

NACO National Association of Counties

CountyNews

The Voice of America's Counties

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES ■ WASHINGTON, D.C.

VOL. 44, NO. 20 ■ October 22, 2012

County officials eye seats in Congress, governorship

By BEVERLY SCHLOTTERBECK
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

More than two-dozen current or former county officials are hoping to join their county colleagues in Congress or lead a state come Nov. 6. Most are candidates in races for House seats, but there's at least one governor's mansion on the line and three U.S. Senate seats. Following is a report on several of the races.

In Indiana, Richard Mourdock, a former Vanderburgh County commissioner (1995–2002) who unseated Sen. Richard Lugar in the Republican primary, faces Democrat Joe Donnelly for that state's open Senate seat.

Meanwhile both candidates for the Wisconsin Senate seat being vacated by retiring Sen. Herb Kohl, can lay claim to county backgrounds. Tammy Baldwin (D), former Dane County supervisor, is facing off against Tommy Thompson (R), a former Milwaukee County supervisor. Baldwin currently represents

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Photo courtesy of Mecklenburg County, N.C.

Brea Spencer spreads mulch during a service project performed by teen mentees in Mecklenburg County, N.C.'s Recreation Employment Corp program. Find out how they're learning about parks and rec — inside and out. Story on page 8.

Wind farm could help fill Wyoming county's coffers

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

A huge gust of renewable energy will blow into Carbon County, Wyo., joining its portfolio of oil, natural gas, coal and uranium

QuickTakes

States with the Most Units of Local Government

Illinois	6,968
Pennsylvania	4,905
Texas	4,856
California	4,350
Kansas	3,806

2012 Census of Governments preliminary counts

resources. And it could benefit power-hungry states in the West.

County commissioners recently approved a conditional use permit that clears the way for Power Company of Wyoming LLC to build a 1,000-turbine wind farm — the Chokecherry and Sierra Madre (CCSM) Wind Energy Project — that could generate more than 2,500 megawatts of power, create 100-plus permanent jobs and pay property taxes to the county of \$291 million to \$437 million over the 20-year life of the facility, according to the power company.

"There's just no question that it's going to improve the quality of life," said Terry Weickum, chair-

See WIND FARM page 5

More referenda concern counties

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER



Taxing non-medical marijuana in three states, a tug of war over a town in North Dakota and a new levy for road construction in Arkansas are among the issues voters will decide on Election Day.

In part two of a series on ballot measures, *CountyNews* takes a look at how counties would be affected by the outcomes.

In North Dakota, voters in Cass and Richland counties will stage a tug of war over Pleasant Township. Cass voters will choose whether to let Pleasant go, and Richland voters will decide whether to bring Pleasant on board. Cass is the most urban of North Dakota's counties, but Jeff Erslinger, communications director for the North Dakota Association of Counties, said the issue is flood-control related.

"I'm not aware of this ever happening...certainly not in modern times," he said. "The infamous Red River that floods Fargo quite often flows north, so any mitigation they do tends to cause problems upstream — south in this case — and so this township feels it's being trampled by the city folk, and so they want to join the other county, which is fighting against some elements of Fargo's flood plan."

Meanwhile on Arkansas's statewide ballot, voters will decide whether to approve a 10-year half-cent sales tax proposal to fund the extension of the four-lane highway system in Arkansas.

"Issue No. 1 could have a profound effect on county road budgets," said Chris Villines, the Association of Arkansas Counties' executive director. "It would result in an injection of millions of dollars into each county's road fund."

New Jersey's county colleges would benefit from the Building Our Future Act bond referendum, which would provide \$150 million for 19 colleges. New Jersey Association of

Counties Executive Director John Donnadio said enrollment at those colleges has increased dramatically in the last few years.

Farther south, Alamance County, N.C. will also look at funding its county college system. Voters will decide on a sales tax and a bond issue that would build and finance a career-training center at Alamance Community College. To the east in Wake County, voters can authorize a bond issue that would raise \$200 million for Wake Technical Community College.

In California, Proposition 30 would establish a temporary, seven-year tax for people earning more than \$250,000 annually. It would guarantee funding for program responsibilities transferred to counties by the state in 2011, primarily the incarceration of low-level adult offenders and parolees. It also restricts the state's authority to expand program requirements.

Through this, local government revenues could be higher than they otherwise would have been because the state would be

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"New app takes on bullies in Anne Arundel County, Md. » Page 10

CountyNews Features

NACo, Vilsack partner on regional drought meeting

By ERIK JOHNSTON
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

With more than two-thirds of the nation's counties declared official drought disaster areas, NACo partnered with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to hold a regional drought meeting in Douglas County (Omaha), Nebraska on Oct. 9.

NACo President Chris Rodgers, commissioner, Douglas County, Neb. moderated the opening session where he stressed the need for a comprehensive drought response and a multi-year Farm Bill.

"It is critical to address the immediate needs of our nation's producers, but we also must look at the mid-range and long-term drought issues facing our state, region and nation, and begin to plan for them," Rodgers said. "A critical first step in this response must be the passage of a multi-year Farm Bill when Congress returns after the elections, so that producers, businesses and local

governments can plan for rural development efforts tailored to meet upcoming challenges such as the possibility of a continued drought."

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and federal officials from a half-dozen other agencies participated and discussed tools now available to producers and businesses, and listened to suggestions regarding larger community-wide needs.

"From the early days of this disaster, USDA has taken action to help," Vilsack said. "We've streamlined our disaster-designation process, provided easier access to farm credit, and opened more conservation lands for emergency haying and grazing, and much more. Meanwhile, we continue to convene regular meetings of White House Rural Council to coordinate the federal response and identify every effort we can take to provide additional help and assistance.

"In order to do the most good," Vilsack continued, "we must ensure



Photo by Erik Johnston

NACo President Chris Rodgers (r) discusses the day's events with USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack.

a strong partnership between local communities, states, tribes and the federal government."

The meeting included two breakout tracks, with one focused on meeting the needs of farmers and ranchers, and the other on businesses and communities. Producers expressed worries over the lack of resiliency in rural water systems, the need for interconnected water systems with multiple sources and the need to help livestock producers, new producers dealing with drought for the first time and those producers without crop insurance. Another consensus issue was the need to bolster research on drought-resistant crops.

The resources available to help producers are catalogued at www.usda.gov/drought.

Several of NACo's rural leaders served as panel participants in the community leader breakout sessions. Commissioner Don Larson from Brookings County, S.D., Supervisor Melvyn Houser from Pottawattamie County, Iowa, and Supervisor Doris Karloff from Saunders County, Neb. described the issues facing rural counties.

The top concern expressed by many community leaders was meeting the immediate needs of producers and businesses in their communities that do not have a safety net. Wildfires, for example, have ravaged many counties and overburdened the volunteer first responders of rural counties. Another major issue is balancing the need for irrigation during times of drought with diminishing municipal water supplies. Variable-speed water pumps for wells and interconnected public water systems are solutions that rural water professionals are striving to get communities to plan for moving forward.

As families face economic stress, communities are also striving to accommodate the public health issues that are beginning to be seen by the mental health system.

Vilsack stressed his support for a comprehensive recovery response that considers the ideas of local leaders. The federal government is coordinating the drought recovery response through the implementation of the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF).

The framework is designed to link local, state, tribal and federal governments, the private sector and nongovernmental and community organizations that play vital roles in recovery. The resources available for all stakeholders, including planning, data and loan availability to develop community economic recovery plans, can be found at www.drought.gov/drought and www.whitehouse.gov/drought.

County officials stressed the need to focus on opportunities for a more resilient future. "The drought situation is very difficult, but I encourage those of us responding to this situation to think about how we can adapt to Mother Nature's whims," Houser said. "We should consider fostering new opportunities for rural entrepreneurs to develop water resource conservation and reuse solutions that help producers and communities adapt to less water."

The day's events were the first in a series of USDA roundtable-workshop sessions. NACo, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension and the city of Omaha sponsored the meeting.

Profiles in Service



» Lu Barron

NACo Board of Directors
County Supervisor
Linn County, Iowa

Years affiliated with NACo: 15 years

Years in public service: 15 years

Occupation: county supervisor

Education: Kirkwood Community College; University of Iowa

The hardest thing I've ever done: successfully sited a new modern landfill

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Madeleine Albright, Bill Clinton and Vaclav Havel

A dream I have is to: visit as many World Heritage sites as I can before I die (58 so far).

You'd be surprised to learn that I: have a son who lives in the Czech Republic and a daughter who lives in New Zealand.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: hiked 35 miles in a rainforest in New Zealand.

My favorite way to relax is: dinner with friends and a good bottle of red wine

I'm most proud of: my husband Bill and a marriage of 30 years, plus our two children Will and Barbara.

Every morning I read: *The Cedar Rapids Gazette*.

My favorite meal is: homemade chicken and biscuits.

My pet peeve is: litter.

My motto is: "You can do anything you set your mind to."

The last book I read was: "Prague Winter" by Madeleine Albright.

My favorite movie is: *Dr. Zhivago*.

My favorite music is: anything by Jimmy Buffett.

My favorite president is: Woodrow Wilson.

In Case You Missed It

News to use from past County News

» Register now for NACo's 2012 Healthy Counties Forum

Join NACo in DeKalb and Fulton counties in Georgia Nov. 27-28 for a day and a half health-focused forum to explore important changes in health care delivery and financing. The forum will examine broad health care policy and system changes, and the implications for county health care delivery systems.

