

NACO National Association of Counties

# CountyNews

The Voice of America's Counties

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES ■ WASHINGTON, D.C.

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## House passes bill to stop EPA pesticide regulation

By JULIE UFFNER  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The House has passed legislation that would countermand a court order and prevent the Environmental Protection Agency from regulating pesticides.

The Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act (H.R. 872), passed March 31, was introduced as a bipartisan response to a court ruling on *National Cotton Council v. EPA* (6th Circuit 2009). The court decision instructed EPA to move forward with regulating pesticides under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.

The agency was under a court-ordered deadline of April 9 to produce a permit process, however, the

court recently granted an extension until Oct. 31.

As originally proposed, the pesticide regulations would have a significant impact on county government activities associated with public health, land use, forest and park management, flood control, transportation projects, air and water programs, invasive species control and endangered species protection.

Pesticides are currently regulated under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). It is the principal law that authorizes EPA to regulate the manufacture, distribution, sale and use of pesticides in the United States.

In *National Cotton Council v. EPA*, the 6th Circuit ruled that EPA must regulate pesticides as a pollutant un-

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## Disaster preparedness takes leap of 'faith'

By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

*(This is the final installment in a series of articles on faith-based county programs, which began in the March 28 issue of County News with a look at an environmental program in Hennepin County, Minn.)*

When disaster strikes, churches can play an important role in meeting their parishioners' spiritual needs in a time of great uncertainty. But they also can help to ensure their broader communities are prepared for the inevitable disruptions a crisis brings.

Cole County, Mo. Sheriff Greg White is a longtime advocate of faith-based disaster preparedness

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The Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant sits on a bluff on the Pacific Coast in San Luis Obispo County, Calif., near offshore earthquake faults.

## Counties air nuclear concerns in wake of Japan's quake

By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

A Long Island county official is calling for a wider evacuation zone around U.S. nuclear power plants. In San Luis Obispo County, Calif., supervisors want the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant to complete seismic studies before seeking license renewal.

Both actions are fallout from Japan's troubles at the Fukushima Daiichi generating station, damaged by the one-two punch of an earthquake and tsunami. Events there have heightened concerns in some of America's 107 "nuclear counties," those that contain or are near atomic power plants.

"The Japan tragedy obviously has brought the whole issue back to the forefront in our county in particular," said Adam Hill, chair of San Luis Obispo's Board of Supervisors. The area is seismically active, and a fault was discovered near the Diablo Canyon plant in 2008, he added.

Its two reactors sit hard by the Pacific Ocean, which provides cooling water, 85 feet above sea level.

In December 2003, the San Simeon Earthquake — magnitude 6.5 — caused two deaths in the county but no damage to the plant. So concerns about quakes predate the Japanese crisis in this coastal county, located halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco. Diablo Canyon was built to withstand a 7.5 temblor, according to its owner, Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E).

About 50 residents turned out for a recent Board of Supervisors meeting to air the pros and cons of nuclear power, according to reports. The county's population is about 267,000.

PG&E is conducting seismic studies as part of its effort to relicense two reactors for 20 years beyond their 2024 and 2025 expirations. A year ago, Hill and two San Luis Obispo board colleagues sent a letter to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, asking it to halt the relicensing process until

the earthquake safety studies could be completed and reviewed by an independent panel. In light of events in Japan, Hill has renewed that call,

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- 3 - Wake County, N.C.
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- 5 - Fulton County, Ga.

Source: Hanley Wood, 2011

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## Analysis

## Efforts to repeal 3-percent withholding renewed

By MICHAEL BELARMINO  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The date Jan. 1, 2012 will mean more than just the start of a new year for many counties. Under Section 3402(t) of the Internal Revenue Code, as enacted in Section 511 of the Tax Increase Prevention and Reconciliation Act of 2005, federal, state and local governments will be required to withhold 3 percent of nearly all of their contract payments, Medicare payments, farm payments and certain grants.

For counties, this requirement will only apply to jurisdictions that make payments of more than \$100 million annually for property or services, with a proposed single payment threshold of \$10,000.

Additionally, the proposed rules on the requirement provide a threshold of \$10,000 that dictates which payments government entities must withhold from.

Since the requirement's enactment, NACo has actively sought to repeal this unfunded mandate, joining forces with state and local government representatives as well as business associations. It was originally set to take effect this year, and past efforts to repeal have only produced the short-term delay that was enacted in the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Renewed interest this year among some members of Congress to repeal the requirement is encouraging, but it's anyone's guess whether full repeal or another delay

in implementation will occur. Currently, there are three bills calling for repeal. In the House, H.R. 674 was introduced by Rep. Wally Herger (R-Calif.). This bill provides for full repeal of the requirement and does not provide an offset to do so. Support for the bill is bipartisan and it currently has 61 cosponsors.

In the Senate, Sen. David Vitter (R-La.) introduced his version of a repeal bill, S. 89. It is similar to the House version in that it repeals the requirement without providing an offset. Although the bill has six cosponsors, it does not have bipartisan support.

The second repeal bill in the Senate, S. 164 by Sen. Scott Brown (R-Mass.), has bipartisan support with four cosponsors. Brown's bill,

however, differs from the others by including a rescission of \$39 billion in appropriated discretionary funds to offset the cost to repeal. Under the language of S. 164, the director of the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will determine which appropriations accounts the rescission will come from. However, the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs are excluded from consideration.

On March 15, as the Senate began to consider reauthorizing the Small Business Innovation Research Program and the Small Business Technology Transfer Program (S. 493), Brown filed Amendment 212 to the bill. It essentially includes all of the language from S. 164. On March 17, during general floor

speeches, Brown spoke on his amendment and noted that the withholding requirement would have a significant impact on businesses and is a costly unfunded mandate for state and local governments already under fiscal stress. As of this writing, the Senate had yet to complete work on the bill. It remains unclear, however, whether there is enough support to bring Brown's amendment forward for consideration by the Senate.

In a related development, the Obama administration recently acknowledged its support for delaying implementation of the requirement. OMB spokeswoman Moira Mack recognized that implementation would prove to be highly complex and that federal agencies may need additional time to change systems, payment processes and contract award procedures to comply.

However, adding to the difficulty for state and local governments in preparing for implementation is that the IRS has yet to issue final regulations from the proposed regulations released in 2008.

## Teens think twice before being 'Stopped'

By CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON  
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Car crashes are the number one killer of teenagers. Teens are 200 percent more likely to crash than any other driver with passengers in the car. These statistics, from the National Transportation Safety Board, are just what counties in Michigan want to impress upon teens and their parents through the STOPPED program.

Sheriff's Telling Our Parents and Promoting Educated Drivers (STOPPED) was launched in 2005 by the Michigan Sheriff's Association. Parents who participate in the program are alerted whenever their children are stopped for a traffic violation. After starting as a pilot program in seven Michigan counties, it expanded to 27 counties in 2006 and is expected to be in all 83 counties by the end of 2011.

"There is nothing more important to a parent than the protection of their children," said the Michigan Sheriff's Association Executive Director Terrence L. Jungel. "Sheriffs and all of law enforcement understand this, and we are here to help in any way we can."

To enroll, parents register their vehicles online for free at [www.misheriff.org](http://www.misheriff.org) and a STOPPED sticker is mailed to their home to be placed on a vehicle's windshield. It serves as a visible reminder to the young driver to drive safely and responsibly, and if he or she is pulled over for any reason, the parents will receive a letter and email regarding the incident. The notification feature makes parents



aware of any potential problems and enables them to enforce rules they have set regarding teenage driving privileges. Information in the letter includes the time, location, number of passengers, reason for the stop and whether a citation was issued.

Funding for the program has been provided by AAA Michigan since 2006. Working together, the Michigan Sheriff's Association and AAA Michigan are striving to foster a partnership between parents and law enforcement to promote safe driving by teens.

