

## 'CROmnibus' includes some victories for counties

By LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS STAFF

After days of negotiating, Appropriators released the final FY 15 spending package on Dec. 9. The \$1.1 trillion bill — coined the "CROmnibus" — would fund the government through September 2015 with the exception of a Continuing Resolution to only fund the Department of Homeland Security through February.

The primary source of contention surrounding the omnibus stemmed from a number of policy riders found throughout the 1,600-page bill. House conservatives hoped to include over 100 policy riders in the final measure. Several policy riders included in the final bill are of interest to counties including:

- Extension of the Internet Tax Freedom Act (ITFA) through Oct. 1, 2015.

ITFA prohibits state and local governments from taxing internet

See OMNIBUS page 10



Photo by Carolyn Unser

Participants at a mobile workshop during NACo's Symposium on America's County Transportation and Infrastructure get ready to explore the 180-foot wind turbines at the Kaheawa Wind Farm on Maui. The workshop was one of four held during the two-and-a-half-day symposium, Dec. 3–5.

## Symposium showcases innovation, points out counties' challenges

By BEVERLY A. SCHLOTTERBECK  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

If you think Hawai'i is only about palm trees, ocean breezes, beautiful beaches, great surfing and special island graciousness, maybe, just maybe you haven't been paying attention. The Aloha State is also home to ambitious renewable energy projects, an expanding tech sector and burgeoning smart electrical grids.

Its robust attention to renewable energy and transportation infrastructure made it a natural setting for the NACo Symposium on County Transportation and Infrastructure, hosted by Maui County, Dec. 3–5 and held in conjunction with NACo's fall Board of Directors meeting.

The symposium, packed with seven sessions and four mobile workshops, explored

the links between transportation infrastructure and economic development. It offered lots of data about the global shift in economic development, the state of America's surface transportation and port systems, and how counties are using their resources and smarts to maintain and create vibrant infrastructure for the future.

### What's Happening Now

The deteriorated state of America's roads and bridges is no secret. Groups like the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) have been reporting regularly on the state of America's infrastructure. Their most recent report card issued in 2013 gave it all a D+, according to Brian Pallasch, ACSE managing director, government relations and a panelist at the session on the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) transportation

act. To get top grades, it would need a \$3.6 trillion investment by 2020, Pallasch said.

That America has bad roads and bridges is probably nothing new to most county officials, but for participants at the symposium, what was new or at best very sobering, was the Dec. 4 luncheon presentation by John Vickerman of Vickerman Associates LLC, a port planning and design firm, on America's maritime infrastructure. While America's 360 commercial and 90 deepwater ports can expect a 73 percent growth in freight tonnage by 2025, they will be largely bypassed by the next generation of cargo ships which can carry up to roughly 18,000, 20-foot containers. Carolyn Imamura, Pacific Development

See SYMPOSIUM page 8

## NACo Board adopts FY15 budget, legislative priorities

By TOM GOODMAN  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIRECTOR

The NACo Board of Directors approved an \$18.8 million budget for FY15, adopted legislative priorities for the coming year and reviewed a strategic blueprint that will guide future activities for the association during its meeting Dec. 5 and 6 in Maui County, Hawai'i.

The 2015 legislative priorities are tax reform, protecting the federal-state-local partnership for Medicaid, transportation reauthorization, approval of the Marketplace Fairness Act, funding for Payment In Lieu of Taxes and Secure Rural Schools, rejection of the "Waters of the U.S." proposal rule and immigration reform that addresses issues impacting county government. (See page 10 for a full description of the priorities.)

The budget includes funding for redesigning the website, information technology infrastructure, enhancing and marketing the association's brand and expanding federal policy, advocacy and research.

See NACo BOARD page 11

CountyNews

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THIS HOLIDAY

— Season —

AND A VERY

HAPPY 2015





# EPA proposes controversial ozone rule

By JULIE UFNER

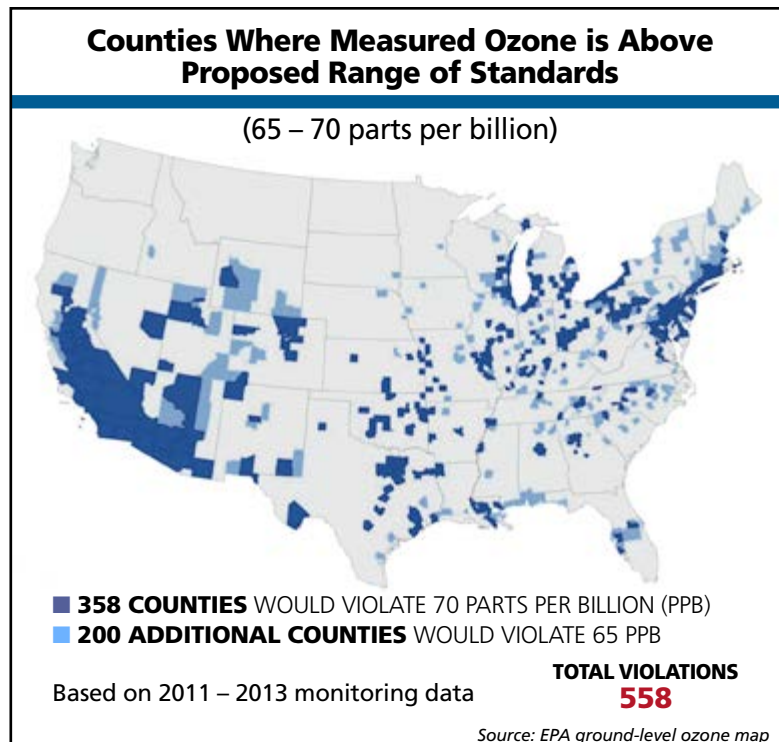
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently stated that the current federal ozone standard is insufficient to protect the public and that it should be strengthened to protect public health and the environment.

EPA issued a 626-page proposed rule to tighten the current standard of 75 parts per billion (ppb) to a range of 65–70 ppb. Additionally, the agency indicated in its Nov. 25 rule that it would consider raising the proposed standards 60 ppb.

Currently, 227 counties — primarily urban and in the East — are considered in non-attainment of existing ozone standards. However, under the proposed rule, this number could increase dramatically, as could the costs for compliance. Under a 70 ppb standard, 358 counties would be in violation. If it were lowered to 65 ppb, an additional 200 counties would not comply.

The economic impact on counties of tighter standards could be considerable. Counties in non-attainment are subject to more restrictive regulations and rules. A number of counties that currently exceed Clean Air Act (CAA) ozone levels say it can be difficult to attract new businesses to their areas since these companies would need to meet the stricter standards, causing



the counties to lose out to areas that are in attainment.

Under the CAA, EPA is prohibited from considering the cost of new National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) rules. However, to comply with Executive Order 12866 on Regulatory Planning and Review, and Office of Management and Budget guidance, the agency releases a Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) to analyze potential costs and benefits.

A 70 ppb standard would cost \$3.9 billion per year and impact

primarily eastern states, according to the EPA. If the standard were set at 65 ppb, costs are estimated at \$15.2 billion annually. The cost to California is not included in these calculations, since a number of California counties would be given until 2032–2037 to meet the standards. The costs are estimated based on both existing and future pollution control technologies.

EPA said the benefits created by the proposal would yield significant savings in health care costs and outweigh costs by as much as 3–1.

## NACo FSC launches new online bond investment platform

By KELLY BOGGS

FSC OPERATIONS SPECIALIST

In 1994, interest rate movements and poorly constructed bond portfolios caused large losses for investors in every part of the world. In the U.S., public funds were lost in well-publicized bankruptcies and near-bankruptcies in several counties and other jurisdictions. NACo Financial Services Center (FSC) was conceived in 1994, and part of its initial mission was to determine if there was a way for NACo to provide assistance to public treasurers as they fulfill their core role as stewards of taxpayer money.

NACo convened a Blue Ribbon task force, led by both county officials and private sector experts, to examine the policy failures that led to the financial calamity. The massive publicity surrounding the celebrated cases quickly disclosed alarming facts. The task force conclusions were

“Although the challenge of investing county money is the job of only a few of us, the impact is felt by all of us, as county officials and as citizens.”

simple but powerful.

First, it was easy to see that many of the new financial instruments and, in some cases, aggressive financial management techniques, leading to losses were not anticipated by the restrictions in current state statutes and local investment policies. The task force strongly recommended a review at the county level and the states embarked on thorough statute updates.

Second, the task force was unanimous in its recommendation for

elevating the visibility of the treasury investment functions and the need for more reporting, understanding, support and recognition of the challenges faced by treasurers. A quote from the report read by Committee Chair Julian Butler, Madison County, Ala. county attorney, stated “although the challenge of investing county money is the job of only a few of us, the impact is felt by all of us, as county officials and as citizens.”

Finally, the task force called for a return to adherence to the time-tested Prudent Man Rule. This “common law” rule dating from 1830 is now generally interpreted to command that a prudent investor looks first to the safety of principal, second to liquidity and the ability to meet obligations in a timely fashion and finally, to the relative earnings of the portfolio.

Simple and powerful advice, but

See **FINANCE** page 6

## How the Clean Air Act Works

The National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) are established under the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.) and overseen by the EPA. NAAQS apply to outdoor (ambient) air quality and are intended to protect public health.

In addition to ozone, five “criteria” pollutants — carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter and sulfur dioxide — are regulated under NAAQS. Each standard has its own requirements on how many times the standard may be exceeded; generally, a three year average is used.

The Clean Air Act (CAA) instructs EPA to set both a primary and secondary NAAQS for each criteria pollutant. Primary standards encompass those intended to protect public health and the environment, and secondary standards are intended to protect public welfare, which includes damage to crops, plants, property, wildlife, etc. Under statute, the agency is only able to create standards based on health considerations.

Under the CAA, air quality standards for each criteria pollutant are reviewed every five years in conjunction with the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC). CASAC provides advice to the EPA on NAAQS. EPA must designate areas as attainment, non-attainment and unclassified. States then must complete a State Implementation Plan (SIP) to address pollution exceedances in non-attainment areas. A SIP is a specific plan to reduce air pollution that includes control strategies that are implemented by states and local governments.

Tightening the standards would result in significant health care savings and prevent 750 – 4,300 premature deaths yearly by 2525, the agency said.

According to the American Lung Association, ozone is the most widespread air pollutant and is known to cause coughing, wheezing and asthma attacks, and increases the risk of hospital admissions and emergency room visits, as well as the risk of premature death.

Ozone is a major component of smog. Primarily as a summertime pollutant, it forms when sunlight reacts with pollutants such as volatile organic compounds emitted from chemical plants, gasoline pumps, oil-based paints, and auto body and print shops; sources of nitrogen oxides (NOx) include power plants, industrial facilities and motor vehicles. However, in the past decade, high ozone levels have also been observed in winter months near oil and gas operations in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming.

