

NACo applauds bipartisan, bicameral efforts to reauthorize Second Chance Act

By JIM PHILIPPS
MEDIA RELATIONS MANAGER

**WEB*
CONTENT** NACo has given a hearty thumbs-up to bipartisan, bicameral efforts to reauthorize legislation that aims to reduce jail and prison costs to taxpayers and improve public safety.

The bipartisan Second Chance Reauthorization Act of 2013 would improve and consolidate the programs authorized by the 2008 Second Chance Act, but reauthorize them at reduced levels to better reflect current appropriations.

First enacted in 2008, the Second Chance Act provides federal, state and local governments additional tools necessary to help incarcerated individuals more successfully re-enter their communities upon release and avoid reoffending.

"Sheriffs and jail administrators have embraced re-entry programs as part of their public safety mission and have worked with

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Photo by Matthew Fellows

NACo Executive Director Matt Chase outlines the county stake in jail and prison re-entry programs at a Capitol Hill briefing Nov. 13, organized by the Council of State Governments. The briefing was held in conjunction with the introduction of a new reauthorization measure for the Second Chance Act.

Colo. voters lukewarm to secession; tax measures get mixed results

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Voters in counties across the nation decided the likely fate of an iconic stadium in Texas, largely rejected the notion of several Colorado counties' seceding from the state and, in Florida, approved nearly a billion dollars in bonds to modernize a county public hospital.

Of the hundreds of local issues decided on Nov. 5, the ones attracting the most national attention were a 51st state advisory referendum in 11 Colorado counties and a plan to save Harris County, Texas' Astrodome stadium.

In Colorado, voters in five of the counties approved the non-binding question to secede. Majorities backed it in Cheyenne, Kit Carson, Phillips, Yuma and Washington counties — all in northeastern

Colorado — by winning margins that ranged from 54 percent to 62 percent. But the measure failed in the largest county where it was on the ballot, Weld County (pop. 253,000) by 56 percent to 44 percent. The counties where voters favored creating a new state range in population from 1,800 to 10,000 residents.

Secession was always a "high hill to climb," according to Chip Taylor, executive director of Colorado Counties, Inc. (CCI), because it would require state and congressional approval. "I think the real earnest effort was to send a message to Denver and maybe there's another way to send that same message," he said.

Phillips County, where 62 percent of voters favored secession, has an idea. The county has asked CCI to seek legislation to change the composition of the General

Assembly to give rural counties representation not based solely on population, which would require amending the state's constitution. Of the Legislature's 65 House members, 12 represent rural counties, and six of 35 senators are from rural districts.

"We just don't have a voice; we're run over," Phillips County Administrator Randy Schafer said. He'd like to see a State Legislature that's more like the U.S. Congress in terms of representation: where one chamber, the Senate, has equal representation from each state.

"Raising the (secession) issue was not only worth it, but we'll continue to pursue the change so we do get a voice," he said.

In Harris County, Texas, a \$217 million bond measure to renovate

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Farm Bill moves to conference with NACo priorities

By ARTHUR SCOTT
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Meeting for the first time on Oct. 30, the Farm Bill Conference Committee discussed key NACo priorities addressed by both the House and Senate farm bills (H.R. 2642 and S. 954).

Overall, NACo supports the Senate version of the farm bill (S. 954) and its Rural Development Title because it more adequately addresses county need and priorities. Since 1996, the Rural Development title has averaged \$413 million in mandatory funding per farm bill.

While the bills from both chambers are well below this average, the House bill authorizes \$50 million in mandatory funding compared to \$227 million authorized by the Senate bill.

The Senate farm bill also authorizes a broad range of programs that

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U.S. Forest Service, counties must work together to mitigate wildfire, Clark says



NACo Second Vice President Sallie Clark told a U.S. Senate panel that “healthy forests and pre-fire mitigation efforts” are the only answers to help mitigate the threats of wildfires and floods on public lands and private property across the country.

Clark, El Paso County, Colo. commissioner, testified before the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Subcommittee on Conservation, Forestry and Natural Resources, Nov. 5. The hearing, “Shortchanging Our Forests: How Tight Budgets and Management Decisions Can Increase the Risk of Wildfire,” featured testimony from local Colorado business and government representatives from wildfire-affected areas. Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.) chairs the subcommittee.

“I want to stress the need for more investment in mitigation and the importance of having the Forest Service working together with local officials to make the most of that investment,” Clark said. “Fires and devastating and destructive flash floods have no respect for city, county, state and federal boundaries, private property lines, critical public safety and utilities infrastructure or potential loss of life.”



Photo by Ryan Yates

NACo Second Vice President Sallie Clark discusses her testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Conservation, Forestry and Natural Resources with subcommittee members, (center) Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.) and Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.)

Clark, whose county was devastated last year by the Waldo Canyon Fire and hit again this year with the even larger Black Forest fire, said she was encouraged to see the introduction of bipartisan legislation that would give local officials the flexibility needed to

do fire mitigation in a manner that will ensure the greatest return on their investment.

“We need to mitigate the greatest threats for fires and floods, whether they are on public lands or private property and we need the flexibility to partner and col-

laborate with multiple agencies, jurisdictions and land owners to get the job done,” Clark said. “And local input is a key to understanding the needs of communities.”

**To read Clark's testimony, see this story at www.countynews.org.*

NACo seeks action on Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act



NACo has asked its members to support the Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act, introduced earlier this year, and encour-

age the House Natural Resources Committee to consider the bill. Rep. Doc Hastings (R-Wash.) chairs the committee.

The measure was introduced in February and referred to the

Natural Resources Committee which has yet to mark up the bill.

H.R. 596 would extend royalties and lease income from solar and wind projects developed on federal lands to home states and counties. Similar to existing revenue-sharing models for alternative energy development—such as geothermal leasing—the act would share revenues with states and counties, while providing reinvestment in Bureau of Land Management (BLM) renewable energy programs and sharing critical funds to sustain wildlife and recreational uses of nearby land. Its companion bill in the Senate is S. 279.

NACo is part of a coalition of groups supporting the legislation, including the Wilderness Society, the Outdoor Alliance and the

Western Governors Association.

Future revenue-sharing dollars will contribute to the delivery of critical governmental services such as road maintenance, public safety and law enforcement, conservation easements, capital for leveraging federal and state resources, and the critical stabilization of operations budgets in tough economic times.

Numerous counties nationwide have federal lands within their boundaries that have been developed or are suitable for alternative energy development.

**See this story at www.countynews.org to access the brochure, *Renewable Energy and Conservation—Protecting America's Natural Heritage*, which further explains why supporters back the legislation.*

Re-entry programs part of public safety, justice mission

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researchers to adapt evidence-based practices like risk assessment and case management to suit the complexity of the local jail setting,” NACo Executive Director Matt Chase said during a Capitol Hill briefing Nov. 13, organized by the Council of State Governments.

“Laws such as the Second Chance Act bring us closer to the best days of intergovernmental relations with model cooperation of federal, state and local officials.”

Chase noted that counties own 2,657 jails and spend \$70.2

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- » Second Chance Act has provided more than \$90 million to counties
- » Act helps counties reduce recidivism
- » More than 13 million admissions and releases yearly to county jails

billion each year on public safety and justice services and that the Second Chance Act has provided more than \$90 million to counties to explore and test common sense, evidence-based approaches to reducing crime and improving public safety.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, there are more than 13 million admissions and releases annually to county jails, involving about 7 million to 10 million individuals. Many of these individuals cycling in and out of county jail have mental illness issues or substance abuse issues.

The reauthorization was introduced by Sens. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Reps. Jim Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.), Danny Davis (D-Ill.), Howard Coble (R-N.C.), Bobby Scott (D-Va.), Spencer Bachus (R-Ala.), Marcia Fudge (D-Ohio) and Steve Chabot (R-Ohio).