Space is limited; the registration deadline is Nov. 1. For further details and to register, visit www.naco.org/programs/csd/Pages/NACo2012HealthyCountiesForum.aspx.

CountyNews

The Voice of America's Counties

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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

E-mail | cnews@naco.org

Online address | www.countynews.org

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Mail subscriptions are \$100 per year for non-members. \$60 per year for non-members purchasing multiple copies. Educational institution rate, \$50 per year. Member county supplemental subscriptions are \$20 each. Send payment with order and address changes to NACo, 25 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

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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'Greening' county jails – and saving greenbacks

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

**WEB*
CONTENT** It isn't spinning straw into gold, but turning jail inmates' blankets into bedding for pets has meant comfy naps for shelter pups and kittens in Multnomah County. Recycling those blankets is also helping ensure a "greener" future through the county's Sustainable Jail Project — environmentally and financially.

It's a trend that's playing out across the nation with county correctional facilities seeking green building certification, composting food waste and planting gardens. These measures are helping the environment and, in some cases — like Multnomah's — saving counties big bucks. Sustainability initiatives in FY11 resulted in more than \$400,000 in cost savings for the Sheriff's Office, according to Sheriff

Dan Staton.

"This coming year, we're potentially looking at somewhere in the vicinity of about a million to about a million-five" — that's dollars — Staton said. The jail has an average daily population of 1,200. Its annual budget is about \$26 million.

The initiative is a project of Staton's office and the county's Office of Sustainability. It began as a small-scale effort in 2010, reflecting the county's department-wide commitment to sustainability, and it won a NACo Achievement Award this year.

Jail staff and inmates have seen numerous changes since the introduction of sustainable practices that have included switching from plastic foam to reusable cups, using recycled twine to wrap laundry instead of plastic shrink-wrap and capturing, treating and recycling water used to wash clothes and bedding.

"Having this major resource user

in the jail laundry really suggested that was a good place to go for some conservation effort," said Judy Shiprack, county commissioner and chair of NACo's Green Government Advisory Board. "When the sheriff saves money on the jail laundry, we save money, too. But it's way more than that; we've really reduced our waste footprint."

In addition to the laundry, the jail's sustainable kitchen and sustainable purchasing have also saved money while helping the environment. Each year, the jail's kitchen serves more than 1.5 million meals. Last year, 110,000 pounds of food waste was diverted from the landfill through composting and \$140,000 was spent on local food, which the project says had a 1.75 multiplier effect to the local economy.

Green purchasing practices have saved more than \$250,000 a year by buying disinfectants in bulk rather than individual bottles. The jail went from using 800,000 plastic foam cups per year to reusable cups for a \$9,100 annual savings.

"One of the really helpful collateral benefits of the sustainable jail project," Shiprack said, "is that we've gone from looking at these procurements as supplies to use, so that now we look at them as resources to manage."

Future objectives of the Sustainable Jail Project include:

- digitizing the jail's law library,



Photo courtesy of Multnomah County, Ore.

Laundry at the Inverness Jail in Multnomah County is bundled using twine banding. Before the Sustainable Jail Project began, plastic shrink wrap was used to package laundered items.

saving about \$70,000 annually

- reducing total energy use of the jails 20 percent by 2020, and
- reducing water use in county jails 10 percent by 2015.

In Alameda County, Calif., officials unveiled a smart-grid project earlier this year at the Santa Rita Jail, which has had a 1.2 megawatt rooftop solar system since 2002. It also uses fuel cell technology and has five small wind turbines. The project was partly funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, the

California Energy Commission and the California Public Utilities Commission.

"Santa Rita Jail now has the capability to 'island' itself off the main utility grid and independently generate and store its own energy," explained Nate Miley, Alameda County supervisor and board president. "We're not only excited by what we've accomplished with this project, but see its application with hospitals and other facilities that need to remain operational in an emergency." The jail has a population of about 4,000 inmates.

New Mexico's Los Alamos County Justice Center recently received the second highest "green" certification from Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), qualifying as a LEED Gold building (Platinum is the highest category). Its green features include an improved thermal building envelope, energy-efficient glazing, an overhang shading system, high-efficiency mechanical systems, a rainwater drip irrigation system and a reflective roofing system.

Staton, the Multnomah County sheriff, sees the movement toward sustainable jails as a "can't lose" proposition. "You're helping out the environment; you're helping out your inmates; you're looking after your staff. You're looking after the taxpayer, and you're still maintaining your same core service levels by generating savings by trying to tap into other ideas."

*See the online version of this story at www.naco.org/countynews to view a YouTube video about Multnomah County's Sustainable Jail Project.

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

NACo's 2012 Healthy Counties Forum

County Challenges and Opportunities in a Changing Health System

November 27–28 • DeKalb and Fulton Counties (Atlanta), GA

- Examine broad health care policy and system changes;
- Explore a wide range of issues affecting county health care delivery systems;
- Feature a tour of Grady Hospital as well as a panel discussion with hospital leadership; and
- Provide an opportunity to connect with representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other health policy leaders.

Space is limited ... registration deadline is November 1.

Registration fee (\$100) covers the Forum, a welcoming reception the evening of November 27, two lunches and a breakfast. NACo will cover up to two nights of your stay (Monday, November 26 and Tuesday, November 27) at the Loews Atlanta Hotel for as many as two representatives from each county, while space remains available.

Agenda and registration available on NACo's website ...

www.naco.org/programs/csd/Pages/NACo2012HealthyCountiesForum.aspx

Questions? Please contact Anita Cardwell ...

@ acardwell@naco.org 202.942.4267.



EPA memo touts benefits of decentralized wastewater treatment



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Decentralized Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Partnership has developed a series of four papers that highlight how decentralized wastewater treatment systems can be sustainable and appropriate options for communities and homeowners.

The papers are intended to provide information to the public and to state, local and industry officials on the benefits and types of decentralized wastewater treatment systems. Decentralized wastewater treatment consists of a variety of onsite approaches for collection, treatment, dispersal and reuse of wastewater.

The MOU Partnership is an agreement involving EPA and 16 partner organizations to work collaboratively at the national level to

improve decentralized performance and the nation's public health and water resources. Since 2005, the MOU has reflected EPA and its partner organizations' commitment to encourage proper management of decentralized systems and increase collaboration among EPA, state and local governments, and decentralized system practitioners and providers.

In 2011, the MOU Partnership convened working groups to develop papers around each of four topic areas that demonstrate how decentralized wastewater treatment can be: (1) a sensible solution; (2) cost-effective and economical; (3) green and sustainable; and (4) protective of the environment, public health, and water quality.

*For a link to copies of the papers, see this story at www.naco.org/countynews.

Wind project could help ease transmission bottlenecks

WIND FARM from page 1

man of the County Board. “Not to say that everybody is enthusiastic about the project, but I am.”

Power Company of Wyoming says it would be one of the largest wind farms in North America. After state approvals are received, construction is slated to begin in 2013.

Weickum voted in favor of the permit, as did his two board colleagues. While that includes Vice Chairman Jerry Paxton, he said he voted with mixed emotions. He’s no fan of wind energy, but the project meets all criteria for approval. He and other residents worry about wind turbines dotting the county’s wide-open spaces — Wyoming is the least-populated U.S. state, with 568,000 residents spread over 97,814 square miles. Several people who spoke at a public hearing also expressed concerns about strobe lights atop the towering structures spoiling pristine nighttime vistas, but most favored the project, Weickum said. State law mandates wind developers to have plans for how the turbines will be dismantled at the end of their lifespan and for restoration of the land.

“It’s not without problems, that’s for certain,” Paxton said, “but certainly it will allow us to diversify our revenue stream, which has been one of our biggest problems over the years.” The county’s economy is heavily dependent on the vagaries of natural gas prices, which currently are low.

“The situation has been pretty grim for us the last few years,” he added, “and it certainly would be nice as a county commissioner to have some revenue that we could stick away and could take care of all the deferred maintenance issues that we’ve had over the years.”

Carbon County, population 15,786, would also receive 60 percent of an estimated \$149 million in energy production taxes paid to the state over 20 years.

The project has the potential to generate enough power for 1 million homes, which presents another opportunity — since the state has just over half that many residents. Paxton said the utilities in the state already produce far more energy from coal than can be consumed in Wyoming. But transmission bottlenecks make it difficult to export that power.

One advantage of the CCSM project and others like it, he said, is the transmission lines associated with them. “We have an abundance of natural gas and

coal here. So were looking at the bigger picture,” he said. “You can put electrons on that same line that are generated by fossil fuels. It could open up some markets....”

The project would be built in Wyoming’s “checkerboard”

area, a patchwork of federal and privately held land. Half of the project would be on private property and half on public lands within a 320,000-acre ranch south of Rawlins, the county seat, and Sinclair. That brings the U.S. De-

partment of the Interior into the picture. One week after the County Board approved the project’s permit, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced that various federal agencies had approved the site as suitable for wind energy

development.

“Wyoming has some of the best wind energy resources in the world,” he said, “and there’s no doubt that this project has the potential to be a landmark example for the nation.”



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N.M. counties hope to store nuclear fuel waste

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER



With a new corporate partner to help their proposal, two New Mexico counties are hoping to attract spent nuclear fuel for storage near their shared border.

Lea and Eddy counties hope to establish an interim nuclear fuel consolidated storage facility in Eddy County, near its shared border with Lea, and reap the economic benefits. Preliminary plans would aim for that goal in three years.

