

NACO National Association of Counties

# CountyNews

The Voice of America's Counties

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES ■ WASHINGTON, D.C.

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## House votes to change budget agreement

By PAUL BEDDOE AND MARILINA SANZ  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTORS

The House of Representatives passed the Sequester Replacement Reconciliation Act (H.R. 5652) May 10 by a 218–199 vote.

The bill cancels the Jan. 2, 2013 automatic across-the-board cuts (known as sequestration) in discretionary programs included in last year's Budget Control Act (BCA) deal. It also incorporates approximately \$300 billion in mandatory program cuts known

See **BUDGET** page 7

### QuickTakes

#### Best States for Business

- 1 – Texas
- 2 – Florida
- 3 – North Carolina
- 4 – Tennessee
- 5 – Indiana

Source: Chief Executive Magazine 2012



Photo by Beverly Schlotterbeck

Jerome Selby (second from right), mayor of Kodiak Island Borough, Alaska, is the new president of NACo's Western Interstate Region. Also elected at WIR's conference in Santa Fe May 16–18: John Martin (l), first vice president, commissioner Garfield County, Colo., and new to the board, Lesley Robinson (r), second vice president, commissioner, Phillips County, Mont. Ron Walter (second from left), is immediate past president and commission chairman, Chelan County, Wash. Look for a full report on WIR's 2012 Conference in the June 4 edition of County News.

## Some counties pay to fix unfinished subdivisions

By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Silt runoff from an unfinished subdivision in Henderson County, N.C. is clogging streams. In Paulding County, Ga., commissioners have formed a task force to deal with 174 residential developments with incomplete infrastructure.

When the housing bubble burst four years ago, it left behind a host of problems that counties across the nation still are dealing with. Some call them “zombie” subdivisions, and residents of these partially completed developments are becoming increasingly vocal about unpaved roads, missing sidewalks

and street lights, and overgrown lots.

Compounding the problem, some of the builders have gone belly up, or performance bonds that guaranteed infrastructure completion have expired or changed hands several times, making them difficult to track down.

Counties are pursuing varied strategies to fix the problems—taking legal action, of course—but also assuming financial responsibility to finish roads, curbs and gutters.

“We’re coming up with a game plan for where we know we’re not going to have money. And that’s where it gets a little touchy,” said Todd Pownall, a Paulding County commissioner. “Of course, the

people in the developments want things done, and the people that aren’t in the development say why are you using tax dollars to finish this project? But that’s a legitimate question.”

Even when bond money can be recovered to make improvements, governments often are questioned about why they’re doing work in uninhabited subdivisions, when an occupied development may be lacking infrastructure. Pownall explained that when bond money is recovered for a specific project, it must be spent on that neighborhood, whether anyone lives there or not.

See **SUBDIVISION** page 12

## NACo 2012 election credentials in the mail

By ILENE MANSTER  
MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

Credentials and voting information for NACo's 2012 election were mailed May 14 to the chief elected official (CEO) of each member county.

To vote, a county must have paid its 2012 dues and have at least one paid registration to the annual conference. The CEO must indicate on the credentials form, the names of the voting delegate and alternate authorized to pick up a county's voting materials. There can only be one alternate designated on the form.

The CEO must also indicate on the credentials form whether the county would want its ballot cast by another (proxy) county or its state association of counties' president, or his or her designee in the event that neither of its

See **CREDENTIALS** page 6

### INSIDE »



Lea County, N.M. will host \$1 billion “ghost city” for testing » **Page 10**

EPA lists counties failing ozone standard » **Page 4**

NACo International Economic Development Task Force member inks deal with Chinese city » **Page 9**

Counties' use of flying drones aids law enforcement, other departments » **Page 11**

### CountyNews Features



# House introduces bill to stop 'Waters of the U.S.' guidance

By JULIE UFFNER

ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

A bipartisan bill was introduced in the House to prevent the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corp of Engineers from moving forward with the "waters of the U.S." guidance. NACo supports this bill and asks that you contact your members of Congress to ask their support for H.R. 4965 and the Senate companion bill S. 2245.

This bill is in response to a proposed guidance on the Identifying Waters Protected by the Clean Water Act. Originally issued as a draft in April 2011, the guidance was sent in final form to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on Feb. 21, 2012. The final waters of the U.S. guidance is expected to

be released soon.

According to the EPA and the Corps, the guidance is meant to clarify what waters fall under federal jurisdiction by modifying the waters of the U.S. definition in the Clean Water Act (CWA).

NACo, however, has expressed repeated concerns over the scope of the waters of the U.S. proposal—the guidance is significantly broader in scope than previous guidance documents on the subject. Previous documents narrowly referred to CWA Section 404 wetlands jurisdiction, in light of previous *Solid Waste Agency of North Cook County* and *Rapanos* U.S. Supreme Court decisions.

The guidance, on the other hand, states there is only one waters of the U.S. definition within CWA which

would impact every CWA program beyond the 404 permit program.

H.R. 4965 was introduced by Reps. John Mica (R-Fla.), chairman, and Nick Rahall II (D-W. Va.), ranking member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee; and Frank Lucas (R-Okla.), chairman, and Colin Peterson (D-Minn.), ranking member of the House Agricultural Committee. There are currently 37 sponsors on the bill.

## County Implications

The waters of the U.S. proposal acknowledges "that decisions concerning whether or not a

waterbody is subject to the CWA have consequences for states, tribal and local governments..." However, potential impacts have neither been addressed nor adequately studied. Since there are a number of CWA programs that directly impact counties—such as the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Program; Pesticides General Permits; Total Maximum Daily Load; and Water Quality Standards, changing the definition of waters of the U.S. will affect counties.

While the guidance is technically non-binding, many counties believe based on previous experience, Corps

staff will claim federal jurisdiction over county ditches using the 404 permit program, essentially using the guidance as a regulation.

## County-owned Ditches

Under the draft guidance, a ditch is jurisdictional if it has a bed, bank and an ordinary high-water mark, and connects directly (or indirectly) to navigable or interstate waters, regardless of distance.

Many counties are required to obtain 404 permits for their roadside, flood and stormwater ditches. Section 404 permits can be cumbersome and costly to obtain. A number of counties report the process may take years and be extremely expensive.

In regards to maintenance activities, the EPA and the Corps have stressed continuation of their current exemption of maintenance of ditches. However, while an exception exists on paper, it is very narrowly crafted. In reality, a number of counties have been required to obtain maintenance-of-ditch 404 permits to cut down vegetation or

See **WATERS** page 6

# NACo states priorities to conferees on transportation bill

By ROBERT FOGEL

SENIOR LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR



NACo has sent a letter expressing its priorities on the reauthorization of the surface transportation program to the Senate-House Conference Committee considering the measure, which met for the first time on May 9. The conferees made opening statements; however, little of substance was accomplished.

NACo's priorities for the transportation portion of the conference include the off-system bridge program, which was added as an amendment during consideration of the Senate bill, and transportation planning where NACo supports efforts to retain current authority of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, both large and small, and expand the authority for transportation planning in rural regions.

It will be up to staff to work on reaching compromises on the many differing issues. There is no sense of how long it will take the 44 conferees to resolve the differences in the Senate and House bills.

Another transportation item in the NACo letter concerns streamlining projects and NACo's efforts to support ways to simplify and speed up the environmental review of county highway, bridge and transit projects. The Senate bill also included a non-transportation issue: one-year funding extension of the Payment in Lieu of Taxes

program and Secure Rural Schools programs, both of which are very important to many counties and are an issue NACo's letter urges that be included in the final bill.

NACo also commented on Keystone XL Pipeline. In the letter, NACo urges Congress to expedite the comprehensive review and submission for the approval process—including the presidential permit—for the Keystone XL Pipeline and other petroleum pipeline projects. The letter adds that it is equally important that a thorough review and permit process be completed in a timely and thoughtful manner. The letter addresses Gulf Coast Restoration and recommends adoption of the Restore Act, which would send 80 percent of the Clean Water Act penalty fines from the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill to the five affected states—Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida.

The final priority in the letter is the Small Issuer Exemption, which NACo supports and is in the Senate bill only. The provision provides for the temporary increase in the small-issuer exception and will help bond issuers such as small county governments to bypass the costly administrative process of issuing bonds in the open market. It also can lower the borrowing costs on their debt to finance infrastructure projects.

\*For a list of the conferees, view this story online at [www.naco.org/countynews](http://www.naco.org/countynews).



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# MSRB establishes protections for state, local governments



The Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB) has announced that beginning in August underwriters of municipal securities will be required to disclose risks about complex financial transactions, potential conflicts of interest, and compensation received from third-party providers of derivatives and investments to their state and local government clients.

The new rules include explicit and expanded requirements for underwriters aimed at protecting state and local governments that issue municipal bonds.

“We have acted decisively and consistent with our mandate to protect state and local governments established by the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010,” MSRB Chairman Alan Polsky said.

The new requirements, which have the force of federal law, will ensure that state and local governments have important information they need to make informed decisions about issuing bonds and related transactions.

MSRB rules already prohibit an underwriter from engaging in any deceptive, dishonest or unfair practice with respect to an issuer of municipal securities. However, a key theme of the new rules is ensuring state and local governments have important information to make the best decisions when undertaking financial transactions.

A municipal bond issuer should be informed about the material risks of an interest rate swap recommended by its underwriter. It should also know whether its underwriter is issuing or purchasing credit default swaps in its securities since those swaps could affect the pricing of the issuer's securities.

Under current law, all representations that underwriters make to state and local governments must be truthful and accurate.

The new rules provide specific examples of how underwriters must fulfill this obligation. For example, an underwriter may not represent that it has the requisite knowledge or expertise with respect to a particular financing if the personnel that will work on the financing do not have that expertise. The new rules also prohibit excessive compensation of underwriters, determined by the specific facts and circumstances of the offering, and require that the price paid by an underwriter for an issuer's bonds must be fair and reasonable.

Stephen H. Holt, president of the National Association of County Collectors, Treasurers, and Finance Officers, said, “The new rules will further strengthen the current protections given to state, county and other local municipal governments when dealing with fi-

nancial transactions being handled by underwriters of municipal securities.

“NACCTFO welcomes these new, stronger rules that will assist many of our members in providing their constituents with further protection in regard to financial

transactions. We congratulate the MSRB on their foresight.”

