

NACo National Association of Counties

CountyNews

The Voice of America's Counties

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES ■ WASHINGTON, D.C.

VOL. 43, NO. 8 ■ April 25, 2011

North Carolina tornadoes savage at least 18 counties

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Bertie County, N.C. can't seem to catch a break. This rural county in the northeast corner of the Tar Heel state experienced two 500-year floods between 1999 and 2010. But neither wrought the devastation of the recent tornadoes that left 12 people dead and scores more homeless. The death toll could climb from critical injuries.

There were 24 deaths in North Carolina from the April 16 twisters that clawed a path of destruction across the state. The casualties in Bertie County, population about 19,300, made it the hardest hit area in the state.

There were four deaths in Wake County, where the capital city, Raleigh, is located. But property damage in that more urbanized county (pop. 897,000) could top \$100 million, a county official said.

"North Carolina has taken a beating, but we are going to do what we are so good at doing — recover," Gov. Beverly Perdue said.

See **TORNADOES** page 12



Photo courtesy of the Roanoke-Chowan News-Herald

A tornado-mangled tree in Bertie County, N.C. doubles as a flagpole in the aftermath of a twister outbreak April 16 that left at least 24 people dead statewide, 12 of them in Bertie County.

Veterans, military families a winning theme for 2011 NCGM celebrations

By JIM PHILIPPS
MEDIA RELATIONS MANAGER

"So, the benefits are here. We want people to know that they can

come to the courthouse, see our veterans' services officer on the first floor—or see any of us—and we'll make sure that we get those benefits to them as quickly as we can."

In one TV sound bite, County Judge Loyd Neal, Nueces County, Texas, summed up the purpose of National County Government Month (NCGM): In good times and tough times, counties are here to serve.

This year's theme, Serving Our Veterans, Armed Forces and Their Families, has proven to be very popular as counties across the country are raising public awareness about the role and responsibilities of county government as well as the

services available.

As reported by KIII-TV in Corpus Christi, Nueces County kicked off its NCGM celebrations by honoring local veterans during a ceremony featuring the veterans color guard and band. The event was held at the county's veterans monument located in front of the courthouse.

Many counties embraced this year's theme and honored their local veterans and military families.

In Caddo Parish, La., Commission President Ken Epperson coordinated a variety of events including a ribbon cutting of the

See **NCGM 2011** page 11

NACo seeks examples of regulatory hurdles, hindrances

By MIKE BELARMINO
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

If you have been bothered and befuddled by federal regulations that add expense and headaches to your projects or operations, now's your time to let NACo know.

NACo is collecting information to forward to the Obama administration in conjunction with a White House initiative to find ways to design cost-effective, evidence-based regulations.

Earlier this month, officials from the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) and Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) met with local government groups to discuss the administration's implementation of regulatory review initiatives, and to seek their assistance in gathering information.

Specifically, NACo is looking

See **REGULATIONS** page 6

CountyNews Features

- Model Programs
- News From the Nation's Counties
- Profiles in Service
- NACo on the Move
- Research News
- The H.R. Doctor Is In
- What's in a Seal?
- In Case You Missed It
- Financial Services News
- Job Market / Classifieds

QuickTakes

5 Wealthiest Counties

- 1 - Loudoun County, Va.
- 2 - Fairfax County, Va.
- 3 - Hunterdon County, N.J.
- 4 - Howard County, Md.
- 5 - Los Alamos County, N.M.

Based on 2008 Median Household Income
Source: Forbes.com

INSIDE »



Citizen input smoothes redistricting process in Tennessee » **Page 8**

Now's your chance to apply for a NACo committee appointment » **Page 2**

FCC looking for county input on rights of way » **Page 2**

One state's budget battles illustrate impact on counties » **Page 7**

MEMORANDUM

TO: NACo Members
FROM: First Vice President Lenny Eliason
DATE: April 11, 2011
RE: 2011–2012 Presidential Leadership and Committee Appointments



As I look ahead to my year as NACo president, I want to take this opportunity to let you know about the appointments that I will have the privilege of making to NACo's leadership team. These appointments are for one to three year terms and membership on some of these committees has specific requirements. Following are the appointments along with the qualifications required for each.

IMPORTANT: Steering committee membership is not a part of this application process.

The NACo president appoints **only the steering committee leadership. The State Associations of Counties are responsible for nominating the general steering committee members.** If you are interested in becoming a member of a steering committee you must contact your state association directly.

Please complete an online application if you are interested in being considered for a presidential appointment to any of the following committees or to NACo's Board of Directors.

Steering Committee Leadership

The 11 steering committees will each have a leadership team consisting of a chair, an appropriate number of vice-chairs, and subcommittee chairs and vice-chairs. Those applicants who have been active members of the steering committee will be given preference in consideration for these appointments. The applicant should be willing to help coordinate leadership conference calls, develop the meeting agendas, and testify before Congress if necessary. These appointments are for one year.

Caucus Steering Committee Leadership and Members

The Rural Action Caucus Steering Committee and the Large Urban County Caucus Steering Committee will each have a chair and an appropriate number of vice-chairs and committee members. Applicants who have been active members

of these caucuses will be given preference in consideration for these appointments. These appointments are for one year.

At-Large Appointments to the NACo Board of Directors

Each president appoints 10 at-large directors to the NACo Board of Directors for a one-year term. These appointments are to add balance to the board with respect to any inequities between urban and rural, gender, geography and minority representation. As with our communities, our strength is in our diversity. These appointments are for one year.

Standing Committees

The Standing committees are as follows:

Finance Committee Advises the officers on the annual budget of the association before it is presented to the Board of Directors and provides oversight on other financial issues as directed by the officers. (Appoints three members for a three-year term with a background in finance and/or investment.)

Information Technology Committee Advises the officers on information technology issues and provides oversight on NACo information technology projects. (Appoints the chair, two vice chairs, and 22 members for a one-year term.)

Programs and Services Committee Advises the officers regarding the development and evaluation of programs and services for NACo members. (Appoints the chair for a one-year term and eight members for three-year terms. Selects one or two vice-chairs from the membership of the committee.)

Membership Committee Actively recruits and retains member counties, parishes and boroughs in order to increase NACo's total membership. (Appoints the chair and vice-chairs for a one-year term.)

Ad Hoc Committees

The Ad Hoc committees are as follows:

Deferred Compensation Advisory Committee (Appoints the chair for a one-year term and five members from participating entities for a three-year term.) In 2011, the open slots are for two appointed county officials and three elected county officials.

NACo Financial Services Center Advisory Committee (Appoints nine members for a one-year, renewable term, as follows: county administrator or county executive; county clerk; county commissioner or supervisor; county purchasing manager; county treasurer or finance officer; state association executive; NACo first vice president; and two members from county government.)

Arts and Culture Commission (Appoints the chair, vice-chair and 25 members for a one-year term.)

Geospatial Information Systems Committee (Appoints the chair and vice-chair for a one-year term.)

Green Government Advisory Board Provides information, guidance and support to the NACo Green Government Initiative. (Appoints the chair, vice-chair(s) and members.)

Healthy Counties Advisory Board Provides information, guidance and support to the NACo Healthy Counties Initiative. (Appoints the chair, vice-chair(s) and members.)

Everyone who wants to be considered for a leadership or committee appointment on a standing or ad hoc committee for the 2011–2012 presidential year must complete the Presidential Appointments Application Form. It is available online at NACo's website, www.naco.org. You will find it under "About NACo" ► "Committees and Caucuses" ► "Presidential Appointments."

The deadline for submitting your application is June 3. I look forward to receiving your application and to your active participation in NACo.

Please direct any questions you may have to Karen McRunnel at 202/942-4238 or by email at kmcrunne@naco.org.

FCC seeks input on public rights of way

By JEFF ARNOLD
 DEPUTY LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has adopted a Notice of Inquiry (NOI) on public rights of way for broadband deployment, both wired and wireless. The April 7 action will appear in the Federal Register shortly and will have a 60-day comment period.

Some telecommunications industry representatives have suggested, in other proceedings at the FCC, that local governments have been a hindrance to the deployment of broadband, particularly through rights-of-way approval procedures, management and rights-of-way fees.

This NOI asks a series of questions about local government management of its rights of way, approval procedures and fees. This is an opportunity for county governments to set the record straight as to what actually occurs in counties, rather than allowing the FCC to rely on anecdotal suggestions from industry groups. The comment period will begin as soon as the NOI is published in the Federal Register (probably the week of April 18) and will run for 60 days, with 105 days for reply comments.

The NOI can be found on the NACo website, under "Legislation and Policy" ► "Learn about Policies and Committees" ► "Telecommunications and Technology Steering Committee." A Notice of Inquiry is a preliminary step, part of a fact-finding process by the agency, to determine if some regulatory action should be initiated. Should the record from the NOI suggest that further action be taken, the FCC would initiate a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

To comment on the NOI:

All filings related to this Notice should refer to WC Docket No. 11-59.

• Comments may be filed using:

1) the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS); 2) the Federal Government's eRulemaking Portal; or 3) by filing paper copies.

• Electronic Filers: Comments may be filed electronically using the Internet by accessing the ECFS: <http://efile.fcc.gov/ecfs2/> or the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Filers should follow the instructions provided on the website for submitting comments.

• Paper Filers: Persons who choose to file by paper must file an original and four copies of each filing.

• Filings can be sent by hand or messenger delivery, by commercial overnight courier, or by first-class or overnight U.S. Postal Service mail. All filings must be addressed to the Commission's Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission.

• All hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings for the commission's secretary must be delivered to FCC Headquarters at 445 12th St., SW, Room TW-A325, Washington, DC 20554. The filing hours are 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. All hand deliveries must be held together with rubber bands or fasteners. Any envelopes must be disposed of before entering the building.

• Commercial overnight mail (other than U.S. Postal Service Express Mail and Priority Mail) must be sent to 9300 East Hampton Drive, Capitol Heights, MD 20743.

• U.S. Postal Service first-class, Express and Priority mail must be addressed to 445 12th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20554.

CountyNews

The Voice of America's Counties

President | Glen Whitley
Publisher | Larry Naake
Public Affairs Director | Tom Goodman
Executive Editor | Beverly Anne Schlotterbeck
Senior Staff Writer | Charles Taylor
Staff Writer | Charlie Ban
Graphic Artist | Jack Hernandez
Editorial Assistant | Christopher Johnson

ADVERTISING STAFF

Job Market/Classifieds representative
 Christopher Johnson

National Accounts representative

Beverly Schlotterbeck

(202) 393-6226 • FAX (202) 393-2630

Published biweekly except August by:

National Association of Counties

Research Foundation, Inc.

25 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.,

Ste. 500, Washington, D.C. 20001

(202) 393-6226 | FAX (202) 393-2630

E-mail | cnews@naco.org

Online address | www.countynews.org

The appearance of paid advertisements in County News in no way implies support or endorsement by the National Association of Counties for any of the products, services or messages advertised. Periodicals postage paid at Washington D.C. and other offices.

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

POSTMASTER: send address changes to

County News, 25 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Ste. 500, Washington, D.C. 20001

(USPS 704-620) ■ (ISSN: 0744-9798)

© National Association of Counties
 Research Foundation, Inc.

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

FY12 House budget makes deep cuts in county programs

The House of Representatives passed the FY12 Budget Resolution (H. Con. Res. 34), the first step in the congressional budget process, by a vote of 235–193 April 15. The resolution by Budget Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wisc.) would reduce spending by almost \$6 trillion over the next 10 years.

The budget resolution traditionally does not give many specifics. Instead it gives a blueprint to the appropriators of how much they have available in their specific functions. Additionally, it may give instructions known as budget reconciliation to authorizing committees for deficit-reduction measures. Nonetheless, Ryan's blueprint gives a general idea of what can be expected and calls for significant changes to some programs, particularly Medicaid.

