

NACO National Association of Counties

CountyNews

| The Voice of America's Counties

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Langston new NACo president, Clark wins second VP

Annual Conference
After-Action Report



BY BEVERLY A. SCHLOTTERBECK
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

A redesigned and rebranded 2013 NACo annual conference made its debut in Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas last month. The newly-christened County Solutions and Idea Marketplace ran one day less than its predecessors, yet featured more workshops and a special leadership track for attendees, intended, as 2012 NACo President Chris Rodgers said, “to make it more productive, more educational and less costly to members.”

At the Annual Business Meeting, held in conjunction with the conference, delegates elected Linn County, Iowa Supervisor Linda Langston as NACo’s 78th president, and in the first contested election for second vice president in several years, Sallie Clark, commissioner, El Paso County, Colo., won the official slot on the Executive Committee

Rounding out the NACo leadership team are Riki Hokama, first vice president and council member Maui County, Hawaii, and Chris Rodgers, commissioner, Douglas

County, Neb., as immediate past president.

In her inaugural remarks, Langston pledged to take NACo to “great new heights” with the help of members, affiliates and staff of the association.

She will have one key presidential initiative this year, under the banner of building Ready and Resilient Counties—Prepare, Respond, Thrive. (See report on her inaugural speech, page 4)

Also elected to the executive team as regional representatives

See ANNUAL page 2

Photos by David Hathcox

NACo’s 2013 leadership team takes the stage at NACo’s County Solutions and Idea Marketplace. (l-r) Linda Langston, president; Riki Hokama, first vice president; Sallie Clark, second vice president; and Chris Rodgers, immediate past president. A full conference wrap-up, including a photo review, begins on page 5.



As family and friends look on, Jane Halliburton, (l) former Story County, Iowa supervisor, swears in Linn County, Iowa supervisor Linda Langston as NACo’s new president. Also pictured are: Langston’s husband, Dave; son, Eric; son-in-law, James; son, Evan; daughter-in-law, Amanda; Susie Younger, “Iowa sister;” and Bill Patterson, Iowa State Association of Counties executive director.

CountyNews
Features

Innovation aims at improving services, reducing costs

Annual Conference After-Action Report



By **CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON**

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

AND **CHARLES TAYLOR**

SENIOR STAFF WRITER



Applying innovative technologies to reduce costs and improve service delivery was the focus of NACo's 2013 Technology-Innovation Summit. It featured county information officers and officials discussing issues ranging from shifting criminal justice responsibilities to enhancing cyber security. The summit is held twice a year preceding NACo's major conferences.

Among the speakers were Susan Green, assistant CIO, and Deputy District Attorney Mark Whitmore, both from San Diego County, who moderated a session on how technology and operations can combine to create efficient and effective juvenile justice systems.

Later, there was a live demonstration of the Justice Electronic

Library, an electronic management system used by San Diego County's attorneys and courts, to replace existing, unwieldy paper-based processes. A test case file was used to illustrate how it provides access to files quickly and comprehensively.

"This makes it so attorneys no longer have to bring files and documents to court," Green said. "All information can be found and shared on any secure electronic device."

Cathy Marias, CIO, Bexar County, Texas, discussed how counties can manage threats in the digital age even if they don't have a chief information security officer. She offered advice on building a Best Security Practice by having counties engage in public-private partnerships with software companies to help reduce the amount of security risks. Protecting county assets is the most important goal.

"I've lived through this whole evolution," Marias said. "It's a whole lot different than it used to be when IBM mainframes were thought to be impenetrable."

Mary Singer, director, Health-

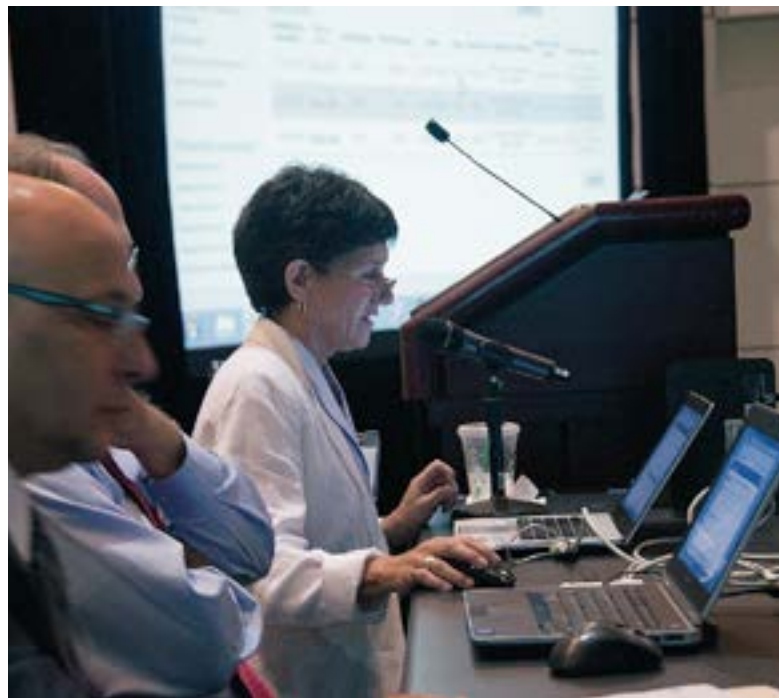


Photo by Jack Hernandez

Susan Green, San Diego County, Calif., demonstrates the Justice Electronic Library System at the Technology Summit.

care Strategic Services, IBM, explained how her company is using its know-how to build sustainable health care systems, improve quality and patient safety, and increase access and patient value. One example mentioned was the partnership between WellPoint and IBM's "Watson" computer.

Under the agreement, WellPoint develops and launches Watson-based solutions to help improve patient care through the delivery of up-to-date, evidence-based health care for millions of Americans. IBM develops the basic Watson health care technology on which WellPoint's solution will run. To date, Watson has helped physicians identify options that balance the interactions of various drugs and narrow down a large group of treatment choices, enabling physicians to quickly select the more effective treatment plans for their patients.

"IBM faces the same health care challenges counties do," Singer said. "Investing to improve health care systems pays off for business and society."

Phil Bertolini, deputy county executive and CIO of Oakland County, Mich., led a session on the Government-to-Government (G2G) Marketplaces. Oakland County and the state of Michigan have entered a partnership that both predict will save taxpayers money and expand cloud computing offerings for government-based software in the state.

State and county officials envision the marketplace as "a multimedia-rich information portal" where any government

agency can research and access e-commerce, website hosting and other government solutions. It will be available to users by desktop, laptop, smartphone, tablet or other mobile devices, and open to all governments to submit and share their own products and services.

"In this tough economy, county and state governments need to share," Bertolini said. "It's not only cost saving but beneficial for everyone."

Councilmember Hans Riemer, Montgomery County, Md., highlighted open government aspects of his county's presence online such as its CountyStat Web page. It provides access to anyone to the county's performance benchmarks, and how departments are meeting their goals as part of a larger open data initiative.

Officials from Texas and Michigan shared their experiences with providing paperless access to documents, and document storage and retrieval.

"Dallas County is the only

county in Texas where all of our courts are paperless courts," County Clerk John Warren said. About 160,000 cases are filed annually in the courts he oversees generating 12 million documents that run to more 100 million pages. Providing digital-only access to these files saves about \$1.2 million annually on operating expenses and business processes, Warren said.

Cathy Talcott, tax assessor-collector, Comal County, Texas, talked about working with a team of vendors to create a website that allows taxpayers to use their smartphones to scan a unique QR (quick response) code to receive personalized tax account information and the option to pay online. It was piloted in 2012, and the county saw its property tax collections increase by almost 13 percent in December 2012, compared to a 0.8 percent increase in December 2011.

NACo is partnering with AT&T to produce a Cyber Counties guidebook that is scheduled to be released in October.

**Resources from the 2013 NACo Technology-Innovation Summit are available at www.naco.org/tech-innovation-summit.*

HHS secretary among featured session speakers

ANNUAL from page 1

were Commissioner Joe Bryan, Wake County, N.C., eastern region, and Commissioner Tim Josi, Tillamook County, Ore., western region.

In the policy arena, delegates approved 13 new policy resolutions, several platform changes and reaffirmed 91 resolutions initially adopted at the 2012 annual meeting and the 2013 Legislative Conference. (See page 15 for the new resolutions.)

General session speakers and panelists, including Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, targeted the Affordable Care Act and its impact on counties, and the future of health care in their remarks. One panel discussion focused on innovative responses to newly emerging county challenges while another speaker extolled the benefits of freight rail. (You can read more about their presentations on page 14.)

Those attending the conference had their choice of more than 40 educational sessions including a new workshop block devoted exclusively to enhancing leadership skills and knowledge, a town hall

meeting on violence prevention and a morning-long educational forum that explored the challenges and opportunities oil and gas development bring to counties. (See report beginning page 13)

For conference attendees who had workshop scheduling conflicts, NACo's Web-based Conference Learning Center (www.naco.org/clc) will have the session materials and, in some cases, audio recordings available at no cost.

Also new this year was the Awards Luncheon, which acknowledged the winners of NACo's many award programs. Among those honored at the event were Achievement Award, National County Government Month and presidential scholarship award winners.

Next year's County Solutions and Idea Marketplace will be held in New Orleans, July 11-14, 2014.



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CORRECTIONS

► The jump page and continuation line to the cover story "State, local tax issues stay hot in Congress," that appeared in the July 15 issue of County News, were incorrect. The correct page number was 10 in the regular issue and the continuation line should have read "Taxes."

► In the Hot Topics section, "How to Succeed When Systems Fail You," continued on page 10. An incorrect jump page number had been listed.

Moving Forward with Muni-Bonds: **Keep Up the Pace**



By **MATT CHASE**
NACO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

cess will provide a great opportunity to schedule meetings and project tours with members and their staff to discuss the importance of municipal bonds to your local communities.

■ What You Can Do Over the Summer Recess

Don't just tell them; show them!

One of the best ways to communicate to your members of Congress about the importance of tax-exempt municipal bonds is to invite them and their staff to tour facilities or projects that are funded completely or in part by municipal bonds.

We encourage you to reach out to their schedulers now to get on their summer schedules. Remember to also invite the member's Washington, D.C. staff including the legislative director and chief of staff.

Lawmakers will appreciate the

opportunity to see the facilities made possible with municipal bonds, meet local business leaders and talk with employees who work in the facilities. Whether you get them in a car and drive around their district or schedule a tour, this is a very effective way to build the relationship and begin your advocacy efforts.

Be sure to mention that tax-exempt municipal bonds are not a special interest provision. They have been embedded in the federal tax code since its modernization in 1913.

Remember to thank them for their time and, if possible, take pictures and write a press release about the visit.

Also, arrange for a tailored profile of the impact on your county of changes to the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds. In May, NACo

prepared individualized profiles with these costs for each state and 45 counties. If your county was not among those initially surveyed and you would like to have your county-cost profile, please send your 2012 interest payment on your tax-exempt municipal bonds to research@naco.org. NACo's research team will produce a profile for you within one business day.

For questions on how to engage your members over the summer recess, please contact the NACo Legislative Affairs Department at 202.942.4254.

■ Thank them for their support!

Thank your House members for signing the "Dear Colleague" letter in support of the exemption for municipal bond interest.

To see if your representative signed on, go to <http://bit.ly/1aVlimS>

Also, urge your House members to cosponsor the Terry-Neal resolution (H. Res. 112) supporting municipal bonds.

H. Res. 112 celebrates the history and importance of municipal bonds in developing the infrastructure of the nation. There are currently 84 representatives signed on as cosponsors and more are needed. Visit <http://bit.ly/164hjkX> to see the current list of cosponsors.

If your representative would like to sign on, have their staff contact either A.T. Johnston in Rep. Lee Terry's office (at.johnston@mail.house.gov or 202.225.4155) or Ann Jablon in Rep. Richard Neal's office (ann.jablon@mail.house.gov or 202.225.5601).

Thank you for all of your efforts over the past few months to engage your congressional delegation on tax reform issues critical to county government. Now that we are well into the second half of the year, the tax reform process has evolved into more of a marathon and less of a sprint, and keeping a consistent pace of engaging your delegation will be critical in the coming months.

■ What's Next on the Congressional Calendar?

Congress is scheduled to leave for the summer recess beginning Aug. 5 through early September.

