

## Vice President Biden opens busy, upbeat NACo Legislative Conference



More than 1,500 county leaders were in Washington, D.C. for NACo's annual Legislative Conference Feb. 21-25. Attendees heard from top-level federal officials and met with members of the Obama Administration and Congress on key issues such as transportation, municipal bonds, healthcare, the environment and public lands.

Vice President Joe Biden, who began his political career as a New Castle County, Del. council member, addressed attendees at the opening general session. He touted the Obama Administration's plans to use new federal tax policies to fund infrastructure improvements and two free years of community college. Biden acknowledged counties' responsibilities for roads and other infrastructure, and their role in local economies.

"A bridge or a road or a park not only attracts business but keeps business," he said. "They generate opportunities."

Other members of the Obama Administration who participated in

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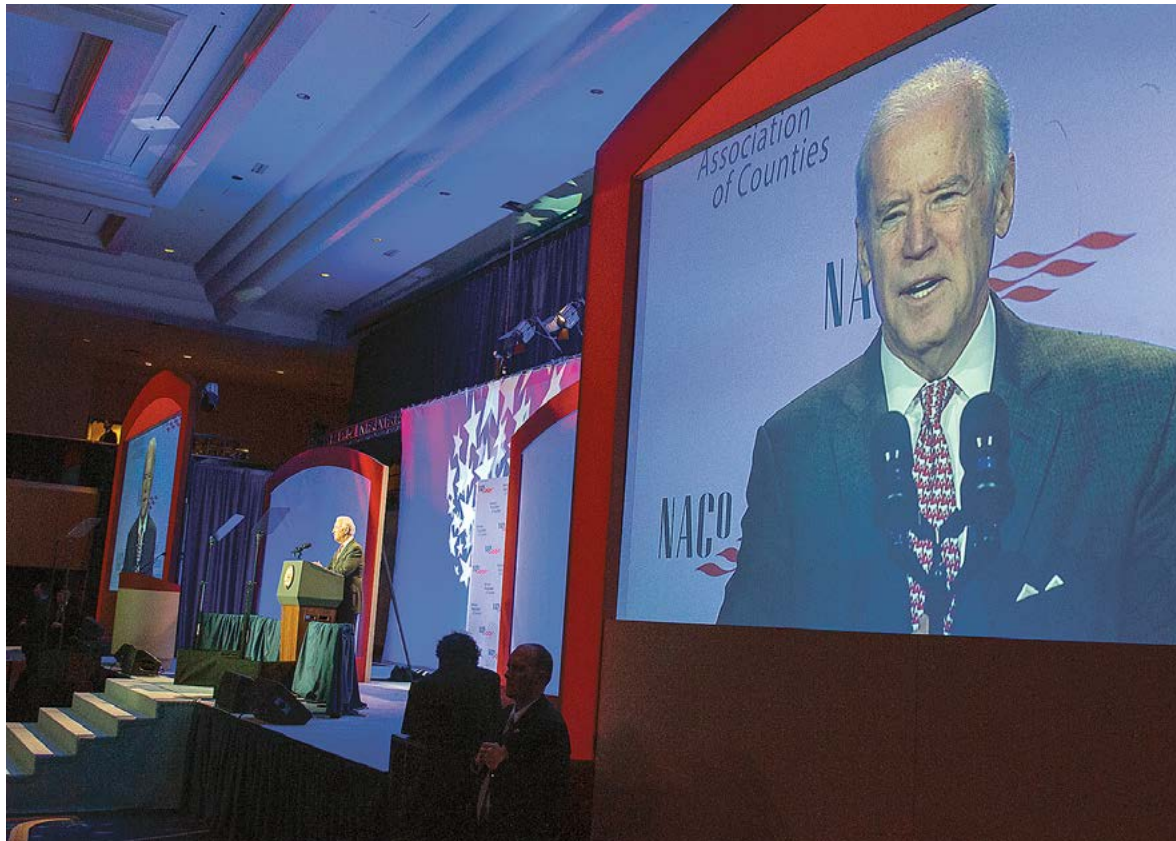


Photo by David Hathcox

Vice President Joe Biden led the contingent of top-level federal officials who briefed attendees during conference general sessions.

## FCC decision gives counties hope of blazing Internet speeds

By **CHARLES TAYLOR**  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Communities in North Carolina and Tennessee are moving closer to the information autobahn — ultra-high-speed Internet — thanks to the Federal Communications Commission's recent decision on municipal broadband.

How fast is ultra-high-speed, or gigabit, Internet? Speedy enough to download 25 songs per second or a high-definition movie in 36. In both states, municipal utilities are providing faster, cheaper Internet access than "big telecom" is offering.

On a 3-2 vote, the FCC recently approved petitions from Wilson, N.C. and Chattanooga, Tenn. last month to preempt laws in both

states that "[hamper] investment and deployment of broadband networks in areas where consumers would benefit from greater levels of broadband service," according to FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler.

Some 20 states nationwide block or limit municipal broadband efforts.

In Chattanooga, the Hamilton County seat, a city-owned utility, EPB, offers Internet access and services throughout its 600-square-mile electric service territory. A state law barred the utility from expanding broadband beyond that footprint — and into areas of Bradley and Hamilton counties.

"We'll likely look to southwest Bradley County and the portion of Hamilton County that we do not

currently serve first," said Harold DePriest, president and CEO of EPB, said in a statement.

Hamilton County Mayor Jim Copping applauds the FCC's Feb. 26 opinion and order. The FCC action moves the county closer to the goal of making "high-speed broadband available to all homes and businesses in Hamilton County," he said.

The SouthEast Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (SEATOA) also praised the decision. "SEATOA has consistently stood behind the principal that local leaders should be empowered to make decisions about their own communities," Michael Williams,

See **FCC** page 5

## NCGM helps raise awareness about counties

By **TOM GOODMAN**  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIRECTOR

Counties across the country are holding activities and events next month as part of National County Government Month (NCGM), held each year in April.

The activities include holding open houses at county facilities, conducting programs with schools, recognizing veterans and employees, and issuing proclamations. Since 1991, NACo has encouraged counties across the country to actively promote county government programs and services. The focus of NCGM is to raise public awareness and understanding about the roles and responsibilities of county government.

This year's theme is "Counties Moving America Forward: The Keys are Transportation and Infrastructure," which is the focus of NACo President Riki Hokama's presidential initiative. Following the theme, counties

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# Repeat immigration bills in committee

By HADI SEDIGH  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The House Judiciary Committee will begin marking up four immigration bills this month. Each bill deals with enforcement of immigration laws, and they were introduced in similar form in the 113th Congress. NACo opposed two of the bills because they imposed unfunded mandates on local governments, as explained below.

Here's a quick look at the measures.

■ **The Legal Workforce Act (H.R. 1147):** This bill would mandate employers to verify the immigration status of new hires through E-Verify — an electronic system that confirms the work authorization of immigrants. State and local governments, however, would have the additional mandate of verifying the employment authorization of existing hires.

NACo has opposed versions of the Legal Workforce Act introduced in previous sessions of Congress because the measure would pose an unfunded mandate — of verifying the immigration status of current employees — on state and local governments.

■ **The Michael Davis, Jr. in Honor of State and Local Law Enforcement Act (H.R. 1148):** This bill would grant state and local governments the authority to enforce immigration laws, heretofore a federal responsibility. It is substantially similar to the SAFE Act (H.R. 2278), introduced in the 113th Congress and opposed by NACo, the National League of Cities, the National Conference of State Legislatures and the U.S. Conference of Mayors because of concerns with the shifting of federal immigration enforcement responsibility to state and local governments and resulting costs to those governments.

The bill also calls for increased sharing of information related to

undocumented immigrants between state's local governments.

■ **The Protection of Children Act (H.R. 1149):** Under current law, undocumented children from countries that share a border with the U.S. (e.g., Mexico) can be immediately returned to their home country after being apprehended if they are not victims of trafficking or persecution, while children from other countries go through formal removal proceedings.

This bill would remove that distinction and enable authorities to immediately return children to their home countries regardless of the geographical proximity of the country to the U.S. It would also require the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) with biological information regarding the sponsors or families to whom unaccompanied minors allowed to remain in the U.S. are released.

■ **The Asylum Reform and Border Protection Act (H.R. 1153):** Under current law, undocumented immigrants apprehended at U.S. borders who show a "credible fear of persecution" are allowed to stay in the country while courts adjudicate their claim for asylum. This bill would address the concern that such individuals are allowed into the country and subsequently granted asylum without sufficient caution on the part of the federal government. It tightens the standards related to admitting individuals who assert a fear of persecution into the country and thereafter adjudicating their claims for asylum.

The bill would also require HHS to provide DHS with information regarding the location of undocumented minors in HHS custody.

# Application period opens for pipeline safety grants



Governmental entities or nonprofit groups may qualify for a 2015 Technical Assistance Grant of up to \$100,000 per year through the U.S. Department of Transportation, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. The grants will fund engineering or other scientific analysis of issues relating to pipeline infrastructure.

By JEN HORTON  
PROGRAM MANAGER

The U.S. Department of Transportation, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) is now accepting applications for the 2015 Technical Assistance Grants for communities or affected stakeholders seeking engineering or other scientific analysis of issues relating to pipeline infrastructure.

Governmental entities or nonprofit groups may qualify for a grant of up to \$100,000 per year. Applicants must be local communities or groups of individuals related to the safety of local pipeline facilities. "Communities" are defined as cities, towns, villages, counties, parishes, townships, boroughs and similar governmental subdivisions or consortia of such subdivisions. For-profit entities are not eligible. The closing date for applications is April 22, 2015.

The announcement can be found by using the "SEARCH GRANTS" tab at [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov). Search by Funding Opportunity Number DTPH5615SN0002. For more information, please contact Karen Lynch at [karen.lynch@dot.gov](mailto:karen.lynch@dot.gov).

when considering or planning for development near a pipeline right of way.

PIPA's recommendations, while not formally mandated, attempt to both examine and mitigate pipeline risks in densely populated areas. Key roles are outlined for local government, property developers or owners, transmission pipeline operators, and state real estate commissions to enhance pipeline safety, and ensure the protection of people, the environment and pipeline infrastructure.

Additional information on PIPA can be found at [www.PIPA-info.com](http://www.PIPA-info.com) including resources on how to locate transmission pipelines, understand pipeline risks and manage development near transmission pipelines.

*The Hazard Mitigation Planning: Practices for Land Use Planning and Development* near Pipelines is a recently issued guidance document that outlines best practices for communities to help reduce risks from pipeline incidents, including those caused by natural hazards. The document provides emergency managers, planners and others involved with developing hazard mitigation

plans with a knowledge and understanding of how pipelines operate and common products transported through transmission and distribution pipelines, the potential impacts of pipeline incidents and resources and mitigation plan strategies to help reduce risks.

For any questions related to pipeline safety for counties, contact Jen Horton, [jhorton@naco.org](mailto:jhorton@naco.org).

## In Case You Missed It

### News to Use From Past County News

#### ► 2015 Achievement Awards program is now open for nominations!

The 2015 Achievement Awards program is now accepting nominations! The deadline for submissions is March 27 at 11:59 p.m. EDT. Counties may apply online at [www.naco.org/achievementawards](http://www.naco.org/achievementawards). For more information or if you have any questions, contact Yael Lazarus at [ylazarus@naco.org](mailto:ylazarus@naco.org).

### Additional Pipeline Safety Resources

The Pipelines and Informed Planning Alliance (PIPA) initiative — comprising stakeholders from all levels of government and representatives of pipeline and building industries — focuses on issues related to the potential impact of land use, and development around transmission pipelines. Since forming in 2008, PIPA representatives have worked to address the protection of pipelines

### Quick Takes

#### Counties with Lowest Obesity Rates for Women

FIGURES IN PERCENTAGES • 2013

Pitkin County, Colo.	18.5
Douglas County, Colo.	18.6
Routt County, Colo.	19
Teton County, Wyo.	19.6

Does not include counties withheld to avoid disclosing individual data.

University of Washington, Centers for Disease Control

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# COUNTY INNOVATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

Oakland County, Mich.

## Playing the Long Game on Safe Sleeping Practices

By CHARLIE BAN  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Starting Oakland County, Mich.'s newest residents' lives out on the right foot meant starting them out on the right side. For infants, that means sleeping on their backs, one of the tenets of safe sleeping, and a message the county wanted to spread.

"In 2000, we took a really good look at infant mortality in our county and saw a tremendous disparity in the number of infant deaths, particularly in the African-American community," said Kathy Forzley, Oakland County's health officer-manager. "Public health nurses don't always have the audiences who need to hear them the most, so teaching parents, particularly mothers, how their infant's sleeping position could impact their health," is important, however they can be reached.

In hopes of addressing positional asphyxia (suffocating) while sleeping, the leading cause of infant crib death, the county's health division hatched several plans. One, "Crib Notes," was billed as a babysitting safety class, but Forzley said her department hoped to also reinforce lessons to women who would eventually become mothers.

