

Midterm elections shift power base

By JESSICA MONAHAN
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The 2014 midterm elections have shifted the political balance in Washington, D.C. Despite a handful of unresolved races still pending, Republicans are clearly set to control both houses of Congress in 2015.

In the House, Republicans maintained control. Going into election night, Republicans held 233 seats and Democrats held 199 (seats in New Jersey, North Carolina and Virginia were vacant). Although several races are still undecided, the 2014 midterms has given House Republicans their largest majority

since the 1946 elections when they controlled 246 seats.

If they take all undecided races, Republicans will gain their House largest majority since they won 270 seats in 1928.

In the Senate, Republicans gained control for the first time since 2006, picking up seats in Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Montana, North Carolina, South Dakota and West Virginia. One race remains unresolved with the incumbent Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-La.) heading into a runoff election against Rep. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) Dec. 6.

See ELECTIONS page 6

NACo creates united health discount program

By TOM GOODMAN
PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIRECTOR

NACo has created one united health discount solution for counties and their residents by adding the dental program to the NACo

Prescription and Health Discount Program.

This change, which became effective Nov. 1, will make the programs easier for counties to administer and help residents better understand what is available and how to take advantage of the great savings.

The current name of the program is the NACo Prescription-Health-Dental Discount Program. New marketing materials are being developed and the name could change to enhance the promotion of the program. NACo has renewed its contract with CVS/Caremark, which will administer the combined program.

“Offering one discount program that makes it easier for counties and their residents has been a long-term goal for NACo,” said Executive Director Matt Chase. “I am pleased that we have been able to achieve this goal and now can offer county residents across the country great savings through one discount solution. The new program will provide a high level of access, savings and service.”

See NACo HEALTH page 3



Courtesy of Arthur Scott

Rural Action Caucus members tour the CHS Refinery in Yellowstone County, Mont. CHS is the nation's leading farmer-owned cooperative. It recently announced that it is pumping \$406 million into the Laurel, Mont. facility.

Rural Action Caucus symposium zeroes in on economic development

By ARTHUR SCOTT
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

NACo's Rural Action Caucus (RAC) met in Yellowstone County, Mont. for the 2014 Fall RAC Symposium Nov. 6-8. This year's event brought together over 45 county officials from 15 states.

Throughout the three-day program, RAC members examined how rural counties harness local assets and regional partnerships to bolster rural economic development efforts. The caucus also laid the groundwork for strategies to accomplish key federal policy and legislative goals in the years ahead.

Programming focused on pressing federal legislative and policy priorities that have an impact on county governments. The issues ranged from long-term funding and authorization for federal surface transportation programs, to FY15 federal appropriations, to local control and taxation of online sales and Internet access,

to tax-exempt municipal bonds and environmental regulations.

In addition to in-depth policy discussions and a mobile workshop on energy development, county leaders participated in a workshop entitled “Cultivating a Competitive Advantage: How Rural Counties are Growing Economies with Local Assets and Regional Partners,” which engaged RAC members in an overview of asset-based economic development strategies for counties.

NACo also debuted a new report of the same name which highlights 15 rural counties' building on natural resources; existing infrastructure, local institutions; historic and cultural resources; and human capital to sustain economic growth and productivity.

Representatives from three counties showcased in the report served on a panel during the workshop to discuss local-level economic development strategies. Yellowstone County, Mont. Commissioner Bill Kennedy talked about his county's

partnership on the regional level with the Big Sky Economic Development organization to invest in local infrastructure, train a skilled workforce and attract businesses.

See RAC page 3

As County News went to press,

NACo announced it has called on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to withdraw its 'waters of the U.S.' definition until further analysis.

READ MORE AT
www.countynews.org

OP-ED Inmate calling service in jails, complex challenge

By JOHN THOMPSON
INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION



John Thompson
Interim Executive Director
National Sheriffs' Association

The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) represents over 3,000 sheriffs nationwide who operate approximately 80 percent of the jails in the United States. Sheriffs, typically, are the chief law enforcement official of their counties with numerous duties in addition to the operation of county jails.

Generally, a jail is used by local jurisdictions to confine people for short periods of time, including people who have been convicted to serve a short sentence, individuals awaiting trial, and people who have not yet paid bail. In contrast, prisons are operated by the state or federal government and are used to house convicted criminals for much longer periods of time.

The sheriffs in the United States are very diverse and have different jurisdictional sizes and challenges, including budget constraints. Similarly, the sizes of the jails operated by sheriffs and their inmate populations are very diverse and have different challenges.

A top priority for all sheriffs operating jails is to maintain and ensure security in all aspects of the jails' operation, including the ability for inmates to make and receive calls.

Sheriffs must continue to have control over and the ability to monitor the communications of inmates. Inmates

oftentimes try to continue criminal activity from within jails. They communicate with other criminals outside of jails and in other jails and prisons to circumvent security. They contact witnesses, their victims, judges, attorneys and law enforcement in order to harass or intimidate them. Inmate telephone systems are built to reflect the unique needs of each correctional facility and to provide a variety of important security components to prevent these activities.

Security mechanisms come at a cost to the facility. The small size of most jails, coupled with high turnover rates, means that jails must charge more per minute than larger facilities in order to recover the costs of providing inmate calling services (ICS).

In its comments to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), NSA detailed some of the very real costs associated with the administration of ICS systems,

including monitoring phone calls; analyzing recordings; providing escorts for phone repair technicians, and answering questions about the system from inmates and their families.

New technology and advances in computers and smartphones require jails to continually update ICS systems to ensure that mechanisms are in place to monitor and detect criminal activities.

Enhancements in calling services, such as video visitation and Internet visitation, require corresponding enhancements in ICS security measures. Oftentimes the adoption of new technologies increases the cost of ICS for jails.

Sheriffs must have the flexibility to deploy all necessary security mechanisms to monitor inmates and deal with new communications technologies. This includes an adequate cost-recovery mechanism.

NSA recognizes that maintenance of communication with family can have a positive influence for an inmate's reintegration into society after release from jail. However, sheriffs must continue to have the ability to finance administrative functions and the security measures that they deem necessary to protect the public and the inmate population. Otherwise, the ability of sheriffs to provide ICS to inmates will be imperiled, which would not be in the interest of inmates or their families.

FCC seeks comments on jail phone rates

By YEJIN JANG
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Last year, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) took action that capped rates for interstate inmate calling systems (ICS). This action aimed to lower calling rates for prison inmates who make interstate calls.

The FCC instituted an interim rate cap that became effective Feb. 11: interstate ICS rates could not go above \$0.21 per minute for debit and prepaid calls; and \$0.25 per minute for collect calls.

The FCC now seeks to impose similar restrictions on intrastate calling (calls that start and end in the same state), which would affect ICS rates for county jails.

On Oct. 22, the FCC released a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) that seeks comments on several issues related to intrastate calling, including:

- whether facilities (e.g. jails) incur costs in the provision of ICS
- how facilities should recover these costs
- whether the FCC should establish permanent rate caps for intrastate and interstate calls
- whether the FCC should limit ancillary charges
- whether the FCC should prohibit site commission payments, and
- whether the FCC should

specify appropriate transition periods to grant facilities time to adjust.

Chief among these questions is the issue of site commission payments. Some county and regional jail authorities receive a site commission payment from ICS providers, typically negotiated through contract. Use of commission payments will vary by jurisdiction, but they are generally used for inmate wellness programs.

Several states have banned site commission payments: Michigan; Missouri; Nebraska; New Mexico; New York; Rhode Island and South Carolina. Alabama is in the midst of reforming its ICS rates. Inmate calling rates in the aforementioned states are generally lower than those states without a site commission prohibition.

Counties that wish to comment in this proceeding should reference docket number: 12-375. Comments can be uploaded to the FCC's electronic comment filing system, which can be found at <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/upload/display?z=7ansg>.