As members travel home, the re-

NACo Municipal Bond Campaign closely tracks congressional action



NACo's latest effort follows months of persistent lobbying on behalf of municipal bonds by the association and its members. Following are highlights from the campaign.

■ Senate "Blank Slate" Exercise

In July, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and Ranking Member Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) engaged in a "blank slate" exercise as the next step in tax reform efforts in the Senate. This approach essentially removed all provisions in the tax code, including the exemption for municipal bond interest, and called for senators to make the case for specific provisions to be included in the code.

In a letter sent to their colleagues, the two leaders stressed the need to simplify the tax code, but recognized some provisions were important to keep. For those that should be retained, they called for clear evidence that the provision helps: grow the economy, make the tax code fairer, or effectively promote other important policy objectives.

The exercise generally received mixed reactions from senators, ranging from no response submitted to responses with just general principles outlined.

■ 138 Representatives Supported Municipal Bonds "Dear Colleague" Letter

As a result of your outreach seeking signatures in the

House for a bipartisan letter led by Reps. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-Md.) and Randy Hultgren (R-Ill.) — both former county officials — supporting municipal bonds, NACo is pleased to report that 138 representatives, evenly split on both sides of the aisle, signed on to the letter that was sent to House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) and Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.).

■ 14 Senators Sent Letter to President Urging Support for Municipal Bonds

In April, Sen. Mark Begich (D-Alaska) sent a letter to President Obama urging the Administration not to cap or eliminate the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds as a means of addressing the federal deficit. The letter, on which 13 fellow senators joined, stressed the negative impact that state and local governments would experience as a result of any changes.

■ NACo-led Letter with 59 National Organizations Supporting Municipal Bonds during March Senate Budget Debate

In March, the Senate's 2014 Budget Resolution contained language that suggested the possibility of a cap being placed on tax expenditures, which could include the exemption for interest earned on municipal bonds. In response, NACo led a letter that garnered a broad coalition of national organiza-

tions with members that would be impacted by proposed changes to the exemption.

■ Ways and Means Committee Tax Reform Working Groups

Earlier this year, House Ways and Means Chairman Dave Camp (R-Mich.) and Ranking Member Sandy Levin (D-Mich.) announced the formation of 11 separate Ways and Means Committee Tax Reform Working Groups. The groups engaged in a "fact finding" exercise where the current law for specific issue areas was identified and external stakeholder feedback was obtained in various forms. Although no specific group focused on state and local financing, tax-exempt municipal bonds was part of the discussion.

■ Senate Finance Committee Tax Reform Option Papers

For most of the spring, Senate Finance Committee members met on a weekly basis for closed-door discussions on various tax reform topics. The goal was to collect feedback from committee members on a range of options for taking on tax reform. As with the House Ways and Means Working Group exercise, no single option paper focused solely on municipal bonds. They were discussed, however, in at least one paper — the May 15 paper titled "Economic and Community Development."

**You can find municipal bond resources on NACo's website at www.naco.org/muniresources. You can also find links to documents mentioned in this report by viewing this article at www.naco.org/countynews.*

If you have questions or need assistance, contact Mike Belarmino at mbelarmino@naco.org or 202.942.4254

Committee meetings feature prominent speakers

Annual Conference
After-Action Report



■ Transportation Steering Committee

In conjunction with the annual conference, several hundred representatives from NACo-member counties participated in policy steering committees, developing the association's legislative policy and platform. Often the meetings provide a stage for events or speakers relevant to the scope of the committees. Here are some highlights.

First term U.S. Rep. Roger Williams (R-Texas) seemed wistful when describing how he saw county government. "The decisions you make on the county level affect people a lot more than what we do in Congress," he said, adding that counties were a level of government where new solutions could be tried and evaluated quickly.

Not to seem disillusioned with legislative work already, he said he

was pleased to have made it to the House Transportation Committee. "It gives me influence into every bit of our transportation systems," he said. "If we can't move people or product, we can't do anything."

During his remarks, he advocated for public-private partnerships wherever possible for transportation infrastructure financing, because of the respect he has for the private sector's efficiency and the fact that federal spending on transportation would be under \$1 billion for the first time in years.

He advocated for inter-city passenger rail and the reauthorization of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008, which is due to expire in September. He also noted that he had introduced a bill to repeal fuel-efficiency standards that were recently adopted by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Bob Fogel, NACo staff liaison to the transportation committee and a NACo senior legislative director, is retiring in September after 28 years at NACo and committee members honored his work at the conclusion of the meeting.

■ Agriculture and Rural Affairs Steering Committee

Department of Commerce Deputy Assistant Secretary Matt Erskine gave an update on Commerce Department initiatives aimed to help rural counties.

"State and local governments do not have resources to make critical



Photo by David Hathcox

Department of Commerce Deputy Assistant Secretary Matt Erskine briefs members of the Ag and Rural Affairs Steering Committee.

investments when the need is more urgent than ever," Erskine said. "No one, including counties, can go it alone to achieve economic development success. Getting together with state associations and tapping into regional resources are more important than ever."

He also talked about how counties in the past often found themselves

applying for federal assistance programs among many different agencies. This is why the Obama Administration wants to synchronize these programs to maximize federal taxpayer returns but also enable communities when they craft their long-term development plans.

See COMMITTEES page 8

President Langston to focus on ready, resilient counties

Annual Conference
After-Action Report



BY CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Linn County, Iowa Supervisor Linda Langston pledged to take NACo to "great new heights" during her year as president.

She will have a single key presidential initiative this year: Ready and Resilient Counties – Prepare, Respond, Thrive.

"Why focus on resilience?" she asked. Because counties are on the front lines of coping with an increasing variety of disasters: hurricanes, forest fires, economic disruptions, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes. In the past three years, 25 percent of counties have experienced a presidentially declared disaster.

"Resilient communities recover faster and better and ultimately even if you never experience a disaster, fostering resilience makes for a better community and a thriving county," said Langston, whose home county experienced devastating floods in 2008. "It builds the capacity of a system — your county — to maintain its core purpose and integrity in the face of drastically changed circumstances."

She said counties can learn from each other's experiences and also stressed the importance of collaboration with federal agencies such as FEMA, HUD, Health and Human Services, EPA and the Small Business Administration. NACo will also work with foundations and corporate partners to expand the range of resources available to counties to assess and improve their readiness.

"Partnerships and collaboration

are new mandates in today's world," Langston said. "We must build more of them and work with others to advance a solution-driven local government. We will demonstrate every day Why Counties Matter."

Langston said NACo will also continue its focus on previous presidential initiatives such as healthy counties, cybersecurity, smart justice, veterans and immigration reform.

In a nod to the authors of those initiatives, she acknowledged her immediate predecessors, past presidents Chris Rodgers, Lenny Eliason and Glen Whitley — "I have learned so much from you, and you have all set great standards for leadership." For their support, she also thanked her family, the Iowa State Association of Counties and the mentors who "taught me so much about good leadership," Jane Halliburton, former supervisor, Story County, Iowa, and Colleen Landkammer, a past NACo president.

She closed with a rallying call to her colleagues from across the country.

"In today's era of severe partisan gridlock and budget challenges at the federal level, it's clear our counties must take an even stronger leadership role, helping themselves. We can't wait for the White Knight to rescue us in a disaster," Langston said.

"It's going to be a busy and exciting year, as we build on NACo's strengths — our members — who are problem solvers, networkers and amazing thought leaders.

"I look forward to taking this journey with each you and all of our NACo team members across America this year."



Photo by Jack Hernandez

U.S. Rep. Roger Williams (R-Texas) addresses the Transportation Steering Committee. The first-term congressman serves on the House Transportation Committee.

Workshops explore cutting-edge issues for counties

Annual Conference After-Action Report



NACo's Annual Conference: County Solutions and Idea Marketplace provides excellent workshops for learning timely and relevant information about issues important to county government. The following report highlights educational sessions from the Tarrant County, Texas conference.

(Several of the workshops were recorded with audio and slides from the presentations available at NACo's website—free to conference attendees, or for a fee to non-attendees. Visit www.naco.org/clc.)

Saturday, July 20

LEAN County Government

Who spoke?

- **Laurie Klupacs**, interim executive director, Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC)

- **Toni Smith**, education director, AMC

What participants learned:

How to do more with less. Finding a county that hasn't had to face this reality can be harder than quelling fears among staff that talk of efficiency studies is a code word for layoffs.

"It's not about laying off staff," Smith said. "It's about figuring out how what you do adds value and eliminating anything in the process that doesn't add value."

That said, after an efficiency

analysis, such as the waste-busting LEAN process favored by AMC, employees can find themselves reassigned, if that promotes an organization's product and reduces waste.

She added that too much of problem-solving involves time spent brainstorming a nebulous issue, time that could be better allocated to identifying the problem that could be resolved and effect improvement.

They identified waiting, defective processes, unclear objectives and wasted movement as four of the key opponents of an effective office. The two have done LEAN training in counties across Minnesota.

Successfully analyzing processes and making them more efficient could lead to dramatically reduced backlogs, reduced lead times, improved consistency in work.

"Sponsors must be open-minded and willing to accept the results, or else it will be a waste of time," Klupacs said.

(Staff contact: Laurie Klupacs and Toni Smith, tsmith@mncounties.org, 651.789.4335)

Modernizing Health Plans

Who spoke?

- **John Bass**, vice president, United Healthcare

- **Thomas Diaz**, M.D., medical director, United Healthcare



Photos by David Hathcox

Thomas Diaz, M.D., United Healthcare, makes a point about how the Affordable Care Act will affect county employee benefits as Tina Glenn, Tarrant County HR director, looks on.

- **Tina Glenn**, HR director, Tarrant County, Texas

What participants learned:

Glenn and the United Healthcare officials shared innovations that are lowering the costs of employee health care for Texas counties.

Glenn said Tarrant County participates with several other counties in a Public Employee Benefits Co-operative (PEBC) created in 1998. It developed a common plan design for all medical and dental benefits for its members, including Dallas,

Denton and Parker counties.

"Diabetes is something that we're grappling with," she said. The PEBC has a disease-management program for people with such chronic conditions. "These individuals are closely monitored; there's a lot of good outreach." Their supplies are covered at 100 percent, which helps to ensure better compliance in taking their medications.

An employee without diabetes could cost a county \$3,000 a year, according to Diaz. That doubles for

someone with controlled diabetes, and a person with uncontrolled diabetes could cost \$10,000 to \$22,000 a year.

Bass said half of what counties spend on health care is preventable. Based on his company's data, 40 percent of health care costs can be linked a single statistic: elevated blood sugar levels. Wellness and prevention programs, like the PEBC's, can make a difference. He added that if a diabetes-prone person can lose 5 percent of their body weight, they cut their risk of developing full-blown diabetes by more than 50 percent.

Bass said one way counties can rein in their health benefit liabilities is by providing incentives, such as lower insurance premiums. Though they have upfront costs for employers, in the long run, they reduce such factors as hospital admissions and costlier readmissions, and give employees a stake in managing costs.

(Tarrant County liaison: Natalie Plunk, 817.884.1041.)

Sunday, July 21

NACo Town Hall on Preventing Community Violence

Who spoke?

- **Ron Mandersheid, Ph.D.**, executive director of the National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors

- **Bill Pribil**, sheriff, Coconino County, Ariz.



A work group considers how to communicate approval of new landfill for coal ash from power plants during an exercise at the Staying on Point: It's the Message workshop.

Sebelius enlists counties' help; freight rail benefits, future of health care explored at general sessions

Annual Conference
After-Action Report



NACo conferences are notable for their top-notch speakers from both the private and the public sphere. The 2013 Annual Conference was no exception. Following is a review of the general sessions' headliners.

Kathleen Sebelius

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius urged NACo members at the closing general session to become involved in promoting enrollment in the health care insurance exchanges that will launch in October.

Just because new coverage options will be available doesn't mean that everyone knows about them or will take advantage of them, she said, adding that county elected officials are uniquely positioned to help educate their constituents about the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) continuing implementation.

"It's absolutely critical to reach out to people who will benefit the most from expansion," she said. "A healthier, more prosperous America has to be built city by city, community by community, county by county."

She said the Medicaid expansion option under the ACA is important to counties because it reduces the burden of uncompensated care and could be a shot in the arm for local economies and hospitals, freeing up dollars counties could use for other priorities.

