

NACO National Association of Counties

CountyNews

| The Voice of America's Counties

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Rep. Fattah encourages broader persuasion efforts for LUCC members

BY CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

NACo's Large Urban County Caucus came away from a meeting with Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-Pa.) May 8 assured that their messages were being heard by members of Congress, but also with suggestions for how they could magnify what they had to say. LUCC's meeting with Fattah was one of several with key congressional and White House offices during LUCC's annual fly-in.

Helen Holton, Baltimore City councilwoman and LUCC chair, stressed the importance of maintaining tax-exempt status for municipal bonds, and Fattah responded with advice and a reminder that members pay attention to their local newspapers.

"I think your voice has been heard on this, along with the (U.S. Conference of) Mayors," he said. "But work externally, too. Your newspaper editorial boards need to be speaking out on these issues."



Photo by Charlie Ban

Toni Carter, commissioner, Ramsey County, Minn.; and Helen Holton, Baltimore City councilwoman and LUCC chairwoman, talk to U.S. Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-Pa.) during the LUCC Fly-In May 8. Behind them, Miami-Dade County, Fla. lobbyist Bill Couch and NACo Executive Director Matthew Chase look on.

Farm bill makes its way out of House, Senate ag committees

BY ERIK JOHNSTON
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR



The obstacles preventing a reauthorization of the farm bill are quickly clearing as both the House and Senate agriculture committees passed farm bill packages with bipartisan support on May 14 and May 15. The farm bill was slated to move to the Senate floor the week of May 20 at the publication deadline. The biggest shift in farm bill status is the promise by House leadership to give the bill floor time by this summer.

If the House and the Senate stick to this schedule, then there will be enough time for the two chambers to negotiate a compromise and pass a final bill by

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Counties celebrate National County Government Month

BY JIM PHILLIPS
MEDIA RELATIONS MANAGER



Under the theme, Smart Justice: Creating Safer Communities, the 2013 edition of National County Government Month is in the history books. More than 100 counties in 26 states participated to raise public awareness about the important role county government plays in their communities.

NACo President Chris Rodgers, who has made smart justice a priority of his presidential term, said he is pleased about the enthusiasm exhibited by NACo member counties throughout April.

"National County Government

Month under the smart justice theme was very successful," Rodgers said. "I am grateful to county officials and employees who devoted their time and expertise to interact with the communities they serve to raise awareness about county government services and programs."

Since 1991, NACo has encouraged counties to actively promote county government services and programs during county government awareness campaigns.

Here are some examples of how counties and state associations celebrated NCGM this year:

- In **Cape May County, N.J.**, freeholders welcomed student representatives to their April 23 meeting as part of county government month.

Fifteen students representing eight high schools participated in the event that concluded with the students conducting both the caucus and regular meetings of the freeholders after spending the day learning about the role of county government. On April 24, 12 winners of the poster contest were recognized in the courthouse jury assembly room.

- **Lewis County, Wash.** held an open house at the historic county courthouse under the theme: Creating Safer Communities. The featured attraction was the sheriff's office showcasing the new mobile command center

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Tax reform presents some risk for counties

ANALYSIS

By MICHAEL BELARMINO

ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

As the tax-writing committees in both chambers move full-steam-ahead with efforts to draft a plan for comprehensive tax reform, there is still the question of whether the 113th Congress would even be able to pass such a major piece of legislation.

Very few in Washington are optimistic that a rewrite of the tax code can be achieved. The more the layers of the tax code are exposed, the more the doubt increases that lawmakers will be able to make the decisions that would amount to true, comprehensive reform.

Regardless of whether Washington will be able to enact reform, the key players in the discussion — the White House, Ways and Means

Chairman Dave Camp (R-Mich.) and Senate Finance Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) — have made it fairly clear that reform will be pursued and everything is on the table. Counties should be aware of what that means since provisions that impact state and local government are very much a part of this discussion.

Where the Tax Reform Debate Currently Stands

First, the president has already submitted his FY14 budget request, which reiterates the 28-percent cap on certain tax benefits, including interest earned on municipal bonds. Soon after the budget's release it became apparent that the request was dead on arrival in Congress; nonetheless it can serve as a baseline for discussion.

Second, the Joint Committee on Taxation released its report May 6

SpeedRead » » »

- » Leaders in both House and Senate committed to bipartisan reform
- » State, local munibond tax exemptions at risk
- » Not many optimistic about comprehensive reform

on the Ways and Means Committee Tax Reform Working Groups. The release generally signaled the end of the data and recommendation collection efforts that the 11 tax reform working groups set out to accomplish beginning in early February. The report, however, does not contain any recommendations. Rather, it is an overview of the current tax code, an overview of previous reform proposals and a summary of the submissions from

various stakeholders regarding their views on tax reform. Next the Ways and Means Committee will evaluate the details of the report and use the content to frame its tax reform discussions over the coming weeks.

The final piece relates to the work of the Senate Finance Committee. Currently, committee members are engaged in weekly discussions about different tax reform topics each session. Upon completion of a session, the tax reform option papers used to guide the discussions are posted on the committee's website.

In many areas where Congress legislates, partisanship tends to be the operative word. However, both Camp and Baucus are intent on conveying the message that they are committed to working together to achieve the goal of comprehensive tax reform. In a joint statement, they recently announced a new website, www.taxreform.gov, which is meant to provide a means for individual taxpayers to submit reform suggestions for their consideration.

The Provisions

Tax reform concerns for counties (and state and local governments in general) fall within a few areas.

The first is the tax-exemption for interest earned on municipal bonds. This provision has received a significant amount of attention from lawmakers as a way to achieve various objectives, such as lowering individual rates or raising revenue. Any alteration of this provision potentially has the greatest impact on state and local governments because of the role that municipal bonds play in the financing of infrastructure. Additionally, any change to the exemption would fundamentally alter the federal, state and local partnership that develops and maintains the nation's essential infrastructure.

The proposals impacting the exemption put forth so far, including the 28-percent cap in the president's FY14 request, would essentially place a tax on what has otherwise been tax-exempt interest for more than 100 years.

If any of the proposals were adopted, state and local governments would see their borrowing costs increase, which would likely decrease infrastructure investment and potentially hinder current projects from moving forward. In a joint report released in February, NACo, the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors estimated the increase in borrowing costs for infrastructure investment to be \$173 billion if a 28-percent benefit cap on municipal bond interest had been in place over

the past decade. If municipal bonds were fully taxable over the same time period, the increased borrowing costs would have been \$495 billion.

The next area of concern is the federal deduction of state and local taxes. Under current law, taxpayers can deduct state and local income, property and sales taxes on federal tax returns. This, for the most part, recognizes the historic relationship of the federal, state and local governments, and the fact that all levels provide vital services to shared constituents. Support state and local efforts to set tax rates at levels that match the service demands of their residents across a range of incomes and needs.

The final area of concern is not as clear cut as the first two because it does not directly involve the federal tax code or impact federal revenues and expenditures. Rather, it involves legislative initiatives that affect state and local taxing authority. Despite not involving the tax code, the initiatives still arise in tax reform discussions given the revenue that could be generated for state and local governments or the tax savings that are purported to be created for taxpayers. Therefore, the initiatives present both an opportunity and risk

See TAX REFORM page 4

Bipartisan forest roads bill introduced in House and Senate

By JULIE UFNER

ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Members of the U.S. House and Senate introduced a bipartisan bill May 16 to reaffirm EPA's 37-year stance that forest roads runoff should be regulated as nonpoint sources through the states' best management practices (BMP), rather than through the federal Clean Water Act's (CWA) National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program. The Silviculture Regulatory Consistency Act was introduced in the Senate by Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) and in the House by Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-Wash.) and Kurt Schrader (D-Ore.).

This bill comes on the heels of the March U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Decker v. Northwest Environmental Defense Center (NEDC)*, which overturned a lower court ruling that would have required logging companies, and state and local governments to obtain industrial Clean Water Act permits from EPA for storm water runoff from forest roads.

While the court's ruling was a partial win for counties, the justices did not rule on whether forest road runoff is to be considered a point source under CWA. If storm water runoff from forest roads were deemed to be a point source by the courts, CWA industrial permits would be required for activities,



At issue in Congress: Should runoff from roads like this one be considered point or nonpoint sources?

regardless of the road's original purpose. Industrial NPDES permits have tighter and more restrictive requirements than general NPDES permits. The plaintiff in the Decker decision, NEDC, has already refiled in the 9th U.S. Circuit Court on the point versus nonpoint issue

Point sources are single-source emitters of pollution. Examples of water point sources include discharge points of pipes, factories, combined sewers or sewage outflows. Point sources are generally regulated under CWA's NPDES permit program. Nonpoint source pollution comes from a variety of sources such as agriculture

runoff, snowmelt or storm water from impervious surfaces, such as roads or parking lots. It is generally regulated at the state level via best management practices.

Forty-four percent of the roads and highways in the U.S. are owned and maintained by counties, and county-owned roads run through federal, state and private lands where logging activities may occur. Determining who owns a road or its principal use is not always simple. Two of the roads in question in the Decker case, were, in fact, county-owned roads that were multipurpose in nature and not solely dedicated to logging.

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Senate begins immigration reform bill mark-up

By MARILINA SANZ
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The Senate Judiciary Committee began its mark-up of the immigration reform bill (S. 744) May 9. The version being considered by the committee differs slightly from the bill as originally introduced, and takes \$7.5 billion from the money to be collected under the immigration fees and penalties prescribed under the legislation and devotes it to deficit reduction.