The current ozone standard has been in place since 2008. In 2010, EPA proposed tightening the standard to a range of 60 – 70 ppb. The rule was to be finalized in August 2010; however, EPA asked for several extensions from the courts. Ultimately, in 2011 the Obama Administration pulled the plug for the proposal — the cost of implementation was estimated to be between \$19 billion and \$90 billion.

The agency was under a court-ordered deadline to release the newly proposed ozone rule by

Dec. 1. The court order instructs the agency to release a final rule by October 2015. Once published in the Federal Register, the public comment period will be open for 90 days.

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# Child care reauthorization signed into law

By MARILINA SANZ  
SENIOR LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

President Obama recently signed the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) of 2014. The law extends CCDBG through 2020 as originally written. The program had last been reauthorized as part of welfare reform in 1996.

CCDBG is the discretionary spending component of the Child Care and Development Fund and it is used for working poor families. The program has a current appropriation of approximately \$2.3 billion. Together with the mandatory and state-matching requirement, total funding for the fund is approximately \$5.5 billion.

As with most federal social services programs, CCDBG funding goes to the states, but counties sometimes administer it. CCDBG administering agencies are generally the same state or county departments that also operate the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Block Grant.

The new law makes several changes to state plan requirements, quality set-asides, background checks and eligibility determinations that affect program administration.

The law requires that the states establish health and safety requirements. One requirement will be to conduct health, safety and fire inspections for all child care providers before licensing and on an annual basis thereafter. It also establishes new background check requirements. Criminal background checks are mandated for all new employees and need to be conducted every five years thereafter.

The requirement covers all child care staff members, including those who do not care directly for children but have unsupervised access to them. The measure also includes the types of criminal activity that will make a child care worker ineligible for employment.

The quality improvement set-aside will increase over five years

from 4 percent to 9 percent. There will also be minimum set-aside of 3 percent for quality improvements for infant and toddler care.

The major change in eligibility determination is a new 12-month

re-determination period. Some states re-determine eligibility every six months. States are given the option to terminate assistance prior to the re-determination if a parent loses employment, but must continue

benefits for three months to allow for job search.

The new legislation is the result of a bipartisan compromise and was based on the reauthorization bill that the Senate passed in March (S. 1086).

The agreement was approved under unanimous consent by the House of Representatives Sept. 14 and by a vote of 88 – 1 in the Senate Nov. 17. President Obama signed the measure Nov. 19.



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### Quick Takes

#### TOP FIVE

U.S. Christmas-tree Producing Counties

**Ashe County, N.C.**  
1.98 MILLION

**Clackamas County, Ore.**  
1.88 MILLION

**Marion County, Ore.**  
1.5 MILLION

**Benton County, Ore.**  
1.18 MILLION

**Polk County, Ore.**  
929,350

USDA Agricultural Census (2012)



# NACo, CSG target mental health in jails

By CHARLIE BAN  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

NACo and the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center announced a national initiative to lower the population of jail inmates with mental disorders.

Various mental health and criminal justice practitioners, mental health advocates and federal legislators spoke in support at a Capitol Hill briefing Dec. 9.

Starting in 2015, county leaders will commit to a sophisticated planning and implementation process for increasing access to effective mental health services and increasing collaboration between providers of those services and the criminal justice system. The effort, dubbed “Stepping Up: A National Initiative to Reduce the Number of People with Mental Illnesses in Jails,” follows the rise in the number of people with mental disorders booked into local jails, now estimated to top two million annually.

NACo Executive Director Matt Chase noted that during the recent Board of Directors meeting, one quarter of NACo board members said that among the inmates in their county jails, at least 60 percent were estimated to have serious mental health or substance abuse issues.

“Essentially we’ve been using America’s county jails and other local jails as our mental health (treatment facilities),” he said.

The effort to stem that tide will start with a joint NACo-CSG national summit to convene counties that have well-developed plans in place to position them as leaders in the effort. The organizations will provide technical assistance to counties to help them assess the number of inmates in need of mental health treatment and the county’s treatment capacity, make a plan for which outcomes can be



Photo by Greg Gibson

Susan Pamerleau, Bexar County, Texas sheriff, speaks at the Capitol Hill press briefing.

tracked and evaluated, and engage leaders from various applicable county agencies. Those plans are still being developed, CSG spokesman Michael Clark said.

“Essentially we’ve been using America’s county jails and other local jails as our mental health (treatment facilities)”

“We’ve basically criminalized mental illness,” said U.S. Rep. Richard Nugent (R-Fla.), who served as sheriff of Hernando County, Fla. for 10 years. “This is one area where the federal government can make a difference.”

Nugent sponsored the Justice

and Mental Health Collaboration Act of 2013.

Bexar County, Texas Sheriff Susan Pamerleau’s point, that more than 800 of the 4,000 inmates at the Bexar County Jail — the 16th largest in the county — are being treated for some level of mental illness, resonates nationwide. Eight percent of those inmates suffer from serious mental health problems.

“Anywhere from personality disorders to disorders that can be treated with psychotropic drugs, so they can be in the general population, all the way through to psychoses,” she said.

“It’s frustrating when we invest money in mental health programs in the jails and then we see those people coming back time and again.”

Pamerleau pointed to the lack of coordination between law enforcement and mental health services, sometimes because of existing laws separating the two functions.

“In jails, we’re not authorized to force medication,” she said. “We can’t do that, so if they refuse their medication, they may see a decline in their circumstances and they may go from the general population to being in the mental health unit.”

“Some departments may have temporary hold facilities,” she added, “but often don’t have access to case histories and medical histories of those individuals so we can respond to their respective situations beyond just temporary testing.”

Pamerleau described the impact that crisis-intervention training has had for her department. Before the training, they used force to quell

a disturbance involving a suspect with a mental illness an average of 50 times a year. In the five years following that training, they’ve done so twice.

“If that isn’t proof that crisis intervention training is essential, I don’t know what is,” she said. “Law enforcement has to be involved (with mental health training), because they’re the first to respond and first to see the challenges on the street.”

Paton Blough vouched for that. A South Carolina man with a bipolar illness diagnosis, he had been arrested six times during paranoid delusional states. He has amassed two felony convictions while incarcerated and unable to access his medication.

“I believed the police were there to kill me,” he said of his delusional states. “I wanted police and jail guards to understand the reality of the delusions that had gone through my mind during my temporary psychotic states.”


He said of his six arrests, three went relatively well and three were

“extremely violent.”

He stressed that crisis intervention teams, first responders prepared to handle someone with a mental illness, were crucial to proper response to disturbances. Blough now works as an advocate for people with mental illnesses.

“In my head, I was fighting for my life,” he said. “What made the difference was experienced officers that when faced with this complicated and difficult challenge... they knew how to connect with me, understand what I was going through.”

The initiative will involve several organizations, including the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors, National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, National Council for Behavioral Health, National Sheriffs’ Association, Major County Sheriffs’ Association and Policy Research Associates.



## Profiles in Service

**Phyllis Williams**  
General Services Coordinator  
National Association of Counties

**Number of years active in NACo:** 17 ½

**Years in public service:** 17 ½

**Occupation:** general services coordinator, NACo

**Education:** Montgomery Blair High School, Silver Spring, Md.

**The hardest thing I’ve ever done:** being in labor for 21 hours

**Three people (living or dead) I’d invite to dinner:** my mother, Grandma Rosie (with whom I’m honored to share a birthday), and Grandpa George

**A dream I have is to:** be a blessing to everyone who crosses my path.

**You’d be surprised to learn that I:** have two teenagers at the age of 60.

**The most adventurous thing I’ve ever done is:** climb the Dunn’s River Falls in Jamaica.

**My favorite way to relax is:** play games on my Kindle Fire HD, listen to music.

**I’m most proud of:** my mom — that woman has a heart of gold.

**Every morning I read:** my Bible — I have to have my morning inspiration.

**My favorite meal is:** baked chicken, dressing, fresh kale and gravy.

**My pet peeve is:** saying “I can’t,” especially if you have not tried.

**My motto is:** “Always keep a positive attitude.”

**The last book I read was:** *Battlefields of the Mind* by Joyce Meyers.

**My favorite movie is:** *The Love Dare*.

**My favorite music is:** jazz, old school and gospel.

**My favorite president is:** President Jimmy Carter.

## In Case You Missed It

### News to Use From Past County News

#### ► NACo’s County Intelligence Connections (CIC) is now ‘County Explorer’

The color-coded, interactive, do-it-yourself map enables users to compare and contrast all 3,069 U.S. counties. Users may juxtapose counties based on information from more than 70 county-specific datasets and 500 variables, regarding anything from a county’s finances and demographics to the number of roads and bridges within the county’s limits.

When users engage with County Explorer, they also have access to the names and titles of county officials. The program is updated monthly and organized by year, so users have access both to current and historical data.

You can test out County Explorer at [www.naco.org/countyexplorer](http://www.naco.org/countyexplorer).



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES



# NACo FORUM OPTIMIZING HEALTH, JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY IN YOUR COUNTY

JAN. 21 - 23, 2015 | CHARLESTON PLACE HOTEL | CHARLESTON, S.C.

This forum is being jointly conducted by the Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee, Healthy Counties Advisory Board and Smart Justice Programming. NACo is hosting the forum Jan. 21–23, 2015 in Charleston County, S.C. to bolster leadership in local health and justice systems and emergency management responsibilities.

The forum will feature discussions on:

- Behavioral health interventions
- Health coverage and the justice system
- Collaborative partnerships
- Emergency Management Roundtable

Through keynote presentations, panel discussions, mobile workshops and group dialogues, county leaders will learn more from national leaders and from their peers' firsthand experiences.

## WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

This forum is aimed at elected and appointed county officials, key county staff members and local stakeholders working in health, justice, human and social services, emergency management and related fields.

## HOW TO REGISTER?

Registration is required online at  
[www.naco.org/2015healthjusticeforum](http://www.naco.org/2015healthjusticeforum)

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE:** Wednesday, December 31, 2014

## FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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NACo Program Manager  
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**For registration information and questions**, please call the NACo Meetings Call Center, 202.942.4292. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern time.

E-mail symposium questions to [nacomeetings@naco.org](mailto:nacomeetings@naco.org).

# Competition will challenge coal-dependent counties

By JEN HORTON  
PROGRAM MANAGER

Recently, NACo and the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Research Foundation, with the support of the U.S. Economic Development Administration, launched a new partnership to support county and regional leaders in coal-reliant communities by retooling their economies to become more resilient to changing conditions.

Throughout 2015, NACo and NADO Research Foundation will hold a series of three intensive,

hands-on workshops designed to boost the innovative potential of coal-reliant counties and regions seeking to grow and diversify their economies. Counties and regions are asked to form teams to apply to enter the program.

Teams that submit winning applications will be selected to attend a hands-on workshop guided by expert facilitators and practitioners. These workshops will be structured to guide counties and regions to design solutions tailored to their communities' needs and identify implementable projects.