The principles covered in the new regulations are:

- An underwriter is required to provide robust disclosures as to its role, its compensation and any actual or potential material conflicts

of interest.

- All representations made by underwriters to state and local governments must be truthful and accurate, and may not misrepresent or omit material facts.

See MSRB page 16



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# EPA lists counties not meeting 2008 ozone standards

By JULIE UFFNER

ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR



On May 1, the Environmental Protection Agency released the list of counties not meeting the 2008 ozone standards of 75 parts per billion (ppb). This list includes 45 areas. Most areas have been on the non-attainment list previously, except for three new areas in two states — California and Wyoming.

The current ozone standards of 75 ppb have been in place since 2008. EPA has worked with states and tribes, and through a public comment period, to identify areas of the country that do not meet the standard. The agency credits ongoing improvements in air



quality by states, tribes and local governments as a big reason why more areas were not classified as non-attainment.

The ozone rule was originally proposed by the EPA in January 2010. The agency proposed to change the current primary ozone standard of 75 ppb to a range of 60–70 ppb. The White House

estimated the cost of implementation to be between \$19 billion and \$90 billion.

Under the stricter standards, as originally proposed, almost 650 counties would be designated as non-attainment.

But in September 2011, President Obama chose to withdraw the tighter proposal due to “reducing regulatory burdens and regulatory uncertainty.” However, the

standard will be revisited in 2013. Under the Clean Air Act, every five years the EPA is required to review and revise, if necessary, current air quality standards.

Ozone is primarily created through emissions from cars, power plants, industrial facilities, electric utilities and other sources. Ozone can also be created by indoor equipment such as printers and copiers.

Since both sunlight and hot weather precipitate its formation, ozone is known as primarily a summer pollutant. Both urban and rural areas can have high levels of ozone due to airborne transport of pollutants from hundreds of miles away.

*\* To view a list of the non-attainment counties, see this story online at [www.naco.org/countynews](http://www.naco.org/countynews).*

## House budget deal would kill Census' community survey

By JACQUELINE BYERS

DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND OUTREACH

American businesses and state and local governments would lose access to up-to-date demographic and economic data under a provision in the proposed House budget version that would abolish the American Community Survey.

The ACS was created in the late 1990s by the Census Bureau to collect the demographic data historically collected on the long form used during the decennial censuses. The survey was fully implemented in 2005. The ACS, which is mandatory, is sent to 3 million households annually and is used to provide more up-to-date data than that collected once a decade at the time of the Census.

Many of the demographic questions on the ACS have been included at the request of Congress and federal agencies. These questions provide information that is used in the allocation of nearly \$400 billion in federal and state funding and also help the federal government to target federal programs and funding to areas of need. Failure to return the ACS can result in fine of up to \$5,000.

Rep. Daniel Webster (R-Fla.), the author of the legislation that would abolish the ACS, criticizes the survey for invading people's privacy by requiring them to answer questions about their commutes to work, whether they need assistance with various life tasks, among others. He is quoted as saying, “We need to ask ourselves whether this survey is worth \$2.4 billion.”

Last year, Rep. Ted Poe (R-Texas) introduced H.R. 190, which sought to make responding to the ACS voluntary. Many statisticians and other data users had expressed concern about making this form voluntary because a lower response rate on the

ACS would have required costly in-person follow up by Census Bureau staff to get the required data.

In addition, it may eventually have required the Census Bureau to bring back the long-form census (which went to about 17 percent of the population or one in six households) for the 2020 decennial census. The full implementation of the ACS in 2005 led to the 2010 decennial census becoming a short form that contained only 10 questions since the demographic data is collected on the ACS.

County governments are among the stakeholders that will be hit hardest if this program is abolished. The data from the ACS is used primarily in the distribution of federal funds, and in this era of scarce resources it is imperative that that data is accurate and up-to-date. Also, counties use this data for their own internal purposes, such as planning, assessing the makeup of their communities, housing needs, commuting patterns, school, curriculum and classroom needs, educational levels, and other data that help to determine their community and economic development needs.

An article in the May 10 *Business Week* outlined how curtailing the ACS would hit the business community hard also. The article cited the Chamber of Commerce, which relies on the data for information such as household spending, per capita income and population estimates. Businesses also rely heavily on the data to help make decisions about where to build new stores

and hire new employees, and to get valuable insights on consumer spending habits. Another business executive has said that without accurate economic and demographic data such as that collected on the ACS, businesses “would be flying blind” when trying to make decisions and possibly lose much more than funding the surveys would cost.

Andrew Reamer, a professor at the George Washington Institute of Public Policy, said the “the loss of the American Community Survey will cause chaos and inefficiency in the operations of business and government in the U.S.”

Many conservative organizations have come out in support of the continuation of the ACS. *Bloomberg Business Week* reports that economists at conservative think tanks Cato Institute, American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and the Heritage Foundation all expressed support for the data-gathering surveys since they rely heavily on the statistics they produce to study the economy. “Those agencies are essential,” said Phillip Swagel, an economist and non-resident scholar at AEI. “The data they provide really tell us what's going on in the economy.”

Political strategists have stated that they believe that this piece of legislation may become a bargaining point once the new spending bill goes to the Senate. They believe that the House will agree to continue to fund the American Community Survey in exchange for making responses voluntary.

## Profiles in Service



» Liz Kniss

NACo Board Member  
County Supervisor  
Santa Clara County, Calif.

**Number of years active in NACo:** 12

**Years in public service:** 28

**Occupation:** being county supervisor in a county of nearly 2 million residents

**Education:** bachelor's of science in nursing, master's in public administration

**The hardest thing I've ever done:** is raise a family while working.

**Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner:** Margaret Thatcher, Marie Curie and John F. Kennedy.

**A dream I have is to:** provide women and girls all over the world with access to education.

**You'd be surprised to learn that I:** come from a small town and lived on a farm for several years.

**The most adventurous thing I've ever done is:** run for public office.

**My favorite way to relax is:** walking.

**I'm most proud of:** my advocacy for health and for the environment.

**Every morning I read:** *Wall Street Journal*, *San Jose Mercury News*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Palo Alto Daily* and *Palo Alto Post*.

**My favorite meal is:** a simple salad, grilled salmon, fresh bread and a glass of California wine.

**My pet peeve is:** dishonesty.

**My motto is:** “A ship in the harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for” —William Shedo

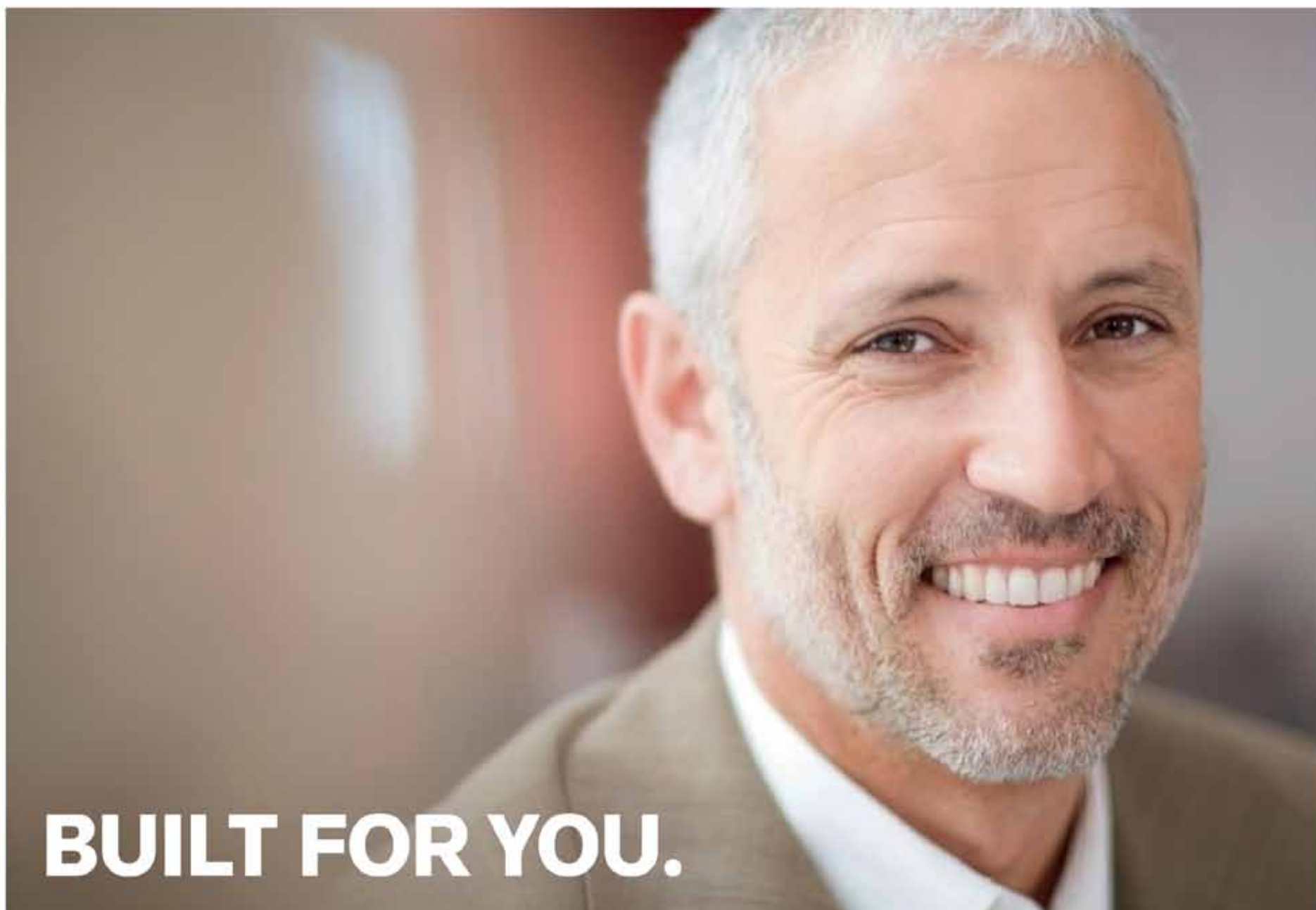
**The last book I read was:** “The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer” by Siddhartha Mukherjee

**My favorite music is:** all types, really.

**My favorite president is:** the Democratic one.



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# NACo-Cooperative Extension set stage for ongoing dialogue

By Ed FERGUSON  
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The need for and importance of strong local relationships, ongoing communication and a mutual understanding of the value of Cooperative Extension (CE) were key conclusions of a national two-day meeting of officials from NACo and CE held in Kansas City, Mo. May 3–4.