"We approached it as educating siblings and babysitters, but hoped those lessons would hold on once the students started their own families," she said.



Photo courtesy of Oakland County, Mich.

Oakland County public health nurses teach safe sleeping techniques to nursing students at local colleges, plus strategies for teaching those techniques to pregnant women.

But the lessons needed to spread farther than that. Through the "Safe Sleep — Train the Trainer" program, the county would ensure that its messages about safe sleep reached a wider audience.

Oakland County public health nurses teach safe sleeping techniques to nursing students at Oakland University and Rochester College, who would then spread their expertise to wherever they end up working. The schools have adopted the program as a regular feature of their nursing curriculums.

"We're equipping them with

public health messaging that will stay with them for their entire careers," Forzley said. "They'll reach places — day care centers, doctor's offices — where we as public health professionals don't have the same long-term presence."

Admittedly, Forzley said, the plan has a long gestation period, but the sustained focus will pay off.

"Even when we educate a mother, she might be getting a different lesson at home from her mother

or mother-in-law," she said. "This is also about generational change. In part, we're trying to educate the future grandmothers of Oakland County so these lessons are universal and second nature."

Shane Bies, administrator of the county's public health nursing services, said the key has been the sustaining the department's effort.

"This program is an example of what public health does best — align partners and resources around an

issue," he said. "We've sustained these efforts, whether it's around Crib Notes or Safe Sleep, and in the end we're changing behaviors and lowering infant mortality."

Even so, Forzley said it can be hard to demonstrate that public health programs are successful and deserve continued funding — \$14,000 in Safe Sleep's case, for advertising, supplies and staff costs — when their results can only show up years down the road. Given that human gestation is a nine-month process, even cases in which mothers are directly taught safe sleeping techniques cannot be evaluated until their children are born and pass their first birthday.

But in the 14 years since the health division first turned its attention to safe sleeping, African-American infant mortality has fallen by nearly half, down to 10.6 deaths per 1,000 live births between 2009–2012, from 21 deaths per 1,000 live births between 2000–2002. Given the birth rate over that period, that accounts for 156 additional infants that survived past their first birthdays.

"It's important for public health officials to keep eye on long-term benefits so we can all acknowledge successes and have something to show when we ask for funding," Forzley said.

*County Innovations and Solutions features award-winning programs.*

## NACE conference to include programs for elected officials

The National Association of County Engineers (NACE) Annual Conference, scheduled for April 18–23 in Daytona Beach, Fla., will include special sessions for elected officials.

The sessions will be held April 22 and focus on transportation, infrastructure, watershed protection and vehicle technology. A special registration fee of \$325 will include a reception and dinner on April 21, and breakfast and lunch on April 22.

The topics to be covered in the sessions for elected officials are:

- General Session with NACo Legislative Update — Topics included in the update are the Highway Trust Fund Reauthorization,

MAP-21 Road & Bridge Funding, County Economic Tracker and other initiatives that affect counties.

- Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) — A National Strategy for Eliminating Highway Fatalities on Local Roads — Nearly 33,000 lives are lost annually on the nation's highways. While these have declined, there is acknowledgement that even one fatality is too many.

- Infrastructure 101 for Elected Officials — What do local officials need to know about types of bridges, bridge inspection requirements, replacement options and pavement preservation options?

- USDA and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS),

Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program and Funding Opportunities — Local municipalities repair watershed impairments that have been caused by natural disasters.

- Transportation Funding for Local Public Agencies — Efficient infrastructure funding can vary, including the federal aid program and state "buyout" programs.

- Impacts of Advanced Vehicle Technology (V2V, V2I) — Vehicle-to-vehicle or vehicle-to-infrastructure technologies will transform the way local entities operate and maintain transportation systems.

For more information and to register, go to the NACE website: [www.countyengineers.org](http://www.countyengineers.org).

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# Lincoln County, S.D. fights for the right kind of road

In today's world of economic development, transportation is one of the key elements. Lincoln County, S.D. recognized this fact and became proactive in developing an interchange that would see 2,100 acres being developed into commercial, light industrial and residential areas that would profit two school districts, three communities and the county itself.

Lincoln County is located in the southeastern portion of South Dakota and includes part of Sioux Falls, the largest city in the state. Sioux Falls is a major trade area for a four-state region and boasts two large health care providers that are nationally recognized for their medical research.

The county has seen significant growth over the past 10 years, doubling in size to an urban-centered 50,000-plus population



Lincoln County Commissioners Dale Long (right) and John Schmidt (center), and Erica Beck, Lloyd Companies, examine plans for the land surrounding the new interchange.

tion Secretary Darrin Berquist and South Dakota Governor Dennis Daugaard (R). After several weeks of deliberation and negotiations, the end result was that the county would take the lead in borrowing \$15 million to be combined with private investment of \$4 million. The state provided the cash flow necessary to secure the land for the interchange. The deal was struck.

This is the first time in the history of the state that a public-private partnership has been successfully put together for the sole purpose of economic development. One of the state legislators is further investigating that this area be designated as an enterprise zone, which could further be a model for the rest of the state to follow. NACo President Riki Hokama has made transportation one of the major planks in his administration.

The challenge that counties face is to provide increased revenue to meet the demands that are placed upon them. Lincoln County is no exception. As the county looked towards its future, the commissioners recognized that without continued economic growth they would be facing a revenue shortfall in the next five to seven years.

Rather than waiting for this to happen, they acted on the opportunity that was presented to them to invest in the future, increase their tax base and provide funds necessary for schools and communities.

*(This report was prepared by Lincoln County, S.D. If you have a groundbreaking initiative that you would like featured in County News, please contact Bev Schlotterbeck, editor, bschlott@naco.org.)*



## Profiles in Service

### Rod Bockenfeld

Chair  
Finance, Pensions and Intergovernmental Affairs  
Commissioner, Arapahoe County, Colo.

**Number of years active in NACo:** 10 years

**Years in public service:** 10 years

**Occupation:** finance, criminal justice, banking and small business

**Education:** B.S. in law enforcement administration from Western Illinois University; graduate of the University of Colorado Graduate School of Banking

**The hardest thing I've ever done:** starting my own business and successfully running it for nine years.

**Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner:** Bill O'Reilly, George Will and Charles Krauthammer

**A dream I have is to:** structurally balance the federal budget.

**You'd be surprised to learn that I:** am a much more feeling person than I appear.

**The most adventurous thing I ever done was:** fly planes.

**My favorite way to relax is:** sitting on my back deck with a cold beer and staring at the mountains at dusk.

**I'm most proud of:** how well my kids are doing.

**Every morning I read:** *The Denver Post*.

**My favorite meal is:** my wife's Swiss steak.

**My pet peeve is:** people who cannot make a decision.

**My motto is:** "It's amazing what you can accomplish when you don't care who gets the credit." — Harry Truman

**The last book I read was:** *Killing Lincoln* by Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard.

**My favorite movie is:** any movie based on a true story.

**My favorite music is:** anything upbeat.

**My favorite president is:** Ronald Reagan.

**My county is a NACo member because:** NACo is a tremendous resource to have available in order to be successful as an elected official. The training, networking and available research materials at your fingertips make the membership well worthwhile.

from a mainly rural population of 24,000. The transformation of this county to urban from rural has been a challenge for the Board of Commissioners, as has keeping a proper balance between the two and providing necessary funds to support this growth.

Interstate 29 runs the length of Lincoln County's borders, which has provided for increased transportation opportunities. Just north of its boundaries is Interstate 90, running east and west. In addition to ground transportation, Lincoln County is fortunate to own a small regionally significant airport that has seen increased activity over the past several years. It has been used for commercial purposes attracting business usage.

Upon learning that the Federal

Highway Administration (FHWA) was scheduled to provide an overpass on Interstate 29 for 85th Street, which would be a main artery for transportation into the city of Sioux Falls, a group of land owners petitioned the FHWA to consider an interchange instead of an overpass in order to open up opportunity for economic growth. Ascertaining that the interchange was not being considered by the Federal Highway Administration, the county engaged in a conversation with the South Dakota Department of Transportation to determine if arrangements could be made at a state and local level to provide for this interchange.

Commissioners Dale Long and Jim Schmidt held several meetings with the Department of Transporta-

## Bill could stop FCC preemption on municipal broadband

FCC from page 1

the organization's acting president, said in an email to County News. "This principle should definitely apply to their own technology infrastructure."

SEATOA represents localities, individuals and regional authorities that develop, regulate and administer voice, video, data communications, broadband and Public, Educational, and Governmental Access operations in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

Williams added, "Many communities — both rural and urban — in our SEATOA states ... are currently suffering from a technology gap that is drastically limiting both their educational and economic growth. How these communities solve these

problems should not be restricted by regulations which seek to limit their decision-making authority."

As with EPB in Chattanooga, Wilson — the seat of Wilson County — also provides gigabit broadband, voice and video service in addition to electricity. But a 2011 North Carolina law imposed conditions on the city that effectively prevented it from expanding broadband into neighboring counties, even if they requested it. Wilson's municipal utility provides electric service in six eastern North Carolina counties and broadband service in Wilson County.

Meanwhile, Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) and Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) have already introduced a bill stating that "the FCC cannot preempt states with municipal broad-

band laws already on the books, or any other states that subsequently adopt such municipal broadband laws."

Still, community broadband advocates are optimistic. Christopher Mitchell, director of the Community Broadband Networks Initiative at the Minnesota-based Institute for Local Self-Reliance, is among them. He said both Wheeler and President Obama have raised the issue's profile.

"I feel like the whole process is actually benefiting communities around the country, even though this decision only impacts the communities in two states, and frankly could be reversed or it could be stayed ... but we'll still have all those other benefits from the bully pulpit and all the engagement we've seen on the issue."



# NACo Board sets July election review bylaw vote

At its meeting Feb. 23, the NACo Board of Directors approved a recommendation by the Election Review Committee to update the formula that determines how many votes NACo member counties can cast in NACo elections. The update requires a bylaw change and will require a vote by the membership at the NACo annual business meeting in Mecklenburg County, N.C. this July.

The Election Review Committee investigated the share of votes small counties and large counties have within NACo and how the balance of power may have shifted over time. Under the current formula for awarding votes, in place for decades, each member county receives one

vote for every \$500 in dues (or portion thereof) it pays to NACo. The committee looked into various simple adjustments to the formula before deciding on recommending one vote per \$1,200 (or portion thereof) in dues.

“Twelve-hundred dollars represents the amount that moves the vote totals per county back towards the relative impact that each county had when weighted voting was set up in 1991,” said Lenny Eliason, chair of the Election Review Committee.

If approved by the membership at this year’s annual conference, the changes to the new weighted vote formula would be in effect for the 2016 election.

# Rep. Rob Bishop calls for long-term funding for PILT, Secure Rural Schools

**BIDEN** *from page 1*

the conference included U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez; U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman; Jerry Abramson, director of the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs; Michael Botticelli, director of the White House Office of National Drug Policy; Ronald Davis, director of the Dept. of Justice’s Community Oriented Police Service and executive director of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing and Thomas L. Tidwell, chief of the U.S. Forest Service.

Featured members of Congress included House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-Pa.) and House Committee

on Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah). Bishop assured attendees from public lands counties that Secure Rural Schools funding would be approved on a one year basis. He also called for long-term full funding for the PILT and SRS programs.

“It’s time that you don’t have to feel that you must grovel every year for funding,” he told county leaders.

NACo hosted two congressional briefings on Capitol Hill — “The Road Ahead for County Infrastructure: County Priorities for Transportation and Infrastructure Funding and Financing” and “All Health is Local: Medicaid and the Role of Counties in Local Health Systems.”

There were more than two dozen educational workshops featuring county officials and other leaders

in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. They focused on topics such as workforce and economic development; transportation and infrastructure; public health and safety; mental health and jails and cybersecurity and technology.

In conjunction with the Legislative Conference, NACo launched an online video describing top federal policy priorities and why they matter to counties and residents.

“Decisions made by the White House, Congress and federal courts have a major, cascading impact on our ability to lead our communities and pursue a better future,” the video states.

To view the video online, go to <http://bit.ly/1BgRX7p>. To read more about the conference, see the County News special report beginning page 7.