The Eddy-Lea Energy Alliance, LLC (ELEA) owns 1,040 acres, which it calls a suitable site for that facility. ELEA comprises the two counties and the cities of Carlsbad, Eddy County's seat, and Hobbs in Lea County all of which contributed equally to the land purchase. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) would fund such an operation.

More than 65,000 tons of spent nuclear fuel is already stored in 75 reactor sites nationwide, with 2,000 more tons produced each year. The kind of facility ELEA proposes would consolidate that spent fuel until it can be reprocessed or permanently stored.

The Obama administration defunded construction of a nuclear fuel repository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada in 2010, stalling the only progress on a permanent storage facility. Around that time, ELEA, which had formed in 2006 to pitch the region for a now-defunct

nuclear project, came out of dormancy to try pitching southeastern New Mexico again.

ELEA recently partnered with Areva, a French company known primarily for nuclear power operations, to help field a proposal to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). If chosen, Areva would build and operate the facility.

"That's a huge step," said Jack Valpato, an Eddy County commissioner who serves as ELEA's treasurer. "They focus on the logistics and ELEA can focus on the political side."

That will include strengthening nuclear power's image in New Mexico, which already has two nuclear laboratories, both of which have field offices in the Eddy-Lea area, and an operating storage facility.

The Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future, which ELEA has been following closely as a guide, delivered its final report to DOE in January, making recommendations for managing spent fuel and high-level radioactive waste. The report endorses a consent-based approach to locating these facilities.

"Trying to force such facilities on unwilling states, tribes and communities has not worked," it said.

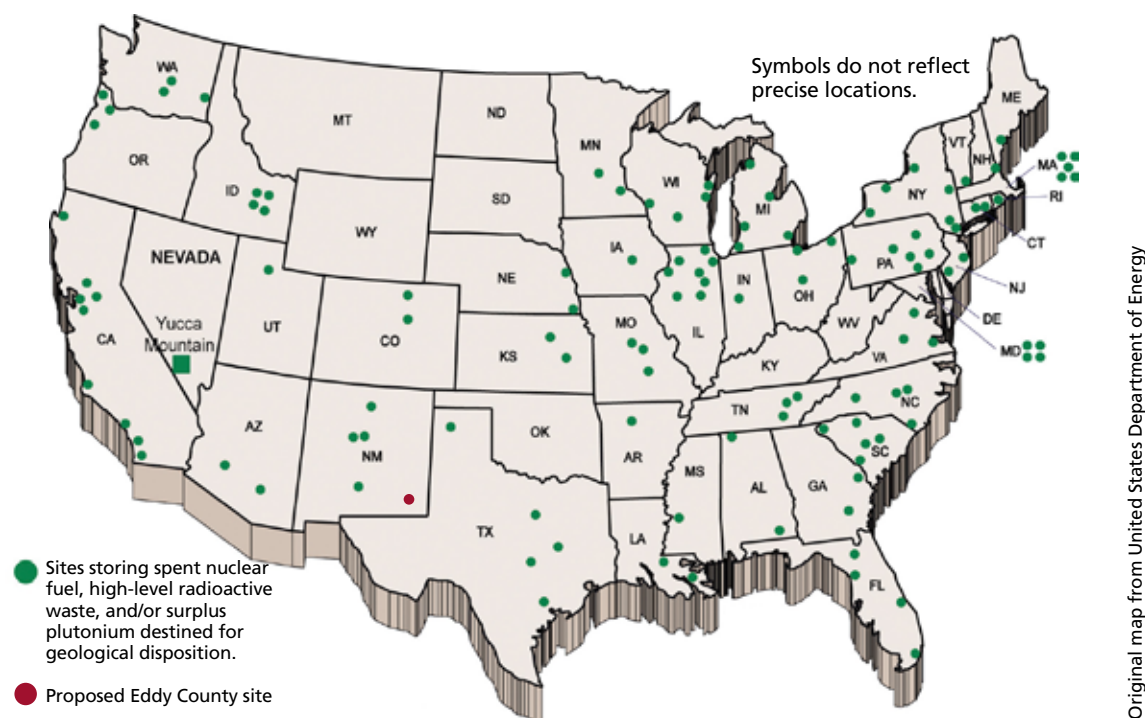
Making ELEA's case to the federal government will mean convincing the DOE that there's local consensus favoring the facility, backed up by the existing nuclear storage presence. For 13 years, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) has stored clothing, tools,

sludge and soil contaminated with manmade radioactive elements from defense sites. The materials are stored nearly a half mile underground in a salt formation, and most can be stored in barrels and moved by hand, the remainder must be handled by machinery.

"Everyone has grown accustomed to nuclear shipments around here, and people welcome it," Volpato said. "When WIPP was proposed, I was skeptical. The more I learned and saw it in action, though, I became a convert."

He said ELEA and Eddy County haven't received the kind of backlash he expected to news of

Nuclear Waste Locations in the U.S.A.



the plans, a response he attributes to the county's track record with nuclear material storage.

The proposed storage facility would be above ground. Much of ELEA's case for the storage facility's suitability piggy-backs on WIPP's qualifications—it's 40-plus miles from any population center, the area is seismically stable, there are no waterways nearby and few weather events that would threaten a storage facility.

"We try to answer questions and be transparent with residents. WIPP has really demonstrated what this could mean to Eddy County," Volpato said. "We saw Carlsbad transformed by the white-collar workers who moved in."

Though the land is entirely within Eddy County, Lea County Administrator Mike Gallagher said his residents are generally familiar and comfortable with WIPP's nearby operations and favor the ELEA's efforts.

"These projects maintain stringent safety standards, provide quality high-paying jobs, and the communities have demonstrated strong support for these projects," he said.

Former state Rep. John Heaton is serving as the chairman of ELEA's board. He said before the ELEA tries to get an NRC license, it will have to win the state's endorsement. That will involve a strong education and public relations effort, which again will rely heavily on WIPP's success.

The Blue Ribbon Commission report attributes failures to place a storage facility to state opposition. Yucca Mountain had support from Nye, Mineral and Lincoln counties, but significant outcry from the rest

of Nevada and was opposed by U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.)

"Even where local communities or tribal governments have supported a proposed facility, states have often been opposed," the report said.

Reaching a host agreement with the state would likely have stipulations, Heaton said.

"The state will probably want incentives," he said. "What those will be I couldn't tell you. Maybe direct dollars, maybe a new research (facility) being placed in New Mexico."

Congress must also fund an interim storage facility, and Senate bills to that effect by Lisa Murkowski (D-Alaska) and Diane Feinstein (D-Calif.) died this year.

Heaton said he imagined other regions were eyeing this opportunity, but he didn't know of any, specifically, who had pursued it to the extent that Eddy and Lea counties have.

An NRC spokeswoman was also unfamiliar with any pending proposals.

"We need to clean up the back end of the start of our nuclear age," Heaton said. "We can take advantage of the economies of scale and stop storing nuclear materials in a power plants all over the country. A storage facility is going to be open in the near future—it should be in southeastern New Mexico."

**See this story online at www.naco.org/countynews to read the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future's report to the Department of Energy and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's licensing requirements*

NACo seeks member ambassadors

Veterans share experience with new NACo members!

The NACo Ambassador Program helps new and existing member counties become more familiar with NACo by pairing county officials and staff with an experienced ambassador. The ambassadors will share their experience and help county officials and staffs to better understand what NACo has to offer and how to maximize participation in NACo.

Whether it's participating in exclusive member-benefit programs, attending conferences and steering committee meetings or using the NACo website to find a grant, a NACo Ambassador can help county officials and staff get their bearings, while creating great networking opportunities with their colleagues.

The ambassador also aids NACo staff with welcoming new NACo

member counties and retaining existing counties by speaking of member exclusive benefits and services, legislative affairs and upcoming NACo activities and events.

Cindy Bobbitt, Grant County, Okla. commissioner, is a NACo Ambassador and active in her role to bring NACo and its programs to the attention of elected officials and staff.

"As county officials, we each make choices: We can stay in our own environment and let county government continue as is, or we can get involved and make county government stronger and better. NACo is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Being an involved member in NACo allows county officials to do just

that," Bobbitt said.

"In particular, NACo Ambassadors help establish quality first impressions with county officials and county staff to ensure these new officials receive information to help solve issues back home, save money for taxpayers and become better prepared public servants," she continued. "In short, NACo Ambassadors help fill the gap and get people connected. I am honored to serve as a NACo Ambassador. This organization has prestige and strength, and I hope members will take advantage of the many opportunities it offers."

To volunteer to be an ambassador or to sign up to speak with an ambassador, please contact Ilene Goldberg, membership coordinator, at 888.407.NACo (6226) ext. 291, or igoldberg@naco.org.



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Hospital food pantry offers prescription for hunger

By **CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON**
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

WEB* CONTENT An apple a day keeps the doctor away, or so the saying goes. Now, Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) in Minnesota has a new prescription: Take two bags of groceries and call me in the morning.

The county-owned hospital has launched a Therapeutic Food Pharmacy to better serve patients identified through its clinics as “food-insecure.” The USDA defines food security as access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.

“Seeing children and their families go hungry is preventable,” said Linda Carson, who coordinates the hospital’s program. “We make sure to keep an eye out for signs that a family needs food.”