The meeting was convened by NACo and the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP). Its purpose was to discuss the mission, goals and priorities of both organizations, to identify mutual interests, needs and resources, and to consider ways to collaborate at the national, state and local levels. The meeting was arranged following NACo’s decision not to fund the Ralph L. Tabor Extension fellow position in 2012.

Determining local needs—and figuring out how best to meet them—were quickly identified by the

group as keys to strong county-CE relations. In a facilitated dialogue, participants outlined issues of mutual interest such as rural-urban interdependence; education about civic engagement, especially for youth; education to address obesity and to encourage healthy living; assuring ongoing sustainable food systems and strength in agriculture; and achieving excellence in education and service delivery.

Recognizing that strained county and CE finances are likely to continue, attention also was paid to strategies that maximize efficiency and economy, such as sharing information about model programs, using electronic technology more broadly, encouraging partnerships at the local and state levels, and recognizing excellence through joint awards.

One example cited as a way to enhance counties’ and CE’s mutual interests is Georgia’s use of a state liaison position. Meeting

attendees Ross King, executive director of the Association County Commissioners of Georgia, and Beverly Sparks, University of Georgia associate dean for Extension, said that the county government and CE partnership in Georgia could serve as a model for other states. Dennis Calvin, director, Pennsylvania State University Cooperative Extension, reviewed a similar arrangement in his state.

NACo President Lenny Eliason and Donald Larson, chair of NACo’s Agricultural and Rural Affairs Steering Committee, both expressed how demographic changes and fiscal realities require CE to clearly articulate what value it adds to the health and well-being of local citizens. Most counties provide a significant portion of the funding for local CE programming, especially for 4-H youth development efforts.

Daryl Buchholz, associate extension director, Kansas State University, and Robin Shepard, executive director, North Central Cooperative Extension Association, agreed to encourage similar dialogues at state levels between CE and county officials. The purpose is to create efficiencies in the way CE and county governments work together to increase awareness of existing CE programs, and to listen to the needs of local citizens to create new programs of high value.

Other county officials in attendance were Lu Barron, supervisor, Linn County, Iowa and chair of NACo’s Rural Action Caucus, and Keith Langenhahn, field representative, Wisconsin Counties Association. NACo Deputy Executive Director Ed Ferguson and Associate Legislative Director Erik Johnston also represented NACo.

Other CE representatives at the meeting included Mark Latimore, administrator, Fort Valley State University in Georgia; Lyla Houglum, executive director, Western Extension Directors Association; and Jane Schuchardt, executive director, ECOP.

A complete report of the NACo-Cooperative Extension dialogue outlining additional action strategies is in process and will be posted on the NACo website when it is available.

# Credentials deadline looms on June 22

CREDENTIALS from page 1

designated delegates picks up the county’s ballot. A county may also choose not to cast its ballot.

Each member county must return a form, signed by the chief elected official, in order to vote. In addition to being mailed, the credentials form is also available via a link on the NACo website at [www.naco.org/credentials](http://www.naco.org/credentials). The deadline to return the form is Friday, June 22.

This year’s election will be held on Tuesday, July 17 at 10 a.m. during the Business Meeting at the NACo Annual Conference in Allegheny County (Pittsburgh), Pa. Counties will vote on resolutions that set NACo legislative and association policy for the coming year. Delegates will also elect NACo officers for the coming year. The position of second vice president is usually the one position that is contested.

The county must be a NACo member “in good standing” in order to vote, meaning that a county’s dues for 2012 must be paid before the voting occurs. Also, the county must have at least one paid registration for the annual conference and have proper credentials.

The credentials form attests to a county’s eligibility to vote. The form contains information on the number of votes a county is eligible to cast, as well as the identity of the delegate who is authorized to cast the county’s vote.

The number of votes per county is determined by the amount of dues it pays. Dues are based on population. NACo’s bylaws allot one vote per \$500 in dues:

- Counties with dues of \$400 to

\$499 receive one vote.

- Counties with dues of \$500 to \$999 receive two votes.

- Counties with dues of \$1000 to \$1,499 receive three votes, and so on.

The maximum number of votes a county can receive is 112.

The Credentials Committee ensures that all member counties participating in the election process, either for NACo officers of policy, are able to do so in the most efficient and fair manner. The committee confirms requests for credentials pick up, helps guarantee the process runs smoothly, resolves credentials disputes, and assists during the election itself.

The 2012 Credentials Committee members are:

- Helen Purcell, recorder, Maricopa County, Ariz., chair
- Cindy Bobbitt, commissioner, Grant County, Okla., member
- Walter Tejada, county board-member, Arlington County, Va., member
- Arlanda Williams, councilwoman, Terrebonne Parish, La., member

The NACo bylaws also provide for a parliamentarian, reading clerk and tally clerk to aid in the election process. They are:

- David Ferdinand, commissioner, Canyon County, Texas, parliamentarian
- Lee May, commissioner, DeKalb County, Ga., reading clerk, and
- Patty O’Connor, taxpayer services director, Blue Earth County, Minn., tally clerk.

If you have any questions, please contact Ilene Manster, membership coordinator at [imanster@naco.org](mailto:imanster@naco.org) or 888.407.NACO (6226) x291.

## Word Search

### Louisa County, Va. Facts

Read more about Louisa County in “What’s In A Seal?” on page 10.

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

AGRICULTURAL (known for being agricultural)  
CAROLINE (Queen, mother of Louisa)  
CIVIL (war fought in county)  
DOGWOOD (official Virginia flower)  
FREDERICK V (Louisa’s husband)  
GEORGE II (King, father of Louisa)  
GOLD (county high school color)  
GREEN (county high school color)  
HANOVER (county Louisa formed from)

JOUETT (rode to warn Thomas Jefferson of British Army)  
LOUISA (Princess the county was named after)  
REVOLUTIONARY (war fought in county)  
TOBACCO (sun-cured tobacco capital of the world)

Created by: Christopher Johnson

# Open rule-making favored over current guidelines

WATERS from page 2

trees in earthen ditches or clean out debris from manmade ditches. Special conditions may also be attached to the permit for maintenance activities. One California county can only clean out an earthen floodwater ditch six months out of the year because of impacts to bird habitat.

If more ditches become jurisdictional under the guidance, the concern is the problems that exist now within the 404 permit program will only intensify, especially if the process is not streamlined nor accompanied by a Corps staff increase.

Because of the broad implications for state and local governments, NACo opposes the waters of the U.S. guidance from moving forward. NACo would prefer the agencies to move forward with a transparent rule-making process, in order to address all concerns in the bill.

NACo’s policy states that local streets, gutters and human-made ditches must be excluded from the definition of waters of the United States.

NACo asks that counties contact their senators and ask them to co-sponsor or support H.R. 4965 and S. 2245.



# House bill cuts Medicaid, public health funding; hurts counties

**BUDGET** from page 1

as reconciliation. The Senate is not expected to take up the House bill, leaving the decision on whether to change the sequester requirement to the post-election lame duck session.

Under H.R. 5652, there would not be separate specified limits for defense and non-defense programs. However, the budget resolution that

passed the House March 29 shows that the intent was to cut non-defense discretionary programs by a lesser amount than if the sequester were in place (\$27.3 billion rather than \$37.2 billion) and increase defense spending by \$8.2 billion above the BCA deal.

In order to make up for cancelling sequestration in 2013, H.R. 5652 makes deeper mandatory cuts in several programs that affect counties,

including Medicaid, the Prevention and Public Health Fund, the Social Services Block Grant and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistant Program (SNAP). The bill does not, however, include the proposed block grants for Medicaid and SNAP as originally proposed in the budget bill. NACo opposes turning these programs into block grants because they could result in cost shifts to counties.

Cuts to Medicaid include lowering to 5.5 percent from 6 percent the amount of the non-federal match that states can raise by taxing health care providers; extending the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid disproportionate share hospital (DSH) cuts through 2022; and repealing the ACA's Medicaid maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement, allowing states to restrict eligibility standards. NACo opposes cuts to Medicaid that are likely to shift costs to counties.

The bill also contains a full repeal of the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF) for an estimated savings of about \$11 billion over 10 years. The PPHF was authorized and fully funded at \$16 billion over 10 years by ACA, and \$5 billion was previously taken from the PPHF to pay for the Medicare "doc fix" and

other popular tax extensions back in February. NACo strongly supports the PPHF and opposes cutting it for any purpose.

Another program that would be repealed is the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), which is currently funded at \$1.7 billion. SSBG is an entitlement to states, but several states pass the funds through to counties. It can be used for multiple activities, including adult protective services, child welfare and services to the disabled.

The rationale given for eliminating the program is that it is duplicative. However, there is no other source of federal funds for adult protective services, and child welfare services provided by SSBG often go to children who are not eligible for federal programs.

Additionally the bill goes beyond eliminating the funding. It strikes the program from the statute. This means that states would no longer be able to transfer funds from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Block Grant — and that SSBG will no longer be available as the conduit for disaster relief funds. SSBG was used to distribute funds after Hurricane Katrina and other disasters because

its flexibility allowed federal aid to move quickly.

The SNAP cuts would amount to over \$30 billion over 10 years and in some cases would make program administration more complicated. Even though the Senate is not expected to consider reconciliation, some or all of these cuts could come up during the House Farm Bill debate. The cuts include:

- eliminating SNAP performance bonuses
- reducing the state allocation for SNAP employment and training in FY13 from \$90 million to \$79 million
- reducing categorical eligibility to households receiving cash assistance through other low-income programs
- moving the elimination of the increased SNAP benefit included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 from 2013 to July 1, 2012, and
- eliminating the requirement that states that use the standard utility allowance to provide the allowance to households that receive Low Income Energy Assistance payments. Known as "heat and eat," this provision is often used to help apartment dwellers whose utilities are included in the rent.

## In Case You Missed It ...

### News to Use from Past County News

#### ► Dental Discount Program now available to NACo-member counties

The NACo Dental Discount Program is now available to all member counties in 47 states.\* It gives counties an opportunity to offer their uninsured residents or employees dental and orthodontics savings. The discount card allows people to save 5 percent to 50 percent on dental care, and 20 percent on orthodontics.