"I believe in the program because it's a good idea," said Sheriff Kenny Marks, Menominee County, Mich. "It helps ease the gap between parents and children when they start driving and also helps keep an eye on them while keeping them safer."

A new element to the program last summer was adding off-road vehicles (ORV) like boats and snowmobiles to the registration.

"With more than 800,000 boats, 275,000 snowmobiles and 139,000 ORVs registered in Michigan, we realized the program could be just as successful off the roads as it is on," Jungel added.

The program also helps enforce a new Michigan law that went into effect April 1. The Michigan Graduated Driver Licensing Law stops first-year, or Level 2, drivers from carrying more than one passenger younger than 21, except for immediate family members, in their car at all times. They also cannot be driving between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. unless going to or from work, or unless accompanied by a parent, guardian or an adult age 21 or older.

The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University,

recently recognized the Michigan Sheriffs' Association STOPPED Teen Driving Program as a Bright Idea recipient.

"The STOPPED program continues to expand and evolve with technology," Jungel said. "The success of this program and the recognition it receives helps spread the program nationwide and keep teen drivers safe."

For more information on this program, visit [www.misheriff.org](http://www.misheriff.org).

For more information on Bright Ideas, visit [www.ash.harvard.edu](http://www.ash.harvard.edu) ► Programs ► Innovations-in-Government ► Awards ► Bright-Ideas.

## Wildfire Reports Available

The U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Interior have released two Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) reports, which provide the framework for a comprehensive strategic effort to restore and maintain resilient landscapes, create fire-adapted communities and respond to wildfires. The Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) is an intergovernmental body of federal, state, tribal and municipal stakeholders. NACo's representative on the council is Lake County, Ore. Commissioner Dan Shoun.

"After months of work, I am pleased that Congress now has a comprehensive game plan to address dangerous and costly wildfires," Shoun said. "The next step is working with our partners in developing regional strategies to address wildfire challenges faced by fire and natural resource managers and the fire community at all levels."

Shoun was appointed by U.S. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to represent county government's interests on the council.

He is a member of NACo's Public Lands Steering Committee and the Western Interstate Region (WIR).

"These devastating wildfires threaten our communities and local budgets year after year," Shoun said. "Today, we are closer than ever to implementing effective solutions to protect our communities and precious resources."

For more information, contact Ryan Yates at 202.942.4207.

## CountyNews

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# Health care reform one year later: What to expect

By ANITA CARDWELL  
SENIOR ASSOCIATE

One year after passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), many insurance reform provisions have gone into effect, including ones related to health benefits that counties provide to their employees. Implementation efforts concerning other parts of the law are also moving forward.

Considering the legal challenges to the law, however, the states' differing stances on moving forward with implementation and a changed political climate, uncertainty remains about how future provisions will be put in place and how counties will be involved.

During NACo's February webi-

nar, Implementing the Affordable Care Act: Updates and Upcoming Issues, Kathleen Nolan of the National Governors Association commented that the current political environment clearly affects state decision making and that all states are also facing fiscal constraints that limit the capacity of their planning and implementation efforts.

Of particular concern for states is the sustainability of their Medicaid programs, which continue to experience increasing enrollment and costs.

In 2014, when the PPACA expands Medicaid to include all eligible individuals who have incomes up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level, Nolan noted that the program will most likely

look different than it currently does. It could operate more like commercial insurance and less like a safety net program, and the newly eligible population may have other types of health needs. With the need to rein in rising Medicaid costs and enhanced federal aid (FMAP) ending in June, states are currently determining where to make cuts that will not damage the program in the long term.

They are finding this task challenging because of the health reform law's maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements, which mandate that states maintain Medicaid eligibility levels until the expansion of the program in 2014, and for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) the MOE provision extends to 2019.

In late February, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) provided further guidance to state Medicaid directors about the MOE provisions in the law, and CMS is working directly with states as they assess their Medicaid programs. Nolan emphasized that decisions made now are critically important as "...what happens in the program in the next three years is going to impact the [Medicaid] expansion," and that states must also keep in mind the crucial issue of ensuring access to care providers.

NACo opposes Medicaid cuts, particularly proposals by some states to transform the program into

a block grant, and if states reduce Medicaid eligibility rules this will most likely result in a shifting of the costs of services to counties.

## Health Insurance Exchanges

Another major focus for states concerns plans for the development of the health insurance exchanges which will serve as eligibility portals in 2014 for individuals to find Medicaid or private plan coverage. Last year the Department of Health and Human Services provided nearly \$49 million in exchange planning grants to 48 states and the District of Columbia. As of February of this year at least 31 states and the District of Columbia had formed commissions or other entities to lead implementation

efforts and begin planning for the exchanges.

Some of the significant state decisions regarding the exchanges concern:

- how to govern and structure them
- how to develop and enhance the IT system infrastructure needed for enrolling individuals, and
- how to meet the requirement that the exchanges be financially self-sustaining by 2015.

Currently four states — California, Massachusetts, Utah and Washington — have passed laws creating exchanges, and Indiana established its exchange through an executive order from the governor. Others are moving

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## Resources for Information on State PPACA Implementation Activity

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) has a database tracking state legislative actions on some of the key PPACA provisions, as well as other health reform implementation information, available at [www.ncsl.org/healthreform](http://www.ncsl.org/healthreform).

The National Academy of State Health Policy's State Reform website offers detailed information about state PPACA implementation progress on specific measures. The site also offers state officials and anyone else interested in PPACA implementation issues an opportunity to connect and discuss topics at [www.statereform.org](http://www.statereform.org).

The National Governors Association's website contains health reform implementation information and resources. Go to [www.nga.org](http://www.nga.org) and click on Health Reform Implementation section.

## Regulations would burden counties

PESTICIDES from page 1

der the Clean Water Act's NPDES permitting requirements. Prior to that decision, EPA used FIFRA to regulate pesticide use — as long as pesticides are used in accordance to FIFRA, the applicator was covered under federal law. The proposed EPA pesticide permit program adds additional reporting and monitoring requirements. No funding was attached to the new requirements to help state and local governments comply with the new regulations.

The bill now moves to the Senate for consideration.

### Why H.R. 872 Is Needed

In June 2010, the EPA introduced its draft National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Pesticides Permit program in response to the court's ruling. It required pesticide permits for all pesticide discharges to a water of the U.S.

The current version of the permit, as released April 1, requires operators to minimize pesticide discharges; maintain relevant equipment; and monitor and report any adverse incidents. Some permits may incorporate pest management requirements based on integrated pest management principles.

According to the EPA, the final permit will cover pesticides for the following use patterns into "waters of the U.S.": (1) mosquito and other flying insect pest control; (2) weed and algae control; (3) animal pest control; and (4) forest canopy pest control.

While the EPA does not intend to permit pesticide applications intended for land use (or non "waters of the U.S." use), a number of groups have expressed concerns that land-use applications could be governed in the future through citizen suits. This could be especially important for counties that regularly use pesticides in land-based applications. Some

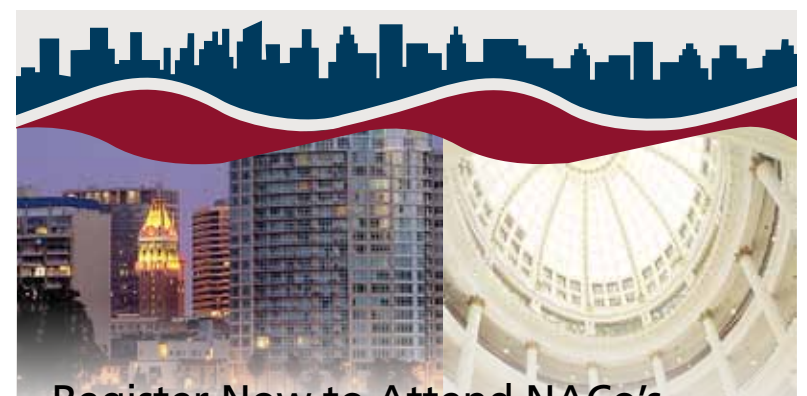
may find that activity objectionable enough to file a lawsuit.