## WORD SEARCH

### Baldwin County, Ala. Facts

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

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U F Z Q E W T I I U H E L I P O R T S A

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**BAY MINETTE** (county seat)

**BEACHES** (there are 32 miles of beach in Baldwin County)

**BLAKELY** (ghost town)

**BON SECOURS** (National Wildlife Refuge)

**BRATS** (Baldwin Rural Area Transportation System)

**DAPHNE** (city)

**ESCAMBIA** (the name of two adjacent counties to the east, one in Alabama and one in Florida)

**FAIRHOPE** (an experimental Utopian community founded in 1894, based on Henry George's book *Progress and Poverty*)

**FORT MIMS** (historic site of an 1813 Creek War massacre)

**GULF COAST** (region of Alabama in which Baldwin County lies)

**HELIPORTS** (are numerous in Baldwin County due to a heavy military influence)

**HURRICANES** (have rendered Baldwin County a "disaster area" 5 times since 1979)

**LARGEST** (Baldwin County is the largest county in Alabama, bigger than Rhode Island)

**LOXLEY** (town)

**METIS** (term for biracial Creek Indians, many of whom live in Baldwin County)

**MOBILE** (adjacent county to the west)

**OUTSTANDING ALABAMA WATER** (two Baldwin County areas have been given this environmental distinction)

**SAND ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE** (one of the most endangered lighthouses in America, located on Mobile Bay)

**TENSAW** (river that flows through Baldwin County)

**U.S.S. TECUMSEH** (a small warship that guarded Mobile Bay during the Civil War; the wreck site is considered a "war grave")

Created by Sarah Foote

# April brings NCGM celebrations, demonstrations, outreach

**NCGM** *from page 1*

will be showing their residents how they are at the forefront of strengthening transportation and the infrastructure fundamental to moving America forward.


Counties play a key role in everything from moving people and goods to moving the economy forward.

“County transportation and infrastructure are vital to boosting economic competitiveness, moving our food efficiently and maintaining a strong national defense,” Hokama said.

NCGM provides an opportunity for counties to highlight key transportation projects like new bridges, roads, resurfacing projects or other infrastructure work. Counties that do not have transportation responsibilities are using NCGM to highlight the infrastructure projects that they fund.

There are also other ways to show how your county plays a central role in your community and helps “move America forward.” Counties can participate in NCGM by hosting community outreach events and activities, tours of county facilities, recognition ceremonies for volunteers and county employees, sponsoring essay or art contests and adopting resolutions.

One activity that all counties should pursue during NCGM



is to meet with their members of Congress. During those meetings, county officials should stress that federal policies matter to county government and county government matters to America’s local communities. They should know that county governments are responsible for the fundamental building blocks for healthy, safe and vibrant communities and that federal policy decisions have a major, cascading impact on county government.

With transportation and infrastructure as the theme for NCGM this year, officials should also emphasize the need for Congress to approve a long-term reauthorization of Moving Ahead for Progress in

the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) and fixing the Highway Trust Fund. Information on this issue can be found on the NACo website.

Another way to celebrate NCGM is to participate in the County Day of Recognition for National Service. Every day, in counties across America, national service is tackling tough problems and strengthening communities. On April 7, 2015, as part of NCGM, county leaders are encouraged to recognize the impact of national service and thank those who serve on the first annual County Day of Recognition for National Service.

As part of the event, county executives and board chairs will hold public events and use media to highlight the impact of national service to the nation’s counties and inspire more citizens to serve. The initiative is being led by NACo and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). To learn more and sign up your county, go to [www.nationalservice.gov/countiesforservice](http://www.nationalservice.gov/countiesforservice).

NACo wants to hear about your activities and events for NCGM. Send them to [TomGoodman@naco.org](mailto:TomGoodman@naco.org).

## NACo JOBS ONLINE

Good employees are crucial to getting the job done!

[www.naco.org/programs/jobsonline](http://www.naco.org/programs/jobsonline)







By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

# Lawmakers focus on solutions to funding transportation

Three House members and one senator shared their ideas for fixing the nation's transportation funding crisis at a packed Capitol Hill briefing with NACo leaders and congressional staffers.

Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) said there is bipartisan interest in raising the federal gas tax as a way to plug the "hole" in the Highway Trust Fund, but he is open to other funding approaches.

The issue has been "studied to death," including two presidential commissions during the Bush Administration, he said. Their conclusion was that more investment is needed in the nation's crumbling infrastructure, and a higher gas tax is one solution.

"You can make the difference," Blumenauer told NACo members, "to be a part of the coalition that tells this Congress to put up or shut up.... If they've got something better than the gas tax that is sustainable, that's big enough and dependable—put it on the table, put it in a bill, pass it."

Other lawmakers who participated in the briefing included Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.) and Reps. Randy Hultgren (R-Ill.) and Jeff Denham (R-Calif.).

They were joined by county officials from areas large and small,



John Jay Shannon, M.D., head of Cook County's health and hospital system, says despite the Affordable Care Act, his county still has 300,000 residents with no ability to pay for health care. Also pictured (l-r) are: John Haney, Barry County, Mich.; Ed Michalik, Psy.D., Berks County, Pa.; Bob England, M.D., Maricopa County, Ariz.; and Commissioner Mary Ann Borgeson, chair, NACo Health Steering Committee.

who shared their infrastructure financing concerns, and how they're struggling to deal with transportation needs back home. NACo's message to Congress continues to be: Reauthorize the MAP-21 Act

on a long-term basis rather than passing temporary fixes.

Over the next 10 years, California has more than \$80 billion worth of projects that have to get done, Hultgren said. "Those aren't the projects that we'd like to get done. But the ones we have to get done.

Blumenauer has introduced a bill, H.R. 680, the Update, Promote, and Develop America's Transportation Essentials (UPDATE) Act of 2015. "It would raise the gas tax 15 cents phased in over three years, index it for the future, and it could very well be the last time that we ever have to raise the gas tax," he said. It would be replaced by another funding source that is "sustainable over time."

"We shouldn't wait until our infrastructure crumbles to address it," he added. "But we've got to be able to come together as Republicans and Democrats and agree on it. These should not be partisan issues, these are about building America and creating jobs and moving our economy forward."

## Hill staffers briefed on importance of federal health funding

Health care, public health and Medicaid took center stage at a Capitol Hill briefing for congressional staffers, All Health is Local: Medicaid and the Role of Counties in Local Health Systems, during the Legislative Conference.

Four health professionals from counties of varying sizes addressed

how their communities rely on the federal government to help fund their operations.

"The decisions Congress makes on how to regulate and fund health services—including public health, behavioral health and long-term care and hospital services—will profoundly affect our work in county government," said Mary Ann Borgeson, chair of NACo's Health Steering committee and a Douglas County, Neb. commissioner, who moderated the Feb. 24 panel.

Of the federal entitlement programs, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, she said, the third relies on a mix of federal, state and local funding. "Many states use counties to administer, finance and deliver Medicaid services on behalf of their citizens," she added. The speakers provided examples of how federal policies and programs affect programs such as Medicaid at the county level.

John Jay Shannon, M.D., CEO of the Cook County Health & Hospitals System, gave the view from Cook County, Ill. (pop. 5.2 million). From slightly smaller Maricopa County, Ariz., (pop. 3.8 million), Bob England, M.D., director of the county's Department of Public Health, focused on public health.

Shannon said the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has "given our health system financial oxygen."

"We've been able to substantially reduce the amount of reliance on

local Cook County taxpayers, such that today it represents less than 15 percent of our operating revenues," he said.

Still, the county hospital system must serve approximately 300,000 residents who don't qualify for any type of insurance, even under the ACA. "Every year, we provide a very significant amount of service that is not only unbillable, but we also have and will continue to have a very significant proportion of residents of the county who have no ability to pay."

Maricopa County's England drew a distinction between health care and public health. "We provide services that benefit the entire population, not just members of a particular health plan," he said. "Historically we have done this pretty well with truly meager resources, but local public health departments now are struggling to maintain their core capacity." He cited National Association of County and City Health Officials research which shows that since 2008, local health departments have lost 15 percent of their public health workforce.

"Like many local health departments, I am way-dependent on federal funding," England added. "My local health department is 70 percent federal funds, largely passed through from the feds to the state and then down to us.

"It is crucial that we sustain funding as flexibly as possible to address the public health needs of counties all across the U.S."



Photos by David Hathcox

Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) says he's an "all-of-the-above guy" when it comes to transportation funding but he favors raising the gas tax to shore up the Highway Trust Fund.





# Biden keynotes Opening General Session

NACo's Legislative Conference started out of the gate with a bang and just kept running. Here are a few of the highlights from the conference's general sessions.

## Opening General Session, Feb. 23

### ■ Joe Biden

Vice President Joe Biden touted the Obama Administration's plans to use new federal tax policies to fund infrastructure improvements and two free years of community college.

Biden, a former New Castle County, Del. councilman, framed the plans as a strategy to enhance U.S. economic competitiveness, noting that the country's infrastructure was falling behind while other countries' educational systems were catching up.

"Community college is probably the best-kept secret that exists out there, but we're going to do everything in our power to make sure it's no longer viewed as a secret. It's the most agile education institution we have available," he said. "You're uniquely positioned to identify local industries and connect them with your local community colleges and create a pipeline of workers."

Two free years of community college, which would cost about \$60 billion over 10 years, would be funded closing capital gains tax loopholes affecting who Biden described as the top half-percent of taxpayers.

"I don't want to punish anybody, but tell me which is more valuable: providing access free at college to anyone in the United States who qualifies, or continuing to have one-half of the one percent have another \$220 billion when they're doing very well already."

He also suggested adding a 0.07 percent fee to banks with more than \$50 billion in assets engaging in "risky loan practices," which he said would raise \$320 billion that could pay for a childcare tax credit and two-wage earner tax credit.

Biden acknowledged counties' responsibilities for roads and other infrastructure and their role in local economies.

"A bridge or a road or a port not only attracts business but keeps business," he said. "They generate opportunities."

The Administration's Grow America Act, a six-year, \$478 billion transportation bill, would help advance U.S. infrastructure relative to foreign competitors, he said. It includes a guaranteed \$317 billion over six years for highway repairs,



Photo by David Hathcox

Vice President Joe Biden pitches the Obama Administration's plan to fund infrastructure and free community college through a reduced tax rate for repatriated overseas assets and closing tax loopholes.

continued TIGER grants, policy changes to dramatically accelerate permitting processes, and an increase in federal transit funding totaling 10 percent.

He said that could all be paid for by corporate tax reform. He suggested reducing the corporate tax rate, currently 35 percent, to a percentage in the high 20s.

"That would in fact generate over \$200 billion by eliminating tax loopholes, all of which would be dedicated to infrastructure," he said.

He also said a one-time, 14 percent tax (as opposed to the normal, roughly 35 percent tax) on \$2 trillion in overseas assets held by American companies would encourage them bring the assets home, at a reduced tax rate, and generate \$268 billion in tax revenue.

### ■ U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman

The country's top trade negotiator, Michael Froman, presented the case for why counties should care about updating the country's trade promotion policy.

"Trade policy might not be at the top of your agenda every day.

You've got roads to fix and schools to run. But done right, trade policy is a necessary component of any community's successful economic strategy," Froman said.

He cited several statistics to prove his point: since 2009, exports have accounted for nearly one-third of the nation's economy and 1.6 million new jobs. Workers who are employed by exporting businesses, on average, earn 18 percent more than their counterparts in non-exporting businesses.

To maintain and intensify the momentum, the Administration is pushing for fast-track trade authority as negotiations over the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement, or TPP, begin to wrap up.

"Trade promotion legislation is the way Congress gives direction to the president about what to negotiate, how to consult with Congress before and during the negotiations and how Congress will decide at the end of the day — after an extensive public debate — whether to support or reject a trade agreement.

"It's how Congress has worked with American presidents since FDR, including every president — Republican and Democrat — for



U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman

the last four decades, to ensure that the United States takes the lead in shaping the global trading system," he said.

Froman said TPP, which would cover 11 other countries and 40 per-

cent of the world's economy when completed, is the most ambitious trade agenda the U.S. has ever put forward and would level the play-

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Jason Grumet, founder and president of the Bipartisan Policy Center.



# Powerful House committee chairs, labor secretary address conferees

**SPEAKERS** from page 8

ing field for American workers and businesses.

He called for bipartisan legislation. "It's time to update trade promotion legislation to meet the needs of today's global economy and lock into law the progress we have made on a number of issues, including labor and the environment," he said. "A bipartisan trade promotion bill will do just that, addressing these changes and empowering America to continue leading on trade."

## ■ Jason Grumet

Jason Grumet isn't exactly nostalgic for congressional earmarks. But he said they did serve a useful purpose: creating a beneficial link between local and federal government.

"We are depriving Congress of opportunity to actually help to make local decisions," he said. "How can we expect [them] to take the tough votes on raising the debt ceiling, investing in infrastructure if they're not going to have any opportunity to do anything popular at home?"

Grumet, founder and president of the Bipartisan Policy Center, was a featured speaker at the Opening General Session, Feb. 23. He also wrote the book *City of Rivals: Restoring the Glorious Mess of American Democracy*. There is power in that messiness, he argues.

He noted that his organization's purpose is to help return America to a place "where the country can be polarized, partisan and productive." It's not a new idea. The Founding Fathers often vehemently disagreed on issues, he said, yet they still got things done.

"We used to have the capacity in this country to metabolize the aggression and hostility which is essential in any democracy — to have a constructive collision of ideas," he said.

He believes one solution to the problem would be for members of Congress to spend more time in Washington. Last year lawmakers spent less time legislating, 113 days, than any Congress in recent memory, he said. They need time to build relationships, even with adversaries.