** To view a video of the Capitol Hill briefing, see this story at www.countynews.org*

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News to Use From Past County News

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Survey results suggest real estate recovery underway

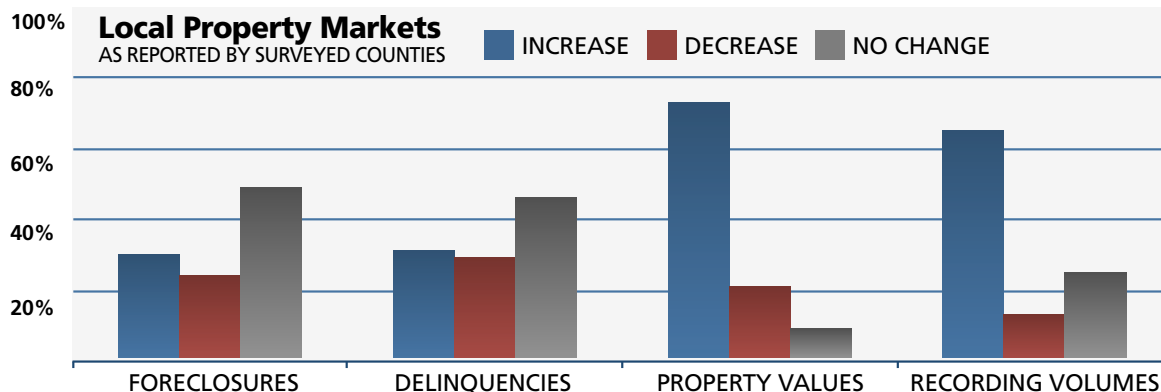
By BEVERLY A. SCHLOTTERBECK
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Property appraisals have improved, foreclosures have leveled off and tax revenues are on the upswing in the nation's counties, according to a Thomson Reuters-NACo survey of county assessors, recorders and treasurers.

Results from the Local Property Market Survey conducted this past spring will be released Nov. 19. It is the third annual survey undertaken by NACo and Thomson Reuters to assess the health of county governments and identify national trends and patterns.

"The annual survey provides valuable data for assessing the direction of local property markets and how technology impacts the assessment, recording and tax collection processes," said NACo Executive Director Matt Chase. "The results show some positive signs that the housing market is improving."

The uptick in assessed values, reported by survey participants, marks the second consecutive year real property values have appeared to be on the rebound. Seven in 10 respondents reported an increase in property assessments. Small counties (under 50,000 population) were more likely to report increases,



2013 Thomson-Reuters / National Association of Counties Records Management Systems Research Study.

while larger counties (250,000 or more) reported more decreases (31 percent).

Paralleling the increase in property values was an increase in the amount of taxes collected. Sixty-five percent of the responding counties reported an increase in tax revenues of 2 percent, on average.

Another key finding that points to a recovery in the real estate

market involved the volume of record transactions. A significant percentage of respondents — 77 percent — reported an increase in the number of documents recorded daily in their offices. This is up an average 10 percent over the previous year's survey.

On the other side of the ledger, counties reported a stabilization or decrease in foreclosures and delin-

quent accounts. By a 7 to 10 margin, counties saw either no change in foreclosure numbers (48 percent) or a decrease (23 percent). Similar percentages held steady for delinquent accounts: either no change reported by 42 percent of the respondents or a 28 percent decrease.

The survey also showed the rate of staff reductions dropping significantly over the previous year.

Sixteen percent of appraisers and assessors' offices reported reductions compared to 46 percent the previous year. Similarly, 11 percent of records management departments — recorders and registrars — reported a decrease, a 39 percentage point drop from the prior year's 50 percent figure.

The downward trend, however, did not signal an increase in hiring. Only 5 percent to 8 percent of the survey respondents reported any increase in staff size.

The survey also asked counties to name the most valuable trends in new technologies. Overall, the tax departments, assessors' offices and recorders' offices selected mobile technology as the top trend, with cloud and eGovernment services also given high marks.

Complete survey results, including an in-depth look at how respondents assess their current technology use and needs, will be released during a webinar held by *Governing* magazine Nov. 19.

Florida, Oregon county medical facilities get funding boost

VOTERS from page 1

the derelict Astrodome failed by an unofficial tally of 53 percent to 47 percent. While demolition remains an option, local efforts continue to seek a historic designation for the structure.

Before the election, Christopher Hawthorne, the *Los Angeles Times'* architecture critic, wrote, "There may be no piece of architecture more quintessentially American than the Astrodome." The city of Houston's archaeological and Historical Commission is considering declaring the stadium a historic landmark.

Elsewhere across the nation, voters in counties large and small weighed in favorably on issues related to hospitals and health care.

Voters in Miami-Dade County (pop. 2.5 million) okayed raising taxes to fund hospital improvements

by approving \$830 million in bonds for the "modernization, improvement and equipping of Jackson Health System's facilities located throughout the county, including ... emergency rooms, children's ambulatory pavilion and urgent care centers," according to the ballot language. It passed by 65 percent to 35 percent. While the measure passed, some opponents remained concerned that the measure lacked specifics on oversight of the funds.

Commissioner Audrey Edmonson, a strong backer of the measure, sought to allay those fears. "The next step is to convene a citizen's oversight board to keep a watchful eye on how the bond money is spent, and I promise the people that this will be done," she said.

In Curry County, Ore. (pop. 22,300), voters approved a \$10 million, 30-year general obligation bond that would increase property taxes by 74 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value to build a new hospital to replace an aging one in Gold Beach, the county seat, and expand other health care services in the county. The margin of passage was 66 percent to 34 percent.

A proposed tax increase for law enforcement services didn't fare as well. Curry, like many timber-dependent counties in Oregon, faces uncertain finances because of cuts to federal timber payments (Congress has approved the payments for one more year, and timber counties are

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seeking a long-term solution). Voters rejected a measure that would have raised the current county tax of 60 cents per \$1,000 to approximately \$1.34 per \$1,000. Despite its failure, homeowners might still end up paying higher taxes. Under a state law passed earlier this year, the governor — with county commissioners' approval — can impose taxes to maintain essential public safety services in budget-constrained counties.

In the U.S. heartland, Jackson County, Mo. voters rejected a half-cent sales tax hike that would have raised \$800 million over 20 years to fund a new medical research institute. The proceeds were intended to fund so-called "translational" research into developing profitable new drugs and discovering cures for diseases. It lost by a more than five-to-one margin — 84 percent to 16 percent.

Proponents of the measure estimated that in its first 10 years, it would create more than 200 jobs in the Kansas City area with an economic impact of \$607 million, according to published reports. They also projected that Jackson County government would receive 20 percent of profits from the commercialization of new drugs, devices or treatments the institute might produce.

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Quick Takes

Top Turkey Hunting States

Number of Harvested Turkeys	
Missouri	58,421
Alabama	57,100
Pennsylvania	43,650
Wisconsin	42,970
New York	36,000

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Deconstruction program combats county's blight

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Looking at the more than 70,000 blighted buildings throughout the Detroit area, Wayne County realized there were valuable building materials inside many of them, and outright demolition might not be the right answer.

Instead, careful deconstruction could not only mean a new source of building materials, but also a revenue source and an employment opportunity for more than 80 people who would be deconstructing 100 homes over two years.

"We wanted to be able to focus on sustainability and job development with a possibility of creating a back-end market for materials," said Ann Leen, the county's deputy director of community development. "We wanted to jump on the (sustainability) bandwagon but we realized

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- » Deconstruction is a "greener" way to raze buildings
- » Salvaged reusable building materials diverted from landfills
- » Created jobs for 80 trained deconstruction workers

pretty quickly that there was no bandwagon, we would be driving it."

Deconstruction involves the deliberate disassembly of a structure, with an eye to salvaging as much reusable building materials as possible.

The county used stimulus money from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to fund the project and committed two years and \$1.9 million to what became known as the Neighbor-

hood Stabilization Deconstruction Program (NSDP), starting in March 2012. There was a ready contingent of trained deconstruction workers living in Wayne County, with 290 who were unemployed when the NSDP started. Leen said the big step came in pairing job sites with the workers' addresses, reducing the barrier to employment that comes with the distance to a job.