There are separate competitions

for each of the three workshop opportunities.

The competition timeline is below:

- **First Competition**  
Application opens: Jan. 7, 2015  
First workshop: mid-April, 2015 in eastern Kentucky
- **Second Competition**  
Application opens: late May  
Second workshop: mid-September in Colorado
- **Third Competition**  
Application opens: late August  
Third workshop: mid-November in West Virginia

The Innovation Challenge is

open to all counties and regions in the U.S. that are economically linked to the coal industry, including those that are coal-producing and those that are home to significant concentrations of coal processing and related facilities. Applicants are asked to organize teams of no more than five people and must include at least one county elected official and an individual representing a

regional development organization (such as an economic development district staff member).

The application for the first workshop, along with details about eligibility and other FAQs, will be available at [NACo.org](http://NACo.org) and [NADO.org](http://NADO.org) on Jan. 7. If you have questions in the meantime, email Kathy Nothstine at [knothstine@naco.org](mailto:knothstine@naco.org) or Jen Horton at [jhorton@naco.org](mailto:jhorton@naco.org).

## New bond platform expands choices

FINANCE from page 2



it was lost in the financial engineering of the late '80s and early '90s. Fortunately, the focus put on public funds by state and local officials in this painful era largely protected public cash reserve funds in subsequent market upheavals in 2001 and 2008.

State investment statutes and local investment policies were examined and bolstered in virtually every corner of the country. Local Government Investment Pools (LGIP) were restructured to enhance safety of public money and adhere to consistent standards.

Finally, treasurers themselves responded to the scrutiny by improving reporting and communication with elected officials and conducted this business in a much more open and effective manner.

At the time, NACo FSC spent a good deal of time determining whether it could help solve the problem. However, conservative new policies rendered a national program solution impractical and unneeded. Over the years, the FSC never stopped following this topic and made note of periodic innovations, none of which it felt provided a powerful improvement in the status quo. That changed in 2012.

Inefficiencies persist. As we all know, it is common in all but the largest counties, that the person or department that invests reserve funds wears multiple hats. Depending on the state, it may be budgets, elections or tax collecting. The time available for maintaining its investments is always short and information is cumbersome to come by, with investors having to rely on bond dealers to show them investments and prices. What they lack is information that is affordable, efficient and actionable.

In 2012, David Keen, NACo's CFO, started using an online platform

to invest the association's operating funds. What began as a search for better yields, ended with the discovery of eConnectDirect, a technology solution offered by Multi-Bank Securities Inc. (MBS).

The eConnectDirect bond platform allows a finance professional to look at a wide variety of investment options, meeting their policy and statute standards on their own or alongside their broker, to select the investment that best fits their needs as offered by multiple dealers.

Keen's experience with MBS and eConnectDirect led to a two-year review and due diligence process to determine what the broker-dealer community was offering treasurers and finance officers in the way of technology and innovative solutions. NACo FSC

assembled a committee of treasurers in late 2013, with different sized jurisdictions and financial needs, to conduct a competitive selection process in which MBS was awarded an agreement with FSC to provide eConnectDirect. The program has enjoyed significant interest in the early stage of a soft launch this fall and is being positioned for a broader rollout in 2015.

"We are delighted that we now have access to the capabilities eConnectDirect provides," Keen said. "We look forward to working with MBS in offering eConnectDirect to all our members."

*Multi-Bank Securities, Inc. Member of FINRA & SIPC; MSRB. eConnectDirect is a registered trademark of Multi-Bank Securities, Inc.*

By JEN HORTON  
PROGRAM MANAGER

NACo has announced the five counties selected to hold a County Prosperity Summit in 2015:

- Cape May County, N.J.
- Cheatham County, Tenn.
- Scott County, Ky.
- Shasta County, Calif.
- Titus County, Texas

With support from the Ford Foundation, these summits aim to convene local leaders in each county to introduce counties to the *Wealth Works* framework, help counties build strategies to strengthen regional relationships and identify ways to deepen and sustain economic development activities.

NACo will invite national experts to each county who will engage with local leaders to generate new and creative solutions for building and strengthening local economies.

Additionally, NACo staff will work with each selected county to develop a personalized agenda and individualized content relevant



to specific local issues, including workforce development, food systems, entrepreneurship and wealth creation.

Each summit will convene approximately 25 – 50 participants, including a broad mixture of county elected officials and staff, other local and regional public officials, business owners, representatives of the nonprofit and philanthropic community and other relevant stakeholders.

NACo's panel of expert reviewers was overwhelmed by the many qualified applications received for the County Prosperity Summit program. NACo is currently formulating additional resources to support counties interested in new economic development approaches.

## WORD SEARCH

### Clark County, Nev. Facts

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

**APEX** (home of the Apex Landfill, the largest in the U.S.)  
**BIGHORN** (sheep found in Clark County)  
**CREECH** (Air Force Base)  
**CREOSOTE** (bush, the county's main native vegetation)  
**DUSTY** (Alan Burd's character in the campaign "Don't Be A Dusthole")  
**EUREKA** (19th-century locomotive in Las Vegas)  
**FORT MOJAVE** (Indian reservation)  
**HOOVER DAM** (partially located in Clark County)  
**HUNTRIDGE** (first desegregated theater in Las Vegas)  
**LAKE MEAD** (the largest reservoir in the U.S. by water capacity)  
**LAS VEGAS** (county seat)

**MAJESTIC STAR** (casino company headquartered in Clark County)  
**MESQUITE** (city in Clark County)  
**MT. CHARLESTON** (highest peak in the county)  
**NYE** (neighboring county to the west)  
**PARADISE** (unincorporated community in Clark County)  
**PETROGLYPH** (rock engravings found in many archaeological sites in Clark County)  
**TECHATTICUP** (the oldest patented gold, silver, copper and lead mine in Nevada)  
**TOIYABE** (National Forest in Clark County)  
**WILDERNESS** (20 federally designated wilderness areas)

Created by Sarah Foote

M	H	M	V	A	F	S	P	Q	X	A	K	S	H	G	P	W	J	O	N
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# STATE → TO → STATE

## ★ OKLAHOMA ★

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

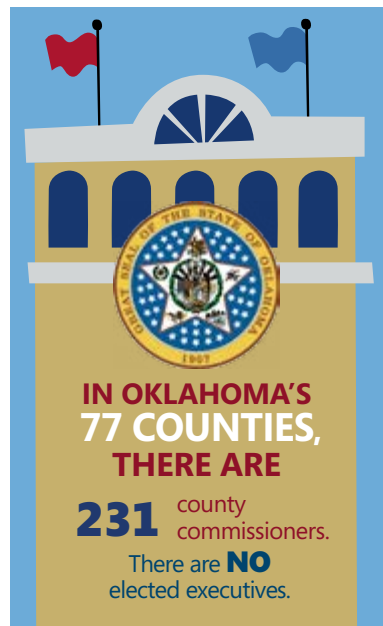
*State-to-State explores these questions and helps keep you in touch with your fellow leaders across the country.*

### OKLAHOMA

Sooner State counties fared well during the 2014 legislative session in Oklahoma City. The Association of County Commissioners of Oklahoma (ACCO) saw positive results on two fiscal issues of interest to its members.

The passage of a bill relating to insurance pools was a plus. "There was a recent change that might have treated our insurance program just like a private insurance program and exempted us from the governmental tort claims act which limits financial liability to a county," said Gayle Ward, ACCO executive director. "We clarified that language to keep us under the governmental tort claims act."

Another successful piece of legislation increased the purchase order limit from \$10,000 to \$15,000. For counties, that raises the ceiling



below which contracts have to be competitively bid by \$5,000.

Plusses aside, Ward said transportation funding will continue to be a challenge. "Last year the Legislature took \$10 million out of one of the county transportation revolving funds in order to balance the budget," she said. "It seems there will be another budget shortfall this year, and it seems likely they may come after more transportation funding to fill that gap."

Counties will also be hard-

pressed to fill the "hole" in sheriff's budgets caused by a recent unexpected move by the state's Department of Corrections, which removed many state prisoners from county jails. Ward said sheriffs will face a "hardship" in finding a replacement for the payments the state once provided to house its prisoners.

If not an outright victory, there was an acceptable compromise on an issue involving phone companies and rights of way. A recent state attorney general's opinion gave telephone companies the right to lay their lines anywhere in county right of way without notice to the county. "We worked with the telephone companies to come to an agreement on a bill that regulates them to notify the county when and where they are placing their lines," Ward said.

When the Legislature reconvenes in February, ACCO will have its hands full educating freshman lawmakers. "We have had a pretty significant turnover in the legislature due to the term limits that were implemented a few years back," she said. "Trying to educate the new ones is a constant challenge."

# County offers below-market rate loans to municipalities

By CHARLIE BAN  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Franklin County, Ohio doesn't typically act like a parent to municipalities within its borders, but it's about to start lending them money to get projects off the ground.

Starting in February, below-market-rate loans of up to \$1 million will be available to cities, villages and townships within the county borders through an infrastructure bank.

It started with a minor crisis in

2013, when Gov. John Kasich (R) cut the local government fund by half, over two years.

"We had to raise taxes to cover the shortfall, but we could only raise the sales tax by increments of one-quarter of one percent," said Commissioner John O'Grady. "We didn't need to raise it that much, but we didn't have a choice."

But with an extra few million dollars coming in, roughly \$3.5 million in 2014, the county found some use for it.

"We wanted something impactful for local government and economic development," O'Grady said. "Infrastructure was an obvious choice, because it either will help a community grow or take care of maintenance they'll have to address eventually."

Soliciting input from local businesses and municipalities led the county to develop a lending

program for local government infrastructure or economic development projects. Loans will be capped at 50 percent of total project costs, but county staff anticipate the infrastructure bank loans will ultimately comprise one-quarter of the financing. For townships and villages, O'Grady said, the infrastructure bank might be the best chance to get loans for projects.

Interest rates will be set at 0.25 percent below AAA municipal market data rates, and terms can range between one and 10 years.

"You're talking about money for next to nothing," O'Grady said. "These are very favorable rates."

The loan application process involves proposal discussions with county economic development

See **LOANS** page 16

# Kentucky counties are 'Work Ready'



Photo courtesy of Northern Kentucky Tri-ED

A new production line at Bonfiglioli USA in Boone County, Ky. — its first in the U.S. — is what three Northern Kentucky counties hope to see more of as a result of their recent certification by the state as a "Work Ready" region.

By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Three neighboring northern Kentucky counties — Boone, Campbell and Kenton — are the first in the state to be certified together as a Work Ready region under Kentucky's Work Ready Communities program.

To qualify, a county must garner local support and commitment to apply for the designation and meet criteria in six areas: high school graduation rate, National Career Readiness Certificate holders, demonstrated community commitment, educational attainment, soft-skills development and digital literacy.