The pharmacy dispenses only healthful foods to low-income



Photo Courtesy of Linda Carson

A staff member looks on as Eugenia Aicacer (r) gives her 15-month-old son Luis Alex a dried cherry to try after receiving it at the Hennepin County Medical Center’s Therapeutic Food Pharmacy.

patients referred by doctors at the hospital’s clinics and is funded by grants and donations provided to the hospital and county. The program differs from other food pantry models. Instead of having kids and their families shop at a pantry like a grocery store, the

clinic provides pre-packed bags with foods that meet nutritional standards. Families are not restricted as to how many times they can receive food from the pharmacy and are also free to go to other food pantries.

HCMC’s food pharmacy was launched in May 2009 with the support of Second Harvest Heartland’s food bank and the surrounding community. It’s believed to be the only food pantry inside a county hospital.

Starting with the hospital’s pediatric clinic, the food pharmacy gradually expanded its services based on recommendations by medical staff about which populations were most at-risk. It grew out of a clinic project that focused on encouraging families to incorporate canned fruits and vegetables into their diet — no easy task where some immigrant populations are concerned.

“Many people who are from outside the U.S. are wary of canned goods due to the fact they lived in an area what they were warned against them,” Carson added. “Fresh food was the norm year-round so it takes some getting used to.”

Program costs vary with availability of donated foods but range between \$3.50 and \$5 per household, and the pharmacy serves between 1,200 and 2,000 families a month. So far in 2012, the food pharmacy has distributed 4,000–10,000 pounds of food in pre-sorted bags to about 61 families per week.

The program also features a demonstration kitchen where those visiting the pharmacy can learn how to cook healthy foods and control portion sizes.

“The program has enhanced access to healthful foods among low-income families, generated high levels of satisfaction among them and improved the diet and overall health of those served,” said Joni Geppert, registered dietitian and research evaluator, department of pediatrics, Hennepin County Medical Center.

**For links to a slide presentation and more information about the Therapeutic Food Pharmacy, see this article online at www.naco.org/countynews.*

Mentees learn inner workings of county parks and recreation

By **CHARLES TAYLOR**
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

WEB* CONTENT If Mecklenburg County, N.C. was looking for a standard bearer for its “Recreation Employment Corp” program, it need look no further than Kenyon Smitherman.

The 17-year-old high school senior is about to complete the 40-week REC program that pairs teens with mentors on the staff of the county’s Park and Recreation Department. The mentees are paid minimum wage, \$7.25 per hour, for up to 10 hours of work per week.

One of the program’s goals is to expose the youths to career options in the field of parks and recreation, and provide them “an opportunity to visualize the future.”

Kenyon, as a result of the program, is now visualizing the futures of others — as well as considering a different one for himself.

“Originally, I was thinking that I wanted to pursue a career in academia,” he said. “But recently, I’ve been focusing on more public service, possibly working with a nonprofit organization or working in the government sector — just trying to help make the next generation have a better future.”

He credits his experience with

the REC program, in part, for his shift of focus.

“Working with my coworkers and just seeing how dedicated they were to helping all the kids move forward — and have really just great experiences in childhood — it really inspired me to try to do the same,” Kenyon said.

He is one of 20 teens ages 14 to 17 participating in the program that began last February. It is designed to help local youths gain “valuable first-time work experience and positive life skills.” Each is paired with a recreation facility manager from centers throughout the state’s most populous county, home to Charlotte.

The program is designed to “empower at-risk youths to make positive life choices and maximize their personal potential,” according to its mission statement. “Our recreation centers, the majority of them, are in areas that have communities and teens that are really in need of mentoring,” said Lola Massad, division director, community and recreation services. Many of the teens live within walking distance of the centers at which they work.

Park and Recreation staff recruited potential candidates — mostly teens already active in Park and Recreation programs — and

developed an application process that included a written essay and an in-person interview. Sixty teens applied.

Makayla Bowe was one of them, though she didn’t think she nailed her interview. Marquisha Clayburn, her mentor, begs to differ. She is facility manager at the county’s Revolution Park Sports Academy.

“Most of them, it was their first time ever interviewing for a position,” Clayburn explained. “They were a little nervous, especially Makayla. She did a great job in the interview; she answered the questions very well, was confident, even though she thinks she wasn’t... and that was one of the reasons we hired her.”

The two found they have a lot in common. Makayla has hoop dreams and wants to go to college and play basketball — and eventually become a nurse anesthetologist. Clayburn, who played basketball in college, can relate. In addition to exposing Makayla to the inner workings of parks and recreation, she gives her mentee basketball advice. “That’s one of the things we work on and we get to talk about all the time,” she said, as Makayla job-shadows her mentor.

See **MENTEES** page 9

Word Search

Harford County, Md. Facts

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

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

- ABERDEEN IRONBIRDS** (minor league baseball team)
- ÆGIS** (local newspaper)
- BALTIMORE** (adjacent county, Harford formed from)
- BEL AIR** (county seat)
- BUSH** (declaration that was precursor to the American Revolution)
- CECIL** (adjacent county)
- CHESAPEAKE** (county sits at headwaters)
- HAVRE DE GRACE** (city in Harford once considered for U.S. capital)
- HENRY HARFORD** (last proprietary Gov. of Maryland; county is named after)
- KENT** (adjacent county)
- LANCASTER** (adjacent Pa. county)
- MARYLAND** (state county is in)
- MEISSNER** (county resident and figure skater in 2006 Olympics)
- YORK** (adjacent Pa. county)

Created by Christopher Johnson

Teens job-shadow park and rec employees

MENTEES from page 8



Photo courtesy of Mecklenburg County, N.C.

Terri Stowers (standing), Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation, listens during a class for mentees, each of whom is paired with a parks and rec employee.

"She's a hustle box," Clayburn said of her mentee's ability on the court — and likely off as well.

Calandra Barnes mentors a teen at West Charlotte Recreation Center, where she is facility manager. She believes the REC program is giving kids a "behind-the-scenes" look at the world of recreation and parks, and sense that recreation staff does more than "just get out balls and play."

"It definitely creates an awareness of the planning process and implementing the programs, and how we advertise and how we work and do our community service as well as our customer service," she said. "Sometimes people are not very familiar with why we do the things that we do and how we run as a business."

For Massad, all signs indicate that the REC program has been a success. "This first go of it, we had a budget and enough funding to do 20 teens," she said. "The Board of County Commissioners felt like this program was very successful and wanted to expand it. We're expanding it this next round to 44 teens." And next year, the mentors will include recreation specialists, not just facility managers.

She believes the program could easily be duplicated in other counties, with or without paying the mentees. But she says the compensation buys commitment from the teens. "It gives them the resources to be able to get some confidence... as they approach the time to get into the job market."

Whether Kenyon Smitherman came in with confidence or acquired it, he has turned into a great ambassador for the program.

"A lot of times when we see the kids that come inside the rec center, we see so much hope and so much promise and so much potential," he said. "And I feel like that's really why we're all here — because we're all trying to help them get to that point in their life where they can make a difference in the world, and where they can really just change the world for the better."

He is confident that recreation might be the key that helps him unlock that potential in others.

**See the online version of this story at www.naco.org/countynews for a Mecklenburg County-produced video about the REC program.*

Green Government Initiative gets new board appointees



NACo President Chris Rodgers has appointed seven new county members to serve on the advisory board of the association's Green Government Initiative, a national effort to assist the nation's counties in developing and implementing environmentally sound programs and practices.

The new appointees are:

- Keith Carson, supervisor, Alameda County, Calif.
- Audrey Edmonson, commissioner, vice chair, Miami-Dade County, Fla.
- Burrell Ellis, chief executive officer, DeKalb County, Ga.

- Doug Hill, executive director, County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania

- Peter McLaughlin, commissioner, Hennepin County, Minn.

- Victoria Reinhardt, commissioner, Ramsey County, Minn. and
- Dennis Sandquist, director of planning and development, McHenry County, Ill.

NACo's Green Government Initiative Advisory Board consists of 26 county members and 18 corporate sponsors, who work cooperatively to spearhead development of the national program to assist counties in "going green."

The Green Government Initiative, launched in 2007, serves as a

comprehensive resource for county governments on all things "green," including energy, green building, climate protection, air quality, transportation, land use, water quality, purchasing and recycling. Through the Green Government Initiative, NACo provides education and outreach to counties on sustainability strategies, and directs them to corporate and organizational partners that can offer green services and products.

**See this story online at www.naco.org/countynews to access more information about NACo's Green Government Initiative and how your county can get going green.*

NACCED elects officers, directors at 37th Annual Conference

Jack Exler, deputy director, Allegheny County, Pa. Department of Economic Development, is the new president of the National Association for County Community and Economic Development, or NACCED, a NACo affiliate. He was elected during the affiliate's 37th Annual County Community and Economic Development and Training, Sept. 30–Oct. 3 in Orange County (Orlando), Fla.

Also elected at the Annual Awards Luncheon was Tony Agliata, assistant planning director for Ocean County, N.J. as vice president and W. Keith McNeely Sr., director of human and economic development for Athens-Clark County, Ga. as secretary-treasurer. Frank Newton, community development administrator for Cobb County, Ga. was re-elected to a one-year term as NACCED's representative to the NACo Board of Directors.

In workshops and general sessions, NACCED members explored topics such as housing and economic trends, housing policy beyond 2012, overcoming obstacles to redevelopment, fair housing, foreclosure prevention, and restoring urban and suburban neighborhoods after the housing crisis.

Among the many speakers was former Sen. Mel Martinez (R-Fla.) who served as HUD secretary in the first administration of President George W. Bush. He currently serves as co-chair

of the Bipartisan Policy Center's Housing Commission. Martinez was introduced by his son, John, a member of the Orange County, Fla. Board of Commissioners.