OP-ED FCC regulations, a big step forward

By PETER WAGNER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PRISON POLICY INITIATIVE



Peter Wagner
Executive Director
Prison Policy Initiative

For most people living in 2014, the telephone is an incredibly inexpensive way to communicate.

But if you have an incarcerated family member, a single phone conversation can cost more than most people pay for an entire month's worth of phone service. Finally, things are changing.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is considering new regulations that will protect the poorest families in your county from the predatory jail telephone industry that was, in some facilities until recently, charging more than \$1 a minute.

Last year, the FCC capped the cost of interstate calls, and is now considering capping the costs of in-state and local calls, as well as

addressing the industry's unnecessarily high fees for having, funding and closing accounts. The FCC has concluded that the jail telephone market is fundamentally broken.

In a normal market, consumers pick products based on lowest price and best features, but in the jail telephone market, the facility picks the vendor who promises to pay the

facility the most. The vendor then raises that revenue by maximizing charges to consumers. That's just backwards, and raising revenue from county residents in this manner has costs that far outweigh the monetary benefits:

- It's disproportionately taxing the poorest residents of your county.
- It discourages family communication. Preserving family communication is proven to improve outcomes for incarcerated people and their families, with benefits for the crime rate and the costs of future incarceration.

- It incentivizes the telephone vendor to create new sources of revenue not subject to the commission system (i.e., charging your taxpayers a \$9.50 fee every time they make a payment via credit card, or just outright seizing unused balances upon release). All of this increases the burden on your county's families

but brings in no revenue at all for your county.

And recall, the people who are confined in your jails are either presumed innocent, as they have not been convicted of anything, or they are serving short sentences for misdemeanors.

The easier you make it for incarcerated people to maintain their family, housing and employment relationships, the sooner your county can see the financial benefits of healthier communities and lower jail populations.

These charges are bankrupting for families, but compared to the cost of running a jail, the commission barely registers.

Some of the industry's defenders would have you believe that jails could not function without this revenue, but the FCC concluded

CountyNews

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Published biweekly except August by:
National Association of Counties
Research Foundation, Inc.
25 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
STE. 500, Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 393-6226 | FAX (202) 393-2630
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POSTMASTER: send address changes to
County News, 25 Massachusetts Ave. N.W.,
Ste. 500, Washington, D.C. 20001
(USPS 704-620) ■ (ISSN: 0744-9798)
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Research Foundation, Inc.

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Comprehensive plan combines prescriptions, health, dental discounts

NACo HEALTH from page 1

The NACo Prescription & Health Discount Program offers significant discounts on prescriptions; vision care; LASIK and PRK vision procedures; hearing aids and screenings; prepaid lab work; prepaid diagnostic imaging, and diabetic supplies. The prescription portion of the program provides average savings of 24 percent on thousands of medications.

The savings range from 15 percent to 75 percent, and the free discount card is accepted at more than 65,000 pharmacies nationwide.

Since the prescription program began, residents in counties offering this card have saved \$550 million on 46 million prescriptions.

The beauty of this program is that residents can begin saving on prescriptions as soon as they receive a free prescription discount card.

SpeedRead » » »

- » Prescription Drug Discount Card: Free for Residents
- » Dental Discount Program: \$6.95 month or \$69 year for individuals. \$8.95 month or \$79 year for families
- » Medical Services: \$6.95 month or \$69 year for individuals. \$8.95 month or \$79 year for families

To receive savings on health services, memberships are available on a monthly or annual subscription basis for both individuals and families.

Like prescriptions, the discounts are available immediately upon enrollment. For individuals, the fees are \$6.95 a month or a discounted \$69 a year. For families, the fees

are \$8.95 a month or \$79 a year.

Adding the dental discount program enables residents to save on all health services through one program.

This program helps residents of NACo member counties save 15 percent to 50 percent on dental care, and is accepted by more than 110,000 participating providers nationwide.

The dental discounts help people who are uninsured, but can also complement health insurance plans or work with health savings



accounts and flexible spending accounts. For individuals, the fees are \$6.95 a month or \$69 a year. For families, the fees are \$8.95 a month or \$79 a year, the same as for medical.

NACo took action to create one program based on a decision by the Board of Directors at the Annual Conference in July that directed the staff to negotiate a contract for a

new administrator for the NACo Dental Discount Program. Following the conference, Careington, Inc., the original dental program administrator, terminated its agreement with NACo, effective Oct. 25. Staff then worked with CVS/Caremark to create one program.

More information on this program is available at www.naco.org/health.

White House policy advisor meets with RAC

RAC from page 1

Cascade County, Mont. Commissioner Joe Briggs highlighted a number of financial incentives counties can pursue to leverage local quality of life to attract new businesses.

Finally, Renville County, Minn. Commissioner Bob Fox described a five-county partnership to reinvest in a regional short-line railroad to encourage new economic opportunity along the rail line.

Doug McKalip of the White House Domestic Policy Council joined RAC members to discuss rural issues and initiatives being addressed by the Administration.

As senior policy advisor for rural affairs, McKalip provides advice and counsel to the president on issues involving farm, ranch and trade policy as well as coordination of the White House Rural Council. During the keynote address, McKalip examined the recent "Made in Rural America



Photo by Arthur Scott

A Rural Action Caucus member reviews the new NACo report on rural counties and economic development — a major topic at the symposium.

Export and Investment Initiative" in which NACo partnered with the White House Rural Council to develop a series of regional forums, bringing together rural business and community leaders with federal partners to discuss new opportunities to bolster rural exports and strengthen the local economy.

RAC members were also joined by Nathan Ohle, special advisor

for external affairs, U.S. Economic Development Administration, and senior advisors to Senator-elect Steve Daines (R-Mont.), Sens. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and John Walsh (D-Mont.), and Gov. Steve Bullock (D).

For more information on NACo's Rural Action Caucus, contact Arthur Scott, associate legislative director at 202.942.4230 or ascott@naco.org.

Quick Takes

Decline in Youth in Confinement by State

1997 and 2010

Tennessee	-66%
Connecticut	-65%
Arizona	-57%
Louisiana	-56%
Georgia	-52%

U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2011

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SAVE THE DATE

NACo Western Interstate Region Conference • May 20-22, 2015
Kaua'i, County (Kaua'i), Hawai'i



REGISTRATION will open January 5, 2015.

NACo's Western Interstate Region Conference focuses on public lands and their issues critical to the western region of the United States. It provides county officials with the opportunity to hear speakers, discuss legislation, and network with other officials to exchange information on those issues.

Visit www.naco.org for more detailed conference information and to plan your participation.

QUESTIONS?

Contact nacomeetings@naco.org or call 202.942.4292.



Crime Dramas Spur Interest in Constitution

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER



A Missouri county judge is turning high school students' interest in crime procedurals television shows into a lesson on the Constitution.

Associate Circuit Court Judge Doug Gaston paid attention when

students toured the Texas County courthouse a few years ago.

"They'd talk about how interested they were in *C.S.I.* and shows that involved forensic evidence," he said. "I figured, if that's what they enjoy, we need to get where they are — teach them in a way that is interesting to them."

He resolved to create some programming to capitalize on students'

interest and use that opportunity to teach them more about the constitutional process for prosecuting a crime.

To make it educational, Gaston had to put that forensic work in the context of a trial, which meant fulfilling more roles than just that of the investigator. As the program, called the Constitution Project, took form, he introduced the role of journalists and the project became a competition. He also recruited volunteer mentors from each discipline to guide participants, from the police department, prosecutor's office and local newspaper.

And the Constitution Project was born.

Starting with one Texas County high school, then four, until the program widened to include the entire Show-Me State, schools assembled teams of four students for each discipline, based on their interest and merit. Later on, the program added a website design component.