"We're always looking for more tools for the toolbox, and the way the state's program was set up is it required counties to submit their applications independently, and we were okay with that," said Robert Horine, county administrator for the Campbell County Fiscal Court, the local governing body. "But we did it in a collaborative fashion." He said there were no direct costs to

the counties other than staff time.

The statewide program is designed to be a magnet for economic development by demonstrating an area's workforce readiness. It began in 2012 under the auspices of the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board and the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, and is a top priority for Gov. Steve Beshear (D).

Other counties in Kentucky have pursued the designation individually, but this is the first time three counties coordinated their applications. And that should come as no surprise, say local officials. Cooperation is in these counties' DNA. They created the Tri-County Economic Development Corp., known as Tri-ED, in 1987 as the region's not-for-profit economic development district.

"We were very adamant about the fact that we wanted to go into this as a region, not as individual counties," said Wade Williams, Tri-ED's vice president for business retention

See **WORK-READY** page 16

### CORRECTION

► The Richland County, S.C., seal featured in the April 7 "What's in a Seal" shows the South Carolina State House. The building was incorrectly identified. Also, Richland County was formally incorporated in 1799, as indicated on the county seal.



# Mobile workshops visit observatory, wind farm, EV pilot project

By BEVERLY SCHLOTTERBECK  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Sitting in the Pacific, 2,300 miles from San Francisco, Hawai'i has relied on tourism and the military to feed its economy and fossil fuel to provide its energy. But that's all changing.

Economic development boards like the one in Maui County are looking to diversify their economies by attracting technology and research facilities to their shores; while a statewide initiative, Hawaii Clean Energy, aims to supply 40 percent of the entire state's energy needs from locally generated renewable sources by 2030.

Participants who attended any of the four mobile workshops at NACO's Transportation Symposium were rewarded with an insider's view of how Maui County is undertaking these significant shifts in direction.

The first workshop at the county's 450-acre Research and Technology Center — described as the hub of Maui's growing scientific and technology industry — focused on the importance of multi-sector partnerships, broadband and IT infrastructure development.



Photo by Bev Schlotterbeck

Jeanne Unemori Skog, president and CEO, Maui Economic Development Board, kicks off the first mobile workshop which explored Hawai'i's role in global innovation.

Representatives from the Joint Information Technology Center (JITC), which supports U.S. Department of Defense medical readiness requirements, and the Pacific Disaster Center, a nonprofit associated with the University of

Hawai'i, briefed participants on the core nature of their ventures. The JITC is charged with developing rapid deployment medical services, like its "Doc in Box" for the military to use in theater, and engaging in applied research, development and deployment of tele-health and biotechnology to improve the quality of care for military members, veterans and their families.

The Pacific Disaster Center (PDC), a public-private partnership, provides multi-hazard warn-

ing and decision-support tools for emergency managers. According to its executive director, Ray Shirkhodai, PDC also conducts advanced risk assessments that integrate hazard exposure with socio-economic factors so the impact of a disaster can be better understood, and if necessary, mitigated through improved preparedness and planning processes.

PDC's website features an interactive map (<http://atlas.pdc.org/atlas/>) that allows visitors to isolate their areas of interest and track disasters across the world in real or near-real time.

The next several workshops further explored Maui's drive to innovate its economy and shift its energy grid from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources.

At the Haleakala Observatory, the world's first astronomical research laboratory and home to the Department of Defense's largest optical telescope, participants learned how Maui is using the space surveillance capacity of the observatory to attract businesses in the optics and supercomputing industries.

Not only is the island county home to one of the most important space surveillance sites in the world, it is also home to one of the state's largest wind farms, the Kaheawa Wind Farm, built on a ridgeline of the West Maui Mountains by Boston-based First Wind. The farm with 34, 180-foot turbine towers can provide 51

megawatts of electricity, enough to power 16,000 homes.

The project, which was built in two phases, cost \$192 million, according to Carolyn Unser, First Wind community outreach coordinator. It was the first utility-scaled wind farm to develop a Habitat Conservation Plan, which are now standard across the industry. The plan protects several endangered bird and plant species on the mountain.

The final workshop featured another renewable energy-related project — one with an international twist. JUMPSmartMaui is a demonstration project between Japan, Hawai'i and Maui that aims to incorporate Smart Grid renewable energy and all-Electric Vehicle (EV) solutions to power a cleaner Maui. Jeanne Unemori Skog, president and CEO of the Maui Economic Development Board hosted the workshop held at JUMPSmartMaui's storefront headquarters in a local shopping center. Workshop participants learned about the project's development, its ties to Japan and its partnership with Hitachi Ltd. They witnessed a demonstration of an EV charging station and took turns sitting behind the wheel of a Nissan LEAF EV.

The project, funded at \$30 million by the Japanese agency, NEDO, began in 2011. It has met its initial goal of recruiting 200 volunteer Nissan LEAF drivers and 40 homeowners.

## Inland ports post gains as freight transporters

SYMPOSIUM from page 1

Council — speaker at another session — put the capacity of these ships in more concrete terms: They can move 36,000 cars or 863 million cans of baked beans over the world's oceans. There are no ports in North America that can handle the giant ships, which sail with a crew of eight.

America doesn't show well in terms of tonnage handled either, Vickerman said. Nine of the 10 busiest ports in the world are in Asia. Of the top 10, six are on the Chinese mainland. Shanghai, with the largest port in world, sports 200 cranes to move containers on and off ships.

The Suez Canal, thanks to its capacity to handle the mega ships, will "become the predominant port in a very dicey area as manufacturing shifts to India," Vickerman predicted.

"Ports, to be successful, must reduce costs and increase cargo velocity securely in an environmentally friendly manner," he said. In other words, freight moves "down

water" to ports with the lowest cost and the best service.

Yet, there's a bright spot for county officials who want to support the shipping needs of their local businesses: inland ports. A misnomer really, inland ports, one of the fastest growing ways to move freight, are actually railheads or distribution systems. "The more rail is linked and synchronized from inland ports to main ports, the better," Vickerman said.

An example is the inland Joliet, Ill. port (in Will County) where Wal-Mart built a 78-acre warehouse that saved millions of dollars in truck drayage, he noted.

Yolo County, Calif. Supervisor Don Saylor knows the value of inland ports, even if the Port of West Sacramento in his county more accurately fits the traditional definition of a port. The 40-mile, 30-foot deep watershed channel links California's rich Central Valley produce to the Port of San Francisco. And just as Wal-Mart located a major facility at the Joliet inland port, the Port



Photo by Casey Nishikawa

A team member from the JUMPSmartMaui project demonstrates the use of a charging station with an EV, electronic vehicle.

See SYMPOSIUM page 9



# Distribution system can be as valuable as manufacturing base

SYMPOSIUM from page 8

of West Sacramento has attracted food processors from around the world, some from as far away as Japan, who have set up shop at the port, Saylor said.

Distribution networks, like inland ports, may be as valuable as the manufactured goods or the commodities themselves, according to Paul Brewbacker, Ph.D., economist and principal with TZ Economics and former chief economist for the Bank of Hawai'i. "With modern logistics, the scale and scope of your distribution system matters," Brewbacker, who spoke at How Does the Global Supply Chain Reach Your County, said good distribution networks — with their transportation efficiencies — help to moderate prices. They are why "you pay pretty much pay the same at a Wal-Mart in Hawai'i as you would at a Wal-Mart in Idaho."

On the other hand, shoddy distribution networks plagued by poor roads, aging bridges, congestion and inadequate ports constrain the supply chain and threaten local and national economies. The ACSE estimates that failing to invest in the country's infrastructure will cause a \$3,100 drop in U.S. personal income and a \$3.1 trillion loss in GDP.

How are counties dealing with this direct threat to growing their economies? Basically two ways: urging Congress to fund the nation's dwindling Highway Trust Fund for the long-term, and relying on their own strategies and partnerships on the other hand.



Scott McGolpin, public works director, Santa Barbara, Calif., discusses his presentation with other panelists, Tammy Baney, commissioner, Deschutes County, Ore., and James Whitty, manager, office of innovative partnerships and alternative funding, Oregon Dept. of Transportation.

NACo supports an increase in the federal gas tax, as does the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the only tax increase the Chamber does support, said Janet Kavinoky, executive director for transportation and infrastructure, at the Chamber and panelist at The Road Ahead — Map-21 discussion. "The [federal] gas tax is a simple, elegant way to raise revenue" for the trust fund, she said.

Her advice for effectively communicating the need for long-term trust fund solvency: "Repeat. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat." And while you're repeating, she said, take your congressional representative along with a local business leader to a project site visit

so they can see what transportation funding means to your county. Better yet, she suggested, county leaders should call their local chamber to set up a joint effort or event.

Many counties, though, aren't waiting for the federal government to support their infrastructure needs. One symposium session looked at how they are leveraging new and traditional funding and financing techniques to meet their transportation challenges.

Santa Barbara, Calif. takes ad-

vantage of a recently passed state law that allows local governments to swap federal transportation dollars for state dollars. Why does that matter? Because it avoids "federalizing" small projects, said Santa Barbara public works director, Scott McGolpin. Federalizing a project adds cost and time, he said.

In addition to complying with state environmental quality regulations, a project using federal dollars will also need to meet federal compliance demands as well. Mc-

Golpin said the dual compliance requirements could add as much as 50 percent more in costs.

"On small projects, we try to make sure that only state and local funding is involved."

Rising fuel efficiency standards not only threaten federal highway transportation dollars, but also state transportation revenue as well. One promising alternative is a "road usage fee," which essentially charges drivers according to the number of miles they drive.

In Oregon, the state has embarked upon a pilot road usage charge. Oregon's fuel tax provides 44 percent funding for surface transportation needs, according to James Whitty, Oregon Department of Transportation. The state believes fuel efficiency will drive the gas tax out as a viable funding source. Subsequently, the Legislature in 2013, passed a per-mile road usage charge law, SB 810. The program, set to begin in July 2015 is open to 5,000 volunteers. Vehicles will be taxed at 1.5 cents per mile. Various devices, will be available to monitor mileage and gas usage. Drivers will be given a gas tax refund.

Eleven Western states are exploring the road usage tax as an option to their fuel taxes, Whitty said. "It's not an endorsement [by these states], just an exploration."

See SYMPOSIUM page 10



Hawai'i Lt. Gov. Shan S. Tsutsui welcomes NACo members to the symposium.



Lee May, interim chief executive officer, DeKalb County, Ga., jumps in on a discussion about the Highway Trust Fund during a session on reauthorizing MAP-21.

Photos by Tom Goodman



# Driverless cars pose new questions for transportation infrastructure planners

**SYMPOSIUM** from page 9

The symposium took a turn toward the future at its final session, Driving into the Future with Tech Innovation at the Wheel, Dec. 5.

Allen Bieher, director, Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) Transportation Center, and Monali Shah, senior innovation manager, HERE Traffic and Connected Driving, discussed the vehicles and roadways

of the future.