In other action: Brian Paulson, community development coordinator, Clark County, Nev., who served as NACCED president for the past year, became immediate past president and a member of the executive committee.

Darryl Holmes, planner for

sustainable initiatives for Cook County, Ill.'s Bureau of Economic Development, was elected to a two-year term on NACCED's board. Reelected to two-year terms on the board were Norma Drummond, deputy commissioner, Westchester County, N.Y. Planning Department; Christy Moffett, CDBG project planning manager, Travis County, Texas; and Karen Wiley, community development coordinator for Salt Lake County, Utah.



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County police create app geared to school safety

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

A school shooting in Baltimore County, Md. on opening day prompted the police chief of neighboring Anne Arundel County to ask what his department was doing to ensure students' safety.

Lt. J.D. Batten Jr. is the school safety unit commander for the Anne Arundel County Police Department. He said Chief Larry Tolliver asked him what he'd like to do that hadn't been tried before, urging him to be as creative as possible.

"I said I wanted to try to get us as school resource officer personnel more involved with our students in the social media environment, the Internet-based environment and the textual environment," Batten said.

Less than two months after the Aug. 27 shooting, which the victim survived, Batten unveiled a new smartphone app Oct. 15 that students can use to anonymously report bullying, threats of violence or other safety concerns. It's called

AACoPD Speak Out.

"Kids will say things online in any kind of Internet-based medium or text medium that they just won't say in person," Batten said. That's not always a good thing since those media also can be used for the very behavior — such as cyberbullying — the app is designed to help address. "But there's a flip side to that same coin. We believed that there was probably the chance that they may say something positive or preventative about a friend in trouble if they didn't actually have to pick up the phone and talk to a live person," he added.

According to a recent Nielsen survey, 58 percent of teenagers between 13 and 17 years old own a smartphone.

The free app currently works on Android devices, and Batten expects an iPhone version to be available soon. In the meantime, a mobile Web app is available that doesn't need to be downloaded.

It allows users to quickly email School Resource Unit (SRU) officers and supervisors with any questions, concerns or notifications about at-



risk behavior. Students are being encouraged to "speak out" when they or a friend are being bullied; when they know someone needs help or when they know someone is threatening others online.

Batten and two school resource unit sergeants screen the incoming messages; armed with this information, SRU personnel can work proactively with school officials and other stakeholders to try to head off

dangerous behavior.

"Teenagers want to do the right thing," said Bob Mosier, a spokesman for Anne Arundel schools, "they just don't want other people to know they're doing it. We view this as another tool in the toolbox of communications, and it's a tool that meets students where they are using technology they're already comfortable with."

Bob Yatsuk is the school division's supervisor of school security. He said the app complements a toll-free anonymous tip hotline the school system has had for the past six years. "This is just a continued effort in the process of cooperating with our local agencies," he said.

Using an "added-value business mindset," the app was developed in-house at a cost of "less than \$1,000," Batten said, by Cpl. William Davis, a tech-savvy school resource officer who is the School Resource Unit's go-to guy on social media issues. Batten said he initially considered using Facebook or Twitter to solicit tips from students, but Davis recognized them as more challenging media for maintaining anonymity.

While the app clearly states it is not an emergency response system, Batten believes it provides students a way to provide information to authorities that might otherwise have never been disclosed.

"This is not a 9-1-1 immediate response system," he said. "We also say clearly we cannot assure you 100 percent confidentiality, but we'll do everything we can by law to assure confidentiality."

In addition to students' ability to send tips through the app, the app can push messages to users. It also includes links to various health, counseling and social services provided by the county and schools.

Batten said the app has already been downloaded about 200 times since its launch, and he's received an inquiry about it from Kansas City.

"I've told people I'm not sure what direction this is going to go. I'm not 100 percent sure that if we build it they will come," Batten said. "But I do know that if you don't try, you'll never find out."

For more information about the app, contact Batten at dbatten@aacounty.org.

More than a dozen current county officials vying for House seats

CANDIDATES from page 1

Wisconsin's 2nd Congressional District, while Thompson served as President George W. Bush's HHS secretary from 2001 to 2005 and was Wisconsin's 42nd governor.

In a race where the incumbent is heavily favored, Albany County, Wyo. Commissioner Tim Chestnut (D) is challenging Sen. John Barrasso (R), who is seeking his second term. Barrasso currently chairs the Senate Republican Policy Committee.

In House races, at least 13 currently serving county officials have set their course for a congressional seat. Lee County, Ala. Commissioner John Harris (D) hopes to unseat five-term incumbent Mike Rogers (R), himself a former Calhoun County commissioner. When Rogers was first elected to the county commission at 28, he was the youngest person and first Republican to serve. Harris was first elected to the Lee County Commission in 1994. They are vying for Alabama's 3rd District spot.

In California's 3rd Congressional District, Colusa County Supervisor and Republican Kim Vann is challenging incumbent Democrat John Garamendi. Vann is a member of NACo's Rural Action Caucus and served as a vice chair in 2011.

John Travaglione (R), the chair of California's 7,200 square-mile Riverside County and a former NACo board and steering committee member, is seeking to capture an open seat in California's redrawn 41st District. He faces Democrat Mark Takano.

When U.S. Rep. Mike Pence (R-Ind.) decided to run for governor, the 6th District opened up for two challengers. Delaware County Council Member-at-Large Bradley Bookout (D) is taking on Republican Luke Messer, a former congressional staffer. This is Messer's third run for a House seat.

Elected as Lewis County, Ky. judge-executive in 2010, Thomas Massie resigned from the office in June of this year to devote more time to the 4th District race where he faces Bill Adkins (D). The seat was vacated by retiring Rep. Geoff Davis (R).

John Ewing (D), Douglas County, Neb. treasurer, is a long shot, according to press reports, in his race against seven-term Republican Lee Terry in Nebraska's 2nd District.

Nassau County, N.Y. Legislator Fran Becker (R) is making his second run at the 4th District seat now held by eight-term congresswomen Carolyn McCarthy. In New York's Southern Tier, Nate Shinagawa

(D), Tompkins County Legislature vice chair, is squaring off against one-term Republican Tom Reed in a mostly rural, redrawn 23rd Congressional District. Shinagawa is a vocal opponent of hydraulic fracturing — or fracking — while Reed strongly supports natural gas exploration as one tonic for the area's struggling economy.

The redrawn 9th District in North Carolina has been held by Republicans since 1963, most recently by Rep. Sue Myrick who is retiring. Mecklenburg County Commissioner Jennifer Roberts (D) is competing for the now-open seat against Republican Robert Pittinger. Roberts served as the county board chair from 2006 to 2011 and was a member of NACo's Large Urban County Caucus Steering Committee. Pittinger is a real estate investor and former state senator.

In his second term as a Washington County, Pa. commissioner and the current board chair, Larry Maggi (D) is challenging incumbent Tom Murphy (R) in Pennsylvania's 18th District. Maggi is running as a conservative Democrat against the five-term incumbent.

Shelby County, Tenn. Commissioner George Flinn (R) is taking a second crack at a House seat in his race against incumbent Steve Cohen

(D) in the state's 9th District. Flinn, who owns Flinn Broadcasting with 40 radio and TV stations across the country, also ran in 2010 for the Republican nomination in the 8th Congressional District. Coincidentally, Cohen served two years on the Shelby County Commission in the 1980s.

The scramble for the new 10th District seat in Washington features Pierce County Councilman Richard Muri (R) challenging Democrat Denny Hack. Both men had made previous runs for House office in 2010: Muri was defeated in his bid for the 9th District seat, while Heck lost his race to represent the 3rd District.

Third try may be a charm for Snohomish County, Wash. Commissioner John Koster (R). Koster,

who is serving his third term on the commission, ran for Congress in 2000 and 2010. An active NACo member who has served on the NACo board and steering committees, Koster faces retired Microsoft executive Suzan DelBene (D) for a chance to represent the newly redrawn 1st District. The race for the 1st has been called one of most expensive in the country.

Also in Washington State, a former King County councilman, Robert McKenna (R), is being hailed as the best chance for Republicans to regain the governor's mansion in nearly 30 years. He faces retired U.S. Rep. Jay Inslee in his bid.

Christopher Johnson, editorial assistant, contributed to this report.

Ask questions and get information from NACo staff. Visit www.NACo.org and click in the upper right corner.

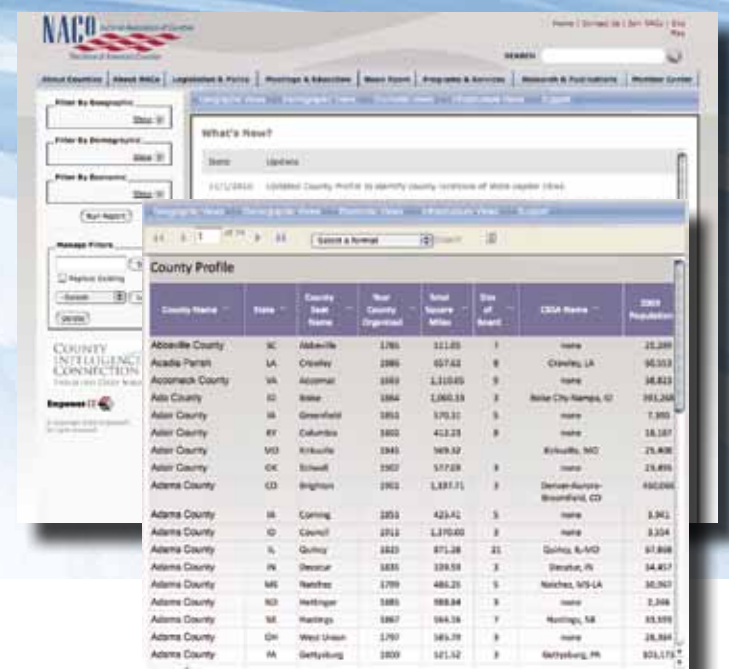
COUNTY INTELLIGENCE CONNECTION

TARGETED DATA SOLUTIONS

NACo's County Intelligence Connection (CIC) online service makes analysis easy, providing a range of geographic, demographic, economic and infrastructure related data at the county level.