An amendment offered by Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) would raise that level to around \$8 billion. The new version also removes the Affordable Care Act (ACA) insurance mandate for individuals who are in the Registered Provisional Immigration (RPI) status, since

SpeedRead » » »

- » Bill would take \$7.5 billion to \$8 billion in anticipated fees and penalties to reduce the deficit
- » No mandate for counties to check current employees immigration status
- » Payments under SCAAP would expand to include a new category of incarcerated individuals

they will be barred from receiving ACA subsidies and tax credits. RPI status is the new category created for undocumented immigrants already in the country prior to Dec. 31, 2011. Estimates place their number at 11 million.

Committee members have filed 300 amendments. During the amendment process there was the risk of a provision being added that would require counties as employers to implement the E-verify system. As currently written, the bill does not require counties to verify the immigration status of their employees. None of the amendments filed before the Senate Judiciary Committee would change that.

On the plus side, Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) offered an amendment, which NACo supported, that would make two major fixes to the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP).

First, it would allow reimbursement payments for incarcerated individuals who have not been convicted of a crime. Secondly, it would direct the U.S. Department of Justice to continue reimbursements for individuals in the “unknown status” category. These are individuals whose status is unknown because they have not come into contact with the federal immigration system and therefore do not appear in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security database. In 2012 DOJ announced that it would no longer reimburse for this category, which would have cost counties significant losses in SCAAP funding. The amendment was adopted by a 10-8 vote.

The mark-up is expected to last through the month of May. Senate floor consideration is expected in June.

Questionable sequester: Forest Service plan to squeeze more money from counties

By RYAN YATES
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Count another sequester victim: 2012 Secure Rural Schools funding. States received notice in March from USDA that FY12 funding for the SRS program would be subject to sequestration.

The announcement stated, “As mandated by sequestration, we will need to withdraw 5.1 percent of the payment that has already been received or reduce the amount to be dispersed in the coming weeks.” USDA has begun billing states that receive the funds, and they are expected to return the amount to the U.S. Treasury.

States have also been threatened with penalties, which has drawn sharp criticism from some members of Congress. In a letter to Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell, Sens. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) criticized the agency’s plan “to assess interest, penalties, and administrative costs on sequestration repayment amounts if States did not pay up. This is unacceptable,” they wrote. “We urge you to take immediate action to mitigate the impacts of the sequester on the States and counties.”

The Secure Rural Schools

program provides a lifeline to communities in 41 states impacted by the severe decline in timber receipts from national forest lands. Communities that once had thriving timber industries now depend on the funds to pay for schools, roads and emergency services at a time when many rural counties face limited budgets. Putting additional burdens on those communities as the result of a bureaucratic mistake is unacceptable, the senators said.

House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (R-Wash.) questioned the legality of the Administration’s decision and stated, “The president should be working with Congress on making smart and responsible cuts and reforms — not using the sequester as a tool to score political points on the backs of rural schools and communities by demanding refunds of dollars used to pay teacher and police salaries.”

While counties are very concerned over a 5.1 percent cut to the SRS program — a program that has been cut by roughly \$170 million since 2009 — the primary concern for NACo is the precedent that was set in applying sequestration to a FY12 program funding.

“Counties have largely accepted that the sequestration is the law of the land and programmatic cuts in federal programs going forward, are inevitable,” said Mike Murray, NACo Public Lands Steering Committee Chair and commissioner, Lewis and Clark County, Mont.

“However, this retroactive move by the Administration to squeeze more money from rural forest communities is not only legally questionable, but insults the longstanding intergovernmental relationship between counties and the federal government.”

The program (which has expired) received a one-year funding extension for FY12 through the enactment of the MAP-21 transportation act last Congress. The USDA proposed sequestration cuts to SRS totaling \$17.9 million. Over the past six years, funding levels for the Secure Rural Schools program has been reduced by more than \$180 million. Further cuts to SRS will create dramatic budgetary shortfalls for 729 rural counties, severely affecting their ability to continue providing government services to the public.

Profiles in Service



» David Nicholson

NACo Board Member
Circuit Clerk
Jefferson County, Ky.

Years affiliated with NACo: 3

Years in public service: 29

Occupation: County circuit court clerk

Education: B.A., political science — Westminster College, Fulton, Mo., post graduate work at Cumberland School of Law — Samford University, Birmingham Ala.

The hardest thing I’ve ever done: Speak at a funeral

Three people (living or dead) I’d invited to dinner: Abraham Lincoln, Bill Gates and Bill Clinton

A dream I have is to: attend the Masters golf tournament with my family.

You’d be surprised to learn that I: am a prolific gardener.

The most adventurous thing I’ve ever done is: skydiving — a challenge from my daughter.

My favorite way to relax: Travel

I’m most proud of: my son and daughter.

Every morning I read: *The Courier Journal*, *Wall Street Journal*, Facebook and the weather report.

My favorite meal is: lobster, twice baked potato, asparagus and salad.

My pet peeve is: disorganization.

My motto is: “All for one and one for all.”

The last book I read was: *Money Follows Excellence* by Bill Lamb.

My favorite movie is: *Top Gun*.

My favorite music is: Jazz.

My favorite president is: Bill Clinton.

Counties wary of consequences of tax reform efforts

TAX REFORM from page 2

for counties, and could find their way into a larger tax reform package.

Examples include legislation that has already been introduced or was introduced in previous congressional sessions but has yet to be seen in the current one. For instance, an opportunity would be the Marketplace Fairness Act of 2013 (which recently passed the Senate with bipartisan support) that grants state and local governments the ability to enforce existing sales tax laws. If enacted, this legislation could lead to the collection of taxes currently lost by state and local governments on remote sales.

In terms of risks, initiatives

would include the Wireless Tax Fairness Act that would preempt state and local taxing authority on wireless services, and the Digital Goods and Services Tax Fairness Act which could potentially preempt state and local taxation of digital goods and services.

As one can see, even though the concerns are few, their potential impact on state and local government is great. Over the course of this year and possibly into 2014, as critical stakeholders in the outcome, counties will need to follow the development of tax reform plans and engage their members of Congress to ensure that the local perspective is taken into consideration.



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Senate farm bill much better for NACo's rural priorities

FARM BILL from page 1

Sept. 30, when the current farm bill extension expires.

The Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act (FARRM) of 2013, H.R. 1947, which passed the House Agriculture Committee by a vote of 36-10, includes \$940 billion in funding over 10 years. The Senate Agriculture Committee passed the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2013, S. 954 by a vote of 15-5. The measure includes \$955 billion over that same time period.

During the markups this week NACo successfully supported and opposed several amendments. In the Senate, NACo was the lead champion behind the adoption of Brown Amdt. 1, which would

give USDA Rural Development the flexibility to prioritize 20 percent of funding to projects that are a part of multijurisdictional economic development strategies. This will help ensure that USDA focuses on the priorities identified by counties and their partners in their county and multi-county economic development strategies. NACo successfully opposed attempts to repeal country-of-origin labeling in both the Senate (Johanns Amdt. 1) and House (Austin Scott Amdt. 20). Similar efforts are expected on the House and Senate floor.

Another key NACo win was the successful inclusion of McIntyre Amdt. 41 in the final House bill. The amendment makes technical assistance an eligible expense under USDA's community facilities pro-

gram. NACo successfully tweaked the language to ensure that local governments are eligible to receive and provide technical assistance under the program. In addition, the NACo-supported Healthy Food Financing Initiative (Fudge Amdt. 29), which authorizes \$125 million in appropriations for USDA to incentivize construction of grocery stores in food deserts, was approved by a vote of 21-19 in the House.

NACo narrowly lost a priority effort to restore \$50 million in mandatory funding for a backlog of water and wastewater projects. McIntyre Amdt. 39 was defeated by a vote of 23-22 during the House markup. The effort to provide \$15 million in mandatory funding for the Rural Microenterprise Assistance Program and change eligibility to include local governments (McIntyre Amdt. 40) was also defeated in the House by a vote of 25-20.

The larger fight in the amendment process in both bodies was over the size of the cuts to nutrition programs and the type of risk management system for producers. After lengthy and heated debates, all major efforts to amend the committee leadership's proposals for nutrition and risk management were ultimately unsuccessful.

Spending Levels and Nutrition Programs

The House Agriculture Committee farm bill would reduce spending over the next 10 years by more than \$39.7 billion, while the Senate bill cuts overall spending by \$23 billion. Both of these Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projected figures include about \$6 billion in cuts enacted by sequestration. The main funding difference between the two bills is that the House bill achieves the majority of its savings by cutting about \$20.5 billion from the Nutrition Title, while the Senate bill cuts only cuts \$4 billion from the Nutrition Title.

NACo opposes cuts to nutrition programs and will work to minimize cuts in any potential conference. The most worrisome nutrition cut in the House bill for counties is the elimination of the categorical eligibility option, which represents \$11.6 billion of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) reductions. This provision allows states to align the SNAP eligibility and assets to the same rules they use for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Block Grant (TANF), which makes it easier to operate the program and saves administrative costs. The federal government pays 100 percent of the



A farmer works her fields in Solano County, Calif.

SNAP benefits, but only 50 percent of the administrative costs. Counties in 11 states administer SNAP and TANF.

Rural Development and Energy

NACo priorities in the Rural Development Title and Energy Title fare much better in the Senate bill.

The Senate bill includes \$115 million in mandatory funding for the Rural Development Title. This includes \$50 million for the water and wastewater backlog, \$50 million for the Value Added Producer Grant Program and \$15 million for the Rural Microenterprise Assistance program.