For more information on implementing this new program in your county, go to [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org) and click on "Solutions Center" and "Help Your Residents" from the drop-down list. You will see a clear link to the NACo Dental Discount Program. You may also call toll-free for more information at 1.888.407.6226 (NACo) and ask for "membership."

(\*Currently, the program is not available in Montana, Vermont and Washington, but NACo is working with the program partner Careington, Intl. to offer the program in the future for the counties within these states.)

## Need Revenue to Close Your Budget Shortfall?

### NACo Prescription Program Can Help

Are you facing difficult budget decisions? You're not alone. Counties across the country are confronting similar problems – cut services or reduce staff. The NACo Prescription Discount Card Program offers another option that could help close the budget gap.

As a program participant, you can choose to receive a marketing reimbursement fee, which would pay your county \$1 per prescription when the card is used to receive a discount. This funding could help save a needed program or prevent staff layoffs.

Your residents, especially those without insurance, can save, too! Savings can be up to 75%; the average savings rate is 24%.

More than 65,000 pharmacies participate, including all the major chains. The program is free, easy to use and everyone is eligible.

**It's a winning program! It's a winner for residents and for counties. Sign up today!**



To learn more about the program, go to [www.naco.org/drugcard](http://www.naco.org/drugcard) or scan the QR code.

Operated by CVS Caremark.  
This is NOT insurance. Discounts are only available at participating pharmacies.

Rev 04.12



**NACo** National Association of Counties  
The Voice of America's Counties



# Phone app shows counties new ways to fight crime

By CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON  
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT



Have a crime to report but want to remain anonymous? For residents in counties across the country, there's an app for that.

Fairfax County, Va. Crime Solvers recently launched the free app TipSubmit, which allows the public to anonymously submit tips to police through the local Crime Solvers program. You can download TipSubmit on iPhones and Android phones.

"If there's any incident of harassment, assault or drugs, this app could be used to help get the information to police without fear of information being traced back to the tipster," said Shelley Broderick, spokeswoman for the Fairfax County Police.

With TipSubmit, users select the local crime solvers program to send a tip. They then fill out a tip form, which allows users to select the type of crime, attach a photo and even give a location of the crime using the phone's GPS feature.

The tip is assigned a code and users can track correspondence about the issue with the local police department. TipSubmit is also used by other local police departments, including Montgomery and Charles

counties in Maryland; and the city of Manassas and Stafford County in Virginia.

TipSubmit was developed by *CrimeReports.com*, a company based in Salt Lake City that works with thousands of law enforcement agencies to help reduce, prevent and solve crimes by enabling officials to easily open and manage a controlled dialog with the public. *CrimeReports.com* offers online crime-fighting tools including a public crime map, alert messaging, anonymous tip submission and data analytics.

The new mobile application augments the existing TipSoft tools that allow the public to submit anonymous tips via phone, Web and SMS Text-a-Tip. The app has the ability to use GPS to auto-locate the nearest agency or users can select an agency manually. Members of the public can attach images and video to tips. The app also makes it possible to establish an anonymous, ongoing, two-way dialogue and real-time chat with the receiving agency. Tipsters could receive rewards of up to \$1,000 for information submitted to Crime Solvers, and the tipster's identity is confidential.

In Virginia, tipsters and their information are protected under state law when their information is reported to a certified Crime Solvers program.

Crime Solvers (also known as Crime Stoppers in some jurisdictions) began in Albuquerque, N.M. in 1976. It is a national community-oriented program involving citizens, the business community, news media and police departments working together in the fight against crime. Comprising a group of citizens along with a police liaison, the programs pay cash rewards for information leading to the arrest and indictment of any person or persons who commit crimes or for the capture of a wanted criminal. Rewards are funded solely by donations from local businesses and private citizens.

Crime Solvers programs are started by concerned citizens who want to help their communities fight crime. Each program is independent and operates under its own bylaws and board of directors. Board members come from all segments of the community and donate their time and talents for one common goal — to make the program a success by assisting law enforcement in reducing crime.

To download the TipSoft application, visit <http://TipSoft.com> or visit the Android Market or iTunes App Store.

*\*For more information on this program, read the online version of this story at [www.naco.org/countynews](http://www.naco.org/countynews).*

# Inmates get a second chance training dogs

By CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON  
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT



Some Chatham County, Ga. inmates are getting a new "leash" on life helping train some of man's best friends.

More than half a dozen adoptable dogs are being taught basic obedience skills by inmates facing criminal charges. It's part of a new Sheriff's Office program called Operation New Hope. For four weeks, inmates serving short sentences for non-violent misdemeanors live with dogs from the Humane Society for Greater Savannah, house-breaking and training them so they'll be ready for adoption.

"It's a win-win for everybody," said Sgt. Robert Brooks, who brought the idea to sheriff's office brass. "Everything around an inmate is negative — the public perception of an inmate is negative, being in jail is negative; and this is an opportunity for an inmate to prove to the community that they have some self-worth and can put something positive back into the community."

And as for the animals, Brooks said, being housebroken and obedience-trained will help their chances come adoption time.

When the program ends, the dogs will be put up for adoption through the Humane Society, and a new set of dogs and inmates will be introduced to one another. The sheriff's office hopes the dog-training experience will open up employment pathways for the inmates through veterinary support, pet stores, kennels and the like.

Programs like Operation New Hope are sweeping the nation. Other programs, like "Dogs on Parole" in Alachua County, Fla. or "Shelter Dog Training Program" in Orange County, Calif. differ in how they're run, but the goal is the same: to help inmates and the dogs they train turn their lives around.

Deputies in Chatham County say about 91 percent of participating inmates do not return to jail and the adoption rate for the dogs is nearly 100 percent.

*\*For more information on this program, read the online version of this story at [www.naco.org/countynews](http://www.naco.org/countynews).*

# Property tax measures, bills worry counties

By CHARLIE BAN  
STAFF WRITER



The call to eliminate property taxes can be a populist rallying cry, but the governments who rely on them take a much more sober attitude.

If a constitutional measure on North Dakota's June 12 primary ballot is approved, anti-tax activists could force dramatic changes that the Legislature rejected roundly three years ago.

Measure 2 seeks to abolish property taxes by constitutional amendment, their revenue replaced with state funding determined by a complex formula administered by the Legislature.

Local policy makers would be unable to fund their own projects to their liking and thus be reliant on the attention of legislators to allocate funding.

The measure's proponent group, Empower the Taxpayer, says it would improve property tax policy.

The state Legislature, the body that would control the funding, voted down a bill with similar intent in 2009.

"They hardly had a discussion on it," said Jeff Eslinger, the communications manager at the North Dakota Association of Counties. "The Legislature itself said it didn't want this, but at least if they had passed the bill it would have been easier to fix. You don't want to put tax policy specifics and dates in the

constitution, it's just not the right place for it."

The state's strong economy may have helped propel Measure 2 to the ballot. Since 2006, North Dakota has become the nation's third-largest oil producer. And its lowest-in-the-nation unemployment rate is linked to the oil boom.

"When times are good, there's an undercurrent of desire to keep the government from having too much money," Eslinger said. "The problem is, most people don't seem to realize there are different taxes and they fund different governments. That, and it's easy to get people to sign a petition by asking them if they don't like property tax."

Trying to fund local projects without the authority to raise money as they see fit would be, to local governments, similar to performing brain surgery wearing oven mitts. And Eslinger worries that when the Roughrider State's boom times wane, county budgets

will be more vulnerable than before.

"When things get thin as they have in the past, the Legislature has passed costs down to the counties," he said. "When they have total control over the budget, there's no doubt they'll do it again."

Father east, a bill to repeal the state's personal property tax passed the Michigan Senate. The tax covers vehicles and equipment not covered under the real estate tax. The House, however, has yet to introduce its own bill, which Michigan Association of Counties (MAC) Legislative Coordinator Deena Bosworth says expresses caution on the chamber's part.

"We don't expect the House to move quickly on this," she said. "They're more likely to go after income tax changes, if anything."

Two amendments to the Senate bill, however, made Bosworth feel significantly better if it does go forward. MAC's earlier opposition to the bill was motivated not by

the proposed repeal of the tax, but by the lack of a guaranteed funding source to replace the lost tax revenue. One amendment was an assurance that the funding for local governments would be guaranteed, otherwise the repeal would fail, and the other changed the qualifications for reimbursement to offer it to more counties.

"We had significant reservations about any change where the Legislature would pay us an annual appropriation," she said. "We had seen statutory promises that were not honored by later legislatures."

The Pennsylvania Legislature is looking at a personal property tax repeal bill, but it would only affect school district funding, not counties.

*\*View NDACo's Measure 2 Website, complete with instructional videos about the amendment, at [www.naco.org/countynews](http://www.naco.org/countynews).*

Keep up with NACo online ...

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





# Franklin County inks EcoPartnership in China

By **STEPHANIE OSBORN**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, COUNTY SERVICES

Franklin County, Ohio and the city of Hefei, China will collaborate to develop and deploy electric vehicles and address other energy and environmental issues facing their communities under an EcoPartnership agreement made official May 3 in Beijing. Franklin County Commissioner Paula Brooks and Hefei Mayor Zhang Qingjun, signed the agreement as part of the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogues that took place May 2-4.

Brooks is a vice-chair of the NACo International Economic Development Task Force and a member of the NACo Green Government Advisory Board.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton presided over the EcoPartnership signing ceremony on behalf of the U.S. "This illustrates once again that the United States and China can and will work together in new ways and through many channels to address our common challenges on energy and the environment, two issues that



Paula Brooks, Franklin County, Ohio Board of Commissioner's president, and Zhang Qingjun, mayor of Hefei, China (both seated) sign an EcoPartnership agreement May 3 in Beijing. Brooks is a vice-chair of NACo's International Economic Development Task Force. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton spoke at the event.

transcend politics that we live with every single day in our homes, our businesses, and our communities," Clinton said.

The Franklin County agreement includes plans to explore the use of electric buses, to examine

partnering with businesses in Hefei to bring jobs and economic development to the county, and to jointly tackle other clean energy and environmental-protection issues, such as lake and wetland conservation, waste and sewage

treatment, energy conservation in buildings, and urban planning. The localities will work closely with Ohio State University and Hefei University of Technology in carrying out the agreement.