"We looked at maps where people could walk to work and it seemed like a win-win," she said. "They're already trained and ready to work, they can remove blight in their neighborhoods and it could become a full-community engagement effort."

The program relies on neighborhood residents to keep an eye on houses that have made it past the site selection stages and are awaiting deconstruction because fire-damaged houses are immediately eliminated because of lead and asbestos concerns and squatters could introduce biohazards into a structure.

"There are a few times we've put a lot of work into making sure we have a good property that is ready to go and we show up and it had burned to the ground," Leen said. "We impress upon the neighbors to let us know if something is up in the property, to call the police."

"One of the biggest challenges is that often the most blighted houses out there aren't right for our needs. They're too damaged and dangerous."

Site selection is driven by the level of blight in a community, amount of cooperation with property owners and the available workforce. Reports from the Safe Routes to School partnership helps target areas where children are exposed to the dangers that accompany blight. That has meant a lot of deconstruction in the Highland Park section of the county.

"You have to look at it with a community perspective; you can show up with a bulldozer for a demolition and be done in two days, but that's not what this is intended to do," Leen said. "This comes down to people improving their neighborhood and doing something productive with the materials they recover."

Deconstruction takes roughly two weeks per house, and has yielded lumber and bricks among other materials. Leen said crews typically recover 70 percent of original building materials.

That thrills Lisa Grace, the development director for EcoWorks, which runs Reclaim Detroit, a southeast Michigan deconstruction organization that markets the materials wholesaler.

"The materials you can get from these houses are extremely



Photo courtesy of Wayne County, Mich.

Deconstruction crews carefully salvage reusable building materials from vacant houses in Wayne County, Mich.

valuable," she said. "Hardwoods, walnut, maple... you can't find this wood firsthand anymore. Detroit's housing stock is ripe for this stuff. These materials are finding new life in flooring and furniture."

After recovery, the materials go to a warehouse where workers remove nails, sand wood and otherwise prepare the materials for resale through Reclaim Detroit, which helps cover some of the deconstruction labor costs.

"There is a return on investment, but it hasn't hit the mark we want it to, yet," Leen said. "Our intention is not to create a market, but there is a business, a way to figure out how to make it work."

Gina Cavaliere, deputy director for the Wayne County Economic Development Growth Engine, said the county was po-

sitioned perfectly to coordinate this program.

"It makes sense for a government to take the lead and test it, because it might not be a sustainable economic model for the private sector. As a community model it makes perfect sense."

Grace said the extra resources the county puts in will continue to pay off.

"Deconstruction costs a little more than demolition but you're funneling the money into the local economy, saving landfills and reclaiming usable and valuable materials," she said. "The county isn't being shortsighted and saying they need to get rid of [blighted properties] immediately. It's not the solution to Detroit and Wayne County's blight problems, but it's part of the solution."

Profiles in Service



» **Brad Carlyon**
Member, Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee
County Attorney, Navajo County, Ariz.

- Number of years active in NACo:** Four
- Years in public service:** 16, with five as an elected official
- Occupation:** county attorney (prosecution and civil responsibilities)
- Education:** J.D., University of Arizona; B.S. in business administration, Northern Arizona University
- The hardest thing I've ever done:** having to tell the family of a child molestation victim that there was insufficient evidence to convict
- Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner:** Mark Twain, Martin Luther King and Thomas Jefferson.
- A dream I have is to:** protect children from predators.
- You'd be surprised to learn that I:** danced the waltz in a dance competition.
- The most adventurous thing I've ever done is:** skydive.
- My favorite way to relax is:** sailing.
- I'm most proud of:** creation of a Children's Advocacy Center to assist children who were victims of physical or sexual abuse.
- Every morning I read:** Twitter, my new source for news.
- My favorite meal is:** chile rellenos with rice and beans, followed by an Italian cream cake.
- My pet peeve is:** people who complain but won't do anything.
- My motto is:** I wished someone would do something; then I realized I was someone.
- The last book I read was:** *Effective Fundraising for Nonprofits: Real-World Strategies That Work*, by Ilona Bray, J.D.
- My favorite movie is:** *Hoosiers*.
- My favorite music is:** eclectic, from classical to jazz to metal.
- My favorite president is:** George Washington, he set a high standard.

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Improving health for all citizens, focus of forum

By MATTHEW CALL

COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST,
COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS & ROADMAPS



Creating healthy counties takes more than just a vision or an idea — it takes action and planning. Envisioning Roadmaps to Health was the focus of a recent NACo forum in Dane County (Madison), Wis. with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps of the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.

County officials and NACo representatives from across the country gathered to share stories, trade tips and create their own plans for engaging communities in talking about improving health for all citizens.

Leveraging relationships and creating partnerships was a repeated theme in the success stories of county leaders taking action in their communities. You can look up where a county comes in on the County Health Rankings, but where you go from there is up to you and whom you represent. “Most of all, the rankings are a call to action,” said Bridget

Catlin, director of the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps.

So what does that action look like? Janine Sinno Janoudi, health policy analyst for Ingham County, Mich. Health Department, said thinking about health in all areas of planning can find problems before they arise. In her area, one land use application came through for a senior center but had no proposal for a bus stop. Because of an initiative that required checking every new development proposal for its health impact, the lack of a bus stop was caught and fixed before building began. “A simple thing like that can be caught early on because of a checklist,” Sinno said.

Peter Rumble, deputy county administrator of Community and Government Affairs for Sonoma County, Calif., said one mission in his area is to tackle disparities across geographical lines. Data point to a person living longer just a few miles from another neighborhood. Population health must move away from “passing out pamphlets” and into influencing policies and socioeconomic factors, Rumble said. “I ask you — does zip code matter more than a pamphlet?” he said.



Photo by Matthew Call

Participating at a forum break-out session are: (from left) Mary Kushion, Clare County, Mich.; Ramon Rojano, human services director, Wake County, N.C.; Diane Cable, health and human services director and Supervisor Lori Djumadi, Adams County, Wis.; Curtis Tessman, business development coordinator, Black River Memorial Hospital, Jackson County, Wis.; (backs to camera) Kitty Jerome, discussion facilitator, University of Wisconsin; and Linda Langston, NACo president.

Getting started sometimes can be the hardest part. Who’s going to take the first step? What matters most to your county or region? Sharing lessons learned, the attendees of the Roadmaps forum stressed reaching out to unofficial community leaders

and getting their buy-in to identify priorities and empower residents to improve their lives in their own ways.

As Wake County, N.C. Human Services Director Ramon Rojano said while listening to his peers share strategies, planning is everything.

“I want our county to be No. 1 in the whole country,” he said. “And I think we can work toward that.”

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Pilot nets counties dozens of 'free' bridges

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Three Pennsylvania counties are serving as guinea pigs in a "bridge bundling" pilot that could be expanded statewide. And for stepping up, they're getting the work done for free.

As a result, Blair, Luzerne and Washington counties will have 38 bridges repaired, refurbished or replaced this year and next. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) is coordinating the effort and paying the full freight, and is looking to expand the concept to its state-owned bridges and other county bridges.

Typically, the costs of bridge work are shared in Pennsylvania, with the state paying 80 percent and the county 20 percent. Scott Christie, PennDOT's deputy sec-



Photo courtesy of Washington County, Pa. Planning Commission

Before and after photos of the Chartiers Creek Bridge #19 in Washington County, Pa. show one result of a three-county, bridge-bundling pilot that's tackling 38 structurally deficient bridges.

retary for highway administration, said offering to pick up the tab was a way to "incentivize" counties to participate in the pilot.

"What we said was anybody

who opts into this on a pilot basis, we will waive that 20 percent," he said, "because our belief is we will save more than 20 percent of the cost, so in reality by us waiving

their 20 percent cost, we actually pay less money."

The way that works, he said, is by bundling similar projects. "We have a lot of structurally deficient bridges," Christie explained; "let's take a bunch of them that have realistically the same characteristics or can be described in the same way — have the same span length, the same opening, things like that."