In comparison, the House bill would reduce Rural Development authorizations by \$1.5 billion over five years, a 50 percent reduction, and reduces mandatory funding by \$100 million with only \$50 million in mandatory funding for the Value Added Producer Grant Program.

The contrast is even starker between the two Energy Titles, with the Senate bill's inclusion of \$800 million in mandatory funding and the House providing no mandatory funding. The Energy Title received \$1 billion in mandatory funding in the 2008 farm bill, which makes up nearly all of its annual funding. Therefore, the House bill threatens the elimination of these NACo-supported programs. The NACo-supported Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program fares better in the House with \$100 million in mandatory funding compared to the \$85 million provided in the Senate bill.

Senate Policy Changes More Favorable to NACo positions

The Senate bill includes more NACo-supported policy changes to rural development programs, which make authorizing language clearer, simpler and more effective

for rural counties. The House and Senate both simplify application forms and add a technical assistance component to the Community Facilities Program. However, only the Senate bill requires USDA to focus resources on strategic community and economic development plans on a multijurisdictional basis.

Crop Subsidies

Both the House and Senate bills would eliminate the commodity programs such as direct payments for producers (subsidies) and replace them with risk management options. The House bill cuts Commodity and Crop Insurance programs by \$13.8 billion over 10 years while the Senate bill cuts these programs by \$16 billion. The Senate bill creates the Agricultural Risk Coverage Program, which would make payments to farmers for shallow losses that are not covered by crop insurance and the Adverse Market Payments program, which would make payments to farmers when prices fall below certain targeted levels. This new target price option was not included in the last Senate-passed version of the farm bill and is now included due to its importance to Ranking Member Thad Cochran (R-Miss.) and other members from the South.

The House cuts conservation programs by \$6.4 billion, while the Senate cuts these programs by \$6.9 billion. The House consolidates 23 conservation programs into 13. The Senate takes a similar approach by consolidating the 23 current programs into four fundamental program functions: Working Lands, Conservation Reserve Program, Easements and Regional Partnerships.

**Detailed summaries of each bill are available by accessing this story online at www.naco.org/countynews.*

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Infrastructure bank pools small revenue streams

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER



Counties in Pennsylvania and New York have debuted loan programs to help fund infrastructure improvements in areas where work is needed.

A long-lived plan to repair each of Dauphin County, Pa.'s bridges has evolved into an infrastructure bank open to municipalities and other organizations within the county's borders. Suffolk County, N.Y.'s sewer infrastructure bank is more of a traditional loan program.

The Dauphin County Infrastructure Bank will provide up to \$30 million in low-interest loans to municipal projects by pooling small streams of tax revenue over the next three years.

Within the county, 40 municipalities—townships, boroughs and the state capital city Harrisburg—draw consistent but relatively small proceeds from the state's 12-cents-a-gallon liquid fuels tax. Added up, the revenue trickles accumulate into a significant stream, about \$1 million a year that will be

SpeedRead » » »

- » Infrastructure bank pools small streams of liquid gas tax revenue
- » Municipalities, redevelopment authorities, non-profits, school districts and private companies can apply
- » Interest rates are 0.5 percent to 1 percent

paired with money from the state department of transportation's Pennsylvania Infrastructure Bank, which will contribute the rest of the money to the pot.

"When you're getting \$4,000 or so, for a smaller township, it won't go too far," said Commission Chairman Jeff Haste, who planned the project during years of working as a transportation engineer in the 1980s and '90s. "With that money, the townships could chip in another quarter-mile of paving, but it wouldn't mean anything of major impact."

The impact comes from using the sum of those revenue streams to unlock other local, state and federal

funding sources that wouldn't have been available to municipalities going it alone.

"We're taking advantage of economies of scale," Haste said. "We're able to negotiate for rates most of these municipalities couldn't dream for on their own."

Commissioners' spokeswoman Amy Richards Harinath said the county has had a lot of interest in applying from municipalities.

Londonderry Township is planning to submit several applications for the infrastructure bank, which Township Manager Steve Letavic calls "visionary."

"It gives us access to capital at a cheaper rate than a public issuance," he said. "This is going to give us a chance to take care of several projects that, before this infrastructure bank came about, we had no idea how we were going to pay for."

Citing \$500,000 price tags for common repair projects, the infrastructure bank could help put a major dent in repair costs. On top of Letavic's list is a bridge, built in 1940, that needs major work.

"Municipalities around here are dealing with a lot of looming

infrastructure costs and this bank is giving us a way to make these repairs happen."

The county itself, municipalities in the county and redevelopment authorities are eligible for infrastructure bank loans. School districts, nonprofit organizations and private companies can apply if sponsored by a municipality. The applicant must have good credit.

Projects are evaluated on their economic impact, involvement in a collaboration and impact on heavily used routes. Applications will be judged by the county's Gaming Advisory Board, which does the same for projects funded by the Hollywood Casino.

The loans can be used to buy land; relocate utilities; or build, improve, repair or rehabilitate transportation infrastructure. The loans can be for up to 10 years and can be awarded a fixed 0.5 percent interest rate for governments or 1 percent for non-profits or private companies.

Successful applicants will have access to the county's engineering firm to help with their projects, an option Harinath said will appeal to smaller municipalities or projects that are just getting started.

In New York, the Suffolk County's Asset Stabilization Reserve Fund pays for projects that the county sewer infrastructure committee and County Legislature approve. The sewer bank, which debuted in April, seeks to expand sewer service to the county, only 25 percent of which is served by sewage treatment facilities. The reserve fund holds approximately \$30 million.

**See this story online at www.naco.org/countynews to see more details about the Dauphin County Infrastructure Bank.*

Quick Takes

Top 5 County Fairs

(Based on attendance)

- 1 – San Diego County, Calif.
- 2 – Los Angeles County, Calif.
- 3 – Orange County, Calif.
- 4 – Erie County, N.Y.
- 5 – Alameda County, Calif.

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The building now known as Billy Bob's Texas was built in 1910 as an open-air barn used to house prize cattle for the Fort Worth Stock Show. During World War II, the building was used as an airplane factory for the Globe Aircraft Corporation. In the 1950's the building became a department store so large that stock boys wore roller skates to make their jobs easier.



Today's Billy Bob's is synonymous with good times! You'll have plenty to do and see in over 100,000 square feet in the World's Largest Honky Tonk. We're planning some great entertainment for this event to complement the 30 individual bar stations, a Texas size dance floor to enjoy, and Live Pro Bull Riding... we're talking real bulls – not mechanical!

We'll be serving up real Texas Smoked Bar-B-Q beef brisket, ribs and sausage with all the trimmings, along with an ample supply of Mexican dishes and other delicacies.

Fort Worth resident Pat Green
is the scheduled entertainment for the
Conference Celebration Event,
Monday evening.



And to top it all off... We'll have grammy nominated (and local Fort Worth guy) PAT GREEN! You won't want to miss this. Green is a Texas inspiration and a mainstream country artist who can rock arena and stadium stages. His life and career have already been filled with rich experiences. Pat's co-written songs with Willie Nelson, Brad Paisley and Jewel. He has appeared on national TV shows like Austin City Limits, Jimmy Kimmel Live! and The Late Show With David Letterman and been hailed by Billboard, USA Today, Esquire, People and Country Weekly.

Y'all make plans to join us Monday night! Celebrate the inauguration of NACo's newly elected president and the tradition of western culture in the Fort Worth Stockyards.

See y'all in Fort Worth!
at the

NACo Annual Conference
2013
County Solutions
and Idea Marketplace

July 19-22

Fort Worth Convention Center
Fort Worth-Tarrant County, Texas



Arlington, Va. will share county website code

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Computers use cookies — not snicker doodles, but those little bits of data that help your Web browser remember what sites it's visited before.

In Arlington County, Va., county officials are using a real, not virtual, cookie analogy to explain why the county plans to share some of its website code freely with the open-source community.

"This is like saying we made this really good cookie; we're going to share the ingredients with you," said Jennifer K. Smith, Arlington's

manager of Web and video communications. "You might be able to make a better cookie recipe. We try it. We make a better cookie recipe from what you did. And you can also share the cookie recipe, and all the ingredients with others you know, and they might improve it even more."

That's the philosophy behind the open-source movement. "On open source projects," Peter Welsch, a senior Administration technology advisor, wrote in a *whitehouse.gov* blog post, "programmers build tools to solve specific problems, then make those tools freely available so others can

SpeedRead » » »

- » County to share open-source website code
- » Collaboration can aid transparency
- » Open-source emergency-preparedness app was precursor

use them and contribute their own improvements." The White House website is, in fact, built on a foundation of open-source software.

The distribution of open-source code must comply with certain

criteria. To that end, the Arlington County Board recently approved the use of the General Public License (GPL) for website source code developed by the county. The license allows other users — individuals, other local governments, nonprofits — "to benefit from the work done by the county government by being able to re-use, copy, modify, or make improvements to website code the county releases publicly." The GPL is the most widely used license in the open-source community.

The county will share its code through Bitbucket, a code-sharing website, said Katie Pegoraro, a tech services project manager in

Arlington's IT Department, who played a key role in the effort to release the code.

Pegoraro said the word "open" in open source doesn't mean it's any riskier than proprietary software the county might purchase. "Open-source software isn't inherently any more secure or less secure than closed-source software," she said.