Ohio State already has provided

Hefei with technical advice about a wetland restoration project being planned in the city's downtown area.

Following the ceremony in Beijing, Brooks led a delegation from the Columbus region to meetings with local leaders and businesses in Hefei, a city of more than 5 million people. The delegation included representatives from Columbus Sister Cities, Ohio State, the Ohio Hotel and Lodging Association and NACo. Like Columbus, Hefei is a capital city. It is the fast-growing government, business and cultural center of Anhui province, which lies west of Shanghai and Nanjing.

The U.S.-China EcoPartnerships program is an initiative of the U.S. Department of State aimed at developing new models of mutually beneficial voluntary activities between state, local and private-sector organizations to spur innovation, investment and engagement on clean energy and environmental issues. Eighteen partnerships have been enacted since the EcoPartnership program began in 2008.

How did  
Franklin County, PA,  
**Standardize 36  
Departments**  
onto one ECM System?

When Franklin County implemented Laserfiche enterprise content management, it quickly discovered that **one technology could transform staff productivity and cut costs across the county.** What started as a niche application in the County Commissioner's office grew into a critical foundation for business processes in 36 diverse business units.

"Laserfiche is hands down the most expansive technology in our county," says Ed Yonker, Application Software Support. "We can bring all of our activities from across the county together instantly. We're comfortable using it to streamline every single business process we've got."



Visit [laserfiche.com/franklincounty](http://laserfiche.com/franklincounty) to download the Franklin County case study white paper.



# New Mexico county lands desirable ghost town

By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Ghost towns are a bad thing, right?

Not the one that's about to spring up in Lea County, N.M. That's where a company recently announced plans to build what some are calling a \$1 billion "ghost city" — to be used to test emerging infrastructure and technologies in a real-world, but uninhabited, setting.

Pegasus Global Holdings LLC officials say their Center for Innovation, Testing and Evaluation (CITE) will be unique in the world in replicating a modern city in size and scope. The facility, scheduled to break ground in June, is projected to create at least 350 permanent jobs and 3,500 indirect jobs in its

design, development, construction and operational phases. Lea County, population 64,700, sits in the state's southeast corner, bordering Texas and Mexico.

Lea County is known as the state's "energyplex" for its concentration of oil and gas-related industries. But the county had been looking for ways to diversify its economy as a hedge against boom-and-bust cycles, even before Pegasus came calling.

Gregg Fulfer, chairman of Lea County's Board of Commissioners, said the county had been seeking proposals and ideas on how to generate more research activity in the county — from national research labs in the state such as Los Alamos and Sandia, and universities.

"And all of a sudden, Pegasus

walks up... it's kind of like the field of dreams," he said.

Once Pegasus decided it wanted to locate in New Mexico, state economic developers initially identified 16 potential sites. Earlier this year, the list was winnowed to two finalists: Lea and Dona Ana counties.

In recent years, U.K.-based Urenco, a uranium enrichment company built a major facility in Lea County, which already had a strong skilled workforce of engineers, scientists and researchers, according to Lea County Manager Mike Gallagher.

Another factor in the county's favor was the availability of vacant land — CITE will need up to 20 square miles, which can be aggregated from private owners willing to sell.

CITE's potential economic impact to the county has yet to be fully determined, but Gallagher believes landing the facility will further establish Lea County as an "attractive place to conduct applied research, and hopefully, commercialization of such research."

The testing center will comprise urban, suburban and rural environments, including a mix of new and aging infrastructure, according to Pegasus. This will give its clients the opportunity to test and evaluate their technologies in a facility that closely simulates the real-world. "The test infrastructure will be 'unpopulated' allowing for a true laboratory without the complication and safety issues arising from having residents," the company said.

"As to CITE itself, its design, its scale and its scope, it's one of a kind," said Robert H. Brumley, managing director of Pegasus Global Holdings LLC. "It's the only one, not only in the United States, but in the world."

"There are test and evaluation facilities that test traffic, and test smart grid or test computer operating systems in urban areas," he added.



An aerial rendering shows the master plan for the Center for Innovation, Testing and Evaluation (CITE), a \$1 billion "ghost city" to be built in Lea County, N.M.

"But this is the only one where we have brought all user application groups together in an environment where you can actually see it operate in what would be the substantially prevalent infrastructure in the U.S."

"At the end of the day, this is one of a kind."

CITE will be located in unincorporated Lea County, west of the city of Hobbs. Brumley said Pegasus chose an area "based on the available land, infrastructure and breadth of community support that is required for this type of project."

That support should not be underestimated, local officials say. The county, Hobbs, the county's economic development arm, county residents and New Mexico Junior College "all cooperated in a very positive way to discuss this project, to recruit this project," Gallagher said.

Brumley added, "The county commissioners as well as the business leadership of the county have

all recognized that a way to mitigate the boom-and-bust cycle is to bring in industries that are either related to energy, ancillary to energy, or like with us, ancillary to science and technology."

Another attraction to Lea County, Brumley said, was the success and support of businesses already located there.

"Having the opportunity to talk to these other firms about their experience of moving into the county — that was a very big sale point," he said. "Nothing convinces an investor to invest in a community like the success story of the guy who invested in the community before you and has a positive story to tell."

Gallagher said the community spoke with one voice: "It's been noted that at times — the people from CITE, they didn't know if they were talking to a city representative or a county representative, because we were working in synch with each other."



Images courtesy of Pegasus Global Holdings LLC

A diagram of CITE's proposed City Lab shows the variety of facilities planned. It is designed to replicate a typical mid-sized American city — without inhabitants — and will allow innovators to test their latest technologies in a real-world setting.

## Everyone Remain Calm ...

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# Drones assist county sheriffs' search and rescue missions

By CHARLIE BAN  
STAFF WRITER

**WEB\*  
CONTENT** Unmanned aircraft have garnered most of their news coverage for their role in targeting terrorists overseas, but domestically they serve many of the same functions as their military counterparts.

Although most are no bigger than a radio-controlled plane, unmanned aircraft—or drones—are regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration, which has given clearance for four counties' sheriff's offices to use them.

Mesa County, Colo. has been a leader in using drones for search and rescue operations. Ben Miller coordinates the program.

"We don't need them to blow people up, but the rest of the stuff they could do opens up a lot of options," he said. "It allows us to get that aerial view for a reasonable price. It's certainly cheaper than flying a helicopter."

What started as a throwaway line at the water cooler about how cool it would be to have an unmanned aircraft became a years-long process for Miller to bring drones to Mesa County,



Photo courtesy of Mesa County, Colo.

Mesa County, Colo.'s fixed-wing drone can be launched by hand and fly for up to an hour.

which came to fruition in 2010. Since then, the office has flown 25 missions, logging just under 140 hours of flight.

The drones most frequently serve to exclude wide swaths of land while performing searches, using cameras mounted on the aircraft. Their usefulness is measured not so much in what they definitively find as what they rule out.

"Nobody has had that 'save,' that image of a lost child wandering in the woods, but I'm convinced this technology has that capability," Miller said. "Instead, we can use it to narrow the territory we have to search manually, which saves a lot of time and effort."

The course of Miller's research into drones led him to partnerships with manufacturers in Canada and Colorado who provided Mesa County with aircrafts for the price of the materials. The direct operational cost, including replacement parts and electricity to charge the drones, totals \$3.36 an hour.

The sheriff's department has two drone aircraft from which to choose—a helicopter, which can fly for 12 minutes, and a plane that is launched by hand that can fly for an hour. They both can be outfitted with infrared cameras, and both transmit video and still images to the control unit.

Even without the deals Mesa County got, Miller said drones could be affordable, with models available for close to \$50,000.

Miller likens drones to a canine unit in terms of the training necessary for deputies to use them.

"You don't have to hire a new officer to specialize in drone flight,"

he said. "There's enough automation that you can train someone very quickly, and they can easily maintain proficiency."

In addition to search and rescue missions, Mesa County uses its drones to assist the state highway patrol and local fire departments in taking aerial photographs of vehicle crashes and fires.

"We've been able to see hot spots in fires from overhead that people on the ground can't see,"

Miller said. "In that case, the firefighters were made aware of where another fire could have flared up."

When flying lower than 400 feet, the sheriff's office gets search warrants if the drone's flight path can see into an area like a fenced-off back yard in which a resident has a reasonable expectation of privacy.

Polk County, Fla. toyed with using drones, but decided against

it. Orange County, Texas has FAA clearance, but works with a local contractor to provide a drone when it needs one.

\*Read this story online at [www.naco.org/countynews](http://www.naco.org/countynews) to find a link to videos of Mesa County's drones in action.

## Unmanned Aircraft

A variety of governments, agencies and educational institutions have clearance from the Federal Aviation Administration to fly unmanned aircraft—or drones. Their uses vary from public safety—conducting aerial search and rescue operations or surveillance—to commercial, including photography, aerial mapping, crop monitoring, advertising, communications and broadcasting. Clearance to fly, however, does not mean the organization currently flies drones. Some, such as Miami-Dade County, have investigated the process and received clearance, but have not yet begun flying drones on their own.

A link to the list of entities authorized to fly drones can be found at [www.naco.org/countynews](http://www.naco.org/countynews).

# Counties embrace reform of local government

By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Fiscal times might not be desperate in Suffolk County, N.Y., but they do call for drastic, if not desperate, measures. Faced with a projected \$530 million budget deficit between now and 2013, one county legislator says it's time to "totally transform county government and the role it plays in the lives of citizens."

"We must be strategic in re-conceptualizing what county government is and how it operates," Legislator DuWayne Gregory wrote in a letter to his constituents.

He told *County News* that in better times, the county has funded programs that weren't mandated but were seen as local priorities. "Given the current fiscal environment, we may have to reprioritize ourselves."

According to a recent IBM white

paper, "Flatlined: Rethinking the local government business model for a future of zero growth," local governments need a new approach to the way they are organized, managed and motivated.

"The local government business model is broken," it said. "The infrastructure and services that local governments are expected to provide cannot be financed based on existing revenue streams and current approaches to government operations."

Suffolk County and Loudoun County, Va. are among those where local elected officials are working to re-envision their government structures to deal with new economic realities.

In Suffolk County, population 1.5 million, it's a process that's being undertaken with what Gregory calls "compassionate efficiency."

