

NACO National Association of Counties

CountyNews

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Some funding gets bump in short-term

By MARILINA SANZ
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

As County News went to press, the Senate was expected to complete its work on the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2013 (CR) late Saturday evening, Sept. 22. The measure, which would fund the federal government through March 27, 2013 and maintain 2012 funding levels for most programs, had already passed the House, Sept. 13. Some of highlights for counties include:

billion in the Budget Control Act disaster-designated funding. This funding provides relief and recovery efforts following disasters, such as the recent Hurricane Isaac.

Transportation

Transportation is one of the areas where there is a funding increase from FY12. All transportation programs, except the federal-aid highway program, receive a 0.612

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Disaster Relief

The bill continues funding for the FEMA Disaster Relief Fund at last year's level, including \$6.4

Sequester's impact varies

By MARILINA SANZ
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

On Friday, Sept. 14, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a preliminary report on the programs that would be affected by automatic program cuts known as sequestration. The cuts would be triggered Jan. 2, 2013 if Congress doesn't act to change the Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA).

BCA requires \$109 billion in deficit reduction a year, for a total of \$1.2 trillion in deficit reduction from FY13 to FY21. The annual amount is split equally between defense and non-defense spending, or \$54.66 billion each.

However, BCA also reduces Medicare spending by two percent, which brings the amount to be cut from non-defense programs to \$43.58 billion.

Not all non-defense programs would be reduced by the same percentage. Domestic discretionary programs of interest to counties, such as the Community Development Block Grant, would be cut by 8.2 percent. There is a second category of domestic programs, known as direct spending, that

See SEQUESTRATION page 8



Photo by Erik Johnston

Twenty county elected officials and staff participated in a White House Forum, "Building Blocks for Economic Development and Job Growth," on Sept. 19. The event focused on the role of the public sector in making strategic investments to support private sector job creation and economic opportunity.

Participants, including representatives from NACO and the National Association of Development Organizations, split into groups with federal officials to provide in-depth feedback on a number of topics.

Participating in a feedback session on Building Resiliency are (l-r): Rebecca Troutman, North Carolina Association of County Commissioners; Steve Etcher, Boonslick Regional Planning Commission, Warrenton, Mo.; Russell Cowley, Six County Association of Governments, Richfield, Utah; Angela Belden Martinez, senior advisor and director of external affairs, Economic Development Administration; NACO First Vice President Linda Langston, Linn County, Iowa; Council Member Greg Fox, Howard County, Md.; and Bob Fogel (with back to camera), NACO senior legislative director.

Read an extended report on the White House Forum in the online edition of County News, available Sept. 25, at www.naco.org/countynews.

SCAAP program change postponed for one year

By DALEN A. HARRIS
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) recently announced a one-year delay in its plan to eliminate the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) payments, announced May 2.

This is a major victory for many counties, who will not need to face major reductions to SCAAP awards in the short term. However, all is not well for the future of the SCAAP program, and expected changes next year will negatively and disproportionately impact many counties across the nation.

First authorized in 1990, SCAAP partially reimburses states and localities for the costs of detaining and incarcerating undocumented criminal aliens convicted of state and local offenses who have been incarcerated for at least four consecutive days.

Specifically, the program provides federal assistance to states and local agencies to do the following: 1) offset the costs incurred for the imprisonment of undocumented criminals who are convicted of felony offenses, or two or more misdemeanors; 2) better identify

See SCAAP page 8

QuickTakes

Counties that Demolished the Most Vacant Structures (in the last 10 years)

Walker County, Ala.	9.2%
Orleans Parish, La.	8.9%
Fayette County, Pa.	7.8%
Jefferson County, Ark.	7.6%
St. Landry Parish, La.	6.2%

Source: USA Today, Census Bureau Data

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How would sequestration impact funding for county programs? Check out the post-sequestration chart » [Page 8](#)

Capitol Hill briefing spotlights county use of SSBG funding

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER



The Social Service Block Grant (SSBG) looks like an easy choice for deficit reduction specialists. If repealed, the Congressional Budget Office calculates a \$1.4 billion direct spending reduction in 2013 and a \$16.7 billion reduction over a 10-year period.

But NACo member counties respond that it's far from a no-brainer.

At a Capitol Hill briefing Sept. 12, NACo released a survey of more than 70 counties that put a human face on proposals to severely reduce or eliminate SSBG funding. Many responses anticipated an uptick in institutionalization for some residents who could no longer access in-home care, and layoffs for county workers who provide those services.

"It's an easy target — you see savings ... in year one and you don't have to rewrite the tax code to get it," said John Sciamanna, co-director of government affairs at the National Foster Care Coalition, who spoke at the briefing. "If they eliminate funding, they probably won't hear from the people who are affected."

During the briefing, Bob Suver, Clark County, Ohio's director of job and family services gave several examples of adults who benefitted from services available because of SSBG funding. Some were being taken advantage of by adult children or other relatives or were languishing in poor health without the county's intervention. A woman who was locked in her closet by an abusive husband and

a man relegated to living in a semi-tractor-trailer were put in protective services after the county acted.

"It is the primary source of funds for adult protective services and the only source of federal funds

for vulnerable adults in need of protection," Suver said.

Maryland state Del. Sandy Rosenburg described SSBG as part of the compact between the federal government, and state and local governments — the epitome of federalism. Though Congress changed SSBG from being an entitlement in 1981 and cut its funding, counties lauded the increased flexibility with which they could spend the money.

"The local government has the flexibility to tailor programs to their specific needs," he said. "It is not duplicative of other federal programs, so people will go without services if this is reduced or eliminated in the budget process, real people will be affected. It is needed to close gaps, to help people who are dealing with abuse or neglect."

Iowa withheld SSBG funding for 2013 as an inducement for counties to form regional mental health cooperatives. Woodbury County shifted its mental health court and in-school therapists to state oversight to avoid having to dismantle the programs, but Social Services Director Patty Erickson-Puttman did have to cancel a crisis aversion program that was due to debut.

"There's no way we can afford to start it up for three or four years now," she said. "We had it budgeted and ready to start, but the state's insistence that counties regionalize is preventing us from going forward with it."

Paul Oswell, director of social services in Essex County, Va., mentioned that on top of the money that funds his staff, the projected loss of \$43 million for licensing of

social service facilities would make it harder to find treatment facilities for citizens in his county to use.

"Licensing itself is a state function, but it's very relevant to what we do on the county level," he said. "On top of that, SSBG basically funds the jobs for the social workers we employ."

Oswell said almost a quarter of Essex County is eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding, which demonstrates how great the need for SSBG-funded services is for his department. In a reversal of most survey respondents, Essex County's number one service for SSBG funding was child welfare services.

"It's as if the folks in Congress don't understand the value of SSBG," he said. "They think there are other funds that make up for that gap, but there aren't. We won't have people to send out to investigate children's living situations without SSBG. It's a big deal."

**See this story online at www.naco.org/countynews to read the survey on counties uses of SSBG funding.*



Photo by Jack Hernandez

Bob Suver, Clark County, Ohio director of job and family services and Tom Joseph, National Association of County Human Services Administrators consultant, head to the briefing on Social Services Block Grant funding Sept. 13 at the U.S. Capitol.

TANF fares well in Continuing Resolution

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percent funding increase for the first six months of FY13.

The federal-aid highway program will get the same amount per month under the CR that it got in FY12 — a year-long obligation limitation of \$39.14 billion. This is because of a technicality in the law that prevents the highway program from getting either the 0.612 percent increase in the CR or the 1.4 percent increase in MAP-21.