"Since we can read the code of open-source software, we can look at it for security holes ourselves before we decide to use it," she added. "Generally, if anyone does find a hole, he or she would tell

See OPEN SOURCE page 16



USDOT Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study

Public Input Session

The U.S. Department of Transportation invites you to participate in the upcoming Public Input Session for the Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study (CTSW) May 29.

MAP-21 Section 32801 requires the USDOT Secretary to complete a "Comprehensive Truck Size & Weight Limits Study." The Study will be conducted as an objective, data driven initiative using the most current, best-suited analytical methods, tools, and models.

The study will evaluate and compare the differences between trucks loaded at or below current federal truck size and weight limits to those operating in excess of those limits. The CTSW Study will produce findings on highway safety and truck crash frequency and severity, pavement and bridge infrastructure service life impacts, the cost and effectiveness of enforcement and implications for the national transportation system including the modal share of freight movements that would result if Federal truck size and weight limits were to change.

The first Public Outreach Session will provide stakeholders an opportunity to share feedback on the approach and methods USDOT intends to use to complete the Study. The USDOT will also solicit comments on "alternative truck configurations" to be evaluated in the Study. The meeting, which is free and open to the public, will be held as an in-person workshop. Webinar access is available for those unable to attend in person. Three additional Public Outreach Sessions will be held over the next year and a half.

Wednesday, May 29 12:30 – 4:30p.m.

USDOT headquarters
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE • Washington, DC 20590

To register for the webinar visit

www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/resources/webconference/web_conf_learner_reg.aspx?webconfid=26090

To attend in person, email CTSWStudy@dot.gov.

In advance of the Public Input Session, a worksheet on the alternative truck configurations will be shared with registered participants prior to the session and will be available at the website provided below.

For those unable to attend, a transcript of the presentations and stakeholder comments will be available on the FHWA Freight website www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/sw/map21tswstudy/index.htm.

House next stop for Water Resources Development Act

By JULIE UFFNER
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

With a strong bipartisan vote of 83–14, the Senate okayed the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), a popular biannual bill that authorizes Army Corps of Engineers projects and provides policy direction to the Corps.

WRDA (S. 601) would authorize \$12.5 billion for many water-related projects in counties involving navigation channels, harbors, beach management, levee repair, aquatic ecosystems, flood emergency and water infrastructure projects through the Corps. The yearly appropriations process determines the funding levels for WRDA projects.

Included in the measure is a provision to review the Corps' vegetation management policy. The Corps' policy requires all vegetation, except grass, to be removed from levees in order to allow for easier inspections and to reduce any potential weakening of levees through root growth. Levees that the Corps finds to be out of compliance with its vegetation policy will be ineligible for federal disaster assistance. The Corps policy often puts local governments in conflict with other federal and state rules on vegetation, especially when considered as habitat for listed species under the Endangered Species Act.

Meanwhile, the measure contains good news for harbor maintenance. S. 601 would increase funding from the Harbor Maintenance Trust

Fund (HMTF), which historically has collected more in shippers' fees, than it's spent and subsequently boasts a \$7 billion balance. Proceeds from the trust are used to finance the dredging of ports and harbors.

Beginning with \$1 billion in FY14, spending would increase every year thereafter by \$100 million through FY19. Beginning in FY20 all funds collected would need to be spent.

In another provisions WRDA creates a Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Authority (WIFIA) pilot program to fund Corps and EPA projects for a period of five years though loan and loan guarantees for water supply, wastewater and flood control projects. It also creates an additional pilot program to cede control to non-federal partners for Corps projects in order to reduce costs and to evaluate alternatives for the decentralization of federal projects.

Last enacted in 2007, WRDA has faced an uphill battle over the past several years due to the earmark ban. The bill carefully avoided the earmark ban by granting the Corps authority over what projects should move forward. This decision has caused controversy in the House where members are concerned about giving the Corps too much authority over projects.

WRDA reauthorization now moves to the House where the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is expected to draft its own WRDA version.

Public works association recognizes county directors

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

The American Public Works Association named its annual Top Ten Public Works Leaders last month, including two county public works directors with contrasting backgrounds.

Don Jacobovitz is finishing up his sixth year as public works director for Putnam County, Fla., following stops in several different Florida local governments, including Orange County. He got his start as an Army combat engineer and transitioned into transportation work.

He has plenty of it in Putnam County, with more than 400 miles of paved road and twice as much road made of dirt. Putnam County is on the lower end of the income level, which means low property values and corresponding low funding for operations.

That adds up to a challenge for Jacobovitz to work efficiently and make whatever work his department of 70 does, last.

"It's rewarding to solve problems, especially if others have tried,"



Don Jacobovitz
Putnam County, Fla.

he said. "My challenge, day in and day out, is to do as much as we can under the resource restraints we have."

That means a lot of searching for grant opportunities, looking for cost savings and forging partnerships with other agencies to find mutually beneficial projects.

What doesn't cost anything is the attitude he brings to the job, which he said motivates him.

"I make it a priority to provide



Julia Bueren
Contra Costa County, Calif.

excellent customer service for all residents," he said. "It's how I train my department and how I act."

People notice and they respond. He gets feedback in the forms of thank-you letters from residents, which he reads at staff meetings.

"I've never been in a place where you get responses for routine work like we do," he said. "People appreciate what we do to keep things moving. It makes us feel good about the work we do and reminds us of

the people who pay our salaries, the reason we keep these roads safe. We work for them."

Ontop of the 1,200 miles of roads and the county's drainage system, Jacobovitz's department operates and maintains three package wastewater plants, a water processing plant, a barge port and two ferries, one of which is the oldest in Florida. "The route's been around since 1910, and they still use the same boat from 1916 to push the ferry," he said.

Durable and efficient, indeed.

Julia Bueren has spent her entire career in Contra Costa County, Calif.'s public works department, rising to director in 2008. Through the department's rotation program for engineers, she worked on projects in flood control, construction and transportation before serving as deputy director for the department.

The financial collapse in 2008, shortly after she started the job, coupled with a wave of early retirements challenged her plans of realigning the department's priorities.

"I wasn't planning to upset the apple cart, but when you deal with the emergency of the financial

collapse you have to improvise," she said. "Our first new priority was getting succession in order so we could move ahead, because we lost a lot of experience all at once."

Public works in Contra Costa County takes charge of 660 miles of county roads, smaller parks, two airports and architectural design services.

Her department grew to 480 people in 2012 when public works merged with general services, bringing buildings, grounds, mail, fleet and purchasing services all under her supervision.

She hopes her tenure is known by its focus on her employees.

"I talk to people, go out and talk to employees, staff," she said. "We had to do some layoffs and it was tough, but I tried to approach it from a personal viewpoint. I try to be relatable while still being the boss."

The merger gave Bueren the opportunity to learn a variety of different parts of her new department.

"I love the people," she said. "It's a great department; the staff always delivers, exceeds expectations."

There were no county representatives among last year's winners.

DID YOU KNOW?

\$500 MILLION
IN SAVINGS

40 MILLION
PRESCRIPTIONS FILLED

SAVINGS UP TO
75 PERCENT

65 THOUSAND
PHARMACIES

NACo National Association of Counties

The **NACo Prescription Discount Card Program** offers J.D. Power award-winning customer service available toll-free everyday from 7am to 11pm EST. County residents can also access a wealth of information at **www.nacox.org** including participating pharmacies, price estimator, health related articles and much, much more.

Chance your county's residents won't get the information they need to save on their prescriptions? **ZERO.**

To learn more about the program or to request assistance with your current program, go to **www.naco.org/drugcard**, call 1-888-407-6226 and ask for "membership" or scan the QR code.

*Average savings 24%. Savings may vary by drug and by pharmacy. Operated by CVS Caremark. This is NOT insurance. Discounts are only available at participating pharmacies. 1069003NCS5(04) 02.13



Counties go all out to show 'Why Counties Matter' during NCGM

2013 NCGM from page 1

vehicle, track ATV and patrol boat, as well as a new law enforcement dog and handler. The vehicles were surplus and were renovated into state-of-the-art law enforcement tools at little cost to taxpayers.

Two floors of the 1927 Lewis County courthouse featured displays from various county departments with staff on hand to explain their services. There was even a NCGM cake and the following Facebook post from the citizen who baked and decorated it: "It was my pleasure... Lewis County is THE place to BE... Good people, good government, good times! Thank you for the opportunity to help promote National County Government Month...AND Lewis County...what a great day!"



A Lewis County, Wash. resident added a sweet touch to the county's celebration of National County Government Month in April, and gave the county a "shout out" on Facebook.

- In **Sierra County, N.M.**, the local radio station broadcast 30 days of county related "Questions of the Day" to educate the public about county services and programs. County officials invited the public to visit department informational booths with materials about each department. Free hot dogs and trimmings were provided.

- The **New Hampshire Association of Counties (NHAC)** hosted its annual "Governor and Executive Councilors" breakfast in honor of NCGM. NHAC Executive Director Betsy Miller reported that each county presented descriptions of programming established to reduce recidivism in county correctional facilities and provided data to show success. The governor also issued a NCGM proclamation.

- **Pontotoc County, Okla.** held a Smart Justice, Health and Safety Fair. The event was held on the plaza of the county courthouse and featured booths from the sheriff's department, district attorney's office, judge's office, Oklahoma Highway Patrol, United Way, Legal Aid, county elected officials, 4-H, emergency management, Cooperative Extension Service and Pontotoc County Literacy Group among others. Visitors were treated to free hot dogs and drinks provided by a local bank.