He describes it as "completely rethinking how we can continue to provide the services that are the most critical to the largest number of county residents, while at the same time realizing that government cannot—nor should it ever even try—to be all things to all people."

Tough decisions are being made, he said, and while the county has little choice regarding state and federally mandated spending, it must look critically at programs and services it has provided at its own discretion in the past. This extends even to such areas as health and social services programs. "We will try to maximize revenues in a way that allows us to minimize how much each person will feel it," he said.

The County Legislature and

See REFORM page 12

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# Counties target low-hanging fruit, sacred cows in pursuit of reform

**REFORM** from page 11

county executive have already identified \$162 million in new revenue — about one-third of the total deficit — in their Stage One Mitigation Plan. Creating its own traffic bureau will help county keep more of the money generated in Suffolk County under its control.

Currently, when a motorist is ticketed, more than 70 percent of the value of the ticket goes to the state, and 25 percent stays in Suffolk, Gregory said. “A local traffic bureau will reverse that equation and make sure that violators’ fines

go towards funding traffic and safety measures here on [Long] Island, not upstate.” It’s an option that previously has been available to the county, but Gregory said the prior administration was loath to pursue it. This and other “low-hanging fruit” are being pursued as a first step.

In Loudoun County, the Board of Supervisors created a Government Reform Commission in January. “This commission is intended to generate actionable recommendations and a blueprint for streamlining county government and reducing costs,” supervisors’ Chairman Scott York

said at the time.

With 312,000 residents, this Washington, D.C. exurb has for years been one of the fastest growing counties in the nation; but like other counties it suffered during the recession and housing bust.

Tom Julia chairs the 13-member reform commission, with representatives of each of the county’s eight districts and five at-large members appointed by the supervisors. He sees the commission’s work as a 12-to-18-month process. It will make recommendations to the board on both “long-standing issues and a lot of sacred cows.”

One of the biggest areas the commission will tackle is the relationship between the County Board and School Board and what can be done to consolidate activities in a variety of areas.

“Forexample, site selection, land acquisition, construction, IT functions, HR functions, other things,” Julia said. “There’s been a very modest amount of that (collaboration) that has occurred in part because of certain statutory requirements and in part because of turf.”

He sees this as perhaps the “most significant” area where the commission can provide insights to the supervisors. Other issues

include whether to professionalize the county’s largely volunteer fire service, and if it should convert from a sheriff’s department to a police department for law enforcement.

“At the end of the day, I suppose there’ll be people that are disappointed if we don’t come back with recommendations that ultimately lead to some cost savings, but that is not solely what’s driving us here,” Julia said. “We’re clearly looking at structural issues and how business gets done, and do we have sustainable models of how we’re doing things.”

## ‘Zombie’ subdivisions create offsite environmental problems

**SUBDIVISION** from page 1

In those counties that are taking responsibility, officials say it’s a case of protecting the value of investments already made in their communities until the housing market recovers — and protecting residents.

Earlier this year, the Metro Council of Nashville and Davidson County, Tenn. passed an ordinance to spend public funds to finish incomplete infrastructure that poses a “public health or safety concern in its present condition.” Paulding County, near Atlanta, once was one of the nation’s fastest growing counties, and it’s considering following suit. It has formed an infrastructure task force to assess needs in unfinished subdivisions and to consider paying for

improvements using county funds.

Robert Duvall, a Metro Council member, said he had seven bankrupt subdivisions — the most in Davidson County — in his district.

“The recent legislation has allowed us to enter into an agreement with a developer or a builder whereby if they would come in and agree to pick up a portion of the infrastructure cost, then we would agree to pick up a portion of the infrastructure cost,” he said. “The people in the community would get their street lights; the people in the community would get the topping coat on their pavement; we would accept the streets as a metropolitan street, and Metro would be responsible for future maintenance.”

Pownall is in the real estate

business and has seen the problems “in the trenches.”

“Some have said we’re finishing the incomplete developments; we’re trying not to look at it like that,” he said. “We may get to a point where we do that. What we’re doing is coming up with plans and cost factors....” He said in developments where there’s no bond money to do the work, the county is considering advancing the cost of the improvements and recovering it in the future through a per-lot assessment when building permits are issued.

All three counties have had some success in calling in bonds and lines of credit to finish the work. Sometimes it required arm-twisting, dogged pursuit and litigation.

Henderson County officials aren’t considering using public money, but the problems there are indicative of what other counties face. They are working to stabilize a development called Seven Falls, which required a \$6 million improvement guarantee from a developer that had sought bankruptcy and splintered into several disparate entities and limited liability companies.

“When the deadline passed for those improvements to be done and they weren’t done, we called the bond, and now we are in the process of litigating to try to get that bond money,” said Sarah Zambon, senior deputy county attorney.

“For Henderson County, for local government, for the commissioners, it created a fairly large administrative burden in terms of chasing down the bond money.”

In addition to homes, Seven Falls was designed to be western North Carolina’s “only private golf and river club” bordered by



Photo by Ron MacArthur/Cape Gazette

A top coat of asphalt is needed to make this Sussex County, Del. street flush with a protruding manhole cover. Scenes like this play out in unfinished subdivisions nationwide.

the French Broad River in the Blue Ridge Mountains near Hendersonville and Asheville, according to one “luxury” real estate website.

Seven Falls provides an example of how unfinished infrastructure can affect more than residents and owners, it can also have negative offsite impacts to the environment.

Since June 2010, Seven Falls LLC has been fined more than \$1,000 per day because of soil erosion problems. Tim Fox was the county’s erosion control technician until a few months ago, when he took a job with the state. On a scale of 1 to 10, he rated Seven Falls’ erosion problems a 10. He was called upon to testify on the county’s behalf in the developer’s bankruptcy case, which the court dismissed.

“I testified that Seven Falls was an environmental disaster, and I still stand behind that,” he said.

Soil from unpaved roads is being washed away by runoff causing

“severe gullying and accelerated erosion.” Fox said headwaters are the life’s blood of the streams — and ultimately rivers — they feed. “A lot of the headwaters streams have been impacted, which affects everything below it.” He estimates “miles of streams” have been adversely affected.


Beyond the environment, Seven Falls’ and other zombie subdivisions’ problems — and Henderson County’s efforts to address them — illustrate another role of government in situations such as these, Zambon said.

“It’s a consumer protection issue also, because there are honest people who bought property out there who are subject to the developer’s promises who now have lots that they can’t access because there are no finished roads,” she said, “and the roads that there are, none of them were paved. So even the roads that were graded are falling apart.”



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## News From the Nation's Counties

### ► ALABAMA

The state transportation department reversed course and decided to work with officials in **DEKALB COUNTY** to develop road signs directing people to **new tornado shelters**.

The department had earlier opposed the signs along state highways because they would overcrowd the existing signs, Fox News reported.

In 2011, the county managed to prevent the Federal Emergency Management Agency from tearing down tornado shelters built at schools.

### ► ARIZONA

Attorneys for **MOHAVE COUNTY** and Quatterra Alaska, Inc., a mining company, filed a **law-suit against the U.S. Department of the Interior**, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and BLM Director Robert V. Abbey. **WASHINGTON COUNTY**, Utah has joined the suit, too.

The suit challenges Salazar's closing of more than one million acres of federal land to all mining, effective Jan. 9, 2012.

According to the suit, proper procedures under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the National Environmental Policy Act were not followed.

The document states defendants ignored both science and facts and have deprived "Mohave County, as well as the state of Arizona, of tens of millions of dollars in revenues and jobs, further inhibiting the state and local government efforts to recover from the worst economic recession in 80 years."

The Mohave County Board voted in 2009 to support uranium mining in the northern county. The county borders the Grand Canyon.

### ► CALIFORNIA

The **TULARE COUNTY** Board of Supervisors made it easier to ask a court to shut down operators who are **violating local medical-marijuana rules**.

A new policy the board approved also introduces fines — which include a \$100-a-day fine for each violation — and other penalties if public safety is threatened by the violations.

Currently, the process to shut down operators takes 120 to 180 days, but the authorized changes could reduce it to about 45 days.

County Counsel Kathleen Bales-Lange noted that the county would count each marijuana plant

as a violation, the *Tulare Advance-Register* reported.

Other penalties for ongoing violations could include criminal prosecution, suspending special-use permits for activities on properties not related to marijuana and denying permits in the future.

### ► FLORIDA

• The Florida Supreme Court ruled that **term limits for county commissioners** are constitutional.

The high court unanimously upheld the right for charter-governed counties across the state to impose term limits on their county commissioners and constitutional officers like sheriffs and clerks of court, the *Herald-Tribune* reported.

There are 20 charter counties in the state.

• After deploying more than 2,000 tons of concrete materials, **ST. LUCIE COUNTY** has two new **artificial reefs**.

The reefs are each made of 1,000 tons of different concrete and steel structures including culverts, light poles, concrete slabs and steel safes. Funding for the reefs came from a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission grant and the St. Lucie County Erosion District.

Artificial reefs at similar depths have supported gag, Goliath grouper, red snapper, scamp and snook.

### ► IOWA

If natural disaster or public safety emergency forces **DUBUQUE COUNTY** into a lockdown, most public and many private facilities now have emergency kits, known as "**crisis bags**" made to address the situation.

The bright red nylon tote bags hang in school offices and classrooms, college campuses, libraries, city and county offices, and will soon be visible in places of worship, thanks to the county health department. All bags include first aid supplies to treat injuries for up to 48 hours and a flashlight, the *Telegraph Herald* reported.

### ► KANSAS

• Commissioners in **DONIPHAN COUNTY** are weighing whether to let voters decide on allowing restaurants to serve **liquor by the drink**.

Doniphan County is located on the Missouri River, across from **BUCHANAN COUNTY** and the city of St. Joseph, Mo. KNZA-FM reported officials of three Doniphan County cities want a referendum in November on ending the county's dry status.



Photo courtesy of Salt Lake County, Utah

### ► UTAH

**SALT LAKE COUNTY** Mayor Peter Corroon and South Salt Lake Mayor Cherie Wood prepare to lead the pack for the annual **Mayors' Bike to Work Ride** May 15. The Bike to Work Week event was free and open to the public and included snacks and t-shirts for all participants.

Meanwhile, the **CHEROKEE COUNTY** Commission has allowed **Sunday beer sales** at stores in the unincorporated areas of the county.