"There is a limit to improving the health of your communities unless there is access to affordable health insurance," she said.

She encouraged county elected officials to become knowledgeable about new provisions of the ACA because the same constituents who stop them in the grocery store to complain about potholes will also start asking about the insurance exchanges, now called Marketplaces. In addition, she asked counties to engage their faith, health and business communities to help educate them about their options.

County officials can learn more about a new online Health Insurance Marketplace that will open in every state through HealthCare.gov. They also can sign up online to receive updates from HHS and further disseminate that information.

She said HealthCare.gov will be more like commercial websites in that it will feature a live Web chat option to answer questions in real



Photos by David Hathcox

(l-r) A discussion on health care's future at the closing general session was moderated by Robert Early, president, JPS Network; and featured Richard Migliori, M.D., executive vice president, United Health Group; Michael Leavitt, former U.S. Health and Human Services secretary and Utah governor; Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe; and Timothy McBride, PhD, professor, University of Washington in St. Louis.

time. There is also a 24/7 customer service call center that can offer assistance in 150 languages.

Sebelius thanked NACo's leaders for creating a partnership with HHS that will strengthen enrollment efforts in counties. Her department is partnering with local libraries and community health centers to help people sign up, and she added that efforts are underway to hire people to work in local communities to educate residents about the program.

Where is Health Care Going? The Public Sector Impact

Three health care practitioners, including a former Cabinet secretary, an academic and a health care system administrator bandied about opinions and predictions on how the Affordable Care Act's implementation would affect the public sector.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe then took on the specialist's role and related those sometimes-general thoughts to the concerns of county governments.

Much was made of the inefficiencies in the current health care financing system, which wastes hundreds of billions of dollars a year on incorrect or untimely treatment, to the point where if those inefficiencies were eliminated, they would go a long way to properly funding it.

Former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Mike Leavitt compared the transformation to going from a subsidized transportation system of personal taxicabs to a bus system, with all of the adjustments and complaints that would accompany such a transition. He advised officials to view the ACA's implementation as a transformation of the way health care services are delivered, with eventual advantages once the system was in place. He said he is more optimistic than he has been in the last decade that its goals are within reach, but it was best not to look at it as a pejorative.

Knabe agreed. "Whether you're for or against it (the ACA), we have to be ready," he said. He added that the ACA will still leave between 10 and 20 million people uninsured, and caring for the poor ends up being counties' niche in health care.

Matt Rose

Matt Rose, chairman and CEO of the BNSF Railway Company came loaded with a boxcar of statistics to make his case for the efficacy of freight rail transport. Railroads, he said, already account for nearly 40 percent on intercity freight movement, and each train can remove 280 trucks from the roads, which impacts congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

"A 10 percent shift in freight

from truck to rail could also produce over \$3 billion in highway maintenance cost savings," he said. "It's easy to imagine less road congestion, it would make everyone's commute easier."

On top of 175,000 jobs working for railroads, the industry sustains nearly an additional 800,000 jobs. He noted that rail contributes \$265 billion annually to the U.S. economy. Rail accounts for approximately one-third of all U.S. exports, including 68 million tons of coal and 74 million tons of grain.

He said BNSF and NACo have a good relationship because his company's annual meeting with the Transportation Steering Committee gives each side a chance to understand the other's concerns. They've used those meetings to focus on avoiding land-use conflicts by protecting rights of way from incompatible residential developments.

He added that a comprehensive rail system affects the costs of transporting freight to the point where it could reduce costs.

"These trains deliver goods to businesses and right to the consumer," he said, "Higher fuel efficiency means lower costs to get them to the market."

He said the projected 40 percent increase in freight tonnage by 2040



HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius speaks at the closing general session.

Board adopts variety of resolutions in Fort Worth

Annual Conference After-Action Report



In addition to platform revisions, county officials adopted a number of new policy positions, dealing with issues from New Taxes on Health Care Benefits to Mitigation Funds for Wildfires. Following is a list of the newest policy resolutions adopted at the NACo Annual Business Meeting, July 22.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

■ International Economic Development and Offshore Manufacturing

Issue: Economic Development is a key issue for many counties across the nation and with high unemployment still in existence, jobs are a priority. However, too many companies are moving from one state to another without a net increase to the overall U.S. economy.

Adopted Policy: NACo would like the federal government to encourage businesses to move manufacturing back to the states from offshore. This can be done through a variety of incentives. NACo is open to working with the federal and county governments to find the right way to incentivize this initiative.

ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND LAND USE

■ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 Permit Program

Issue: Administration of Clean Water Act (CWA) s404 Permit Program for routine maintenance.

Adopted Policy: NACo urges the federal government to improve the CWA s404 permit process by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps); remove routine maintenance of human-made public flood protection facilities from the s404 permit process when no endangered species habitat present; and extend the (CWA) general permit term for routine maintenance from five to 10 years. This proposal does not apply when endangered species are present in the maintenance area.

HEALTH

■ The National Conversation on Mental Health

Issue: County role in the National Conversation on Mental Health.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports



Photos by David Hathcox

Environment, Energy and Land Use Steering Committee Vice Chair Penny Gross, Fairfax County, Va., presents her committee's policy recommendations to the Board of Directors.

the goals of the Administration's effort to launch a national conversation to increase understanding and awareness about mental health and to identify ways to reduce stigma, and to expand coverage and improve access to mental health services, especially for young people and veterans. NACo calls on the Administration to recognize counties as essential partners in these efforts and for counties to be engaged and invited to the table as national and local conversations are developed and implemented.

■ Repealing and Replacing the Medicare DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program

Issue: The Medicare Durable

Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies (DMEPOS) Competitive Bidding Program threatens small, rural home medical equipment supplier businesses and access to home care for beneficiaries in rural counties.

Adopted Policy: NACo opposes the DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program and calls for repeal of the program. NACo supports the alternative Market Pricing Program (MPP), an improved bidding system developed by the medical equipment industry and supported by economists. The MPP will cut Medicare rates for home medical equipment to a responsible level and allow all providers to participate at those rates regardless of the bidding process.



Elizabeth Blanchard, commissioner, Merrimack County, N.H., questions speaker at Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee meeting.

HUMAN SERVICES AND EDUCATION

■ Reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant

Issue: The Child Care and Development Block Grant expires at the end of the fiscal year.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports a reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), which includes enhanced program flexibility, and s increased access to quality and safe child care.

■ International Collection of Child Support Obligations

Issue: Congress is considering legislation to streamline and make more uniform the process for collecting child support obligations from non-custodial parents living outside the United States.

Adopted Policy: NACo urges Congress to enact legislation implementing the 2007 Hague Treaty Convention, which contains procedures that ratifying countries must follow to process international child support cases in a uniform, simple, efficient, and accessible manner that is cost-free to U.S. citizens seeking support in other countries.

JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

■ Supporting Legislation to Provide Mitigation Funds for Certain Areas Affected by Wildfires

Issue: Support for Legislation

Providing Mitigation Funds for Certain Areas Affected by Wildfires

Adopted Policy: NACo supports legislation that provides dedicated mitigation funds by allowing the use of up to 15 percent of the cost of a Fire Mitigation Assistance Grant (FMAG) to support wildfire mitigation projects.

■ Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act and FEMA Mapping Procedures

Issue: Changes made to the National Flood Insurance Program and the release of inaccurate flood maps are causing dramatic increases in the cost of flood insurance.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports a sustainable, fiscally responsible National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) that protects the businesses and homeowners who built according to code and have followed all applicable laws. NACo urges Congress to amend the Biggert-Waters Act to keep flood insurance rates affordable while balancing the fiscal solvency of the program. NACo urges Congress to reinstate grandfathering of properties (not policies) that were built to code, have maintained insurance or have not repeatedly flooded for example, and to implement rate structures that reflect an economically reasonable rate.

■ Resolution Supporting the Metal Theft Prevention Act of 2013

Issue: The theft of specified metal.

Adopted Policy: NACo urges Congress to pass legislation supporting action to prohibit the stealing of specified metal, which would affect interstate and foreign commerce.

■ Resolution on an Alternative Restructuring of Homeland Security Grants

Issue: Establishing fiscally sound adjustments to homeland security grant programs that will continue to enhance the nation's capabilities to meet the challenges posed to counties by emergencies and disasters of all types.

Adopted Policy: NACo applauds the efforts of the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security to streamline the grant system and build a more fiscally responsible and sustainable program. However, NACo opposes the Homeland Security Grant Vision put forth by the Secretary in FY12 and FY13.

See **RESOLUTIONS** page 8

NACo policy opposes new taxes on health care benefits

RESOLUTIONS from page 7

NACo proposes an alternative that will better address the needs of all levels of government, and that does not discard the advances created by the past grants. We propose consolidation of the current homeland security grants into two programs:

- **National Preparedness Program** — A compilation of all current homeland security grants from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. De-

partment of Health and Human Services (HHS) (except as below), based on realistic risk to each state from all hazards including but not limited to terrorism, grants would be made to each state in order to sustain and enhance resilience and the ability to help other jurisdictions. Prioritization and allocation decisions to be made by the State Administrative Agency in transparent consultation and consent of local governments, and continuing to require that no less than 80 percent of these funds be passed to local government based

on their realistic risk.

- **Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI)** — Specific additional funding to the 25 urban areas at greatest risk of disastrous event (of all hazards including terrorism) in light of the significant populations and economic drives located in these areas. Again, the program would be jointly administered by the State Administrative Agency and the existing UASI organizational units and continuing to require that no less than 80 percent of these funds be passed through

to the urban areas.

NACo will work with Congress and the other stakeholders to prepare updated legislative language to accomplish these goals.

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

Resolution Opposing New Taxes on Health Care Benefits

Issue: The possible application of the excise tax provided in the Affordable Health Care Act (ACA) to health insurance for county employees as well as the expansion of taxation on employer-provided health benefits.

Adopted Policy: NACo opposes the taxation of health insurance benefits to county employees through the application of the ACA excise tax on health insurance benefits for county employees, the capping of the tax exclusion for employer-based defined contributions made by counties and any new taxes which would apply to the health benefits that counties provide to their employees.

PUBLIC LANDS

Resolution Supporting Funding for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program

Issue: Long-term funding source for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program (PILT).

Adopted Policy: Except for instances in which acquisition of private land may be necessary to comply with provisions of the Endangered Species Act, or acquisitions are supported by the local government of the affected area. NACo supports designating the use of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) as a sustainable source of funding for Payment in Lieu of Taxes, with formula modification that would comply with NACo policy & policy #13 of the Federal Land Management & Policy Act of 1976. NACo further supports full funding of annual LWCF appropriations without reductions to state mineral lease funds, if PILT is fully funded through the LWCF fund.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

Resolution Supporting Deployment of Next Gen 911

Issue: Allowing 911 call centers to receive Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates along with text messages.

Adopted Policy: NACo opposes efforts to impose unfunded mandates on local governments, but supports the voluntary use of text messaging to 911 and encourages the sending of GPS coordinates with text and SMS messaging when using 911.

EELU committee meeting spotlights environmental best practices

COMMITTEES from page 4

States and counties are in a better position fiscally than 2–3 years ago and general fund spending levels increased 2.2 percent this fiscal year. Additionally, 24 more states enacted lower spending levels in FY13 than in FY08.

“When rural America is strong, America as a whole is strong,” Erskine said.

Environment, Energy and Land Use Steering Committee

An educational session brought together several different programs that addressed the committee’s portfolio: environment, energy and land use.

ENERGY

Santa Barbara County, Calif. – EmPower

Santa Barbara County’s energy inefficient and deteriorating housing stock got a boost from a county program that provides low-interest financing options — including rebates for improvements of up to \$4,500 — and referrals to participating contractors.

The program, EmPower, developed a loan-loss reserve, effectively insuring against losses by contractors doing the work. The program leveraged federal funding for improvements at a 20:1 ratio.

In 18 months, 217 homes had work done by associated contractors, work that generated \$1.7 million in business for those contractors.

Ramsey County, Minn. – Law Enforcement Center Solar Panels Project

Hoping to diversify energy sources, the county installed solar

energy cells on its law enforcement center. “Our goal was to give us options for how we acquire energy for our county buildings and reduce carbon emissions if we could,” Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt said.