Transportation programs of interest to counties that include the 0.612 percent increase (the numbers below reflect a one-year funding total) are:

- Transit Formula and Bus Grants — \$8.41 billion
- Transit Capital Grants — \$1.97 billion

- Airport Improvement Program — \$3.37 billion
- Essential Air Service — \$143.8 million
- Amtrak — \$1.43 billion
- TIGER grants — \$503 million

Housing and Urban Development

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) will be funded at no less than \$2.95 billion, and the HOME program at \$1 billion. It is possible that CDBG could be funded at \$3.2 billion if Congress passes a full-year FY13 appropriation bill. The FY12 HUD appropriations included an up to \$300 million set-aside within the CDBG formula for disaster assistance. The CR does not include this disaster assistance funding carve-out within CDBG. In August,

NACo and other CDBG coalition members sent a letter urging House and Senate Appropriations leadership to remove the disaster assistance funding carve-out from CDBG formula grants.

Human Services

The CR includes a clean extension of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Block Grant (TANF), which would otherwise expire Sept. 30. There was concern that the House might include language prohibiting the administration from implementing the TANF waiver program announced in mid-July. However, it was not included because the Senate will not agree to the waiver prohibition, and it would derail passage of the CR. Instead, two committees, Education and the Workforce, and Ways and Means

passed a non-binding resolution condemning the administration's proposal.

The Refugee Resettlement Program is another of the few programs that received an increase from current funding. The CR includes \$900 million, an increase of approximately \$76 million.

Other Language of Interest

The CR includes language prohibiting expenditures that would have "high initial rates of operation or complete distribution of appropriations at the beginning of fiscal year 2013." This prohibition is intended for discretionary grants and doesn't impact quarterly expenditures for formula grants and entitlement programs.

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Cybersecurity needs highlight broader IT workforce issues

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Janet Claggett jokes that she used to be 6 feet tall, but because of the weight on her shoulders she's shrunk to 5-feet-3-inches.

As chief information officer for Richland County, S.C., her burden includes hiring and retaining IT professionals in an era of decreasing government resources and increasing competition from the private sector. The subspecialty of cybersecurity — with its growing importance — is but one area where challenges abound.

"We live in a very dangerous world right now," Claggett said, "and the whole cybersecurity threat is escalating and it shows no signs of abating. Now you're being challenged with keeping your county government or your city government safe from attacks from all over the world."

Add to that the "consumerization" of IT. "You introduce the whole concept of tablets and smart-phones, and you have exponentially increased your possible points of failure, because each of those devices represents a security risk," she said.

October is National Cyber

Security Awareness Month, and cybersecurity is one of NACo President Chris Rodgers' presidential initiatives. Ensuring there is adequate skilled staff to protect counties' cyber-infrastructure is just one of the issues being addressed by a new NACo IT Workforce Working Group. It recently formed to address recruitment, retention and compensation of all county information technology professionals.

NACo CIO Bert Jarreau summed up the challenge. "Today's technol-

ogy professionals must successfully deal with cybersecurity, mobile computing, cloud platforms, shared services, disaster recovery, transparency mandates, open source options, software-as-a-service, outsourcing decisions, legacy systems and keeping the lights on," he said. And the pace of technological change continues to quicken.

One of the working group's goals is to create a whitepaper that offers comprehensive strategies to help counties resolve their IT staff-

ing issues. Another product will be informational materials to educate elected officials.

"A team has been put together that can come up with some possible solutions that we can share with counties across the country," said Helen Purcell, Maricopa County, Ariz. recorder and chair of the group. Its members include county CIOs and human resources directors, a private sector HR consultant and NACo staff.

can be difficult for counties to recruit and retain staff, he said.

If counties are to compete effectively, the issue of increasing — or restructuring — compensation must be considered, workgroup members said. The dominant workforce rewards system in private sector IT has always been very "cash-focused," according to David Van de Voort, a human resources consultant with Buck Consultants in Chicago, who is serving as a resource to the workgroup. Not so in the public sector.

Citing a 2009 survey, he said for CIO positions public sector pay was about 54 percent of the all-industry sample. Figuring in bonus pay, government CIOs earn just 37 percent of the all-industry sample. That figure drops to 25 percent when you consider long-term incentives, typically paid in cash or stock. The pattern is less dramatic for government database analysts, who earn 97 percent of the all-industry salary but only 88 percent when considering salary and bonus pay.

Prior to the recent economic crisis, governments tended to focus more on the quality of the benefits they could

Keeping up with the Fords and GMs

Phil Bertolini is deputy county executive and CIO in Oakland County, Mich., an area where the decline-then-recovery of the automotive industry has brought staffing needs into sharp focus. He is co-vice chair of the workgroup with Claggett.

"The IT sector in southeast Michigan was one of the fastest-growing sectors in the nation last year," he said. "The private sector is rebounding and our auto industry is rebounding a bit, so people are gobbling up the IT professionals."

Cybersecurity expertise, in particular, is highly sought after, and it

IT workforce whitepaper draft due Dec. 5

NACo's IT Workforce Working Group is scheduled to report its findings at the Technology Summit, March 2, 2013, during NACo's Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., according to NACo CIO Bert Jarreau, who is staff liaison to the group.

A draft will be completed in time for the Dec. 5 NACo Fall Board Meeting and will be available for counties to use in their IT recruitment and retention efforts.

Members of the working group include Helen Purcell, recorder, Maricopa County, chair, and vice chairs Phil Bertolini, deputy county executive and CIO, Oakland County, Mich., and Janet Claggett, CIO, Richland County, S.C.

NACo Prescription Discount Card Program

There is still time to take advantage of the 2012 new program offering with the NACo Prescription Discount Card program, act now and contact us to find out how. The program has proven results that have been demonstrated across the country with more than \$480,000,000 in savings. No need to take our word for it, just ask your peers. Below are just a couple of testimonials about the program that are reiterated in similar context many times!

"As a NACo member county, it just makes sense to offer the FREE Prescription Discount Card Program to county residents. The success is seen in the everyday savings for residents."

Tim McCormick, County Commissioner, Ohio County, WV

"I have been approached many times at community events by residents about the NACo Prescription Discount Card Program. Their strong motivation to share their positive stories is the true testament to how the program helps our residents. You learn that that is not just about the money saved but also the emotional impact of the program."

Marc Hamlin, Brazos County District Clerk, Brazos County, TX

Contact NACo at 1-888-407-NACo (6226), Andrew Goldschmidt, Director, Membership Marketing at extension 221 or Ilene Manster, Membership Coordinator at extension 291.



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See **CYBERSECURITY** page 6

Youth powers Louisiana parish Police Jury

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Alexander Hamilton wrote in the Federalist Papers that vigor of government was essential to the security of liberty, so in that case, Evangeline Parish, La.'s liberty is safer than in Fort Knox.

Its nine-member police jury boasts three jurors under the age of 40, and two right over, giving the parish likely one of the youngest governing bodies in the country. It's a situation that Police Jury Association of Louisiana Executive Director Roland Dartez says is very out of the ordinary, especially in a parish without term limits.

"It's a rural parish, and it's the kind of place where people stay in office for decades," he said. "Things don't change much, usually."

For Bryan Vidrine, now 33, running for office was a spur-of-the-moment decision when he heard an incumbent was retiring in 2007. He was 27 at the time. Now he's the jury president.

"Before I ran, I used to talk about all the things I wanted to do, all the budget issues that were important to me," he said. "I thought my ideas could be useful on the local government level."

He encountered some resistance because of his age, but found that a vigorous defense of his candidacy focused him further on the job.

"I had to overcome the disadvantage of people's perceptions of my youth by presenting detailed solutions for our problems," he said. "I showed people I wasn't just out to win a political position, I wanted to make a difference and I knew how to do that."

In office, he said he wants to



Photo courtesy of Evangeline Parish, La.