Mock crime scenes give the investigative units a chance to look for clues, in the form of planted fingerprints, fake blood and hair and cell phone evidence. The teams are evaluated on how well they find clues, if they follow constitutional restrictions and how well their timed police reports are written.

Throughout this process, the journalist team takes pictures, conducts interviews and writes copy based on what they see and hear. That copy is scored.

After two weeks to prepare a case, trial advocacy teams present to mock juries with their openings, closings and witness examinations, all of which figure into their score. Meanwhile, the journalists are back at it, covering the trial.

The best score wins.

"Adding the journalists was a way to bring the First Amendment into the process," Gaston said.

All parts of the process, he said, work to help the students appreciate the Constitution's processes, protections and freedoms, and, Gaston hopes, to help the students enjoy themselves.

"Without truth you can't get to justice, and without justice you can't get to freedom," he said. "A courtroom trial is a great example of why our country works when it works the way it's supposed to."

Two years ago, the Supreme



Photo courtesy of Judge Douglas Gaston

Students report on a crime scene while others check for clues.

Court of Missouri's Civic Education Committee approved the Constitution Project to be a statewide program, with a state final held in the capital, Jefferson City.

On the statewide stage, all of the investigative components are

16 'first stringers' on their teams."

And there is benefit for the sponsors, who defray the program costs, along with offering the mentors.

The highway patrol, state press association and other statewide sponsors view the program as a recruiting tool, giving them a chance to see some of the most interested teenage investigators, journalists or trial advocates.

"What's great is that our mentors are getting a lot out of it, too," Gaston said. "By design, the media and police and justice systems are all adversarial, but when people involved in those roles sit down and approach their jobs from an educational standpoint, they realize how everything works together, and some of them are reporting back that they have an appreciation for the work other people in different jobs do."

County Innovations and Solutions features award-winning programs.

**Read this story online at www.countynews.org to access materials for the Constitution Project.*



Profiles in Service

Dan Chadwick

NACo Board of Directors
Executive Director,
Idaho Association of Counties

Number of years active in NACo: more than 24

Years in public service: 31

Occupation: executive director, Idaho Association of Counties

Education: juris doctor and bachelor of arts, University of Idaho

The hardest thing I've ever done: hold my grandson Brady in my arms after he died to tell him goodbye.

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Paul the Apostle, Charles Augustus Chadwick (great grandfather) and Osiah Woods (great great grandfather)

A dream I have is to: tour Civil War battlefields and museums with my wonderful wife, Michele.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: was a language specialist in the U. S. Air Force for over seven years.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: flown over 400 hours in a C-130 as a crew member during the Cold War.

My favorite way to relax is: reading while listening to my favorite music.

I'm most proud of: my wife Michele and her strength and accomplishments, and my son and daughter and their families, and all they have done and given in life.

Every morning I read: *The Idaho Statesman*, *Washington Post*, *New York Times* and *Politico*.

My favorite meal is: rib-eye steak (medium), salad with Thousand Island and a Ketel One on the rocks, dirty.

My pet peeve is: unkindness and cruelty by those who think that is the road to success.

My motto is: "Dear God, today I woke up, and I am alive and I am healthy. Thank You."

The last book I read was: *Lost Rights: The Misadventures of an American Relic* by David Howard.

My favorite movie is: *Chicago*

My favorite music is: Jane Monheit, Frank Sinatra, jazz, Christian and almost anything else.

My favorite president is: Theodore Roosevelt.

Streetcars not desired by two counties' voters

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Voters in two counties sent strong messages — directly in Florida and symbolically in Virginia — that light rail is not the answer to their transportation needs.

Pinellas County, Fla. voters convincingly flashed a big red light to Greenlight Pinellas, a transit referendum that would have raised the sales tax by 1 percent to build a 24-mile light rail system and expand bus service.

With 929,000 residents, it's the largest metro area in the United States that is not modernizing its transit system, according to Kenneth Welch, a County Commission member who also chairs the county's transit authority. The rail portion of the system would have cost \$1.7 billion over 30 years.

"The voters sent us a clear message that this was not the right plan for Pinellas at this time," he said. Yet Welch remains optimistic that something can be salvaged from the effort. "What I heard throughout this process is 'we like the bus portion of the plan'... they are not quite sold on rail and how rail fits into Pinellas County."

Opponents — "No Tax For Tracks Pinellas" chief among them — argued that the resulting 8 percent sales tax rate would be the highest among the state's 67 counties, and would harm rather than help economic development as proponents claimed. Sixty-two percent of the electorate turned thumbs down.

In Arlington County, Va., where a \$500 million streetcar system is being proposed, there was no direct vote on the issue. But voters in this overwhelmingly Democratic county of 225,000 residents reelected a



Photo from facebook.com/notaxfortracks

Protesters in Pinellas County, Fla. from the group No Tax for Tracks got their wish on Election Day. A referendum to raise the local sales tax to fund a light rail system and bus improvements was defeated by a convincing margin.

Atlanta-area county voters say 'yes' to subway extension

While light rail fared poorly in some quarters, subways did better in Clayton County, Ga., where voters — 74 percent to 26 percent — approved a 1 percent sales tax to extend the Atlanta-Fulton County-based MARTA system into Clayton.

Located south of Atlanta, Clayton County (pop. 264,000) has had no transit system since recession-era budget cuts claimed its locally operated bus service in 2010. The county's residents have the lowest median household incomes in the region, \$42,569, and 7.5 percent of households don't own a car, according to a study conducted for the county by Florida-based consultants. The median annual incomes in Fulton and DeKalb counties are \$57,664 and \$51,252, respectively.

The Brookings Institution, which has studied

the region's transportation needs for more than a decade, sees the vote as a plus for the entire area.

"[It] also puts Atlanta into an important national group: metro areas using ballot measures to take charge of their economic futures," Brookings researchers Adie Tomer and Jessica A. Lee blogged recently in a post titled, "Clayton County Transit Vote Brings Benefits to Entire Atlanta Region."

"As Washington continues down the path of fiscal uncertainty, metro areas are looking to their voters for expanded transportation investment, often headlined by major transit projects," they added. "This kind of devolved leadership proves Americans want improved infrastructure — so long as they know what their money will buy."

The votes are in on ballot measures

A report in the Nov. 3 issue of *County News*, "Ballot initiatives range wide, but number fewer than 2012," examined a number of ballot questions with potential impact on local county governments. As a follow-up to that story, here is how the featured initiatives fared:

- **Orleans Parish, La.** — Amendment 6 to increase the property taxes charged for fire and police protection — Approved 51–49

- **Tennessee** — Amendment 3 to shut the door on levying any new state or local taxes on personal income or payroll — Approved 67–33

- **Georgia** — Amendment 1 to

cap income tax rates — Approved 74–26

- **North Dakota** — Measure 4 to prohibit the state or any county or other political subdivision of the state from imposing mortgage taxes — Approved 76–24

- **Arkansas** — Issue 4 to legalize alcohol sales in all counties — Defeated 57–43

- **Oregon** — Measure 92 to require genetically engineered food to be labeled — Defeated 50.5–49.5

- **Maui County, Hawai'i** — Genetically-modified Organism Moratorium — temporarily ban the use of genetically engineered seeds until the county conducts a

public health and environmental study — Approved 51–49

- **Mendocino County Calif.** — Measure S — Community Bill of Rights Fracking and Water Use Initiative — to ban fracking and all related activity, imposing harsh criminal penalties for any violations — Approved 67–32

- **San Benito, Calif.** — Measure J — Fracking Ban Initiative — to prohibit hydraulic fracturing and related gas and oil extraction activities — Approved 57–43

- **Santa Barbara, Calif.** — Measure P — Fracking Ban Initiative — to prohibit "high intensity oil and gas operations such as fracking,

acid well stimulation treatments and cyclic steam injection." Defeated 63–37

- **Clark County, Wash.** — Proposition 1 — Home Rule Charter — Approved 53–47

- **New Mexico** — Amendment 4 — allows certain counties to become "urban counties" and establish county charters (A county would need to be less than 1,500 square miles in area and have a population of 300,000 in order to become an "urban county.") — Approved 59–41

(Information for this report was compiled from Ballotpedia.com)

Republican-turned-independent County Board member who has made his opposition to the streetcar a key issue in two campaigns.