### Waters of the U.S.

What are or are not "waters of the U.S." will play a large role in what "waters" are regulated under the new pesticides permit program.

Generally, it is recognized that key terms in the Clean Water Act such as "waters of the U.S." have yet to be defined. To that end, the EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers quietly sent a "waters of the U.S." guidance document to the Office of Management and Budget for review in December 2010. It has yet to be published for public comment; no official drafts have been released; and state and local groups were not consulted.

According to EPA officials, this guidance document will be used by Corps and EPA staff to clarify what are and are not "waters of the U.S." This guidance will play a large part determining what "waters" fall under the pesticides rule.



## Register Now to Attend NACo's 2011 LUCC Annual Meeting

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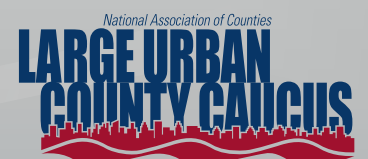
... will showcase programs in:

- Economic Development
- Health Care
- Human Services
- Transportation

Additionally, the Annual Meeting will feature interactive tours of programs and projects in Alameda County that may spur innovation in other counties.

To register and for additional details, please visit [www.naco.org/urbancounties](http://www.naco.org/urbancounties).

Contact Dalen Harris  
at (202)942-4236  
or [DHarris@naco.org](mailto:DHarris@naco.org)  
for more information.



Register by May 14, 2011



# Miami-Dade pilot program could serve as national model

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training for churches, congregations and religious groups. For him, it's a dual calling — as the county's chief public safety officer and as an ordained Southern Baptist minister.

Even informally, churches have long served as focal points for those in need, through feeding programs, clothing drives and housing the homeless. In Mississippi, the majority of shelters operating immediately after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 were managed by faith-based organizations (FBO), according to a Johns Hopkins School of Public Health study published in 2008.

"What we're setting forth is a construct and there's no mandate to be involved. It's an opportunity," White said. "If I was going to be scriptural, I would say that we're preparing the saints for service" — a reference to *Ephesians 4:12* from the Bible. "If I was doing it from my scouting background, I would say I'm encouraging us to be prepared. If I'm doing it from a governmental standpoint, I'm simply building community resiliency."

It's an approach that has friends in high places. The past and current presidential administrations, George W. Bush's and Barack Obama's, have recognized a role for faith communities in meeting local needs. In one of his first acts as president, Bush created the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in 2001. Obama renamed it the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships and expanded its mission.

As part of Obama's initiative, centers were created within several



Photo courtesy of Miami-Dade County, Fla.

Jannah Scott (r), U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, shares a light moment with Eddy Riquenes Montero, a member of Junta Patriotica Cubana, at the launch of Miami-Dade County's Communities Organized to Respond in Emergencies (CORE) program.

federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The agency, under its faith-based initiative, recently launched a program in Miami-Dade County, Fla. that it hopes will serve as a national model for working with congregations and other community-based groups called CORE. It stands for Communities Organized to Respond in Emergencies. Jannah Scott, deputy director of DHS's Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, was there for the kickoff April 1.

"Given Miami-Dade's cultural make-up and its high level of disaster preparedness, this community is a perfect starting point for our goal of building a more resilient nation," Scott said. "We believe Miami-Dade

CORE will become a model for the nation."

Curt Sommerhoff is the county's emergency management director. He said FEMA approached the county about serving as a laboratory for the new initiative. The launch, held at an African Heritage Cultural Center, drew members of the county's Latino, African-American, Haitian-American and Muslim communities, among others.

Sommerhoff said Miami-Dade's religious community has a history of helping when disasters occur. After a March 2003 tornado outbreak in the county's Brownsville-Liberty City area, faith-based groups were quick to respond.

"We had a lot of faith-based organizations such as the Baptist Builders and others come in and really support a very poor area of

our community that was impacted by those tornadoes, and got people working on roofs of the uninsured," he said, "and it was from there that we started to work more and more with some of the faith-based folks."

Under the CORE initiative, non-profits of all types are encouraged to consider using their facilities as shelters or distribution points for emergency supplies, managing donation drives following disasters and providing neighborhood translation services in times of crisis. The kickoff marked the beginning of a series of community meetings that FEMA will organize with the goal of creating formal affiliations to strengthen Miami-Dade's overall emergency preparedness.

Sommerhoff said the event was designed to communicate CORE principles to the attendees. Interested parties were invited to sign pledge cards agreeing to work with the county and indicating what resources they could provide; they were also asked to communicate the initiative "within their own networks."

"We're going to continue to reach out to more and more of these community groups," Sommerhoff said.

CORE also meshes well with the

county's existing disaster recovery framework, he added, noting that his department has a full-time human services coordinator. "One of the things that we've seen post-disaster... is that you really do need a person full-time focused on those kinds of social unmet needs following a disaster — those things that are affecting the community in terms of mental health and some of the other social services."

Cole, the Missouri sheriff, said, "I applaud their efforts. We have been in operation for several years now and are pleased with the results."

He said enlisting FBOs in sheltering, feeding and distribution operations can literally be a lifesaver after a disaster.

"If you look at it psychologically, if you take groups of people and if you want to reduce the effects of societal degradation, if you want to enhance their survivability," he said — "if they have a sense of mission during a disaster, then you've automatically reduced suicidal ideation, because there's a sense of purpose to their life in a very trying, rapidly changing environment."

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## Smart 911 aids county responders

By CHARLIE BAN  
STAFF WRITER

Henderson County, N.C. can now pierce the cloud of chaos that often surrounds emergencies.

The Sheriff's Office debuted Smart911 in late March, offering residents an opportunity to enter information about their families into a database that emergency responders can access when they receive a call.

"When people call 911, something is generally wrong and they aren't thinking clearly," said Lisha Corn, the department's communications director. "Now we won't have to spend valuable time during an emergency establishing the basics."

Smart911 links basic information such as names, descriptions, medical

conditions, photos of family members and emergency contacts with the caller's address. With those details in the database, emergency call takers can forward information directly to first responders.

Other counties across the country using the service include Dixie County, Fla. and Nashville-Davidson County, Tenn.

Corn said she was impressed with a feature in the Smart911 software that allows call takers to initiate text messaging with callers who feel unsafe speaking aloud.

"It seemed like a no brainer," she said. "We won't have to wait and gather information from people in a frenzy and we can focus on the details of the emergency they are dealing with when they call."

Residents must, however, enter the data themselves, which is stored offsite and is only accessed by the county when residents call for emergency services.

"It has so much potential, as long as the public gets involved," Corn said. "Our biggest challenge is getting the word out to people to enter their information."

The department is promoting the Smart911 program on its website and Facebook page, and fire departments have been spreading the word. Corn has met with school administrators and the county's council on aging to reach older residents.

The program will cost \$21,000 this year, and Corn said that it will be renewed if it gets good responses from the public.

## Profiles in Service



» Olen D. Jackson

NACo Board Member  
Commissioner  
Morrow County, Ohio

**Number of years active in NACo:** three

**Years in public service:** 14

**Occupation:** Retired teacher and coach

**Education:** B.S., Morehead State University

**The hardest thing I've ever done:** cutting spending by eliminating programs and jobs to balance the budget.

**Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner:** Abraham Lincoln, John Wooden and Adolph Rupp.

**A dream I have is to:** see the day that state and federal governments truly recognize and treat counties as worthy partners in government.