Bieher said there are two types of vehicles in the works: connected and autonomous. Connected vehicles give off short-range signals. They can be transmitted from vehicle to vehicle, referred to as V2V; vehicle to infrastructure like traffic signals, or V2I; and vehicle to other sources, bicycles for example, or V2X.

An autonomous vehicle (AV), on the other hand, senses what's all around it. It's the driverless car like Google is pioneering. Since, theoretically, there would be a reduced risk of collisions, they could be placed closer together on a roadway and built smaller and lighter.

Both types have new policy implications. Bieher listed several:

- Safety — who will be liable for accidents? Would the vehicle's manufacturer be on the hook for damages?
- New mobility and access could be available for handicapped population
- Congestion
- Public Transportation — Would they undermine the system?
- Energy and Environment
- Land use, and
- Economy and Jobs — impact to service industries, like automotive repair

Bieher invited NACo members to participate in a network CMU is beginning to build to conduct research and development in real-world policy issues surrounding connected and automated driving.

*(If you are interested in participating in CMU's Technologies for Safe and Efficient Transportation policy network, please contact Allen Bieher at [abieher@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:abieher@andrew.cmu.edu).)*



Photos by Tom Goodman

Honolulu City and County Council Chair Ernie Martin (center) chats a bit with NACo President Riki Hokama (l) and Matt Chase, NACo executive director.



Luncheon speaker and ports expert John Vickerman discusses some of the finer points of his presentation with NACo Board members (l-r) Roy Brooks, commissioner, Tarrant County, Texas; Jim Healy, commissioner, DuPage County, Ill.; and Gordon Topham, commissioner, Sevier County, Utah.



Janet Kavinsky, with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, urges symposium participants to support an increase in the gas tax as the best bet for fully funding the Highway Trust Fund. Also seen are panelists Brian Pallasch, American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), and Jessica Monahan, NACo. Their session explored The Road Ahead—MAP-21.

# PILT gets \$375 million; SRS not funded yet

**OMNIBUS** from page 1

access. This is considered a victory for state and local governments because a permanent prohibition had been under consideration.

• **Prohibits the use of any funds to issue further rules placing the sage grouse on the Endangered Species List for FY15.**

The pending sage grouse listing has the potential to impact millions of acres across the nation with devastating impacts to economic and infrastructure development projects.

• **Prohibits the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from requiring Section 404 permits**

Directed at agricultural activities including construction and maintenance of farm ponds and irrigation ditches.

• **Instructs the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers to withdraw the interpretive rule regarding the applicability of the Clean Water Act**

The interpretative rule was put out in April 2014 for the agricultural community. It provided specific recommendations on how to qualify for exemptions from the Section 404 permitting program for certain agricultural practices

While the omnibus provides funding for almost all government programs for the remainder of FY15, below are a few highlights from the bill of particular interest to county priorities:

• **The Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program received \$372 million**

When combined with the \$70 million in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2014 brings the total funding for PILT next year to \$442 million.

• **FY14 and FY15 funding for the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) Program was not included**

House leadership has committed to taking up SRS legislation early next year.

• **USDA Rural Development received \$2.4 billion in funding — \$5.71 million more than enacted FY14 levels**

Funding includes \$2.27 billion for Community Facility loans (\$13.7 million increase

from FY14); \$1.25 billion for water and waste disposal (\$40 million less than FY14 levels); \$24.9 billion for single-family housing loans (level funding from FY14)

• **The Community Development and Block Grant program received \$3 billion**

\$20 million below enacted FY14 levels.

• **The HOME Investment Partnership Program received \$900 million**

\$100 million below enacted FY14 levels.

• **The Community Services Block Grant received \$674 million**

Level funding with enacted FY14 levels

• **The Social Services Block Grant received \$1.7 billion**

\$44 million above enacted FY14 levels

• **The State Criminal Alien Assistance Programs received \$185 million**

\$5 million below enacted FY14 levels

• **The Byrne/JAG Program received \$376 million**

Level funding from enacted FY14 levels

• **The Second Chance Act Program received \$68 million**

Level funding from enacted FY14 levels

• **The Essential Air Service program received a direct appropriation of \$155 million (\$6 million increase from FY14 levels) with an overall estimate of \$255 million available for the Airport and Airway Trust Fund.**

• **The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant program received \$500 million**

\$100 million less than enacted FY14 levels

Using the cover of a two-day Continuing Resolution to avoid a government shutdown, the Senate will begin debate on the FY15 spending package immediately. While a vote could be expected as early as Friday, Dec. 12, a final vote could be delayed into the weekend.



# FSCorp, Membership, Conferences boost 2014 revenue



Photos by Tom Goodman

Tim McCormick asks for membership leads from NACo Board members. McCormick, commissioner, Ohio County, W.Va., chairs the Membership Committee.

## NACo BOARD from page 1

“NACo is financially sound,” said NACo Executive Director Matt Chase. “We have strong, diverse revenue sources that enable us to advance our advocacy and research capabilities, while enhancing our programs and services for members.

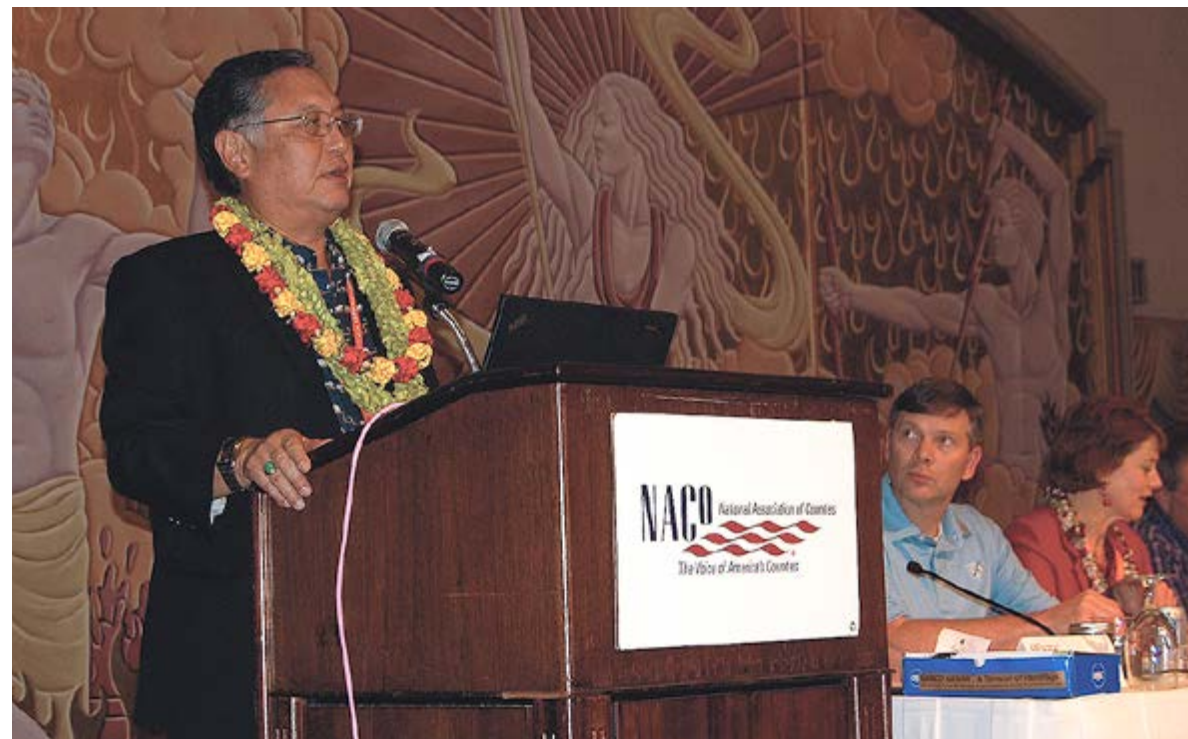
The 2015 budget includes ending the year with nearly a \$600,000 surplus. Chase said that a \$600,000 surplus may seem high, but having a conference with low turnout and high costs or an economic downturn could deplete that surplus quickly.

In 2015, revenue from the U.S. Communities program is projected to increase, but revenue from member-

ship dues and conferences is expected to decrease. The deferred compensation program is also expected to grow, but because NACo is expanding the percentage of revenue shared with the state associations, it will not see a revenue increase.

New grants that are part of the 2015 budget include: Department of Commerce – Economic Development, \$186,542; Federal Highway Administration — economic development links with transportation, \$122,601; Veterans Community Connection, \$93,291 and Justice Management Institute, \$62,615.

Chase outlined the 2015 Strategic Blueprint noting that the associa-



NACo President Riki Hokama, Maui County, Hawai'i council member, presides at the NACo Board meeting.

tion is switching from “Outputs & Process” to producing “Outcomes & Impact.”

The burning imperatives of the blueprint are:

- increase membership engagement, especially with newly elected county officials
- drive relevancy of county government in the federal policy arena
- enhance the portfolio of membership benefits and enterprise solutions, and
- upgrade NACo's communication tools and membership outreach.

The imperatives will be achieved through five objectives:

- advocacy – promote sound policies that advance the interests of America's counties
- leadership – empower county

leaders with new skills, resources and ideas

- solutions – provide high-quality, cost-saving services for counties and the public
- civic education – enhance the public's understanding of county government, and
- excellence – exercise exemplary stewardship of NACo's financial, intellectual and human resources.

Chase's presentation included highlights of the advocacy, research and program accomplishments

during this year. There were 42 special reports and publications produced, 26 conferences and events held, 14 grant agreements signed, 18 podcasts produced and 46 webinars held. Local governments saved more than \$150 million in 2014 through the U.S. Communities program; county residents have saved \$590 million through the NACo Prescription, Health and Dental Program and

See NACo BOARD page 12

## NACo Legislative Priorities 2015

• **Tax Reform:** NACo supports the preservation of the federal deductibility of local property and income taxes and the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds that provide critical funding for public facilities, infrastructure and development.

• **Protecting the Federal-State-Local Partnership for Medicaid:** NACo supports maintaining the federal-state-local structure for financing and delivering Medicaid services. Counties continue to be concerned about measures that would further shift federal and state Medicaid costs to counties, including cuts, caps or block grants.

• **Transportation Reauthorization:** NACo urges Congress to fix the Highway Trust Fund and pass a multi-year surface transportation bill that would provide funding certainty for counties.

• **Marketplace Fairness Act:** NACo supports legislative initiatives that permit the collection of existing sales and use taxes from remote sellers.

• **Payment in Lieu of Taxes and Secure Rural Schools:** NACo supports extending full mandatory funding for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program and legislative efforts to reform and fund the expired Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program.

• **“Waters of the U.S.” Proposed Rule:** NACo has raised concerns over the scope of the proposed rule as released by EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers, including its potential impact on county-owned and maintained public safety infrastructure and has called on the federal government to withdraw the proposal until further analysis has been completed.