Because of those similarities standard designs and construction methods can be used rather than counties taking a piecemeal approach and engineering each project individually. PennDOT is focusing on bridge replacements in Luzerne, superstructure rehabilitation in Washington and redecking projects in Blair at a total cost of about \$11 million.

"Basically we're cutting back the big design effort, and then on the construction side, because it's the same design, it ends up being a precast cookie cutter-type operation," he said. "You can use the same formwork to make all the beams, and a lot of the steel and reinforcing steel in the deck is all the same."

Eighteen structures were selected for rehabilitation in Washington County, according to Lisa Cessna, executive director, Washington County Planning Commission. The supporting abutments will be left in place and the superstructures refurbished. She said if the county did the work, it could cost approximately \$500,000 to rehabilitate a bridge or \$800,000 to replace one.

"That saves us a tremendous

amount of money and helps us focus our attention and our limited dollars in other locations," she said. "So it's a big deal to us, not only to have those [bridges improved] but also a big deal to us hopefully in lessons learned — that there's a different way of going about doing business."

In Luzerne County, seven bridges are scheduled to be replaced on a "fast track" and three, deemed obsolete or redundant, to be demolished. Design work is being done this year with construction to be completed in 2014 — years earlier than the county could normally accomplish.

Bridge replacements normally take from four to six years on average due to "stringent environmental, utility, right-of-way and cultural resource regulations," according to a report to the County Council from Luzerne's Road and Bridge Department.

"The county could choose not to participate in the program," the Dec. 11, 2012 report stated. "However, replacing the structures using the normal federal aid process would require at least 20–30 years and at least \$25 million in funding."

After the pilot is evaluated, PennDOT officials said they'll look at providing other kinds of incentives for counties to participate in bridge bundling, so this "freshman class" will be the only one to get a free ride. Christie said his agency is looking for other ways to provide cost-saving incentives to counties going forward.

"Let's say PennDOT knows this year we're going to do a bunch of 60-foot-long bridges, eight of them," he cited as an example. "We'll then we go to the locals in that area and say do you have any that are 60 feet that you want to opt in, and then we can incentivize what your share would be. So we're trying to marry it up to our own program."

In Washington County, two bridge refurbishments have been completed, Cessna said. "I hope the pilot project across all three counties... helps develop some new guidelines and specifications that deal with local structures because a lot of these are in remote locations; they're important to the people who live there."

SOLUTIONS SPOTLIGHT

Effective Public & Private Sector Partnerships

In today's world of the Internet, the way we live, work and play has been fundamentally changed...or has it? All information is instantly and concurrently available, whether we know and use it or not.

Fairfax County, Va., one of the nation's largest urban counties, had a big problem. One of the nation's largest on-line auction software providers, The Public Group had the perfect solution.

PROBLEM

Managers of the county surplus materials had traditionally used local "live" auctioneers' services to legally dispose of vehicles, computers, and anything and everything that had outlived its useful life as a county asset. The cost of warehousing and inventorying assets had grown annually, and local and even regional auction services were "netting" less and less money for the county's general fund. Maintaining transparency and audit ability was challenging, and the local pool of qualified buyers remained small, resulting in less competition and less money for surplus assets.

SOLUTION

Fairfax County officials learned about Public Surplus (a product of The Public Group), a sophisticated software solution available to public agencies that need to legally

The Public | Group®

Helping governments go green one click at a time.

dispose of excess materials through a competitive auction. The county went out to a competitive bid and selected Public Surplus as the most comprehensive and cost effective solution available. Most government agencies use Public Surplus at no cost and therefore do not need a contract to do so. For those agencies that do feel the need for a contract, The Public Group has several national contracts for them to consider.

RESULTS

In its first year, Fairfax County revenue from surplus sales skyrocketed over 100% from the previous year. Fairfax County, today, is one of Public Surplus' largest users. "We know that more money returned to our taxpayers from disposal of these assets is a 'win-win' for the county; and with the audit ability (seven-year record) and transparency of the system, our management and citizens are better protected from any problems, which traditionally have occurred with old fashioned live auctions," Fairfax County Supervisor Gerry Hyland said.

As we spotlight one of NACo's

newest Premier Corporate Sponsors, The Public Group and its Public Surplus software online auction product, we hope that NACo members will welcome them into the NACo family. According to Eric Heaps, president of The Public Group, "we hope to also introduce your members to our newer Contract Management and Public Purchase software programs. Given the way we all now do business, NACo and The Public Group are a perfect fit."

Recently, Past NACo President Don Stapley from Arizona joined The Public Group upon his retirement as a Maricopa County supervisor. "My first love has always been with counties and local government. When I saw the Public Surplus product and the enormous increases in revenue this system can produce for county taxpayers, I was sold. This is a story that is easy to tell because the system, with its simplicity, sells itself." Don Stapley serves as a senior marketing manager for The Public Group.

NACo salutes The Public Group, and welcomes them into our family of Premier Corporate Sponsors.

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youtube.com/NACoVideo

NACo releases new 'Economic Resilience' publication

By JEN HORTON
PROGRAM MANAGER

National and global economic dynamics have shifted dramatically in recent decades. Counties, regions and communities that can foresee, adapt to and leverage changing conditions to their advantage are best positioned to attract and grow new businesses, retain skilled workers and families and promote a high quality of life.

A new NACo publication, *Strategies to Bolster Economic Resilience: County Leadership in Action* (available for download Dec. 2), will highlight eight counties that are applying innovative approaches to economic development to bolster economic growth and improve community quality of life.

The counties featured in the report include Augusta-Richmond, Ga.;

Brookings, S.D.; Cuyahoga, Ohio; Garrett, Md.; King, Wash.; Maui, Hawaii; Prince George, Va. and Rutherford, N.C.

Based on a series of interviews with leaders in the featured counties, three common themes emerged: long-range planning, support for targeted industries, local businesses and entrepreneurs, and workforce development and education. The publication is divided into sections that explore each theme and within each section is a brief introduction and examples of how several counties have put these concepts into action.

Long-range Planning

Maui County, Hawaii pursued a long-range planning effort in the early 1980s that laid the groundwork for a substantial economic diversification effort focused on science and technol-

SpeedRead » » »

- » New NACo publication highlights strategies to achieve economic resilience
- » Eight counties featured
- » Three themes dominate successful efforts

ogy industries. Augusta-Richmond County, Ga. prioritized long-term planning and infrastructure development to breathe life into its urban center. As a result, Augusta-Richmond was able to withstand the recession and attract new investments and improve regional quality of life.

Brookings County, S.D. formed a public-private partnership to help realize the visions set forth in a strategic economic development plan.

County leaders view such partnership activities as a key strategy to growing and diversifying their economic base, creating more jobs and increasing the county's overall competitive advantage in the global economy.

Garrett County, Md. saw the loss of a major employer in the 1990s as an opportunity to develop a long-term economic development plan to diversify the economic base and bolster resilience to future economic stressors.

Although each county pursued long-range planning with varying motivations and methods, a common outcome exists in each case: long-range plans for economic development help county leaders position their communities for ongoing economic growth and lasting resilience to changing economic conditions.

Facilitate Economic Growth

Counties can facilitate economic growth by evaluating local strengths and opportunities, becoming knowledgeable about industry trends and cultivating relationships with business leaders to ensure mutual support for both industry and community needs.

Maui County, Hawaii capitalized on its natural physical advantages to attract space research and green energy-related firms. Augusta-Richmond County, Ga. and Prince George County, Va. leveraged their transportation and infrastructure assets and created partnerships with major firms in the manufacturing sector. King County, Wash. and Brookings County, S.D. invested in programs to encourage growth in targeted knowledge and innovation-based sectors.

Additionally, counties can build stronger local economies that are more resilient to changing conditions by assisting existing businesses and growing local entrepreneurs.

Cuyahoga County, Ohio; Garrett County and Brookings County have funded business training programs, developed business incubators and formed collaborative partnerships to support business development and entrepreneurship.