**The most adventurous thing I've ever done is:** being a volunteer firefighter and EMT — responding to alarms.

**My favorite way to relax is:** playing golf or sitting on the beach.

**I'm most proud of:** my family.

**Every morning I read:** *The Columbus Dispatch*.

**My favorite meal is:** steak.

**My pet peeve is:** people who don't vote.

**My motto is:** "Keep the faith."

**The last book I read was:** *The Wit and Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln*.

**My favorite movie is:** *Field of Dreams*.

**My favorite music is:** Country.

**My favorite president is:** Abraham Lincoln.



## Resilience in community important to preparedness

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His approach to faith-based disaster preparedness also includes building "community resiliency," such as helping congregations develop their own all-hazards plans, including how to deal with a fire or medical emergency in their facilities.

"We traditionally throughout our government have used non-governmental entities for years and years and years. It would seem foolish to overlook the resource," Cole said. "The support structure that already exists is that of the faith-based organizations, our churches and synagogues, mosques ... It's not just the facility but the people who comprise those communities of faith."

*Miami-Dade CORE used an online questionnaire to assess the disaster response capabilities and needs of community and faith-based organizations. View it at [www.miami-dadecore.org/miami.html](http://www.miami-dadecore.org/miami.html).*

# Health rankings compilers seek anecdotes

By CHARLIE BAN  
STAFF WRITER

The release of the second annual health rankings for U.S. counties by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation provides almost everyone in the United States with a snapshot of their local health conditions.

Many counties improved after their first ranking, and perhaps more did, under the radar. What the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin's Health Institute, who prepared the rankings, hope to learn is how these statistics affect the counties they evaluate.

The new rankings website ([www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)) asks for stories of how the statistics have spurred counties to action.

"I really think the stories help people overcome the analysis paralysis," said Julie Willems Van Dijk, a researcher at the University of Wisconsin's Population Health Institute. "It gives them a narrative to jump in. There's no right or wrong way to look at the conditions that influence health."

The project seeks not only success stories, but lessons from setbacks and challenges.

The rankings synthesize a picture of a county or city's overall health by analyzing factors including the area's physical environment, and social and economic factors, access to and quality of clinical care and the behaviors (or misbehaviors) of residents.

"We want to know how are people using this information, how they have learned from it," she said. "In the end, it will help us know what kind of information they need to address the health of their populations."

"There are so many perspectives from which you can look at a county's health, we hope we've made a simple way to look at complex data," she said.

Users can compare statistics among up to three counties in a state against the state averages.

With some variables relatively fixed, such as environmental factors and the number of health care professionals, counties can implement programs to influence other factors.

Genesee County, Mich. attacked

the health behaviors that ranked it last in the state. With high rates of obesity, smoking and chlamydia, the Greater Flint Health Coalition had identifiable targets, and as a result was able to combat those conditions with health-risk assessments and competitions designed to increase employee fitness.

They need not be complex initiatives, either.

Columbus County, N.C. Health Director Kimberly Smith reminds residents calling the health department to take a brisk 30-minute walk every day and to eat more fruits and vegetables in a recorded message.

Kyle Spurgeon, president of the Jackson Chamber of Commerce in Madison County, Tenn., expects the rankings will become a major element in economic development, particularly in site selection for businesses. That was the catalyst that got the chamber involved in publicizing successful wellness programs, such as the school system's Jumpstart Jackson, which seeks to make Jackson the healthiest city in Tennessee.

"For the first time, you can really compare places on equal footing,

and that means a lot to the human resource side of a business," he said. "Being healthy makes a county attractive."

Even the effort counts, Spurgeon believes. "Moving up the charts won't happen overnight, but the fact that we're doing something differentiates us," he said.

He sees the two-pronged approach to improving community health, both from county government and private employers, as accelerating the improvement in people's health.

"By jumping out there early, that will be a difference-maker in attracting businesses," Spurgeon said. "In disparate groups, we had proactive businesses that were starting to have wellness programs. Now we have a medium to promote these kinds of wellness practices, like the kind the Jackson Energy Authority has going, and other businesses can learn from them."

*Counties can contribute their stories of how the RWJF rankings have motivated and helped shape health initiatives at [www.countyhealthrankings.org/your-stories](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/your-stories).*

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### Spotlight on Snohomish County, Washington

Snohomish County, WA launched the NACo Prescription Discount Card Program in June 2005. Since the program's inception, thousands of people in the County (population of 606,024) 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](http://www.naco.org/drugcard) for program information.

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# Counties weigh pros, cons of having nuclear facilities nearby

## POWER PLANTS *from page 1*

this time appealing directly to the plant’s owner.

“I called on PG&E to voluntarily put aside their relicensing process right now. They have plenty of time,” he said.

There are 104 operating commercial reactors in 31 U.S. states, according to the Nuclear Energy Institute’s (NEI) website — the vast majority of them east of the Mississippi River. While NEI does not track reactors by county, a 1991 National Cancer Institute study reported that 107 counties were home to or near nuclear facilities. Their locations are as diverse as Louisa County, Va., Manitowoc County, Wis., Rockingham County, N.H. and Maricopa County, Ariz. (See table below).

Ocean County, N.J. is home to the nation’s oldest nuclear plant still in operation, Oyster Creek, which was licensed in 1969. Its reactor and one at New Jersey’s other nuclear plant, Hope Creek in Salem County, are the same design as the Japanese reactor that had an explosion and radiation release, according to a Reuters report.

One lesson Hill has taken from Japan’s experience is to look

beyond “engineering assumptions and such” — regarding structural integrity—to issues such as backup plans and auxiliary power, the lack of which exacerbated the Japan plant’s problems for a time.

“I’m not against the plant and I’m not an anti-nuke activist either,” Hill said, “and I have a pretty respectable relationship with PG&E. They’re an important part of our community; they’re the biggest private employer in our community.

“I’ve tried to go about this very cautiously and courteously with them.”

### Two N.Y. Counties Worry about Evacuation Planning

In Suffolk County, N.Y. on Long Island, it’s a plant in Connecticut that has some locals concerned about how they would escape if there were a nuclear accident.

“My job is to protect the health and safety of my constituents which are on the south fork of eastern Long Island,” said Suffolk County Legislator Jay Schneiderman, who wants the federal government to expand the emergency planning zone around nuclear plants to 25 miles

*See POWER PLANTS page 7*

## Nevada county officials show nuclear support



Photo courtesy of U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
A tunnel was bored into Yucca Mountain in Nye County, Nev. in preparation to develop the site as a repository for high-level nuclear waste.

Some counties would just as soon see nuclear energy go away, but Nye County, Nev. officials have a different opinion. They want the federal government to restart the process of developing Yucca Mountain, in the county, as the nation’s first high-level radioactive waste repository.

In light of what happened in Japan, County Commissioner Dan Shinhofen said a permanent nuclear waste storage site is in the national interest. “We can see from the (spent fuel) pools in Japan how dangerous it is to have them next to the sites,” he said.

The Obama administration pulled the plug on Yucca Mountain, and Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.) has

declared the project “dead.” But the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee recently launched an investigation into the decision to terminate the project.

Late last month, the Nye County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved a resolution calling for the project to resume. It reads, in part: “If ... the Yucca Mountain repository can be constructed and operated safely, Nye County reaffirms our prior resolutions and supports such operation and construction....”

Shinhofen said a recent community meeting on the topic attracted about 50 people — three opposed, two unsure and “the rest in favor of Yucca Mountain moving forward.”

“On the local level, closer to Yucca Mountain,” he said, “there is a lot of local support for it. What we continue to get is Harry Reid and the commissioners out of Las Vegas trying to play up how dangerous it is.”

Yucca Mountain also has long-term benefits for this rural county, population 44,000, located 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas. “In the long run, it benefits us with the creation of jobs and then the multiplier effect with those jobs and those people spending money,” Shinhofen said, adding that the county has lost 2,700 jobs since the project was halted.

“I’m a firm supporter of it,” he said. “I have grandchildren growing up here in Nye County; all my children own homes here. So if I had any fear of it, I would not be in support of it.”