Some of the most significant proposals for counties include a Medicaid block grant, overall domestic spending reductions, a reserve fund for Secure Rural Schools and PILT, and consolidation of job-training programs. NACo wrote a letter to Ryan and Ranking Member Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) expressing concerns before the mark-up.

Overall Domestic Spending Reductions

Funding for non-defense domestic discretionary programs would go back to FY08 levels. NACo approved a resolution at its legislative conference in March supporting domestic discretionary spending at 2010 levels.

Medicaid Block Grant

Medicaid would stop being an entitlement and the federal share would be converted into a block grant, indexed for inflation and population growth, for states. In exchange for accepting the risk, the plan envisions states assuming more or less total control over program design and implementation. NACo strongly opposes block-granting Medicaid because of the inevitable crushing cost shifts to counties.

Ryan projects Medicaid savings for the Treasury of \$750 billion over 10 years — states and counties and other Medicaid service providers

could be at risk for that amount or more.

President's Medicaid Proposal

On April 13, President Obama

issued his own budget framework for deficit reduction in which he rejected the Medicaid block grant. Instead, he would replace the current myriad federal medical assistance percentages (FMAP) for Medicaid

and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) with a single matching rate for all program spending that would be linked to states' efficiency. He proposes an automatic increase in the matching rate in the case

of increased costs due to a future recession.

In addition, the president invites recommendations to improve

See FY12 page 8



Smart Now, Sustainable Forever

Esri® Technology gives you the power to plan your future. With mapping, modeling, and data analysis solutions, Esri has the complete platform to start your smart community today for a sustainable tomorrow.



Learn more at esri.com/conews

CORRECTION

The listing in the April 11 issue, "Nuclear Power Plants by County or Parish," contained errors. Three Mile Island and the Susquehanna nuclear plants were misplaced. Three Mile Island is in Dauphin County, Pa. and Susquehanna in Luzerne County, Pa. We are sorry for any confusion.

Continuing Resolution passed for remainder of fiscal year

This fiscal year's budget battle has finally concluded, just in time to begin the FY12 budget battle. Both the House and the Senate passed the Continuing Resolution (CR) before funding ran out at midnight April 15. This culminates months of negotiations and political wrangling that put the federal government on the precipice of a shutdown. Congress begins work on the FY12 budget after a two-week spring recess. The Legislative Department has reviewed the FY11 CR and provides the following overview.

Agriculture and Rural Affairs

The agriculture portion of the CR, which funds USDA and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), includes a total of nearly \$20 billion in funding, which is a decrease of around \$3 billion or 14 percent below the FY10 funding level.

The FDA received \$2.3 billion, which is a 4 percent increase above FY10. This level will only allow FDA to begin implementing some of the recently passed Food Safety Modernization Act (P.L. 111-353). USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service is funded at \$1.01 billion, which represents a minor cut of \$10 million or 1 percent.

Most USDA Rural Development programs, which directly fund county infrastructure and development efforts, received significant cuts. For housing and community programs, the CR provides \$1.2 billion in budget authority, which is a 14 percent cut from the FY10 level of \$1.4 billion. Rural business and energy programs received \$128 million in the CR. This represents 31 percent below the FY10 level of \$185 million. Rural Utilities Programs such as broadband, water and wastewater infrastructure received more modest cuts. The CR provides \$598 million for these programs, which is 8 percent below the FY10 level of \$653 million, but 25 percent above the House budget resolution, which would have only provided \$449 million.

The CR eliminates funding for Resource Conservation and Development Councils (RC&D), which were funded at \$50.73 million in FY10 through USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

HUD Programs Cut

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) formula funding is cut to \$3.3 billion from \$3.9 billion, a 16 percent cut from the FY10 level. While significant, this level is well above the 62 percent

proposed cut to \$1.5 billion for CDBG contained in the House budget resolution. NACo lobbied to save CDBG from drastic cuts.

The HOME Investment Partnership program is reduced from \$1.8 billion to \$1.6 billion for FY11. The Obama administration's Sustainable Communities Initiative, receives \$100 million, a \$50 million cut from the FY10 level. Homeless housing assistance grants are increased by \$40 million, for a total of \$1.9 billion including \$225 million for the Emergency Solutions Grant program.

The HOPE VI program receives \$100 million, a 50 percent cut from the FY10 level of \$200 million. The Section 8 voucher program is funded at \$18.4 billion, with \$16.7 billion for tenant-based voucher renewals, and \$50 million for HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers.

Environment and Energy

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Interior section of the Continuing Resolution would be funded at almost \$8.8 billion. That is a funding decrease of \$1.6 billion below enacted levels. The Clean Water (CW) and Drinking Water (DW) State Revolving Fund (SRF) programs will be cut \$997 million below enacted levels to \$2.5 billion. SRF programs help finance state and local water infrastructure projects.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund for land acquisition received \$301 million, \$149 million below enacted levels.

The Energy and Water section is funded at \$31.8 billion in the CR, a \$1.7 billion cut from FY10 levels.

The Department of Energy (DOE) would be funded at \$25.6 billion for the rest of the year. This is \$10.7 billion under the 2010 enacted numbers. Within DOE, energy efficiency and renewable energy is slated to receive \$1.8 billion—\$407 million below 2010. The Army Corps of Engineers is funded at \$4.9 billion; this is \$578 below the 2010 enacted level. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) budget was cut by \$140 million below enacted levels to \$4.6 billion.

Spending Affecting County Health Programs

Some of the most significant health policy provisions of the bill are not in it—namely, those measures that had been adopted by the House in H.R.1, but were dropped from the compromise bill. These include provisions which would have defunded the Affordable Care Act (including the Prevention and Public Health Fund) and Title X family planning programs like Planned Parenthood.

State Health Access Grants, which had been used by a handful of states to improve access to health care, are eliminated. The program had been funded at \$75 million last year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) landed nearly \$5.7 billion, which is a \$730 million cut from last year's level.

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) gets

\$6.27 billion in discretionary funding, which includes Community Health Centers, health professions training, the Ryan White Care Act, and Title X Family Planning. This is \$1.2 billion below last year's FY10 level, but \$900 million above the House budget resolution. Some HRSA programs will receive new funding in FY11 through the Affordable Care Act.

Human Services Programs Spared Major Cuts

In general, human services programs fared very well in the continuing resolution. The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), which had been slated for a substantial cut in the House budget resolution as well as the president's FY12 budget, received \$680 million, close to level funding. CSBG remains very vulnerable in the next budget cycle, however.

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program had the biggest cut. It received \$4.71 billion overall, a reduction of \$390 million from the contingency fund. Senior nutrition

programs received level funding \$847 million, the same as FY10. The Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Head Start received increased funding. CCDBG received \$2.2 billion, a \$100 million increase, and Head Start received \$7.57 billion, a \$340 million increase.

Funding Slashed for Justice and Public Safety

The FY11 Continuing Resolution severely cuts a number of programs important to county governments, and local justice and public safety agencies. In fact, the legislation reduces Justice and Public Safety programs, technical assistance or services important to counties by more than \$1 billion dollars compared to FY10 enacted levels.

For the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the legislation provides \$2.2 billion for DHS State and Local Grant Programs (\$3 billion enacted in FY10), \$50 million for FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation

See **RESOLUTION** page 5

Profiles in Service



» Sally A. Heyman

Board of Directors
Commissioner
Miami-Dade County, Fla.

Number of years active in NACo: more than eight

Years in public service: 24 elected, eight in law enforcement

Occupation: crime and loss prevention specialist, attorney

Education: B.A. criminal justice, University of Florida; M.S. criminal justice, Nova University; juris doctorate, University of Miami

The hardest thing I've ever done: pass the Florida Bar

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Eleanor Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln and Walt Disney

A dream I have is to: redeem social injustices.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: have a tattoo.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: hovered over an active volcano.

My favorite way to relax is: hanging out in a park, especially near water.

I'm most proud of: helping others.

Every morning I read: my calendar.

My favorite meal is: chocolate.

My pet peeve is: liars.

My motto is: "Make something better."

The last book I read was: *The Collectibles* by David Baldacci.

My favorite movie is: *Big*.

My favorite music is: 60s and 70s.

My favorite president is: Bill Clinton.

In Case You Missed It ...

News to Use from Past County News

► Now accepting applications for the NCGM Award

The National County Government Month Award recognizes counties' participation in National County Government Month during the month of April. This year's theme is "Serving Our Veterans, Armed Forces and Their Families."

To be eligible for the competition, the county program must be conducted by a current NACo member during the month of April as part of National County Government Month. Programs will be judged on the following factors: citizen participation, involvement of elected officials, utilization of existing resources, amount of positive media coverage generated by the event(s) and how the program was promoted by the county (i.e. press releases, social media, etc.)

Applications must be received by Tuesday, May 31, to be eligible for the competition. The winning counties—rural counties (population less than 100,000); suburban (population between 100,000 and 500,000) and metropolitan (population above 500,000)—will be recognized during the NACo Annual Conference this summer in Multnomah County (Portland), Ore. at the general session with a prize of two free registrations to any future NACo Annual Conference.

To fill out an application, visit www.uscounties.org/cfiles_web/ngcm/ngcm_award.cfm.

Labor programs take \$800M hit compared to FY10 funding

RESOLUTION from page 4

Grants (\$100 million enacted in FY10), \$249 million for State and Local Training/Exercises (\$267 million enacted in FY10) and \$182 million for FEMA's Flood Map Modernization Fund (\$220 million enacted in FY10).

Both Fire Equipment and Staffing Grants (\$810 million) and Emergency Management Performance Grants (\$340 million) are level funded compared to FY10, and FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund received a significant boost in funding at \$2.65 billion (\$1.6 billion enacted in FY10).

For the Department of Justice, the legislation provides roughly \$1.12 billion for DOJ's State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance account (\$1.53 billion enacted in FY10), and grant programs such as the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program, Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants, Second Chance Act Grants, Mentally Ill Offender Act Program Grants, Drug, Mental Health and Problem Solving Courts Grants and the Prisoner Rape Prevention and Prosecution Program are reduced across the

board by approximately 17 percent from FY10 levels.

Additionally, the legislation provides \$246 million for COP hiring grants (\$298 million enacted in FY10), \$276 million for Juvenile Justice Programs (\$424 million enacted in FY10) and \$419 million for domestic violence and sexual assault grants administered by the Office of Violence Against Woman (no change from FY10).

The legislation appears to reject earlier proposals to eliminate DOJ's Juvenile Accountability Block Grants, but the CR eliminates the Byrne Discretionary Grant program and Weed and Seed fund.

Workforce Programs Receive Slight Reduction; Reduces WIA State Set-asides

The Department of Labor funding level for the FY11 Continuing Resolution is \$12.7 billion, an \$800 million reduction, and approximately 6 percent cut, from the FY10 enacted funding level of \$13.5 billion.

The bill provides \$2.8 billion for job training state grants for

adults, youth and dislocated worker programs, which is \$182 million below the FY10 level.

Under the legislation, adult training is funded at \$771 million — a 10.5 percent cut. Dislocated workers is funded at \$1.06 billion, a roughly 10 percent cut. Finally, Youth training is funded at \$827 million, a cut of 10.4 percent from FY10 enacted levels.

The bill also provides \$125 million for a new Workforce Innovation Fund to encourage states and regional partnerships to engage in systemic reform to improve program outcomes. The \$125 million provided for the Workforce Innovation Fund reduces the percentage cut in WIA State Grants from 10.3 percent (\$307 million) to a total net reduction of 6.13 percent (\$182 million) to the grants.

Under the legislation, the FY10 \$1.71 billion funding level for Job Corps programs is maintained, while \$75 million in Job Corps construction funds is rescinded. Youth-Build is funded at \$80 million, a \$22.5 million (22 percent) reduction below the FY10 level.

FY10 funding of \$125 million for the Career Pathways Innovation

Fund is rescinded (FY11 funding already was eliminated in an earlier funding bill from March), and funding reserved in FY10 for Transitional Jobs is eliminated.