- **Waldo County, Maine** posted an informational document on its official website with a scrolling NCGM banner and the national smart justice theme. Website visitors could click on a document featuring information about the

sheriff's office and the jail.

- The Board of Commissioners in **Franklin County, Ohio** recognized NCGM and announced that the county is participating in the NACo Dental Discount Program.

- Area high school students in **Oakland County, Mich.** met with county officials to learn about county government at the Annual Youth in Government Day program.

- In **Blue Earth County, Minn.**, officials provided public tours of the justice center, and showcased county departments and services.

- The **North Carolina Association of County Commissioners** encouraged its counties to celebrate NCGM and featured a segment on its monthly television show.

- In **Roane County, W.Va.**, local youth were invited to lead the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance at the April 9 Board of Commissioners meeting. The children observed the entire meeting and afterwards enjoyed refreshments with the commissioners. Eighth graders participated in an essay contest sponsored by the County Commissioners Association of West Virginia.

- **Chatham County, Ga.** held the "Smart Justice Expo" at Live Oak Public Libraries' Southwest Chatham branch.

- **Johnson County, Kan.** held a free event, "Smart Justice: Creating Safer Communities," at the youth and family services center and offered the public a glimpse of its criminal justice programs. Two dozen exhibits showcased the hard work and progress county officials have made in the past decade toward integrating juvenile and adult offenders back into society with favorable outcomes.

- **Richmond County, N.C., Clay County, Iowa, Fillmore**

2013 National County Government Month Participants

Association of Indiana Counties
Athens County, Ohio
Belknap County, N.H.
Belmont County, Ohio
Blue Earth County, Minn.
Boone County, Ky.
Brunswick County, N.C.
California State Association of Counties
Cape May County, N.J.
Carroll County, N.H.
Chatham County, Ga.
Cheshire County, N.H.
Chisago County, Minn.
Clay County, Iowa
Coconino County, Ariz.
Cumberland County, N.C.
Curry County, N.M.
Dakota County, Minn.
DeKalb County, Ga.
Douglas County, Minn.
Dunn County, Wis.
Eagle County, Colo.
El Paso County, Colo.
Fillmore County, Minn.
Floyd County, Ky.
Franklin County, Ohio
Gila County, Ariz.
Glenn County, Calif.
Goliad County, Texas
Grafton County, N.H.
Hampton County, S.C.
Hillsborough County, N.H.
Johnson County, Kan.
Kentucky Association of Counties

Kitsap County, Wash.
Kittitas County, Wash.
Lake County, Calif.
Lewis County, Wash.
Lincoln County, Minn.
Linn County, Iowa
Manatee County, Fla.
Maui County, Hawaii
Merrimack County, N.H.
Monmouth County, N.J.
New Hampshire Association of Counties
North Carolina Association of County Commissioners
Nueces County, Texas
Oakland County, Mich.
Oconto County, Wis.
Parker County, Texas
Phelps County, Mo.
Pitt County, N.C.
Pontotoc County, Okla.
Putnam County, Fla.
Richland County, S.C.
Richmond County, N.C.
Roane County, W.Va.
Rockingham County, N.H.
San Bernardino County, Calif.
San Joaquin County, Calif.
San Mateo County, Calif.
Sierra County, N.M.
Somerset County, N.J.
Strafford County, N.H.
Tarrant County, Texas
Trumbull County, Ohio
Waldo County, Maine
Wicomico County, Md.

In Case You Missed It

News to use from past County News

» NACo presidential appointments application due June 5

The Presidential Appointments Application Form must be completed by everyone who wants to be considered for a leadership or committee appointment on a steering, standing or ad hoc committee for the 2013-2014 presidential year.

The application form is available online at NACo's website, www.naco.org under About NACo ► Committees and Caucuses ► Presidential Appointments.

The deadline for submitting an application is Wednesday, June 5. Please direct any questions to Karen McRunnel at 202.942.4238 or kmcrunne@naco.org.

Join the NACo Network...



fb.com/NACoDC
twitter.com/NACoTweets
linkedin.com/in/nacodc
youtube.com/NACoVideo

County, Minn., Chisago County, Minn., Trumbull County, Ohio and Dakota County, Minn. passed resolutions commemorating NCGM.

Apply for a NCGM Award

Did your county make the extra effort to raise public awareness about the role and responsibilities of county government and the services and programs available during the month of April? If so, apply for a National County Month Award by the Friday, May 24 deadline.

The purpose of the award program is to encourage counties to participate in NCGM and recognize nationally counties that sponsor outstanding programs during the month of April.

The National Association of County Information Officers (NACIO) — a NACo affiliate — will judge the 2013 award entries. Three counties will receive the top award: rural counties (population less

than 100,000); suburban counties (population between 100,000 and 500,000) and metropolitan counties (population above 500,000).

First place winning entries will receive two, free registrations that could be used at any NACo conference. This prize is worth more than \$1,000.

Second place awards will also be presented. Counties chosen for second place awards will receive one, free conference registration. All counties that submit entries will receive certificates recognizing the programs they initiated.

All entries will be posted online to serve as a database of ideas for other counties to use. There is no cost to apply. Go to www.naco.org ► Tell the Public What Counties Do ► National County Government Month and click on the online award application form.

For questions, contact Jim Philipps at 202.942.4220 or jphilipps@naco.org.

Fattah advises county officials to pepper op-ed pages

LUCC from page 1

Write letters to the editor — they influence members beyond just hearing from (officials) and influence their staffs.

“For policy issues, they should be voting their district,” he added. “Members are to be expected to vote with their parties on procedural issues, but when it comes to a policy issue they should be voting their district or vote for what’s in the country’s interest.”

He added that taking positions in print, even if they had been done so ad nauseum, always helps reinforce said positions.

SpeedRead » » »

- » Influence members of Congress with newspaper op-eds
- » Grand bargain comes first
- » LUCC pushed transportation, workforce redevelopment, education reauthorization

“Leaving this to these tea party characters who say ‘nothing government does is useful,’ we know that’s an unreasonable statement, but unanswered, there will be some people who believe it,” Fattah said.

LUCC members came to push for reauthorizations of the work-

force development, transportation and elementary and secondary school acts. Fattah said everyone’s priority was to settle the nation’s financial situation.

“The president’s trying to cut a deal around big money issues with the Senate,” he said. “Once we settle money matters, then we can get to work on substantive issues.”

Fattah was pessimistic that the House could move any legislation, though.

“The trains are not running, at the moment; we’ve done nothing,” he said. “It was only with a big gigantic push that we did the Violence Against Women Act.”

He supported authorization of the Workforce Development Act, saying it was integrated in the approach to restoring and rebounding the economy, but also used examples from his home district in Philadelphia to stress the need for work-readiness programs, too.

“We’ve had 3,000 manufacturing jobs available for over a year; people don’t show up on time; they’re not ready to work,” he said.

In terms of justice-reform efforts, he was encouraged a growing coalition between justice-reform advocates and conservative members who were getting fed up with the high incarceration rate.

“There are nonviolent offenders taking prison space away from



Photos by Charlie Ban

Miami-Dade, Fla. County Commissioner Sally Heyman asks a question of U.S. Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-Pa.), while Ramsey County, Minn. Commissioner Jim McDonough and Tarrant County, Texas Commissioner Roy Brooks listen.

people who really have to be locked up,” he said.

Fulton County, Ga. Commission Chairman John Eaves expressed support for the Second Chance jail diversion program, which had seen its funding cut in the sequester. Fattah said, “We hope we’ll be able to increase funding

but it’s a challenging proposition.”

Commissioner Sally Heyman mentioned Miami-Dade’s public purpose workforce housing initiative in the meeting, describing how

public attorneys, teachers, nurses, firefighters and law enforcement officers can rent affordable housing to help establish credit and pay back loans.

Large counties deliver Why Counties Matter message to Capitol Hill, Administration

County leaders from the nation’s largest counties carried the *Why Counties Matter* message to Capitol Hill and urged members of Congress and the Administration to support federal funding and legislative priorities affecting large, metropolitan counties and their residents.

The Large Urban County Caucus (LUCC) annual fly-in, May 7–9, in Washington, D.C. included visits to 35 congressional offices, a special leadership team meeting with House Urban Caucus Co-chair Chaka Fattah (D-Pa.) and a joint meeting with White House staff.

The advocacy effort led by LUCC Chair Helen Holton, council member, Baltimore City, Md., focused on preserving the federal-state-local partnership for health care — especially Medicaid funding — the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds, and funding priorities for important housing and community development programs such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

LUCC is a bipartisan coalition of elected and appointed county officials from across the nation representing about 130 million people.

Participating in this year’s fly-in in addition to Holton were: Tarrant County, Texas Commissioner Roy Brooks; Ramsey County, Minn. Commissioner Jim McDonough; Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sally Heyman; El Paso County, Colo. Commissioner Sallie Clark; Fulton County, Ga. Commission Chairman John Eaves; NACo First Vice President Linda Langston, supervisor, Linn County, Iowa; Franklin County, Ohio Commission President John O’Grady; and Ramsey County, Minn. Commissioner Toni Carter.



The LUCC delegation with U.S. Rep. Chaka Fattah as they conclude their May 8 meeting. Top row (l-r): Franklin County, Ohio Commissioner John O’Grady; Ramsey County, Minn. Commissioner Toni Carter; Fattah; Ramsey County, Minn. Commissioner Jim McDonough; Tarrant County, Texas Commissioner Roy Brooks and Fulton County, Ga. Commissioner John Eaves. Bottom Row (l-r): El Paso County, Colo. Commissioner Sallie Clark; Miami-Dade, Fla. County Commissioner Sally Heyman; Baltimore City, Md. Councilwoman Helen Holton, LUCC chairwoman; and Linn County, Iowa Commissioner and NACo First Vice President Linda Langston.