• **Immigration Reform:** NACo supports comprehensive immigration reform that includes a modernized legal immigration system, establishes a temporary worker program, provides an earned path to citizenship and enhances border security.



Judy Shiprack, commissioner, Multnomah County, Ore., offers her opinion during a panel discussion on the results of a poll conducted by NACo staff to ascertain Board members' views on a number of topics. Also serving on the panel were Mary Ann Borgeson, commission chair, Douglas County, Neb.; and Mike McGinley, Beaverhead County, Mont.





# COUNTY INNOVATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

Pike County, Ky.

## County Embraces Famous Family Feud

By CHARLIE BAN  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

The ends didn't always justify the means in the Hatfield-McCoy feud — and boy, were they mean — but Pike County, Ky. is starting to benefit from its notoriety.

Long dormant in the minds of local residents, the 28-year, 19th century local conflict gained national attention with a three-part miniseries by the History Channel in 2012. Kevin Costner and Bill Paxton played the patriarchs of the families fighting along the Big Sandy River separating the Mingo County, W.Va.-based Hatfields and the Pike County native McCoys. The murder of a McCoy who fought for the Union during the Civil War sparked the feud that resulted in 14 deaths.

The well-received miniseries drew attention to the county of 65,000 at Kentucky's confluence with Virginia and West Virginia. Now Pike County is capitalizing on renewed interest in the feud's history to encourage tourism.

"People from all over the world started showing up, wanting to see where everything played out," said



Feuders' action figures allow tourists to take home pieces of history.

Daniel Thacker, executive assistant to County Judge Executive Wayne Rutherford. "The state and county agreed that they had neglected what a resource we had."

The History Channel later aired a reality TV show, *Hatfields and McCoys: White Lightning*, chronicling the lives of the families' descendants.

"I've lived most of my life in Pike County," Thacker said, "and

my teachers never mentioned that these historic events had happened nearby. It was something people knew about, but we didn't call much attention to it."

That's no longer the case.

Thacker said Rutherford used that tourist interest and momentum to fund construction of an amphitheater and restroom facilities, a venue for summertime performances of *BloodSong: A Story*



Photo courtesy of Pike County, Ky.

The cast of "Bloodsong: A Story of the Hatfields and McCoys"

of the Hatfields and McCoys, a play written and produced by the Artists Collaborative Theatre. The park was already known as Hatfield McCoy Park. The play opened to 300 people.

The county also made court records from the feud available, adding to the primary documents available for study for visitors interested in details.

While park renovations were in

motion, the county's tourism office planned a three-hour guided bus tour of sites related to the feud, along with a CD-based self-guided tour. An iPhone app, developed by feud descendants, uses GPS tracking to help visitors find historical sites and houses, and includes digitized documents related to the families.

"Before the miniseries, our tourism office estimated about 2,000 people visited all year, on average," Thacker said. "Most months, we have between 10,000 and 20,000."

For a county reeling from the decline of its economic base with the decline in coal extraction, the tourism boom is welcome.

"Nothing can replace what we lost with coal, but this is helping and along the way, we're embracing our history and learning more about it," Thacker said.

In addition to the tourism investment, the interest in the feud has meant academic investment, too. The University of Kentucky's Program for Archaeological Research teamed up with National Geographic to excavate a site where a McCoy house was burned down, after Hatfields reportedly used cotton as kindling.

"They found burned cotton fibers, which substantiated one of the stories," Thacker said.

The county spent \$178,579 on new construction and renovation of Hatfield McCoy Park.

## Quick poll takes Board members' pulse on issues

NACo BOARD from page 11

more than 325,000 county employees are saving for retirement through the deferred compensation program.

On the final day of the meeting, staff used instant polling to determine the views of the Board on environmental issues, jails, health care, county revenue, interacting with members of Congress and NACo programs and services. After each series of questions, a panel of Board members discussed the results and related the issue to their counties.

The meeting was held in Maui County because it is the home county of NACo President Riki Hokama, a council member in Maui County. A two-and-a-half day symposium on transportation and infrastructure was held prior to the Board meeting. Transportation and infrastructure are the theme of Hokama's presidential initiative.



Richard Forster, supervisor, Amador County, Calif., comments on the Board Finance Committee's report.

County Innovations and Solutions features award-winning programs.



# NACo joins Supreme Court *amicus* brief in temporary sign case

By LISA SORONEN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
STATE AND LOCAL LEGAL CENTER

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Reed v. Town of Gilbert, Arizona* could upset the regulation of posted signs nationally. Most sign codes, like Gilbert's, include different categories of temporary signs. It makes sense, for example, to give people more time to remove thousands of election signs and less time to remove a few yard sale signs.

In this case, the court will decide whether local governments may regulate temporary directional signs differently than other temporary signs. The court could rule, practically speaking, that all temporary signs must have the same time, place and manner requirements.

Gilbert's sign code includes temporary directional signs, political signs and ideological signs. After being notified that its temporary directional signs announcing the time and location of church services were displayed longer than allowed, the

Good News Church sued Gilbert. The church claimed Gilbert's sign code violates the First Amendment because temporary directional signs receive the less favorable treatment (in terms of size, location, duration, etc.) than political signs and ideological signs.

The 9th Circuit ruled that Gilbert's sign code does not violate the First Amendment because the distinctions between the three sign categories are "content-neutral:" all signs in each category are treated the same regardless of their content even if the three categories of signs are treated differently.

Because the lower court concluded that the sign categories are content-neutral, it applied intermediate scrutiny rather than strict scrutiny. The different treatment of temporary signs would not serve a "compelling" government interest as strict scrutiny requires, but does serve a "significant" government interest as intermediate scrutiny requires.

The State and Local Legal Center (SLLC) *amicus* brief argues

that Gilbert's sign code does not violate the First Amendment. Sign codes with multiple categories of temporary signs, usually classified by function, with their own time, place and manner requirements, are common.

And the fact that a temporary sign must be read to determine what kind of temporary sign it is does not render a sign code "content-based." Finally, even when the three categories of temporary signs at issue in this case are compared with each other, they are regulated by purpose, rather than by content, meaning strict scrutiny should not apply.

Bill Brinton of the Rogers Towers law firm wrote the SLLC's brief which was joined by the National League of Cities, NACo, the International City-County Management Association, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the International Municipal Lawyers Association, the American Planning Association and Scenic America.

# New OSHA requirements take effect in January



Beginning Jan. 1, 2015 there'll be a change to what covered employers are required to report to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Employers will be required to report all work-related fatalities within 8 hours and all in-patient hospitalizations, amputations and losses of an eye within 24 hours of finding about the incident.

Previously, employers were required to report all workplace fatalities and when three or more workers were hospitalized in the same incident. (Employers in states with a state-run OSHA program should contact their state plan for the implementation date.)

The updated reporting requirements are not simply paperwork but also have a life-saving purpose: they will enable employers and workers to prevent future injuries by identifying and eliminating the most serious workplace hazards.

Employers have three options for reporting these severe incidents to OSHA. They can call their nearest area office during normal business hours, call the 24-hour OSHA hotline at 1.800.321.OSHA (1.800.321.6742), or they can report online at [www.osha.gov/report\\_online](http://www.osha.gov/report_online).

\*See this article at [www.countynews.org](http://www.countynews.org) for links to OSHA's updated reporting requirements and an explanatory YouTube video.

## Starting Jan. 1, 2015

### All employers under federal OSHA's jurisdiction must report to OSHA:

- All work-related fatalities within 8 hours (Employers in a state with a state-run OSHA program should contact their state plan for the implementation date.)

### Within 24 hours, all work-related:

- Inpatient hospitalizations
- Amputations
- Losses of an eye

## SOLUTIONS SPOTLIGHT

### Effective Public & Private Sector Partnerships

#### Midland County, Texas

When Midland County, Texas decided to upgrade and relocate one of its three public libraries, the goal was to change what people perceive happens at a public library.

Specifically, the county wanted to change what people think of when they think of public library services. To accomplish the library's goals, John Trischitti, Midland Library System director, is using state-of-the-art interactive new technology to expand the library's services.

"Right now, people use the library until they graduate from high school, and then they do not come back until after they have children," he said. Trischitti thought that by expanding service offerings, he could attract people who normally do not use the library.

The Midland County Centennial Library is a 33,000-square-foot facility. The foundation of the library is built around a comprehensive technology plan which has been called the "Techiest" in Texas.



The physical design seeks to spark creativity and imagination in the minds of visitors with life-size trees, pictures of animals, a wall of bubbles, a room with its ceiling portraying planet Earth, interactive digital walls and 1,500 square feet dedicated to museum exhibits.

The county IT team worked with Cisco to develop the network foundation, data center technology, communications solutions, interactive applications and video technology for the library.

"One of the key goals for the

IT infrastructure was for it to have extremely high bandwidth to handle all of the library goes using the Internet and the Web-based applications," said Jason Bates, Midland County.

By expanding the library's programming and offerings, the county library has become a hub for the local community to collaborate, learn and share together. Since the opening of the new Centennial Library, community usage statistics have been truly incredible:

- Check outs have increased annually by 204 percent from 83,072 to 253,197
- The number of patrons checking out materials has jumped 707 percent, from 6,112 to 49,353
- The rate at which new patrons were added increased 1,355 percent from 614 added annually to 8,938

In a community of approximately 147,000 people, the new Centennial Library is on pace to welcome over 250,000 people through its doors during its first year of operation.

## What's in a Seal?



### Clark County, Nev.

William Verrill, a graphic designer and Clark County resident since 1979, designed the government logo for Clark County, Nev., which functions as the county seal.

Regarding the logo, entitled "People First," Verrill said he felt it was important that the logo be "a departure" from other governmental logos he'd seen from around the country, so he made the petroglyphs, seen throughout the county's Government Center, a key design.

He borrowed from this primitive style and illustrated them the way Nevada's earliest inhabitants might have on their rock murals.

Earth-toned colors, a bighorn sheep and the sun were all "musts" for inclusion in the design, he said. In the center of the logo, the Colorado River snakes into Lake Mead. Across the bottom are stick figures holding hands to symbolize the centralization of all the departments of Clark County to better serve its citizens. All four petroglyphic elements are rendered on a three-dimensional rough-hewn diamond shape to represent the native red rock that is prevalent in the government center, and Clark County as a whole.

Clark County's Public Information Officer Dan Kulin contributed to this.





# News From the Nation's Counties

## ► CALIFORNIA

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY** has enacted a **living wage ordinance** for all employers doing business with the county. Contracts with for-profit businesses initiated after July 1, 2015 will require at least a \$19.06 hourly wage. Contracts with community-based nonprofits would be exempt from the requirement until a separate living wage policy can be created with input from stakeholders.

## ► COLORADO

A year after two fires ravaged its landscape, **EL PASO COUNTY** is reviewing its **private burn policy**, which currently barely regulates the practice and provides no protocols for public alerts or safety nets. *The Gazette* reported commissioners are working to include a local permitting process and weather restrictions.