Align Economic Development with Workforce Development

Counties can align their economic development activities with workforce development initiatives to meet sector-specific demands. Workforce initiatives developed in tandem with economic strategies mean that employers can use a ready labor supply while counties can retain skilled workers in the community by linking job training with job creation.

Maui County invested in initiatives that educate its young people from an early age in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)-related fields. For county leaders, this is as much about fostering a strong workforce to meet industry needs as it is about investing in the community's future.

Garrett County prioritized building a highly educated, technologically advanced and innovative workforce through incentives and partnerships with local training institutions. Both Augusta-Richmond County and Prince George County invested in workforce training programs and partnerships with local universities to develop a more advanced workforce, and attract and retain growing businesses.

Senate would mandate funding levels for rural development programs

FARM BILL from page 1

are critical to counties. Specifically, within the Rural Development title, NACo supports the Senate bill's mandatory funding levels for the Rural Micro-entrepreneur Assistance Program (\$15 million), the Water/Wastewater backlog (\$150 million) and Value Added Producer Grant Program (\$62.5 million).

"Funding for issues like the water-wastewater backlog and programs like the Rural Micro-entrepreneur Assistance Program and Value Added Producer Grant Program are not only vital to the success and sustainability of North Carolina's rural counties, but to counties throughout the United States," Person County, N.C. Commissioner Ray Jeffers said. Jeffers chairs NACo's Rural Action Caucus.

NACo also supports the Senate's approach to streamlining the authorizing language for rural development programs, which is designed to assist the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in administering programs and improving accessibility for rural constituents. It would allow USDA to focus resources on strategic community and economic development plans on a multijurisdictional basis.

Within the House bill, NACo supports Sec. 10013, Use and Discharges of Authorized Pesticides. This provision overturns EPA's general pesticides permit program, which was finalized in 2011. EPA's general pesticides permit program has had a significant effect on county programs, particularly mosquito abatement and noxious weed control efforts along roadways and other wet areas.

This is especially important for counties that have large land masses

and must spray or monitor large areas within the county. Some counties have reported suspending, delaying or reducing their county-run pesticide programs due to additional costs. No funding was attached to help state and local governments comply with the EPA regulations.

In the House bill, NACo opposes a provision that would eliminate categorical eligibility for families that receive non-cash assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. This provision, included in the 2008 law, is used in 43 states and reduces

administrative costs because TANF families do not have to file a separate application.

NACo supports the high-performance incentive bonuses from the 2008 Farm Bill that have contributed to reduced error rates, — also slated for removal in the House bill. It also supports the provision in the 1996 welfare reform law that allows states with high unemployment to obtain waivers from the strict and cumbersome three-month benefit cut-off for single, childless adults. Forty-five states received these waivers during the recession.

Farm Bill Conferees

Senate Members

Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich.

Patrick Leahy, D-Vt.
Tom Harkin, D-Iowa
Max Baucus, D-Mont.
Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio
Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn.
Michael Bennet, D-Colo.
Thad Cochran, R-Miss.
Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga.
Pat Roberts, R-Kan.
John Boozman, R-Ark.
John Hoeven, R-N.D.

House Members

Frank Lucas, R-Okla.
Steve King, R-Iowa
Randy Neugebauer, R-Texas
Mike Rogers, R-Ala.
Michael Conaway, R-Texas
Glenn Thompson, R-Pa.
Austin Scott, R-Ga.
Rick Crawford, R-Ark.
Martha Roby, R-Ala.

Kristi Noem, R-S.D.
Jeff Denham, R-Calif.
Rodney Davis, R-Ill.
Steve Southerland, R-Fla.
Ed Royce, R-Calif.
Tom Marino, R-Pa.
Dave Camp, R-Mich.
Sam Johnson, R-Texas
Collin Peterson, D-Minn.
Mike McIntyre, D-N.C.
Jim Costa, D-Calif.
Tim Walz, D-Minn.
Kurt Schrader, D-Ore.
Jim McGovern, D-Mass.
Suzan DelBene, D-Wash.
Gloria Negrete McLeod, D-Calif.
Filemon Vela, D-Texas.
Marcia Fudge, D-Ohio
Eliot Engel, D-N.Y.
Sandy Levin, D-Mich.

STATE → TO → STATE

★ PENNSYLVANIA ★ MICHIGAN ★

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, a new County News feature, will explore these questions and help keep you in touch with your fellow leaders across the country.

Pennsylvania



The Pennsylvania General Assembly is a full-time, yearlong legislature.

With a year-long session there can be dozens of issues facing the Keystone state's 67 counties, but three big issues are dominating the agenda says Doug Hill, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania executive director: the state budget, transportation funding and the legislature's response to the Jerry Sandusky child-abuse scandal.

Funding from the state budget, of course, "drives what we can do," Hill said. And as the ink dried on the 2014 budget "counties held their own," he said — an achievement, given today's economic climate and compared to the state's recent budget history.

One important provision that made it through: eligibility for the state's innovative social services block grant was extended to 10 additional counties. The program, which began last year, bundles funds for select social service programs (based on a formula) and sends them to a county, which then decides how to divvy them up among their service streams.

A transportation measure that could mean \$2 billion for counties is still up in the air with only a short time before the legislative session ends.

Meanwhile, the dust hasn't completely settled over the legislature's multiple measures intended to revise the state's child protective services rules in the face of the 2011 Penn State scandal. The package of 8–10 pieces of legislation could "materially affect how we run our programs," Hill said.

COUNTY MANAGEMENT



IN PENNSYLVANIA,
THERE ARE
262 elected county board members and elected executives.

6 are elected county executives

IN MICHIGAN,
THERE ARE
626 elected county board members and elected executives.

4 are elected county executives

Aside from what counties face in Harrisburg, at home they're facing a massive overhaul of the 911 system, which they took over in 1990. Hill says wireless access and VOIP phone service challenge the old system, as does the current funding mechanism of landline subscriber surcharges, "inadequate now," Hill says.

On the horizon, Hill sees both good news and not so encouraging news for Pennsylvania counties. Not so encouraging is Hill's observation that politics in Harrisburg is getting less consensual. "We're starting to see some of the same

difficulty on building consensus that we are seeing throughout the political system."

On the other hand, counties in Pennsylvania have a "solid working relation with many parts of the state's Administration, he said. "It makes me hopeful."



Michigan

Tim McGuire, executive director, Michigan Association of Counties (MAC), said fighting legislative and executive efforts

to eliminate personal property taxes on businesses was a major issue last session and continues to be one.

For several years, the state attempted to kill the tax as a way to promote business development. But phasing out property taxes also cuts local revenues, making it hard to maintain services, he said. The legislature succeeded in passing a measure to curtail the tax, which the governor signed. Counties support making the state more business-friendly but not at their expense.

In place of the property tax, the state will allow localities to impose an essential services (for sheriffs and jails) assessment on businesses, which the state says will cover up to 80 percent of local property tax losses. The governor has been amenable to continuing negotiations to help counties recoup their losses.

McGuire said the state's economy is slowly rebounding — a cause for some optimism. "The state is running with a surplus, so [the question is] how are we going to funnel those monies back into units of local government? There's definitely an upward tick in the economy, so I'd say those are all hopeful things."

As is the case in many states, unfunded state mandates are a persistent challenge. "The dollars are continuing to shrink and shrink, yet the services that counties have to provide are not changing," McGuire said. "Revenue-sharing dollars are going away, property taxes are declining, but the services we have to provide remain constant."

Beverly Schlotterbeck and Charles Taylor, County News staff, contributed to this report.

Group advances broad definition of water resiliency

By ROBIN DAVIS

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF CLEAN WATER AGENCIES (NACWA)



Forty years after the passage of the Clean Water Act, clean water agencies across the country are undergoing a remarkable transformation. Instead of simply collecting and treating wastewater, these forward-thinking utilities are becoming managers of valuable resources, partners in local, county and regional economic development, and providers of environmental benefits to their watershed communities.