Ryan Williams, 27; Ryan Ardoin, 38; and Bryan Vidrine, 33, are something of a novelty on the Evangeline Parish, La. Police Jury, which typically sees older jurors with long tenures, according to the state association. In addition, two other jurors are 40 years old.

examine all options available in a particular situation.

"I never want to write something off because someone says 'that will never work,'" he said. "Times change, and something that might not have worked years ago might be just the right move now. Thinking any other way is complacency."

He said, however, that there are some disadvantages to having a youth-heavy board, particularly when it comes to the dearth of institutional knowledge.

"You have to rely on your predecessors, be willing to listen and ask them how they handled something 20 years ago," he said. "Even if it's not the way you end up dealing with something, it gives you a better overall view of the issue."

Ryan Williams was even younger — 21 — when he took office to fill out his uncle's term. He's now 27, with six years of experience on the jury. He came from a family of politicians, and saw public office as a way to serve as a role model.

"I wanted to inspire other young people, let them know there was some place they could take their talents and make a difference."

He knew what to expect before his first meeting and felt like he was never overmatched by the issues facing the jury. He also felt as though he was able to connect better with younger residents when trying to communicate what's going on with the jury, for example, a recent tax increase.

"I explained exactly what services the tax paid for and why that parish needed it; nothing new, but it sounded different coming from someone who was a little younger, who could connect to people who were getting set financially early in their lives."

Without writing off the older voters, Williams carefully trusts they will continue to remain active while he focuses on getting younger people out to the polls and highlights opportunities for their voices to be heard.

"Older people are going to vote regardless, but if you put effort into

reaching out to young people, they'll respond."

Like Williams, Ryan Ardoin got involved in the jury through family. He owned a lawn care business with his late father, Mitchell, whose Lou Gehrig's Disease diagnosis prompted him to run for office in the early 2000s.

"We both liked meeting people through our business, talking to them and hearing their concerns," Ardoin said. "He figured the work on the jury wouldn't be too physical, so he ran and beat five other guys."

Mitchell Ardoin served on the jury for three years, but as his ALS progressed to the point where he couldn't serve anymore, and the jury allowed him to appoint a family member to fill out his term. That was Ryan.

"I said I'd take the job, but wasn't interested in running for it," he said. "I just wanted to finish my dad's term."

Six months later, when Mitchell died, family members pressed Ryan to stay on the jury. He eventually asked the jury if he could run again, despite his intentions to the contrary, and he was encouraged to jump into the election. He has been re-elected

twice since and just turned 38.

His most important advice for young officials has been to give himself time to answer constituent questions fully and have his ducks in a row before he answers, one of many tips he picked up from his older colleagues.

"At first I was quiet, listened, asked questions, and the other jurors took me under their wings," he said. "I always hung out with older guys growing up, so it seemed natural when I was an adult."

Dartez sees the mixture of ages on the jury to be a great advantage for Evangeline Parish.

"They're already taking leadership roles, which is great," he said. "They've had some seasoned guys to learn how to meet constituent needs from," he said. "You can tell by their actions that they're in it for the right reason — to serve their communities."

"I love the old jurors, but sooner or later they're going to be gone and we'll need a new generation of leaders," he added. "If other parishes have people who step up like this, we're going to be alright."

Next Generation NACo

President Chris Rodgers began an initiative this spring, Next Generation NACo, to focus the efforts of young county officials within NACo's ranks.

Through this effort, he hopes to provide a networking forum for young county officials, and to identify and serve the educational and professional development needs unique to that age group. This includes mentoring on how to get involved in NACo functions, such as serving on steering committees.

The group met at July's Annual Conference, and the membership discussed bylaws for the group and the possibility of participating in a service project.

Contact NACo Legislative grassroots coordinator Matthew Fellows at mfellows@naco.org.

Rural counties' broadband projects face uncertainty

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER



The success of two South Carolina counties' plans to provide broadband access to rural areas could be in jeopardy because of a new state law that severely restricts public broadband projects. It also essentially bans new ones.

Oconee and Orangeburg counties received more than \$27 million in federal stimulus funds in 2010 for rural broadband projects.

A South Carolina law, enacted in July, requires local governments that offer broadband Internet services to charge rates similar to those of private companies, even if the government could provide the service at a lower

cost and the area is not served by commercial providers.

"It effectively prohibits municipalities from operating their own broadband systems through a series of regulatory and reporting requirements," said Catharine Rice, president of the SouthEast Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (SEATO). "These practically guarantee municipalities could never find financing because the requirements would render even a private sector broadband company inoperable."

SEATO represents local government broadband planners and community video programmers in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. While the statute won't kill the projects

already underway, it could limit their potential.

Orangeburg County received

more than \$18 million to build a "last-mile" fiber project — connecting directly to end users — serving about

25 percent of the rural county. It also invested about \$4 million of its own money in the project.

"We have the ability to move forward and complete the project that we have," said Harold Young, Orangeburg County administrator. "But the viability of the whole broadband system is put in jeopardy because this bill doesn't allow us to expand past the initial phase of what we were doing." That expansion is needed to make the project sustainable. Orangeburg, a "persistent poverty" county as defined by federal standards, applied for the grant to address "economic and educational disparities that exist within our community."

Jim Baller is an attorney who has

Connect America Fund targets rural areas

The FCC recently announced that it will provide \$115 million in incentives to commercial broadband providers nationwide to stimulate extension of their services into rural areas, through its Connect America Fund.

Its goal is to encourage companies to extend high-speed Internet access to nearly 400,000 residents and small business owners in 37 states within three years, 7 million within six years and 19 million by 2020.

In making the announcement, FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski called the initiative "just the beginning of our efforts to unleash the benefits of broadband for millions of homes and small businesses in unserved rural communities across the U.S."

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Spray park wins national aquatics award

By Christopher Johnson
Editorial Assistant

WEB* CONTENT The Fairfax County Park Authority in Virginia was recently named the recipient of a 2012 Best of Aquatics award for Best Spray Park.

Designed and built by the Joey Pizzano Memorial Fund (JPMF), the spray park is dedicated to improving the lives of children with special needs and their families. The fund was formed after the drowning of six-year-old Joey Pizzano, a developmentally disabled child, in 1998.

Bob and Paola Pizzano created the foundation as a living tribute to celebrate their son's life. They chose Fairfax to build this spray park as a way of giving back to the community where they have raised their 8 children.

"It was exhilarating for this county spray park to be recognized," said Bob Pizzano, president of JPMF. "The success was always



Photo courtesy of Robert Pizzano

A colorful dragon, a pirate ship and more greet kids at the Our Safe Harbor spray park in Fairfax County, Va.

apparent in the faces of the children and families seen enjoying the spray park."

Our Special Harbor is a zero-

water-depth facility that serves as the focal point for a larger Family Recreation Area in Lee District Park and is operated by the Fairfax

County Park Authority. It carries the theme of the Chesapeake Bay and is fully accessible for children of all abilities. The park features a water maze, water-dumping crab basket and a custom skipjack and crab boat. All promote barrier-free opportunities for accommodating individuals with disabilities.

The idea for the facility came from an existing program called the Splash Program, run by JPMF, that helps kids learn about water safety at local swimming pools while giving families the opportunity to play together safely.

"The main goal for the park was to provide a place where children with disabilities and their families could enjoy the water together in a fun and accepting environment," Pizzano said.

The park features water resistant wheelchairs for any guest that requires one. Everyone else must wear water shoes because the water in the park can make the ground slippery in places.

The park's operation is funded by contributions to the Fairfax County Park Foundation that help

cover the operating costs, which are nearly \$30,000 per season. It is free of charge for all families to use.

Spray parks, also known as spraygrounds, are fast becoming a popular alternative to traditional water parks. Public and private county parks, campgrounds, resorts, hotels and YMCAs are installing these safer, more accessible options.

