutants from affecting the health of the citizens. The site was detoxified in 2004. Thus the phrase "environmental justice" was initially developed for Warren County's situation.

The seal shows Warren County with three dots representing the cities of Macon, Norlina and Warrenton. The year the county was founded is in gold and the background of farmland represents its agricultural roots.

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

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



# Model Programs From the Nation's Counties

San Bernardino County, Calif.

## Intervention Keeps Preschool Kids In Class, School In Operation

By CHARLIE BAN  
STAFF WRITER

Behavioral problems didn't just disrupt lessons in San Bernardino County, Calif.'s preschools, they threatened the schools themselves.

The county's preschool services department found that many of its classroom management issues were stemming from children with social-emotional issues, with 903 children cited with those issues in the 2008–2009 school year, inching them closer to expulsion.

"Some of the children were acting out violently, fighting and biting, and enough of those incidents could endanger our licensing," said Liz Gallegos, an analyst with the preschool department. "Not only that, but many of these students were missing out on valuable class time because they had to be sent out of the room to address their problems."

In the meantime, every incident that disrupted lessons robbed other students of class time and provided a distraction. Most teachers hadn't

been trained to handle those issues. That evidence, Gallegos said, made it clear the teachers and parents needed additional training, and students needed more support from the behavioral health department.

**After a year of the program, the 903 students referred to mental health specialists dropped to 463.**

"They're teachers, they're not counselors or therapists," she said. "They would have to learn some ways to keep class going and deal with disruptions, though."

In stepped the county's behavioral health services, which, with the preschool services department, created the Preschool Prevention and Early Intervention program to address the emotional issues in some students that cause behavioral problems in the classroom.

Armed with funding from the

state's Mental Health Services Act, which funds early intervention programs, the county was able to train teachers to deal with students' behavioral problems. That included a variety of components:

- teacher training, to increase the use of effective classroom management techniques to handle children exhibiting the kind of behaviors that could get them kicked out of class
- parent training, through a series of activities to strengthen parenting competencies and increase parents' involvement in their children's education
- mental health interns onsite to augment school staffs with college or graduate students in clinical practicum programs. The interns provided mentoring to teachers and parents of 250 preschool children, with reported behavioral problems in classes, and
- support from psychologists. More than 90 percent of students in the county's preschool program are Head Start participants, and with that economically disadvantaged

population comes a variety of challenges, Gallegos said, including the stresses of foster care, incarcerated family members or other issues.

By teaching children how to handle difficult living environments, the psychologists were able to help them learn what feelings were normal and how to process them.

After a year of the program, the 903 students referred to mental health specialists dropped to 463.

"We judged the success of the program by the reduction in students

being sent to outside specialists," Gallegos said. "By that measure, we made a dramatic improvement."

The behavioral health department contributes more than \$312,000, via the Mental Health Act funding, for the program annually, which covers the cost of four or five interns, three psychologists, plus expenses.

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

## Job Market & Classifieds

### ► FINANCE DIRECTOR – CARROLL COUNTY, VA.

Salary: \$56,300 annually; DOQ

General Definition of Work: Performs complex professional work developing, monitoring and executing a financial plan for the County that is fiscally sound, meets near and long term goals and objectives of County administration and the Board of Supervisors, and related work as apparent or assigned. Work involves setting policies and goals under the direction of the Assistant County Administrator. Preparation of the Budget, supervising finance functions (accounts payable and payroll), review compliance of purchasing policy, preparation of the monthly expenditure reports. Departmental supervision is exercised over all personnel within the department.

Education and Experience: Bachelor's degree with coursework in accounting, finance, or related field and extensive experience in local government budgeting and finance, or equivalent combination of education and experience. CPA or MBA preferred.

All candidates for this position must provide a completed Virginia State Application to the Carroll County Human Resources Office at 605-1 Pine Street, Hillsville, VA 24343. For more informa-

tion candidates are welcome to contact Human Resources at 276.730.3103. A complete job description and application may be found at: [CarrollCountyVA.org](http://CarrollCountyVA.org). Position will remain open until filled.

Application review will begin June 14. Carroll County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

### ► FINANCE DIRECTOR – EDDY COUNTY, N.M.

Salary: \$74,995 – \$78,792 annually; DOQ.

Employee will work under the general direction of the County Manager, carrying out the financial policies and goals set by the Board of County Commissioners. The successful candidate will plan and administer the systems and processes for the accounting of revenue and expenditures by Eddy County. Benefits: paid vacation, sick leave and holiday; PERA retirement plan; health insurance paid at 100 percent for full-time employees and at 60 percent for their dependents. Detailed job specifications and applications may be obtained at the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions or online at [www.co.eddy.nm.us](http://www.co.eddy.nm.us). EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER M/F V/D.



Photo courtesy of San Bernardino County, Calif.

Students at San Bernardino County, Calif.'s preschool in Victorville got to visit with several government officials. Seated left to right: Assistant Sheriff John McMahon, District Attorney Michael A. Ramos and State Assemblyman Stephen Knight. Standing left to right: Director of Preschool Services Ron Griffin, County Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt and preschool supervisors Kelly Johnson and Nikki Stanley.

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