Access updated data on county revenues and expenditures, jails, libraries and full-time employees. Coming soon ... information on law enforcement services and justice systems.

To see the full range of information, visit www.NACo.org. Click on "County Intelligence Connection (CIC)" under the Research & Publications tab.*



The screenshot shows the NACo County Intelligence Connection (CIC) online service interface. It includes a search bar, navigation tabs, and a 'County Profile' table. The table lists various counties with their respective data points.

County Name	State	County Seat	Year County Organized	Total Square Miles	Size of County	CSA Name	2009 Population
Abbeville County	SC	Abbeville	1786	321.85	1	none	25,289
Acadia Parish	LA	Croftley	1886	657.62	9	Croftley, LA	95,353
Accomack County	VA	Accomack	1669	3,310.65	9	none	38,822
Ada County	ID	Boise	1884	1,060.15	2	Boise City-Nampa, ID	191,268
Adair County	IA	Greenfield	1852	575.31	5	none	7,393
Adair County	NY	Columbia	1802	423.23	9	none	18,187
Adair County	MO	Warrensburg	1843	369.52	9	Warrensburg, MO	29,436
Adair County	OK	Schwell	1902	577.28	9	none	21,891
Adams County	CO	Brighton	1902	1,337.71	3	Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, CO	690,098
Adams County	IA	Corning	1851	429.42	5	none	5,342
Adams County	ID	Coeur d'Alene	1912	1,876.60	9	none	9,204
Adams County	IL	Quincy	1823	871.38	21	Quincy, IL-MO	97,898
Adams County	PA	Gettysburg	1835	339.58	3	Gettysburg, PA	34,417
Adams County	MS	Natchez	1789	486.25	5	Natchez, MS-AL	30,267
Adams County	ND	Hettinger	1885	888.84	9	none	2,368
Adams County	NE	Hastings	1867	964.38	7	Hastings, NE	33,399
Adams County	OH	West Union	1790	384.78	9	none	28,894
Adams County	PA	Gettysburg	1800	521.32	9	Gettysburg, PA	35,175

*Subscriptions are available for non-members.

Model Programs From the Nation's Counties

Anoka County, Minn.

Students Help County Build a House

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Book smarts alone without practical experience aren't enough to get you hired these days, but in Anoka County, Minn. students are getting a chance to improve their odds.

Architecture students from Anoka Hennepin Technical College helped plan a new house slated to replace a demolished structure as part of a neighborhood stabilization effort. The county has been using federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program money since 2008 to buy foreclosed properties at a discount — 60 so far.

Teacher Jay Boyle appreciates the opportunity his students received.

"Most students don't get a chance to do real stuff like that," he said. "They were second-year students, so they had spent plenty of time in the classroom, and the county gave them a lot of freedom."

His 16 students submitted plans that they either drew from scratch or adapted from existing house plans. Boyle narrowed their entries down to six, from which the county staff chose one.

The county handled the demolition of the old house while



Architecture students from Anoka Hennepin Technical College tour the construction site of a house they designed in Anoka County, Minn.



Photos courtesy of Anoka Hennepin Technical College

the students got to work creating blueprints. They would see how different features and design schemes would affect that house's cost. In addition, they learned how local ordinances would affect the project — how far the house must be set back from the road, for example.

"We kept the driveway, so that, plus the setbacks made it a challenge for the students," said Kate Thunstrom, the county's community development manager. "Throughout the project we were

pretty much having them work backward from specifications we had in place."

The project was charged with being as sustainable as possible, which Boyle said allowed the students to try "green" concepts they had discussed in class.

"They figured out how to orient the windows to make efficient use of solar energy, and they knew to put the garage on the northern side of the house to buffer it from the wind."

Thunstrom said as lots become available for similar rebuilds, the county wants to continue to work with the school to repeat this project.

"We have to balance it with the real estate market and timing," she said. "We had the lot available when the students were working on two-story buildings, so it fit together well. When it comes to doing another one, we'll have to look at what stage the students are in — whether they'll be designing

single- or double-story houses."

Involving the students in the design process added no costs to the \$267,204 total for rebuilding the houses, a price tag that included property acquisition, demolition and site preparation and the construction contract. Those costs were covered by the Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

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

More statewide and local referenda affect counties

REFERENDUM from page 1

required to continue paying local governments for the responsibilities they assumed in 2011, and to pay all or part of the costs associated with future federal and state law changes and court cases, according to David Liebler, the director of public affairs for the California State Association of Counties.

Proposition 31 establishes a two-year budget cycle, which allows local governments to alter how laws governing state-funded programs apply to them. In short, if a county is charged with providing a service, it can choose how to do so and gives them the money to do so, unless it runs afoul of state law. The Legislature or relevant state agency would be able to veto that change within 60 days.

Proposition 34 would outlaw

capital punishment in California, which would indirectly save counties money. Counties foot the bill for indigent defense, and appeals in death penalty cases are extensive and expensive.

Colorado has a measure on its ballot that would decriminalize and tax non-medical marijuana, allowing local governments to opt out of allowing its sale.

"This would basically treat marijuana like alcohol in the regulatory scheme it sets up," said Eric Bergman, policy and research supervisor at Colorado Counties, Inc. Even if counties opt out, the measure would still permit growth, possession and use in the home.

"To be honest, no one expects this measure to pass, but obviously we will be watching with considerable interest," Bergman said.

Washington and Oregon voters

will decide on similar measures.

Lawrence County, Ala. hopes Amendment 11 passes, which would prohibit municipalities outside of the county from imposing any ordinances inside the county. It would prevent parts of the county from being annexed by cities, a situation Probate Judge Mike Praytor said was attempted, and soundly defeated, in 2011.

Voters in Beaufort and Aiken counties in South Carolina may choose to change their counties' to the council-manager from the council-administrator form. That change would mean the county treasurers and auditors would be appointed, rather than elected.

Among other county referenda: Also in North Dakota, Walsh County will vote on granting equal custody in divorces, whenever both parents are judged fit.

Palm Beach County, Fla. voters could approve slot machines at the Palm Beach Kennel Club dog track.

McLean County, Ill. could end up eliminating its recorder's office, transferring its functions to its county clerk's office.

McHenry County, Ill. will vote on changing to an executive form of government.

Smith County, Texas voters could decide to allow alcohol sales

in their county.

The Oct. 8 *County News* article on ballot items improperly described Arizona's Proposition 115. The proposition makes various changes to the judicial branch and the Commission on Appellate Court Appointments.

**See this story at www.naco.org/countynews to view more information these ballot measures.*

WEB 
CONTENT

When you see the "web" icon in a story, there's more information available in the online edition of County News at www.naco.org/countynews. Check it out!

Keep up with NACo online ...

www.naco.org



Green Purchasing Toolkit

Counties across the country are evaluating their purchasing strategies to find opportunities to save taxpayer money, reduce negative impacts on the environment, and find better performing products to provide vital services to communities.

NACo and its partners — U.S. Communities, the Responsible Purchasing Network, and Green Seal — developed an online toolkit to help America's counties reduce negative impacts on the environment without compromising on cost or performance.

The Green Purchasing Toolkit contains resources and case studies which illustrate how counties are already purchasing green products and actually saving money through lower upfront costs, reduced operating costs, and avoiding substantial costs associated with hazardous material disposal.

www.naco.org/greenkit



News From the Nation's Counties

► ALABAMA

A federal bankruptcy judge has denied the city of Birmingham's request to block **JEFFERSON COUNTY** from **closing the emergency room** of its money-losing public hospital. The county filed a \$4.23 billion bankruptcy nearly a year ago, and says it can no longer afford to cover the 319-bed county hospital's losses of \$10 million a year.

The county proposes to replace Cooper Green Mercy Hospital's emergency department with an urgent care facility and provide indigent care through outpatient clinics, Reuters reported. Patients needing in-patient care could be sent to other hospitals, which the county would reimburse.

► CALIFORNIA

Hoping to curb waistline expansion, **LOS ANGELES COUNTY** launched a **new public health campaign** aimed at helping residents control their portion sizes.

"Choose Less, Weigh Less" aims to raise awareness about recommended calorie limits and to get residents to consume fewer calories. The campaign will educate residents about how they can take small steps to make significant changes in their health.

According to new data, nearly 24 percent of county residents were obese in 2011, a 74 increase since 1997.

County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky said lost productivity and health care expenditures were costing the county \$6 billion annually, according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

The campaign will include advertisements on buses, billboards, television, radio and social media. The county also plans to work with restaurants to get them to offer smaller portions. In addition, public health officials are researching other options such as taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages or bans on certain larger-sized drinks.