Current code requires that county residents notify their local fire protection district and the health department when they want to burn vegetation. It does not have any protocol for getting word out to the public, nor does it discuss which fire department should be on hand to help if burns get out of control.

## ► DELAWARE

**NEW CASTLE COUNTY** unveiled its first-ever **economic strategic plan**. The map of the county's economic potential will serve as a blueprint with specific action steps aimed at short-term goals and long-term opportunities for the county to bring new jobs and strengthen the economy.

County Executive Thomas Gordon said that a plan is vital to ensuring New Castle County would not become "a third world country" in the near future.

## ► FLORIDA

• **BROWARD COUNTY** sent a stern letter to Uber and Lyft saying that the **ride-sharing companies'** drivers may be arrested, their cars impounded and fines imposed against them and the companies.

The letter warns the companies to "cease operations in Broward County" until drivers are complying with Broward tax laws, which include drivers obtaining chauffeur licenses and permits or decals for the vehicles and paying to pick up passengers at airports, the *Miami Herald* reported.

• **MIAMI-DADE COUNTY** commissioners passed an amendment to the **county's human rights ordinance** barring discrimination in

employment, housing and public accommodations against people who identify as transgender.

The amendment prohibits discrimination based on gender identity and expression. Before the passing of the new law, the *Miami Herald* reported, the only way a transgender person could file a discrimination complaint would be if the offender explicitly "outed" their particular sexual orientation or gender identity.

• Signs **publicizing the addictiveness** of herb kratom could be coming to **PALM BEACH COUNTY** bars, convenience stores and other places selling the substance.

Although the County Commission didn't approve an outright ban, it did call for asking local businesses to voluntarily stop selling kratom to children while state and federal officials decide whether to take action.

Kratom has become a popular ingredient at South Florida kava bars, often added to tea. The trees are native to Thailand and the leaves have long been used as an herbal drug, according to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Chewing the leaves in small doses can turn kratom into a stimulant, while in high doses kratom can feel like a sedative.

**SARASOTA COUNTY** is the only one in Florida to regulate kratom, according to the *Sun Sentinel*. In October, Broward County opted not to outlaw the sale, advertisement or display of the herb.

## ► HAWAII

The state Department of Agriculture and **KAUAI COUNTY** are paying a consultant \$100,000 to examine the possible health and environmental effects of **pesticide use on genetically modified crops**.

The joint fact-finding process is expected to start in January and be completed within a year.

A federal judge in August invalidated Kauai's law requiring biotechnology companies to disclose more information about the pesticides they spray on their GMO crops and create a buffer zone around schools and certain other public areas.

The same judge, Barry Kurren, dealt a similar hand to the Big Island last month, invalidating **HAWAII COUNTY's** partial ban on growing genetically modified crops.

## ► ILLINOIS

**COOK COUNTY** is issuing Wells Fargo, claiming the lender **disproportionately targeted minorities** with high-cost mortgage loans.



Photo courtesy of Suffolk County, N.Y.

Parents of Logan Stiger, a **LORAIN COUNTY**, Ohio teenager who died after a powdered caffeine overdose, talk to FDA officials during the Suffolk County effort to push a national ban on sales of the powder to minors.

## ► NEW YORK

**SUFFOLK COUNTY** Legislature Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory and 18th District County Legislator William Spencer visited Capitol Hill Dec. 9 to lobby the Food and Drug Administration to **ban the sale of powdered caffeine to minors**. Suffolk County was first local government in the country to pass such a ban following the overdose deaths of several teens.

The suit alleges Wells Fargo approved high-cost, high-risk loans for women, Hispanics and African-Americans more often than others. This happened over the past decade, helping fuel many foreclosures in the county, the suit said.

Wells Fargo and its affiliates are responsible for more than 26,700 foreclosure filings on homeowners in Cook County from January 2000 through August 2014, according to County Commission President Toni Preckwinkle's office.

Roughly 18,900 of those filings — or 71 percent — are concentrated in Cook County's minority neighborhoods, even though only 22.6 percent of owner-occupied homes in Cook County are owned by minorities.

Cook County filed similar lawsuits against HSBC North America Holdings, Inc., and against Bank of America earlier this year, the *Sun Times* reported.

## ► MARYLAND

**HOWARD COUNTY** Executive Allan Kittleman has officially **overturned a ban on the sale of sugary drinks** and high-calorie snacks on county property and at events sponsored by the county.

Kittleman said the ban, signed into law by former Howard executive Ken Ulman with a 2012 executive order, "clearly overstepped" an "appropriate role" for government, *The Baltimore Sun* reported.

## ► MISSOURI

The **ST. LOUIS COUNTY COUNCIL** transferred \$3.4 million from an emergency fund to cover police overtime and other expenses after the **Ferguson shooting protests**.

KWMU-FM reported that overtime accounts for more than \$2.5 million of the extra expenses, in addition to covering supplies, food and clothing.

## ► NEW YORK

• A state grant of \$750,000 will enable **BROOME COUNTY** and the Broome County Land Bank Corp. to establish a county **Home Ownership & Housing Initiative**, the *Press & Sun Bulletin* reported.

The initiative's goal is to convert foreclosed or vacant properties into affordable housing. It also would provide assistance to repair 10 low- and moderate-income homes.

Nine projects in the state's southwestern counties — aka the Southern Tier, which borders Pennsylvania — have been awarded \$3.4 million through the area's Regional Economic Development Council. The money, from the federally funded Community Development Block Grant Program, is administered by New York State Homes and Community Renewal.

• **WESTCHESTER COUNTY** legislators are considering creating an **"energy czar"** position for the

county.

"It would deal with all resource procurement," Legislator Peter Harckham told Mid-Hudson News Network — whether it's electricity, vehicles, purchasing or waste disposal.

He added that the position would be responsible for all facets of sustainability — from low-flow toilets to sensor-activated lighting in county buildings.

## ► OHIO

**CUYAHOGA COUNTY** Councilman Dave Greenspan plans to introduce legislation that would **cut services** provided to cities and villages if they are more than three months late in paying the bill.

"We provide services. If you're not current in paying for them, you won't be receiving them," he said. The county offers services to local municipalities — including such things as sewer maintenance, website design and health care coverage, according to the *Plain Dealer*.

The topic came up recently when County Council members discussed an unresolved dispute with the cities of Cleveland and Lakewood over traffic violation fees the county says it's owed. Officials have previously said the fees could add up to as much as \$100,000 a year.

## ► PENNSYLVANIA

A **regional emergency response system** led by **NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY** could become a reality. County commissioners recently approved forming a multi-county committee to study the idea. It's a move that Commissioner Stephen Bridy believes will save each participating county \$1 million.

The county is inviting **SCHUYLKILL, SNYDER, COLUMBIA, MONTGOMERY and UNION counties** to join in the effort.

"We're in a unique situation to head up this regionalization initiative because we have the [radio frequencies]," Bridy told *The News Item*. The county is purchasing maritime frequencies that are expected to be in high demand, which extend across Pennsylvania and into New York.

## ► SOUTH CAROLINA

To round out its 215th anniversary celebration, **RICHLAND COUNTY** is hosting a **special community drop-in**. It's designed to let residents get up close and personal with their county government, and



## Financial Services News

# Saving More for Health Care Costs in Retirement

Health care will likely be one of the biggest retirement expenses county workers face. Unfortunately, many are likely to guess or underestimate what their expected health care costs will be.

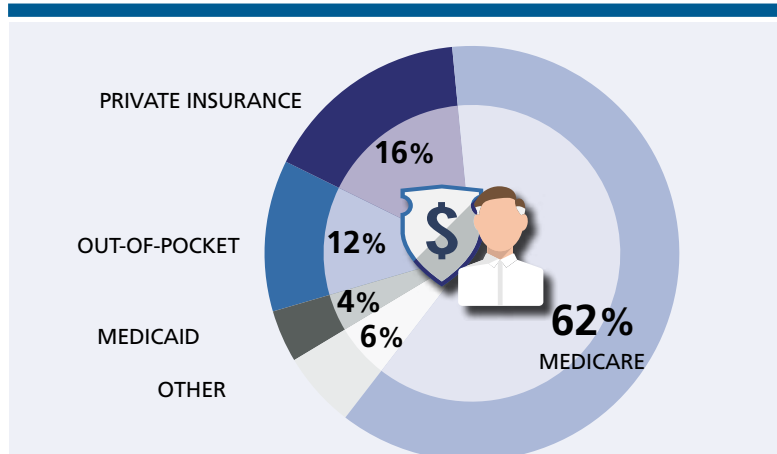
In fact, the average 65-year-old couple pays about \$220,000 out of their own pockets for health care over a 20-year retirement period.

Even though Medicare covers many expenses, paying Medicare premiums, deductibles, co-pays and other shared costs will most likely be each retiree's responsibility. Add to those costs what Medicare doesn't pay for — see the nearby chart — and it becomes apparent that health care expenses can have a big impact on their standard of living in retirement.

That's why Larry Johnson, a DeKalb County, Ga. Commissioner, endorsed Nationwide's new health care cost assessment tool and the county's risk director, Larry Jacobs, saw that workshops featuring the tool were scheduled for deferred compensation plan participants. This tool:

- uses research from one of the world's leading actuarial firms to align an individual's anticipated health care needs with current trends

**Medical Expense Coverage Sources for Medicare Beneficiaries Age 65 and Older**



Source: 2011 Medical Expenditures Panel Survey

in health care spending;

- personalizes an individual's estimated health care costs based on their current health conditions, family medical background and outlook for retirement, such as where they plan to live, and

- shows how an individual's health care spending can change throughout retirement and estimates their potential long-term care costs.

Johnson says providing employees access to the tool was "a no-brainer. People don't understand what the positive benefits of deferred

compensation are. Most think they'll have all the money they need — that they'll be self-sufficient. If they don't know what their expenses may be," Johnson adds, "how can they really know if their financial resources in retirement will be enough?"

"If we as a county employer want to help employees make sure their futures are bright, we need to help them understand all their costs in retirement. We saw the Health Care Cost Assessment as an additional opportunity to get county workers thinking about their life goals and

asking the right questions to help them better plan their future."

To date, DeKalb County has held four sessions with about 100 employees; 70 have completed the assessment. "I think it's greatly increased awareness among those who've used it," Johnson said. "There's a misperception about what Medicare will cover. Seeing what the assessment told them was an 'Aha!' moment."

Johnson says another such moment was when the county employees realized they didn't have a good handle on when they should take their Social Security benefit.

"They're telling us, 'We need to save more to help cover our health care.' They're asking for comprehensive reviews of their participation in the NACo Deferred Comp Program in light of these assessments." In response, DeKalb County is planning health care and retirement planning fairs for its employees, as well as inviting its Nationwide Retirement specialist to hold more one-on-one visits with employees.