Model Programs

Maricopa County, Ariz.

Maps Track Livestock-Auto Accidents

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Livestock doesn't understand roads. That becomes a major hazard for drivers when they roam the countryside, especially in Maricopa County, Ariz., which reported more than 300 livestock-related traffic accidents annually for several years. That impacted the safety of drivers and the assets of ranchers. "Someone could forget to close the gate, the cattle guard could be full, a fence could be down," said Larry Wolfson, who supervises the county's geographic information system (GIS). "Ultimately, these

crashes were happening on county roads, so we had to address them. The volume was high enough that we needed some kind of mitigation effort." That made way for the introduction of the Department of Transportation's roadway-livestock incident mitigation policy in late 2009, which established a sophisticated tracking and analysis system, that would yield a master incident map. Improving the map's accuracy was the gradual integration of GPS units in county vehicles which helped deputies and others who respond to livestock accidents make the locations of their reports more accurate and precise.



The GIS department linked an email address to a map of the county where incidents would be compiled, with the input from the emails going directly into the

database. Individual incidents are noted on the map with a small circle and as the number of incidents in an area increases, so does the size of the circle. "If there were more than 'x' incidents at a site, we would do something about it," Wolfson said. The traffic management division takes over at that point, installing

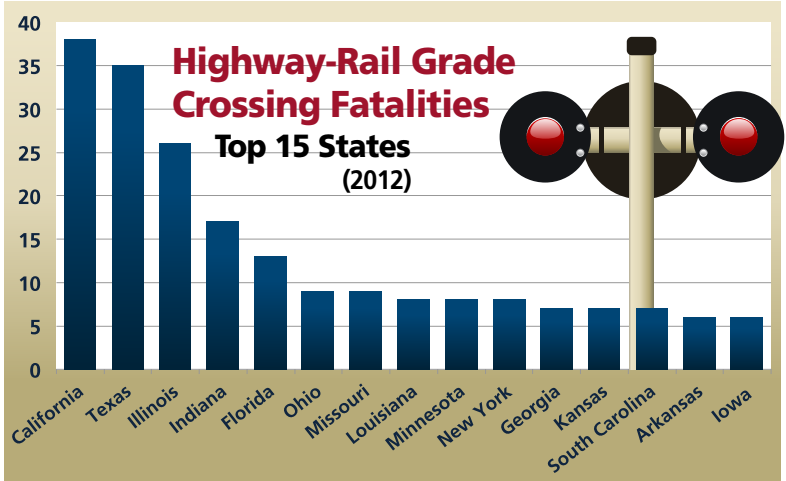
rails and road signs in trouble spots and addressing the problem with livestock owners. The map allows the team to plainly see where the trouble spots are and to adjust query parameters to show results throughout different time frames. The basic framework in the GIS interface for adding incident reports can be adapted to fit other needs across several departments. Development of the map was done completely in-house with county Web developers using ArcGIS, which was already operational in various county offices. It took the development team approximately 200 hours over two months to design, test and implement the program.

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

Research News

Teaming Up to Improve Railroad Safety in Ohio

Counties collaborate with different stakeholders to help execute their policies — foundations are one such partner, helping counties stretch their dollars by providing additional funds. Medina County, Ohio's Railway Safety Taskforce recently celebrated its 100th meeting and the great improvements in railway safety it achieved over the years, partly the result of its collaboration with the Angels on Track Foundation. In 2002, Medina County Commissioner and Railroad Safety Taskforce Chair Pat Geissman reached out to the Angels on Track Foundation and built a partnership with the foundation to help fund the task force. According to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO), there were six crashes between a car and a train at Medina County railroad crossings in 2003, the first year after the task force formed. With the partnership and additional funding from the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC), PUCO, the North American Railway Foundation and the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad, safety has improved at more than 70 of the county's 108 railroad crossings. In 2008 and 2009,



there were no car-train crashes in Medina County. The cooperative county-foundation partnership provides a model for even greater effectiveness in improving the more than 5,900 crossings in Ohio, and the thousands more nationwide. According to PUCO, statewide railroad fatalities plunged from 20 to 4 in 2010 and 2011. Many other states have railway crossing crashes that exceed 50 and even 100 a year, resulting in hundreds of deaths. Fifteen states represent over 65 percent of total incidents in the United States and over 67 percent of the 271 deaths from these crashes nationwide.

County-foundation partnerships may be one way to address these numbers. Taking Medina County as an example, county knowledge and resources can be used in this life-saving work to make communities safer. Foundations and other interested groups can ease the financial burden on counties for railroad safety improvements. Finally, when facing other important challenges, counties may use this type of partnership to advance their mission. (Research News was written by Nick Lyell, CIC intern.)

Word Search

Shasta County, Calif. Facts

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

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

- CASCADE** (range where Mount Shasta is located)

DAM (built in 1945, provided jobs)

LAKE (an artificial lake created by the construction of Shasta Dam)

LASSEN (adjacent county)

MODOC (adjacent county)

MOUNTAIN (known as 'White Mountain', located at the southern end of the Cascade Range)
- NATIONAL** (four-year University)

PLUMAS (adjacent county)

REDDING (county seat)

SHASTA TRINITY (national forest)

SIMPSON (four-year University)

SIKIYOU (county where Mount Shasta is mostly located)

TEHAMA (adjacent county)

TRINITY (adjacent county)
- Created by Christopher Johnson

Financial Services News

457(b) Plan Lets Counties Pick and Choose Options

Nationwide Retirement Solutions, provider of the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, has recently launched new and enhanced plan options, specifically created for plans with assets between \$500,000 and \$25 million. These new plan options are available to current plan sponsors of the NACo Deferred Compensation program as well as counties considering the program.

The new options respond to counties' needs for greater flexibility to choose the pricing, investments and fiduciary support they're looking for. Nationwide's new 457(b) offering includes:

- potential for zero asset management charge

- investment menu selection, including ongoing monitoring and reporting

- fiduciary support of the investment menu at no additional cost, and

- access to a guaranteed fixed account with a competitive crediting rate.

Flexible Pricing

The opportunity for zero asset management charge responds to requests from some plan sponsors and participants. For plans that select this option, Nationwide's fixed account yield would be adjusted, but should still be competitive in the marketplace.

For counties that prefer a higher

fixed account yield, Nationwide offers a new plan option that continues to meet that need and offers competitive asset fees.

Integrated Fiduciary Solutions

County plan sponsors that choose one of the new 457(b) plan options from Nationwide will receive the Investment Fiduciary Services, provided by Morningstar Associates, at no extra charge to the plan or its participants.

The service includes:

- investment selection by an objective third party
- a diversified menu of proprietary and third-party investment options
- monitoring and due diligence of investment options
- a sample Investment Policy Statement that can be adopted by the plan, and
- quarterly and annual reports detailing investment performance.

Few fiduciary programs offer the depth of service that the Morningstar Fiduciary Services provide. When plan sponsors enroll in the program, they receive a prudent investment management process,

which includes identification of what Morningstar Associates believes to be high-quality funds and ongoing monitoring of the funds.

Morningstar Associates, in combination with Morningstar, Inc.'s other registered investment advisors, has been offering this service for 10 years, and currently provides it to more than 6,700 public and private sector retirement plans with more than \$17 billion in assets under advisement and management.

Current plan sponsors of the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, as well as counties

considering the program, should contact their Nationwide representative or call 877.496.1630, for more information about these new plan options.

To learn more about the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, and how promoting deferred compensation can benefit county employees, contact Lisa Cole by email at lc@naco.org or phone at 202.942.4270.

(Financial Services News was prepared by Bob Beasley, Communications Consultant, Nationwide Retirement Solutions)

NACo on the Move

» In the News

• **Ryan Yates**, associate legislative director, was quoted in the article "Forest Service to States: Give Subsidies Back" in *Time* magazine May 3.

» NACo Staff

• **Paul Beddoe**, associate legislative director, spoke about the history of the health care debates over the last 100 years, leading up to and including the passage of the 2010 Affordable Care Act at the opening plenary session of the Kansas County Commissioners Association annual conference in Sedgwick County May 8.

• **Emmanuelle St. Jean** has been named the new program manager in NACo's County Solutions and Innovation (CSI) health and human services area. St. Jean comes to NACo from the National Council on Aging. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in biological sciences from Barnard College, Columbia University and a master's of public health, health policy and management from Emory University.



Emmanuelle St. Jean



Jen Horton

• **Jen Horton** has joined NACo as a program manager for infrastructure and sustainability. Previously, Jen served as a planning and policy fellow at EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities, where she managed technical assistance programs for local governments and communities related to land use, smart growth and economic development. Before coming to the federal government, she worked for the Washtenaw County (Mich.) Economic Development and Energy Office supporting the countywide brownfield redevelopment program. Horton received a master's of science and a master's of urban and regional planning degrees from the University of Michigan in 2012.

• **Hadi Sedigh** has been named legislative assistant in the Legislative Affairs Department. Sedigh received an undergraduate degree in political science from Hunter College in New York City and a law degree from the University of Virginia. Most recently, Hadi worked as a legislative fellow for Rep. Yvette Clark (D-N.Y.)



Hadi Sedigh

On the Move is compiled by Christopher Johnson.