"We used to use this kind of diversity in America to our advantage," he said. "Recently something has started to change; the good news is that we can get it back."

## General Session, Feb. 24

### ■ Bill Shuster

U.S. Rep. Bill Shuster (R-Pa.) warned that Congress' infrastruc-



U.S. Rep. Bill Shuster (R-Pa.)

ture plate was very full this year, and transportation was going to be a challenge. As the chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, he's in a position to know.

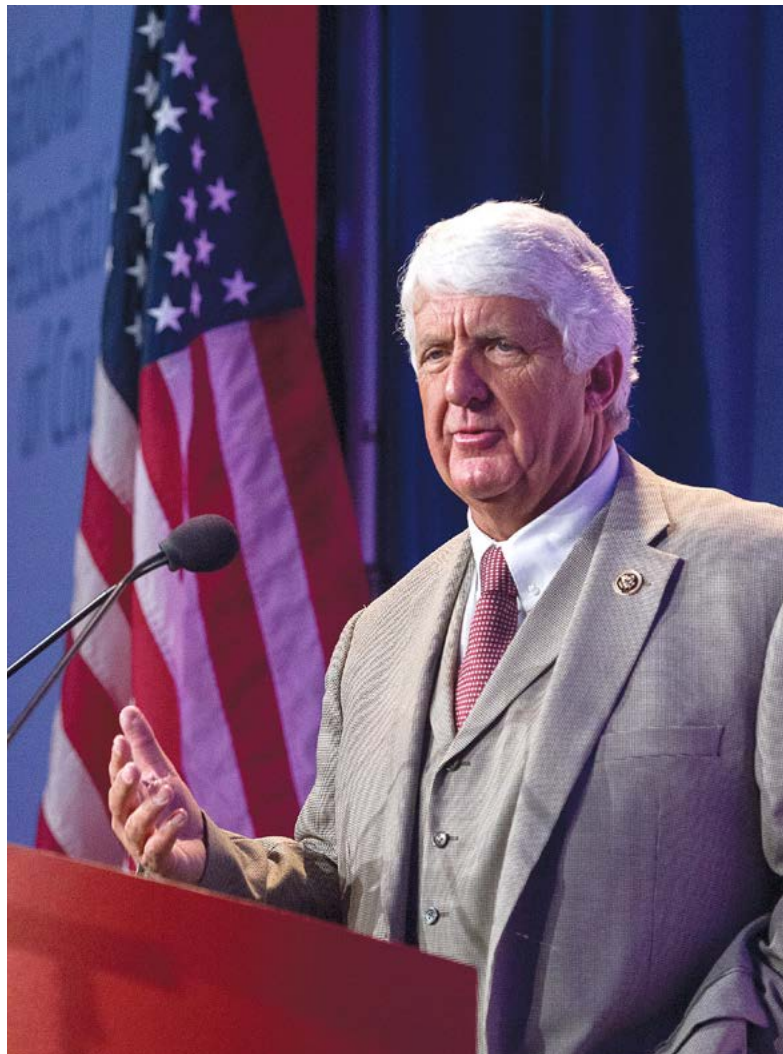
The surface transportation bill's length and breadth would be dictated by how much tax revenue could be repatriated.

"This bill has to be long-term, fiscally responsible and make sure Washington gets out of the way," he said, alluding to conditions and processes for federally funded

projects. "When you use your own dollars, and state dollars, you can get projects done, quicker and at a lower cost."

Along with the surface transportation reauthorization, many other bills loom large: FAA reauthorization, pipeline safety reauthorization, FEMA reform, GSA reform, passenger rail safety, water resources and Waters of the U.S.

He opposes Waters of the U.S. "It's going to cost you a lot of money, jobs, economic impacts to agriculture developers," he said.



Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah)

"It's something we're fighting very, very hard on."

He urged county officials to show their representatives in Congress where roads and bridges are in need of repair.

"Some of my colleagues on my side of the aisle, I think they need more education than others," he said about Republican firsthand experience with infrastructure needs. "My colleagues on the other side of the aisle, sometimes when there's a pot of money they want to spend it in seven or eight different new ways. I think we need to have a focus on where the money needs to be spent — on critical infrastructure, like roads and bridges."

He argued that the U.S. Constitution's Postal Power makes interstate commerce, and infrastructure in support of that commerce, a federal responsibility.

"There are many departments in Washington D.C. that I'd be happy to cut their spending. When it comes to the security of this nation and infrastructure needs, that should be one of our focuses for the federal government."

### ■ Rob Bishop

Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), the new chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, took swipes at the Obama Administration's public lands policies, which he la-

beled "non-creative," and promised at least one-year funding for the beleaguered Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program.

SRS had supported essential community services in eligible counties, mostly in the West, since 2000. It expired on Sept. 30, 2014. Since then counties have faced hard decisions about how to fill the funding gaps left by its loss.

Bishop, an avid proponent of returning more control over federal lands to state and local governments, said he is looking for new kinds of solutions in the ways the country manages its public lands.

Among the items on his agenda: full and long-term guaranteed funding for SRS and payment in lieu of taxes (PILT), the broader public lands reimbursement program that is also subject to the whims of appropriators. "It's time," he said, "that you don't have to feel like you have to grovel."

Exploiting the energy resources on public lands is also another priority for the committee chairman. "If this country is actually going to move forward and become a world leader in the area of energy, and use affordable energy to push full employment and actually have jobs in this country, we've got to develop the energy that's on federal lands,

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Secretary of Labor Tom Perez





# Ex-White House tech guru: Counties do innovate

Jennifer Pahlka, founder and executive director for Code for America, demystified her organization's esoteric name, emphasizing that technology "was a third- or fourth-order question" in government.

"What comes first is users," she told attendees of the Technology Innovation Summit. "We don't need to be all be coders, but good governance and good society is now inextricably linked to at least an understanding of the digital."

Pahlka recently served as the deputy chief technology officer in the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy.

She issued a call for county government officials and administrators to work more closely with technology leaders to tell counties' stories and put counties' services forward in a way that greets users and makes county services accessible.

"It is how we govern, it's in every service we provide," she said of technology. "We need to integrate that in and think about it."

She relayed the experience that three of her organization's fellows had when working with the city and



Jennifer Pahlka, founder and executive director of Code for America, speaks to NACo Technology Innovation Summit luncheon attendees.

county of Honolulu. Their hosts insisted they work on the county's website, a job far too daunting for their resources, but they analyzed most-searched-for content and with the help of acquaintances in county

government, spent a weekend assembling more effective answers for the most pressing questions users had for the site.

"Participating in government is not just complaining," she said.



Photos by Jack Hernandez

Shelley Goodman Taub, Oakland County, Mich., and Don Couch, Maui County, Hawai'i follow a Tech Summit presentation on a tablet.

"It's offering your hands and saying 'I can be involved with this.'"

She acknowledged that government fights an uphill battle in many people's minds when it comes to innovation. Although the private sector is viewed as faster, government retains credibility and unity that can make up for that disadvantage.

"What degrades the reputation

of government, in innovation, is the perception that while the rest of the world is moving so fast...there's a perception that it isn't moving so fast in government," she said.

"Governments will always be constrained, always have less capacity than people want them to have. Where community can come together and be that capacity, government can be the platform."



# EPA needs do-over on 'Waters of the U.S.' rule

The EPA needs to "go back to the drawing board" on its proposed rule on "Waters of the U.S.," according to Susan Bodine, chief counsel for U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

There's still too much uncertainty in the draft "waters" rule, she said, adding that as written, it would allow EPA to "claim jurisdiction over virtually all water anywhere," with few exceptions. At a joint House-Senate committee hearing in February, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy told lawmakers that any suggested changes in the proposed rule would not be enough to warrant a re-proposal. Bodine's committee bosses disagree, she told NACo's Environment, Energy and Land Use Committee.

"We certainly have many states opposing the rule; many local governments asking the agency to go back to the drawing board," Bodine said. "We have the chief counsel for the Small Business Administration's office of advocacy telling EPA and the Corps to go back to the drawing board because they failed to consider small business impacts and small governmental impacts that the statute requires...."

Following the February hearing, at which NACo First Vice President



Photos by Jack Hernandez

Susan Bodine, chief counsel, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, reels off a list of concerns about EPA's proposed Waters of the U.S. rule at the Environment, Energy and Land Use Committee meeting.

Sallie Clark testified, the committee chairs issued a joint statement, saying: "We will continue to conduct oversight over the EPA and work together towards legislation to prevent this flawed rule from being finalized."

Bodine noted that an EPA report, *Connectivity of Streams and Wetlands to Downstream Waters*, was just issued in January 2015 — after the comment period on the rule had closed last November. Its findings, she said, should have been a part of the public discussion.

Still unclear, she added, are unequivocal definitions "tributary" and a "significant nexus" of waters. She called an EPA definition of the latter — "any connection that's more than insubstantial" — a "circular" definition that lacks clarity and specifics.

EPA received one million comments on the proposed rule by the November 2014 deadline, Bodine said, a volume it would be impossible for EPA to consider in time



Tom Tidwell, chief, U.S. Forest Service, addresses the Public Lands Steering Committee.



# WIOA maintains local governance

COMMITTEES from page 10

to issue a final rule this spring, as planned.

## ■ Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee

At the juncture of justice and public safety, prescription drug abuse poses a growing threat, with 16,000 overdose deaths from prescription painkillers in 2013 and another 8,000 from heroin overdoses, but counties now have a weapon in the war against opioid addiction.

Naloxone, a medication that combats the effects of opioids, is being increasingly used to save lives of heroin users in the throes of what would otherwise be fatal overdose.

“When officers trained in use of Naloxone recognize signs of an overdose, their ability to administer the drug quickly can mean the difference between life and death,” said Michael Botticelli, director of the White House’s Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). The ONDCP has given states \$12 million to help supply them with the medicine and train local first responders.

Denise O’Donnell, director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance in the Justice Department’s Office of Justice Programs and said a multi-jurisdictional approach, addressing health, criminal justice and interactions with pharmacies, is necessary.

Botticelli said Good Samaritan laws, which protect 911 callers from arrest and prosecution when they report a drug overdose, are crucial to encouraging people to alert authorities when someone overdoses.

## ■ Community, Economic and Workforce Development Committee

Portia Wu, the Department of Labor’s (DOL) assistant secretary for employment and training, encouraged county leaders to begin preparing now for changes that Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) will bring later this year. Many of its requirements take effect on July 1.

The act was signed into law in July 2014 and updates the rules governing federal employment and training programs, and their state and local administration. It maintains local governance over workforce training programs, and strives to better prepare employees to meet the needs in existing and growing job sectors.

She noted the Obama Administration’s commitment to workforce training through efforts such as the president’s proposal to make community college free.



Stan Gimont, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, takes his turn at the lectern during the Community, Economic and Workforce Development Committee meeting. Also pictured (l-r) are: Commissioner Tony Hyde, Columbia County, Ore., and Tom Guevara, U.S. Economic Development Administration.

One key goal of WIOA is to improve employment opportunities for those ages 16 to 24. While unemployment nationally is below 6 percent, it’s still in the double digits for this demographic, she explained.

“That’s the future of our workforce. If we don’t invest there, we are not putting ourselves on the glide path to success,” Wu said.

She added that the Labor Department is investing in apprenticeship

training partnerships for youths and young adults. Learn-and-earn job programs have long been used in the skilled trades. DOL is offering \$100 million in grants to expand registered apprenticeship programs in more technological fields, such as health care, information technology and advanced manufacturing. Public-private partnerships are encouraged to apply by the April 30 deadline.



Photo by David Hathcox

San Miguel County, N.M. Commissioner Rock Ulibarri discusses the impact of the court ruling that stayed parts of President Obama’s executive order on immigration at the Immigration Reform Task Force meeting.

# Perez eyes county help in building ‘skills superhighway’

SPEAKERS from page 9

and offshore as well, and that’s where my committee’s jurisdiction comes in.”

Energy development on federal lands impacts the entire economy, the entire country and what kind of foreign policy the country can have,” he added.

## ■ U.S. Secretary of Labor Tom Perez

Secretary of Labor Tom Perez made an earnest and enthusiastic pitch for county help in building, what he termed, the new “skills superhighway,” during remarks before attendees at the 2015 Legislative Conference. “It’s an Eisenhower moment,” Perez told the audience, referring to President Dwight D. Eisenhower who initiated the now nearly 47,000-mile Interstate Highway System. “I need your help as we revamp the skills superhighway.”

Perez, who served in local government as a Montgomery County Md. council member, said as the economy continues to recover, the challenge becomes, as he said, to “take this tailwind and turn it into shared prosperity.”

He outlined three principals guiding the Administration’s efforts in building the skills superhighway.

- Demand-driven workforce development: Perez said that in his talks with businessmen, common to all his conversations was their need for a trained workforce. “We need to work to fill that pipeline.”