Mesa County, Colo. – Minerals and Energy Resources Master Plan

In 2011, the county adopted a comprehensive plan for mineral extraction and energy resources, updating plans that had been passed almost 30 years prior.

“We tried to create a balance between present and future resource development and land use,” Commissioner John Justman said. “We’d like to limit the impact that comes from extraction.”

ENVIRONMENT

Fairfax County, Va. – Stream and Pond Restoration

Nearby development and increased use of impervious surfaces caused a stream near the county government center to erode, cutting the stream off from a local flood plain. By dredging the stream and transferring silt using custom-made bags, engineers were able to move sediment and raise the creek bed.

LAND USE

McHenry County, Ill. – Green Infrastructure Plan

As part of the county’s 2030 comprehensive plan, the planning department aimed to link its major assets via open space. That meant determining what those assets were and the best way to develop the linking greenways.

Printing out huge maps allowed

commissioners to annotate their districts and influence the plan. Land use and environmental advocates were included, too.

“It was one of the least controversial projects we’ve done,” said Dennis Sanquist, the county’s director of planning and development. “It had near-universal support.”

Brookings County, S.D. – Pipeline Overlay District

The county adopted an overlay district to identify when development is planned near a transmission pipeline. “By keeping communication open between the county and interested parties, we know who is planning what,” said Robert Hill, the county’s development director. “I can’t force people to talk about their plans.”

Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee

NACo and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security have signed an MOU to promote DHS’s “Blue Campaign.” The campaign is designed to coordinate and enhance the department’s anti-human-trafficking efforts. It focuses on prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership efforts associated with its anti-trafficking activities, according to the memorandum.

The MOU was announced at the Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee, July 20. To learn more about the campaign, go to www.dhs.gov/humantrafficking, or contact Maeghan Gilmore at NACo, mgilmore@naco.org.

(Charlie Ban, Christopher Johnson, Beverly Schlotterbeck and Charles Taylor, County News staff, contributed to this report.)



Photo by David Hathcox

Commissioner Michael McKee, Uintah County, Utah, listens intently to the policy debate at the Public Lands Steering Committee.

Shale Forum offers variety of county perspectives, advice

WORKSHOPS from page 5

• **Michelle Morgan**, director, One Safe Place, Fort Worth, Texas
What participants learned:

After a violent act, whether it is a mass shooting or a troubled relationship that went too far, one of the first questions is invariably, “why?”

Panelists including a behavioral health scientist, a law enforcement official and a social worker agreed substance abuse, particularly alcohol, is a catalyst, especially when combined with serious mental illness.

“If they have a severe mental illness and substance abuse, there’s a high probability they’ll become violent,” Mandersheid said. “Most people with behavioral health conditions are not violent, and are, in fact, four-to-seven times more likely to be victims of violence.”

Pribil said although Coconino County has a relatively low crime rate, alcohol causes a lot of assaults.

“We struggle with it in our community, how to overcome it,” he said.

Often, that violence takes place at home, and it’s repeated.

“(There are) typically seven reported incidents to law enforcement before [victims] leave,” said Morgan, who directs a domestic violence resource center in Fort Worth. “They have the same intervention each time but don’t understand the nature of domestic violence.”

Mandersheid added that violent video games and media are an influence in enabling violent behavior, noting some games allow a player to “kill” thousands of people in an hour.

“It greatly devalues life,” he said. “If you get addicted to it, it influences your subsequent behavior.”

Mandersheid did, however, mention that the Affordable Care Act would establish a good framework for mental health treatment.

(Staff contact: Paul Beddoe, pbeddoe@naco.org, 202.942.4234)

■ Educational Forum: Solutions for Shale-impacted Counties

Who spoke?

- **Dick Gardner**, Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, Lincoln, Neb.
- **Don Macke**, Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, Lincoln, Neb.

What participants learned:

Gardner and Macke facilitated this highly interactive educational



Police Juror Major Coleman, St. Helena Parish, La., takes in a presentation on infrastructure financing.

forum, in which participants frequently broke up into small groups. Counties as diverse as Potter County, Pa., Forrest County, Miss. and Trumbull County, Ohio joined with counties better known for their involvement in the shale gas and oil industry to learn from each other. Improved hydraulic fracturing techniques have enabled drilling in

areas once deemed inaccessible or too costly.

More experienced counties, from states like North Dakota and Colorado, offered advice while all participants benefited from the facilitators’ expertise. They outlined four phases of past natural resource booms: planning, development, production and reclamation.

Counties new to the game can expect to deal with land use planning, infrastructure and social issues — such as friction between newcomers and old timers, and increases in crime and domestic violence, among others.

However, participants from counties with longer track records with the industry said benefits can

outweigh perceived risks. Officials from Pennsylvania touted working with the industry to obtain funding to improve first responder training for gas emergencies. In Sublette County, Wyo., gas companies helped local officials construct an emergency medical facility closer to the gas fields, which also serves local residents.

Tarrant County, Texas Judge Glen Whitley, a NACo past president, offered his county’s expertise in working with the shale gas industry — which is firmly established in the Fort Worth area — to counties where the industry is emerging. “We’ll be glad to set up a workshop,” he said. “We’ll sit down and we’ll plan an agenda that will bring folks from the cities, from the oil and gas companies, the pipelines, all of that, and we’ll help.”

Gardner and Macke said partnerships, sooner rather than later, can make all the difference. The keys to a successful experience, they said, are to take the potential boom seriously; get organized; think strategically; and to stay ahead of the curve.

(Staff contact: Therese Dorau, tdorau@naco.org, 202.942.4224)

■ Post-Adjudicated Programs and Smart Justice

Who spoke?

- **Brent Carr**, judge, Tarrant County, Texas Criminal Court
- **Cynthia Velasquez**, program manager, Tarrant County, Texas Drug Impact Rehabilitation Enhanced Comprehensive Treatment (D.I.R.E.C.T.)
- **Kathryn Omarkhail**, professional staff, Tarrant County, Texas Family Court Services
- **Courtney Young**, program manager, Tarrant County, Texas Veteran’s Court
- **Jim Sinclair**, assistant director, Tarrant County, Texas Felony Alcohol Intervention Program (FAIP)

What participants learned:

Tarrant County, Texas has several post-adjudication programs currently in operation. The panel included representatives from these programs and examined phases of specialty court programs.

Carr gave an overview of the different programs the county uses to help prevent non-violent offenders from being put in jail. How the programs are funded and how much counties saved was also addressed. County jails cost 500 percent more than the most expensive adjudication program



Judge Brent Carr, Tarrant County, Texas Criminal Court, gives an overview of jail diversion programs as Courtney Young of the county’s Veterans Court listens.

See **WORKSHOPS** page 10

Attendees learn about communication strategies, health reform issues

WORKSHOPS from page 9

(\$10 per day).

"There are more startup funds for these programs than sustaining (funds)," Carr said. "These programs sell themselves but need local partnerships to withstand the costs."

Non-violent offenders have two options in Tarrant County when it comes to supervised treatment according to Velasquez. D.I.R.E.C.T. Diversion and D.I.R.E.C.T. Drug Court offer non-violent offenders a judicially supervised treatment regimen in three or four phases over 12 months. The program has a 62 percent completion rate and 21 percent recidivism rate.

Omarkhail focused on the issue of mental health and how Tarrant County designed its diversion program to keep mentally impaired offenders out of the traditional criminal justice process and direct them into appropriate rehabilitation options.

Young said veterans who are currently facing prosecution for one or more criminal cases can find appropriate rehabilitative options.

"Most vets with mental health issues have them as a result of years in the field of combat," Young said. "The veteran's court helps rehabilitate them back to a normal life with their families."

Sinclair concluded the workshop by talking about how the FAIP program helps high-risk repeat DWI offenders with enhanced supervision and individual accountability when it comes to alcohol abuse.

(Tarrant County Liaison: Kathryn Omarkhail, kmomarkhail@tarrant-county.com, 817.884.3755.)

■ Staying on Point: It's the Message

Who spoke?

• **Todd McGee**, moderator, communications director, North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC)

• **Jessica Beyer**, communications director, Blue Earth County, Minn.

• **Lori Hudson**, communications director, Hillsborough County, Fla.

• **Dave Rose**, communications director, El Paso County, Colo.

What participants learned:

The workshop offered quick tips from seasoned public information officers (PIO) on how to craft and deliver messages to the media.

Workshop moderator McGee, National Association of Counties



Supervisor Peggy Romo West, Milwaukee County, Wis., shares work-life balance tips during a professional development workshop. Also pictured (l-r) are Board Chair Marina Dimitrijevic, Milwaukee County; Commissioner Alisha Bell, Wayne County, Mich.; and Councilmember Stalney Chang, Honolulu City and County.

Information Officers president, briefly discussed how to construct a message, treat the media and prepare for an interview.

The best advice when delivering a message, the PR experts said, is to stick to the three main points you deem most important, and reinforce them as often as possible. Research has shown that when presented with a litany of facts, most listeners can only reliably recall about three of them. So don't waste an interview opportunity by trying to cram in too much

information. Don't be evasive, but stay on-message.

Participants then broke into four groups, with each group given a controversial decision that needed to be communicated to the media. The group was to craft a message and select a leader who would participate in a mock news conference. The PIOs acted as reporters, while all audience members were invited to play reporter as well. After the news conference, the groups critiqued their spokespersons and messages.

There was time for questions and answers after the presentations with many participants interested in how to handle the media during major disasters or incidents.

(Staff contact: Jim Philipps, jphilipps@naco.org, 202.942.4220)

■ Health Reform Impacts to County Employees' Health Benefits

Who Spoke?

• **Rick Johnson**, senior vice president, public sector health practice leader, Segal Consulting

• **Susan Meholic**, head, business operations and product, public and labor segment, Aetna

• **Robin Vincent**, benefits administrator, Harris County, Texas

What participants learned:

The speakers offered their advice and perspectives on issues counties will face during fuller implementation of the Affordable Care Act this year and next.

Johnson said, "We now have something that is changing the entire playing field. First off, there are new and many more stringent requirements that public sector plans have to meet that they've never really had to meet before.... Importantly, the federal government is now a player in every one of your plans, whether you want it or not, or whether you like it or not."

He added that the state health exchanges — now called marketplaces — that go online Jan. 1, 2014 will be another major change. "Keep in mind you're going to have not only your usual competitors or vendors out there to deal with in terms of benefits but also perhaps even more cost-effective approaches through these exchanges."

Johnson and Harris County's Vincent both stressed that counties will have consider how to deal with variable-hour and seasonal employees who are not classified as fulltime.

"What do you do with those people you hired to mow the grass, to be lifeguards and others where they may be working fulltime for parts of the year?" Johnson asked. "You've got to figure out whether now they should be offered coverage as well" — and how that will affect county budgets.

Vincent called this the biggest challenge her county has faced thus far in implementing the ACA, and sorting it out can't be accomplished in a human resources vacuum. Other departments such as the county attorney and IT need to be involved as well.

Vincent advised counties to provide feedback to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on what's working and what's not — and to use NACo as



Wellington Webb leads a workshop on FirstNet, on whose board he serves.

See **WORKSHOPS** page 11

Speakers address energy-efficient buildings, grassroots outreach

WORKSHOPS from page 11

a resource to bridge information gaps. “We got in contact with our representative from NACo who actually got us on the phone with somebody from Health and Human Services, and they listened to us,” she said.

(Staff contact: Maeghan Gilmore, mgilmore@naco.org, 202.942.4261)

■ Data to Dollars: Energy Tracking Best Practices for Decision Makers

Who Spoke?

- **Dustin Knutson**, director of energy services, Institute for Building Technology and Safety (IBTS)
- **Brian Bell**, vice president for strategy, Facility Dude

What participants learned:

Knutson pitched his organization’s energy use intensity database and explained that more participation would make the benchmarks it calculates more statistically relevant.

The measure IBTS uses divides energy consumed over a year by

the total floor space in a building to yield “use intensity.” Use intensity is then indexed by type of building: office, warehouse, mixed-use.

“There are obvious differences in the way buildings are used,” he said. “Firefighters are focused on doing their jobs, and whether the garage bay door was closed when they left on the way to fight a fire is the last thing on their minds.”

He said the best way to frame energy-efficiency improvements is to reassure employees that despite the abstract purpose of reducing energy use, it would not end with cold people working in dark office buildings.