The bill reduces state WIA set-asides to 5 percent, which allows more funding to flow to local areas.

Reductions in Federal Land Management Agency Budgets

Federal land management agencies received widespread cuts in the FY11 continuing resolution. Department of the Interior (DOI) agencies received the following reductions (compared to the FY10 enacted levels): BLM — \$18 million, Fish and Wildlife Service — \$141 million, National Park Service — \$127 million, and the USGS — \$26 million. USDA Forest Service received reductions in National Forest System funding of \$6 million. The Land and Water Conservation Fund (land acquisition) was cut by \$149 million.

Both USDA and DOI Wildland Fire programming (including funding for the FLAME fund) received significant cuts totaling \$529 million. Cuts to wildland fire budgets

could prove to be a significant problem for fire-prone portions of the country as many expect a high-risk fire season in 2011.

Without funding for the FLAME account and if fire suppression budgets are exhausted early, agencies will again be forced to "borrow" critical funds from other USDA and DOI programs. Historically funds borrowed from other agency programs have not been repaid.

Transportation

A number of transportation programs suffered significant cuts in the FY11 continuing resolution but most of the programs that directly affect counties are funded at current levels — that is the same funding as FY10.

The largest cut is to high-speed rail, which received no funding compared to \$2.5 billion in FY10. This program was an administration priority and has run into problems with Ohio, Wisconsin and Florida returning funds to the federal government for high-speed rail that their new governors decided not to use.

See **RESOLUTION** page 12

NACo Prescription Discount Card FREE to your county and your residents

**FULTON
COUNTY, GA**
**Total Savings
To-Date
\$2,272,249**

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

Spotlight on Fulton County, Georgia

Fulton County, GA launched the NACo Prescription Discount Card Program in March 2007. Since the program's inception, thousands of people in the County (population of 915,623) have utilized the program and saved millions of dollars.

Contact Andrew Goldschmidt, Director, Membership Marketing at 1-202-942-4221 or Ilene Manster, Membership Coordinator at 1-202-942-4291, or visit www.naco.org/drugcard for program information.

Operated by CVS Caremark.

This is NOT insurance. Discounts are only available at participating pharmacies. Rev 03.11

Smartphone users
scan code to access
the NACo website.



Caucus fly-in focuses on NACo's rural priorities

By Erik Johnston

ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Members of NACo's Rural Action Caucus (RAC) conducted a fly-in advocacy effort April 5-7 to voice their support for federal funding, legislation and programs critical to rural communities across the country. Eighteen RAC members from 16 states met with six federal agencies and 48 congressional offices.

Each year, the caucus identifies the most pressing issues facing rural counties and brings them to the attention of key administration officials and members of Congress. This year's priority issues included:

- support for NACo rural surface transportation priorities and the Essential Air Service Program (EAS)

- making rural development a priority within Farm Bill reauthorization and level funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Development programs

- a multi-year reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS)

- support for rural health care by protecting Medicaid, and

- level funding for the Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG).



Photo courtesy of Sen. John Cornyn

Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) (second from left), listens to NACo President Glen Whitley talk about rural county priorities. Also meeting with Cornyn are (l) Hinds County, Miss. Supervisor George Smith and Naco staff, Ed Rosado and Daria Daniel.

"While Congress is considering billions of dollars in domestic spending cuts, it's critical that they hear directly from county officials," said RAC Chair Lu Barron, supervisor, Linn County, Iowa. "We need to work together to create jobs and grow our economy. That

objective becomes more difficult to achieve if federal programs affecting rural communities are cut substantially."

Key offices visited included Reps. Adrian Smith (R-Neb.) and Jim Matheson (D-Utah), co-chairs of the Congressional Rural Cau-

cus; Senate Finance Committee Chair Max Baucus (D-Mont.); Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.); Senate Republican Policy Committee Chair John Thune (D-S.D.); and Republican Senatorial Committee Chair John Cornyn (R-Texas).

RAC members also discussed these priorities with senior officials from six federal agencies. RAC's leadership team met with Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and discussed NACo's

Farm Bill priorities. Vilsack committed to an ongoing dialogue with RAC leadership regarding rural development policy and Farm Bill reauthorization.

RAC members emphasized rural surface transportation reauthorization priorities with the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and the shortage of medical professionals in rural areas with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

A meeting with the U.S. Forest Service focused on the future of the Secure Rural Schools program and the Forest Service Planning Rule. RAC members also met with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to discuss floodplain mapping issues and with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), where the focus was NACo's opposition to more stringent regulation of dust, pesticides and potential expansion of Clean Water Act jurisdiction.

RAC is the voice for America's rural counties in Washington. It is a bipartisan coalition of rural elected officials from across the country striving to enhance the quality of life in rural counties through effective federal legislation. Any individual county official from a NACo-member county can join RAC. RAC members receive occasional legislative action alerts and updates about RAC's priority issues.

For more information about NACo's Rural Action Caucus, visit www.naco.org/ruralcounties or contact Erik Johnston at ejohnston@naco.org or 202.942.4230.

NACo wants to hear how federal regs impede progress, add costs

REGULATIONS from page 1

for particular barriers (administrative, regulatory or legislative) that county staff or elected officials find to be duplicative or burdensome because they tend to prevent the efficient use of money from federally funded programs that benefit constituents.

For example, one county wanted to undertake a storm water improvement project to address local flooding concerns. The project entailed adding a second structure to a concrete box culvert and replacing a corrugated metal culvert.

These structures were deemed "jurisdictional" by the Army Corps of Engineers because they had a "bank on each side" and had an "ordinary high-water mark." Subsequently, the county was forced to acquire a permit for the work. The permit process caused

the county to nearly miss critical deadlines, risking the loss of much needed grant funds for the project.

In the meantime, several homes were flooded during heavy rains because the project was behind schedule and to add more headache, the county was also required to pay \$10,000 in mitigation costs associated with the impacts to the concrete and metal structures that were part of project. In the end, the Corps recommended no changes, meaning no additional environmental protection was provided — or perhaps needed — by going through the federal process.

You can enter your experiences online at www.naco.org/FedRegsProblems or go to the "Legislation and Policy" main page on NACo's website.

Please be as specific as possible, citing examples where appropriate. The results will be forwarded to the White House.

For those who are interested in the policy process, the guidance for this initiative is primarily outlined in two documents released by the administration earlier this year. The first is a Jan. 18 Executive Order aimed at improving regulation and regulatory review. The second is the Feb. 28 Presidential Memorandum instructing executive departments and agencies to work with state, tribal and local governments to reduce unnecessary regulatory and administrative burdens to encourage better outcomes at lower costs among the various federal programs.

Both documents can be viewed by visiting www.whitehouse.gov and following the links to the "Statements and Releases" section of the "Briefing Room."

For more information, contact Mike Belarmino, associate legislative director, at mbelarmino@naco.org or 202.942.4254



Photo courtesy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture

(l-r) Muskogee County, Okla. Commissioner Dexter Payne; Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack; Brookings County, S.D. Commissioner Don Larson; and RAC chair, Linn County, Iowa Supervisor Lu Barron pose for an official portrait after their meeting.

Wisconsin counties face state-imposed cuts

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Madison, Wis. became the poster child for how state budget-balancing can affect localities in the dawning months of 2011. Madison, the state capital and seat of Dane County, captured the nation's attention with a new governor's proposals to fill a \$3.6 billion budget gap, drama over union rights, a Capitol under siege and AWOL Democrats.

Gov. Scott Walker's (R) proposed 2011–13 biennial budget would axe \$36.5 million in shared revenues returned to counties in 2012; other municipal governments would lose \$59.5 million. The budget also reduces statewide funding for K-12 education by more than \$800 million.

While the numbers differ from state to state, the situation is far from unique. Counties from California to the Carolinas are coping with state-imposed cuts, as governors and state legislatures try to plug their budget holes.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a non-partisan Washington, D.C. think tank, 44 states and the District of Columbia face shortfalls in FY12 totaling more than \$111 billion and ranging from 2 percent to 45 percent of their total state budgets.

Some states have already finalized their budgets for the next one to two fiscal years; others continue to do hard math and make harder spending choices (see sidebar).

Walker says he's giving localities the tools they need to be more innovative in addressing residents' needs and solving local problems. "It's true we are reducing aid to local government by just over \$1.25 billion, but we are providing almost \$1.5 billion in savings through our budget repair bill," he said in his March 1 budget address.

The budget repair bill, which contains his controversial collective bargaining reforms, will effectively save local governments \$700 million a year, he added. But some county officials see it differently.

"This budget is a combination of funding reductions and then program cost-shifts to the county that in the aggregate give you heartburn," said Michael Serpe, Door County administrator. "It's like death from a thousand paper cuts, you bleed to death. It's not like slitting your wrists, but you bleed to death nonetheless."

If his county were to continue programs and services at current levels, it would have a \$2.08 million budget shortfall under Walker's cuts.

The county has until November to finalize its budget, and Serpe said it will be balanced by reducing expenditures.

"We're going to be hard-pressed to make it work, but we will make it work," he said. "And we're going to try to make it work in a fashion that is as seamless to the general public as possible."

Walker's budget also would centralize several human services programs previously administered by the state's 72 counties, including

"income maintenance" programs such as FoodShare (food stamps) and Medical Assistance (Medicaid). The governor's plan for Medicaid would reduce expenditures by more than \$500 million over the next two years, according to the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA).

Walker's budget does, however, provide relief from some state mandates such as eliminating a maintenance-of-effort requirement for funding libraries, ending mandatory municipal and county recycling, and

allowing municipalities to merge police and fire departments into a single public safety department, WCA said in a March 11 budget analysis memo.

In Wisconsin, to balance proposed cuts to local governments and schools, Walker's budget implements changes to collective bargaining and public employee pension and health care benefits, hashed out in his budget repair bill (the one that restricted collective bargaining rights).

The reforms require union-represented state and local government employees to contribute 5.8 percent for pension and 12.6 percent for health insurance premiums, previously subsidized or paid by their employers. His state deficit-cutting relies heavily on counties' being able to swap reduced state funding for savings from these changes.

It's the same kind of tough medicine Walker prescribed as

See CUTS page 10

Budget Snapshots from Other States

Alabama

Unlike counties in other states, Alabama counties benefit from a constitutionally mandated flow of state revenues. By law, counties receive a set portion of state revenue, said Sonny Brasfield, executive director, Association of County Commissioners of Alabama. "We don't find ourselves clamoring for money in the State Legislature. There's no local government line in the state general revenue budget."

To the degree that state revenues decline, so would county revenues, but any additional threats to the county revenue stream would come from cuts to state agencies, Brasfield said. "They may try to push services down to the local level at the administrative level," Brasfield explained. But that hasn't happened often.

"The funding issue really takes care of itself."

Nebraska

Nebraska's legislature cut all funding to its counties by eliminating three programs. One gave state aid to all counties, another reimbursed counties that held state prisoners in their jails and the third gave property tax relief to counties without jails.

"They were looking to repeal all laws dictating state funding to counties so that in future years there will be no reference to these statutes," said Nebraska Association of Counties Executive Director Larry Dix. "As you can expect, nobody is happy about this."

For most counties, the total from the state comprises close to 2 percent of their total budgets, so although the cuts will be noticeable, they won't be crippling. Now, the association is working on a companion bill to give the counties relief from state mandates, to ease the budget pressure.

"One mandate in particular is the requirement that all counties provide a certain square footage for the state's Health and Human Services department," he said. "This meant some of our small counties, which don't even have an HHS presence, had to lock up space that they couldn't use. We hope to get them a little freedom, but these bills aren't moving through as fast as the cuts."

South Carolina

South Carolina's House approved a FY12 state budget bill, which includes general fund

appropriations of \$5.2 billion. It reduces aid to public schools by at least \$74 million and colleges will lose more than \$16 million.

Counties will likely feel the pinch in mental health services as \$8.3 million may be cut in state funding for the coming fiscal year. Since 2008, \$81 million has been cut from mental health services.