- Take the job seeker where you find them

- Every worker is gifted and talented: “There is no such thing as a spare American,” he said.

The secretary also gave a huge shout out to apprenticeships, which he believes have been devalued in the U.S. They have application beyond the traditional skilled trades, he noted. “Apprenticeship is the other college, only without the debt.”

Community colleges also got high-fives from Perez. He called them the “secret sauce of success across the economy.”

## ■ David Gregory

The media landscape is changing so rapidly as to be “almost unrecognizable,” according to David Gregory, a veteran former reporter and six-year host of NBC’s *Meet the Press*.

“Media is becoming more

fractured,” he said. “There’s so much information flying at us; there’s more of an onus on all of us as consumers of news to weigh it, to say, ‘Is this something I can trust? Is this useful to me? Does it seem true.’”

During his remarks, after which he left time for a few audience questions, Gregory shared anecdotes from his more than two decades with NBC, including his “difficult” parting of the ways with the network.

Whoever fills the moderator chairs of the Sunday morning political shows, holding an audience’s attention will continue to be a challenge. In the age of DVRs and on-demand video, “appointment television” has taken a big hit, he said. A viewer no longer has to commit to watching something at a specific time on a specific day.

Gregory gave his assessment of President Obama’s performance and looked ahead to who might succeed him. Obama embraced “change” as his mantra, but once in office, “This president who said Bush got it wrong on foreign policy, on Iraq... and then he came in and actually accelerated aspects of the national security state that was started under President Bush,” Gregory said.

Looking at the potential field of candidates for 2016, he said Jeb Bush and Hillary Clinton seem well-positioned to become their parties’ nominees.

The question for Clinton, he said, is “How does she say I am the future when she represents so much of the past?” For Bush to win, he’ll have to prove his conservative *bona fides* and appeal to a much broader coalition of voters than past GOP candidates.

As for Gregory, post-NBC, he’s writing a book about faith and spirituality, scheduled for publication later this year.



David Gregory





# Handling of mentally ill offenders tops workshops

Monday, Feb. 23

## ■ Reducing the Number of Individuals with Mental Illness in County Jails

### Who spoke?

- Patrick Fleming, director of behavioral health services (retired), Salt Lake County, Utah
- Gilbert Gonzales, director, behavioral health services, Bexar County, Texas
- Fred Osher, M.D., director of health systems and services policy, Council of State Governments' Justice Center

### What participants learned:

Numbers don't lie. And in Bexar County, Texas, the data on arrestees with mental illness or substance use disorder being diverted from jail has been impressive. It's also saving money. Today, about 2,200 nonviolent offenders per month are diverted from jail, Gonzales said. The county has a population of more than 1.7 million and a jail that can hold over 1,000 inmates.

Starting in 2002, a group of stakeholders began meeting that included law enforcement, judges and local hospital systems, among others. Their goal was to decrease the number of mentally ill inmates by keeping them from becoming inmates, that is, evaluating their mental health or substance use issues at the earliest point of contact — upon arrest and before booking. Police can refer them to a county Restoration Center, which



Photos by David Hathcox

Dr. Fred Osher (l), Council of State Governments, responds to a question from a workshop audience member. Also pictured (l-r): Gilbert Gonzales, Bexar County, Texas; Pat Fleming, Salt Lake County, Utah; and Leon Evans, Bexar County, Texas.

can assess mental health needs and refer them to appropriate treatment.

Each of the county's 5,000 law enforcement officers is required to take 40 hours of critical incident training. A video about the restoration center's services ([http://youtu.be/\\_7Pc8V-iXw0](http://youtu.be/_7Pc8V-iXw0)) is shown daily at police and sheriff's roll call.

Gonzales said the population that been successfully diverted to mental health services has a rearrest rate of 18 percent, compared to 34 percent for those not diverted.

Through a partnership between

NACo and the Council of State Governments Justice Center, an initiative to scale-up this kind of approach is underway, Fleming said. He outlined six steps of the process: convene a team of county leaders, establish a benchmark against which to measure success, assess treatment and service capacity, develop a plan with measurable outcomes, use evidence-based practices and track data.

"We want to establish a baseline count so we can come back to you with both the pretrial and the sentenced population — and their composition — and you can

understand where the initiatives that you're sponsoring make a difference," Dr. Osher said.

NACo and CSG will soon issue a call to action for counties that wish to commit to learning more about, and implementing, such measures.

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## ■ Integrity and Civility Management

### Who spoke?

- Stuart Brody, consultant, Integrity Intensive

### What participants learned:

Brody argued that ethics rules, particularly in government, were fundamentally limited, and personal decision-making skills would do the heavy lifting when faced with difficult decisions, which he framed as a competition of "rights," rather than right and wrong.

"Ethics is a regime of compliance," he said. "Integrity is a culture of values."

He outlined the three primary conflicts of interest that public officials face — their own ambition versus public interest, loyalty to a contributor versus the duty to be free of those deflections of interest and party versus public interest.

"Ethics is the foundation of integrity but it's insufficient to practice integrity," he said. "Integrity as we're going to use it, is the skill at decision making."

That decision making, he said, could often run contrary to deeply held cultural traditions, including the Golden Rule.

"Say your neighbor asks you for help getting his child a job with the county," he said. "Following the golden rule, wouldn't you want him to do it if you were in his role?"

Brody facilitated several group discussion examples using ethical dilemma prompts.

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## ■ Cybersecurity: The New Business Priority for Protecting Private Health and Financial Information

### Who spoke?

- Tim Tompkins, senior director for security innovations, Aetna
- Patrice Bordron, IT risk leader, Nationwide
- Matthew Chevrax, U.S. Secret Service

### What participants learned:

Passwords might not be the best way to protect users' identities online.

Tompkins explained that a behavioral model of authentication can be a more accurate, and multi-faceted, than binary — correct-or-incorrect — password authentication.

Those authentications can include the type of device, geolocation, operating system and user behavior.

"If your account gets a log-in one day using an iPhone in the U.S. and the next day in China using an Android device, it's suspicious," he said.



David Whicker (l) chief information officer for Rockingham County, N.C., introduces cybersecurity speakers Matthew Chevrax, Tim Tompkins and Patrice Bordron.



# Workshops cover economic development, justice systems

WORKSHOPS from page 12

Chevraux demonstrated how easily stolen credit card information can be purchased online using bitcoin. He described the organized crime characteristics common in identity theft — mostly Russian-speaking from Eastern Europe — and walked through the investigation and prosecution of one such hacker in the mid- 2000s.

Staff contact: Jerryl Guy, 202.942.4229, jguy@naco.org

## ■ Power in Numbers: Forging Regional Economic Development Partnerships

### Who spoke?

- Lillian Salerno, USDA Rural Development
- Supervisor Orlando Trainer, Oktibbeha County, Miss.
- Commissioner Renee Price, Orange County, N.C.
- Supervisor Claire Collins, Bath County, Va.

### What participants learned:

Rural economic development needn't originate in your backyard to benefit your county was the key takeaway from this session. County elected officials from Mississippi, North Carolina and Virginia outlined how partnerships with neighboring counties and localities in their region are helping to grow their economies.

"When you're talking about trying to land these major industrial projects and prospects that can really be a game changer for your community, first of all you have to have the resources in order to attract them," Trainer said. "And we realized in Starkville (the county seat of Oktibbeha County) that we were lacking in that area." Not totally lacking, however. Starkville is home to the University of Mississippi.

Trainer shared how his county, in northeast Mississippi, worked collaboratively with neighboring Clay County, the state, and regional economic development partners to land Yokohama Tire Corp. While it's in Clay County, not Oktibbeha, Trainer said his county benefits.

"What benefits Clay County... benefits Oktibbeha. There's no mandate that says you can't (live in Oktibbeha County) and work in Clay County," he said.

Price shared how her county was chosen as the first U.S. manufacturing site for the Japan's largest candy maker Morinaga & Co., Ltd.

"It took 18 months, and it was like dating process to try to bring them in," she said. The company



Photos by David Hathcox

Group interactions highlighted the Integrity and Civility Management workshop.

broke ground on the \$48 million factory last June and it's expected to open this year.

Again, a local government partner played a key role. Price said the deal would not have been possible without the city of Mebane, located mostly in neighboring Alamance County with a portion in Orange.

It's providing water and sewer infrastructure to the site.

"Once we landed this deal, other businesses started coming and asking about the land across the road, so it's having spinoff effects already," she said.

Bath County, Va. (pop. 4,700) is the least populous of the three coun-

ties, but its biggest asset is tourism. It's home to the Homestead Resort, a national landmark.

Collins focused on her county's and neighboring Highland County's "cultural and heritage-based asset managed development." Fifty percent of the businesses in the county are home-based, so growth

is largely dependent on Internet connectivity, she said, and growth opportunities are in those that complement tourism.

The two counties are partnering through a broadband accessibility grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (a CDBG planning grant) to assess the opportunities to work with the private sector. Currently, they're developing a telecommunication s plan to identify business and community needs, and solutions.

## Tuesday, Feb. 24

## ■ Federal Legislative Policies Affecting County Justice Systems

### Who spoke?

- Jay Nelson, government affairs manager, Council of State Governments
- Elizabeth Pyke, director of government affairs, National Criminal Justice Association

### What participants learned:

The Republican takeover of the U.S. Senate helped create a "perfect storm" that Pyke thinks could mean dramatic justice reform.

"This Congress has been in session a little more than a month and we've already seen a number



Wake County, N.C. Commissioners Caroline Sullivan and Sig Hutchinson take notes at the workshop on reducing the number of mentally ill inmates in jails.

See **WORKSHOPS** page 14





# Resolutions now bound for Annual Conference in July

Seven NACo steering committees passed interim policy resolutions during their Legislative Conference meetings.

## COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STEERING COMMITTEE

### ■ Support Reauthorization and Appropriations for the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration

**Issue:** Appropriations and reauthorization legislation for the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA).

**Interim Policy:** NACo urges Congress to support reauthoriza-

tion and appropriations for the U.S. Department of Commerce's EDA to keep communities strong and economically viable at a time when our nation needs it the most.

### ■ The National Housing Trust Fund

**Issue:** Allocation of National Housing Trust Fund (HTF) resources.

**Interim Policy:** NACo urges Congress and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide for the allocation of HTF funds to local governments. Driving HTF resources to the local and county levels will ensure these federal affordable housing resources are effectively targeted and tailored to meet the unique and individualized affordable housing needs of local communities across the nation. In the event that increased HTF resources

become available, Congress and HUD are also urged to provide a formula allocation of HTF resources directly to local governments.

### ■ FY16 Appropriations for the Department of Housing and Urban Development

**Issue:** Support FY2016 Appropriations for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

**Interim Policy:** NACo urges Congress to support the following levels of funding for core U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs in the FY2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill: no less than \$3.3 billion in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) formula funding;

no less than \$1.2 billion in formula funding for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME); \$2.1 billion for Homeless Housing Assistance grants, including at least \$250 million for the Emergency Solutions Grant program plus an amount to fully fund expiring supportive housing and Shelter Plus Care rent subsidy contracts; full funding for existing Section 8 project-based, tenant-based contracts and administrative fees and \$500 million in Section 108 Loan Guarantee authority.

In addition, NACo opposes the imposition of a funding threshold to receive CDBG formula funds directly or elimination of "grandfathering" provisions that allow cities and counties to maintain their entitlement status. NACo also does not support diverting CDBG formula funds to other categorical grant programs.

## ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND LAND USE STEERING COMMITTEE

### ■ Allow Publicly Owned Treatment Works to Operate as Designed, Including Peak Wet Weather Flow Management Techniques Such as Blending

**Issue:** During heavy rain events Publicly Owned Treatment Works ("POTWs" a/k/a wastewater treatment plants) "overflow" the increased storm water around the primary treatment plant, blend the overflow back into the treated water from the primary treatment plant, and then discharge ("blending"). The EPA is attempting to bypass the normal rulemaking process and ban blending.

**Interim Policy:** NACo supports the crafting and uniform application of Clean Water Act regulations and permits such that Publicly Owned Treatment Works can operate their facilities in the manner in which they were designed and permitted, including the use of peak wet weather flow management techniques such as blending.

### ■ The Environmental Protection Agency's Efforts to Tighten Ozone Air Quality Regulations

**Issue:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) effort to tighten ozone air quality standards.

**Interim Policy:** NACo opposes implementation of the EPA's proposed 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone until the 2008 NAAQS for ozone have been fully implemented.

### ■ Creation of a National Program to Allow States to Offset Air Pollution Exceedances

**Issue:** Giving states the flexibility to manage air pollution within their borders.

**Interim Policy:** NACo supports the creation of an EPA policy to grant states and local governments the authority to leverage air quality improvements in one region to offset the non-attainment status of another adjacent region during the same period to avoid non-attainment status in the region whose air quality exceeds the current standards.