The measure would take effect in July, unless a protest petition forces it onto the August election ballot. The measure would allow Sunday beer sales at convenience stores, truck stops and delis, according to the *Joplin Globe*.

• Despite pleas to reject a complaint from a national group, the **RENO COUNTY** Commission **will not reinstate sectarian prayer** before its meetings, and is changing its policy to reflect that.

The move comes after the Americans United for Separation of Church and State objected to the tradition of ministers offering prayers before the meetings.

The *Hutchinson News* reported most commission members favored asking professionals to offer non-sectarian prayers. If no minister or speaker is available, a commissioner could say a prayer or ask for a moment of silence.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State told the commission last month that it had received a complaint about the prayer tradition.

### ► MARYLAND

In response to increasing metal thefts affecting home and business

owners, **BALTIMORE COUNTY** police announced a new task force, the **Metal Thefts Team**.

The thefts include everything from ripping copper gutters off homes to breaking into Baltimore Gas and Electric facilities and taking electronic devices.

Lawmakers in Annapolis have updated laws to try and combat the problem, but police say too many loopholes still exist. Baltimore County was one of the first jurisdictions in the state to require metal dealers to report transactions to authorities, the *Baltimore Sun* reported.

Already barred from resale are items such as catalytic converters, cemetery urns, tree grates, water meters, street signs, guardrails, light poles and grave markers. And dealers are required to keep records of every transaction and hold questionable items, such as decorative pieces, to give police time to track them if they are stolen.

### ► MASSACHUSETTS

County jails will **lose more than \$1 million** for HIV testing and education thanks to state budget cuts.

Sheriffs warned that the cuts will lead to eliminating staff who educate inmates about the virus; curtailing HIV testing within the jails; and ending visits by infectious disease doctors who monitor inmates' health. This would

threaten the health of inmates and those they have contact with after being released, according to the *Boston Globe*.

Federal cuts forced the state to reduce its overall AIDS prevention budget by \$4.3 million, which amounted to about 25 percent of annual spending on HIV prevention. The elimination of the jails program is among the first casualties.

Jails, where turnover is much higher than in state prisons, have long been regarded as crucial venues for introducing prevention and testing.

The \$1.25 million cut to jails and houses of correction in the state's 13 counties starts July 1.

### ► MISSISSIPPI

Road department employees in **LOWNDES COUNTY** are now required to take **one drug test a year**, and others will be randomly chosen for tests three other times during the year.

In the past, employees only were tested on a random basis, according to *The Dispatch*.

### ► NEW YORK

• **ULSTER COUNTY** Executive Michael Hein said plans are underway for a former group home to be turned over to the county to provide temporary housing and other **services to veterans in need**.

Hein is slated to ask the county Legislature later this month to pass a resolution requesting transfer of the state-owned property to the county, the *Daily Freeman* reported.

"We believe this provides an opportunity for transitional housing in a manner befitting people who have fought for our country, regardless of their financial situation," he said.

In his 2012 State of the County address, Hein said transitional housing for veterans was one of his priorities. He said some veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, and some who fought in prior wars, are "struggling to readjust to civilian life."

• Veterans are also on the minds of **ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY**, which will soon offer an **identification card for veterans** that gives them discounts at participating businesses, according to the *Watertown Daily Times*.

About 30 businesses have signed up so far. "The biggest thing will be to get more businesses on board," County Clerk Mary Lou Rupp said. Her office will administer the program.



# The H.R. Doctor Is In

## Mother Remembered

Now that many of us have spent some Earth Day and Arbor Day time in total awe of the power and beauty of Mother Nature in shaping our existence, it is time to focus on the celebration of a much more personal shaper of each of us — our mothers.

Every one of us was brought into the world by a mother. Reproductive sciences may be able to help with in-vitro fertilization or in screening for genetic diseases, but somewhere along the line, a mom (not to mention a dad) was very heavily involved in the process.

Mothers are amazing creatures.

We owe our lives to them and in most cases the growth and development of our attitudes and behaviors. Though family structure has changed especially fast in recent decades, most single-parent households are headed by moms. Shamelessly reinterpreting a line from the anthem of the British Empire, "Land of Hope and Glory," let us consider "How can we extol thee, we who are born of thee?"

Our mothers, perhaps even more than our dads, introduce us into the world of relationships. They nurture us and support us as we cry tears of joy at a wedding

**Though family structure has changed especially fast in recent decades, most single parent households are headed by moms.**

or a graduation. They hug us and comfort us as we cry tears of grief and sadness when we experience something terrible. They may be the first people we think of when we need to call, Skype or email for advice or help. We may return

home to live with them after we have "left home" as about 20 percent of children between ages 25 and 34 do in our country. (In 1980, in case you are curious, that number was about 11 percent.) They may also be dependent on us later in their lives and live with us, as about 4 percent do.

We often take them for granted or whine incessantly at them as children when we can't have our way often pushing them to the brink of insanity with our stubbornness. Yet they are there for us. They change our diapers, sing our lullabies, wipe our noses and see to our needs for food, learning and security. They put up with our "terrible twos" even when that period of annoying behavior lasts well past a one-year period.

We often do not appreciate all that they went through for us and how much our lives really represent an extension of their own hopes and dreams. That appreciation may not come until after they have passed away.

It is altogether fitting to create a holiday celebrating mothers,

notwithstanding the urging of the greeting card companies. They fully deserve our applause and honor every day of the year.

Mom, for all that you have done for me, for all that you have done that I may never realize, and in sincere apology for all the opportunities I missed to be more in your life than I was, I thank you and award you my personal medal for bravery and service far above and beyond the call. I am what I am because of you.

How can I best extol thee? I can honor you and the people and causes about which you cared. I can insure that your life, with all its passion and caring, becomes ingrained in the mind of my own beautiful daughters and grandchildren. I can see that you live on and on through them and through me.

Rest well, Mother, in the knowledge that you are remembered as a woman of valor and as the shaper of the lives of others.



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

## Counties recognized for bike-friendliness

NEWS FROM *from page 13*

Software for the program and decals to identify participating businesses were paid for by two local car dealers. Rupp said more than 30 counties in the state are operating their own programs.

The first cards will be issued at a military and veterans appreciation day and career fair June 16.

### ► NORTH CAROLINA

• Slim and none... Those are the chances of **moving the Democratic National Convention** from **MECKLENBURG COUNTY** — in protest of the state's voters passing Amendment One, banning same-sex marriage, according to news analysts.

Gay Marriage USA, a New York-based advocacy group launched a petition calling on the Democratic National Convention Committee to "move the convention out of North Carolina" after the law's passage May 8, ABC News' The Note Blog reported.

"Too much planning has gone into it," said Larry Sabato, director of the University of Virginia Center for Politics. "Practically speaking, it's at total nonstarter."

Further, it would punish a county in which about 54 percent of the vote in was against the amendment, according to the North Carolina State Board of Elections.

• **WAKE COUNTY** kicked off a three-month campaign aimed at getting **automated external defibrillators** in more public buildings.

The goal of the Wake EMS 100-Day Heart Safe Automated External Defibrillators Campaign is to help more people survive cardiac arrest, *WRAL.com* reported.

The county has partnered with local defibrillator vendors to offer incentives for businesses and groups buying the devices. Once a device is registered, the information is provided to the Wake County 911 centers so that dispatchers can quickly locate the unit and assist with its use during emergencies.

### ► OREGON

**MULTNOMAH COUNTY** has saved at least \$400,000 at the county's two jails through a joint project by the Sheriff's Office and Office of Sustainability to make the **jails more environmentally sustainable**.

Officers and inmates have seen numerous changes including switching from Styrofoam to reusable cups, using recycled twine to wrap laundry and capturing, treating and recycling water used to wash clothes and bedding. Some of the future objectives highlighted include:

- digitizing the law library, saving about \$70,000 annually
- reducing total energy use of the jails 20 percent by 2020
- reducing water use in county jails 10 percent by 2015, and
- working with food contractors to buy at least 10 percent of food locally.

The project began as a small-scale effort in 2010.

### ► VIRGINIA

First-year **ISLE OF WIGHT**

**COUNTY** Supervisor Dee Dee Darden was a finalist for Monsanto's **Farm Mom of the Year** award. She represented the southeast region in the program that recognizes women's contributions to family, farm, community and agriculture.

Darden and her husband farm 600 acres of peanuts, cotton, corn, wheat, soybeans, pumpkins and beef cattle. They also run Darden's Country Store, a family business since 1952, where they cure country hams.

As a regional winner, Darden won a \$5,000 cash prize.

### ► CONGRATULATIONS

This year's list of **America's Most Bike Friendly Communities** includes **TETON COUNTY**, Wyo., **ARLINGTON COUNTY**, Va., and the city and county of **DENVER** and **SAN FRANCISCO**, respectively, in its Gold and Silver categories. Platinum is the highest designation awarded by the League of American Bicyclists in its annual ranking.

New to the list this year is **ADA COUNTY**, Idaho, entering in the Bronze category.

Communities are recognized based on evaluations of factors such as investment in bicycling promotion, education programs, infrastructure and pro-bicycling policies. See the full list at [www.bikeleague.org](http://www.bikeleague.org).

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

# What's in a Seal?



► **Louisa County, Va.**  
[www.louisacounty.com](http://www.louisacounty.com)

Formed in 1742 from Hanover County, Louisa County was named for Princess Louisa, daughter of King George II and Queen Caroline of England, and wife of King Frederick V of Denmark.

Its central Virginia location put it squarely in the path of Revolutionary and Civil War action and other historical events. It was from Cuckoo Tavern in Louisa County that on June 3, 1781, Jack Jouett rode through the night to Charlottesville and Monticello warning Gov. Thomas Jefferson and the Virginia assemblymen of the approaching British army. The Battle of Trevilian Station, the largest cavalry battle of the war, was fought in western Louisa County.

The seal shows Princess Louisa holding white flowers in a blue dress, which was period color and attire. The gold geographical representation of the county with the green background were the county high school colors at the time of design and adoption. At one time, Louisa County was known as the "Sun-Cured Tobacco Capital" of the world, which is signified by the tobacco on the right. The dogwood flower on the left is also the official state flower. Always primarily agricultural, the county still has many lovely homes from the 18th and 19th centuries.