"Our Special Harbor was built to not only fulfill a need in Fairfax County but as a model to be emulated and replicated throughout the country," Pizzano added.

The county award comes one year after Fairfax County Park Authority was named the recipient of the Best of Aquatics 2011 Best Overall Commitment to Aquatics, an award that recognizes excellence in aquatics programs, facilities, operations and community involvement for large, multiple-facility systems.

**For more information on Our Special Harbor and the Joey Pizzano fund, see this story online at www.naco.org/countynews.*

Market salaries attract IT candidates

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provide, such as strong retirement programs and job security. But as county governments have contracted, pay freezes, job cuts, and pay and benefits givebacks have made public service even less attractive to some, he said.

IT-specific Pay Scales Could Help

To attract top candidates, many local governments must combat the "presumed political incorrectness of paying market salaries in the public sector," according to the workgroup.

Purcell said the answer might be "a different pay matrix than we see in the rest of the county." About 25 percent of employers of all kinds do something special for IT, Van De Voort said — most commonly a special pay scale for IT.

On the challenge of retaining employees, Claggett gave this example: After two years, a high-performing entry- or middle-level county IT employee can acquire new skills that make them worth \$10,000 to \$20,000 more in the private sector. Holding onto such employees can be "extremely difficult."

"We do not have to pay top dollar. I don't even think I would want to," she said. "But we've got to nip at the heels of market salaries. We've got to

be in the ballpark of market rates or we cannot compete."

Failing that or in addition, Bertolini said other forms of incentives could be offered such as flexible work hours. "Can we create a more collaborative work environment that the younger IT employees seem to enjoy?" he said.

Van De Voort added that providing training opportunities can also be a selling point. "Going back to that interest of IT folks to maintain their skill set and learn new things, if you can provide training experiences for IT people," he said, "they may not see that as part of their pay program, but they see the value in it."

Another hurdle counties face is fighting the perception that they are not interesting places to work — that

the work isn't cutting-edge or as glamorous as, say, game programming or software development. But Claggett said counties now are often "leading innovators" because they've had to find new ways to do more with less. "That's a very enticing carrot to the technology workforce out there."

And so, the conversation continues...

"When you get my peers together," she said, "all we're talking about is the fast pace, the accelerating pace, the consumerization, the new expectations of your organization on your department, the expectation of instantaneous results, and the expectation — let's get back to cybersecurity — that amongst all of that we will keep the lights on and we will keep you safe."

Webinar on cybersecurity staffing set for Oct. 24

Recruiting, Hiring and Retaining IT/Cybersecurity Talent is the topic of one of a series of five webinars on cybersecurity NACo and its partners are offering in October. It will be held Oct. 24 from 2–3 p.m. EDT.

Peggy Maxso of the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE) will lead this session on the steps it has taken to build the cyber workforce for county governments.

To register, visit <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/687782810>. See the complete roster of sessions at www.naco.org/meetings/webinars/Pages/CybersecurityWebinarSeries.aspx.

Word Search

DeSoto County, Miss. Facts

Learn more about DeSoto County in 'What's in a Seal?'

M	M	M	T	U	A	R	M	D	Y	B	K	N	C	D	N	N	M	S	V
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- CRITTENDEN (adjacent county)
- DESOTO CORRIDOR (from Chicasaw Bluff, Tenn. to Coahoma County, Miss.)
- FASTEST GROWING (one of the fastest growing in the U.S.)
- HERNANDO (county seat named after Hernando de Soto)
- JAMES EARL JONES (actor from county)
- JOHN GRISHAM (author from county)
- MARSHALL (adjacent county)

- MEMPHIS (city located in county)
- MISSISSIPPIAN (Indians who originally inhabited county)
- SHELBY (adjacent county)
- TATE (adjacent county)
- TENNESSEE (bordering state)
- TUNICA (adjacent county)
- VELVET CREAM (oldest continually running restaurant in the U.S.)
- WOODLAND (Indians who originally inhabited county)

Rural public broadband faces state legislative hurdles

BROADBAND from page 4

been involved in legislative and legal battles over dozens of cases of state barriers to public broadband projects. "For them not to have complete freedom to do what their citizens need is very difficult to justify," he said.

Oconee County was awarded \$9.6 million for a so-called "middle-mile" project to build a fiber-optic network to serve community anchor institutions such as schools, hospitals and libraries in rural areas of the county, and wholesale customers.

"The legislation, for us, is not a means to prevent us from operating our system. It's meant to make it more difficult," Oconee County Administrator Scott Moulder said, "and it's meant to make it more competitive with the private market." He doesn't believe the statute will hamper the county's ability to comply with the requirements of the federal grant it received, "but that's still left to be seen, though," he said.

Laws such as South Carolina's are being passed in a growing number of states, according to Christopher Mitchell of the Telecommunications as Commons Initiative of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance.

In recent years, 19 states have passed laws that restrict or prohibit municipal broadband projects. And the major telephone and cable companies have opposed public broadband as anti-competitive and contributed heavily to legislators in states passing restrictive laws, he said.

"They want to prevent any new Davids. They're Goliaths, and they want to make sure that to the extent that they can strangle David in his crib, they're doing that," Mitchell said. "To the extent that more networks pop up that show how much less expensive and more reliable (they are) — and faster speed can be distributed at a lower cost — these companies look worse."

The Minnesota and Georgia state legislatures this year took up bills that could ban public broadband projects; the Georgia measure was turned into a study bill, and the Minnesota bill never made it out of committee.

That was good news for Bob Fox, a Renville County, Minn. commissioner. His county and neighboring Sibley County — along with 11 towns — have developed a proposal to provide "fiber to the farm," homes, businesses and government facilities in these rural counties.

The RS (for Renville Sibley) Fiber project has created a joint powers board, as Minnesota law allows, to develop a system whose construction would be backed by

revenue bonds. All participating communities have until Sept. 25 to vote on whether to participate.

"Agriculture has changed tremendously in the last couple of decades," said Fox, who also chairs NACo's Agriculture and Rural Development Steering Commit-

tee. "The technology is probably one of the pieces that's lagging." He believes that if restrictive legislation is resurrected next year it would grandfather projects already underway.

However these projects work out, the Institute for Local Self-Reliance's

Mitchell sees rural broadband as a potential economic engine — with a parallel to electricity. "Broadband in rural areas is important to me because it improves the economy everywhere," he said. "Rural electrification provided a turbo-boost to the economy because everyone was

participating. And we see the exact same effect in broadband."

**View this story online at www.naco.org/countynews for a link to a podcast about the "fiber to the farm" project in Renville and Sibley counties in Minnesota.*

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Jailing illegal aliens can take hefty bite out of county budgets

SCAAP from page 1

undocumented individuals; and 3) expedite the process of transferring undocumented criminals from state and local correctional facilities to federal custody in preparation for deportation.

Although it is the federal government's responsibility to enforce immigration laws, counties incur millions of dollars in unreimbursed expenses each year as a result of housing undocumented criminal aliens who violate state or local laws. Additionally, counties are often responsible for processing and prosecuting illegal aliens, and in many cases, must provide medical care and other services to these individuals.

Therefore, counties are bearing a disproportionate share of the criminal justice-related costs associated with illegal immigration, and SCAAP-related costs to local jurisdictions have continued to rise.

Prior DOJ's proposed change, its Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) had provided reimbursement credit to states and localities that incurred costs for detaining individuals whom they believed to be undocumented criminals.

In doing so, the agency acknowledged that undocumented individuals constitute a high percentage of foreign-born inmates of unknown immigration status who were not in any federal immigration database. So, it was disturbing that DOJ sought the May 2 change.