That board member, John Vihstadt, said his recent victory was something of a referendum on the streetcar; he won with 56 percent of the vote.

"It was certainly a major issue both in my special election upset (in April) and in my ability to retain the seat in November," he said. On the campaign trail, he called the project "wasteful, extravagant" and said he favors a less expensive, less disruptive modified bus rapid transit (BRT) system, which could be built for 20 percent to 25 percent less.

"I am very much pro-public transit," said Vihstadt, who commutes to his day job via the region's Metro rail and bus system. "I just did not think that the streetcar makes sense from either a transit perspective or an economic development perspective in Arlington."

While his election doesn't doom the project — three of the County Board's five members conditionally favor the streetcar. But two of them are up for reelection next year.

Back in Pinellas County, although voters rejected light rail, the political calculus seems to indicate that residents want transportation issues addressed. Voters reelected or newly elected three county commissioners and six transit authority members who supported the Greenlight project, Welch said, bearing witness to the fact that, "like anything else in Florida, it's complicated."

The major takeaway from the referendum is that while county voters might not be ready for light rail, they do want to see the existing bus system enhanced. "I think if you can kind of bifurcate the plan and move forward with the bus improvements and the BRT express routes, I think that's a logical path," he said.

The next opportunity to take a revised plan to voters will come in 2016, when neighboring Tampa Bay-area Hillsborough County, has scheduled a transit-funding referendum. Welch said Pinellas County needs to have a plan that works with Hillsborough, home of Tampa. "I think we can bring the bus part of this back, at a lower cost, also in 2016, and show those regional connections and have another shot at improving our transit," he added.

"The rail piece is not a battle I want to fight for the next 10 years while our core services deteriorate. I want to get some improvements on the ground, and the rail discussion can happen when it happens."

Shannon County, S.D. to be renamed Oglala Lakota County

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Most of the time, talk about an election “changing the map” is figurative, but Election Day 2014 meant a literal change to South Dakota’s.

Earlier in November, more than 80 percent of voters in this county along the Nebraska border approved a ballot measure changing the name of Shannon County to Oglala Lakota County.

The vote exceeded the two-thirds threshold required by state law for a county name change.

That struck a symbolic victory for Oglala Lakota Native Americans who make up more than 90 percent of the population of the county, which is entirely within the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, and begins to roll back, at least in name, the legacy of the men who divided tribal land in the 1870s.

Peter Shannon — the county’s current namesake — was the chief justice of the Supreme Court of the Dakota Territory in the 19th century and reportedly took part in congressional commissions aimed at getting tribes to cede their land.

State law dictates that Gov. Dennis Daugaard (R) will announce the name change in his 2015 State of the State address, after which point the Legislature will pass a resolution to that effect, according to state Rep. Kevin Killer.

“This was important for establishing our identity,” said Anna



Courtesy of Short Bull

A bumper sticker designed by Jesse Short Bull.

Diaz-Takes the Shield, a county commissioner who spearheaded the renaming effort with Killer. “It’s a small step, but something we can bring to our people.”

It’s not a terribly costly step, either. Shannon County does not have a county seat or offices — it contracts with neighboring Fall River County to administer its row offices. Effectively, the most significant cost would be replacing county letterhead and road signs.

“I checked with our highway superintendent and he basically said there were two signs we’d have to replace that said Shannon County,” she said. “It won’t be cost-prohibitive at all.”

When Diaz-Takes the Shield and Killer hatched the plan to get the name change on the ballot, they had roughly a month to collect 1,500 signatures on a petition for the ballot measure.

“We had to hit the ground running,” she said. “But it got us out in the community, letting people know what we wanted to do, and I think we convinced people who hadn’t voted

in a long time to get reregistered.”

Support came from a radio appearance, help from a community development corporation and a boost from the Associated Press picking up the story.

“We’re even hearing that Custer County, Okla. wants to do that the same thing,” she said. “And a town in our county.”

“There had been talk about this before, our elders had discussed it, but we really got started in the spring,” Killer said. “When we talked to people, about 30 said they wouldn’t support the name change, and two actually said it was because their first names were Shannon.”

In 1871, the U.S. policy toward Native Americans shifted from treating tribes as sovereign nations to that of wards of the state, and an effort began to redirect them away

from nomadic lifestyles and toward agriculture.

Following Gen. George Custer’s defeat at the 1876 Battle of Little Big Horn Massacre, the U.S. government got more aggressive, Jesse Short Bull said, and sent congressional commissions to broker deals to break tribal land into individual allotments, redefining reservation boundaries and selling off the surplus. That would also clear territory for a railroad line, Short Bull said.

Short Bull is a friend of Killer’s and a Native Youth Leadership fellow, along with Diaz-Takes the Shield.

Peter Shannon was part of those commissions, though Short Bull said there was no evidence Shannon was actively involved.

The commission’s proposal was not popular in Pine Ridge, in what is now soon-to-be Oglala Lakota County, and failed negotiations gave way to threats from the commission that the natives would be moved by force.

“Shannon didn’t speak Lakota, and I can’t imagine he expected to be involved in that,” Short Bull said. “He was supposed to be handling the territory’s legal business.”

The territory, however, had been

named for Shannon in 1875, Short Bull said, a year before Little Big Horn.

“What should have been sovereign tribal ground was being named already for Shannon,” he said. “When he came to Pine Ridge, his name was already assigned to the land.”

The tribes were eventually located to land away from the Missouri River, which would have been more conducive to the farming the U.S. government intended.

“What hurts me about this is [the U.S. government] took away the tribes’ ability to decide their own destiny,” Short Bull said. “[The Oglala Lakota Tribe] could have evolved on our own terms, if they saw fit to sell the land to the railroad. We have capable people, but they didn’t understand all that was going on beyond their communities.”

As of the 2010 U.S. Census, Shannon/Oglala Lakota County (pop. 14,000) had the second lowest per capita income, at \$6,286.

“Anything you can see that’s in play in the reservation today, it was all rooted into when Shannon and the commissions came,” he said.

GOP governors grow in number

ELECTION from page 1

Republicans will hold at least 53 seats in the Senate, and the Democrats will have 44 seats plus two additional seats occupied by Independents who traditionally caucus with the party.

In addition to the congressional races, there were 36 gubernatorial elections held across the country. Democrats picked up one state, Pennsylvania, while Republicans experienced major wins in blue states such as Illinois, Massachusetts and Maryland. Races in Alaska and Vermont remain unresolved, but Republicans will hold offices in at least 31 states and Democrats will hold offices in 17 states.

How Will the Midterms Impact the Lame Duck?

Now that the elections are over, Congress will enter a lame duck period. For months, House and Senate leadership have described their plans for a lame duck as being dependent on the outcome of election night.

Although Republicans won’t officially take the helm of the Senate until January, their new power will come into play immediately during negotiations over the lame duck agenda. At a minimum, Congress is expected to tackle “must pass” legislation that addresses FY15 appropria-

tions before the current continuing resolution runs out Dec. 11.

Groundwork has already been laid for an omnibus appropriations package that would set funding levels through Sept. 30, 2015, providing Congress a fresh start for the FY16 appropriations process next year.

In addition to finalizing FY15 appropriations, Senate Democrats are likely to push through a number of executive and judicial branch nominations while they still have the majority.

Another possible item that could see action during the lame duck period is a long-standing priority for NACO, the Marketplace Fairness Act (MFA), which grants state and local governments the ability to enforce existing sales tax laws on remote or online sales.