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



## Research News

# Counties Look for Ways to Share Services

County officials across the county are always eager to share new ideas of how to run local governments effectively. Today, county governments are taking the sentiment a step further by looking to share services and programs with other local jurisdictions to improve efficiency and possibly cut costs in the long run.

In South Carolina, Anderson County and the city of Anderson are considering soliciting experts to advise them on how they could further collaborate on providing services to residents. The county and city already work together to consolidate tax bills for residents with the funds divided by jurisdictions later — and to provide sewer services to residents outside of the city. Some areas discussed as possible services for consolidation include animal control, inspection and permitting services, and law enforcement services.

Peoria County and the city of Peoria in Illinois created the Peoria Metro Committee to explore ways the county and the city could share services. Both county and city elected officials have supported creating a culture of collaboration. The committee is also considering approaching the local school board and park district as a part of the discussion. As a part of this effort, the Peoria Area Shared Services Forward citizen's group has provided recommendations on ways that services could be streamlined. Eliminating county elected positions and consolidating IT departments are just a few of the ideas proposed for study.

Although some major changes are being studied and reviewed, many smaller changes are close to approval by both jurisdictions. For example, employees of both the city and county are allowed to use both city and county fuel pumps, which avoids unnecessary driving when a fuel pump is nearby and allows county vehicles to use the

city's E85 fuel pump. The county's use of employees for smaller Public Works projects and adding the limited number of bridge inspections previously done by the city to its workload are other suggested ways to collaborate to serve residents more efficiently.

Stark County, Ohio has proposed applying for a grant for a feasibility study for consolidating IT departments with five other counties and the city of Parma. The other counties considering the proposal include Cuyahoga, Trumbull, Medina, Erie and Lorain. The grant for the feasibility study is funded through the Ohio Department of

Local Government Innovation Fund. It was created by the state to encourage local governments to analyze and implement new ideas for improving service delivery to residents. Up to \$100,000 could be awarded to support the study if the proposal is selected.

In Warren County, N.Y., the public defender's office is proposing sharing resources with area counties when conflicts preclude the county's lawyers from participating in the case. When a conflict exists, the counties may have to hire outside private lawyers to serve as the defense attorney in a case. This could cost the county thousands of dollars

in legal fees with nearly \$700,000 budgeted for the current year.

Instead, the agreement would allow public defenders in other jurisdictions to fill in when a conflict arises. The inter-local agreement would cover legal issues such as insurance and outline any payment of additional costs including travel. A similar arrangement exists in the area for prosecutors who have a conflict of interests in an assigned case.

In addition to consolidating specific services with other jurisdictions, counties are also looking to learn from the innovations of other counties. For example, Anoka

County, Minn. created an innovative system to manage medical records for mental health services. When the state's billing system could not include insurance information needed for these services, the county staff in the IT and Fiscal Services departments created an electronic application that was integrated with the state's system. The system saved staff time and used in-house resources to create a solution. This electronic system is now being shared with other counties throughout Minnesota.

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

## Financial Services News

# Are County Employees Financially Prepared for Retirement?

Given the scars of the recent recession evident almost everywhere in the nation's communities, the headline question practically answers itself. But in March 2012, the Employee Benefit Research Institute put the evidence in sharp relief:

"Nearly two-thirds of workers think they need at least \$250,000 (from sources other than defined benefit plans and selling their residence) to live comfortably in retirement, yet nearly 60 percent have less than \$25,000 in total savings and investments. Twenty-three percent of workers say they are not at all confident about having enough money to live comfortably in retirement."

The good news is... there is good news. Over the 12-month period ending March 31, consumer spending has reflected Americans' confidence in the economy — both spending and the economy have

been trending upward. The Dow Jones Industrial Average, while enduring spates of volatility, continued marching upward.

With other concerns diminished, county employees may be ready to reconsider their financial preparations for retirement. Counties that sponsor the NACo Deferred Compensation Program have an opportunity to help workers restore confidence in their ability to get ready for retirement — even if that retirement is a few short years away.

### Where to Start

Nationwide recently launched an enhanced website for participants of the NACo Deferred Compensation Program. *NRSforu.com* offers a robust Learning Center, with plenty of information about financial terms, investing, risk and retirement plans.

In addition, county workers are encouraged to attend onsite workshops and request one-on-one consultations with local Nationwide retirement specialists. These plan representatives receive ongoing training so that they're prepared to support the NACo program with quality investment education.

Investing involves market risk, including possible loss of principal. Nationwide Retirement Specialists can help county workers understand market risk and strategies that may help them deal with it. However,

Nationwide representatives do not offer investment, tax or legal advice. Workers should consult their own advisors before making any decisions. A qualified financial professional can help investors take a look at their whole financial picture and develop a plan that encompasses all their resources and needs.

### See the Big Picture

Nationwide offers NACo members access to a financial professional through its Participant Solutions Center (PSC). Its licensed representatives:

- know the NACo program options inside and out
- offer options for outside of program, and
- deliver one-on-one guidance.

PSC representatives take a look at the big picture — not only for county employees, but also for their spouses and family members.

Not all counties have established a relationship with Nationwide's Participant Solutions Center. For more about this service, call the Plan Sponsor Support Center at 877.496.1630.

For additional information about the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, contact Lisa Cole by email at [lc@naco.org](mailto:lc@naco.org) or phone at 202.942.4270.

If you'd like more information about preparing financially for retirement through participation

in the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, contact your local Nationwide Retirement Specialist, or call 877.677.3678.

*(Financial Services News was written by Bob Beasley, communications consultant, Nationwide Retirement Solutions.)*

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# Model Programs From the Nation's Counties

Boulder County, Colo.

## Mediation Eases Tension Between Drivers and Cyclists

By CHARLIE BAN  
STAFF WRITER

A war was brewing in idyllic Boulder County, Colo.

On one side, motorists wanted to keep using roads the way they always had — for their cars.

At the same time, bicyclists wanted to train on the same thoroughfares and complained, in droves, to the sheriff's office and county transportation department.

"It built up over a couple of years," said county spokesman Dan Rowland. "Boulder's a unique place—we have a ton of world-class cyclists who come here to train, but even the weekend warriors are dedicated. There's some territorial conflicts that were bound to surface."

Large groups of cyclists could overwhelm the roads some days, with some riders interpreting traffic laws

differently than drivers, making it difficult for motorists to travel. At the same time, cyclists were complaining that drivers passed or followed too closely and viewed bikes as nuisances.

To smooth the way, with the help of a local mediation firm, the sheriff's office and transportation department recruited dozens of cyclists and residents from the neighborhoods around the roads popular with cyclists.

"Someone needed to bring everyone together and see if they could co-exist," Rowland said. "We found that the people who show up for something like this are results-oriented, they want to help and work in the spirit of collaboration."

A survey to determine how to better educate motorists and cyclists to understand safety and reduce tensions went out to cyclist groups and residents, and was available on

the county website and in two daily newspapers. After two weeks, nearly 2,500 people responded.

The group met four times by spring 2010 and agreed on a series of steps the county could take to improve relations between cyclists and motorists. Foremost was the increase in signage in heavy-cycling areas that encouraged riders to move single file through curvy stretches of road, guide them to pull-off areas built on busy roads away from the flow of traffic, and reminders for motorists to pass with care.

"Looking back, they're fairly easy improvements," Rowland said. "With these working groups, often you can get a lot of voices together and come up with ideas that don't cost too much money."

All told, the mediation and road improvements cost \$28,500, which came from the road department's budget.

In addition, the county agreed to schedule more frequent sweeping of road shoulders and debris removal.

"Many of the cyclists said they'd rather ride on the shoulder anyway," Rowland said. "If all it takes is us cleaning them a little more, that will go a long way."

The county's general policy going forward is, when repaving roads,



Photo courtesy of Boulder County, Colo.

Boulder County, Colo.'s picturesque but busy canyon roads require cooperation between drivers and cyclists.

## NACo on the Move

### » NACo Officers and Officials

• NACo president **Lenny Eliason**, Ed Ferguson, deputy executive director, and Erik Johnston, associate legislative director, participated in a NACo-Cooperative Extension Dialogue in Kansas City, Mo. on May 3-4. The dialogue brought together leaders of NACo and Cooperative Extension, focused on examining successful state-local and NACo-extension partnerships, and identified mutual interests and opportunities for collaboration.

### » NACo Staff

• **Anita Cardwell** has been promoted to the position of program manager in the County Services Department (CSD).

• **Meghan Levine** is the new justice associate in CSD. Levine graduated from Vassar College with a bachelor's degree in political science and urban studies.



Tony Jamison

• **Tony Jamison** is the new membership assistant in the membership department. Having already interned at NACo, Jamison is a recent graduate of George Mason University with a degree in marketing.

• **Anya Nowakowski** is a new research assistant working on the County Intelligence Database. Nowakowski graduated from the University of Maryland with a degree in economics.

• **Jacqueline Byers**, director of research and outreach, was the lead presenter in a learning block at the United Way International Community Leaders Conference held in Nashville May 2. "Community Leadership in Challenging Economic Times" addressed how United Way and its agencies can work with county governments to provide mutual solutions to pressing problems.

*On the Move is compiled by Christopher Johnson.*



Anita Cardwell



Anya Nowakowski

## Municipal securities underwriters must disclose more information

MSRB from page 3

• Underwriters of municipal bond issues that recommend complex municipal securities transactions or products are required to disclose all material financial risks and characteristics, incentives and conflicts of interest regarding the transactions or products.

• An underwriter's duty to have a reasonable basis for the representations it makes to a state or local government extends to representations made in connection with the preparation by the state or local government of its disclosure documents.

• The duty to treat state and local governments fairly includes an implied representation that the price an underwriter pays to a state or local government is fair and reasonable, taking into consideration

all relevant factors.

• Underwriters are required to disclose potential conflicts of interest, including the existence of third-party payments, values, or credits made or received, profit-sharing arrangements with investors, and the issuance or purchase of credit default swaps for which the underlying reference is the state or local government whose securities are being underwritten.

• Underwriters are reminded not to disregard the state and local governments' rules for retail order periods by accepting or placing orders that do not satisfy the state and local governments' definitions of "retail."

\* For a complete list of the new regulations, read this story online at [www.naco.org/countynews](http://www.naco.org/countynews).

## Job Market & Classifieds

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

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

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

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