An estimated 80 percent of inmates of unknown immigration status in county jails are undocumented, and by proceeding with the modified payment methodology, BJA would have unilaterally eliminated reimbursement for a significant portion of undocumented inmates in local jail systems, and future SCAAP awards to many local governments would likely have been reduced by more than 50 percent nationwide.

Faced with significant hits to many county budgets, NACo and member counties voiced their opposition to the May 2 announcement, urged Congress to support reversing the change and asked DOJ to reinstate its previous policy.

Throughout the spring and summer, many counties and Congress responded to this call to action, resulting in DOJ's postponing its announced change, freeing up payment of FY12 SCAAP awards.

DOJ also noted that delaying the change could provide a

significant opportunity for local governments to work collaboratively with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to improve local processes for detainee identification.

While NACo and SCAAP-eligible counties appreciate the temporary reprieve, DOJ has already indicated that it plans to discontinue SCAAP payments for "unknown" inmates next year rather than permanently.

Instead, counties are being encouraged to work with DHS' Secure Communities Program, the 287(g) Program or the Law Enforcement Support Center (LESC) to increase their inmate alien status verifications. This will pose a chal-

SpeedRead » » »

» Justice Department grants one-year reprieve for criminal alien program funding

» Expected changes next year will hurt many counties

» SCAAP helps offset localities' costs of jailing certain criminal aliens

lenge for many counties in 2013, and NACo members should begin to educate members of Congress and stress that despite significant local governmental participation in DHS' Secure Communities and 287(g) programs the large number of

unknown inmates in local jails has yet to see any significant decreases.

According to Mark Tajima of the Los Angeles County chief executive's office, working with DHS' Secure Communities, LESC, and 287(g) programs won't eliminate the need for DOJ to continue to reimburse the cost of incarcerating foreign-born inmates who are not in any federal immigration database. He indicated that the L.A. County Sheriff's Department was one of the first law enforcement agencies in the nation to work with DHS through each of these programs, and still has had a very large number of "unknown" inmates in its annual SCAAP claims.

"These DHS programs are of limited value because they use the very same immigration data bases used by DOJ and DHS to determine the eligibility of foreign-born inmates for SCAAP reimbursement," he explained. "So long as most convicted felons who are potentially deportable are transferred from county jails to state prisons to serve their sentences, counties will be disadvantaged relative to states because their deportability (immigration status) will not be adjudicated until after they have served their state prison sentences."

In effect, their immigration status would be determined in time to reimburse states, but not counties, for their SCAAP-eligible costs.

OMB report, only estimate of program cuts

SEQUESTRATION from page 1

would be cut by a smaller amount of 7.6 percent. Payments in Lieu of Taxes, Essential Air Service, the Social Services Block Grant, the Prevention and Public Health Fund and the National Telecommunications Information Administration's (NTIA) state and local implementation program fall under this category.

Entitlement programs are also treated differently and there are some variations among these.

While entitlement programs are relatively unscathed under sequestration, they are very vulnerable if Congress tries to avoid the automatic cuts.

Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Fund, the Child Care Entitlement to States, Transit Formula Grants and the mandatory portion of Grants-in-Aid for Airports escape any reductions. The BCA also exempts all of the Department of Veterans' Affairs programs from cuts. Commodity loans and the

Conservation Reserve Program are also exempt; and OMB opted to exempt almost all of the crop insurance subsidies.

Other entitlement programs, including Federal-Aid Highways, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Block Grant, Child Nutrition, Foster Care, and Child Support Enforcement, have portions that would be cut 7.6 percent. However, this cut results in minimal reductions.

The OMB report is only an estimate and is based on current funding, and could change as a result of the Continuing Resolution that funds the federal government until March 2013. Since sequestration would take place in the second quarter of the fiscal year, cuts would be prorated, which would have an even larger impact per quarter. Some programs are lumped together into larger categories, but the following chart should give an idea of the effect of a possible sequester.

Post-Sequestration Funding (Figures in Millions of dollars)					
	2012 Funding	After Sequestration		2012 Funding	After Sequestration
● Agriculture and Rural Development					
Rental Assistance Program	905	831	● Health	Prevention & Public Health Fund	1,000
Rural Community Facilities	29	27		Substance Abuse & Mental Health	3,640
Rural Housing Assistance Grants	33	30			
Distance Learning, Telemedicine & Broadband	37	34			
Rural Water & Waste Disposal	503	462	● Homeland Security		
Rural Business Program	75	69	FEMA State & Local Programs		2,247
Extension Activities	525	486		Disaster Relief	7,077
Community and Economic Development				Flood Hazard Mapping	98
Community Development Fund	3,408	3,129		Emergency Food & Shelter	120
Section 8 Housing	18,914	17,384	● Human Services		
HOME Investment Partnership Program	1,000	918	SSBG		1,785
Homeless Assistance Grants	1,901	1,745		Aging Services	1,471
Economic Development Assistance	420	386		LIHEAP	3,472
				Child Care (non-entitlement)	2,278
● Education and Training			Children & Family Services		9,908
Training and Employment Services	3,203	2,941			
Elementary & Secondary Education (Title I)	15,742	14,451	● Justice and Public Safety		
Special Education	12,640	11,604	State & Local Law Enforcement Assistance		1,119
Adult & Vocational Education	1,737	1,595		Juvenile Justice Programs	254
DOL Veterans' Employment & Training	273	269		Community Policing	162
● Energy, Environment and Public Lands			● Telecommunications		
PILT	398	368	NTIA State & Local Implementation Grants		69
EPA State and Tribal Grants	3,568	3,475			64
Hazardous Substance Superfund	1,459	1,340	● Transportation		
Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy	2,086	1,938	Essential Air Service & Rural Airports		50
				Federal Aid Highways – mandatory	40,185

Model Programs From the Nation's Counties

Clayton County, Ga.

Arts Organization Collaboration Revives Fading Downtown

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER



Bracing against suburban sprawl from Atlanta, Clayton County, Ga. and its county seat Jonesboro dug in their heels to ensure its historic buildings would withstand the population explosion.

Jonesboro, south of Atlanta, managed to keep its downtown intact while Clayton's population grew faster than any other county in Georgia. In 1998, however, the county's court operations moved out of downtown Jonesboro, a crippling blow to the restaurants and shops nearby that thrived on people coming downtown to do court business. Turnover on the Jonesboro City Council made the city's plans for preservation disjointed and ultimately unfulfilled.

Meanwhile, the county's development in response to its population growth left it long on athletic recreational facilities, but short on cultural options. Enter the nonprofit Arts Clayton, with which the county contracted to set up shop in an historic building, giving it space for exhibits and classes.

The county tourism authority issued bonds to finance preservation work for the building, which was crucial for both sides. With the organization based in the building, downtown Jonesboro had an anchor tenant that would stabilize the commercial area and serve as a beacon to other businesses.

Commissioner Sonna Singleton, who serves as vice chairwoman of NACo's Arts and Culture Committee, said Arts Clayton has effectively filled the gap.

"Even though the court offices are gone, we still have something to bring people downtown," she said. "There's still a destination."

Arts Clayton Executive Director Linda Summerlin credited the county with giving her organization a home.

"We could have never done this without the county commission realizing that this organization was contributing to the quality of life and economic picture and giving us an opening," Summerlin said.

In addition to classrooms, the arts center includes an art gallery featuring primarily Georgian artists' work. The organization has played host to the national watercolor society, and collaborated with the



Photo courtesy of Arts Clayton

Students from Jackson Elementary School in Jonesboro, Ga. visit the gallery at Arts Clayton, a nonprofit supported by Clayton County.

Georgia Museum of Art and the Tubman African-American Museum.

"We are here to serve Georgia artists and it creates an opportu-

nity for them to show and sell their work," Summerlin said.

That effort is bolstered by the local tourism industry.

Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With*

the Wind, set in Clayton County, has drawn thousands of tourists a month, including a large contingent of Europeans in the last few years. A bus tour of sites in the book includes a stop at the Arts Clayton gallery.

"I wish we had the clout that they were coming for the gallery, but we're capitalizing on the opportunity we've been given," Summerlin said. "People are buying paintings and jewelry created by Georgia artists."

Summerlin's house is festooned with pieces she bought from the gallery.

"Early on, I told myself I would wait a while before buying a piece for myself," she said. "When I missed my chance on a particular painting, that went out the window."

One of Singleton's favorite pieces won't meet the same fate. A mural on the wall depicts the Arnold sisters, two teachers who had a lot of current Clayton County residents and their parents in their classes.

"It's a wonderful transition from the historical draw of the *Gone With the Wind* tour to art featuring some African-American women who had an impact on a lot of our citizens," she said.

Despite the beauty of many of the pieces in the gallery, Summerlin said art is a hard sell.

"People will buy reproductions of art that probably end up being more expensive than original pieces we offer," she said. "And it's been a gradual process in getting the local community interested in some of the art that comes here, though the classes and partnerships with the schools are quite popular. It will take a few more years to grow a large, local donor base."

Clayton County provides a portion of the organization's \$444,000 operating costs.

Model Programs from the Nation's Counties highlights award-winning programs. Clayton County's collaboration with Arts Clayton was named the best in category for the 2012 NACo Achievement Awards for Arts and Historic Preservation.

*See this story online at www.naco.org/countynews for a selection of Arts Clayton's class offerings.

Research News

Economic Development Takes Center Stage

As many businesses have faced difficult economic times recently, the issue of economic development has taken center stage in many counties across the country. Counties are stepping up to provide tools and training for businesses owners and entrepreneurs to expand businesses in order to improve the local community.

When Summit County, Utah recently received state funding for economic development, the first task was to survey local businesses to gain feedback on current services and determine additional needs of local businesses. The one-time grant through the Business Expansion and Retention (BEAR) program was provided

With a regional approach, local governments may be able to combine resources to enhance economic development within the region ...

through the Governor's Office of Economic Development. The goal of the program is to boost economic development in rural counties in Utah. After county staff surveyed

200 randomly selected businesses, the remaining funding will be used for activities such as free training for local business owners.

In order to achieve regional collaboration on economic development, Allen County, Ind., the city of Fort Wayne and other local economic development agencies have agreed to combine efforts in looking for economic development opportunities. With a regional approach, local governments may be able to combine resources to enhance economic development within the region and may be able to avoid competition for businesses within the region. Leaders from the governments and agencies are creating a working group to deter-

mine the most efficient course for development collaboration.

In the spirit of collaboration, Macomb County, Mich. partnered with a local community and university to establish a business incubator that focused on industries with strong potential for growth. After the decline of the manufacturing industry in the area, the county commissioned a study that indicated specific industries have tremendous potential for success in the county including alternative energy, defense and homeland security, and advanced manufacturing.

The county worked with Oakland University and the city of Sterling

See RESEARCH page 10

Financial Services News

New York Government Agencies Now Able to Use U.S. Communities

Fifteen years ago, only 31 states allowed governmental entities to purchase goods and services through cooperative purchasing contracts. On Aug. 1, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) signed a bill that modified the New York State procurement code to make cooperative purchasing contracts available to local government agencies within the Empire State.

All 50 states now allow local governmental entities to access savings, expanded product and service offerings, and operating

efficiencies provided through cooperative purchasing programs like the U.S. Communities Cooperative Purchasing Alliance.

U.S. Communities, is the only purchasing cooperative founded by public agencies for public agencies and is the largest. The five national sponsors that founded and co-own U.S. Communities include: NACo, the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing, the National League of Cities, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the Association of School



Business Officials International. In addition, more than 90 state associations sponsor the U.S. Communities program.

Participating in a cooperative purchasing program is an established best practice in public procurement. Cooperative purchasing consolidates the buying power of government agencies and nonprofits nationally to provide benefits in pricing, product quality and contract efficiencies. Aggregating the purchasing power of public agencies can lower costs, increase services and save time. Most purchasing cooperatives offer cost-and time-savings, which are critical to running procurement departments effectively and efficiently.

When it comes to cooperative procurement options, U.S. Communities is NACo's program of choice. Since its founding in 1996, U.S. Communities has generated millions of dollars in savings for participating agencies. With more than 400 purchasing professionals joining each month, the continued rapid growth testifies to the program's record of integrity and value. There are no fees to participate and no purchasing minimums, allowing maximum flexibility for participating agencies.

U.S. Communities supplier partners commit to providing their most competitive government pricing to all participating agencies. Regularly scheduled internal and third-party audits ensure compliance with contract pricing, terms and conditions, while benchmarking analyses evaluate the overall value. Supplier contracts are also reviewed quarterly by the lead contracting agency, and all documents relevant to contract solicitations are publicly posted on the U.S. Communities website for complete transparency.

With nearly 20 years of experience, a substantial customer base, and significant sales, U.S. Communities is in the best position to deliver contracts that offer the most competitive pricing. To en-

sure compliance with state guidelines, it adheres to a competitive bid solicitation process through a lead public agency and provides access to documentation to confirm compliance. Public agencies that implement stringent supplier commitments, audits and price benchmarking participate in U.S. Communities with confidence.

U.S. Communities assists local and state government agencies, school districts (K-12), higher education, and nonprofits in reducing the cost of purchased goods and services by offering

managed access to competitively solicited contracts between suppliers and lead public agencies. U.S. Communities has more than 50,000 registered participating public agencies and offers 22 contracts with 28 suppliers. In 2011, aggregate program volume exceeded \$1.2 billion, with more than \$200 million in estimated savings to participating public agencies. All contracts are non-exclusive, contain no minimum spending requirements and require no usage fees.

Learn more about U.S. Communities by visiting www.uscommunities.org or contact Jim Sawyer, NACo Financial Services at 202.661.8868 or jsawyer@naco.org.

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



October is National Cyber Security Awareness Month

Achieve Cybersecurity Together

Some of us may remember life before the Internet. Our children will have a hard time imagining life without it. The reality is in the 21st century almost all aspects of society rely on computers and the Internet.

Today, we are more interconnected than ever before. Americans enjoy the benefits and freedoms that cyberspace provides — we shop from our homes, bank from our smart phones, and engage friends from around the world through social networks. Yet for all of its advantages, increased connectivity brings a greater risk of theft, fraud, and abuse. No country, industry, community, or individual is immune to cyber risks.

Each October, National Cyber Security Awareness Month (NCSAM) reminds us that being safer and more secure online is a shared responsibility—each of us has an important role to play.

Counties across the country can join together with government, industry, academia, and non-profit organizations to commemorate NCSAM by promoting cybersecurity awareness in their communities.

Whether you have an hour or a year to focus on cybersecurity, visit www.staysafeonline.org/NCSAM for ideas to get you started.

Participate, as well, in NACo's October webinar series on cybersecurity. To register go to www.naco.org/cyberwebinars

If you are hosting an event, please let DHS know via stopthinkconnect@dhs.gov.



Partnering counties spur economic development

RESEARCH from page 9

Heights to form the Macomb-OU INCubator. The goal of the center is to provide comprehensive development and support services to emerging businesses in the industries of defense, homeland security and advanced manufacturing. The center is a place where entrepreneurs and current business owners can explore the opportunities for training and financing. Since its inception, the incubator has served many clients resulting in the creation of new jobs in the county. In addition, the center has seen businesses be successful in securing nearly one million dollars in start-up capital funding.

In rural Mohave County, Ariz. resident entrepreneurs and small businesses are the backbone of the regional economy and play a significant role in the local economy. When local economic data showed that the county's largest source of job growth was from existing small businesses, the county decided to partner with local organizations to bring national training to local residents thought the NxLevelL program.