“Let them know that the money the county saves will go to keeping jobs or providing equipment,” he said.

He added that a basic inventory of building stock could make a good first step to recognizing how much energy was used in various county facilities.

“You’d be amazed how many people don’t have a list of their buildings,” he said.

He also said it is important to establish energy savings goals with

appropriate context.

“You can’t set a standing goal to cut energy use by a static number each year, like 20 percent,” he said. “The total gets smaller every year, and that 20 percent gets bigger and harder to realistically accomplish.”

Bell introduced the scientific method his organization follows when analyzing energy efficiency which includes the following:

- Organization
- Validation — finding billing errors
- Normalization — taking into account weather swings when comparing yearly data
- Classification — comparing appropriate building categories
- Investigation — pursuing discrepancies to find problems
- Justification — demonstrating value in the process, and
- Verification — determining if something was accomplished

(Staff contact: Therese Dorau, tdorau@naco.org, 202.942.4224)

Monday, July 22

■ Have an Impact: Effective Grassroots Strategies

Who Spoke?

- **Deborah Cox**, legislative director, NACo
- **Lisa Nolen**, outreach coordinator, North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC)
- **Alissa Willett**, legislative grassroots coordinator, NCACC

What participants learned:

Workshop speakers explained how counties can step up their game to get their message through to state and federal officials.

Willett said, “The strongest communications we can have is elected leaders to elected leaders.” She proceeded to outline several tools and strategies her association has used to engage with state legislators and members of Congress.

She focused on the importance of having outreach and grassroots efforts closely aligned. For example, her association uses two former county managers as emissaries who serve as its “eyes and ears” throughout the state’s 100 counties. A staff advocacy team, which usually focuses on lobbying at the state capitol, visits counties during breaks or lulls in the legislative session. The lobbyists contact county managers and offer to meet with them about their issues and concerns.

“We want to encourage them



Robin Vincent, benefits administrator, Harris County, Texas, explains potential impacts of the Affordable Care Act on her county’s employees’ health benefits.

[that it’s] their meeting; they come up with the agenda,” she said. “We ask them to invite county commissioners. We’ve had some counties invite every single department head in the county.” They are also asked to invite the state legislators who represent their area.

She also mentioned the association’s success in getting a former county commissioners’ caucus officially recognized by the state’s General Assembly. Twenty-seven ex-commissioners meet biweekly. They comprise a pool of lawmakers that counties can potentially tap to sponsor bills of concern to counties.

“I think the more that we can be viewed as educating and not lobbying, I think we’re really doing a service for counties of North Carolina,” Willett said.

Cox encouraged attendees to get to know their legislators in Washington — know their likes and dislikes, which committees they serve on, how they’ve voted in the past on key issues.

“It’s also very important that NACo, the state associations, individual counties know what the legislators can do for us, whether it’s to introduce or cosponsor

legislation, sign ‘Dear Colleague’ letters and circulate those....”

She asked attendees to let NACo know of relationships they have with members of Congress as a source of potential connections that NACo can leverage.

(Staff contact: Tom Goodman, tgoodman@naco.org, 202.942.4222)

■ Infrastructure Financing in the 21st Century

Who spoke?

- **Gary Fickes**, commissioner, Tarrant County, Texas
- **Victor Vandergriff**, member, Texas Transportation Commission
- **Michael Morris**, transportation director, North Central Texas Council of Governments

What participants learned:

Morris has shepherded several regional transportation projects in North Texas, and he said leadership is crucial to creating opportunities for public-private partnerships to fund infrastructure projects.

He said, “The number one ingredient to our success is the leaders, especially from the public



Board Chair Fred McClure, Davidson County, N.C., participates in the Q&A session during the workshop on grassroots advocacy strategies.

See **WORKSHOPS** page 12

Commissioners offer work-life balance tips in workshop

WORKSHOPS from page 11

sector, standing up and saying 'we're going to do something different; we're not waiting on Congress; we're not waiting on our State Legislature, we're going to partner with our department of transportation and build projects.'"

Local governments, though, should treat exploring such partnerships with the same long-term commitments when deciding to work together.

Vandergriff went as far as to say the Legislature's decreasing funding was leaving local governments in Texas without an alternative.

Morris also suggested toll roads could help defray the cost of maintenance for some roads and bridges.

"So often, those of us in the public sector are facing infrastructure costs without adequate revenue to rebuild that infrastructure," he said. "If we had a toll or user fee on that particular facility, those revenues self-generate for reinvesting."

Fickes discussed the use of toll-managed lanes, a type of congestion pricing that allows drivers to pay tolls adjusted by the amount of traffic in the lanes, which sometimes involves adding lanes to existing roadways.

"We're adding capacity but

giving drivers a choice," he said.

(Staff contact: Michael Belarmino and Robert Fogel, mbelarmino@naco.org, 202.942.4254 and bfogel@naco.org, 202.942.4270.)

■ FirstNet's Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network

Who spoke?

• **Wellington Webb**, FirstNet board member

What participants learned:

Webb presented a workshop on FirstNet and what counties, whether large or rural, need to work on before the system goes live in 3–5 years.

The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 created the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet), an independent authority within the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration. FirstNet is charged to create a nationwide interoperable wireless broadband network dedicated to public safety. This will enable police, firefighters, emergency medical service professionals and other public safety officials to more effectively communicate during emergencies and to use cutting-edge technologies.

"This will be the first high-speed, broadband wireless data

network dedicated to public safety," Webb said. "Involving the states, local and tribal jurisdictions early in the consultation process is critical to FirstNet's ultimate success."

He added that FirstNet will need to balance its goal to develop the nationwide public safety broadband network quickly against the need to conduct meaningful consultations at the regional, state, local, territorial and tribal levels.

While the act provides a basic framework for this process, it does not specify how state and local consultation should occur.

"It is imperative that counties engage in the consultation process and actively seek out the designated state coordinator(s)," Webb added. "This ensures existing local broadband and infrastructure assets are identified and included in the new network."

(Staff contact: Yejin Jang, yjang@naco.org, 202.942.4239.)

■ Finding the Work/Life Balance

Who spoke:

• **Alisha Bell**, commissioner, Wayne County, Mich.

• **Stanley Chang**, council member, Honolulu City and County, Hawaii

• **Marina Dimitrijevic**, supervisor, Milwaukee County, Wis.

• **Peggy Romo West**, supervisor, Milwaukee County, Wis.

What participants learned:

How four county officials keep their lives in order when the demands of public service and the responsibilities of their personal lives meet.

Chang reserves time each evening to exercise and Sundays to spend with his family. He also said it's just impossible to do everything you'd like.

"Accept you'll miss out on some things," he said.

Romo West added a little flexibility to her life by routing her office phone to her cell phone while she's out and about. Bell was single when she was elected, but her family has grown with a husband and two children in the years since. She admits she has had to miss a few performances, but makes those the priority because you can usually delegate or reschedule other things, not your kids' performances, she said.

"Choose what you accept to be involved in, based on the issues you care about," she said. "I'm into human services and women's health, so what I do supports that."

Dimitrijevic said hiring the



G.K. Maenius, Tarrant County, Texas administrator, learns how to apply LEAN principles to improve government efficiency.

right staff and trusting them to do their jobs is crucial to focusing her energy on the tasks she is most qualified to handle.

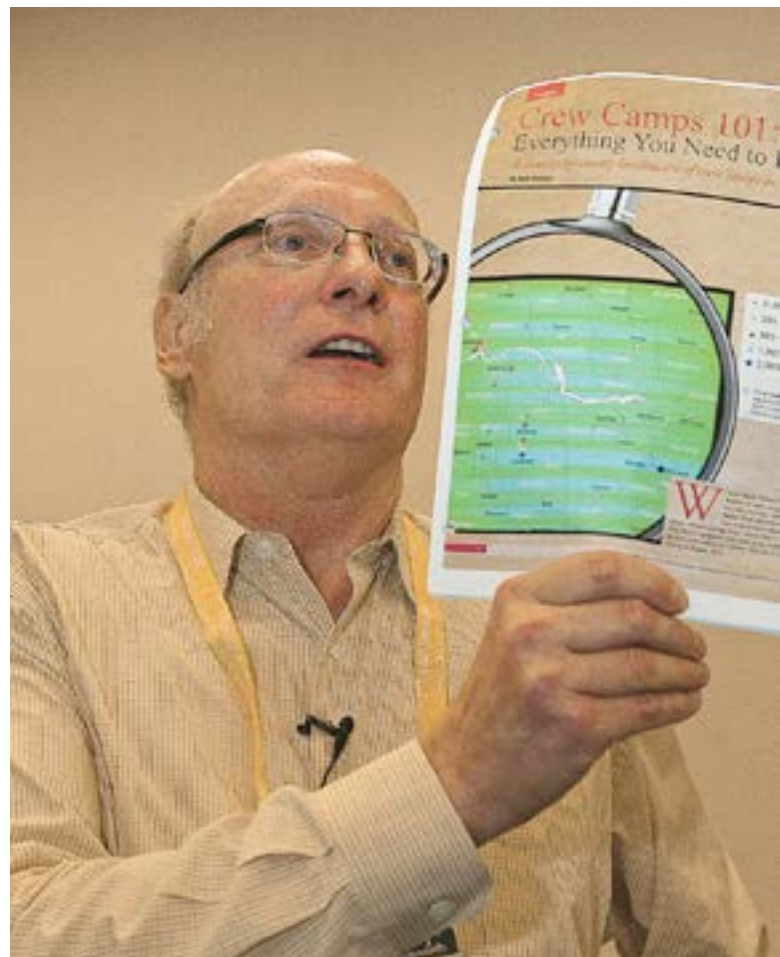
"Many people don't hire the right staff," she said. "You have friends and alliances, but in this environment, you need someone you can trust and rely on."

As busy as she gets, she reserves the lion's share of her time for constituents, though she tries her best, when she sees them at

the grocery store on weekends, to reschedule them for Monday morning, so she can get her shopping done.

(Staff contact: Ryan Hurst, rhurst@pfaw.org, 202.467.2361)

Charlie Ban, Christopher Johnson, Beverly Schlotterbeck and Charles Taylor, CountyNews staff, contributed to this report.



Richard Gardner, Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, Lincoln, Neb., tells attendees at the Solutions for Shale-impacted Counties forum that increased housing demand is typical during resource booms.

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Panelists discuss approaches to governing in changing times

SPEAKERS from page 6

is a good reason to plan on doing more rail transportation for those goods, which would reduce the number of overweight trucks on the road and thus the road maintenance costs required. The goal—optimize freight transportation by letting each mode of transportation do what it does best; have trains carry goods 500 miles or more, before loading onto trucks to take them the rest of the way.

Government Innovation – Governing in Times of Transition

A panel, moderated by *Governing* publisher Erin Waters, discussed the challenges facing county governments, the innovations they have developed and the future of local government.

NACo Immediate Past President Lenny Eliason, an Athens County, Ohio commissioner, said in most of the country, there's a basic lack of understanding of what counties do.

"There's no understanding of what goes on at the local level," he said, noting that civics classes in schools focus on federal and state government. "It's a lot easier to get a message out when people understand what you do."

Council President Toni Preckwinkle said Cook County, Ill. is dealing with keeping its public health system sustainable, creating an environment that encourages



Photos by David Hathcox

During the Government Innovation: Governing in Times of Transition panel discussion, Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle (2nd right) relates how she met the challenges facing her county when she first took office. Listening are (l-r) Erin Waters, moderator, publisher, *Governing* magazine; NACo Immediate Past President Lenny Eliason, Athens County, Ohio; Executive L. Brooks Patterson, Oakland County, Mich.; Executive Michael Hein, Ulster County, N.Y.

economic development and finding alternative ways to handle 90 percent of the county jail population that is awaiting trial.

She also relayed how she helped orient then newly elected Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel to the city-county relationship before he took office. "We both occupy a building

that takes up an entire city block, but there wasn't much collaboration," she said.

By creating a task force that identified ways the two governments could work together, the two executives built common ground by starting to focus on cost-saving measures, such as collective pur-

chasing and combining workforce initiatives.

County Executive Michael Hein had the opportunity to mold Ulster County, N.Y.'s vision of what a county executive was when he took office as the county's first elected executive. His first executive order was an anti-nepotism,

anti-cronyism policy that he said represented the kind of focus on accountability the public wanted when they changed their form of government.