► FLORIDA

PALM BEACH COUNTY stores could soon be banned from selling **herbal incense, synthetic marijuana and bath salts** used by some people to get high.

The commissioners approved a plan to ban the sale or display of the synthetic substances, saying that state laws have not been able to keep them off of store shelves and out of the hands of young people. The substances are sold at many gas stations and convenience stores. Law enforcement officials say side effects can include hallucinations that last for days.



► NEW MEXICO

SANTA FE COUNTY Commissioner Liz Stefanics (l) and others watch as a newly opened section of the **Santa Fe Rail Trail** receives its first official visitors, (l-r) Kensie Baker and Michelle Morath. The 1.7-mile segment cost \$771,281 and runs along the Santa Fe Southern Railway between the Santa Fe Depot and Lamy, N.M. The county will construct five more segments as funding becomes available.

State lawmakers passed laws the past two years banning bath salts, but local officials say manufacturers have continued to find ways to keep the items on the shelves, by changing ingredients or marking the packages with a warning that they are not intended for human consumption.

Store owners, managers and agents that violate the ban will face a fine of up to \$500 and up to 60 days in jail.

► ILLINOIS

COOK COUNTY Board President Toni Preckwinkle's \$2.95 billion budget proposal includes a **\$25 tax on each firearm** and a **nickel for every bullet** sold by the county's 40 federally-licensed gun dealers.

Law enforcement officials would be exempt. Preckwinkle told the *Chicago Tribune* the county would use the money to help pay for medical care for gunshot victims, to reduce the number of weapons on the street and address a serious shortfall in next year's budget — roughly \$100 million.

The proposal also includes a new 1.25 percent tax on merchandise worth more than \$2,500 purchased outside Cook that's brought into the county, a \$800 tax on every slot and video poker machine in the

county, and a cigarette tax increase of a dollar per pack.

► KANSAS

The **SEDGWICK COUNTY** Zoo is encouraging donations of **unwanted tropical and perennial plants**.

Each year, the zoo uses donated plants in several locations across its property to enhance the experiences of animals and visitors. Plants are often placed in the jungle, the Downing Gorilla Forest and the Koch Orangutan and Chimpanzee Habitat.

Large ficus and hibiscus trees are used in the zoo's holding barn for perching birds. Others are divided and grown to multiply into more plants, the *Wichita Eagle* reported.

► MARYLAND

Owners of **pet cemeteries** in **BALTIMORE COUNTY** will have to notify customers of plans to sell or lease their graveyards for development under legislation passed by the County Council.

It requires pet cemetery owners to publish a notice in a general-circulation newspaper of plans to develop a cemetery for any other purpose, and give written notice to every plot owner, the *Baltimore Sun* reported.

If the owner of a plot comes forward within 90 days, the cemetery owner must reimburse the customer for the cost of reburial or, if the plot hasn't been used yet, the cost of the plot.

► MINNESOTA

With the state looking at a proposed **constitutional amendment defining marriage** as between one man and one woman, the **ST. LOUIS COUNTY** Board of Commissioners acted first, voting to oppose the amendment.

It was the first county in the state to go on record with its opposition. So far, 13 city councils have done so, Minnesota Public Radio reported.

Supporters of the resolution said the amendment is discriminatory and deprives people of individual freedoms. Opponents argued it was inappropriate to take a stand on an issue over which the board has no authority.

► NEW YORK

Following up on his pledge to "re-invent" the county-owned Playland amusement park for the 21st century, **WESTCHESTER COUNTY** Executive Robert P. Astorino has announced a **"civic-commercial" partnership** that would broaden the park's appeal, strengthen its

financial position and preserve its family-friendly atmosphere.

Astorino recently signed a letter of intent with Sustainable Playland Inc., a not-for-profit organization based in Rye that has assembled a team of amusement, sports, restaurant and park operators to finalize an agreement to manage the 100-acre waterfront property overlooking the Long Island Sound.

He called the attraction "one of the most beautiful pieces of property anywhere, whose amusement park has become an untenable drain on county taxpayers."

The historic amusement park will remain. Sustainable Playland has committed to making an initial investment of \$34 million in capital improvements to the existing park and adding new elements.

► NORTH CAROLINA

ALAMANCE COUNTY is assessing its options for developing a **historic preservation plan** that would identify and preserve structures and archaeological sites, according to the *Times-News*.

Over the next few months, the county's planning department will determine if grants are available to develop the plan. County Planner Jessica Hill told the County Board of Commissioners the plan could be funded in-house, through grants or using a hybrid approach. The county currently doesn't have a historic preservation plan.

► OHIO

• Now that developers in Nashville have abandoned plans for a Medical Trade Center, **CUYAHOGA COUNTY** has won the race to build the nation's first **"medical mart."**

The public-private project, which received \$465-million in taxpayer financing, includes a 1-million-square-foot convention center, *The Plain Dealer* reported. It is scheduled to open in July. The medical mart is designed to bring doctors and hospital administrators to Cleveland, to see new medical technology and take continuing education classes.

"I think we're sending a clear message to the industry that Cleveland is now going to be a player on the scale they didn't anticipate," Cuyahoga County Councilman Mike Gallagher said.

• **FRANKLIN COUNTY** has been awarded \$3 million from the state's Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund to transform a former garbage landfill into new space for retail, office and residential development.

Research News

Counties Offer Ways to Dispose of Medications



Residents across the country often wonder how to properly dispose of leftover prescription medicine. Leaving it in unlocked medicine cabinets can be a danger as more and more teens are abusing unused pills.

Throwing medications in the trash or flushing them down the toilets can harm the environment. In order to help residents with proper disposal, counties have launched programs to assist residents and educate them about the dangers of prescription drug abuse.

Fresno County, Calif. recently completed the first year of its campaign "Lock it Up, Clean it Out, Drop it Off." The program encouraged parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and any person that has children visiting their homes to ensure that unfinished prescription medicines were locked away or not easily accessible. Residents were encouraged to clean out unused medicine and drop it off at secure drop facilities

at county and city police stations. In the first year, the program collected more than 1,500 pounds of medicine.

"Today's results show we are making progress. Keeping these drugs out of the wrong hands, and having a safe and environmentally appropriate location to dispose of the drugs is instrumental in stopping the rising problem of prescription drug abuse among our teens," said Fresno County Sheriff Margaret Mims.

In addition to disposal boxes throughout the county, some counties also host disposal days for medications similar to other hazardous waste disposal days such as for paint or pesticides. For example, Cobb County, Ga. hosts medication disposal days to provide a safe and free method for residents to destroy their expired and leftover pharmaceuticals. County officials, with the assistance of a local health care facility and police, collected more than 3,000 pounds of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies during just two drop-off events. The items are placed in an incinerator



for 12 hours, not only destroying the drugs, but also preventing any toxic emissions from being released into the air.

In Macomb County, Mich., a new campaign was prompted by recession-driven household changes. For economic reasons, many children and grandchildren were moving back home with aging parents or relatives. Since seniors often take several medications daily and were not used to having teens in the house, medication theft and abuse became more prevalent.

The county Department of Senior Services noticed many seniors were missing prescription medications. In response, the department began an educational program for seniors on how to keep their medicines safe in a locked cabinet and how to dispose of the ones no longer needed. In addition, the program provided information on the signs of drug abuse and what to do if drug abuse is suspected. By partnering with nonprofits, schools and faith-based agencies, the county provided a targeted educational outreach to address a new problem.

Staff in Sarasota County, Fla. created a program called "Safe Rx: Campaign for Responsible Prescriptions" in order to tackle the issue of extra pills from a different angle. Partnering with 16 agencies and organizations from Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee and Sarasota counties, the campaign focused on educating local health care profes-

sionals about prescribing medications responsibly. Educational events were held throughout the area to train more than 450 medical professionals about the risks of over-prescribing medications and safe disposal methods.

The program was developed due to the local area ranking eighth in the state for unintentional poisoning deaths, which was the leading cause of death for in those aged 15–34 in Sarasota County. As a result of attending these educational sessions, medical providers in Sarasota County voluntarily registered for the Florida Prescription Drug Monitoring Program at the highest rate in the state.

**See this story at www.naco.org/countynews to learn about Alameda County, Calif.'s drug disposal ordinance.*

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

Utah county opposes threatened species listing

NEWS FROM *from page 14*

County commissioners recently approved a partnership with the city of Columbus and Wagenbrenner Development to begin the \$6.4 million clean-up of the site; the city and the developer are covering the rest of the costs.

Plans call for 200 new residential units and more than 265,000 square feet of commercial and retail space. The phased redevelopment of the site is expected to leverage \$18 million in private investment.

►UTAH

KANE COUNTY is "completely against" a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) proposal to designate 2,200 acres as "critical habitat" for the Coral Pink Sand Dunes tiger beetle, according to Commissioner Dirk Clayson.

"It will absolutely affect tourism recreation in our area," he said. "For Kane County, that's a pretty big issue," *The Salt Lake Tribune* reported.

A spokesman for FWS in Utah said labeling the beetle a "threatened" species won't preclude development or other man-made uses. However, it does mean that

any proposed use would have to be evaluated for its impact on the protected species.

Clayson said county officials question the FWS data that indicate the tiger beetle's numbers are dwindling.

►WASHINGTON

The ashes of 85 people will finally receive a "respectful" burial in YAKIMA COUNTY; their remains — five urns to a box — had been stored at the county coroner's office, some for nearly 20 years. The decedents had no money for burial, and no one came forward to claim their remains, *The Yakima Herald-Republic* reported. In Yakima County, indigent deaths make up fewer than 10 out of about 1,700 annually.