Overall, the budget would increase spending by 3.5 percent with general fund spending rising over 7 percent. The budget now awaits Senate action.

South Dakota

The South Dakota legislature and governor approved a \$3.9 billion budget for FY12. The budget spends \$1.1 billion in general funds and eliminates the state's \$127 million structural deficit. It makes cuts to government agencies, Medicaid and education, but some of the cuts are not as drastic as originally feared. Another \$12 million, available because the growth in Medicaid patients has been lower than expected, was awarded as a one-time boost to some medical facilities.

Counties will lose some extension service support. Faced with \$1.2 million in budget cuts, the South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service announced a reorganization plan that establishes seven regional centers across the state. This plan eliminates the presence of one or two extension educators in every county across South Dakota.

The budget does not raise taxes and does not tap into the state's reserves.

Tennessee

It's no secret Tennessee is facing some major budget woes, and to help ease the crunch, every state agency has been told to trim its own budget. On March 14, Gov. Bill Haslam (R) unveiled his \$30.2 billion proposed budget, which closely followed that of his predecessor, Phil Bredesen.

One area of increased spending under the Haslam plan will be in education. Haslam proposed a \$63.4 million increase in K-12 education spending in all counties. However, the budget does cut \$20.2 million from higher education, which is likely to cause an increase in tuition at colleges and universities statewide.

Nearly 1,200 state jobs will be eliminated,

starting with currently unfilled positions and those jobs only recently created with federal stimulus money. For those employees keeping their positions, Haslam also proposed a 1.6 percent pay raise, the first since 2007. The proposal will cost the state about \$77 million. The budget is awaiting final passage.

Texas

In Texas, where the deficit is estimated at \$27 billion, the proposed biennial budget solutions from the legislature call for no new taxes. Instead, substantial cuts and realignment of services from the state to the county are being proposed.

Although school districts had been mostly exempt from prior rounds of budget cuts, lawmakers told school districts to anticipate approximately \$5 billion less in the FY12–13 budget as lawmakers begin wrestling with a large revenue shortfall. Cuts of \$5 billion would leave the state approximately \$10 billion short of funding levels required by state law, leading officials to recommend legislation that would alter formulas to cut about 14 percent of state funding to school districts. Five community colleges would also be shut down.

Virginia

The Virginia state budget has been frugal to counties for many years. The amended FY11–12 biennium \$80.2 billion state budget plan features roughly \$75 million more for county public education than the introduced budget.

It includes "hold harmless" funding to help school divisions potentially hurt by declining local revenue and revisions to the local composite index, a complex formula that determines school funding based on measures of community wealth, according to the Virginia Association of Counties.

Counties will also see increases of \$22.6 million for sheriffs and \$12.4 million for local police departments. The budget runs through June 30, 2012 and also provides money to improve state mental health services, spur road construction, promote economic development and pump money into state colleges.

(Charlie Ban, Chris Johnson and Bev Schlotterbeck, County News staff, contributed to this report.)

Davidson County, Tenn. speeds through redistricting

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Census-driven redistricting tends to involve two new maps — one depicting new voting districts and another directing county planning staff to the madhouse.

Doing it in a county with 35 districts, the second most in the country, was a recipe for a full-scale departmental migraine, but Nashville and Davidson County, Tenn. managed to make the decennial process faster and, officials say, more inclusive than ever before.

Faster because an August election looms, forcing the combined city-county government to define the districts that candidates would vie to represent, which wouldn't be feasible in the two or three months that redistricting had taken in the past. More inclusive because of the volume of input from the public online and in person.

The planning department received its U.S. Census data March 16 and immediately drew new district lines to accommodate the changes in population — up to 70 percent growth in a few districts.

The first step was working the

data into a usable form, which Metro Nashville Planning Department spokesman Craig Owensby said meant relying on intense preparation.

"We had been practicing with the software for weeks," he said. "We had a GIS mapper ready to go as soon as we got the data. It was like preparing for an emergency."

Before receiving the census data, the county worked with preliminary numbers based on population change estimates, knowing generally the population increase would center around the southern part of the county, with losses in the north.

The department set up a "war room," staffed primarily by nine people who worked long hours doing what they could with the boundaries.

Several criteria ruled the new districts' designs. The districts were supposed to contain equal populations within a 5 percent margin of error. The redistricting team tried to maintain the old boundaries wherever possible and use natural boundaries like streams, roads and neighborhoods. They kept districts as compact as possible, while maintaining fairness with respect

to the Voting Rights Act and tried not to split up several satellite cities throughout the county.

The first map draft was posted

on the Internet, in contrast to a map of the existing districts, and residents could comment on specific points in the redistricting. After a

few days, the map was revised and resubmitted for public comment. In addition, the war room gang took the map on a tour of the county, offering six public meetings where they took comments. By the end, the department had more than 400 emails and several hundred comments in-person over the course of 17 hours of meetings.

After three revisions, the final draft went to the planning commission 15 days after the census data came in. The 10-person commission unanimously approved the new boundaries.

By contrast, in 1990, the Metro Council totally rejected the planning department's map and did its own, bereft of the opportunities for public comment and input.

"When you're trying to get a 35-way compromise, it's hard to make everyone happy," Owensby said. "But in the end, even if people weren't 100 percent happy with it, everyone appreciated and respected the input that went into it."



Photo courtesy of Nashville-Davidson County, Tenn.

Members of the Nashville-Davidson County, Tenn. planning department huddle around one of the working maps of new voting districts.

For more information on Nashville-Davidson County's expedited redistricting program, contact Craig Owensby at craig.owensby@nashville.gov.

PILT, SRS are priorities in House budget chair's FY12 plan

FY12 from page 3

Medicaid being developed by the National Governors Association's Medicaid Task Force. He specifically calls for reforms "to incentivize more efficient, higher-quality care for high-cost beneficiaries," including those that target low-income seniors eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid, the so-called dual-eligibles. Dual-eligibles account for 15 percent of Medicaid enrollment but 40 percent of Medicaid spending.

The president would also limit states' use of provider taxes to draw down Medicaid matching funds. This proposal is intended to prevent states from being able to lower their own spending while not providing additional health services to Medicaid beneficiaries.

Other Health Programs

In addition to the Medicaid block grant, the budget resolution also repeals the Affordable Care Act cancelling the health insurance coverage expansion which is planned to begin in 2014 through the establishment of health insurance exchanges and expanding Medicaid. Other ACA provisions that would be repealed include the Prevention and Public Health

Fund (PPHF) and the extension of exchange-based insurance coverage to pre-trial jail inmates.

The proposal would reduce expenditures for health to \$347 billion this fiscal year from \$376 billion in FY12, a 7.7 percent decrease. This reduction could affect most direct health care programs, anti-bioterrorism activities, national biomedical research, public health and safety, health services for underserved populations, and training for the health care workforce.

Agencies funded include the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The mandatory programs in this function include Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

Eliminating the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)

The budget would zero-out SSBG, a \$1.7 billion entitlement to states. Several states pass the funding down to counties. SSBG is most frequently used for services to the elderly and disabled, child care

and child welfare. It is the main source of federal funding for adult protective services.

Secure Rural Schools and PILT

Following a strong push from NACo's congressional allies in the House, Ryan made the reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (SRS) and the continued funding of the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program a priority in the proposed committee budget for FY12.

The proposed budget resolution included a deficit-neutral reserve fund for rural counties and schools to provide for the reauthorization of the SRS program or changes to the PILT program. The deficit-neutral reserve fund language sets the stage for a much-needed reauthorization of SRS, set to expire this year. The commitment from the House Budget Committee, in addition to the administration's support in the president's budget proposal, provides a great step forward toward reauthorization.

Consolidating Job Training Programs

The resolution would consolidate

overlapping job-training programs into targeted career scholarship programs. The resolution is not clear on how specific Workforce Investment Act Title I programs would be affected. However, eliminating federal investments in workforce development job training programs will have an immediate impact on the ability of more than 14 million unemployed individuals to transition to new jobs.

These funds help to create and fill jobs, prepare workers whose jobs have disappeared for new careers, and train the American workforce for the demands of a global economy. Cuts to WIA Title I programs will impact current and future workers at all ages, incomes and skill levels, and will be felt across the country.

Agriculture

Agriculture budget authority would decrease by 23 percent to \$20 billion in FY12 from \$26 billion in FY11 (projection). This budget section includes farm income stabilization, agricultural research, and other services administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The discretionary programs include research and education programs, economics and statistics services, administration of the farm

support programs, farm loan programs, meat and poultry inspection, and a portion of the Public Law 480 international food aid program.

The mandatory programs include commodity programs, crop insurance and certain farm loans. The budget includes major reforms of direct payments and crop insurance subsidies to achieve these reductions.

Community and Regional Development

Under Ryan's plan, Community and Regional Development budget authority would decrease by 25 percent from \$16 billion in FY11 (projection) to \$12 billion in FY12. Key federal programs to improve community economic conditions, promote rural development and assist in federal emergency disaster preparations would be affected. These programs include the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, USDA rural development programs and Economic Development Administration (EDA) programs.

Energy and Environment

Energy budget authority would maintain the same funding in FY12, but would decrease by 85 percent by

See FY12 page 9

Ryan budget would replace Medicare with 'premium support'

FY12 from page 9

FY14. The FY12 funding level of \$7 billion decreases to \$1 billion by FY14. This budget function includes the Rural Utilities Service of the USDA, which is a critical source of funding for rural broadband deployment, and water and wastewater infrastructure.

Ryan's budget proposes to cut energy research while promoting the use of renewable and alternative energies such as wind, solar and nuclear. In order to address high gasoline prices, the blueprint promises to increase domestic energy production by lifting oil drilling moratoriums to "safe, responsible energy exploration in the U.S." The blueprint also references the Environmental Protection Agency's greenhouse gas policies as a "job-destroying national energy tax." Ryan's budget proposes to cut all future funding for EPA's climate change regulation policies.

'Food Stamps' Block Grant

The budget calls for a block grant to the former food stamp program, now called Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), beginning in 2015. The program is currently an open-ended entitlement.

In Ryan's proposal the block grant would begin after the unemployment situation stabilizes and would be indexed for inflation. It would also have work requirements.

NACo policy against block grants for entitlements extends to the SNAP program.

Other Human Services Programs

One piece of good news in the budget resolution is a budget-deficit reserve fund for possible expansions in child care, child support enforcement and child abuse prevention.

Justice and Homeland Security

Overall budget authority for the administration of justice is proposed at \$47 billion for FY11 and \$52 billion for FY12. This may impact assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies, community-oriented policing services, juvenile justice, violence against women and other Department of Justice programs that provide financial and technical assistance to county government agencies and services.

Unclear in the budget resolution is its impact to Department of Homeland Security and Federal Emer-

gency Management Agency grants, training and exercises programs that assist states, local governments and public safety agencies prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from all-hazard threats.

Transportation

The transportation baseline for FY12 is \$58 billion and the House budget assumes \$40.5 billion, about a \$17 billion cut. The House budget proposal explicitly rules out any increases in taxes for the Highway Trust Fund and any further transfers to the Trust Fund from the General Fund. Currently contract authority totals \$52.7 billion — that number would be reduced to \$36 billion annually. These figures include the highway, highway safety and transit contract authority.

Put another way, the current baseline for these programs over the next six years is about \$316 billion while the House budget calls for about \$212 billion, a difference of \$106 billion. In comparison, the president's budget asked for \$754 billion in transportation spending over the next six years.

Medicare

The Ryan plan would replace

the current Medicare system for individuals who become eligible in 2022 with a premium-support program. Under this new system, similar to the Medicare prescription drug benefit, beneficiaries would receive a premium subsidy and be given a series of plans to choose from.

Wealthier individuals would receive lower subsidies. Current Medicare beneficiaries and those who become eligible within the next 10 years would not have to shift to the new system.