Asked to give his "elevator speech" about DeKalb County employees' experience with Nationwide's Health Care Cost Assessment, Johnson said: "Nationwide's providing a service for the people who are taking care of us in DeKalb County. The assessment's free. And it only helps to enhance the quality of life for our most precious resource — employees. Why wouldn't we do it?"

Employers who want to learn more about the Nationwide Health Care Cost Assessment through the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, or other aspects of the program, should contact Linda Barber at [barberl@nationwide.com](mailto:barberl@nationwide.com). Public employees who are interested in getting more information about the opportunities available through participation in the NACo Deferred Compensation Program should contact Lisa Cole by email at [lc@naco.org](mailto:lc@naco.org) or by phone at 202.942.4270.

(Financial Services News was written by Bob Beasley, communications consultant, Nationwide Retirement Solutions.)

Nationwide Retirement Solutions (Nationwide) makes payments to the National Association of Counties (NACo), NACo PEB LLC and the NACo Financial Services Center Partnership (FSC) for services and endorsements that NACo provides for all its members generally related to Nationwide's products and services sold exclusively in public sector retirement markets. More detail about these payments is available at [www.nrsforu.com](http://www.nrsforu.com).

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## Job Market & Classifieds

### Legislative Analyst – Baltimore County, Md.

**Salary:** Contingent on qualifications  
Join a team that makes a difference in how county government operates. The Office of the County Auditor operates as part of the legislative branch of county government and serves the Baltimore County Council in its legislative oversight function by providing independent auditing and other fiscal and policy analysis services. Presently, we are recruiting two vacancies in our fiscal and policy analysis unit.

Applications are due by Jan. 5, 2015. Please contact Mr. Michael Shoul at [mshoul@baltimorecountymd.gov](mailto:mshoul@baltimorecountymd.gov), or call (410) 887-4426. For additional information, visit our detailed job ad at: <http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/auditor/employment.html>.

## County turns down free armored vehicle

NEWS FROM *from page 14*

reflect on the progress made in their communities throughout the year.

The event, Dec. 18, marks the date of the county's formal incorporation in 1799 and also celebrates the holiday season.

The county hosted 15 public workshops this year at which residents could provide input, opinions and suggestions about the county's future growth and development as the county revamps its comprehensive plan. Guests at the drop-in can see how their input was incorporated into final plan updates.

### ► TEXAS

**DALLAS COUNTY** is asking the state to reimburse most of the nearly \$384,000 that it spent on responding to the **Ebola crisis** in North Texas, the Associated Press reported.

The county will request about \$258,000, according to Philip Haigh, a spokesman for County Judge Clay Jenkins. The city of Dallas says it spent about \$155,000, while the Texas Department of State Health

Services says it incurred about \$1.28 million in costs.

### ► WISCONSIN

- Add **DANE COUNTY** to the lengthening list of localities that have established a specialty **court to deal with veterans'** issues.

Existing special courts in the county already deal with some of the same problems veterans can face, such as drug and alcohol abuse. However, serving in combat can add complications such as post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury, Dane County Circuit Judge David Flanagan told the *Wisconsin State Journal*.

"We're looking for people whose criminal problem flows from a treatable condition," added Flanagan, a Navy veteran who served in Vietnam. "It's to find people who should be getting treatment but aren't."

To date, 35 people had applied for the vets' court, and seven had been admitted or were ready for admission. The others were being evaluated.

- Thanks, but no thanks is

**SHAWANOCOUNTY** sheriff-elect Adam Bieber's response to the federal government's offer of a free, \$750,000 armored vehicle. Called MRAPs — for **mine-resistant, ambush-protected** — such vehicles have been criticized by civil liberties groups as contributing to the militarization of local law enforcement agencies.

The county's Public Safety committee recently voted unanimously to halt efforts to secure an MRAP, WBAY-TV news reported. "I think the community does not see the need for it, and they don't believe the rhetoric of, 'Hey we need this for officer safety or we need this to protect your kids.' The community is smarter than that," Bieber said.

And he added, free isn't always free in the long run. The 16-ton vehicles require annual maintenance, and it costs about \$300 for each fuel fill-up.

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

## NACo JOBS ONLINE

Good employees are crucial to getting the job done!

[www.naco.org/programs/jobsonline](http://www.naco.org/programs/jobsonline)





## The H.R. Doctor Is In

### An H.R. Doctor Holiday Card

'Twas the night before Christmas  
And throughout County Hall  
Not a bureaucrat was stirring  
No sounds heard at all

The janitor's night off, the alarm systems set  
The beacons for security and decoration met  
The ambient light kept the stars out of sight  
No Bethlehem star could be seen on that night

Those bringing gifts were turned back at the door  
No gifts could be given, auditors hired galore  
No risk of polluting the ethics machine  
Even frankincense and myrrh would have to be screened

While Christmas and Chanukah often meet in December  
We seem to forget what we all should remember  
Of friendship and family, of futures so bright  
Of civil behavior and doing what's right

The holidays tell us of great lessons learned  
A safer and better world to be earned  
Give gratitude and joy — the greatest gifts, we believe  
It's better to give than it is to receive

*With Love and Best Wishes for a "Service to Others" Holiday Season...*

Phil Rosenberg, The HR Doctor  
Charlotte Rosenberg, The HR Spouse  
Elyse Rosenberg, The HR Daughter  
Rachel Brown, The HR Doctor Daughter  
Evie Brown, The HR Grand-Toddler

## NACo on the Move

### ► NACo Officers and County Officials

• NACo President **Riki Hokama** spoke on Nov. 25 during a general session about his Transportation Initiative and NACo at the Missouri Association of Counties Annual Conference in Camden County.

• Craven County, N.C. Commissioner **Scott Dacey** represented NACo at a Dec. 3 briefing on Capitol Hill to urge Congress to pass Marketplace Fairness legislation. Joining him were several members of Congress, mayors and private-sector retailers.

### ► NACo Staff



Chris Marklund

**Chris Marklund** has joined the legislative affairs department as an associative legislative director. He is a native of Madera County in California's San Joaquin Valley and is a graduate of California State University, Fresno, where he earned a B.A. in political science with an economics minor. Prior to joining NACo, Marklund worked closely with a number of congressmen, including Reps. George Radanovich (R-Calif.) and Ken Calvert (R-Calif.). He most recently served as the legislative director for Rep. David Valadao (R-Calif.), where he oversaw portfolios regarding public lands, energy, natural resources and environmental issues, among other legislative duties.

## Joint certification continues three counties' longtime collaboration

WORK-READY from page 7

and expansion-manufacturing projects.

Amanda Dixon is vice president for employer solutions, Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, which served as a convener for the three counties as they compiled data to make their case. "I think it was just another way to really bring together the things that we're all focusing on that impact the entire region."

The trio of newly designated counties — which lie across the Ohio River from Cincinnati — brings to 17 the number of the state's 120 counties to be certified since the program began. Another 32 counties have achieved Work Ready in Progress status.

Work Ready counties must be recertified every two years, and in-progress counties have three years from that determination to achieve full work-ready status.

Williams said that despite the Tri-ED region's history of working together on economic development, going through the certification process taught them a few things. "I think

### SpeedRead » » »

- » Trio of Kentucky counties designated Work Ready region
- » 17 of state's 120 counties have been certified
- » 32 are Work Ready in Progress

what this process did for us is that we've got a bunch of new data points now that we didn't have before." For example, the region hadn't previously focused much on employees' attainment of National Career Readiness Certificates, a credential conferred by ACT, the same entity that does college-readiness testing.

"Northern Kentucky didn't necessarily rate real high on use of those," he said. "So now we're working on plans to implement how we get employers more engaged in that process."

He added that Tri-ED is going after advanced manufacturing. "Historically, we've done very well with machine tool, metal, chemical manufacturing, so we're looking for

those type of operations that generally drive a need for higher-skilled labor," he said.

Robert Curry helped to create the statewide program in 2011 and now administers it, steering counties through the application process and helping evaluate their credentials. There is no cost to counties to apply for certification. Reeling off some of the qualifications for certification, he said the program requires that 25 percent of a county's working-age population have an associate's degree or higher, with future stretch goals of 32 percent and 39 percent.

He noted that, according to a recent Georgetown University study, by 2018, 60 percent of jobs in the state will require some form of post-secondary education.

"When you're sitting down with a company and they're trying to decide whether they're going to locate or expand in your community, one of the first questions to come up is, 'tell me about the workforce,' and it was a tough question to answer," Curry said, "and so that's why this program was designed."

"It was never intended to be a rubberstamp program where everybody gets certified, and you all go home happy," he clarified. "We have made our standards more rigorous than any of the other states that had a program prior to ours."

Tri-ED's Williams said the three counties were "adamant" about going through the process together. "This is a statewide initiative ... and we thought it was important to participate and be one of the first metro regions to get this designation in Kentucky because we want to support Kentucky," he said. "And we think it's a good way for us to show that Northern Kentucky is active in advancing this workforce readiness arena."

## Infrastructure bank adds \$35 million annually

LOANS from page 7

staff, credit analysis, ranking by a loan advisory committee — which will go a long way to determining to proposal's chances — and final approval by the County Commission.

"There's a lot of flexibility in where this money can go," O'Grady said. "Roads, sidewalks, streetscapes, lighting, Internet bandwidth. Anything that can increase our local municipalities' capacity for doing business."

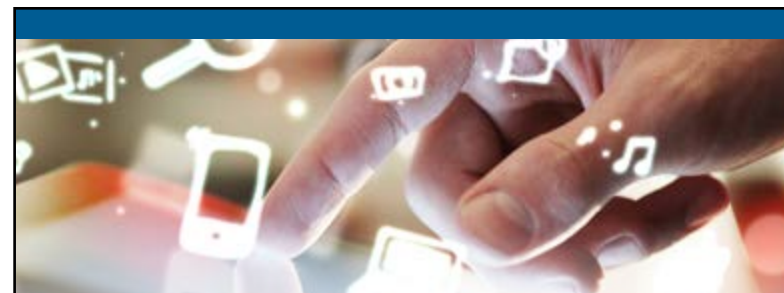
"Flexibility is key here. We didn't want to create something so rigid that we'd eliminate a whole bunch of potential projects."

As the late February application deadline approaches, the county has heard about interest from municipalities ranging in affluence and population density. The remaining rural areas have begun the preliminary step, and O'Grady said that large developers have approached the city of Columbus about making use of infrastructure bank financing.

"It's certainly something that will benefit the private sector in that these projects can happen," he said, noting that economic development-oriented projects, versus infrastruc-

ture projects, had to create new private sector jobs or private capital investment. "This will mean local governments can help the local business community where they hadn't been able to previously."

The county will add roughly the same amount — \$3.5 million — for the next few years. O'Grady said that, and the fact the principals on each loan will eventually be repaid with interest, should preserve the program.



Social media is one of the most effective ways to connect with peers, resources and county residents.

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