### ■ Executive Order Establishing a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard

**Issue:** The President issued an executive order creating a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) that directs all agencies to use one of three resiliency criteria in their policies, projects, and programs receiving federal funding.

**Interim Policy:** NACo urges the comment period on Executive Order 13690 be extended until June 30, 2015 and that the President and Congress direct all federal agencies to engage NACo and state and local government agencies prior to implementation.

## FINANCE, PENSIONS AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS STEERING COMMITTEE

### ■ Federal Voting Systems Standards

**Issue:** Federal voting system standards.

**Interim Policy:** NACo endorses the principles developed by the Future Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VMSG) Working Group that articulate a vision for the federal VMSG to effectively foster innovation and reduce the costs of upgrading and purchasing voting equipment.

## HEALTH STEERING COMMITTEE

### ■ Support Amendment of 42 CFR Privacy Provisions to Create a Uniform Set of Regulations Based on HIPAA Privacy Rules

**Issue:** Interagency coordination to assist "high utilizers"

**Interim Policy:** NACo supports an amendment to 42 Code of

## Republican Senate takeover could be 'perfect storm' for federal justice reform

WORKSHOPS from page 13

of significant bills introduced that would really promote fairly radical change and important reforms in the states," she said. "I think it's a very exciting time in Congress right

now. The fiscal conservatives want to cut prison spending, the faith groups on the left and the right who say 'we're not doing this right,' and the civil rights groups and the states and local governments who say we can do this better and we have been

doing this better and 'let's show you, the federal government, the way to more successful planning and programming.'"

That said, the two years of protection from sequestration are over, and discretionary spending on grant programs is due to tumble, as it has 40 percent since 2010. With the FBI and Bureau of Prisons' budgets basically untouchable, grant funding absorbs most of the budget control impact.

Nelson spoke about two bills that the Council of State Government is focusing on: Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act, which has funded 415 mental health courts 854 local police and county sheriffs' offices, and is up for five-year reauthorization through the Mental Health Collaboration Act. That reauthorization would include mental health training for law enforcement and training for dealing with victims of post-traumatic stress disorder.

The other, Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act, establishes a national center of excellence in criminal justice and mental health to provide education, training and technical assistance around mental health. It also includes comprehensive training for law enforcement agencies to respond to incidents involving people with mental health issues.

**Staff contact:** Yejin Jang, 202.942.4239, [yjang@naco.org](mailto:yjang@naco.org)



Photo by David Hathcox

A lighter moment at a workshop on forging regional economic development partnerships captures a smile from Lee Peek, Marathon County, Wis.



# Counties want into National Health Service Corps loan repayment program

## RESOLUTIONS from page 14

Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 2 privacy provisions to coordinate with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) privacy provisions.

### ■ Change the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

**Issue:** Treatment providers for substance abuse disorders such as opiate abuse are not always fully aware of what the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) does/does not allow when it comes to disclosing patient safety concerns to appropriate parties (i.e. family members or law enforcement officials). Furthermore, treatment providers are confined by strict language within HIPAA, which indicates disclosure is limited to when there is a threat of both “serious and imminent” danger to the patient or others.

**Interim Policy:** NACo urges Congress to amend language in HIPAA to clarify that treatment providers may disclose their concerns about a patient’s safety to appropriate parties when they believe in “good faith” that there is a threat of “serious or imminent” danger to the patient or others. Currently, disclosure is limited to when there is a threat of “serious and imminent” danger to the patient or others.

### ■ Medicaid Institution for Mental Disease Exclusion

**Issue:** Needed revisions to the Medicaid Institution for Mental Disease (IMD) exclusion.

**Interim Policy:** NACo calls on Congress to amend, but not eliminate, the current IMD exclusion for adults between ages 21 and 64, as follows:

- For non-hospital, community-based mental health and substance use residential care for adults ages 21 to 64, the exclusion should be revised to reflect modern evidence based practices and current economic realities. Thus, for persons ages 21 to 64 served in these non-hospital residential placements of size 17 and larger through evidence based programs, up to 90 days of care per year should be eligible for federal reimbursement. Beyond 90 days, the IMD exclusion should still remain in effect.

- For hospital-based mental health and substance use care for adults ages 21 to 64, the exclusion should be revised to reflect improvements and efficiencies that have been made in hospital-based care, plus the economic reality of modern managed care, which assures that only the most minimal, necessary,



Photo by Jack Hernandez

The Board of Directors take a vote on policy resolutions.

inpatient care is provided. Thus, for persons ages 21 to 64 served in these hospital placements of size 17 and larger through evidence-based programs, up to 15 days of care per year should be eligible for reimbursement. Beyond 15 days, the IMD exclusion should remain in effect.

### ■ National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program

**Issue:** The eligibility of county jails for designation as health professional shortage areas for the purpose of the National Health Service Corps.

**Interim Policy:** NACo urges Congress to amend the National Health Service Corps loan repayment program to allow county and municipal jails to be eligible for the program. Currently county jails are prohibited from being designated as health professional shortage areas. NACo urges Congress to review this policy and allow county and municipal jails to be designated as health professional shortage areas.

### ■ Maintain Effort for Essential Support Services for Persons with Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

**Issue:** State and local maintenance of effort for support services for persons with behavioral health

and developmental disabilities

**Interim Policy:** NACo encourages, during implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), maintenance of effort for federal, state, county, mental health and behavioral health authorities and city general revenue funds for social support programs that serve persons with behavioral health and developmental disabilities, including the newly insured disability population; these programs, particularly affordable housing and job supports, must be available so

that persons with disabilities can become and remain fully independent in their home communities.

### ■ Treatment of Substance Use Conditions

**Issue:** Need for new policy on treatment for substance use conditions

**Interim Policy:** Treatment for substance use conditions should be based upon proven evidence based practices, including, when appropriate and necessary, medication assisted treatment. Such care

always should be accompanied by assessments of improvement and outcome to assure that the care provided actually is working.

## JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY STEERING COMMITTEE

### ■ Funding to Combat Child Sex Trafficking and to Assist its Victims

**Issue:** The commercial sex trafficking of children in urban and rural communities throughout the nation

**Interim Policy:** NACo supports increased Department of Justice (DOJ) funding for grants to state and local governments to combat child sex trafficking and assist its victims, including funding for victim-centered services, law enforcement, training, and multi-agency collaborations. Congress should enact legislation to authorize and appropriate additional funding for such grants, and the DOJ should allocate a higher percentage of its trafficking victim services appropriations for grants to state and local governments.

### ■ Urge the Federal Government to Suspend, Instead of Terminate, Medicaid Coverage for Incarcerated Individuals

**Issue:** Medicaid benefits may



Toni Carter, Ramsey County, Minn., chair, Human Services and Education Steering Committee, presents the committee's report.



# Youth shackling in court can be unnecessary, traumatizing

## RESOLUTIONS from page 15

be withdrawn when an individual is incarcerated as opposed to convicted.

**Interim Policy:** NACo urges Congress to pass legislation that:

(a) amends federal law to prohibit states from terminating eligibility for individuals who are inmates of public institutions or residents of IMDs based solely on their status as inmates or residents; and

(b) requires states to establish a process under which an inmate or resident of an Institute for Mental Disease, who continues to meet all applicable eligibility requirements, is placed in a suspended status so that the state does not claim FFP for services the individual receives, but the person remains on the state's rolls as being eligible for Medicaid; and

(c) Once release or discharge from the facility is anticipated, require states to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that an eligible individual is placed in payment status so that he or she can begin receiving Medicaid-covered services immediately upon leaving the facility.

### ■ Urge Federal, State and Local Adoption of a Presumption Against the Use of Unnecessary Restraints of Juveniles in Court

**Issue:** Many youth in custody are forced to appear in court proceedings in restraints that unnecessarily humiliate, stigmatize and traumatize young people. Restraining youth who pose no safety threat is inconsistent with the rehabilitative goals of juvenile justice.

**Interim Policy:** NACo urges federal, state and local government adoption of a presumption against the use of unnecessary restraints of juveniles in court and to only allow restraints after an in-person opportunity to be heard and a finding that restraints are the least restrictive means necessary to prevent flight or harm to the juvenile or others.

### ■ Reauthorize the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act

**Issue:** The Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act has not been reauthorized since 2002.

**Interim Policy:** NACo urges Congress to support the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act.



Public Lands Steering Committee Chair Ron Walter, Chelan County, Wash., presents his committee's report to the NACo Board.

## PUBLIC LANDS STEERING COMMITTEE

### ■ Support the Delisting of the American Burying Beetle

**Issue:** Delisting the American Burying Beetle from the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

**Interim Policy:** NACo urges removal of the American Burying Beetle from the list of endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

### ■ Oppose the Proposed Listing of the Black Pine Snake as a Threatened Species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Issue:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposed listing the black pine snake as a threatened species

**Interim Policy:** NACo urges the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

to withdraw the proposed listing of the black pine snake as a threatened species.

### ■ Allow Re-Classification of Diseased and Insect Infested Forest Products

**Issue:** The abundance of forest products (trees) that are affected by disease and insect infestation, yet still classified as a Federal Asset and regulated as such.

**Interim Policy:** NACo urges the Federal land management agencies to establish the ability of local land managers to reclassify trees and timber products that have been affected by insect infestation or disease to a classification that would allow for the removal of these products without the accountability and oversight necessary for the harvesting of undamaged (green) timber for commercial use.



Peter McLaughlin, Hennepin County, Minn., presents the Transportation Steering Committee's interim policy proposals to the Board. McLaughlin chairs the committee.

### ■ Share Post-Fire Litigation Settlement Funds with Counties

**Issue:** The continuing increase in catastrophic wildfire loss of timber resources on public lands and its impacts on available revenue return for counties.

**Interim Policy:** NACo urges the strengthening, through additional funding, by adhering to the following; 16 U.S. Code 500-Payment and evaluation of receipts to State or Territory for schools and road; moneys received. NACo urges Congress to change the current language in USC579c to allow fire settlement dollars that are determined upon the timber value lost, to return 25 percent of such settlement to counties as stipulated above in 16 U.S. Code 500. This change will recognize the timber revenue lost to counties by catastrophic wildfire and the Federal Government's obligation to counties under the Act of May 23, 1908.

### ■ Support Reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools

### and Community Self-Determination Act and Providing Expedited Payments for FY 2014

**Issue:** Urgent need to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) and expedite the disbursement of retroactive FY 2014 payments.

**Interim Policy:** NACo urges Congress to reauthorize SRS for FY 2014 with an appropriation equal to the full funding amount as authorized in FY 2013. NACo further urges Congress to direct SRS payments to states and counties and provide retroactive payments to counties in FY 2014 expeditiously.

In order to expedite payments, NACo is urging Congress to eliminate barriers and provide the flexibility to counties with the use of Title I, II and III funds.

### ■ Support Revised Wildfire Disaster Funding

**Issue:** Needed mechanisms to

See RESOLUTIONS page 17

# What's in a Seal?

Baldwin County, Ala.



Named for Abraham Baldwin, founder of the University of Georgia, Baldwin County, Ala., was formed by the Mississippi Territorial Legislature in 1809. This makes the county older than the state of Alabama, which came into existence in the year 1819.

The seal of Baldwin County reflects the county's strong veneration for history and geography. Its motto in Latin, *Ne Plus Ultra*, means "The Very Best." The buck antlers on the yellow ribbon across the top of the seal represent the abundance of game found within the area. Similarly, the stylized fish flanking either side of the seal signify water sports and the bay, river and deep-sea fishing within the state, as well as the national phenomenon called Jubilee, found only on the shores of Baldwin County.

The words "recreation, industry, seafood and agriculture" are self-explanatory; Baldwin County boasts a wealth of all four. The tree symbolizes the vast forest resources — timber and naval stores (products derived from pine sap) — as well as the famous "Jackson's Oak," from whose limbs Andrew Jackson addressed his troops during the War of 1812. Also of historic note, the six flags on the seal — the official flags of Spain, France, England, Alabama, the Confederacy and the United States — symbolize the nations with past or present jurisdiction over the county. The Native American is simultaneously symbolic of the Fort Mims Massacre in 1813, the burial ground of William Weatherford "Red Eagle," and the contribution to archaeology from ancient Indian mounds and villages along its shores. The soldier, shown wearing the uniform of the Confederacy, signifies the ever-present willingness of the people of Baldwin County to fight to protect and preserve their rights as free people.

*Felisha Anderson, director of the Baldwin County Commission: Department of Archives and History, contributed.*



# Resolutions cover transportation funding, public lands

## RESOLUTIONS from page 16

fund wildfire suppression adequately and stop counterproductive “fire borrowing”

**Interim Policy:** NACo urges Congress to enact legislation like the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act so that the budgets of the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management will have protection of its resources appropriately devoted to hazardous fuel treatments through active management of the federally owned landscape, rather than having those resources drained by wildland fire suppression.

### ■ Support Amending Title III of Secure Rural Schools to Provide for Reimbursement of Patrol Expenditures

**Issue:** Support amending Title III of the Secure Rural Schools Act (SRSA) to provide for the reimbursement of sheriff patrol expenditures on federal lands.