Before 1994, the state's health and social services department paid for funeral home services, and provided caskets and cemetery plots. But the program was a casualty of budget cuts.

(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.)

The H.R. Doctor Is In

Ernesto, Where Are You?

The HR Doctor, beautiful HR spouse Charlotte and incredible HR daughter Elyse were recently joined by three great friends for a seven-day cruise to Alaska. It was only the second time I had signed up for a cruise, partly out of a concern that the journey involved spending time with 4,000 of my closest friends in a confined space whether I wanted to or not.

The cruise experience, however, turned out to be very positive indeed. Certainly the scenery in Alaska was spectacular. The Mendenhall Glacier was spectacular. The whale watching was exciting. The bears on the shore as we sailed by performed well for us. Stunning mountain peaks, ocean ice floes and other wonders were lovingly displayed for us by Mother Nature.

The ship was beautiful and well maintained. It featured a seemingly endless supply of food and there were opportunities to kick back, relax and enjoy a bit of serenity. The dreaded 4,000-friend scenario never played out as I feared it might.

However, as I look back there is one feature of this cruise I particularly miss: a high degree of service and concern for our happiness and

enjoyment demonstrated by our cabin steward, Ernesto. He was quiet and always attentive. He knew our names and always greeted us with a friendly smile, always asking if there was anything he could do for us. On occasion after our cruise, I found myself wandering around our big house hoping that Ernesto would appear with a cup of coffee and some chocolate.

It is not the advertising alone that creates returning customers or satisfied citizens.

It is hard to overestimate the effect that quiet service excellence can have on running a successful business or government agency. It is not the advertising alone that creates returning customers or satisfied citizens. That status as a "returnee" is driven by recollections of the kind of encounters each of us had.

The legendary groaning and

eye-rolling which may accompany the need to visit a Department of Motor Vehicles or a county building department, may be greatly reduced or turned into a sincere smile if our recollection is marked by a caring and pleasant attitude by the organizations' representatives.

In the case of our Alaska cruise, it was not a matter of whether the Princess Cruise Line did a good job or had the flashiest ad. When the question is whether we will sail again with this company, the reality was that Ernesto was the company in our memory. We will likely engage this company again because of that experience.

The lessons for us as public administrators and elected or appointed officials are important indeed. Always value, recognize and seek out employees with a positive "How can I help you?" attitude and quiet competence. It is they who make for our success more than any factor of technology or advertised "pie-crust promises" — easily made, easily broken.

Phil Rosenberg

Phil Rosenberg
The HR Doctor • www.hrdr.net

Financial Services News

Idaho Launches NACo's Public Health Assessment and Wellness Tool

Idaho has become the first state to launch NACo's Network of Care for Public Health (NOCPH), a public health needs assessment tool, in each of its health districts and counties. The NOCPH provides elected policy makers and other community stakeholders with easy-to-use information about where their communities stand regarding key health indicators, using the best population-based health data available.

The Network of Care provides a state-of-the-art set of community health indicators in 170 categories, all customized for each health district and county. It also provides interactive geo-mapping across the state, comparing counties and indicators. The Network of Care was launched in September during the Idaho Association of Counties'

annual conference.

"This is really a fantastic new program, tailor-made for public health departments," said Carol Moehrle, district director of public health for the Idaho North Central District in Lewiston and past president of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). "We can now have a living report card built from all population health data sources on virtually every topic in health. Combined with model practices, trends and extensive supporting material, it makes an ideal platform for community health needs assessment and community planning."

County Health Rankings information and Healthy People 2020 goals are integrated into the platform, and heavy use is made of information available in HHS' Health Information Data Ware-

house. Data from other state and local sources is also used. The data is matched with suggested interventions and model practices to make it easier for local leaders to effect positive change. GIS technology is used to provide geographic overlays that allow analysis and comparisons to be made within and among jurisdictions. All of the information is then placed into a local Web portal in a format that is easy to use and understand.

Linda Langston, NACo's first vice president, was on hand for the event. "Idaho is a true leader," Lang-

ton said. "This joint effort between NACo, NACCHO and Trilogy is remarkable work that virtually every county can use immediately. The fact that it can be replicated to any county at a very low cost makes it a complete winner. I truly expect to see this as a national platform of local health information in the near future."

NOCPH is a project developed in partnership among NACo, NACCHO and Trilogy Integrated Resources. The concept was refined and improved through comments, ideas and suggestions made via the Community Health Data Initiative

of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

This program is available to any county and state in the country, and can be quickly and affordably replicated. You can learn more about the Network of Care program by visiting NACo's YouTube page www.youtube.com/user/NACoVideo. To schedule a webcast demonstration, please contact Bruce Bronzan at 415.458.5900 or bronzan@trilogyr.com.

(Financial Services News was written by Jim Sawyer, director, NACo Financial Services Corporation.)

Job Market & Classifieds

► DIRECTOR OF FINANCE – COUNTY OF CUMBERLAND, MAINE

Salary: \$63,378–\$86,965 annually; DOQ.

This is professional services work in directing and overseeing the day to day operations of the finance department. This position is responsible for the financial management of County funds and is a key member of the leadership team for the County, including all new initiatives and innovations that are undertaken.

Required qualifications: Bachelor's Degree in Financial Management or closely related discipline. Master's Degree is highly desirable. Seven (7) to ten (10) years of directly related experience in financial management, preferably in the public sector. Three (3) years' experience in the management role in finance and/or accounting. Three (3) years' experience supervising staff. Salary range will be DOQ/E. Cumberland County offers an excellent benefit package including health and dental insurance and a choice of retirement plans.

Required application is available online at www.cumberlandcounty.org or requested by calling 207.775.6809 or may be picked up in person at Cumberland County Human Resources, 142 Federal Street, Portland, ME 04101. Applications must be received by Human Resources by 4 P.M. Nov. 1 for consideration. The County of Cumberland encourages diversity in its workforce. We are an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

► DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY – COUNTY OF CUMBERLAND, MAINE

Salary: \$63,378–\$86,965 annually; DOQ.

This is professional services work managing, developing, and maintaining a county-wide information system of hardware and software applications. Re-

sponsibilities include the leadership of an innovative research and development enterprise project to provide information management systems to interested municipal and school organizations in the region of Cumberland County.

Required qualifications: Associate's Degree in Computer Science or related field (Bachelor's Degree preferred). A combination of an Associate's Degree in computer science or related field and at least six (6) years of education, training and/or experience OR Bachelor's Degree with at least three (3) years' experience involving coordination, supervision, analysis, or project management of automated management information systems. Directly related experience may be substituted for the education requirement on a year for year basis. Demonstrated competence in managing an information system. Ability to coordinate with other organizations to accomplish goals, monitor progress and evaluate outcomes. Salary range will be DOQ/E. Cumberland County offers an excellent benefit package including health and dental insurance and a choice of retirement plans.

Required application is available online at www.cumberlandcounty.org, may be requested by calling 207.775.6809 or may be picked up at Cumberland County Human Resources, 142 Federal Street, Portland, ME 04101. Applications must be received by Human Resources by 4 P.M. Nov. 1, for consideration. The County of Cumberland encourages diversity in its workforce. We are an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

► LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR – FAIRFAX COUNTY, VA.

Salary: \$83,043–\$138,405 annually; DOQ.

Fairfax County has an exciting opportunity for an accomplished professional to serve as its Legislative

Director. As the principal liaison with state and federal legislative officials, the Director is the county's chief legislative spokesperson and lobbyist/advocate for the Board of Supervisor's initiatives and positions. He/she collaborates with others to affect influences on national and state policy positions to align with those of the county, and partners with other jurisdictions to identify and develop common legislative agendas for consideration by the Virginia General Assembly or Congress. The individual in this position is expected to essentially reside in Richmond for the duration of the annual legislative session of the Virginia General Assembly.

Requires: Any combination of education, experience and training equivalent to graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with course work that includes public administration, political science, communications, policy analysis or a related field; plus six (6) years of progressively responsible experience in federal and/or state government relations for a private non-profit or public entity.

To apply or to view full requirements and details, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/jobs.

What's in a Seal?

» Harford County, Md. www.harfordcountymd.gov



Harford County was formed in 1773 from the eastern part of Baltimore County. The county was named for Henry Harford, son of Frederick Calvert, sixth Baron Baltimore of Baltimore Manor in Ireland's County Longford. Harford served as the last Proprietary Governor of Maryland.

Havre de Grace, an incorporated city in Harford County, was once under consideration as the capital of the United States rather than Washington, D.C. It was favored for its strategic location at the top of the Chesapeake Bay since it would facilitate trade while being secure in time of war.

The Harford County seal was designed by George Van Bibber and adopted by the county commissioners on Sept. 28, 1964. In the accepted design, the shield is gold to symbolize the wealth of the county and the richness of its fields. Across the shield are waving bands of blue signifying three major county streams — Deer Creek, Bynum Run and Winters Run.

The crest is a two-handed forearm with one hand holding a white quill symbolizing the pen used by those who wrote and signed the Bush Declaration, which expressed support for the Patriot cause in the emerging American Revolution. The other hand holds a sword as if presenting the nation the skills of reproducing defense materials.

The motto "At the Risk of Our Lives and Fortunes" comprises the last eight words of the Bush Declaration and preserves the same spelling for "risk" that is used in that document.

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

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