MFA could be addressed during the lame duck session through S. 2609, the Marketplace and Internet Tax Fairness Act (MITFA), which was introduced in mid-July by Sens. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), Richard Durbin (D-Ill.), Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.) and Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.).

MITFA is a measure that combines MFA with a temporary extension of the Internet Tax Freedom Act (ITFA), a law that currently prohibits state and local governments from taxing Internet access and is set to expire Dec. 11.

NACO prefers the temporary extension of ITFA rather than permanent extensions proposed in other bills. There are other possible items that Congress may choose to tackle, but Republicans are expected to try and postpone major legislative endeavors until they’re in charge.

During the lame duck, NACO will continue to press Congress for a one-year extension of mandatory full funding for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program for FY15 and for the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act (SRS) for FY14.

House appropriators provided for a one-year extension of PILT in their Interior and Environment Appropriations bill, whereas their Senate counterparts did not.

The House has also passed a NACO-backed forest health bill (H.R. 1526) which included an extension of SRS. The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee is scheduled to take up H.R. 1526 on Dec. 13.

What Can We Expect from the 114th Congress?

There are likely to be several differences between the current and incoming Congress. Most of the differences, not surprisingly, will



Photo by Matt Chase

Utah Gov. Gary Herbert (R), center, poses for the record with NACO President Riki Hokama and NACO First Vice President Sallie Clark. The Utah Governor’s Mansion provided the setting for a NACO Financial Services Center Board reception. The FSC board was meeting in Salt Lake County.

New Senate majority means committee chair shake ups

ELECTION from page 6

be rooted in the Senate where now Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) hopes to restore “regular order” to the committee process, which includes the practice of passing 12 separate appropriations bills through both chambers and then reconciling their differences in conference — something Congress has failed to do since 1994.

Another reform McConnell has suggested is allowing for a “free and open amendment process” and greater debate on the Senate floor, a departure from the direction taken by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.).

A Republican-led Senate also means that Senate Democrats will lose their committee chairs starting in January.

There were also several retirements and incumbent losses in both the House and Senate that will shake up a number of committees that have jurisdiction over key legislative issues important to counties, particularly transportation and tax policy.

Transportation

With regard to transportation, there are numerous changes on the horizon for the committees that are responsible for reauthorizing MAP-21, a critical issue for counties.

In the Senate, several committees have jurisdiction over the reauthorization process and all of them will experience changes in leadership.

One of the most significant changes will occur to the Environment and Public Works Committee, which will no longer be chaired by Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.). Instead, Sen. Boxer will likely serve as the ranking Democrat to Sen. James

Inhofe (R-Okla.). Boxer and Inhofe worked closely together crafting MAP-21, which may bode well for the reauthorization process.

In addition, the current chairs of the Senate’s Banking Committee and Commerce Committee, which have jurisdiction over transit, freight and rail policy, Sens. Tim Johnson (D-S.D.) and Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), are both retiring at the end of the year, leaving questions about who will serve as the ranking Democrats alongside Sens. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) and John Thune (R-S.D.).

In the House, several changes are going to come to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Although Rep. Bill Shuster (R-Pa.) will likely continue on as chair, the top Democrat on the committee, Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.), lost his election. In addition, the chair of the committee’s Highway and Transit Subcommittee, Rep. Tom Petri (R-Wis.), is retiring at the end of this year, leaving behind a strong legacy and a key vacancy on the committee.

Unless Congress acts, MAP-21 will expire and the Highway Trust Fund, which pays for the programs authorized by MAP-21, will become insolvent at the end of May. Shuster has remained committed to getting a long-term bill done, but it’s unclear how these departures will affect the process.

Tax Policy

Regarding tax policy, the House Ways and Means Committee and Senate Finance Committee will also experience changes with Ways and Means Chair Rep. Dave Camp (R-Mich.) retiring at the end of this year. The current Budget Committee chair, Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), is considered a likely candidate to replace

Camp and serve alongside the committee’s current ranking Democrat, Rep. Sandy Levin (D-Mich.).

In the Senate, the Finance Committee’s leadership is expected to flip-flop, with the current chair, Rep. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), serving as the ranking Democrat to Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) when the Republicans take control of the Senate in January.

The House Ways and Means Committee and Senate Finance Committee are expected to tackle a number of tax issues that are critical to counties, including the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund and comprehensive tax reform, which may address the tax exemption for municipal bond interest and the deduction for state and local taxes.

In early 2014, Camp released a discussion draft to guide comprehensive tax reform, which included a provision that would place a surtax on tax-exempt municipal bond interest earned by investors and identified enough funding for to keep the Highway Trust Fund solvent for eight years.

It’s unclear at this time how new committee leadership would tackle these issues.

Entitlement Reform and Medicaid

Republican leaders have signaled they want to reform America’s entitlement programs as part of a larger goal of reducing the national debt and circumscribing the role of the federal government in the health care arena.

Of the three large federal entitlement programs — Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid — counties have a unique interest in Medicaid. Counties provide direct services to

low-income individuals, including Medicaid beneficiaries; they finance Medicaid, putting up local funds to draw down the federal match, and administer the Medicaid program on behalf of the states at the local level.

The chairman of the House committee with jurisdiction over Medicaid, Rep. Fred Upton (R-Mich.), and the presumptive chairman of the Senate committee, Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), have both publicly indicated a willingness to overhaul how the Medicaid program works, specifically suggesting capping the number of federal funds available per beneficiaries in broad categories: children, the blind and disabled, the elderly and other adults.

Any measure which would shift costs from the federal government to states and counties would be of concern to NACO.

In addition to transportation and tax policy, a Republican-led Congress is expected to pursue a number of polarizing legislative items, including approval of the Keystone XL Pipeline, which NACO supports; reforms to the Affordable Care Act; immigration reform, and free-trade agreements.

House Budget Committee Chairman Ryan has even hinted that Republicans may pursue a reconciliation strategy to push through some of their more controversial priorities, such as entitlement reform.

Reconciliation is a legislative process used by Congress — primarily with budget bills — that limits debate and allows for passage with a simple majority. There are several procedural restrictions that apply to reconciliation bills that may interfere with Republicans’ ability to use this option.

While Republicans are eager to

move forward with a robust agenda, it’s important to note that there are a number of obstacles that may limit how much they can accomplish.

First, while Republicans took the Senate in the midterms, their majority is not nearly large enough to bypass the Democrats (unless they use reconciliation).

Second, the Republicans’ upper hand in the upper chamber will be further suppressed once the presidential primary season starts, with at least three of the Senate’s Republicans — Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), Rand Paul (R-Ky.) and Ted Cruz (R-Texas) — expected to make a play for the White House.

In addition, 34 Senate seats are up in 2016 and 24 of those are held by Republicans.

Elections are notorious for inhibiting bipartisan compromise and limiting the legislative calendar, which will likely have an impact on how much gets done between Jan. 3, 2015 when the 114th Congress is sworn in, and Election Day, Nov. 8, 2016.

(Paul Beddoe, deputy legislative director, contributed to this report.)

FCC rules would bring fairness

FCC from page 2

that just 0.3 percent of facilities’ budgets is funded by the commission system. That’s less than one penny for every \$3.

To be sure, the FCC is aware that change — no matter how just and necessary — might be painful for some.

That’s why the FCC is requesting comments on how quickly any changes should be imposed, and also seeking help quantifying the legitimate costs to facilities of having a phone system so that the FCC’s final regulations won’t interfere with facilities’ ability to offer telephone access.

The Federal Communications Commission is bringing long-delayed order and fairness to the market for telephone calls home from jail. The current system is great for the industry but it does a disservice to families, to the facilities and to public safety.