## Nuclear Power Plants by County or Parish

### Pressurized Water Reactors

- **Beaver County, Pa.** – Beaver Valley Power Station, Unit 1 and 2
- **Berrien County, Mich.** – Donald C. Cook Nuclear Plant, Unit 1 and 2
- **Burke County, Ga.** – Vogtle Electric Generating Plant, Unit 1 and 2
- **Callaway County, Mo.** – Callaway, Unit 1
- **Calvert County, Md.** – Calvert Cliffs, Unit 1 and 2
- **Citrus County, Fla.** – Crystal River Nuclear Generating Plant, Unit 3
- **Coffey County, Kan.** – Wolf Creek Generating Station, Unit 1
- **Darlington County, S.C.** – H.B. Robinson Steam Electric Plant, Unit 1
- **Dauphin County, Pa.** – Susquehanna Steam Electric Station, Unit 1 and 2
- **Fairfield County, S.C.** – Virgil C. Summer Nuclear Station, Unit 1
- **Goodhue County, Minn.** – Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant, Unit 1 and 2
- **Grundy County, Ill.** – Braidwood Station, Unit 1 and 2

- **Hamilton County, Tenn.** – Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, Unit 1
- **Houston County, Ala.** – Joseph M. Farley Nuclear Plant Unit 1 and 2
- **Kewaunee County, Wisc.** – Kewaunee Power Station
- **Louisa County, Va.** – North Anna Power Station, Unit 1 and 2
- **Manitowac County, Wisc.** – Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Unit 1 and 2
- **Maricopa County, Ariz.** – Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, Unit 1-3
- **Martin County, Fla.** – St. Lucie Plant, Unit 1 and 2
- **Matagora County, Texas** – South Texas Project, Unit 1 and 2
- **Mecklenburg County, N.C.** – McGuire Nuclear Station, Unit 1 and 2
- **Miami-Dade County, Fla.** – Turkey Point Nuclear Generating, Unit 2 and 3
- **New London County, Conn.** – Millstone Power Station, Unit 2 and 3
- **Oconee County, S.C.** – Oconee Nuclear Station, Unit 1-3
- **Ogle County, Ill.** – Byron Station, Unit 1 and 2

- **Orange County, Calif.** – San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station, Unit 2 and 3
- **Ontario County, N.Y.** – R.E. Ginna Nuclear Power Plant
- **Ottawa County, Ohio** – Davis-Besse Nuclear, Power Station, Unit 1
- **Pope County, Ark.** – Arkansas Nuclear Power Plant, Unit 1 and 2
- **Rhea County, Tenn.** – Sequoyah Nuclear Plant, Unit 1 and 2
- **Rockingham County, N.H.** – Seabrook Station, Unit 1
- **Salem County, N.J.** – Salem Nuclear Generating Station, Unit 1 and 2
- **San Luis Obispo County, Calif.** – Diablo Canyon Power Plant, Unit 1 and 2
- **Somervell County, Texas** – Comanche Peak, Unit 1 and 2
- **St. Charles Parish, La.** – Waterford Steam Electric Station, Unit 3
- **Surry County, Va.** – Surry Power Station, Unit 1 and 2
- **Van Buren County, Mich.** – Palisades Nuclear Plant
- **Wake County, N.C.** – Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant, Unit 1
- **Washington County, Neb.** – Fort Calhoun Station, Unit 1

- **Wayne County, N.Y.** – Ginna Power Plant
- **Westchester County, N.Y.** – Indian Point Nuclear Generating, Unit 2 and 3
- **Windham County, Vt.** – Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station
- **York County, S.C.** – Catawba Station, Unit 1 and 2

### Boiling Water Reactors

- **Appling County, Ga.** – Edwin I. Hatch Nuclear Plant, Unit 1 and 2
- **Benton County, Wash.** – Columbia Generating Station
- **Brunswick County, N.C.** – Brunswick Steam Electric Plant, Unit 1 and 2
- **Claiborne County, Miss.** – Grand Gulf Nuclear Station, Unit 1
- **DeWitt County, Ill.** – Clinton Power Station, Unit 1
- **Grundy County, Ill.** – Dresden Nuclear Power Station, Unit 2 and 3
- **Lake County, Ohio** – Perry Nuclear Power Plant, Unit 1
- **LaSalle County, Ill.** – LaSalle County Station, Unit 1 and 2
- **Limestone County, Ala.** – Browns Ferry, Units 1-3
- **Linn County, Iowa** – Duane Arnold Energy Center

- **Lucas County, Ohio** – Fermi, Unit 2
- **Luzerne County, Pa.** – Three Mile Island Nuclear Station
- **Montgomery County, Pa.** – Limerick Generating Station, Unit 1 and 2
- **Nemaha County, Neb.** – Cooper Nuclear Station
- **Ocean County, N.J.** – Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station
- **Oswego County, N.Y.** – James A. Fitzpatrick Nuclear Power Plant; Nine Mile Point Nuclear Station, Unit 1 and 2
- **Plymouth County, Mass.** – Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station
- **Rock Island County, Ill.** – Quad Cities Nuclear Power Station, Unit 1 and 2
- **Salem County, N.J.** – Hope Creek Generating Station, Unit 1
- **West Feliciana Parish, La.** – River Bend Station, Unit 1
- **Wright County, Minn.** – Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant, Unit 1
- **York County, Pa.** – Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station, Unit 2 and 3

Source: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission



# New York City-area counties voice evacuation concerns

## POWER PLANTS *from page 6*

from 10 miles. Across Long Island Sound, in Waterford, Conn., sits the Millstone II plant. “That plant, which is an aging nuclear power plant, is within that 25-mile radius of most of the people I represent,” he said.

Schneiderman said the Japanese government evacuated a 25-mile zone, and President Obama urged U.S. citizens in Japan during the crisis to stay 50 miles away.

“I think that the arguments that 10 miles are enough have been shown to be false in the practical reality of what happened in Japan,” he said. In a March 19 letter to New York’s U.S. senators and Rep. Tim Bishop (D-N.Y.), Schneiderman called a 10-mile radius “woefully inadequate.”

Suffolk County residents are keenly aware of nuclear issues. Their opposition to the Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant in the 1980s helped to permanently close the facility before it could become fully operational, according to county Legislator Ed Romaine, Schneiderman’s colleague. Then, as now, Suffolk countians were concerned about fleeing the area in the event of a nuclear mishap. Long Island is about 120 miles long and 20 miles across at its widest, and evacuating traffic would funnel toward already congested New York City.

In addition, the county’s population of 1.5 million can grow by a third — to 2 million — during the summer, when tourists flock to posh vacation resorts in the area of Schneiderman’s district known as The Hamptons. Karl Grossman, a journalism professor and investigative reporter who applauds Schneiderman’s efforts, wrote the book *Cover Up: What You Are Not Supposed to Know About Nuclear Power*.

He said, “Chernobyl didn’t involve such a congested area; Kiev is 60 miles away... but Fukushima is kind of like Long Island, densely populated.”

Schneiderman is no knee-jerk nuclear naysayer, adding it has “great potential,” but only if “it’s sited appropriately and the safeguards are there.”

Westchester County, N.Y. Legislator Michael Kaplowitz shares a similar view. His main issue with nuclear generation is that “it doesn’t belong in the middle of 20 million people.” His county is home to the Indian Point Energy Center, with two nuclear reactors, 24 miles from New York City. Twenty million people live within 50 miles of Indian Point, he said.

Kaplowitz, who chairs the legislature’s Environmental and Energy

Committee, is drafting a resolution for the full legislature calling for a 50-mile radius around the plant for evacuation planning purposes, rather than the current 10 miles — “because of the population density, the proximity to New York City and the centrality of New York in

terms of the economic life and the population of the country.”

He is also conducting a series of “plan, not panic” meetings to learn from what happened in Japan.