**Interim Policy:** NACo supports amending Title III of the Secure Rural Schools Act (SRSA) to include reimbursement to counties for sheriff patrol expenditures on eligible federal Forest Service and BLM lands. Patrol expenditure reimbursements were disallowed with the release of a 2012 GAO report to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Before the GAO report, many counties used Title III funds to carry out routine law enforcement patrols on federal land. These patrols helped reduce and deter criminal activity and enhanced the safety of visitors to federal lands. County deputies are able to serve as first responders to any search and rescue or other emergency situation. Limiting the ability of counties to use Title III funds for patrol on federal lands has increased criminal activity and stretches the resources of sheriffs' offices to unsustainable levels.

## TRANSPORTATION STEERING COMMITTEE

### ■ Federal Freight Goods Movement Investment in the United States

**Issue:** The slowly deteriorating national surface transportation infrastructure needs real investment to adequately address the continued growth of the global economy and increases in imports and exports in and out of the United States.

**Interim Policy:** NACo urges Congress to examine the viability of a new dedicated funding source for freight goods movement in the reauthorization of Moving Ahead

for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) that does not take funding away from currently authorized programs. NACo further supports provisions in the next surface transportation reauthorization bill that incentivize freight planning at the local level.

### ■ Equitable Funding and Expenditures of the Highway Trust Fund

**Issue:** The long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund

**Interim Policy:** NACo urges Congress to ensure the long-term

solvency of the Highway Trust Fund by considering revenue sources that will better capture all users of the nation's highways and account for all vehicles. Congress should also consider reducing the allowable administrative costs in order to direct more funding toward highway improvement funding.

### ■ Local Transportation Safety Funding (SHPS Local Coordination)

**Issue:** Need for elevated coordination with local governments in

the development of State Strategic Highway Safety Plans

**Interim Policy:** NACo urges Congress to make safety on county roads a priority in the reauthorization of MAP-21 by requiring that state departments of transportation, at a minimum, cooperate with local government officials (including county transportation officials) in the development of State Strategic Highway Safety Plans (SHSPs) and by directing proportionate Highway Safety Improvement Program funding to areas of safety concern regardless of roadway ownership.

### ■ Local Transportation Safety Funding (Establishment of TZD Grant Program)

**Issue:** Need for additional funding for safety improvements in the reauthorization of MAP-21

**Interim Policy:** NACo supports the establishment of a federal Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) grant program that will provide funding to local governments and non-profit organizations for the purpose of implementing proven safety practices and programs.

## 2015 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

**Does your county have an innovative program that improves county government and increases services to county residents?**

For 45 years, NACo has recognized outstanding efforts in county government through the Achievement Awards Program. Awards are given in 21 different categories including Children and Youth, Criminal Justice, County Administration, health and many more. For more information on this year's awards cycle and to begin your application visit:

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

**QUESTIONS? CONTACT**  
[awards@naco.org](mailto:awards@naco.org)

**DEADLINE:**  
March 27 11:59 p.m. EDT

**NACo** National Association of Counties





# News From the Nation's Counties

## ► CALIFORNIA

• Unable to compete on salaries alone, **LAKE** and **MENDOCINO** counties are stepping up their efforts to **recruit more law enforcement officers**, *The Press-Democrat* reported. Other police agencies in the region are able to offer more lucrative pay and benefits.

"It's been ongoing forever," said Chris Macedo, Lake County undersheriff. "We are a training ground for other agencies."

His office has begun a series of recruiting meetings where potential employees can learn about available positions: seven deputies, eight corrections officers, five dispatchers, two correctional aides and two records technicians.

In neighboring Mendocino, a nonprofit public safety foundation offers \$8,000 police academy scholarships to candidates who graduate and commit to three years of county employment. Lake County officials are hoping a similar program can be started in their area.

• The Board of Supervisors in **YUBA COUNTY** is taking steps to limit "marijuana grows."

Despite the pleas of hundreds of protesters, the board approved new rules that would **ban growing pot** outdoors and limit to 12 the number of plants that can be grown indoors. Opponents said the change was a reversal of existing policy, according to KCRA TV News.

Some residents who grow marijuana for medicinal purposes, accustomed to planting outdoors, said they don't know how to cultivate the plant indoors.

Representatives of the Yuba County Patients Coalition said that if the marijuana ban becomes law, they would initiate a recall campaign against all five supervisors.

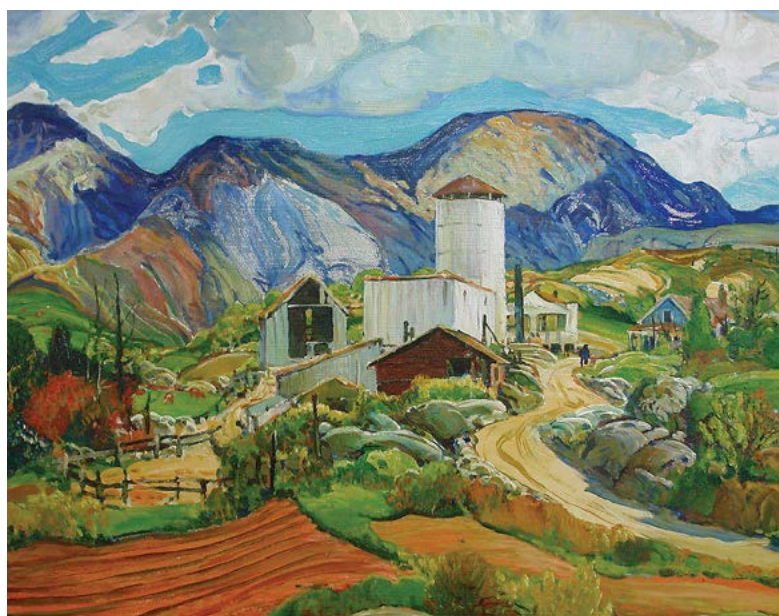
## ► FLORIDA

**VOLUSIA COUNTY** is experiencing an increase in reported cases of **leprosy**. Nationwide, approximately 80 people are infected each year, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

Three people in the county have been diagnosed with the disease within a five-month period. In the previous decade, only one person in the county had the disease, according to ABC News.

Health officials in nearby **BREVARD COUNTY** have also seen a recent increase in cases — 18 in the last five years.

Because the incubation period for leprosy, also known as Hansen's Disease, ranges from nine



## ► CALIFORNIA

An historic **SANDIEGO COUNTY**-owned painting titled "Highland Dairy" is on display in an exhibition highlighting the **county's natural beauty**.

The artist, the late Charles Reiffel, was commissioned by Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal Works Project Administration to create art for the County Administration Center when it was being built in the 1930s.

It will be on display at the California Center for the Arts through May 15.

The county owns several other paintings by Reiffel, including two lent to the San Diego Museum of Art in 2012.

months to 20 years, health officials don't think the recent cases signal a wave of new infections.

Barry Inman, an epidemiologist for Brevard County Department of Health, said some of the victims were diagnosed after interacting with armadillos, a known carrier of the disease.

## ► INDIANA

**LA PORTE COUNTY** and **LAKE COUNTY** officials will soon vote on whether to make a joint bid to **lease the Indiana Toll Road**. This comes after a private consortium operating the road filed for bankruptcy last year.

Under the agreement, a new nonprofit — the Northern Indiana Toll Road Authority, or NITRA — would issue toll road revenue bonds and bid to lease the highway. The bonds would be "non-recourse" bonds that would entail no liability for taxpayers if toll revenue failed to cover the cost of the bonds.

The agreement requires the approval of four bodies: each county's Board of Commissioners and County Councils.

## ► LOUISIANA

• The Lafayette area is now the state's **third largest metropolitan area** — behind New Orleans and Baton Rouge, thanks to the addition of **ACADIA**, **IBERIA** and **VERMILION** parishes. The region

now boasts a population of 479,116, according to updated federal census and Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

Previously, the metro area included only **LAFAYETTE** and **ST. MARTIN** parishes.

• A **new safe harbor site** has been identified for commercial fishermen in the state's coastal parishes — for when hurricanes blow in from the Gulf of Mexico — in **PLAQUEMINES PARISH**.

As many as 200 boats could tie up along the southern wall of the parish's Hero Canal to ride out a storm.

Fishermen identified the site after working with the Coast Guard, state and parish officials and private landowners, *The New Orleans Advocate* reported.

The parish asked the Coast Guard if it could install moorings at the canal and the Guard said yes. Next up will be finding funds for the project, said Guy Laigast, director of the Plaquemines Parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.

## ► MAINE

County sheriffs are squarely behind a bill proposed at the state Legislature that **reverse the state's jail consolidation**, enacted seven years ago. The Maine Sheriff's Association supports the measure.

In 2008, jails were unified with

the state and managed by a new State Board of Corrections, *The Ellsworth American* reported.

**WASHINGTON COUNTY** Jail Capt. Rich Rolfe said, "The Board of Corrections has made promises financially that they haven't kept. They've had seven years to put us in a financial bind. The state doesn't want to make good on their obligations to fund the jail."

**SAGAHADOC COUNTY** Sheriff Joseph Merry added that the governor's office has refused to nominate any board members, thus rendering the panel ineffective.

## ► NEW HAMPSHIRE

**GRAFTON COUNTY** commissioners are working to reduce the population of the county's Department of Corrections.

It recently partnered with two outside agencies to start a countywide **Restorative Justice Program**. The program's target population is troubled youths (ages 10–18) who need guidance due to their risky behavior. One component of the program is reimbursement for property damage.

The county has had a Drug Court Program for eight years, and it recently moved to start a Mental Health Court. A consolidation last September brought the three programs under an umbrella called Alternative Sentencing.

These programs are designed to break the cycle of incarceration and additionally to save money, since they are funded by tax payer funds.

## ► NEW JERSEY

• South Jersey could one day be home to a **regional jail facility** serving the needs of five nearby counties, with **CUMBERLAND COUNTY**'s entry into a \$800,000 shared-services study that will ultimately determine whether there is enough interest in a possible regional jail facility.

The study will assess the needs and feasibility of five counties — **ATLANTIC**, **BURLINGTON**, **CAMDEN**, **GLOUCESTER** and Cumberland, the *Cherry Hill Courier Post* reported.

• **SOMERSET COUNTY**'s freeholders approved a \$6.75 million bailout of a **public-private solar project**. **MORRIS** and **SUSSEX** counties must also approve nearly identical agreements.

Falling solar power market prices and litigation slowed the project, but the plan was to use the borrowed millions, and with

developer SunLight General Solar LLC and contractor Power Partners MasTec, to develop 71 projects atop public buildings in the three counties. Selling back electricity was expected to pay off the cost of the projects.

The counties' obligation remains to the bondholders of the initial \$88 million borrowed, officials told the *Courier-Post*. Officials from the three counties confirmed they are using many of the same solar pricing experts, attorneys, and other professionals who put the first deal together — but they also said that quickly settling the arbitration award was in the interest of easing the pain to taxpayers.

## ► NEW YORK

• **NASSAU COUNTY** is partnering with its medical center to make a new drug aimed at **fighting the heroin epidemic** available to addicts.

The medication Vivitrol, a once-a-month injection, helps free heroin addicts of their cravings. It is being administered as part of a program called "A Shot At Life," and has a very high success rate, according to CBS New York.

• Increasing investigations of **benefit fraud** has saved more than \$1 million, **SCHUYLER COUNTY** officials said.

The district attorney hired a full-time investigator, paid for by a state grant, to work with the welfare fraud unit in the county department of social services.

The welfare fraud unit has investigated 330 potential fraud cases, resulting in 23 arrests for welfare fraud, grand larceny and other criminal charges, compared to an average of four to eight arrests per year in the past, the *Star Gazette* reported.

Officials add the increased focus on fraud investigation will serve as a deterrent.

**CHEMUNG** and **STEBEN** counties will also receive grants for similar investigator positions.

## ► NORTH CAROLINA

The **GUILFORD COUNTY** Register of Deeds is introducing a "Thank You for Your Service" **discount program** to the county's veterans.

Veterans who file their military discharge papers will obtain a photo ID and begin receiving discounts on goods and services from participating local business and merchants.



## Financial Services News

# Your County's Nonprofit Organizations Can Save

By SARAH LINDSAY

PROGRAM MANAGER

NACo FINANCIAL SERVICES

U.S. Communities, the national purchasing cooperative founded by NACo, not only brings purchasing savings and solutions to state and local governments and educational institutions, but also to nonprofit organizations as well.

As civic leaders in counties, local

elected officials can raise awareness of U.S. Communities and help local nonprofit organizations by informing them of the opportunity to save on their everyday purchasing. Nonprofit discounts available through U.S. Communities can enable organizations to save on operating supplies and services, enabling them to commit more of their dollars towards their mission to the benefit of the community as a whole.