The H.R. Doctor Is In

To Serve and Deserve

The end of May is special. It is officially designated as a holiday to honor those who served America in the armed forces. Many have given their lives in that service. The holiday has evolved over the decades, however, to become a prime opportunity to be off work and to spend much of the day at malls (sorry, typo! — make that "malls") buying "stuff." For many kids, it is a chance for a day off from school, a day to sit glued to video games, and to take a break only long enough to go to the mall for a healthy fast-food lunch and more shopping. These activities can easily distract us from the fundamental meaning of a holiday with the word "memorial" in its name.

Each of us, our kids included, has a duty to keep the memories alive of those who volunteered to serve or were compelled to serve during the time of the national draft. We need to remind our children that they stand free to go to school and to have a day off, to go to the mall, to eat junk food and to play mindless



games because of the sacrifices of other people whom they have never met and will never know. In a sense, however, they meet these active or veteran military personnel every day by means of enjoying all that we have because of them.

Put a bit of the original meaning back into Memorial Day. Spend some quiet time thinking of what the holiday really means. Spend some thoughtful time with those you love — your neighbors included — sharing the real meaning of the holiday. Find a veteran or an active-duty member of the military even

if you don't know them personally. Thank them for their service and for being prepared to be first in line at the front line to make possible, safe and sustainable all that we hold dear. Think about that service member you may read about each day who dies in a far off place and try to appreciate what that person's family might be going through. That will surely help you appreciate more than a "giant sale" at some store.

Then, if you must, go shopping, play video games or watch TV. Better yet, have the traditional barbeque. But even between the burgers and the ribs, take a moment to thank and recognize any veterans attending. If none are attending, ask yourself why not and correct that oversight next year!

Those who serve are those who deserve our daily thanks and appreciation.

Phil Rosenberg

Phil Rosenberg
The HR Doctor • www.hrdi.net



News From the Nation's Counties

► ARIZONA

Arizona's county supervisors have asked Gov. Jan Brewer (R) and state lawmakers to **restore \$34 million diverted** during the state's recent budget crisis since 2009.

The *Arizona Republic* reported that a letter outlined three budget priorities worth \$34 million to counties in FY14:

- eliminating state-imposed county payments to house and treat sexually violent prisoners at the Arizona State Hospital
- bringing back all counties' share of state lottery revenue, and
- restoring federal highway-user revenue funds that were diverted from counties to the Arizona Department of Public Safety.

Counties anticipate lower property-tax revenue in FY14 because an 18-month lag in the property-valuation system requires them to levy taxes based on assessed valuations made during the real-estate crisis, when property values were depressed.

There also will be continued reductions in federal resources, particularly because of sequestration, according to the letter.

► CALIFORNIA

• A ceremonial resolution by **FRESNO COUNTY** supervisors has sparked a **minor international kerfuffle**.

The Board of Supervisors passed a resolution in April supporting the largely Armenian territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and its independence. The nation of Azerbaijan, which claims rule over the disputed territory, is asking the supervisors to rescind it.

Azerbaijani officials say that even though the resolution is symbolic and from a county government, it undermines the nation's sovereignty. The supervisors' support, they wrote in a letter, contradicts even the U.S. government's official position that Nagorno-Karabakh is rightfully part of Azerbaijan.

The supervisors have refused to budge on their position, though some say they're willing to give it another look, *The Sacramento Bee* reported. They weighed in out of respect for the views of many in the county's large Armenian community. The resolution urged the state of California and the federal government to also recognize the region's independence.

• **LOS ANGELES COUNTY** Supervisor Don Knabe testified before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs May 7 about

the county's efforts to combat **international human trafficking**. L.A. County, with its two major ports, airport and proximity to the Mexican border, is one of the nation's hubs for sexual trafficking. An uptick in arrests for prostitution for 12-13 year-old girls prompted county probation officers to bring the exploration of young runaways to his attention, Knabe said.

Over the 18 months since his first meeting with the probation officers, Knabe told the committee that the county has spearheaded an effort to raise public awareness, including placing posters on all rail cars, buses and trains operating in the county; creating a video, *Manipulated*, to tell the story of child sex trafficking; and training judges, attorneys and other stakeholders in the justice system to recognize the signs of trafficking.

"We must do everything we can to get these girls off the track and on a path to a better life ahead and together say, 'No more; not in our streets; not to our young girls.'"

• Starting this summer, it will be **illegal to launch sky lanterns** in the unincorporated areas of **SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY** including several beaches.

Sky lanterns are airborne paper lanterns and quite similar to a miniature hot-air balloon. The readily available devices are powered by a fuel cell or candle that heats the air, fills the balloon and makes the lantern fly into the sky.

They have recently become popular for weddings, memorials and other events, but they also pose a huge fire hazard, according to firefighters. An unattended lantern started a brush fire in 2012.

The ordinance includes an exception that allows individuals to apply for a permit to light and launch the devices, but they must be attended to at all times and tethered so they don't fly away.

Sky lanterns are legal in California, but the state fire marshal is working toward a total ban of the devices, which are illegal in Utah, Oregon, Washington and Maryland, according to the *Lompoc Record*.

► COLORADO

PITKIN COUNTY Attorney John Ely is scheduled to argue in court why a local resident **shouldn't be privy to government documents** related to a complaint lodged by her neighbor last year.

At a show-case hearing in June, Ely will make the case that by turning over the documents it would



Photo courtesy of Cape May County, N.J.

County officials and other dignitaries watch May 10 as wreaths are laid at the county Public Safety Training Center in memory of the law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty in Cape May County.

► NEW JERSEY

County officials, the **CAPE MAY COUNTY** Police Academy and the Cape May County Chiefs of Police paused May 10 to remember and honor **police officers killed in the line of duty** in the county.

"This annual memorial service is very important since we honor our Cape May County heroes," said Leonard Desiderio, freeholder vice-director. "We recognize that there is no greater purpose in life than serving and protecting one's community. And there is no greater honor than having the courage to sacrifice one's life in fulfilling this purpose."

The ceremony included a Roll Call of the Fallen, the laying of a wreath, and a 21-gun salute and taps provided by the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center Ceremonial Detail. Colors were presented by the Cape May County Color Guard.

disclose the reporting party's name, which would be bad governance — and bad for the community because it could further enflame tension in the neighborhood and incite a dispute between neighbors.

There is no "positive community benefit in the release of this identification and only a potential for untoward consequences," Ely wrote in a statement to the court.

The complainant who sued the county after a Colorado Open Records Act request was denied, is aiming to find out who called in an alleged code violation on her property, the *Aspen Daily News* reported. It's county policy to protect the names of people who complain about their neighbors, or anyone who alleges a land-use code violation.

► IOWA

A first look at a new state requirement finds only two of Iowa's 99 counties have **achieved gender balance** on their appointed boards and commissions.

The Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics at Iowa State University conducted a study of seven boards and commissions.

"Many of the counties had

achieved gender balance on some of the boards that we studied," said Diane Bystrom, director of the Catt Center, which is studying the issue in cooperation with the Friends of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women.

Iowa is the only state in the nation with state code that requires gender balance on boards at the state, county and municipal level. The law went into effect in 2012.

The boards studied included: the Board of Adjustment, Board of Health, Board of Review, Compensation Board, Conservation Board, Planning and Development Commission and Veterans Affairs Commission.

Bystrom said the other results show promise that the goal is attainable. "A smaller county like **VAN BUREN** and a larger county like **JOHNSON COUNTY** are the two that have gender balance on the boards that we studied," she told Radio Iowa. "So I think that we are pleased to know that it can be done at the more rural level as well as the more urban level to recruit men and women to serve on these boards."

She said the center is collecting data for Iowa's 99 county seats and

the 200 largest cities, to see where municipalities rank on achieving gender balance, a report on which will be finished this summer.

► MARYLAND

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY became the first in central Maryland to allow residents to carry **stun guns** when the County Council lifted its ban on electronic control devices.

"I think it provides an alternative ... for folks that are not comfortable carrying handguns. It gives them a choice. It gives them an option," said Councilman Derek Fink, who sponsored the bill.

Anyone over the age of 18 who passes a criminal background check can acquire a stun gun, CBS affiliate WJZ reported.

► MINNESOTA

Congratulations to **HENNEPIN COUNTY** for winning two **ClearMark Awards** from the Center for Plain Language. The awards, which celebrate clear and effective communication, went to information on visiting the Hennepin County Home School and

Virginia county blind-sided by bombing suspect's burial there

NEWS FROM *from page 14*

to the county's absentee voting Web pages.

"Residents have a right to information that they can understand. Our goal is to make it as easy as possible for people to find the information and services they need, and these awards show that we are on the right track," said Hennepin County Board Chair Mike Opat.

A total of 33 awards were presented at the April 16 ClearMark ceremony in Washington D.C., with only 10 going to public sector organizations.

Nominations for the awards came from throughout the United States and other English-speaking countries, and winners were selected by a panel of international communications experts.

►NEW YORK

The **TOMPKINS COUNTY** Legislature recently adopted a **green-building policy** requiring that all new

construction and major renovations of county-owned buildings meet LEED Silver standards, according to the *Central New York Business Journal*. The acronym LEED stands for or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a certification program of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC).

The law applies to all projects valued at \$500,000 or more. The legislation requires meeting the standard but makes it optional to seek formal designation from USGBC.

►NORTH CAROLINA

MECKLENBURG COUNTY commissioners voted to allow concealed-carry permit holders in most county parks, *The Charlotte Observer* reported.