“The world is basically asking either keep nuclear exactly as is or close it down,” he said, suggesting

a compromise. “That would be to replicate what happened in Platville (Weld County), Colo. in the mid-1990s, when the Fort Saint Vrain plant located there converted from nuclear to natural gas.

“This is, I think, the key to unlock the solution to this problem

... we can have the best of both and control our risks at the same time,” he said. “While I’m urging that we put a 50-mile zone in and to close down nuclear operation, I want to keep power plants going because we still need the power, the jobs and the taxes.”



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# Model Programs FROM THE NATION'S COUNTIES

Wake County, N.C.

## Teen Court Offers Alternative to Juvenile System

By CHARLIE BAN  
STAFF WRITER

Teenagers spend much of their lives carrying the burdens of lowered expectations and suspicion, thanks to their age.

Whether its convenience stores barring groups of them from shopping or the police deciding they are loitering, society apparently has it out for them. When they do slip up and get in trouble, there's an adult waiting to punish them.

But not in Wake County, N.C.

There, a Teen Court has taken off, giving first-time offenders between the ages of 9 and 18 a chance to plead guilty to misdemeanor charges in front of a true jury of their peers and explain their motive for the offense. Referrals come from a variety of sources, including prosecutors, magistrates and community police, but almost three-quarters come from school resource police officers, because the majority of incidents take place at schools.

If they successfully complete the sentence handed down from the jury, their offense is dismissed.

The program was associated with the county's social service department in the 1990s, but was orphaned after a reorganization until ReEntry Inc. took over.

The jury pool includes all middle or high school students in Wake County. Five-hour training sessions are held quarterly at Campbell University Law School, the most recent of which prepared 48 teenaged volunteers and five adults. An attorney or judge volunteers to serve as the judge for the session, and another adult monitors the jury and conducts exit interviews to ensure the defendants understand the process and their sentences.

Teen volunteers serve as attorneys for both the defense and prosecution, bailiff, court clerk and the jury members. On an average of twice a month, volunteers gather at the county courthouse on Tuesday evenings to conduct court.

Program ambassadors try to recruit middle school students, so to

hopefully keep them in the system for at least four years.

"We describe the excitement of being trained to be lawyers, compare it to being like television," said Louise Davis, executive director of ReEntry, Inc., the nonprofit that manages the program. "The only difference is we're not having trials like on television, we're just doing sentencing hearings."

Because all program participants must plead guilty, the students who play the roles of the defense attorney and prosecutor state their cases for leniency or harshness.

"In a real court, you'd never have a kid up there on the stand, explaining the situation or why he did what he did," Davis said. "Here, it's mandatory. It helps the jury understand the circumstances and the defendant's mindset and in a way helps the defendant think through what he did."

Sentences range from writing essays and offering apologies and financial restitution to community service and decision-making skills groups. Most sentences carry a 90-day limit for completion and



Photo by Martiza Adonis, courtesy of ReEntry, Inc.

Volunteers for a jury in Wake County, N.C.'s Capital Area Teen Court are sworn in before a sentencing hearing.

defendants must also return to sit on a jury.

Davis encourages defendants to volunteer at their schools because they have transportation there, it's a safe environment and it presents an opportunity to rebuild the lost sense of community they feel for having been involved in the incident that sent them to court.

"Most kids we see have not

planned what they did, they haven't premeditated a criminal act," she said.

Davis said the program's shortcoming is the size of Wake County — more than 100 square miles — and the lack of public transportation, which discourages a lot of the outlying schools from referring students to the program.

Wake County contributes ap-

proximately \$50,000 to the program's \$200,000 cost, which funds three full-time employees and operating costs. The Juvenile Crime Prevention Council and private donors also contribute.

Since 1998, the program has only seen 10 percent of participants return to court, compared to a 35 percent recidivism rate for children in the same age range in juvenile or district courts. An average of 425 kids go through the program each year.

"I think it works because it reinforces positive behavior," Davis said. "My guess is that 85 percent of kids who come here are not criminal people, they come from families who care and support them and their behavior is correctable. With the family being involved and caring, we're going to have success reaching out to them."

*(Model Programs from the Nation's Counties highlights exemplary county programs. For more information on this and other NACo Achievement Award winners, visit NACo's Web site, [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org) ▶ Research & Publications ▶ Find Solutions.)*

## Research News

### Putting Local Artists on Display

Have you ever seen a new federal building go up in your county and found that none of the art work used to decorate it is from your county or even from your state, and wondered how that happened? Chair Bill Kennedy of Yellowstone County, Mont., did when a new federal courthouse was built in his county. Not a single Montana artist was featured and he wanted to know why.

The answer is fairly simple. No local artists were registered with the U.S. General Services Administration's Art in Architecture Program. This program has existed since 1972 and has commissioned

nearly 500 works of art for federal buildings all across the country. The General Services Administration (GSA) is responsible for the construction or major renovation of federal buildings and it reserves 0.5 percent of the estimated total cost of construction to commission artwork from an American artist that will be permanently installed in all new buildings.

GSA's National Artist Registry is a database of about 2,000 American artists (all must be citizens or permanent residents of the U.S.) who have completed the process of being included. They have expressed their interest in being considered when GSA commissions become available. To be considered, each artist must submit a completed National Artist Registry application form, a current resume and 20 digital images of their work that has been completed during the most recent

five years. Once approved for the registry, the artist can be considered for any GSA art commissions and does not have to reapply or submit an application each time a project becomes available.

Eligible artwork includes sculpture, murals, paintings and other architecturally scaled works in various media. Opportunities for commissions are advertised on the federal procurement website at [www.fbo.gov](http://www.fbo.gov), and artists just need to notify the GSA of their interest in being considered. Their previous submissions to the registry will be used by the judges.

Each time a building is being considered for artwork through the program, a seven-member Art in Architecture advisory panel is convened.

The panel holds three meetings in the city where the project is located. The first meeting, sched-

uled for two hours, reviews the art project and the design intent for the building. The second meeting is an all-day slide review of the work of all of the artists who are candidates for the project. And the third is a two-hour meeting where the commissioned artist presents his or her concept proposal to the panel members.

Preference is frequently granted to local artists, but these artists can also be considered for commissions in other areas of the country.

For additional information about getting your county's local artists registered, go to [www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104456](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104456) and [http://www.gsa.gov/graphics/pbs/Design\\_Excellence\\_Policies\\_and\\_Procedures\\_Chapter8.pdf](http://www.gsa.gov/graphics/pbs/Design_Excellence_Policies_and_Procedures_Chapter8.pdf).

*(Research News was written by Jacqueline Byers, director of research and outreach.)*

Keep up with NACo online ...

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





# The H.R. Doctor Is In

## And I Thought We Were Friends...

Much of the news about government these days looks like the propaganda buildup about the enemy before a major military campaign.

There is a barrage of criticism fired at public employees with defined benefit pensions, leave cash-outs upon separation, compensation in general, and other deferred retirement option programs, job tenure and other "entitlements."

Many of these benefits are embedded, or fossilized if you prefer, in union collective bargaining agreements. These elements of compensation are rather common in governments, but are quite rare in the "at will" of the private sector — except, of course, for the golden handcuffs worn by many financial industry executives and others on the top floor.

The attacks have been magnified in volume and intensity by the overall economic problems we have been facing in America, including — but certainly not limited to — the decline in housing prices. The situation does not help quell the increased nervousness, high blood pressure and clinical depression of private sector employees who

panic at the announcement of an unexpected staff meeting later in the day. They fear that the highlight will be the announcement that their plant is closing and their work is being outsourced.

This contributes to worries about whether our country is on a path to economic decline and whether our dreams will be dashed. These are not issues unique to the U.S. They are harming dreams and hopes, and leading to aggressive protests throughout the European Union, South Africa and elsewhere.