The program is designed to assist entrepreneurs and small business owners reach the next

level of success by providing 12 educational sessions and providing local guest speakers to address the issues and needs of small businesses. Mohave County Economic Development Department partnered with the Mohave Small Business Development Center to offer competitive scholarships for participation in the nationally renowned NxLevelL for Entrepreneur's program.

St. Lucie County, Fla. created a program to spur spending as well as encourage the adaptation of green technology. The county's Solar and Energy Loan Fund (SELF) offers businesses and homeowners low-interest loans to make energy-efficient upgrades to lower their utility costs and conserve resources. Through this revolving loan fund, the monthly loan payments are equal to or less than the monthly energy savings.

By offering these low-interest loans to homeowners for energy-efficient upgrades, the county is not only offering an affordable means to conserve natural resources, but also helping to stimulate the construction industry and local economy.

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



News From the Nation's Counties

► ARIZONA

PIMA COUNTY will save \$11 million by **paying down debt** more quickly over the next three years.

The Board of Supervisors approved issuing \$210 million of debt to help pay for a state-of-the-art wastewater construction project that will accommodate future growth and ensure the county meets strict federal mandates set by the EPA.

That debt is split into two main tracks: Approximately \$150 million will be standard debt that's repaid over a 15-year term. The remaining \$60 million will be paid back over three years. Although it is common for other jurisdictions to issue debt over as much as 30 years, Pima County generally pays 80 percent of its debt in the first 10 years, the *Tucson Citizen* reported.

► FLORIDA

Local firms and those headquartered in **MIAMI-DADE COUNTY** will get preferential treatment when procuring county business.

A new ordinance allows local businesses a 15 percent cushion over a non-local vendor's lowest bid to participate in the best-and-final-offer process. The ordinance also says that if the low bidder is not a local business, then any and all responsive and responsible local businesses submitting a price within 10 percent of the low bid will get an opportunity to submit a best-and-final bid equal to or lower than the low bid, *Miami*

Today reported.

The ordinance covers general services and goods supplied to the county. General services covers support services that require special knowledge or expertise, and goods include supplies, equipment and materials.

To qualify, local vendors must have had a valid business tax receipt issued by the county at least one year before the bid or proposal submission.

► ILLINOIS

The new **MACOUPIN COUNTY Legal Self-Help Center** will provide online access to legal officials for low-income residents.

People without a computer or Internet access can use public-access computers at the Carlinville Public Library. The center will provide legal information on civil matters for low-income residents who must represent themselves in court. The center also contains other non-court-related legal information on matters such as Social Security, Medicare, unemployment compensation and other topics, according to the *State Journal-Register*.

The Illinois Equal Justice Foundation provided start-up funding through an appropriation from the Illinois General Assembly.

► MARYLAND

• **BALTIMORE COUNTY** Executive Kevin Kamenetz wants to borrow \$255 million and repay it over the next 30 years to help fund

the county's retirement system, a move that would carry risk but that the administration says could benefit taxpayers in the long run.

Such a bond issue would not have to be approved by voters. In July, the county lowered its projections on the assumed investment earnings for its retirement system, meaning taxpayers must contribute an additional \$15 million annually to the retirement system starting next year.

The county would invest the borrowed money along with other funds in the pension system, the *Baltimore Sun* reported.

• Maps that define **where septic systems can be placed** in **SOMERSET COUNTY** got the backing of the planning and zoning commission.

Under a new law that was passed by the General Assembly earlier this year, all counties are required to divide land into four tiers ranging from the least restrictive to the most restrictive areas. The tier maps will affect where residential subdivisions can be placed and how big they can be, according to *Delmarva Now*.

Counties are required to have the maps completed by the end of the year.

• Students in **PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY** have a reason to smile, now that the county is coordinating with several partners to make **medical and dental services even more accessible** to public school students and their parents.

Mobile health units that offer the same type of services found in dentists' and primary care doctors' offices will travel to about 175 schools in the county this school year. The units — mostly offering dental services — were previously available at 108 schools, the *Washington Post* reported.

The county is working with Children's National Medical Center, Mary's Center, the University of Maryland School of Nursing Governor's Wellmobile, the Deamonte Driver Dental Project and Smile Maryland.

► MICHIGAN

MACOMB COUNTY Clerk and Register of Deeds Carmella Sabaugh is defying the Michigan secretary of state, saying she'll use applications to vote that **don't contain the U.S. citizenship question** in the November election.

OAKLAND COUNTY plan to use the forms with the citizenship question and **WAYNE COUNTY** officials did not return calls from the *Detroit Free Press*.

Applications with the U.S. citizenship question — used by many municipalities in the August primary — have sparked controversy since Michigan Secretary of State Ruth Johnson ordered the question put on ballot applications before the presidential primary in February.

At the time, there was no legislation requiring the citizenship question, but the Legislature passed the law in June. Gov. Rick Snyder (R) vetoed the bill, saying it would create undue confusion for voters and poll workers.

Sabaugh cited Snyder's veto as a reason for not using the new voter applications and said the old applications require voters to affirm they're a qualified elector, which includes citizenship.

► MISSOURI

Members of the **CAPE GIRARDEAU COUNTY** Board for Developmental Disabilities will have more to work with after this year now that the county commission has **restored the full amount** of the tax levy that funds its activities.

In 2011, commissioners cut funding by half, citing worry about taxpayer money going to pay attorney's fees in a now-settled legal dispute with VIP Industries, which is reimbursed by the board for the costs of running a sheltered workshop for developmentally disabled people, the *Southeast Missourian* reported.

Voters approved the tax that funds the board's activities in 1975. In recent years, the board has collected about \$870,000 annually from the levy.

► NEW YORK

The **Buffalo Bills** and **ERIE COUNTY** have agreed in principle to a one-year lease extension that would keep the team playing at Ralph Wilson Stadium next season. Meanwhile, talks would continue on a long-term deal, the Associated Press reported.

County Executive Mark Poloncarz recently announced the county and the Bills had agreed to extend the lease if a new deal isn't in place by July 31, 2013 when the current lease expires.

"By doing an extension, it guarantees the Bills are here for the full 2013 season, and it gives us ample time during the next 18 months or so to continue these negotiations," Poloncarz said.

► OHIO

MONTGOMERY COUNTY is studying the key traits of communities whose **economies and populations are growing**. County

officials have been holding a series of forums on High Performing Counties: Similarities and Winning Strategies.

Working with researchers from Wright State University and the University of Dayton, the county is looking at mid-sized counties across the country to identify those improving the quality of life for their residents and businesses, the *Dayton Daily News* reported. Joe Tuss, the county's interim administrator, said the forums are "about generating ideas."

Researchers have found nine counties that are doing better than expected in terms of overall growth including: Chatham County, Ga.; Hillsborough County, N.H.; Knox County, Tenn.; Lane County, Ore.; Lehigh County, Pa.; Madison County, Ala.; Onondaga County, N.Y.; Spokane County, Wash. and Utah County, Utah.

► TEXAS

Feral hog tails... \$2 apiece. How much **HAYS COUNTY** commissioners voted to spend on a bounty program... \$1,500. The name of a state program providing even more incentive funds — **Hog Out County Grant Program** — priceless.

The Texas Department of Agriculture's Hog Out grants pay \$20,000 to the county that accumulates the most points from Oct. 1 to Dec. 31. Counties can earn points for the number of feral hogs taken and the number of people who participate in an educational course to learn about the animals, *The Statesman* reported.

County Judge Bert Cobb joked that the county would be serving sausage at this year's employee banquet. But the wild porkers are no laughing matter. They can destroy crop and range lands, and prey on livestock and native species.