Commissioners who supported the move said it brings the county in line with a 2011 state statute that allows concealed gun permit holders to **carry handguns anywhere in parks**. Permit holders, however, cannot carry guns on playgrounds,

►WEB EXTRA◀

To view L.A. County's video on human trafficking, *Manipulator*, and to learn more about Hennepin County's commitment to communicating clearly, see News from the Nation's Counties online.

recreation centers or greenways on property leased by the county from a school.

The change came after commissioners received dozens of emails from permit holders and gun-rights advocates complaining that an ordinance proposed by county staff was too strict.

About 19,000 of the county's 920,000 residents have concealed-carry permits.

►OHIO

MONTGOMERY and **MIAMI** counties have inked an **agreement to dispose of solid waste** that's estimated to save the counties \$20 million over the next five years — \$15 million for Montgomery and \$5 million for Miami, WDTN-TV news reported.

Up to 85,000 tons of waste from Montgomery County will be dumped annually at a landfill in Dayton; another 285,000 tons from both counties will go to a landfill in Bellefontaine.

Montgomery County Commissioner Judy Dodge said her county is committed to "exploring any possible tax-saving collaboration with other local governments..." "This is how governments can work smarter."

►PENNSYLVANIA

ALLEGHENY COUNTY Executive Rich Fitzgerald has formed a Public Health Commission on **Preventing Violence and Promoting Community Mental Health**.

The 23-member panel's mission is to reduce violence and promote positive mental health and community well-being in the county. State Rep. Ed Gainey asked that the commission be formed. He recently held a town hall meeting in his district on reducing gun violence.

The commission is charged with identifying or developing effective strategies to prevent violence and coming up with preliminary recommendations within eight months.

Fitzgerald called community violence a public health problem, adding that "in order for us to have any impact at all on this issue, we need to start approaching it from a public health perspective."

►UTAH

A woman who says she's chairwoman of the Uinta Valley Shoshone Tribe of Utah Indians, a federally unrecognized Indian tribe, has filed documents in four Utah counties asserting a **tribal interest in millions of acres of land**.

Claims were filed with the recorder's offices in **DUCHESNE, GRAND, UINTAH** and **WASATCH** counties. The document also asserts a tribal interest in "all water, gas, oil and mineral rights of every kind," the *Deseret News* reported.

Jonathan Stearmer, deputy Uintah County attorney, is taking the filing seriously. "We're not playing around with this. Anytime there's a wrongful lien, it can have a chilling effect on a specific property," he said, "but it can also have a chilling effect on business and even a chilling effect on tourism."

►VIRGINIA

Sheriff's officials say there are no plans to provide additional surveillance at an Islamic cemetery in **CAROLINE COUNTY** where **Boston Marathon bombing suspect** Tamerlan Tsarnaev is buried.

Sheriff Tony Lippa said his office doesn't have the resources to patrol the site, as it did May 10 after it was disclosed that Tsarnaev's body had been interred there.

"The Sheriff's Office will offer the same amount of protection — no more and no less — to this site as any other cemetery in Caroline County," Lippa said.

He and other county officials received no advance notice of the planned burial, which was arranged by a private citizen from Richmond. But it appears to be legal, the Associated Press reported.

Floyd Thomas, chairman of county's Board of Supervisors, said, "We don't want the county to be remembered as the resting place of the remains for someone who committed a terrible crime."

►WEST VIRGINIA

Sheriff's Departments in all 55 counties will be required to provide their **deputies with bullet-proof vests** starting July 1. Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin (D) signed a bill May 6 mandating the protective equipment.

Only about 50 of some 1,000 deputies statewide do not have their own vests, according to state Del. Bob Ashley, who sponsored the bill. He said the state's Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association pledged to pay for equipping those without vests. The new law also encourages counties to seek funds from federal and other law enforcement programs, the Associated Press reported.

The law was prompted by an incident last August in which a **ROANE COUNTY** deputy was wounded but protected from further injury by body armor.

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

What's in a Seal?

» Shasta County, Calif.

www.co.shasta.ca.us



Shasta County was one of the original counties of California, created on Feb. 15, 1850 at the time of statehood. Parts of the county's territory were given to Siskiyou County in 1852 and to Tehama County in 1856.

The county's history began with Indians, the first inhabitants. When white men began arriving in the early 1800s, five tribes were living in the county: the Achomawi, Atsugewi, Okwanuchu, Wintu and the Yana. The first white men seen by Indians were Russians who came from the north moving southward through the Sacramento River Canyon in approximately 1815.

Shasta took its name from the town of Shasta which took its name from Mount Shasta. Back then, the mountain was inside the boundaries of the county. A few years later the boundary lines changed and Mount Shasta became part of Siskiyou County. Its 14,179-foot peak is still visible throughout most of the county.

The seal shows Mount Shasta overlooking Lake Shasta near the Shasta dam, the second largest and highest concrete structure in the United States at 602 feet high and 3,460 feet long.

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

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Job Market & Classifieds

■ COUNTY MANAGER – LINCOLN COUNTY, N.C.

Salary: DOQ.

Lincoln County (79,313 population). Responsible to five-member Board of Commissioners and serves as chief administrative officer for 22 departments (665 full time employees) with an annual operating budget of \$114 million.

Located in the foothills of the Piedmont Region of North Carolina adjacent to Lake Norman, Lincoln County is a fast growing county 30 miles northwest of Charlotte. More information about the County may be obtained through our website, www.lincolncounty.org. Current manager is retiring June 30.

Minimum requirements include a master's degree in public administration, public policy or related field; ten or more years of progressively responsible experience in local government administration; or equivalent combination of education & experience. Successful candidate must be an innovative leader with

strong interpersonal skills and a proven ability to effectively interact with elected officials, employees, and citizens.

Salary commensurate with experience and qualifications. Obtain applications on the county's website and submit with letter of interest and resume to: Lincoln County, Attn: Clerk to the Board, 115 West Main Street, Lincolnton, NC 28092. Deadline: Open Until Filled. EOE.

Looking for Quality Staff?



www.naco.org

Open source opportunities allow programmers to build on previous work

OPEN SOURCE *from page 8*

the original developer so that the hole could be fixed.

“And that’s the best defense — everyone who uses that bit of code would want it to be secure and has an investment in making it secure, and would share issues or solutions with the rest of the community.”

Smith said Arlington’s website will be built using WordPress, an open-source content management system used by millions of websites worldwide.

The county will roll out the new website in phases throughout the year, and officials say when completed, it will save money by making it easier and faster for staff to update content, eliminate licensing fees and reduce maintenance costs.

“You really have the potential to leverage the innovation of other people much more easily without really having to pay for it,” Smith said.

“Part of it is we’re really in a position today where, ‘How do we do more with less? How do we do more with the same money we

A dozen years ago, Polk County, Ore. was looking to improve the online mapping data available to the public. It worked together with Linn, Yamhill, Lincoln and Benton counties, and chose an open-source solution that the five counties now have been using for several years.

Dean Anderson is Polk County’s IT director with more than 20 years of experience with the county. Though he used open-source software in that instance, he says it may not be right for everyone, every time. But it’s an option worth considering.

“We looked at a number of commercial products,” he said, “and concluded that MapServer, an open source tool box, gave us the best alternative for doing what we wanted to do.” MapServer is an open-source platform for publishing spatial data and interactive mapping applications to the Web.

He is quick to add that he hasn’t drunk the open source Kool-Aid, at least not a whole jug of it.

“As the IT director for Polk County, I have to find the best tools for the money that meet my user needs,” he said. The county is developing information systems for the district attorney’s

office and one for developmental disabilities data. “And none of them are open source. They’re commercial products off the shelf,” he said.

He said one possible downside of working with the open source community is that it might slow down a project’s development process. He said support can be variable because there might not be a single point of contact to go to when problems or questions arise.

Ben Balter, an open-source evangelist and former White House Presidential Innovation Fellow, said one challenge for smaller units of government going the open-source route is resources. “At the state or the federal level, you generally have an entire CIO’s office dedicated to publishing (code), dedicated to getting invested in this kind of space.”

That’s where finding partners can become important, Anderson said. “The only thing that I can afford to do is find the best tools out there ... within the budget constraints you have and make it happen. And if you can collaborate with other counties, that’s the only way to go.”

have today, that we had last year, that we had the year before?”

Pegoraro said this isn’t the county’s first foray into using open-source software. “We also open-sourced the code for our emergency preparedness application — our mobile app — and we

went through the process of getting the County Board to approve that prior to this most recent approval.” The app, Arlington Prepares, has been available to smartphone users since 2011. The county’s library system is investigating using open-source software to manage

its card catalog.

As much as anything, Smith said, going the open-source route is about collaboration, openness and transparency.

“We also really liked the idea of sharing what we do with other places. Local governments are

kind of all in it together,” she said.

“If we can help each other — it doesn’t have to be just other local governments — but if we can help each other and really contribute to the wider body of code and features and services, that’s a good thing.”



REMINDER

Resolutions or Platform Changes for the NACo Annual Conference Due June 19, 5 p.m. EDT

The NACo resolutions process provides members with the ability to create national policies affecting county governments.

The process is intended to be as open as possible in order to allow participation from the entire membership. There are, however, some guidelines to ensure that the process is a relatively orderly one.

These guidelines can be found at:
www.naco.org/legislation/Documents/NACo-PolicyProcess-2013.pdf

All resolutions or platform changes must be submitted to resolutions@naco.org by June 19.

For more information please contact NACo’s Legislative Affairs Department at 202.393.6226.

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