The president's plan also rejected the Ryan Medicare proposal. Obama's proposal would cut excessive payments for drugs by leveraging Medicare's purchasing power. Additionally, the president seeks to build on the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) instituted in the Affordable Care Act (ACA). He proposes a new lower target of Medicare growth per beneficiary to GDP per capita plus 0.5 percent (from GDP per capita plus 1 percent in the ACA).

As under the ACA, when spending growth exceeds this, IPAB must recommend policies to Congress to reduce the rate of growth to meet that target which

would go into effect unless Congress enacted policies to achieve equivalent savings. The proposal would also allow IPAB to promote "value-based benefit designs" and grant it additional enforcement mechanisms.

Social Security

The Ryan plan doesn't make specific proposals for Social Security. Instead it would require the president and the Social Security Board of Trustees to put forth proposals to bring the Trust Fund back into balance in the event that the Trust Fund is not sustainable.

Judging from the continuing debate over the FY11 budget, the FY12 budget process is going to be far more contentious and difficult. A bipartisan Senate group, known as the Gang of Six, is working on a long-term deficit reduction proposal. The group is led by Budget Chairman Kent Conrad (D-N.D.), and includes Majority Whip Richard Durbin (D-Ill.), Mark Warner (D-Va.), Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.) Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) and Michael Crapo (R-Idaho). Their proposal is expected to be unveiled when Congress returns from its two-week Easter recess.



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

2011

NACo Annual Conference and Exposition

July 15–19, 2011 • Multnomah County • Portland, Oregon



Registration Is Now Open!

If you attend one meeting this year, attend this meeting, your association's conference. Network with your colleagues, assist them, learn from them, learn from experts on financial matters, safety and health experts, let your voice be heard on issues from tax cuts to energy policy that affect counties of all sizes.

Conference updates and online registration available at www.NACo.org.

Questions? Please call or e-mail us at ...



(202) 942-4292



nacomeetings@naco.org



Narrowbanding: Will it affect your county?

By now, most local elected officials have probably heard of narrowbanding—a word that threatens to impact the communications systems of their public safety services. But just what is narrowbanding? How do you know what it will, and will not, affect? And, more importantly, what are the fiscal implications?

The short answer is that narrowbanding is the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) terminology for a process that will reduce the size of radio channels used by many public safety and business systems in the U.S. The transition to narrowbanding has been mandated by the FCC to occur no later than January 1, 2013. Narrowbanding will cut in half the amount of radio spectrum used each time a radio transmits a message. The FCC's goal is to create more available channels in congested frequency bands.

Frequencies affected by the narrowbanding mandate run from 150 Megahertz (MHz) to 512 MHz. This range includes the very popular bands known as VHF and UHF. If local law enforcement, fire or emergency medical services agencies use VHF or UHF frequencies, these agencies are required to modify their radio systems, as needed, to comply with the FCC narrowbanding mandate.

However, it is not only public safety radios affected by this mandate. Radio systems used by local transit systems, public works departments, code enforcement agencies, and many other users will all be affected if they use VHF or UHF frequencies. In addition, “non-voice” radio systems used by local agencies may be included. These include water or waste water telemetry supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) systems and automatic meter reading systems. Since this mandate affects various types of public safety and government agencies, ensuring timely compliance must be a priority of local governments.

The effort by the FCC to create additional channels by narrowing spectrum use began in the mid-1990s. This is not a new mandate, by any means, and many jurisdictions already meet narrowbanding requirements. In fact, every two-way radio approved for manufacture by the FCC since 1997 is already capable of operating in a narrowband mode.

If the radios used by your employees are of this newer vintage, they may only need a low-cost modification known as reprogram-

ming. This software change does not involve physical changes to the radio, which will provide further cost savings.

Unfortunately though, many agencies still use older radios that are incapable of moving to a narrowband mode. These radios will

Each option has plusses and minuses. You'll want to get unbiased and competent advice before making these decisions.

have to be replaced. This replacement may include the portable radios carried by public safety personnel, the radios mounted in their vehicles, and the base station or repeater equipment housed at fixed tower locations. And don't forget the pagers used by many fire departments to alert personnel to an emergency situation. Needless

to say, the changes required by the narrowbanding mandate are far reaching.

As a leader in your county, you should determine if the FCC's narrowbanding mandate affects any of your radio operations. Here are some basic steps to take:

- Consult your public safety leadership and those who maintain your radio systems. Remember to consider “non-voice” radios when reviewing the status of your local radio systems.

- Determine if your system needs reprogramming or full replacement.

- Consider available options to meet the narrowbanding mandate. These include: Continuing to use analog systems in a narrowband mode, moving to digital radio systems and moving to another frequency band such as 700 or 800 MHz.

- Each option has plusses and minuses. You'll want to get unbiased and competent advice before making these decisions.

- Collaborate with neighboring communities to determine their narrowbanding plans. Migrate to

narrowbanding in concert with your neighbors in order to assure uninterrupted radio interoperability.

- Consider that narrowbanding may cause a slight decrease in the level of system coverage. Conduct a system coverage analysis to determine if there will be a slight decrease in your radio system's level of coverage. Prepare to add towers or other infrastructure to your system if additional coverage is needed.

- Modify your FCC licenses to show the new narrowband emission, and

- Develop a realistic timeline as well as budget of the costs involved. Older systems may need to be completely replaced.

While some grant funding is available to help with costs associated with narrowbanding, the wise local government leader will plan to make the transition regardless

of grant funds. The bottom line is that narrowbanding is mandatory. The FCC, as of Jan. 1, 2013, will prohibit operation of VHF and UHF radio systems in the current wideband mode. Substantial fines can be imposed for violation.

Non-compliant radio systems run the real possibility that they will cause harmful interference to nearby narrowband systems after that date. No one wants to be in that position, so the best course is to make sure that your county is ready—even if this means devoting funds from the local budget.

The FCC recently made it clear that the Jan. 1, 2013, deadline is firm. The time to act is now.

For more information, visit the following sites:

www.fcc.gov/narrowbanding

www.npstc.org/narrowbanding.jsp

www.IMSAafety.org

County execs disagree over governor's budget

CUTS from page 7

Milwaukee County executive, the post he held for eight years prior to his election as governor last year. But to some of this former colleagues in the counties, “the spoonful of sugar” to make it more palatable is missing.

Not everyone thinks that's a bad thing. Waukesha County Executive Dan Vrakas is “excited about the changes.” He was recently re-elected in Wisconsin's April 5 local elections for county executives and mayors. Like Walker, he's also a former Republican state legislator; their tenures in Madison overlapped in the 1990s and early 2000s.

He said Walker's “toolkit” will “without question give people like myself and other local leaders in Wisconsin the ability to better manage our budgets.”

Former Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk left office this month, after not seeking re-election. She remains a harsh critic of Walker's methods and sued to block implementation of the budget repair bill (BRB), a legal matter still pending a decisive outcome.

Under the BRB, unions can only bargain over wages, said David Callender, a legislative associate at the Wisconsin Counties Association. Further, employers can't offer their represented employees more than the rate of inflation without a referendum.

Falk, a Democrat, called the

BRB's passage “a blatant abuse of power” and argues that local government costs can be reined in without eviscerating employees' collective bargaining rights. She successfully negotiated \$9 million in union concessions in the past three years, she said.

“Just to be illustrative, two years ago I negotiated \$4 million in a 5 percent cut in pay of our employees with all nine unions, a year later a 3 percent cut in pay with all nine unions, and a year after that, more contributions in health care costs by our nine unions,” she Falk added.

“I did not need the tool the governor says he created in order to achieve tax savings for taxpayers.” Her county would lose \$6.3 million in income maintenance funds and \$840,000 in child support enforcement assistance.

Dane is the state's second most populous county (491,000), Waukesha its third (383,000). Door County has a population of about 27,800.

Waukesha's Vrakas, whom Falk considers a friend, disagrees with her. “There's a lot of change in Wisconsin, but with change comes opportunity,” he said, noting that the governor and Republican-controlled legislature are open to compromise. “If we've got a policy that's proposed and we've got a different way we'd like to do it, we're working through our legislators and Wisconsin Counties Association to try to make some tweaks in the budget.”

Conversion to Narrowbanding Reminder

If your public safety agency has not yet modified its FCC license to indicate its conversion to narrowbanding, it needs to get moving.

Starting April 15, the FCC's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau began to mail letters to UHF and VHF public safety licensees reminding them of the January 1, 2013 UHF and VHF narrowbanding deadline.

The FCC mailed the letter to those public safety licensees that have not yet modified their FCC licenses to indicate that they have narrowbanded. While licensees still have approximately 20 months to complete narrowbanding of their systems, and many have plans in place to do so, the FCC wants to be sure that all public safety licensees are aware of this requirement and are making the necessary preparations to comply with the narrowbanding mandate.

The narrowbanding mandate also applies to non-public safety UHF and VHF licensees, including both commercial licensees and state and local agencies that perform non-public safety functions.

In other narrowbanding news: To assist the nation's public safety community and government officials in meeting the narrowband mandate, the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Emergency Communications has released a guidance document entitled, *A Practical Guide to Narrowbanding*. Designed to provide best practices and recommendations for overcoming the most common challenges agencies may experience when transitioning to narrowband, The published guide specifically contains the following:

- Step-by-step guidance to assist affected VHF and UHF licensees, including recommendations for internal processes ranging from budget considerations to inventory of radio equipment, as well as external processes from coordinating with neighboring jurisdictions to ensuring FCC mandates for licenses and modifications are met, and

- State case studies that illustrate lessons learned by emergency response communities during the narrowband transition.

The guide is available for download on NACo's website at: www.naco.org/narrowbanding.

Counties celebrate 2011 National County Government Month

NCGM 2011 from page 1

veterans' service office, tours of government facilities and local student participation in the "commissioner for a day" program.

Parish leaders also paid special tribute to one of their fallen. A fundraising event was held in honor of a local Marine, Lance Cpl. Dakota Ray Huse, who died earlier this year in the line of duty. Proceeds will go toward the Volunteers of America's Shelter for Homeless Veterans.

In Manatee County, Fla., a resolution declaring April NCGM under the veterans theme resulted in a special moment during the board meeting. The *Bradenton Times* reported that after the resolution was adopted, commissioners acknowledged the "shameful reception Vietnam War veterans received" upon their return from combat in the 1970s: "Commissioners then singled out one of its members, Commissioner Larry Bustle, who was a pilot in Vietnam. 'Welcome back,' Commissioner Joe McClash exclaimed. Bustle beamed," the newspaper reported.

NACo President Glen Whitley told *County News* he is deeply moved by the appreciation the American people are showing veterans, service members and their families during NCGM. He travelled to northwestern Louisiana on April 4 and delivered a special NCGM address before the Caddo Parish Board of Commissioners (watch video of Whitley's address at www.ustream.tv/recorded/13778907).

"The National County Government Month theme is one way for NACo to welcome our service members home and support those on active duty and



Photo courtesy of Texas Association of Counties

More than 800 lawmakers, county officials and legislative staff enjoyed a beautiful outdoor lunch on the Texas State Capitol grounds in Austin in recognition of County Government Month, April 2011.

all military families," Whitley said. "To continue that support, the NACo Veterans and Military Service Task Force is working on ways to help those returning to their community get jobs and the medical help or counseling they may need."

Whitley said the rights of service members must be protected while they are fighting overseas.

"An American serving in combat should not face the loss of a job or home while on active duty," he said. "These heroes do so much for us. The least we can do is help them return home successfully."

Since 1991, NACo has encouraged counties to actively promote county government services and programs during county government awareness campaigns.

As Whitley witnessed during his visit to Caddo Parish, counties are celebrating NCGM in many ways across the country:

- Hays County, Texas set up collection sites across the county for residents to donate needed items for deployed troops. "There are a lot of soldiers over there that don't get anything from home," Kimberli Hoelle, accounts payable supervisor for the county auditor's office, told the *University Star* (Texas University). "It's a really big deal for them, and I'm super excited that we're doing this."