This is not the first economic dizzy spell we have seen in our lives or in U.S. history. Nor is it the first time when citizens were massively upset about the actions or inactions of government, or of employee abuse of their privileges.

What is different now is that we get to look directly into the mouths of screaming, uncivil protesters brought right into our homes non-stop. This is the result of the coverage of an often "reality TV" version of the news. Seeing the news of these protests without any productive dialogue about options and long-term consequences paints

a very warped image of American society to anyone from another culture or our own children in an impressionable developmental time in their lives.

**America has a history of love-hate relationships with government, and with those who work for it.**

The problems we face are serious enough and the options difficult enough to understand without the media brandishing the dangerous mass weapons of direct access to all of us. The snippets of "breaking news" we hear about between endless commercials is not so much about the news itself, but rather about the "breaking" of elements of reasonable dialogue between caring persons. The news is now a combination of *Dancing with the Stars* and *The Biggest Loser*. The "stars" are those who can rave and rant the loudest. The losers will be all of us if we allow the screamers to create a rather bleak future for us all.

America has a history of love-hate relationships with government, and with those who work for it. After all, we overthrew an oppressive, financially burdensome British colonial government — by creating a new governmental model ourselves. Soon after there was a United States, there was a rebellion about taxing whiskey. The national "confusion" has continued to this day.

On the "love" side of the equation, we are thoroughly dependent upon services unique to government such as law enforcement, criminal justice, and life safety and public health services, such as disease control and food safety. On the "hate" side, we whine about intrusive government reducing personal freedoms while giving us the long-term, and perhaps incurable disease of massive debt.

We face challenges to the role of government which are greater than ever before. The human life span has more than doubled since the founding of the country. We are integrated into a worldwide economy allowing us to have fruits or buy fresh flowers which are out of season where we live — products which were harvested half a world away only yesterday. I can visit a PakMail store and debate the value

of using the U.S. Postal Service or one of the industry-giant shipping companies such as FedEx or UPS. I can marvel, as I did in the aftermath of Hurricanes Rita and Wilma, at the efficiency of Wal-Mart's supply chain logistical system or I can rely on FEMA to take over my life during a major disaster.

All in all, we live in a wondrous time of change, but the debate about the role of government and of public employees goes on. Perhaps this debate is an endless feature of a healthy and vital democracy.

Still, public employees will remain our friends. We will continue to respect them even as we hold them more accountable than ever. Despite the fat-cutting demands for government liposuction, I believe that my beautiful daughter Elyse's career in the public service will be every bit as rewarding, and at times frustrating, as my own 40 years of service has been and continues to be. Recall the adage that we love our own member of Congress, even as we hold in very low esteem the legislative body itself.



Phil Rosenberg  
The HR Doctor • [www.hrdn.net](http://www.hrdn.net)

## What's in a Seal?



» County of Atlantic, N.J.  
[www.aclink.org](http://www.aclink.org)

In February 1837, Atlantic County, named for the Atlantic Ocean, was formed out of Gloucester County. Once called *Egg Harbor Township*, the eastern half of the original County of Gloucester, it was named an official district as early as 1693, bounded on the north by the Little Egg Harbor River (now known as the Mullica River), and on the south by the Great Egg Harbor River.

Southern New Jersey was the home of the Leni-Lenape Indians. It was explored in the 16th century by Dutch, French, Swedish, Finnish and Portuguese sea captains. The first survey was made by Henry Hudson in 1609. Cornelius Jacobsen Mey sailed into Little Egg Harbor in 1614 and later charted the coastline.

Many of the early settlers were whalers. Shipyards, mills, iron furnaces and brick yards were all active in the region. Prior to the Revolutionary War and War of 1812, shipbuilding became a major industry.

The seal shows a ship sailing on the Atlantic with the year the county was established.

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

## Financial Services News

### Extra Retirement Dollars for County Employees

#### Effect of Contributing 2011 Tax Savings\*

Annual Income	Tax savings for 2011	Amount per pay	Assets from Extra Contributions in 2011 after 20 Years	Assets after 20 Years of Extra 2% Contributions
\$30,000	\$600	\$23	\$1,925	\$22,677
\$50,000	\$1,000	\$38.50	\$3,251	\$39,438
\$100,000	\$2,000	\$77	\$6,503	\$78,875

Through 2011, Social Security taxes have been reduced from 6.2 percent to 4.2 percent of pay. Remind your employees to consider investing that 2 percent savings in their deferred compensation account.

There'd be little or no change to net pay. But there may be a big difference in an investor's account at retirement.

NACo and the provider of the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, Nationwide Retirement Solutions, can help if you would like to find out more information about

this tax reduction and how saving for retirement through a deferred compensation plan can benefit your employees.

The example above assumes a hypothetical 6 percent annual return, compounded daily and is based on bi-weekly contributions. It's intended to illustrate the effects of time and compounding on investments.

It doesn't represent the actual performance of any investment or reflect any applicable fees or taxes. If these were included, the results

would be lower. It is not intended to predict or project investment results. Investing involves market risk, including possible loss of principal.

For additional information about the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, please contact Lisa Cole at [lc@naco.org](mailto:lc@naco.org) or by phone 202.942.4270, or contact Louie Watson with Nationwide at [watsonl2@nationwide.com](mailto:watsonl2@nationwide.com) or by phone 614.854.8895.

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





## News From the Nation's Counties

### ► CALIFORNIA

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY** supervisors approved funding to renovate housing units at the Downtown Women's Center, which will create more **housing for the homeless** there, the *Los Angeles Times* reported.

The project will receive \$1.35 million to help fund a \$2.6-million rehabilitation of an old, vacated structure that had 45 housing units. That structure was emptied in December as women moved into a new 71-unit facility.

The \$1.35 million came from increased property tax revenues generated by redevelopment in the city of Industry, which is required by state law to distribute a portion of its enhanced property tax revenues to affordable housing projects. Because Industry has no land zoned for residential use, the city gives that money to Los Angeles County for affordable housing projects.

### ► IDAHO

**CANYON COUNTY** commissioners have requested a hearing with the state's Department of Environmental Quality to challenge the agency's interpretation of a 2008 **mandatory vehicle emission testing** law.

The commissioners claimed the state is acting beyond the scope of the law and demanded that thousands of motorists be reimbursed the \$11 testing fee. The petition came in response to a threat by DEQ to revoke the registration for as many as 20 county vehicles that have not yet been tested. County leaders said they deliberately avoided testing the vehicles as an act of civil disobedience. They also claimed the state has failed to make a case based on science that emission testing is necessary, the Associated Press reported.

Commissioners told KTRV-TV the process wasn't created in a constitutional manner, claiming the county has been singled out and is subject to environmental rules that don't make sense.

### ► IOWA

Two counties recently set **weapons policies**.

**LINN COUNTY** supervisors approved a policy allowing people with county-issued permits to carry concealed firearms on most county-owned property. It bans guns carried openly, and all guns will be prohibited at the county courthouse, jail and the juvenile justice center, according to the Associated Press. The rule follows a new state law that gives sheriffs less discretion in denying permits to carry guns.

Meanwhile, the **DUBUQUE COUNTY** Board of Supervisors banned weapons on county-owned, leased or otherwise occupied property.

Supervisors Wayne Demmer and Eric Manternach said they'd heard safety concerns from other County Board members since the state law change made it more difficult for the state's county sheriffs to reject gun-permit applications, the *Telegraph Herald* reported.

### ► KANSAS

Shopping locally will recap cash rewards for **HARPER COUNTY** consumers, thanks to new Commissioner Jim Gates who is offering **incentives for people who spend money** in some of the county's restaurants and retail stores.

He considered declining his \$16,000 salary but decided to use it to fund rebates for local shoppers. His first such rebate offer gave a \$25 cash rebate to anyone who spent at least \$200 recently at one of the four grocery stores in the county.