They are reclaiming and reusing water, extracting and finding commercial uses for nutrients and other resources in the waste stream, capturing waste heat and energy from bio-solids and liquids, generating renewable energy, and using green infrastructure to manage storm water and improve the quality of life in urban areas.

One good example is in New Jersey, where the Camden County Municipal Utility Authority (CC-MUA) — which serves 500,000 people across 37 communities in southwestern New Jersey — responded to mounting economic pressures over the last five years with a series of cutting-edge initiatives. They included improving operating performance, installing green infrastructure, launching solar energy projects and recovering methane from a bio-solids project that is currently underway.

Combined operating and capital costs are now lower than they were in 1996; CCMUA's effluent is cleaner and, as such, so too are the tributaries to the Delaware River into which the authority discharges. Odors from the plant have been significantly reduced, and vendor-financed solar photovoltaic arrays save approximately \$300,000 a year in energy costs. All of these things benefit the county broadly and can serve as a model for how the wastewater treatment process can be an asset to residents broadly.

The National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) in collaboration with the Water Environment Research Foundation and the Water Environment Federation, NACWA developed

The Water Resources Utility of the Future ... A Blueprint for Action to characterize elements of the utility of the future, or UOTF, and describe potential next steps to ensure that the UOTF will be within reach for all clean water agencies across the country.

One of the most critical aspects of the UOTF paradigm is the clear need to create sustainable, resilient water facilities that can meet and withstand the impacts of extreme weather events as well as ensure continued services in the face of challenging trends such as population growth, rising energy and material costs, and others. As more climate-related extreme weather events occur, ranging from drought to extreme storms, the nation's clean water agencies are becoming key first responders protecting public health and the environment.

Ensuring the resiliency of these wastewater utilities comes with a huge price-tag — NACWA's 2009 report with the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies estimated that the costs for adapting to and mitigating climate change — in other words building resiliency — at water and wastewater utilities could reach almost a trillion dollars by mid-century.

In addition to the enormous price tag, a key component of ensuring a resilient water sector and watershed community is increased regional cooperation with other municipalities and county governments. Extreme weather events will have significant regional and statewide impacts and will require leadership at the both the local and regional level.

NACWA is committed to working with the Administration, Congress and local government officials to ensure that federal policy addressing climate change fully accounts for the fact that its impacts are all about water.

We need strong support for collaborative efforts at all levels of government to ensure our utilities are resilient and can transform into the UOTF. This will be critical to ensuring another four decades of water quality progress similar to what we have enjoyed since passage of the Clean Water Act four decades ago.

**See this story online at www.countynews.org to learn more about water resiliency.*

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Federal News for the Nation's Counties

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County Innovations and Solutions

Chesterfield County, Va.

Library Teaches Financial Literacy to Families

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Librarians in Chesterfield County, Va. have taken a hands-on approach to teaching financial literacy to families.

"It was becoming a problem that kids couldn't manage money, think about how money works," said Carolyn Sears, the library service administrator for Chesterfield County. "We realized we had to embrace the whole family to teach it."

The topic was getting some attention statewide during the recent recession, and the state was also

requiring that high school students, starting with the class of 2015, take financial planning classes before they graduate.

In 2011, the library won an \$81,000 grant from the American Library Association and the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority Investor Education Foundation. That launched an 18-month program of monthly classes for families to learn financial literacy. One of the librarians, Nanci Clary, had an investment banking background and took the lead on developing the course.

"We decided to focus on the connection between basic grasp

of numbers and financial literacy," Sears said. "It makes sense that if you aren't good with basic math, you won't be able to handle finances, so we worked on that."

The two-hour classes started with a meal, which Sears said

helped disarm the students and ease them into the course. Each class involved a presentation for the entire family and another age-appropriate section.

Topics started off small, introducing basic terminology and con-

cepts before building to rudimentary investment concepts.

"With Nanci teaching the class, it was a departure from the normal librarian style," Sears said.

See INNOVATIONS page 12



Photo courtesy of Chesterfield County, Va.

A family works on financial planning exercises at the Chesterfield County, Va. library's financial literacy course.

What's in a Seal?

» Merrimack County, N.H.
www.merrimackcounty.net



Merrimack County was organized at Concord in 1823 and is named for the Merrimack River. It is divided into two cities, Concord and Franklin, and 25 towns.

The county's roots lie in the building of America, and much of its heritage can be traced back to the era of the stagecoach and hydro-powered mills. Concord, the state capital, boasts the second largest House of Representatives in the world with 400 members.

The seal depicts the dome of the state capitol in Concord at the top. It was designed in 1814 by architect Stuart Park. The octagonal drum with large arched windows supports a golden dome with bull's eye windows and supporting a small lantern. A statue of a huge gold-painted wooden war eagle looking to the left was razed in 1818 and was replaced with a peace eagle statue looking to the right in 1957.

The mill depicts the numerous hydro-powered mills, which were built in the 1800s to support the county's growing industrial business. Most of these mills are still standing today. This mill is situated in Franklin, which was known for its hosiery mills. Famed inventor Herrick Aiken and his sons Walter and Jonas, Franklin natives, manufactured the first knitting machine to knit a stocking with latch needles.

The first Concord stagecoach was built in 1827 by Abbot Downing Company. Employing leather strap braces under the coach, the Concord coach was known for its smoother ride. The company manufactured more than 40 different types of carriages and wagons at the wagon factory in Concord.

The rivers flowing through the seal depict the Pemigewasset and Winnepesaukee Rivers where they meet in Franklin to form the "mighty" Merrimack River.

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

Financial Services News

Independent Stationers Awarded School Supplies Contract

Educational materials, classroom art supplies and related products and services are now available through Independent Stationers under a new a multi-year contract through U.S. Communities.

This exclusive contract was awarded through a competitive solicitation process conducted by lead public agency Prince William County Public Schools in Virginia and is eligible for use by all counties at no cost.

The new contract provides a flexible and economical solution with an easy online ordering tool and fixed pricing on thousands of classroom essentials and teaching aids. Independent Stationers uses local independent community-based dealers. County departments and agencies are able to buy lo-

cally and keep the dollars spent circulated back into the county. In addition, Independent Stationers offers rebates and aggressive incentives to help counties put more money back into their local school systems while saving on items that are already being purchased.

Independent Stationers is a nationwide buying cooperative composed of hundreds of locally owned office-supply dealerships. It has been a supplier with U.S. Communities providing office supplies since 2010 when it was awarded the office supplies contract through Los Angeles County, Calif.

U.S. Communities hosted an informational webinar on the new Independent Stationers school supplies offering, which can be viewed as a recording on the U.S. Communities

website <http://www.uscommunities.org/news-events/webinars/>.

U.S. Communities is the only government cooperative purchasing organization to be founded by NACo, the National League of Cities, the Association of School Business Officials International, the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

For more information about U.S. Communities and the various products and services offered to local governments, please contact Sarah Lindsay, NACo Financial Services Center at 202.942.4228 or slindsay@naco.org.

(Financial Services News was written by Sarah Lindsay, marketing specialist, NACo Financial Services Corporation.)



News From the Nation's Counties

► CALIFORNIA

• **SAN DIEGO COUNTY** is considering using **library branches for veterans' services**.

More than 244,000 military veterans live there, the second-largest total in California. The county's Veterans Services Office helps them obtain local, state and federal benefits. County veterans services officers currently meet with veterans to provide services at nine locations throughout the county, locations that are more centralized than the veteran population, according to the *Village News*.

• The union representing **LOS ANGELES COUNTY** social workers has sued the county to **reduce case loads**.

Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 721 — which represents nearly 55,000 county employees — alleged the county had ignored a directive issued by an arbitrator last year to reduce the social worker-to-child ratios in one office of the county child welfare department.

Under their contract, the social workers are supposed to monitor no more than 30 children at a time, but SEIU said they often handle two or three times that number.

The union wants the county to hire 1,400 more social workers over the next three and a half years, the *Los Angeles Times* reported.