County officials can share information about U.S. Communities and how it benefits nonprofit organizations by directing them to [www.uscommunities.org/nonprofit](http://www.uscommunities.org/nonprofit).

With no cost to participate and no minimum order requirements, nonprofits of any size have the ability to purchase the products, services and solutions they need at volume discount prices that would be nearly impossible to attain individually.

Types of Nonprofits that use U.S. Communities:

- 501(c)3 organizations
- private schools, colleges and universities
- religious groups

• community and social services establishments

- volunteer organizations, and
- trade associations and special interest groups.

Today, more than 55,000 registered state and local government agencies, education institutions and nonprofits are utilizing U.S. Communities contracts to procure more than \$1.8 billion in products and services annually, resulting in significant savings on over a million competitively bid products and solutions.

U.S. Communities is the only national purchasing cooperative sponsored by the National Association of Counties, National League

of Cities, Association of School Business Officials International and U.S. Conference of Mayors as well as 37 state associations of counties. Created by public agencies to meet the needs of public agencies and nonprofit organizations, U.S. Communities combines the purchasing power of more than 90,000 agencies to provide the best overall government pricing. Contracts are competitively solicited to meet the rigorous public agency purchasing rules and regulations.

For more information, visit [www.uscommunities.org](http://www.uscommunities.org) or contact Sarah Lindsay at 202.942.4228 or [slindsay@naco.org](mailto:slindsay@naco.org).

## NACo on the Move

### ► In the News

• Coconino County, Ariz. Supervisor **Liz Archuleta** and Tarrant County, Texas Judge **Glen Whitley** appeared on Feb. 24 on *PBS NewsHour*. They discussed why immigration reform matters to counties. Archuleta and Yuma County, Ariz., Supervisor Lenore Stuart were also quoted in *Cronkite News* on this issue.

• *Honolulu Civil Beat* covered U.S. Vice President Joe Biden's remarks on Feb. 23, at the 2015 Legislative Conference.

• *Telecom Reports Daily* offered some pros and cons about the Federal Communications Commission's new municipal broadband order. The article cited NACo and described NACo's stance regarding the new order.

• *Marketplace Morning Report*, a national radio broadcast program, and *Politico*, a news journal, used NACo's sources to discuss funding for Homeland Security and why it is important for counties.

• A number of Japanese media outlets made an appearance at the NACo 2015 Legislative Conference to cover the first general session on Feb. 23, including three of the five leading daily papers — *Asahi Shimbun*, *Mainichi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun* — and the leading nonprofit news network in Japan, Kyodo News.

### ► NACo Officers and County Officials

• Immediate Past President **Linda Langston** was in Washington, D.C. on March 5 and 6 where she spoke at the French Embassy's FOCUS 2015 plenary session on "On the Road to Paris Climate Conference." She spoke about how to manage growing risk in city planning, how to strengthen infrastructures' resiliency and how to finance resilience.

• Commissioner **Mary Ann Borgeson** of Douglas County, Neb., and chair of the NACo Health Steering Committee was in Washington D.C. on March 4. She spoke at the national campaign launch of the new initiative from "Give an Hour" on mental health and wellness issues.

### ► NACo Staff

• On March 3–4, **Rob Pressly**, program manager, participated in the policy strategy meeting on Walkability and Active Transportation, hosted by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, to determine policies local, state and federal government can implement to improve walkability.



Leon Lawrence

• **Leon Lawrence** has joined NACo as design director. Before joining NACo, Lawrence worked with the *USA Weekend Magazine*—Gannett Co. as a design director. Prior to that, he worked with *USA Today* and *Emerge* magazine as an art director. He holds a bachelor's degree in graphic design from the University of Southern Mississippi.

## The H.R. Doctor Is In

# Long-term Caring: A Reminder

Any long-serving and caring Director of People Services or Director of Human Resources will see many examples over the course of his or her career involving the critical need for long-term care for employees or dependents.

Without warning — often in an instant — plans, dreams and life goals can change. All it takes is not wearing a seatbelt, being careless around weapons, some disease onslaught or just being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Our best defense against the possibility of these ugly outcomes is to carefully and consistently apply the HR Doctor's two premier bits of advice: "Act now to put off the day when something bad happens," and "Don't walk by something wrong!"

This means, of course, never allowing yourself to be in a vehicle without wearing a seatbelt. It means not ignoring anomalous symptoms of health trouble like shortness of breath, dizziness, pain, etc. It means never drinking even close to your capacity to act and think rationally. It also means giving up smoking to reduce the chances that you will hear your physician tell you that you have stage four lung cancer.

Is there a role for employers in helping deal with negative unexpected catastrophes? Absolutely. Employers, especially public employers, have a humane and a practical duty to make available benefits to help employees focus on work excellence rather than personal, serious difficulties. Isn't

this the same reason we might offer health insurance, retirement benefits or even paid time off? We do these things and more to help take worry and disruption out of the workforce as much as we can, while encouraging long-term performance and behavior success in serving the public.

All that leads to a reminder to county employers and, in fact, every employer in the country of the importance of figuring ways to have long-term care support available for employees.

The California Public Employees Retirement System notes that seven out of 10 people over the age of 65 will require long-term care. If you think assisted living or long-term care — call it what you will — is an issue for "old folks," I respectfully point out that 41 percent of people receiving long-term care support are under 65 years old.

This may be especially true in public hospitals providing care for indigents, many of whom will be young people whose motorcycle driving skills and judgments failed to include decisions to wear helmets or wear seatbelts in cars, as well as gunshot victims, etc.

The HR Doctor has witnessed firsthand the tragedy of hundreds of people facing a future of public dollars providing very basic care for decades because of an instant of impaired judgment.

The HR Doctor's strong belief and experience suggests that by the time you and I have coffee at

my assisted-living facility a couple of decades from now, if not longer (I hope), long-term care insurance will be as important, perhaps more important, than health insurance or retirement as an essential fringe benefit.

Even today, if you find yourself in a nursing home, you will spend an average of 2.3 years there. That will cost way over \$200,000 in current dollars just for the care that institution provides, not including your medical needs. Listen carefully and you will hear the clock ticking away at a rate of about \$260 a day... each day... each day.

So, dear elected officials, dear county executives, dear union leaders, dear HR colleagues, spend some precious time considering how to create long-term care support for employees upon whom you depend — we all depend — for the delivery of essential public services. Make it a high priority. Push, urge and include long-term care requirements in purchasing requests for proposals when you go out into the insurance market for benefits. Ask companies to tell you what options they might provide for long-term care coverage.

Work with local providers for such services and see if you can develop a local discount program or preferred provider relationships. Do it now before another tragedy crops up somewhere in the workforce — or much closer to your own home!

Phil Rosenberg • The HR Doctor



# Ohio prison population grows more rural, suburban than urban

NEWS FROM *from page 18*

## ► OHIO

Over the past two decades, the balance of Ohio residents sent to state prisons has shifted, with a majority coming from 82 rural and suburban counties since 2011, according to research by *The Gazette*. In the early 1990s, the state's six urban counties — CUYAHOGA, FRANKLIN, HAMILTON, LUCAS, MONTGOMERY and SUMMIT — sent the most prisoners.

County officials said it's a complex issue—including factors such as suburban and rural population growth, stricter law enforcement and the weakened economy during the Great Recession. But every county official contacted by *The Gazette* said drug crime was the chief cause. Ohio's Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation backs that up, noting that almost 92 percent of inmates in Ohio prisons in 2013 had a history of drug abuse.

Since 1993, felons sent to prison from Ohio's urban counties dropped by a third. Over that same period, suburban and rural counties sent 55 percent more people to prison.

And the shift isn't limited to counties bordering urban counties: *The Gazette's* analysis showed the increase in the number of people sent to prison was greater among counties that weren't adjacent to urban centers.

## ► OREGON

The nonprofit Archangel Ancient Tree Archive planted exact genetic duplicates of the largest and oldest champion coast redwood trees in the world in CURRY COUNTY's Lobster Creek County Park. The planting is in partnership with Curry County's Parks & Recreation and Juvenile Departments to provide, protect and preserve the natural and scenic parks of Curry County and to demonstrate the county's commitment to sustainability strategies outlined in the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development Strategic Plan.

## ► PENNSYLVANIA

Following the Pittsburgh City Council's lead, ALLEGHENY COUNTY Executive Rich Fitzgerald has announced six weeks of

paid parental leave to new mothers and fathers.

Fitzgerald said about 980 non-union employees in the county are eligible. The county has about 5,700 employees, but union employees are covered by various multi-year contracts. Last year, a dozen employees would have qualified. Nine employees could have used the leave in 2013, and seven in 2012, the *Tribune-Review* reported.

County Controller Chelsa Wagner introduced the same policy last year for her staff of 100.

• Having two regional trauma centers adds an unexpected cost to LEHIGH COUNTY. If someone dies at one of those hospitals and needs an autopsy, no matter where they came from, the Lehigh County coroner pays for it, at \$1,800 each, with additional forensics work adding several thousand dollars.

The coroner has sent bills to the counties where the victims originated, 11 in all, for a total of \$146,000 for work done in the last two years.

They don't pay because according to Coroner Scott Grim, he does not have any authority to bill them.

"They're not required to pay, but I still invoice them—in hopes they would pay," he said.

He has an agreement with SCHUYLKILL COUNTY to recover their costs.

The coroner and his staff did 243 autopsies last year, WFMZ News reported.

## ► TEXAS

DALLAS COUNTY has ended one organization's monopoly on the certification process for companies owned by minorities or women that want to do business with Dallas County.

The county now recognizes certifications from state and from local agencies.

Dallas County is one of the region's largest buyers of goods and services, the *Dallas Morning News* reported. Firms that want to bid on county contracts get extra points for being a certified minority- or women-owned business. And when the bids are close, that designation sometimes is what makes the difference.

## ► WASHINGTON

The CLARK COUNTY Coun-

cil redecorated, passing a motion to adorn its public hearing room with the words "In God We Trust."

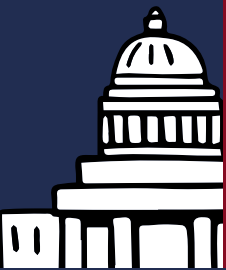
(News From the Nation's Counties is compiled by Charles Taylor and Charlie Ban, senior staff writers. If you have an item for News From, please email [ctaylor@naco.org](mailto:ctaylor@naco.org) or [cban@naco.org](mailto:cban@naco.org).)

## Job Market & Classifieds

### ■ REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – WINONA COUNTY, MINN.

Notice is hereby given that Winona County, Minn. will receive sealed proposals for executive search firm services to assist County Board with the county administrator position search according to written specifications and conditions.

Proposals shall be submitted in form and manner contained in the specifications. Proposals must be received in the Office of the Winona County Attorney no later than April 3, 2015 at 4 p.m. CDT, at which time a formal opening of proposals will occur. Proposal specifications may be obtained from the Winona County website at [www.co.winona.mn.us](http://www.co.winona.mn.us) or by contacting the Winona County Attorney office at 507.457.6310.




## FEDERAL POLICIES MATTER TO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

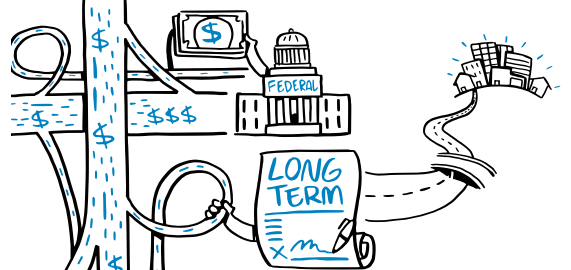
### MATTERS TO AMERICA

The public service mission of our nation's 3,069 county governments is clear: foster safe, healthy and vibrant communities. To achieve this shared goal, members of the National Association of Counties stand ready to work with our federal partners to:

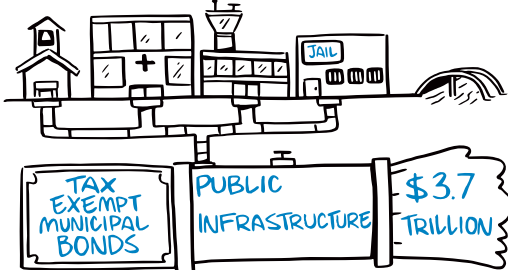
ENSURE FULL FUNDING FOR THE PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES AND SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS PROGRAMS




FIX THE HIGHWAY TRUST FUND AND PASS A LONG-TERM SURFACE TRANSPORTATION AUTHORIZATION BILL




PRESERVE THE TAX-EXEMPT STATUS OF MUNICIPAL BONDS



ENABLE COUNTIES TO COLLECT EXISTING SALES TAXES ON REMOTE AND ONLINE SALES



CREATE A CLEAR, WORKABLE DEFINITION OF "WATERS OF THE U.S."



LEARN MORE ABOUT AMERICA'S COUNTIES AT  
[www.NACo.org/CountiesMatter](http://www.NACo.org/CountiesMatter)