(Peter Wagner is executive director of the Prison Policy Initiative and a co-author of *Please Deposit All of Your Money: Kickbacks, Rates, and Hidden Fees in the Jail Phone Industry* available at <http://www.prisonpolicy.org/phones/>.)

WORD SEARCH

Rapides Parish, La. Facts

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

- ALEXANDRIA (city in Rapides, parish seat)
- APALACHEE (Native American tribe that lived in Rapides in the 1700s)
- AVOUELLES (parish to the east)
- BEAUREGARD (National Guard Camp in Rapides)
- CATAHOULA (parish lake)
- FRENCH (the language of the first settlers in Rapides)
- GRANT (parish to the north)
- KENTHOUSE (the oldest standing structure in Rapides)
- KISATCHIE (National Forest in Rapides)
- LECOMPT (town in Rapides)
- MENARD (village in Rapides)

- NACHITOCHE (parish to the northwest)
- PARISH (Louisiana has parishes instead of counties)
- PAROISSE (French word for parish)
- PELICAN (Louisiana state bird, featured on the Rapides seal)
- PINEVILLE (the only other city in Rapides besides Alexandria)
- POREI (first documented French settler in Rapides)
- RAPIDES (French word for rapids, for which the parish was named)
- RED RIVER (the river that runs through Rapides)
- SPANISH (for a time, Rapides was under Spanish rule)

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What issues are driving state associations' legislative agendas? What are the latest and most persistent challenges your county colleagues in other states are facing? What looks to be looming on the horizon?

State-to-State explores these questions and helps keep you in touch with your fellow leaders across the country.

Louisiana

An elections-related issue ranked high among the bills closely watched by the Policy Jury Association of Louisiana (PJAL) during this year's legislative session. The association represents the state's 64 parishes.

A proposed constitutional amendment would have mandated that at least 20 percent of voters

were needed to approve a parish, city or special district's tax levy, bond issue or proposal to incur or debt, according to Roland Dartez, the association's executive director.

"We were concerned that local tax renewals that may have passed with a majority, but if less than 20 percent of people voted then it is as if it was a 'no' vote," he said.

"That thing had legs; it scared the heck out of me," Dartez said of the bill that stayed alive for the entire session. "It was folks like us, school boards, the Conference of Mayors, cities, sheriffs, we all were against it." Fortunately, the bill stalled in committee on a tie vote.

Though the regular session ended in June, of lingering concern



is that local transportation funds seem to be "on the chopping block," he added. The buzz in Baton Rouge is that lawmakers continue to eye cuts to the Parish Transportation Fund. This is state money that's distributed to localities on a per capita basis.

The tunnel usually provides about \$40 million for parishes' infrastructure needs such as bridges and mass transit, Dartez said. But according to the state constitution, parishes should only receive \$26 million to \$28 million, and every year it's a fight to "keep that extra money."

Statewide, voters earlier this month defeated a legislatively referred constitutional amendment to create a transportation infrastructure bank. The PJAL

had concerns about it but took no position. "We were concerned that it was going to start mandating local governments to start borrowing money instead of being allocated money," he said.

Also in Baton Rouge, apart from the Legislature, Dartez said Gulf Coast parishes had a hand in influencing the state's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority in its recent unanimous vote to oppose the "Waters of the U.S." rule, proposed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Dartez said Louisiana parishes are also encouraged that the Keystone XL pipeline has passed in the U.S. House. It would bring jobs to the state and benefit its economy.

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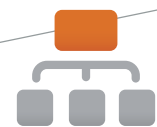
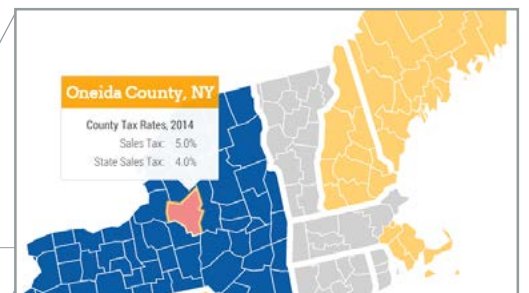
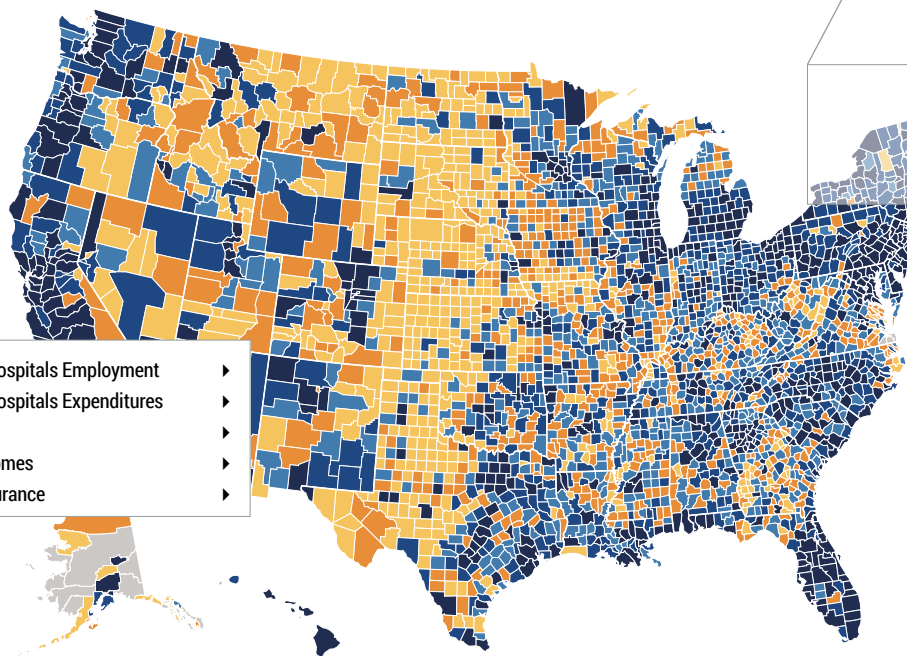
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News From the Nation's Counties

► ARIZONA

GILA COUNTY is now partnering with **NAVAJO** and **APACHE** counties to operate the **Navajo County Workforce Investment Act**.

Director Susan Tegmeyer noted that the partnership will allow the counties to share administrative expenses and best practices. She said she believed it was in Navajo County's best interest to choose a partner before being forced into it by the state, the *Arizona Journal* reported.

► INDIANA

An investigation by WISH News found that for months, trains hauling millions of gallons of **highly flammable crude oil** passed through at least 12 Indiana counties with no advanced warning to firefighters, hazardous materials directors or local emergency managers, despite a U.S. Department of Transportation executive order that states they should have been notified.

The trains were carrying crude oil from the Bakken shale region of North Dakota, which has been involved in fiery and sometimes deadly derailments in Canada, North Dakota, Alabama and Virginia.

The report adds that the Indiana Department of Homeland Security was given the information in June, including oil routes and weekly shipping estimates, but withheld it for four months from local emergency responders in **LAKE, PORTER, LA PORTE, ST. JOSEPH, ELKHART, NOBLE, DEKALB, STARKE, MARSHALL, WHITLEY, ALLEN** and **KOSCIUSKO** counties.

► IOWA

• **JOHNSON COUNTY** officials are working to implement a **new ID card system** that would be the first of its kind in Iowa, allowing access to local services for immigrants and others who may not have the documentation needed to obtain a state-issued ID.

More than 700 people have shown an interest in the card, which officials aim to have in place six months from now. They have yet to determine how the card will be issued, what must be provided to receive one and what it can be used for, according to the *Iowa City Press-Citizen*.

Earlier this year, Iowa City's Human Rights Commission and Ad Hoc Diversity Committee recommended that the city of Iowa City offer municipal IDs to assist immigrants — both documented and undocumented — when interacting



► WASHINGTON

Identical twins Rob and John Snaza often were dressed alike as kids. Looks like it'll be happening again — but for different patches and badges — now that Rob Snaza (pictured right, above) has been elected sheriff of **LEWIS COUNTY**. His brother, John, is already sheriff in neighboring **THURSTON COUNTY**.