- The California State Asso-

ciation of Counties is releasing a series of 10 videos during April, each profiling innovative county programs from across the state.



- Supervisors in Yuma County, Ariz. are visiting Marine Corps Air Station-Yuma where they will "Walk a Mile in their Boots" to experience various aspects of the Marine Corps' premiere aviation training base.

- Tom Green County, Texas requested county-related artwork from schools to go up in the windows of the former county library.

- Linn County, Iowa held a veteran affairs open house and resource fair along with a "Live Healthy Linn" 5K run and walk.

- Veterans and those currently in the armed forces were honored April 26 at the Manistee County, Mich. Board of Commissioners meeting.

- Cumberland County, N.C. honored county employees who are veterans.

- Cape May County, N.J. freeholders are holding several NCGM events including a county health care resource day, a national arts program exhibit, a student government day, a county Earth Day logo contest, and a "My County" poster contest.

- The Kentucky Association of Counties reported that both chambers of the State Legislature passed resolutions in support of NCGM.

- In celebration of NCGM and the 125th anniversary of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, Lackawanna County, Pa. will hold a "Local Heroes Day and Family Fair" on April 30. The event will feature face painting, crafts, live music, and demonstrations of the SWAT team, K-9 unit and mobile command center.

- Larimer County, Colo. is featuring various videos of county employees talking about their jobs and the county services available.

- Pitt County, N.C. honored its veterans at the April 4 board meeting.

- Students in Renville County, Minn. attended a board meeting and shadowed county department heads during the day.

- Rockland County, N.Y. held

a "County Government Day" on April 12 which featured demonstrations of the sheriff's bomb squad, STOP-DWI command van and hazmat truck.

- Sacramento County, Calif. is highlighting essential county government programs and services all month, and displaying the names of local veterans and servicemen and women in the lobby of the county administration building. County officials are also planning a fundraiser to help maintain meeting space for county veterans groups.

- Cochise County, Ariz. is asking local veterans to answer a series of questions such as: How many years did you serve? In which wars or conflicts did you serve? What is your highest military decoration? What is your most unique military connection? Respondents will be invited to a reception at the Board of Supervisors meeting on April 26.

- Berkeley County, S.C. is sponsoring an essay writing contest. Winners will be recognized on April 25 during the council meeting. On April 13, a retired Army veteran and head of the governor's office of Veterans' Affairs made a special presentation about available benefits for veterans through the county and state.

TV coverage of various NCGM celebrations is posted in the NCGM playlist on the NACo Channel at: www.youtube.com/NACoVideo.

To encourage counties to participate in NCGM and to recognize those counties that sponsor outstanding outreach programs each April, a new National County Government Month Award program has been established.

A team of public relations professionals from the National Association of County Information Officers (NACIO)—a NACo affiliate organization—will judge the applications. Judges will select one winner in each of three categories—rural, suburban and metropolitan counties. Each winning county will be recognized during the NACo Annual Conference and win two, free registrations that could be used at any NACo conference. This prize is worth more than \$1,000.

Check the NACo website for more information about specific judging criteria. Applications must be received by May 31 to be eligible for the competition.

Please tell NACo about your NCGM events. Send to Jim Philipps via fax at 202.393.2630 or email at jphilipps@naco.org.



Share your point of view ...

Letters to the Editor

Please include a phone number with your letter. Mail, fax or e-mail to:

County News / NACo
25 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.,
Washington, DC 20001
202.393.2630
cnews@naco.org

Ten counties receive federal disaster designations; more likely

TORNADOES from page 1

“Together we will get through this, get our communities made whole, our businesses and people back to work, and we will keep North Carolina moving forward.”

As of April 20, President Barack Obama had declared a major disaster for 10 North Carolina counties, including Bertie. Eight other counties for which the designation was requested were still being assessed, according to the governor’s office. Other affected counties include Bladen, Cumberland, Halifax, Harnett, Johnston, Lee, Onslow, Sampson and Wilson.

The Bertie County tornadoes affected a different area of the county than the past floods, but the latest disaster has been a blow to entire county’s psyche, said County Commission Chairman Lewis C. Hoggard III, who called the tornadoes’ aftermath “disheartening, devastating emotionally.”

His colleague Wallace Perry, vice chairman, said, “Within a half mile of me, houses are flat. By the grace of God it didn’t get me.

“There’s been a lot of trauma,” he added — “things just torn to pieces.”

Bertie County is among the poorest of the state’s 100 counties, with 23.3 percent of the population living in poverty in 2008, according to Census Bureau figures. The statewide average was 14.6 percent.

“As the 96th poorest county in the state, we’ve learned to survive with less,” Hoggard said. “When these things happen, it makes things harder, but we’ll survive. We’re strong people and we’ll do well in the county — eventually.”

The Bertie County Commission has established a fund to help its residents get back on their feet, the Bertie Tornado Victim’s Fund. Contributions may be sent to the fund at P.O. Box 530, Windsor, NC 27983.

In Wake County, “Windshield estimates at this point — somewhere between a low of \$65 million in property damage, and we think it’ll easily exceed \$100 million,” said Paul Coble, chair of the Wake County Commission.” One-hundred-six people were left homeless.

Parts of downtown Raleigh, the county seat, took a direct hit; other areas were spared completely. “You ride around Wake County, and you can ride through an area that looks like it did two weeks ago. You get a little closer to the path, and you may see some limbs down. You get in the path, and there’s just unbelievable destruction.

“It looked like someone had



Photo by Susan Holder, assistant county manager, Sampson County, N.C.

Sampson County, N.C. Commission Chairman Jefferson Strickland surveys tornado damage in his county on April 18, two days after powerful twisters carved a path of destruction through central and northeast North Carolina.

taken bear claw and started in the southwest and drug it across all the way up to the northeast,” he added.

Of the newly homeless, Coble said, many are immigrants, including some who may be undocumented.

“There is a concern that some people don’t seek help because they’re afraid of what’s going to happen to them because of their immigration status,” he said. “We’re trying to find those people and express to them that our desire is

to help them, and we’re more concerned with their safety and helping them than we are with anything else at this stage of the game.”

Wake County’s outreach also extended to Shaw University, the oldest historically black college in the South. Its campus buildings were so badly damaged that school officials ended its academic year eight days early, sending students home.

Coble said the county helped with sheltering students at a county

high school, and back on campus when the university set up its gymnasium as a shelter.

“We made arrangements for them to receive bedding and materials that they needed to house their students for another couple of nights.” Saint Augustine’s College, also in Raleigh, sustained less structural damage.

“Contributions to the schools certainly would be helpful for both of those schools,” he said. Mechanics and Farmers Bank in Raleigh has

set up a disaster relief fund for Shaw.

For statewide relief aid, the governor’s office has established the N.C. Disaster Relief Fund in partnership with the United Way of North Carolina. To donate, visit www.ncdisasterrelief.org or mail donations to N.C. Disaster Relief Fund, Office of the Governor, 20312 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-0312.

“For those looking for a way to give back, this is a great opportunity to help,” Perdue said.

Budget resolution cuts \$2.5B in unused highway funds

RESOLUTION from page 5

Amtrak, the nation’s passenger rail system, was cut by \$80 million in the capital improvement and debt service account, going to \$922 million from \$1 billion. However operating subsidy grants were level-funded at \$562 million, thereby making it likely that there will not be any service reductions.

The federal highway program, of great interest to counties, was level-funded at \$41.1 billion, which means no change in the federal dollars being available to rehabilitate and construct the nation’s roads and bridges.

What was cut in the highway program is \$2.5 billion in unobligated highway money from past years, which is rescinded, and an additional \$630 million in 1998 dollars and earlier earmarks that remain unspent.

The Federal Transit Administration’s formula and bus grant program was not cut and will continue at \$8.34 billion for FY11. The New Starts and Small Starts program did sustain a cut of \$400 million and is reduced from a FY10 level of \$2 billion to \$1.6 billion for FY11. A prior year’s funding of \$280 million for a New Jersey rail tunnel was rescinded but that project had already been cancelled.

The two aviation programs of concern to counties escaped unscathed. The Airport Improvement Program will, for the seventh straight year, receive \$3.52 billion. Surprisingly, Essential Air Service got \$200 million for FY11 — no cut. The FAA Facilities and Equipment Account took a \$200 million cut to \$2.73 billion for FY11, which will slowdown the build-out of the NextGen air traffic control system. Finally the TIGER II program took a small cut going from \$600 million in FY10 to \$527 million in FY11.

Appropriations Rider Delists Wolf in Five Western States

Language offered by Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho) to return wolf management back to state agencies was included in the recently negotiated FY11 appropriations agreement which funds the government for the remainder of the fiscal year. This provision would remove protections for the Federal Endangered Species Act and allow state regulators to determine whether to protect wolf populations in Idaho, Montana and portions of Oregon, Washington and Utah.

Secretary Salazar’s Wildlands Policy Axed

The final continuing resolution legislation for FY11 includes an important provision related to the Department of Interior’s “wildlands” policy. Specifically, the appropriations rider would limit the use of funds available to the Department of Interior to implement, administer or enforce Secretarial Order 3310.

The order was signed by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar on Dec. 23, 2010 and directed the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to inventory, designate and manage some federal lands as wilderness independent of the U.S. Congress.

NACo has strongly opposed the DOI wildlands policy since it violates NACo’s position on opposing federal land management agency actions that limit access and multiple use of lands that otherwise would be available to the public (i.e. Wilderness Study Areas, “wild lands,” or any other de facto wilderness designation).

Next up — the FY12 budget with even higher stakes. Stay tuned.

North Carolina Tornado Damage by the Numbers

At least 18 North Carolina counties sustained damage from an April 16 outbreak of tornadoes that left 24 people dead. Other effects, as of April 20, include:

- 133 injuries
- 439 homes confirmed destroyed, with that number expected to rise;
- 6,189 homes with some level of damage (5,000 reported in Wake County alone)
- 21 businesses destroyed, likely more to come
- 92 businesses damaged, with that number expected to rise
- 2,000 employees confirmed out of work because their place of business was destroyed or damaged (1,000 of those employees are at Static Control in Lee County, which was demolished) and that number is considered a low early estimate.

Source: Office of the Governor of North Carolina

Model Programs FROM THE NATION'S COUNTIES

Isle of Wight County, Va.

Children's Environmental Enthusiasm Helps Collect Plastic Bags

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Children in Isle of Wight County, Va. schools learn about Eli Whitney's cotton gin, but for all that it accomplished for agriculture in the South, the contemporary version is powerless against a modern convenience — the plastic bag.

Now those students are collecting bags to keep them out of the cotton fields in their county.

As bags get tangled in cotton, they contaminate the crop by reducing the grade and the farmer's profit. Livestock eat the bags and get sick, sometimes dying.

As this became more troublesome, County Supervisor Thomas Wright went as far as to consider banning plastic bags and seeking authority from the General Assembly to keep them out of his county.

The county eventually formed the Virginia Plastic Bag Coalition with the Virginia Retail Alliance,



Photo courtesy of Isle of Wight County, Va.

An elementary school student adds his contribution to Isle of Wight County, Va.'s plastic bag drive. Five elementary schools compete collecting plastic bags, which are later recycled.

a group vehemently opposed to banning the bags, to discuss litter prevention.

"We eventually had more than 50 people signed up on our mailing list," said Rachel Morris-Chieppa,

the county's rural economic development manager. "That's an awful lot for a county this size for a topic so...mundane... so it certainly made us feel like we had a lot of points of view represented."

The county's population is about 35,900.

A survey determined that most of the bags were flying off garbage trucks near the county's transfer stations. Rather than try to fight the trucking industry to tighten regulations about securing trucks' loads, the bag coalition decided to try to take the bags out of the trash cycle altogether.