"Elections are a great way to figure out if people trust you or not," he said, noting that he ran unopposed for reelection.

He said that caring for veterans was one of a county's biggest challenges and obligations. Ulster County opened transitional housing for veterans by repurposing a former group home and funding the operation by selling the community college's president's house and doing community fundraising.

In response to a question about the future director of county government, Oakland County, Mich. Executive L. Brooks Patterson said cities and towns couldn't possibly deliver the services that counties can, a point highlighted by Detroit's recent bankruptcy filing.

Eliason said counties would continue to be the most responsive form of government, comparing it to a hand, whereas the federal and state governments were like the bicep and forearm, respectively.

Hein observed that partisanship, which has been so divisive on the state and federal levels, takes a backseat to willingness to solve problems on the local level.



Matt Rose, chairman and CEO, BNSF Railway Company, tells the audience about his company's collaboration with NACo's Transportation Steering Committee on freight rail issues at the Opening General session.

(Charles Taylor and Charlie Ban contributed to this report.)



2013 Annual Conference County Solutions and Idea Marketplace NACo AWARD WINNERS

All photos by David Hathcox unless noted



Broward County, Fla. is this year's winner of the Leadership in the Arts Award, sponsored by NACo's Arts and Culture Commission and Americans for the Arts. Accepting on behalf of Broward County is Commissioner Chip LaMarca, flanked by Jay Dick, senior director, State and Local Government Affairs, Americans for the Arts and NACo Immediate Past President Lenny Eliason.



Blue Earth County, Minn. was the first place winner in the rural county category for National County Government Month activities and promotion. Celebrating their award are NACo and the county leadership team members (l-r) NACo Second Vice President Riki Hokama; NACo First Vice President Linda Langston; Blue Earth County Commissioner Vance Stuehrenberg; Blue Earth County Commission Vice Chair Will Purvis; NACo President Chris Rodgers; Jessica Byers, Blue Earth County communications manager; and NACo Immediate Past President Lenny Eliason.

Celebrating his Champion Award from the NACo Prescription Discount Card Program is Chris Holley (center), executive director, Florida Association of Counties (FAC) and Leon County Commissioner Bryan Desloge, FAC president. Also pictured: (l-r) NACo Regional Representative Robert Cope, Lemhi County, Idaho; Scott Shalley, FAC staff; Commissioner Barry V. Holloway, Nassau County; Holley and Desloge; Aaron King, CVS Caremark; Cragin Mosteller, FAC staff; and Commissioners Grover Robinson, Escambia County, and Sally Heyman, Miami-Dade County.





Photo by Jack Hernandez

NACo Presidential Scholarship winners Jhone' White-Lucas and Keon McKay show off their awards. Presidential scholarship awards go to students selected by NACo's outgoing president. They are funded by the CH2M Hill company and the David Davenport Scholarship Fund.



Photo by Jack Hernandez

Berks County, Pa. Commissioner Christian Leinbach (2nd left) won NACo Membership Recruiter of the Year honors, which was presented by Membership Committee Chair Cindy Bobbitt, Grant County, Okla. Also pictured are (l) NACo Second Vice President Riki Hokama and Andrew Goldschmidt, membership marketing director.



Flanked by her colleagues from Cook County, Commissioner Joan Murphy shows off her WON Woman of the Year award. Murphy is the first recipient of the award. Pictured are: Commissioner Gregg Goslin; Board President Toni Preckwinkle; Murphy; WON President Dorothy Brown, Cook County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Commissioners Deborah Sims and Peter Silvestri.

NACo Prescription Discount Card Program Award winner David Bottorf, Association of Indiana Counties executive director, (2nd right) shows off his award with Marshall County Auditor Penny Lukenbill, AIC president. Also sharing the limelight are: (l-r) Spencer County Commissioner Al Logsdon; Kent Ward, Hamilton County surveyor; Alicia Ramer, AIC staff; Councilmember Jeff Quyle, Morgan County; NACo Regional Representative Robert Cope, Lemhi County, Idaho; Lukenbill, Bottorff; Aaron King, CVS Caremark; and Commissioner Dave Decker, LaPorte County.





County Innovations and Solutions

Howard County, Md.

County Pilots Diverting Food Scraps from Landfills

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

For all of the meals Howard County, Md. residents leave unfinished, not all of them need to go in the trash. Anyone who follows the food pyramid was eating — or at least starting to eat — plenty of grains, fruits and vegetables, and those unfinished meals had more

to offer than to take up space in a landfill.

On the heels of its successful curbside recycling program, the county's recycling division saw a population willing to try separating food scraps, in hopes of lightening the county's load and tipping fees. A survey showed only 24 percent of Howard County residents did their own composting, so the opportunity

was rich for a food-scrap collection program to reach a population that didn't already compost.

"People are responding because it's an opportunity to divert material from the landfill, and everyone's becoming aware of the environmental implications," said Gemma Evans, the county's recycling coordinator. "It's an opportunity to make a huge change with a little effort."

After a limited pilot program in one neighborhood, the program expanded to one of the county's 15 garbage collection zones, roughly 5,000 households. Approximately 1,000 homes responded and those volunteers received 35-gallon lidded carts for their food scraps.

"We were looking for vegetables, fruit peelings, paper towels, coffee grounds, bread — compostable material," Evans said. "No fish, meat or dairy or anything too oily."

Any extra space in the cart could be filled with lawn debris. In fact, the lawn debris collection truck picked up the food scraps carts.

"We weren't putting out any more vehicles on the roads, so that was nice," Evans said. "They came the same day as curbside trash pickup, so it didn't require any new routines."

An added bonus, she said, was the carts were big enough to fit pizza boxes.

"That was a surprise," she said, "but people gave us a lot of feedback that they liked that. The curbside pickup won't take them if they're too greasy."

So far, it's meant a big difference for the volume of refuse collected, with 25 percent less coming from

In addition to reduced tipping fees, the county's now getting something new out of the process. When the program started, the composting material was sent to Delaware. Now it goes to the county's new composting center at one of its landfill facilities.

"Basically we take all material, put it in long rows with a pipe running through it," Evans said. "We can monitor and control temperature, eliminate odors and expedite its decomposition."

The resulting compost can be used as fertilizer and to mitigate stormwater — a new state mandate — because it is absorbent.

"Overall, the program is keeping beneficial materials from being buried and lost in a landfill," Evans said. "Now they're being put to better use."

The composting center cost \$800,000, and right now can only handle the materials yielded by the pilot collection area. The collection program is expanding, though, individually through the county's 15 collection areas. For the more than 1,000 initial participants, the county spent \$42,600 on carts.

County Innovations and Solutions highlights award-winning county programs.

“Overall, the program is keeping beneficial materials from being buried and lost in a landfill ...”

households that participated in the pilot.

Some pilot program families agreed to keep journals, which revealed positive feelings for what they were learning.

"It's great to see how much our trash is reduced with composting," one family wrote. "In terms of our consumption and use of compostable food, we have to empty our indoor bin a minimum of once per day, sometimes twice."

Profiles in Service



» Roy C. Brooks
NACo Board of Directors
Commissioner
Tarrant County, Texas

Number of years active in NACo: 22

Years in public service: 19 years — county, 6 years City — Forest Hill, Texas City Council

Occupation: Tarrant County commissioner

Education: Historic I. M. Terrell High School, Fort Worth, Texas and Columbia University, New York, N.Y.

The hardest thing I've ever done: saying goodbye to my parents. My father passed in 2003 and my mother just two years ago. Both my parents were an inspiration to me, and I truly miss their counsel.

People (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, W.E.B. DuBois and Jackie Robinson.

A dream I have is to: always continue, until I am unable, to reach out and help to those in need in the community that fall within the cracks of normal social services. Enhance the educational opportunities for children in those same communities.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: enjoy quiet time alone.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: lived in Jamaica in the '70s managing various properties.

My favorite way to relax is: reading.

I'm most proud of: my children, Royce and Marion. Royce is a Harvard — trained practicing attorney in Washington, D.C.; and Marion is a 2010 graduate of the University of Texas Law School.

Every morning I read: *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*.

My favorite meal is: barbeque ribs and a large baked potato, fully loaded and my mother's famous cobbler.

My pet peeve is: unfinished projects and procrastinations.

My motto is: "Community service is the rent you pay for the air you breathe."

The last book I read was: *Inferno* by Dan Brown.

My favorite movie is: *The Godfather*.

My favorite music is: jazz and gospel.

My favorite president is: Barack Obama with Bill Clinton a close second.



Photo courtesy of Howard County, Md. Recycling

Workers at the Alpha Ridge Landfill in Howard County, Md. empty bags of compostable food scraps and yard waste.

The H.R. Doctor Is In

Great Worth at the Ft. Worth Annual Conference

It was an honor and great fun to present a workshop at NACo's Annual Conference in Tarrant County, Texas — sometimes known as Fort Worth. In fact, there was great "worth" in attending the conference. My particular session, presented along with good friend and compelling speaker Chris Hagon, formerly the British royal family's personal protection officer, discussed personal protection for elected officials. Of course, Chris is a great speaker — he has a British accent.



With help from Debbie Stoutamire, NACo's HR director, our conference session was packed — more chairs had to be brought in — and amazingly people stayed for the entire two-hours. I even stayed!

We covered key elements in personal protection and touched a bit on the protection of the larger county government. However, two areas of personal protection were not directly touched upon because of time constraints.

The first is the importance of personal health as a component of overall protection. Much needs to be said and, perhaps will be at next year's conference, about the connection between steps that can be taken to guard against health catastrophes for you and family members.

Very simple steps can be taken to ensure a longer, happier and less painful career of public service as an elected or appointed official. One of the steps is to have a daughter who is a doctor, as I do. If that's not possible, stop smoking, wear a seatbelt, or a motorcycle or bike helmet.

Also make a friend of a personal physician before you really need his or her services.

Fortunately for all of us attending the conference, the second area of personal protection was well covered at the Annual Conference thanks to NACo's partnership with Nationwide Retirement. That is the importance of financial protection.

The HR Doctor heard that there was free food at the NACo-Nationwide Deferred Compensation Advisory Board meeting, and so I crashed the party. Having spent many years as a member of that committee, however, meant that no one bothered to check my ID and I was allowed in. I heard of the continued success of the program with assets of more than \$12 billion in county employee savings and financial management help for tens of thousands.

As defined benefit pension plans come under increased scrutiny if not also dissection and dismemberment, knowing that help is available to prepare for a post-employment future and how simple it is to access that help is an important component of everyone's personal protection plan — or it should be.

At the conference, I got to hug and briefly hang out with dear old friends — not that they are particularly old, but our friendships are. People like Gerry Hyland of Fairfax County, Va.; Kaye Braaten, former NACo president and queen of North Dakota; Peter Torvik, president and CEO of NACo's Financial Services Corporation; and a champion rock musician, amazing David Davenport, philanthropist and king of deferred compensation, among many others.

Having more than 37 years of engagement with NACo, including writing about 400 of these articles, it was great to meet many new friends who told me that they actually read them.

Attending the conference helped me once again to realize networking in person is also a

form of personal protection for elected officials. Public service careers are built upon understanding problems that confront our citizens and coming up with cost effective, compassionate and forward-thinking solutions. No one county government has all the answers.

However, the strength of

hundreds of NACo members coming together in person, and not just electronically, provides a platform of strength and sharing that can make every attending county more successful. Of course it costs money to attend. However I submit that it costs more money to not attend and to not engage.

If NACo will have me back

at next year's conference, I look forward to seeing many more colleagues and friends while we explore creating better local governments — and a better country at the same time.

Phil Rosenberg
The HR Doctor • www.hrdr.net

Research News

ACA Medicaid Expansion Not Uniform

This October, Americans will be able to enroll in health insurance plans through the newly created state-based Health Insurance Marketplace — formerly known as "exchanges." In addition, depending on their state, more Americans may qualify for coverage under Medicaid expansion.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), signed into law in 2010, made possible these new health insurance coverage mechanisms. This expansion will have a significant impact since counties in a number of states are required by state law to provide health services to low-income, chronically ill and uninsured people.

The ACA will help alleviate this burden. Individuals with incomes between 100 percent and 400 percent of the federal poverty level may be eligible for federal premium tax credits to help pay for private health insurance. Through the state-based Marketplace, Americans can compare insurance options by price, benefits and quality to find the plan that best suits their needs.