► FLORIDA

• **ALACHUA COUNTY** may follow **CLAY COUNTY's** lead in **banning the sale of e-cigarettes to minors**. The **MARION COUNTY** Commission is also considering an ordinance that would ban selling e-cigarettes to minors, among other restrictions, the *Gainesville Sun* reported.

E-cigarettes, which are often flavored, convert liquid nicotine into vapor that people inhale. They don't contain the other chemicals tobacco cigarettes do. Smoking an e-cigarette is commonly referred to as "vaping."

• After its current **paratransit system** operator announced it was quitting at the end of the year, **BAY COUNTY** has assumed at least one month of service as a financial conduit and overseer of the system.

The paratransit system has no fixed route and primarily takes senior citizens to medical appointments. The county would fill the operator's role as the community transportation coordinator and re-



Photo courtesy of Charleston County, S.C.

► SOUTH CAROLINA

Charleston County Commission Chairman Teddie Pryor "bearly" contains his enthusiasm while launching a challenge to mayors in the county to collect 100 "Teddie" Bears for Toys for Tots. If they fail, the county sheriff will "lock them up" until enough bears are collected to bail them out. Also pictured is Kristen L. Salisbury, deputy clerk of council. The gauntlet was thrown down to North Charleston Mayor Keith Summey, City of Charleston Mayor Joe Riley and Town of Mount Pleasant Mayor Linda Page.

ceive all state and federal grant money for the paratransit system. Without the county — or a similar government or nonprofit operator — \$300,000 to \$800,000 in grant funding would be lost, the *News Herald* reported.

► GEORGIA

Pending approval of a memorandum of understanding at the end of November, the **Atlanta Braves** will move to a new stadium in **COBB COUNTY** in 2017.

Work to build a \$672 million, 42,000-seat stadium would start in the second half of 2014 if plans are approved. The franchise will not extend its lease at Turner Field in downtown Atlanta when it expires at the end of 2016, according to team president John Schuerholz. Turner Field, which was built for the 1996 Summer Olympic Games, can seat 49,586.

The stadium would be owned by the Cobb-Marietta Coliseum and Exhibit Hall Authority, which also owns the Cobb Galleria Centre and Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre. The Braves would develop the remainder of the site into a mixed-use entertainment district containing restaurants, retail shops and possibly hotels, the *Marietta Daily Journal* reported. Naming rights for the stadium are expected to head to the market soon after the commissioners' vote.

► ILLINOIS

Two county jails in southern Illinois are allowing inmates to use **electronic cigarettes** and others are considering it.

WHITE and **SALINE** counties are letting inmates use the nicotine-infused vapor inhalers. Officials in **FRANKLIN**, **WABASH** and **WILLIAMSON** counties have it up for debate.

White County jail administrator Randy Cobb said the experiment has slowed contraband and raised inmate morale.

"I think it's a trend all counties will eventually adopt," Cobb told Lee Enterprises newspapers.

► MICHIGAN

HILLSDALE, **JACKSON**, **LENAAWEE**, **LIVINGSTON**, **MONROE** and **WASHTENAW** counties have joined together in an effort to attract businesses to the region. The counties are targeting businesses that are seeking a destination for relocation or expansion.

A grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corp. will fund the group's efforts to market the greater Ann Arbor region to company executives and site selectors considering new business locations. These efforts are designed to highlight the region's unique assets, specifically in manufacturing, life sciences, automotive, software and

information technology. Outreach efforts will also promote the region's higher education system.

► NEBRASKA

LANCASTER COUNTY commissioners say they want more information before deciding whether to **extend health insurance benefits to same-sex spouses**.

The county currently covers only opposite-sex spouses, but Blue Cross Blue Shield, the county's insurance provider, recently made a change that allows same-sex spouses to be covered regardless of where a couple was married or where they live, according to the *Lincoln Journal Star*.

County commissioners voted recently to maintain the status quo until they can study the issue. Among their considerations are tax implications, said Doug McDaniel, the county's personnel director. Health insurance premiums are deducted pre-tax, but because Nebraska doesn't recognize same-sex couples, it's not clear whether state taxes would need to be deducted.

► NEW MEXICO

BERNALILLO COUNTY is drafting state legislation that could lead to **more inmates being sent to state prisons** instead of the county jail.

Deputy County Manager Tom

Swisstack said officials are working on two bills to submit to the State Legislature. He has asked for similar measures in at least two past legislative sessions, but both attempts failed, according to the *Albuquerque Journal*.

Under one bill, inmates sentenced to 180 days or more could be sent to a state prison, even if they were convicted of a misdemeanor. Another bill would let judges decide whether to send anyone recently sentenced to fewer than 365 days to the county jail or a state prison.

Swisstack said the proposals could help inmates get back on their feet once released. Currently, all inmates sentenced to fewer than 365 days go to the county's Metropolitan Detention Center, which provides no post-release supervision and offers fewer programs and services for inmates than prisons would.

► NORTH CAROLINA

Responding to a state mandate, **DURHAM COUNTY** commissioners voted to repeal a 13-year-old **"commute-reduction" ordinance** that required large employers to encourage employees to seek alternatives to single-driver commuting, *The Herald-Sun* reported.

Gov. Pat McCrory (R) and the General Assembly enacted reforms last summer that prohibit localities from imposing fees, fines or other mandates on employers to secure their cooperation in commute-reduction programs.

The county ordinance required companies with 100 or more employees to assess their workers' commuting habits, advise them about alternatives to driving to work solo and report to the local transit agency on their efforts to promote telecommuting, carpools, vanpools, buses and other commuting options.

► OREGON

The **MARION COUNTY** Health Department is working with **seven corner stores in "food deserts"** to make sure residents will have access to healthy food choices, *The News Tribune* reported.

"Food deserts are less likely to have access because they're too far from full-access grocery stores. They're relying on corner stores that are stocked with high-calorie and low-nutrient junk food," said Jennifer Eskridge, prevention program supervisor with the health department.

Dane County, Wis. addresses criminal justice system disparities

NEWS FROM *from page 10*

With the help of a three-year, \$170,000 grant from Kaiser Permanente, health department staff are encouraging participating convenience stores to expand or change their food offerings to include fresh produce and items lower in sugar, fat, salt and calories. Each store is treated individually and personalized goals are developed based on store owner interviews, store inventory and customer surveys.

"Our store owners are reporting that they aren't losing money, and

they are selling produce," Eskridge told the *Statesman Journal*.

Participating stores are expected to display Healthy Corner Stores marketing materials, and also participate in social marketing campaigns.

► PENNSYLVANIA

A judge has ruled that **LUZERNE COUNTY**, as a home rule county, has the authority to **stop using locally elected tax collectors** and can collect property taxes at the county level in 2014.

In a lawsuit, municipal tax collectors had argued that the home rule charter doesn't specifically give

County Council the authority to change the way taxes are collected.

But senior Judge David Grine ruled the county is "presumed" to have the authority to act absent specific language to the contrary.

County commissioners have estimated that the county could save \$258,555 annually by collecting the taxes itself.

► WASHINGTON

The Muckleshoot **Indian Tribe** has purchased **96,000 acres of forest** in three counties—**KING, PIERCE** and **LEWIS**—for just over \$313 million, *The Seattle Times* reported.

Tribal Council Chairwoman Virginia Cross said the Muckleshoots plan to use the land primarily for long-term sustainable timber harvest, "while preserving natural values including fish and wildlife habitat, plant resources and areas of cultural importance." She added, "This acquisition is another important step toward the tribe's goals of increasing our land base, reacquiring portions of our homeland and diversifying our economy."

The majority of the land, 86,501 acres, is in King and Pierce counties. In northern Lewis County, the tribe bought 9,806 acres.

Tribal officials said buying back land lost through treaties and forced sales has long been a priority.

► WISCONSIN

DANE COUNTY supervisors, courts and law enforcement officials are considering several alternatives to incarceration to address **racial disparities in the criminal justice system**, the *Star Tribune* reported. The goal is to rehabilitate African American defendants rather than burden them with criminal records that could limit their future options.