Armed with a \$28,000 grant from the state Department of Environmental Quality, the coalition launched an awareness campaign and several bag collection sites throughout the county. Giving away reusable grocery bags has helped, but the army of volunteers Morris-Chieppa recruited next, though, proved to be the most effective.

Students at the county's five elementary schools now compete every year to collect the most plastic bags, which are later recycled. Windsor Elementary has been annihilating the competition, earning pizza and ice cream parties. Eventually, Morris-Chieppa said, removing the bags from the garbage cycle will mean fewer will be able to escape in the wind and end up in fields.

"I might have become 'the bag lady,' but the kids are crazy about recycling," she said. "This is going to show up eventually in people seeing fewer bags around the county."

The competition has definitely gained traction in the schools, and that is part of a long-term approach she values. Information about the effort and weekly school competition standings are updated at www.islebegreen.com.

"We're teaching them to be better stewards of the environment, which is going to plant the seed in their minds," she said. "Plus, kids are guilt-tripping their parents into recycling their bags, so we are getting something done after all."

"When you focus an educational effort on kids, you might not catch that middle generation of people set in their ways," Morris-Chieppa added, "but those kids will grow up they're environmental awareness will be a big part of them. It will be easy to pass legislation later on to protect the environment."

From August 2009 through January 2011, the county collected about 1 million bags. At 70 bags per pound, that is 14,286 pounds of plastic that is not only being recycled, but also isn't likely to wind up in a cow's stomach.

Diverting that weight from the county's landfills has helped financially, too. Morris-Chieppa estimates the county has saved \$2,000 annually in tipping fees since the program began.

"For a small county like ours, saving that much money as a byproduct of a program is a big benefit," she said.

The program was named the best in category for Environmental Protection and Energy in NACo's 2010 Achievement Awards.

(Model Programs from the Nation's Counties highlights Achievement Award-winning programs. For more information on this and other NACo Achievement Award winners, visit NACo's Web site, www.naco.org ► Resource Library ► Model County Programs.)

Financial Services News

Recipe for Food Service Success

With food prices rising nearly as rapidly as gasoline costs, this may be an excellent time to check out the latest U.S. Communities vendor, Premier Inc. U.S. Communities added a food contract to the growing list of competitively bid cooperative contracts for local governments in January.

Premier won the contract which provides food services in conjunction with the alliance's food service distributor, U.S. Foodservice.

On average, the contract offers 5 percent savings over traditionally procured food service contracts. Premier's Contracted Manufacturer Agreements (CMAs) protect against inflation, since Premier negotiates a price-change clause that determines a price-cap as well as how often and for what reasons price changes may be implemented during the term of the agreement.

"We wanted to make sure the

contract included top national brands at competitive prices, attractive rebates and incentives, low shipping costs and technical support to help participants easily review and manage their inventories, spending histories and menu planning," said Patty Ziegenhorn, executive director of University Food Service Administration at Emory University. Ziegenhorn participated on the committee that wrote the food service RFP, evaluated the bids and ultimately awarded the contract to Premier.

In addition to saving money, the U.S. Communities food service contract helps organizations save time and costs associated with obtaining quotes, administering contracts with individual manufacturers and managing the program. By piggybacking on the contract awarded by North Carolina State University, U.S. Communities participants can access more than

300,000 food service products through Premier's broad-line food service distributor, U.S. Food service, without having to go through the RFP process.

Discover how your food service operation can cut costs, save time, eliminate guesswork and give your team the tools to operate more efficiently.

To learn more, contact Premier's U.S. Communities-dedicated team at uscommunities@premierinc.com or 877.981.3312. You may also visit www.premier-uscommunities.com and click "Join Now" to enroll in the program or click "Register for a Webinar" to find upcoming free webinar sessions hosted by representatives from U.S. Communities, Premier and North Carolina State University.

(Financial Services News was written by Nancy Parrish, director, NACo Financial Services Corporation.)

How is social media useful? How do I get started?



Learn more about **Facebook** and **Twitter** and how you can use social media effectively in your county! Contact Emily Landsman at elandsman@naco.org or Matthew Fellows at mfellows@naco.org.

Join the NACo Social Network ...

www.twitter.com/NACoTweets
www.facebook.com/NACoDC

The H.R. Doctor Is In

The Impatient Patient

In physics, the most powerful force in nature is theorized to be a “black hole.” This is a phenomenon with a gravitational force so powerful that nothing, including light which approaches the outer horizon of the black hole, can escape being pulled in. There is no escape from a black hole. Although the black hole is a theoretical construct in the worlds of astronomy and physics, there is something most Americans will experience during their lifetimes which shares some of these characteristics — a hospital stay.

Over a 40-year career in public service, the HR Doctor has spent a great deal of time in hospitals. Fortunately, almost all of this time has been spent in hospital administration as a county human resources director, a public hospital district vice president, and as a chief administrative officer in a county which had a public hospital. There have also been many times spent visiting injured or ill friends, standing in awe in front of newborn nurseries’ windows and speaking with employees.

Several months ago, however, the HR Doctor got to be a patient. What a strange word to describe the experience when a person enters, or is pulled inextricably into a system or an industry with well-meaning persons and practices, with little chance of escape. Perhaps “impatient” would be a better descriptor.

After one ankle began to swell, my physician suggested that I might have twisted it. Perhaps I had a hair-line fracture. These are very reasonable tentative diagnoses given the major displays of clumsiness shown anytime I am forced out on a dance floor. However, during a long-distance phone chat with the beautiful HR Doctor Daughter Rachel, she ordered me to “...go back to the doctor and tell him it’s a blood clot. Do it now!” I, of course, immediately obeyed my daughter (as I have always done), and soon found myself having an ultrasound test. As the owner of a blood clot, I knew that I was in for an immediate hospital encounter.

I knew what I was about to get into as I drove slowly to the hospital. I thought all the while that there was no pain, the bill would be incomprehensibly huge, all of the inconvenience and more. However, I dutifully followed orders.

The encounter began with an hour-long admission process complete with filling out forms, signing

away my firstborn, displaying my insurance card and finally receiving my coveted plastic bracelet which turned me into an inpatient. Suffice it to say, what followed was a new and permanent relationship with a blood thinner, twice daily shots of some mysterious substance, and unannounced visits by strangers asking questions, administering drugs and extracting my precious AB-type blood.

The interruptions were rather constant, especially at night when the door would fly open, the lights come on, and staff members would insist on knowing how well I was sleeping. Perhaps the seminal moment occurred one night at about 2 a.m. when a young physician came stumbling into the room with a chart and clipboard asking a bunch of medical questions. The questions were apparently aimed at some person named “Mr. Steinberg.” When I finally convinced him that he was in the wrong room, at the wrong

time, and speaking to the wrong person, he abruptly left quickly. I think I heard him mutter “sorry,” but I can’t be sure since whatever he said was barely audible.

Fortunately, my family doc visited on several occasions to read

Eventually, however, the patient may well come to accept that there may be no hope of escape.

my chart and to make sure I was still alive. I began actually looking forward to the daily visits by the food service person who brought me my daily allocation of whatever the kitchen had been whipping up. After several bouts of channel surfing on the hospital’s TV network, I realized that watching re-runs of

“House,” various “Dr. G—Medical Examiner,” “The Biggest Loser,” and other medical “reality” shows was perhaps not the best therapy.

In astronomy, the approach to the “event horizon” of a black hole involves ever-increasing speed, leading up to being swallowed up with no hope to avoid your fate. In the hospital, time seemed to slow down to a crawl. Eventually, however, the patient may well come to accept that there may be no hope of escape. Recognizing that all good things must come to an end, the wonderful moment finally came when my doc said “time for you to get out of here!” The last few injections would be done at home.

Months later, there are essentially no symptoms or foot swelling. Coumadin is now my lifelong friend. For a great many health care engagements, I am more convinced than ever that home health care would be a better and far cheaper substitute for the hospital stay. I could also avoid wearing the special designer gown. Likewise, the radical concept of an occasional physician house call would be incredible. It certainly would be easier on others who care about you such as spouses, kids and pets.

For this “impatient,” I found

another application for my long-held personal security maxim, “Act now to put off the day when something bad happens.” The best way to never experience the joys of a hospital stay is to take preventive steps to keep out of there in the first place. It’s not always possible, but wearing a seat belt, a motorcycle helmet, not smoking and keeping the heavy weapons in your house unloaded and trigger-locked are just a few of the steps which will reduce the chances of experiencing a black hole moment.

I haven’t seen a hospital bill yet after several months. I can only imagine the clinical depression, added risk of a stroke, or worse if a person had to confront such a bill with no insurance, no other financial resource, and a sense that there is no escape from another type of black hole — the financial kind.

Perhaps those who scream out about repealing health care reforms, cutting Medicare funding, or cutting the pay of primary care doctors should be mandated (by “the government” of course) to take an astronomy class.

Phil Rosenberg

Phil Rosenberg

The HR Doctor • www.hrdi.net

What's in a Seal?

» **Gaston County, N.C.**
www.co.gaston.nc.us



By action of the North Carolina General Assembly in 1846, Lincoln County, N.C. was divided, and the southern portion was formed and incorporated into a new county to be known as Gaston County. The county is named after Judge William Joseph Gaston, 1778–1844, who was a statesman, scholar, and state Supreme Court justice. He also served as a member of the U.S. Congress and was the composer of the North Carolina State Song.

The county is home to the Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens, the Schiele Museum of Natural History, the Gaston County Museum of Art and History, Crowders Mountain State Park and Christmas Town USA located in McAdenville.

The seal depicts educational opportunities by the use of the open scroll and cap, ties to the county’s industrial base using a set of cogs and gears, Southern heritage, and incorporation of the State Flower (dogwood), all based in the outline of the county overlaid on a field of stars and stripes.

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

Keep up with NACo online ...

www.naco.org



Free guide available to help local governments plan for energy emergencies

To help local officials plan for and respond to incidents and emergencies that result in energy outages, Public Technology Institute (PTI) has released *Local Government Energy Assurance Guidelines Version 2.0*. Published in collaboration with the Department of Energy Office of Electricity Delivery & Energy Reliability (DOE/OE), this publication is available for free from the PTI website, www.pti.org.

Communities typically address energy emergencies from a post-disaster response and recovery point of view. The goal of the updated publication is to enable these communities to engage in pre-disaster planning and risk reduction. The guidelines also assist jurisdictions in the recovery phase, in which vital energy sources are restored.

“Very few local governments have a response and recovery plan that is specific to energy emergencies,” according to Alan Shark, PTI executive director. “Once created, energy assurance plans help local governments provide life-saving services during an energy emergency.”

The guidelines are for all local government decision makers: elected and appointed officials, senior staff, policy makers, and those responsible for energy and emergency operations.

Local Government Energy Assurance Guidelines Version 2.0 synthesizes material from the previous PTI guidelines version with a more in-depth examination of the content from DOE/OE’s 10-Step Local Government Energy Assurance Planning Framework, released last year.



News From the Nation's Counties

► ALABAMA

The state Supreme Court has given **JEFFERSON COUNTY** the okay to continue its **suit against JPMorgan Chase**, accusing the bank of selling the county corrupt financial products.

The county is suing JPMorgan, its principal creditor, in a bid to recover funds it lost through auction and swap rate instruments it purchased to refinance an upgrade to its sewer system.

The interest on the bonds skyrocketed in 2008 when financial markets crashed, pushing the county to the edge of the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history, according to Reuters.

The county's lawsuit, first filed in 2009, alleges that fees charged by JPMorgan were "artificially inflated" in part because of various "bribes, kickbacks, and pay-offs," the court said.

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in November 2009 ordered JPMorgan to forfeit \$647 million in fees that it charged the county. The SEC said the bank had made unlawful payments to friends of county officials.



Photo courtesy of Fairfax County, Va.

Matthew Barkley, director, Disability Services Planning and Development, Fairfax County Department of Family Services, demonstrate a universal design feature at Fate House. The home is a project of Fairfax County Public Schools' construction technologies program and the Foundation for Applied Technical Education, Inc. (FATE).