According to the Advisory Board Company, 17 states will operate their own Marketplaces, seven states are collaborating with the federal government to operate the Marketplaces, and the federal government will operate the Marketplaces in the remaining 26 states.

Medicaid coverage also varies from state to state. Not all states are participating in the Medicaid expansion. In 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court let states decide whether to expand Medicaid to individuals under the age of 65 with incomes up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level as of July 2013. According to the Kaiser Family

States with County Medicaid Matches

Alabama
California
Delaware
Florida
Idaho
Illinois
Kansas
Kentucky
Minnesota
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Mexico
New York
Ohio
Pennsylvania
South Carolina
Utah
Vermont
West Virginia
Wisconsin

■ NO EXPANSION
■ EXPANSION
■ UNDECIDED

Kaiser Family Foundation

Foundation, 24 states are moving forward with the Medicaid expansion — including Arkansas and Iowa with alternative expansion plans; 21 states are not expanding their Medicaid coverage, and six states remain undecided.

In the 21 states in which counties are required to contribute to Medicaid, 10 states are moving forward with expanding eligibility for Medicaid, eight states are not moving forward on expansion, and three states — New Hampshire,

Ohio and Pennsylvania — have not decided.

While counties in states that are opting for Medicaid expansion may encounter additional costs with the enrollment, service delivery and coverage, counties in states that opt out of expansion may continue to pay for those who would have qualified under the Medicaid expansion but do not enroll in the Marketplace.

The state-by-state Medicaid expansion and the introduction of subsidized plans through the Marketplace will give a significant number of people access to health insurance. In King County, Wash., more than 180,000 residents — nearly 85 percent of the county's uninsured adults — will be eligible for Medicaid or reduced premiums for insurance through the Marketplace. Of this total, about 83,000 will become eligible for Medicaid, including around 7,000 individuals who are currently homeless. An additional 100,000 may be eligible for subsidized health plans through Washington state's Marketplace, according to the Washington HealthPlanFinder.

With all of the potential additional coverage, the ACA implementation will pose challenges to counties. Since counties are creatures of the state, the impact of the ACA will vary by the counties' responsibilities outlined by the state and the state's decision regarding the Medicaid expansion and the operation of the Marketplace.

**To view a map of all states and their decisions on Medicaid expansion, see this article online at www.naco.org/countrynews.*

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

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News From the Nation's Counties

► ALABAMA

The three-man garbage collection crew teams may disappear from the streets if **HOUSTON COUNTY**'s experiment with **automated garbage pickup** succeeds.

The County Commission initiated a six-month trial with one of its garbage routes on the western side of the county. A move to full automated pickup could be a part of the 2014–15 budget, and while the cost might approach \$1.8 million, the commission chairman said the savings could be much greater.

The county will be able to eliminate about 10 positions through attrition if it switches to automated pickup, which would save about \$400,000 per year. Other personnel would be reassigned, the *Dothan Eagle* reported.

► CALIFORNIA

• The **MARIN COUNTY** Search and Rescue team helped **save a 19-year-old man** who was clinging to a rock above a 317-foot waterfall in Yosemite National Park, a sheriff's official told the *Mercury News*.

The man was climbing on rock ridges, fell and struck his head on a rock in a basin on the edge of the falls. As he clutched the rock, witnesses ran down the trail for help. They came upon members of Marin Search and Rescue, which was conducting its annual training trip for mountain rescues.

Though the team is not trained for swift-water rescues, it was able to set up anchors and a line across the water. Park rangers arrived in about 40 minutes, clipped onto the rescue line and retrieved the victim. The Marin team then carried him on a stretcher for a two-mile hike down the trail for medical treatment.

• As part of its campaign against the **European grapevine moth**, **NAPA COUNTY** may force the owners of a vineyard to remove or destroy their abandoned vines.

Since 2010, Napa County has sent "public nuisance" notices to the owners of 17 vineyards either abandoned or neglected, the *Napa Valley Register* reported.

Vineyards that are not maintained pose a threat of infestation to other properties.

The 8.27-acre property that is the first to be targeted, includes a house and swimming pool and is in foreclosure. The county would place a lien on the property if it must pay to either remove the vines or treat the vineyard.



Photo courtesy of Oakland County, Mich.

An Oakland County employee walks a shelter dog during her lunch break.

► MICHIGAN

More than 60 **OAKLAND COUNTY** employees used their lunch break to get a little exercise as part of a **new county wellness program** that benefits employees and dogs being housed in the Oakland Pet Adoption Center.

For a two-hour period July 25, 67 employees walked the 15 dogs that were brought to the county complex from the adoption center. The program is a collaboration with OakFit, the county wellness program for employees. The dogs were also available for adoption.

• **SACRAMENTO COUNTY** **sued several large banks**, accusing them of manipulating an influential interest rate to gain profits at the county's expense.

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Sacramento, accuses Bank of America, Barclays, JPMorgan Chase and a host of others of manipulating the Libor interest rate, used to set interest rates all over the world.

The lawsuit doesn't spell out how much the county was allegedly damaged by the manipulation, which took place over several years.

Sacramento County became the 15th government agency in California to file suit over Libor this year, *The Sacramento Bee* reported.

In a typical instance cited in the latest lawsuit, the county entered into a so-called "interest rate swap" with several banks, in effect loaning money to those banks on a short-

term basis, at a rate tied to Libor. Because Libor was artificially suppressed, the county got less money.

• San Joaquin General Hospital is now **SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY**'s first **designated trauma center**, filling an oft-mentioned hole in the area's health care system. As part of the county's recently adopted trauma plan, San Joaquin General will be the first choice to take most patients in the county suffering from traumatic injuries.

► FLORIDA

Beach dunes protect homes from storm surges, and now **BREVARD COUNTY** is considering having **oceanfront homeowners chip in** to pay for their repairs.

The County Commission plan asks some beachside property owners to pick up part of the cost, if they want the work done. A typical home would pay \$2,000 to \$3,000,

according to county estimates.

The plan is a way to come up with the matching funds needed to qualify for a \$2.25 million state grant to repair damage caused to dunes by Hurricane Sandy in October, according to *Florida Today*.

• Commissioners in **HERNANDO COUNTY** will decide if people who **feed stray animals** can be protected from an ordinance barring residents from harboring an animal near a residence.

The board is likely to insert a Good Samaritan clause that would differentiate between cat hoarders and people with a good heart who simply want to help an animal in distress, according to the *Tampa Tribune*.

► MARYLAND

The **MONTGOMERY COUNTY** Council passed a pair of measures intended to **protect and expand tree cover** along public roads and on private property where new construction has disturbed the environment.

One measure requires landowners who cut down a tree along a public right of way to obtain a county permit and replace the tree at or near the site. It also requires the landowner to pay into a tree replacement fund so that the county can plant two additional trees.

The other measure, proposed by County Executive Isiah Leggett, is aimed at preventing loss of tree canopy from new home construction, especially in older neighborhoods. It requires builders to plant three trees for every one lost to construction or to pay a fee to the county, *The Washington Post* reported.

► NEW MEXICO

• The state's county clerks think letting political action committees **pay for a special election** is a bad idea, and they want the Legislature to put a stop to the practice.

Their association has presented a resolution for consideration by the **NEW MEXICO ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES (NMAC)**, the *Ruidoso News* reported.

Three years ago, a PAC paid the cost for a special election — which clerks administer — when voters in **LINCOLN COUNTY** passed a business-retention gross receipts tax to lessen the tax burden for a race track and casino operation that was considering a move out of the county.

The resolution supports legislation that would ban a non-governmental entity, which might

benefit from an election's outcome, from paying for or reimbursing the cost of a special election.

Rhonda Burrows, Lincoln County clerk and an NMAC board member, said, "There was a strong consensus among clerks that this is not a good practice in the administration of elections, and we are introducing this resolution to encourage legislation to prohibit the practice."

• One of **SANTA FE COUNTY**'s fire stations has **gone off the grid**. The county recently installed a 6.1-kilowatt solar photovoltaic system on the roof of one of its fire stations, a first for the county.

The \$18,000 system is large enough to supply all of the electric needs of the Tesuque Fire Station, reducing the county's operating costs and freeing up volunteer fire district funds for fire safety needs.

Commissioner Daniel Mayfield initiated the project which is expected to generate electricity over the next 25 years. The project is a cooperative venture between the county and New Energy Economy, a nonprofit organization focused on sustainable economic development and clean energy.

"This collaboration is the kind of investment (that) responsive and creative local governments take to foster innovative public policy that leads our community by example," Mayfield said.

► NEW YORK

ALBANY COUNTY Legislator Bryan Clanahan wants to keep **hydraulic fracturing waste water** out of his county. He's the chief sponsor of Local Law C; it would prevent fracking brine from being hauled into the county, WNYT.com reported.

Elsewhere across the country, the salty liquid is being used to de-ice roads in winter and to control dust at construction sites.

"Basically, we're trying to get out in front in Albany County and make sure it never happens here," he said.

At least nine New York counties have already passed legislation banning fracking waste.

► NORTH DAKOTA

MCKENZIE COUNTY is now the state's **top oil-producing county** according to the latest data from the state Department of Mineral Resources, *The Bismarck Tribune* reported.

Financial Services News

U.S. Communities Helps Counties Be Resilient

For NACo President Linda Langston, resilience is “the capacity of a community to maintain its core purpose in the face of drastically changed circumstances.”

At the NACo County Solutions and Idea Marketplace annual conference in Tarrant County, Texas, Langston led an educational session that allowed attendees to visualize and measure local resilience, and engage the community in taking proactive steps to improve its preparedness and resilience.

A supervisor in Linn County, Iowa, she knows firsthand the need for communities to mitigate, absorb, respond to and successfully recover from a natural disaster, economic downturn or other adverse event. In June of 2008, approximately 10 square miles of Cedar

Having contracts in place with key suppliers and policies in place to obtain goods and services in an emergency are crucial to a county's ability to be resilient

Rapids, including the downtown area, were flooded.

As Langston described, advancing a culture of community resilience requires acceptance, commitment and investment among all levels of government. This includes the private sector and community-based organizations

working together to mitigate risk and build resilience to disasters. With two-thirds of counties experiencing a major disaster in the past five years, Langston reminded everyone that “recent events, both natural and manmade, have put increasing demands on the need for local governments to be prepared, responsive and nimble in their response to a wide range of emergencies.”

Cathy Muse, director of purchasing and supply management, Fairfax County, Va., agrees. “While disasters are unavoidable, communities can take preemptive measures to remain resilient,” she said.

Speaking on the same panel as Langston, Muse explained how counties can create public-private

partnerships and use cost-saving cooperative purchasing contracts to ensure a ready inventory of tools and supplies are available before, during and after a disaster. Ensuring resources are in place before and during a disaster is a key factor in building and maintaining community resilience once tragedy strikes.

Businesses and private sector organizations are the economic engine of every community. Businesses employ most of the work force, produce and distribute goods and services to the community, and provide first responders and recovery agencies with much-needed supplies to aid the community.

“We need to include business in our disaster and recovery planning,” Muse said — “even to the point of including them in our county exercises and drills. Most companies can provide staging areas, transportation and distribution, and skilled workers and volunteers to aid in a disaster,” she added.

In addition to including business partners in emergency exercises, Muse noted that it is equally important for a county to have continuity of government and business plans in place when disaster strikes. Having contracts in place with

See FS-NEWS page 20

NACo on the Move

» In the News

• NACo Immediate Past President **Chris Rodgers** was the subject of a Michael Kelly column “Public official Chris Rodgers has made his shots count — on the court and off” in the *Omaha World-Herald* July 26.

• NACo’s advocacy efforts were mentioned in the article “‘No Bailout’: Senators look to pre-empt U.S. aid to Detroit” in the *Chicago Tribune* July 26.

» NACo Officers, County Officials



Linda Langston

• NACo President **Linda Langston** spoke about her presidential initiative on resiliency and gave an overview on NACo membership benefits and legislative priorities at the 2013 Annual Conference and Trade Show for the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania in Erie County Aug. 4.

• **Langston** also participated on the panel “Defining the Ideal; an Examination of Current Policies and Programs and the Exploration of Possible Changes Needed in the NIPP, Supporting Capabilities and DHS Sector Engagement” discussing regional resilience at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. July 25.