Unofficial election results, to be certified Nov. 25, gave Rob 77 percent of the vote for Lewis County sheriff, *The Chronicle* reported. John Snaza, has been Thurston County sheriff since 2011.

with police and help them access municipal or private services.

It could also help seniors who no longer drive and don't have birth certificates, homeless people who may have lost their ID or other documentation, spouses and dependents of international students, and people who have been displaced suddenly from their homes, such as disaster or domestic violence victims.

• **LINN** and **JOHNSON** counties are considering **pedestrian trail expansions** that could stretch between the cities of Waterloo and Burlington.

Johnson County officials want to expand one trail by six miles, which would meet up with a six-mile portion of Linn County and would complete with two segments, the *Des Moines Register* reported.

► MARYLAND

MONTGOMERY COUNTY has banned the box.

County employers may no longer ask about an **applicant's criminal history** until after the first interview. If an employer decides to withdraw a conditional job offer because of an applicant's arrest or conviction record, they must provide the applicant a copy of any criminal record and notify the applicant that the offer will be withdrawn and why. Applicants who suspect mistaken identity or false information may respond within seven days, *The Sentinel* reported.

In October, the **PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY** Council Public Safety and Fiscal Management Committee proposed a law based on Montgomery County's Ban the Box law.

► MINNESOTA

Technical glitches in the state's online health exchange are forcing insurance applicants to **submit paper forms**, which counties will be responsible for processing.

Counties had been expected to help users navigate the system, built from \$155 million in federal grants to give consumers a place to compare and buy private health insurance plans or see if they qualify for public insurance.

Although people are strongly encouraged to apply online, federal law requires that paper applications be available for those who choose them, the *St. Cloud Times* reported.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services is shifting its backlog of 4,600 unprocessed paper applications to county human services departments starting on Nov. 17, as well as any new paper applications submitted after that date. The state expects 360 more daily.

► MISSISSIPPI

AMITE and **WILKINSON** counties are planning a **two-county water district** to oversee the use of billions of gallons of water that will be needed for hydraulic fracturing.

If approved, officials said, it would be the nation's first public water management district created only because of hydraulic fracturing, according to *The Enterprise-Journal*.

The district would not control municipal or rural water services but could seek access to their water. The plan calls for oil companies to put up money to form the district, then pay it for access to water and for recycling wastewater. Revenues would be divided evenly between the counties, regardless of the balance of wells.

► NEW MEXICO

A federal judge says portions of **MORA COUNTY's** first-in-the-nation local **ordinance banning oil and gas development** are unconstitutional. As a result, the law could be thrown out altogether.

"Some of these provisions are pretty wild," said U.S. District Judge James Browning during a recent motions hearing in Albuquerque; "they're pretty inconsistent with centuries of federal law," *The Las Vegas Optic* newspaper reported. For example, the 2013 ordinance bans the extraction of oil and natural gas, and trumps the decision-making rights of businesses, and federal and state permits.

The county contends the ordi-

nance is intended to protect its land and water.

► NEW JERSEY

HUNTERDON COUNTY's emergency management and public health divisions and a local hospital recently conducted **Ebola preparedness seminars** for first responders, myCentralJersey.com reported.

The agencies are working together to develop protocols to detect the disease, and to transport and isolate those with suspected Ebola.

"The dissemination of current information is critical, and we have a mechanism that ensures first responders have access to the materials they need," said Brayden Fahey, the county's emergency management coordinator.

► OREGON

About 150 of **MULTNOMAH COUNTY** government's lowest-paid workers will be **getting fatter paychecks**, thanks to a proposed agreement between the county and the employees' union, AFSCME Local 88. Library pages comprise the bulk of those affected (146), along with a few food service workers and program aides.

The employees, who currently

See NEWS FROM page 11

What's in a Seal?



► Rapides Parish, La.

Rapides Parish, located in central Louisiana, was named for a pre-Civil War trading post the French settlers called *Poste du Rapide*. The name pays homage to the rapids of the Red River, where the settlement was located, and whose waters still run through the parish today.

Rapides is a good example of the way the topography and natural elements of a region can become emblematic of the area itself; Louisiana is home to the greatest number of wetlands per state in the U.S., and with these marshy areas, a great variety of wildlife. One classic example is the Louisiana state bird, the brown pelican, which is featured on the parish seal, as well as the state seal and state flag.

The depiction of the pelican on the Rapides seal closely mirrors the illustration on the state seal; however, the Rapides seal is a simple blue and white, whereas the state seal boasts more colors. The Rapides pelican is pictured in a nest with three baby pelicans, all gazing up and expecting food from their mother. Each of these infant pelicans is meant to embody one of the qualities in the text encircling the birds: Union, Justice and Confidence.

(If you would like your county's seal featured, please contact Sarah Foote at 202.942.4256 or sfoote@naco.org.)

U.S. Communities Innovates in Government Purchasing

There are numerous government purchasing cooperatives serving counties, cities and school districts across the country. As county administrators and staff go through their due diligence processes, it can be difficult to tell each cooperative apart. Cost of use, availability of products and services, the procurement process, and other factors are all critical to explore.

U.S. Communities continues to lead and set itself apart, not just in terms of supplier relationships;

transparency in pricing; and the lead public agency process, but also in continual innovation. Recently, U.S. Communities launched its Innovation Exchange (www.uscommunities.org/innovation-exchange), an online portal where counties can share and learn innovative practices to help grow and transform their communities to achieve their vision and goals.

The goal of the Innovation Exchange is to generate innovative ideas to fuel growth, improve government efficiencies, and build a

better future for our communities. On the Innovation Exchange, site visitors can get:

- proven government or private sector innovations
- links to innovation competitions and articles, and
- strategic partner offerings.

In addition to these resources, site visitors can also:

- connect with U.S. Communities value-added services
- explore and join with Partners in Innovation, which include: the Alliance for Innovation; Harvard Kennedy School: Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation; COIN: The Innovation Network for Government;

Fels Institute of Government; Code for America and USC Sol Price School of Public Policy

- gain resources, ideas and awards, and
- submit an innovative solution.

Connect with the Innovation Exchange and submit your county's innovation or idea today.

About U.S. Communities

U.S. Communities is the leading national government purchasing cooperative that reduces the cost of goods and services by aggregating the purchasing power of public agencies nationwide. U.S. Communities provides participants

with access to a broad line of competitively solicited contracts with national suppliers who have committed to providing their lowest overall public agency pricing.

U.S. Communities was founded in 1996 as a partnership between the National Association of Counties; the Association of School Business Officials; the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing; the National League of Cities and the United States Conference of Mayors.

For more information, visit www.uscommunities.org.

Financial Services was written by Josef Hapli, program marketing director.

Fairfax County, Va. adopts new bicycle master plan

NEWS FROM *from page 10*

earn just south of \$12 per hour, will see their pay gradually increase to \$15 per hour, *The Oregonian* reported. Under the agreement, the county will roll out the raises incrementally between now and July 1, 2016.

Affected workers' pay would rise to at least \$13 per hour as soon as the union and County Board approve the change, increase to \$14 per hour starting on July 1, 2015 and to \$15 per hour starting on July 1, 2016.

The raises will increase the county's budget by \$70,000 this year, according to a county spokesman, rising to \$190,000 annually by full implementation.

► PENNSYLVANIA

ALLEGHENY COUNTY Council members recently voted to adopt **new open-burning regulations** drafted by the county Health Department.

The regulations limit what can be burned outdoors to clean wood, propane, natural gas, charcoal, fire logs, wood pellets and smokeless fire starters, according to *The Tribune Review*. The fires must also be at least 15 feet from the nearest dwelling or property line.