► VIRGINIA

Members of **FAIRFAX COUNTY**'s Building for All Committee and Fairfax Area Commission on Aging recently toured Fate House, whose **universal design elements** allow people with and without disabilities to live comfortably. The student-built, single-family home just went on the market for \$775,000.

It's the 19th house built as part of a 40-year partnership between the school system and the Foundation for Applied Technical Education, Inc., according to *KingstownePatch.com*.

or any county-sponsored festivals, air shows, fairs or parades.

Stone said a house or other dwelling where a registrant lives should be off limits to children on Halloween "or any other holiday which allows the sexual registrant to use an 'attractive nuisance' to gain contact with children."

The supervisor said similar prohibitions recently enacted in **ORANGE COUNTY** served as an inspiration for his proposal.

An estimated 3,500 convicted sex offenders live in Riverside County.

► COLORADO

The **MORGAN COUNTY** Commissioners urged the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. House of Representatives not to add any federal regulations

against **hydraulic fracturing** to extract natural gas.

The board passed a resolution against regulations affecting the use of "fracking" in 2008.

Colorado and Wyoming already have stringent regulations on the oil and natural gas industry, and such regulation should stay local, said Morgan County Commissioner Laura Teague.

There are fears that poorly done fracturing could pollute drinking water from groundwater sources, and the EPA is studying that impact, according to the resolution. Part of the resolution asks that no new regulations be created until the EPA study is complete.

Having more EPA regulation might have a negative economic impact on the county, Teague said.

► KENTUCKY

KENTON COUNTY became the first northern Kentucky county to **ban smoking** in most public places.

The ordinance approved by the outgoing Kenton Fiscal Court in December requires offices and public establishments such as restaurants, churches, bowling alleys, bingo halls and retail stores to go smoke-free. Private clubs and "drinking establishments" that meet certain requirements can apply for an exemption.

At least 31 Kentucky communities have adopted some form of smoke-free legislation, and Northern Kentucky was the only major metropolitan area in the commonwealth that hasn't done so.

Initially, the smoke-free ordinance was to be Northern Kentucky-wide. But Boone County officials dropped out of talks in July, citing lack of public support. Earlier this year, a new majority on Campbell County Fiscal Court repealed the comprehensive smoke-free law their predecessors had approved, leaving Kenton as the lone northern Kentucky county with some sort of smoke-free legislation, the *Cincinnati Inquirer* reported.

► MICHIGAN

WAYNE COUNTY has struck a tentative deal with Greektown Casino-Hotel to buy land for a **new county jail** in downtown Detroit. The 7.6-acre site is now a parking lot.

County Executive Robert Ficano said the deal would reduce operational costs by consolidating three jails and limiting the distance inmates travel to court.

County officials have said the new jail could save the county more than \$20 million a year.

The Wayne County Commission also must approve the move.

In November, the commission voted 11-3 to issue \$300 million in bonds to build a jail. Terms of the deal call for the county to give Greektown \$10 million and 1.2 acres that hold the administrative offices of the county sheriff.

Greektown had planned to build its permanent casino on the 7.6-acre site but changed its mind and built it on the same property where the temporary casino was located.

The new jail, which would be five stories high and hold up to 2,300 beds, would be built in two to three years, county officials told the *Detroit News*.

► NEW YORK

• **ESSEX COUNTY** is forming a regional consortium to seek an in-

teroperable radio communications grant. With its existing "closed" radio system, firefighters can't talk to police, or police to highway crews, the *Press-Republican* reported.

The county Board of Supervisors recently gave Emergency Services Director Donald Jaquish the go-ahead to execute a memorandum of understanding with four other counties — **WARREN, WASHINGTON, CLINTON and FRANKLIN** — to form the radio consortium.

The next step, he said, is to apply for a State Homeland Security grant from a \$20 million pool.

• The **SCHENECTADY COUNTY** Legislature is considering a change to **weighted voting** as it looks at reapportioning seats based on 2010 census data. Under a proposal, some legislators' votes would carry more weight; the alternative would be to add nine seats to the current 15-member board and redraw district lines, according to County Attorney Chris Gardner, the *Daily Gazette* reported.

About a half-dozen of New York's 58 counties currently use weighted voting systems.

• **TOMPKINS COUNTY**, in partnership with EcoVillage at Ithaca's Center for Sustainability Education, has been awarded a **\$375,450 federal grant** from the EPA to create "dense neighborhoods that enhance residents' quality of life while using fewer resources."

"Our public-private efforts to design sustainable, dense and livable communities are greatly needed as we enter into a resource-constrained era that will demand out-of-the-box thinking about how neighborhoods are designed," said Martha Robertson, Tompkins County Legislature chair.

EcoVillage is an internationally recognized sustainable community, where residents report a high quality of life while using 40 percent less energy and natural resources than typical American households, county officials said.

► OKLAHOMA

The **TULSA COUNTY** Social Services Department's **Recycled Medication Program** recently topped \$8 million in the value of prescription medications provided. The drugs are recycled from approximately 60 nursing homes and assisted-living facilities.

The program serves individuals

Research News

Emergency Preparedness in Counties

With the recent events in Japan, emergency preparedness has become front and center in today's media.

Counties across the country are already taking steps to ensure residents and staff are informed and prepared in case of an emergency.

Emergency responders from counties surrounding Three Mile Island in Dauphin County, Pa. recently took part in a drill that evaluated how to respond to a release of radioactive material from the plant. Although the drill had been planned for over a year, the events at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant in Japan attracted extra media attention to the local drill. While the operators in the plant simulated a response, the emergency management

agencies in the surrounding counties executed plans to protect and inform residents. The Federal Emergency Management Agency will evaluate the overall effort to protect public health and safety in a final report that will be released in August.

Enrollment doubled in one of the community emergency preparedness academies presented in part by Orange County, Calif., after the earthquake in Japan. The academy was held at eight locations throughout the county in conjunction with city leaders and nonprofit organizations and features an eight-week course for residents to learn how to care for their families during an emergency. The staff from the Sheriff's Department as well as the county fire department led various workshops on what to

do in an emergency. Topics include disaster operations, fire safety, earthquake preparedness, CPR and first aid.

To improve the ability to notify residents of a local emergency, the Emergency Management Agency in Madison County, Ky. is offering upgraded Tone Alert Radios (TAR) to residents throughout the county. These new devices have added features such as a longer battery life, an AM-FM radio, and a text display feature. With an army depot storing chemicals in the county, the radios will alert residents in the event of a chemical release. In addition, the radios provide alert residents urgent weather alerts and warn of other local emergencies. The upgraded radios were funded through the federal Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program.

Peoria County, Ill. formed a regional Public Information Officer (PIO) Committee to enhance

delivery of critical information to the general public in the aftermath of a large scale disaster.

The PIO Committee serves a five-county region and comprises public information representatives from government agencies and local nonprofits responsible for disaster response, rescue and recovery. The committee worked to secure facilities throughout the region to serve as a Joint Information Center (JIC), or communications hub, during the aftermath of a disaster. Working with local businesses and nonprofits, the committee established more than 90 locations willing to serve as J.C.'s so that regardless of where a disaster might strike, committee members would have a location to report to and be able to expedite the release of information to the public.

The Fire and EMS Department in Hanover County, Va. developed a program to enhance the response

to emergency medical calls through partnerships with the Emergency Communications Department and the Statistical Sciences Department at Virginia Commonwealth University.

University staff devised statistical optimization models from the Fire and EMS Department call history that demonstrated the optimal placement and configuration of current resources through the county's 471 square miles. As a result, the department restructured its response design, recreated a computer-aided dispatch system, and was able to retrain all of its personnel in both the Fire and EMS, and Communications departments. The program helped the county improve its response to EMS calls by 8 percent without adding additional resources or funding.

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

NACo on the Move

► NACo Officers and Elected Officials

• **NACo and Glen Whitley** were mentioned in the April edition of *Governing* magazine in publisher Fred Kuhn's column and *The CDBG Mobilization* article.

• **Glen Whitley**, NACo president, spoke about what NACo does and why 100 percent membership is important at the Wyoming County Commissioners Association Conference in Carbon County April 13.

• **Valerie Brown**, NACo immediate past president, participated in the first meeting of the new Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion, and Integrative and Public Health in Washington, D.C. April 12-13. The Advisory Group met with the Surgeon General to review and discuss progress made on the development of the National Prevention Strategy.

• **Lenny Eliason**, NACo first vice president, spoke on NACo participation and national issues of interest to counties at the Utah Association of Counties in Davis County April 13.



Valerie Brown

► NACo Staff



Kathryn Murphy

• **Kathryn Murphy** has been promoted to the position of senior research associate in the research division.

• **Rebecca Hsieh** is the new justice associate in the Community Services division. Hsieh has a dual Bachelor of Arts in Criminology, Law and Society/ Psychology and Social Behavior from the University of California



Rebecca Hsieh

Irvine; and a Master's of Science in Justice, Law and Society from American University.

• **James Davenport**, program manager, Community Services, moderated and spoke at a workshop, "Planning for Pipeline Placement and Safety – New Guidance to Help Communities Assess Risks and Benefits" at the 2011 American Planning Association National Conference in Suffolk County (Boston), Mass. April 11.

• **Erik Johnston**, associate legislative director, spoke about NACo's Farm Bill priorities during a panel at the Community Resource and Economic Development State Program Leaders Meeting in Washington, D.C. April 13.

On the Move is compiled by Christopher Johnson, editorial assistant.

Utah state court deems county's gang injunction constitutional

NEWS FROM *from page 15*

and families in Tulsa County who cannot afford needed medications or would have to seek prescription vouchers from charitable organizations.

Linda Johnston, Tulsa County Social Services director, said the program "really helps everyone involved because we prevent the shameful waste of this valuable medicine." It also lessens the environmental impact of unused medicines being thrown away.

The program has distributed more than 85,000 prescriptions to Tulsa County residents.

► TEXAS

A Texas think tank says **HARRIS COUNTY** health care providers would **lose more than \$2 billion** in Medicaid funding under the budget recently passed by the Texas House of Representatives, the *Houston Chronicle* reported.

In a county-by-county analysis, the Austin-based Center for Public Policy Priorities found the budget would reduce overall Medicaid funding for hospitals, doctors, nursing homes and other providers in Harris County by 38 percent compared to 2009. Harris County's seven adjacent counties would lose

more than \$610 million.

Last year, the county Commissioners Court said it was committed not to raise property taxes. A spokesman for County Judge Ed Emmett said nothing is on or off the table for the hospital district tax rate.

► UTAH

WEBER COUNTY's gang injunction, the first in Utah history, has been declared to be constitutional by a state court judge. The injunction limits the amount of contact members can have with one another and imposes a curfew on members, as well as other restrictions.

The injunction does not violate rights of free association or to bear arms and is "not overly broad,"

Second District Judge Ernie Jones said, according to the *Salt Lake Tribune*.

In court, Weber County Attorney Dee Smith contended the Ogden Trece gang, also known as Centro City Locos, is a menace whose members are responsible for crimes such as graffiti and murder in Ogden.

A later trial to determine whether the injunction should be made permanent probably won't be held until 2012.

(News From the Nation's Counties is compiled by Charles Taylor and Charlie Ban, staff writers. If you have an item for News From, please e-mail ctaylor@naco.org or cban@naco.org.)

Job Market & Classifieds

► ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR – OTTAWA COUNTY, MICH.

Salary: \$23.61–\$30.56 per hour; DOQ.

Under the direction of the Planning and Performance Improvement Department Director, the Economic Development Coordinator provides the oversight for all economic development initiatives undertaken by the County of Ottawa. The top priorities

for this position are to administer the County's Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, implement a Business Incubator, and develop a coordinated economic development plan for Ottawa County. This is a full-time position working at the Fillmore Complex in West Olive. Online applications, with resume and cover letter, accepted at www.miottawa.org. Ottawa County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.