Riki Hokama

• NACo First Vice President **Riki Hokama** provided an update on NACo programs and services at the opening session of the County Commissioners’ Association of West Virginia annual conference in Kanawha County (Charleston) Aug. 4.

• NACo Executive Director **Matt Chase** discussed the importance of protecting the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds with Reps.

Randy Hultgren (R-Ill.) and Dutch Ruppertsberger (D-Md), and U.S. Conference of Mayors Executive Director Tom Cochran at a meeting July 30. Hultgren and Ruppertsberger, both former county officials, are leading the charge in the House to protect municipal bonds in tax reform.



Matt Chase

• Earlier in the month, **Chase, Jim Philipps**, media relations manager, Immediate Past President **Chris Rodgers** and Past President **Glen Whitley** met with *The Fort Worth Star-Telegram* about “Why Counties Matter” July 18.

• **Rodgers** also spoke about the Counties Work program at the 2013 Association of County Commissioners of Oklahoma Summer Safety Conference in Cleveland County (Norman) July 31.

» Coming Up

• **Alex Koroknay-Palicz**, membership coordinator, is exhibiting on behalf of membership recruitment and retention at the 2013 Annual Conference and Trade Show for the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania in Erie County Aug. 4–7.

• **Karina Golkova**, membership assistant is exhibiting on behalf of membership at the County Commissioners’ Association of West Virginia Annual Training and In-Service Seminar in Lewis County Aug. 4–7.

• **Kaye Braaten**, former NACo president, is exhibiting on behalf of membership at the South Carolina Association of Counties Annual Conference in Beaufort County Aug. 4–7.

On the Move is compiled by Christopher Johnson.

What's in a Seal?



» Williamsburg County, S.C.

www.williamsburgcounty.sc.gov

Williamsburg County, located in the southern tip of the Pee Dee River, holds treasures of historical interest dating back to the early 1700s.

In 1730, Gov. Robert Johnson proposed a “Township Plan,” marking the beginning of Williamsburg County. This plan was proposed to stimulate the economy of the province to provide protection for coastal settlers. The township, which was laid out on the bank of the Black River, was named Williamsburg in honor of the Protestant king William of Orange.

Williamsburg’s success was largely attributable to the raising and processing of indigo. Eliza Lucas Pickney was credited with making the indigo plant a commercial success in the county. From indigo, came wealth and prosperity to the area. Hemp and flax were other products introduced in the 1730s.

One of the first impressions that the county offers to people entering the area is the beauty of live oak trees. The trees, many of which line the streets of the county seat Kingstree, are an important part of the local heritage. While Kingstree’s history is most often associated with the white pine that gave the town its name, today the emphasis is turning to the many live oak trees that are part of the town’s beauty and charm.

The county’s seal was envisioned and designed by Lisha Burrows-Pasley in 1998 and became the official seal for Williamsburg County government and an integral part of county history. Her dream for the county has always been unity, remembering the past while at the same time accepting change so that the future could be fruitful. As a result of her beliefs, the slogan embedded in the seal “Promoting the Future” became appropriate. It symbolizes the original courthouse located on Main Street.

The courthouse, a Robert Mill design, was built in 1823. From 1953–1954, the courthouse’s interior and exterior was substantially remodeled, but the building still reflects much of Mills’ original vision.

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

Oregon offers aid for financially stressed timber counties

NEWS FROM *from page 18*

Drillers in the county produce nearly 500,000 barrels more oil a month than the second most productive county, Mountrail County, and more than twice as much natural gas.

McKenzie County had a May production rate of 6.7 million barrels compared to Mountrail's 6.2 million. Together, the counties account for more than half the 186 rigs operating in the state's oil patch.

► OREGON

The State Legislature approved a bill that allows the state to provide emergency help to **financially strapped timber counties** and impose higher taxes to help cover the cost.

House Bill 3453 outlines a procedure for the governor to declare

a "public safety fiscal emergency" in troubled counties, *The Register-Guard* reported. That would allow the state to enter into agreements with local County Commissions to provide money for law enforcement. The state would provide half the money with the rest derived from new local taxes.

CURRY, COOS, DOUGLAS, JOSEPHINE, JACKSON, LANE counties and other historically timber-dependent counties have faced the threat of fiscal insolvency as federal county timber payments ended.

► PENNSYLVANIA

County commissioners in **BRADFORD** and **LYCOMING counties** are backing a plan to ask the state for \$250,000 to study drinking water quality in private wells and the possible effects of drilling for **natural gas in the Marcellus Shale**.

The commissioners plan to write a letter of support for a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, the Associated Press reported. Gas drilling in both counties has been on the upswing.

Three health systems—Guthrie Health, Geisinger Health System and Susquehanna Health — are applying for the funding. The study would be done in collaboration with the U.S. Geological Survey, which would provide technical assistance and contribute an additional \$100,000.

► WISCONSIN

A Wisconsin appellate court ruling has made it a little harder for counties to **deny union rights to jail workers**, the *Wisconsin State Journal* reported.

The 4th District Court of Appeals ruled recently that the state's Employment Relations Commission and **DOUGLAS COUNTY** were wrong to declare 36 jail workers ineligible for full union membership because they don't have arrest powers.

The court said state laws are specific in defining which public

safety jobs are exempt from the ban on collective bargaining for general public sector employees, and that Douglas jailers are protected.

In 2011, the state severely restricted public employees' union rights, except for public safety personnel.

(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.)

Have policies, contracts in place

FS-NEWS *from page 19*

key suppliers and policies in place to obtain goods and services in an emergency are crucial to a county's ability to be resilient and to assure greater likelihood of recovery of costs from FEMA.

One such way to have suppliers ready to help is to use national cooperative purchasing contracts, such as NACo's U.S. Communities government purchasing alliance. U.S. Communities is a government purchasing cooperative that reduces the cost of goods and services by aggregating the purchasing power of public agen-

cies nationwide. Counties, states and other local governments have access to a broad line of competitively solicited, lead-public-agency contracts with best-in-class national suppliers.

All state and local governments have the ability to purchase from U.S. Communities. Nationally solicited contracts provide the highest quality products and services from top manufacturers and distributors to aid in emergency and disaster mitigation, response and recovery.

You can see more of the purchasing best practices at www.uscommunities.org/solutions/emergency-preparedness. The 24 contracts and

28 suppliers that are part of the purchasing cooperative can be used by counties, cities, states and nonprofit organizations to save money on the purchases they make every day.

For more information about U.S. Communities and the various products and services offered to local governments, please contact Jim Sawyer, NACo Financial Services Center, at 202.661.8868 or email jsawyer@naco.org.

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

Job Market & Classifieds

■ COUNTY MANAGER – EDDY COUNTY, N.M.

Salary: \$110,000 – \$150,000 annually; DOQ.

The Board of County Commissioners for Eddy County, N.M. is seeking an energetic, highly skilled public sector manager with team leadership qualities. Minimum qualifications include a Bachelor's degree in Public or Business Administration, plus 10 years of experience in executive management. The county's FY14 Budget is about \$64 million and has 327 FTE authorized. Currently, the County is experiencing a

period of very strong economic growth.

The closing date is Friday, Sept. 6 at 4 p.m. The starting salary will be determined based on qualifications. Eddy County offers a very comprehensive benefits package.

Please send or email resume, including salary history, along with a completed County application and waiver to roxann@co.eddy.nm.us or mail to: Eddy County Board of Commissioners 101 West Greene Street Carlsbad, NM 88220.

The application along with a profile, job description and other information can be found at www.eddycounty.org.

In Case You Missed It

News to use from past County News

» More Why Counties Matter! v.2.0

NACo recently released an expanded version of its popular *Why Counties Matter!* infographic at the 2013 Annual Conference: County Solutions and Idea Marketplace in Tarrant County, Texas.

In bold, colorful fashion, the new eight-page version shows the dynamic impact that county government has upon the lifeblood of America's communities. It features data about transportation networks, public health, hospitals, courts and corrections, public safety and much more.

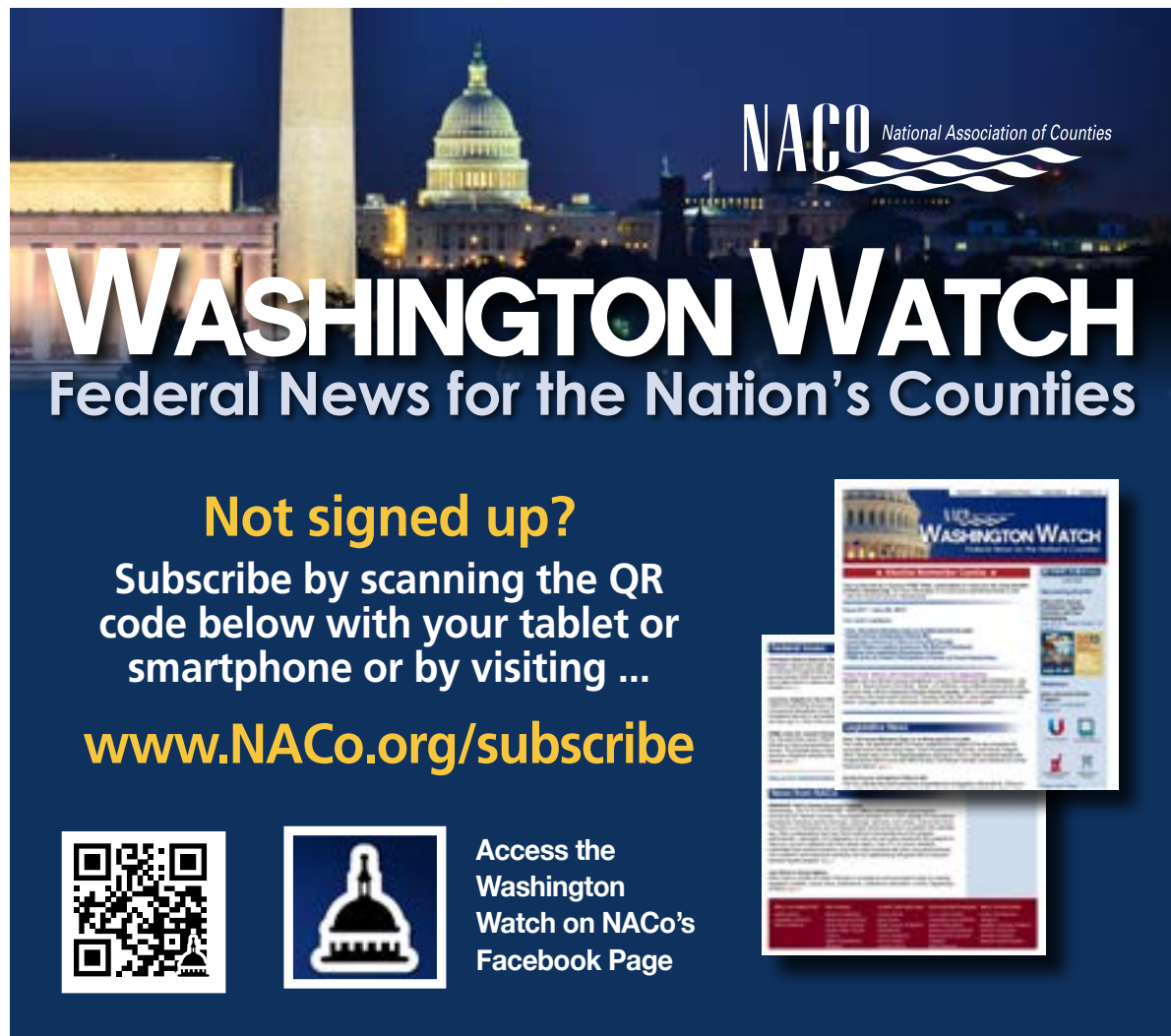
Copies can be downloaded from the NACo website at www.naco.org/countiesmatter.

» Hot Topics: Building Resiliency in a Disaster-marked Era

NACo *County News* released a Hot Topics section on resiliency in the July 15 edition. The section includes what counties have learned in the face of disaster and an article from NACo President Linda Langston on her upcoming resiliency initiative.

To download the PDF of this section, visit www.naco.org/july15HT.

To request a hard copy, email Christopher Johnson at cjohnson@naco.org.



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