► WASHINGTON

An ailing 10-year-old boy is in good condition after a **KING COUNTY** sheriff's helicopter rescued him from a 7,000-foot peak in **CHELAN COUNTY**.

The unidentified boy, his father and a family friend contacted Chelan County officials saying the boy was sick and unable to hike down on his own. They spent the night because the steep terrain was too dangerous for ground teams to navigate at night.

The next day, the boy was airlifted to Seattle where he was transferred to a local hospital, *The Olympian* reported.

» DeSoto County, Miss.

www.desotoms.com



On Feb. 9, 1836, DeSoto County was carved out as the most northwestern of Mississippi's 82 counties in a corner that borders Tennessee and Arkansas. The county is named for Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto, who explored northern Mississippi and is thought to have discovered the Mississippi River near present-day Lake Cormorant. The county seat, Hernando, is also named in his honor.

Major interstates including I-55, I-69 and I-22 make DeSoto County easily accessible from all directions. The greenways, blueways and history make it a popular tourist destination.

The seal depicts the courthouse cupola and a large-scale, inverted leaf. The two images, which represent history and growth, are separated by the Mississippi River which runs along the western border of the county.

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

The H.R. Doctor Is In

Spock's Mind Meld: Good Technique for HR Pros

Here is an all too typical example of an adventure that every professional in human resources frequently encounters. A supervisor meets with an HR professional colleague to share a problem and seek advice. The supervisor wishes to either fire or extend the probationary period of a rather new employee. She explains that she thought the employee did a good job but has "absenteeism" issues.

Further, the supervisor didn't like the way the employee spoke to her.

On the surface, these issues might seem like grounds for disciplinary action, or in the case of probationary employees, might lead to termination. Probationary employees in government are, after all, generally held to be "at will" employees and have yet to be sprayed with the Teflon armor of civil service status. However, a very big deal indeed is to make sure that even with probationary employees, supervisors and the agencies have a job-related basis for their actions.

The plot thickens in this case. The HR professional asked if the supervisor holds other employees in the office accountable for absenteeism. She replied that she did not. The supervisor was asked if she ever discussed her concerns with the employee. She had not. The supervisor was asked to be specific in describing what she meant when she stated that she didn't like the way the employee spoke to her. Once again, the supervisor could not explain specifically what she meant. Finally, with a little help from her HR colleague

On the surface, these issues might seem like grounds for disciplinary action, or in the case of probationary employees, might lead to termination.

(now assuming the role of adult day care provider) the supervisor decided that she would extend the employee's probationary period. She then asked how she could tell the employee what was wrong and what she could do about it.

After another period of coaching, the end result was that the wonderful HR colleague and the supervisor would jointly meet with the employee. In other words, the effort to define a problem, coach the employee and provide "cover" for the supervisor, was in reality a plot to have HR assume responsibility for what a marginally functional supervisor should

be doing with competence and confidence.

In these situations, HR generally offers to be present not only out of compassion for the parties involved, but to insure that the meeting does not result in chaos and ugliness instead of progress and positive outcome. Concern over the supervisor's competence is as important a factor as the employee's reported behavior may be. The next meeting should be focused on helping the supervisor avoid future debacles!

I very much appreciate the great skill and tact of my friend and colleague Diane Stachurski who was kind enough to share this adventure with me. Diane went on, however, to suggest a brilliant solution to all of these situations; namely, borrow the Mind Meld concept from Star Trek's Mr. Spock.

Imagine HR having the authority and capability to use the Vulcan technique to implant into the supervisor's brain basic concepts like respect, no surprises, honest sharing of concerns, and ways for outcomes to be positive. This Mind Meld has implications for

every agency around the world. In fact, the best managers and supervisors in HR and in general already practice the technique... minus the touching, of course. It is the approach of any great and caring coach, colleague and friend.

It has always amazed the HR Doctor that there are supervisors and employees who appear to leave their brains in their vehicles in the parking lot before they come into work. Then, at the end of the work day, they return to the parking lot, pick up their brains, and move on about their lives. Unfortunately, leaving your brains in long term storage may be acceptable when the subject is something much more mundane than how you affect the lives of others as a public servant.

As Diane and the HR Doctor point out, using an HR Mind Meld would allow managers and supervisors as well as the employees who serve the public to "live long, serve well, and prosper!"



Phil Rosenberg
The HR Doctor • www.hrdr.net

Job Market & Classifieds

► EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – CALIFORNIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

Salary: DOQ.

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) is one of the premier public sector policy and advocacy associations in the State of California. Located in the most challenging and dynamic state in the nation, CSAC is seeking a new Executive Director to continue strong leadership on behalf of California counties.

This position, headquartered in Sacramento, is an outstanding professional opportunity for an individual who wants to actively work on some of the most pressing issues of our time and help shape the future in support of the elected leadership of county government in California. CSAC provides a competitive salary along with an excellent and flexible benefits package.

For a detailed recruitment brochure, visit the CSAC website at www.csac.counties.org, or contact Roberts Consulting Group at robertsrgc@msn.com. How to Apply: If you are interested in this outstanding opportunity, submit your resume (email preferred) to Roberts Consulting Group, PO Box 16692, Beverly Hills, CA 90209; Email: robertsrgc@msn.com; Phone: 818.783.7752. Deadline: Friday, Sept. 28.

Counties bill neighboring county's library system

NEWS FROM *from page 11*

► WISCONSIN

• The **WISCONSIN COUNTIES ASSOCIATION (WCA)** is asking all county boards to adopt resolutions backing legislation to require **online retailers** to collect and remit state and local sales tax, according to the *Fond du Lac Reporter*.

"Currently, between \$150 million and \$250 million is being uncollected annually in Wisconsin state and local sales tax due to online-only retailers not collecting and remitting the tax," WCA Executive Director Mark O'Connell wrote in a memo to county board chairs and county executives.

Fond du Lac County Executive Allen Buechel said, "It's definitely

a competitive issue for retail merchants in our own county. It affects their business when [a competing online business] gets a 5 or 5-and-a-half percent discount by not paying taxes."

• **DANE COUNTY** is going high-tech to help World Dairy Expo 2012. The county is investing in wireless Internet access for its Alliant Energy Center campus to facilitate a **quick cattle check-in** process for this year's event Oct. 2–6. The \$30,000 project has expanded limited Wi-Fi access to the central part of the campus just in time for the event.

"World Dairy Expo means millions for our economy and is a global event rooted in decades of deep tradition right here in Dane County," County Executive Joe Parisi said. "By making these upgrades, we're making it easier for World Dairy Expo's more than 2,500 head of cattle to settle into their week-long home, and we are happy to do what we can to make both our two-legged and four-legged guests comfortable

during this amazing showcase for agriculture."

• **KEWAUNEE COUNTY** officials are urging residents to **use their local libraries** after the county received a \$68,404 bill from the library system in neighboring Brown County.

Under legislation signed by former Gov. Jim Doyle in 2006, county library systems can require adjacent counties to cover the cost of services used by those nearby counties' residents, the *Green Bay Press Gazette* reported.

Brown County records show Kewaunee County residents borrowed more than 33,000 items from Brown County libraries in 2011. Manitowoc County was the first county to bill Kewaunee; Kewaunee County reciprocated by billing Manitowoc for services.

(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 and Officials

• NACo First Vice President **Linda Langston** spoke about NACo and the presidential initiatives at the Idaho Association of Counties annual conference in Blaine County Sept. 17.

• Montgomery County Councilmember **Nancy Floreen**, who chairs the council's Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee, was among those participating at the White House Forum, in a special, invitation-only forum titled "Building Blocks for Economic Development and Job Growth" Sept. 19 in Washington, D.C.



Linda Langston

On the Move is compiled by Christopher Johnson

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