Proposals include diversion into programs that allow offenders to make amends for minor crimes, and another would get more minorities into drug treatment that allows offenders to be monitored rather than locked up.

Supervisor Shelia Stubbs has proposed a community court for young men from minority neighborhoods that could begin as a pilot program next year if the County Board approves a \$100,000 budget amendment and neighborhood leaders embrace the idea, according to the *Wisconsin State Journal*.

Blacks comprise approximately 6 percent of the county's population but more than 40 percent of its county jail's inmate population. Further, according to a 2007 study, a black Dane County resident was 97 times more likely to be jailed for a drug crime than a white resident—the widest racial disparity for that measure in the nation.

(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

» NACo Officers, County Officials



• President Barack Obama has appointed **Paula Brooks**, commissioner Franklin County, Ohio; **Salud Carbajal**, supervisor, Santa Barbara County, Calif.; and **Kristin Jacobs**, mayor, Broward County, Fla., to his Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience. The task force will provide recommendations to the Administration on how the federal government can help state and local governments on resiliency and preparedness efforts. Task force members include state, local and tribal officials, experienced in local climate issues.

• NACo President **Linda Langston** spoke about NACo, its legislative priorities and her resiliency presidential initiative at the Iowa State Association of Counties Fall School of Instruction in Polk County Nov. 13.

• **Langston** also spoke about NACo and "Why Counties Matter?" at the Virginia Association of Counties Annual Conference in Bath County Nov. 11.



Paula Brooks



Salud Carbajal



Kristin Jacobs

» NACo Staff



Jessica Monahan

• **Jessica Monahan** has been named the new associate legislative director for transportation in Legislative Affairs. Previously, Monahan worked for Patton Boggs, where she represented the interests of public transportation authorities, municipal governments, universities and private industry before Congress and the executive branch. She is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin with a B.A. in Political Science.

• **Alyssum Pohl**, NOAA Digital Coast fellow, presented an overview of the new Digital Coast NACo publication to the Coastal Caucus at the National States Geographic Information Council Annual Conference in Jackson County, Mo. Oct. 28.

» Coming Up

• **Andrew Goldschmidt**, director, membership marketing, will be exhibiting on behalf of membership recruitment and retention at the California State Association of Counties Annual Conference in Santa Clara County Nov. 19–21 and the County Commissioner Association of Pennsylvania Nov. 24–26.

On the Move is compiled by Christopher Johnson.

*For more information about the Administration's Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, see this feature at www.countynews.org.



Photo courtesy of Berks County, Pa.

► PENNSYLVANIA

Berks County, Pa. Commissioner Chair Christian Leinbach (center), accompanied by Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt, pins Berks County Military Hall of Fame medal on the granddaughter of General Carl Spaatz. Spaatz is a Berks County native and was inducted into the Berks County Military Hall of Fame at the county's annual Veteran's Day Dinner Dance. This year's event attracted more than 900 attendees.

The Berks County Hall of Fame, started in 2009, honors military veterans from Berks County who distinguished themselves during service with the United States Armed Forces.

The H.R. Doctor Is In

Being Thankful at Thanksgiving

A most wonderful time of the year occurs in late November. 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's a 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 retirement and health care benefits, time off, educational support and much more.

Thanksgiving is an excellent time to do more than simply eat a tremendous meal with family and friends—and maybe watch football.

It is a 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 campaigns occur during this holiday time nor that about one in three persons receives help from such an organization. "There but for fortune," could be any one of us.

This holiday is also a time to praise and recognize how much easier our own lives at work are made by having colleagues who work hard to help you as a county government leader and care about your success. Not a bad time to make some "Thanksgiving resolutions" and avoid a New Year's rush. Resolve not

to take things for granted, but rather 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 to share information on 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 a lot to be thankful for in your own work life and personal life.

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

Best wishes!

Phil Rosenberg

HR Doctor • www.hrdtr.net

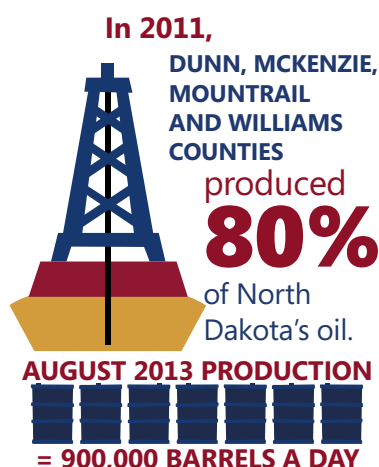
Research News

Hydraulic Fracturing Brings Economic Boom to North Dakota Counties

Over the past 10 years the hydraulic fracturing industry has revolutionized the economies of several North Dakota counties. Dunn, McKenzie, Mountrail and Williams counties, all located in the northwest portion of the state, benefited greatly with the boom creating new jobs and improving the economies of these counties.

All four counties are located on the Bakken Formation, which is prime territory for hydraulic fracturing. Oil production on the formation has significantly increased; in 2011, more than 80 percent of the oil production in North Dakota came from these four counties.

The growth of fracturing has led to North Dakota's becoming a major producer of crude oil in the U.S. — in August 2013 the state produced more than 900,000 barrels of oil a day, behind only Texas. From 2005 to 2011, the number of people employed in the oil and gas sector grew from 6,000 to 35,000, with the most of the jobs being created



along the Bakken Formation. In 2011, North Dakota produced \$10.6 billion worth of oil.

The growth of fracturing, aka "fracking," has led to increased output in North Dakota counties, but one problem that affects the county governments is the distribution of taxes from oil production. The state taxes oil at about a 10 percent rate, a similar rate to Montana and Wyoming, other Western oil producers.

However, the share of the taxes that goes to the county governments in North Dakota is only 11 percent, compared to 35 percent in Wyoming and 39 percent in Montana. This means that the counties are missing out on important revenue opportunities generated by the new oil production.

While fracking has been an economic boon to the affected counties, the influx of industry and jobs has led to several headaches for county officials. The industry is linked to environmental concerns, with a major oil spill occurring in September. In addition, the local infrastructure has also been stretched as the counties go through rapid growth. To help counties cope, North Dakota set aside \$1.2 billion in impact funds in 2012, which they plan to distribute to counties in need of help.

(Research News was written by Benjamin Kirby, research intern.)

Librarians hands-on while teaching financial literacy

INNOVATIONS from page 9

"Librarians usually point you in the direction of a resource or an answer, but we had one taking a much more involved role in teaching, instead of bringing in someone from outside to handle the class. It's more hands-on than people are used to and helps reflect the direction we are going as a library — being more practical and open to meeting patrons' needs."

It was a natural progression, she said, from the way library offerings developed.

"Financial literacy has evolved as a branch of literacy that is becoming very important," Sears said. "The obvious move for libraries is early literacy, but there are lessons people need to learn to be capable once they've grown up."

Those lessons focused on several topics:

- budgeting and money management
- college and education costs
- credit ratings and repair
- personal finance and
- financial planning.

The class yielded 142 graduates

from 50 families, with 12 families attending at least 15 of the 18 monthly classes.

"They made the commitment to coming to every class, and it was amazing how many people came month after month," Sears said. "These were busy families, and so many managed to make it regularly. And when they couldn't, they'd call and let us know."

The course's costs totaled more than \$80,000, all covered by the grant. That included the purchase of several copies of books on financial literacy, distributed among nine library branches, and 49 e-books.

The library has applied for a second grant to continue the program, next time focusing on grandparents who are raising their grandchildren.

"Our senior advocates office tells us that's becoming a problem," Sears said. "More grandparents have the responsibility at a time when they are reaching retirement. It might not be as extensive as our basic program was, but it will be responsive to our community."

County Innovations and Solutions highlights award-winning programs.

NACo National Association of Counties

Make Your Mark on Congress and the Administration!

Attend NACo's 2014 Legislative Conference
March 1–5 ★ Washington Hilton, Washington, D.C.