A representative of the Group Against Smog and Pollution told council members that it often receives complaints from residents about neighbors' bonfires or other outdoor burning.

► VIRGINIA

• The **FAIRFAX COUNTY** Board of Supervisors recently approved a **bicycle master plan** that will quadruple the network of

cycling routes in the county over the next 30 years, *The Washington Post* reported. A week later on Nov. 4, voters approved a \$100 million transportation bond that includes \$6 million for bike infrastructure.

County officials have identified 1,130 miles of roads and rural trails that can be altered so bikes can use them, said Charlie Strunk, bicycle program manager for the county's Transportation Department. Much of that work will be done during repaving projects.

• A federal appeals court in Richmond recently heard arguments on the **PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY** Board of Supervisors' practice of **opening its meetings with a prayer**.

The county is challenging a judge's ruling last year that barred the board from starting its meetings with prayers associated with a specific religion, WHSV-TV news reported. A county resident filed the lawsuit in 2011, alleging that Christian invocations violate the Constitution's prohibition against government establishment of a religion.

The board has a 200-year tradition of allowing members to open meetings with prayers that sometimes mention Jesus Christ, according to court records. The county argues that the U.S. Supreme Court has upheld similar traditions, so long as prayers don't proselytize or disparage another faith.

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

NACo on the Move

► In the News



Sallie Clark

the Rural Action Caucus, WIR, the Keystone pipeline, midterm elections, and importance of bipartisanship.

► NACo Officers and County Officials

• **Chris Rodgers**, former NACo president, was recently appointed to the board of directors for the National Commission on Correctional Health Care, an organization dedicated to improving the quality of health care in prisons, jails and juvenile detention facilities.

• NACo President **Riki Hokama**; **Matt Chase**, executive director; and **Bill Jasien**, interim managing director-CEO of NACo's Financial Services Center, attended the Virginia Association of Counties Annual Conference in Bath County, Va., Nov. 9–11. Hokama spoke on Why Counties Matter and the Transportation and Infrastructure Initiative. Chase talked about the Impact of Federal Policy Decisions on County Government.

• **Emilia Istrate**, research director, spoke on a *Governing* magazine panel examining health and human service issues facing counties next year with their state legislatures Oct. 29. Istrate also talked about NACo's strategic priorities and hosted a workshop discussing NACo's transportation report, *The Road Ahead*, and economic development report, *Strong Economies, Resilient Counties*, at the Iowa State Association of Counties Fall School of Instruction, Nov. 12–14.

► NACo Staff

• **Cecilia Mills** has joined the research department as a research assistant. She obtained her master's in public administration from Arizona State University in 2012 with an emphasis on policy research. Mills joins NACo after a few years of advocacy work, first in Los Angeles and, most recently, in Washington, D.C. She has always maintained an interest in policy since her undergraduate days at Clemson University as a member of the South Carolina Student Legislature and Model United Nations.



Cecilia Mills

► Coming Up

NACo staff and officials will be exhibiting at the following events in the weeks ahead:

• **Andrew Goldschmidt**, director of membership marketing, California State Association of Counties' 120th Annual Meeting in Orange County, Nov. 18–20; Missouri Association of Counties' 43rd Annual Conference in Camden County, Nov. 23–25.

• **Alex Koroknay-Palicz**, membership coordinator, Nevada Association of Counties' 2014 Annual NACo Conference in White Pine County, Nov. 18–20.

• **Kaye Braaten**, former NACo president, Washington State Association of Counties' County Leaders Conference in Spokane County, Nov. 18–20.

• **Karina Golkova**, association coordinator, Kentucky Association of Counties' 40th Annual Conference & Exposition in Lexington-Fayette County, Nov. 19–21. Golkova will also be representing NACo at the Illinois Association of County Officials' Fall Conference in Peoria County, Nov. 23–25.

**Listen to Clark and Robinson by accessing this article online at www.county.news.org.*

The H.R. Doctor Is In

Thanksgiving Touches Work, Too

County News has been kind enough to reprint this article about the glorious holiday we call Thanksgiving. It is a most wonderful time of the year. Thanksgiving is an HR Doctor favorite because it is centered on the opportunity to step back and view our own lives at work and at home with a sense of perspective.

It is great time for an employer to help members of the staff appreciate all that they have in the form of jobs, which are generally steady and career-oriented, and include many fringe benefits such as retirement, health insurance, paid time off, educational support, and much more.

This holiday also provides a wonderful opportunity for employees to recognize that their work is important to the welfare of the community and to take renewed pride in the work they do every day.

Thanksgiving is about much more than simply eating a tremendous meal with family and friends

“What am I doing to make things easier and more enjoyable for my colleagues at work? ...”

and maybe watching football. It is time to ask “What am I doing to make things easier and more enjoyable for my colleagues at work or those in need in the community?”

It is not coincidental that United Way and other charitable campaigns occur during this holiday time. For that matter, as some of the campaigns inform us, perhaps one in three persons receives help from such organizations. “There but for fortune,” that percentage could include any one of us.

This holiday is also time to praise and recognize how much easier our own lives at work are made because we have colleagues who work hard to help county government leaders

and care about their success. Not a bad time to make some “Thanksgiving Resolutions” and avoid the New Year’s rush. Resolve not to take things for granted, but rather to find new ways to help at the office and in community leadership through charitable giving and volunteering.

The HR Doctor has a lot to be thankful for, including the chance which NACo provides to share information about proactive human resources with each of you regularly.

I bet if you stop for just a few seconds and think about it, you also have much to be thankful for, especially the amazing opportunities your leadership provides to contribute to a better community and a better world.

Take time to do that — and save a slice of pumpkin pie for me.



Phil Rosenberg
The HR Doctor

Job Market & Classifieds

■ COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR – MARINETTE COUNTY, WI

Salary: \$82,896 – \$124,344.

Seeking experienced public management professional to lead progressive county organization with a \$70 million plus annual budget. Position appointed by 30 member County Board and works closely with Board Chairman and Executive Committee. Responsibilities include administering day-to-day county activities, directing all non-elected department heads and staff, and serving as chief resource to County Board.

Also responsible for carrying out all established/adopted policies of the County Board. The county encompasses 1,380 square miles and is a full service county, including extensive human/social service functions, 233,000 acres of managed forest land and a joint airport. It is located 50 miles north of Green Bay along the border of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

Requires Bachelor’s degree, Master’s degree preferred, from accredited university in business or public administration, government finance, accounting or related field; 10 years in business, industry, or administration of public agency or department; administrative management experience in county or municipal government; insurance acceptable driver’s license, and no criminal convictions arising from circumstances relating to administrator duties.

Benefits subject to bargain upon employment agreement. Submit resume and cover letter including position title to: Human Resources Department, 1926 Hall Avenue, Marinette, WI 54143, or submit online at mcresum@marinettecounty.com and indicate position title in subject line. Deadline: 4:30 PM CST Jan. 21, 2015. EO Employer.

Note: Identity of persons selected for interview subject to public disclosure per statute.

NACo JOBS ONLINE

Good employees are crucial to getting the job done!

www.naco.org/programs/jobsonline



Your voice is needed in Washington, D.C.

FEBRUARY 21–25, 2015 ★ WASHINGTON, D.C.
MARRIOTT WARDMAN PARK HOTEL

We urge you to register for NACo’s 2015 Legislative Conference, which will be held February 21–25 at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C. At the conference, you will join with fellow county officials to shape NACo’s policy priorities, learn key issues from Administration and Congressional officials, and most importantly, join with your colleagues in advancing the federal policy priorities of county government.

For up-to-date information on the 2015 Legislative Conference visit the NACo website at www.naco.org.



SAVE UP TO \$50 BY REGISTERING ONLINE BEFORE JANUARY 9, 2015!