The *Hutchinson News* reported the



Photo by Nicole Tommerdahl, courtesy of Hennepin County Public Affairs

### ► MINNESOTA

The **HENNEPIN COUNTY**'s Government Center features an exhibit giving a voice and face to the **homeless**.

"Homeless Is My Address, Not My Name" runs through April on the government center's skyway level. Portraits and audio stories of people who have been homeless are presented by St. Stephen's Human Services in partnership with Heading Home Hennepin and Family Housing Fund and is sponsored by the Hennepin County Office to End Homelessness and Heading Home Hennepin.

rebate rose to \$50 for someone who spent \$300. Residents who wanted to collect a rebate brought their grocery receipts from the designated day to Gates' office.

### ► MARYLAND

Years after the father of a Marine killed in Iraq sued the Westboro Baptist Church for protesting at his son's funeral in **CARROLL COUNTY**, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Westboro's members were within their free speech rights.

Now the county commissioners want an ordinance increasing the buffer zone for **protests at funerals** beyond the 100 feet mandated by state law, the *Carroll County Times* reported. Maryland's General Assembly is also considering expanding the funeral buffer zone to 500 feet statewide.

### ► MISSISSIPPI

Following the Biloxi Police Department's **cutbacks to crossing guards**, **HARRISON COUNTY** Road Department employees have been filling in stopping traffic for children.

"The city had a void where there were some budget issues, where they couldn't afford the crossing guards system. But we know the safety of our children is a priority to us all. So we're able to work with the Biloxi Police Department and fill in that void," said Harrison County Supervisor Windy Swetman.

Even though the road employees are at the crossings on county time,

he says they're not neglecting their daily responsibilities.

"We all share resources. There are all sorts of partnerships between the city and county. This is just another way of maximizing the way that we spend taxpayer dollars," Swetman said.

The 16 remaining crossing guards will be released in May. That means starting next school year, there will be no paid crossing guards working around Biloxi schools, WLOW-TV reported.

### ► MONTANA

Fear of invasive species has prompted **FLATHEAD** and **LAKE** counties to form a **local water quality district** with local tribes to protect Flathead Lake. The district would encompass the basin and provide local control over any programs targeting invasive species such as zebra and quagga mussels, the commissioners said.

Caryn Miske of the Flathead Basin Commission told the *Flathead Beacon* county governments have a lot of flexibility when it comes to creating the districts because they can identify their own goals and tailor the district to meet those goals. Through a water quality district, administrators are able to collect fees from improved properties, administer local ordinances and apply for grants and loans, among other tools.

### ► NEW YORK

• The **BROOME COUNTY** Clerk's Office is joining with the

New York State Association of County Clerks and the N.Y. Alliance for Donation (NYAD) this month to promote **organ, eye and tissue donation** throughout the state.

Brochures, posters and enrollment forms will be placed in Department of Motor Vehicles offices statewide, alerting customers of the donor crisis and asking them to enroll in the New York State Donate Life Registry, according to Broome County Clerk Richard Blythe, himself a registered organ donor.

Currently only 11 percent of potential donors enroll in the registry; the national average is 43 percent, *newshcannel34.com* reported.

• **SUFFOLK COUNTY** officials are balking at the local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals request that the county indemnify the nonprofit, which is losing its insurance coverage, according to *Newsday*.

The **SPCA** investigates about 2,500 complaints of animal abuse a year and says it may have to shutter or curtail operations without urgent help from the county.

### ► OKLAHOMA

The new **ROGERS COUNTY** Courthouse will be "quite a presence" in downtown Claremore, according to the design team for the \$18 million facility and grounds.

After construction bids are opened April 15, Commissioner Mike Helm said construction could begin in May or June, the *Tulsa World* reported. The building will be erected immediately east of the existing courthouse, which was built in 1941 and expanded in the early 1980s.

County voters approved the extension of a 0.167 percent county sales tax to pay for the **new courthouse** and a countywide 911 dispatch center. The courthouse will house all county administrative offices, except for the election board and sheriff's detectives, who will remain at the jail complex.

### ► PENNSYLVANIA

**ALLEGHENY COUNTY**'s **Allegheny Together** program to help its cities and towns improve their economic outlook has brought two new communities into the fold.

The program is designed to help municipalities develop a vision and plan to improve their business districts and make them thrive," County Executive Dan Onorato said.

Since the program's launch, the county has provided nearly

## In Case You Missed It ...

### News to Use from Past County News

#### ► County Courthouse Awards applications available

NACo is now accepting applications for the 2011 County Courthouse Awards. The awards recognize elected county officials from NACo-member counties who demonstrate innovative and effective leadership to improve the quality of life of citizens. There are three award categories: rural, suburban and urban.

Applications and information are now available on the NACo website at [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org) under the Awards section. Applications must be received by April 29 to be considered.

If you have questions, please contact Dalen Harris or Erik Johnston, NACo associate legislative directors, at 202.393.6226 or by email at [dharris@naco.org](mailto:dharris@naco.org) or [ejohnston@naco.org](mailto:ejohnston@naco.org).



# Job Market & Classifieds

## ► DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY, VA.

Salary: \$80,662–\$104,861 annually; DOQ.

Spotsylvania County Government is seeking candidates for the position of Economic Development Director with extensive experience in local, state, and/or regional government economic development. To receive consideration, candidates must have a proven and demonstrably successful track record in economic development.

The county is interested in proactive people who are achievement oriented. The successful candidate will clearly demonstrate the following:

- ability to successfully target and establish effective working relationships with prospective businesses both regionally and nationally that are looking for a great location,

- ability to identify the interests and priorities of businesses presently located in the County,

- ability to work effectively with leaders, investors, and developers,

- considerable knowledge of principles and practices of economic development, County and State regulations, business assistance programs, business cost structures, and commercial and industrial activity,

- the ability to guide and supervise staff, and

- a strong knowledge of Tourism — especially creating destinations and heritage tourism.

Candidate must be strong in public relations, negotiations, and public speaking with exceptional business and people skills with internal and external clients.

The two most important skills are an understanding of what needs to happen financially to make a deal work, and to

be able to effectively negotiate with all the parties to bring closure. Further, the individual will need to understand public/private partnerships and how to implement them.

In particular, the successful candidate will recognize the need for timely and predictable decisions and be prepared to work diligently to make those happen. Requires education and/or experience equivalent to a Bachelor's degree in marketing, economics, communications, business administration, public administration and six (6) to nine (9) years of experience in marketing, real estate, economic development, and public relations management.

Please submit a cover letter, resume and writing sample with a County application online at [www.spotsylvania.va.us](http://www.spotsylvania.va.us). Salary: DOQ. Deadline: Continuous. Department of Human Resources P.O. Box 605, Spotsylvania, VA 22553; 540.507.7290. E.O.E.

a total departmental staff of over 60 employees and an annual budget of over 8 million dollars.

Qualifications: Candidates interested in applying must have a Bachelor's degree with major course work in engineering, architecture, planning, construction management, business administration, public administration, or a related field. Advanced degree and professional certification(s) strongly preferred. A minimum of eight (8) years responsible and relevant experience in local government with considerable senior management level experience.

Salary and benefits package includes: Salary is negotiable depending on qualifications. Benefits include: vehicle allowance of \$450 per month, medical, dental and life insurance, retirement plan, leave allowances, and more. Deadline: Open until filled.

To ensure consideration for this position, interested candidates should forward resume, cover letter and five references immediately, via email, to [HRD@coralgables.com](mailto:HRD@coralgables.com) or fax to 305.460.5518. The City of Coral Gables is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Drug Free Workplace.

## ► FINANCE DIRECTOR – CITY OF CORAL GABLES, FLA.

Salary: \$97,490–\$133,869 annually; DOQ.

A beautiful, progressive, international, coastal and historic City of Coral Gables, FL is seeking a highly qualified professional who is inspired by interesting challenges of an established, but dynamic community for the position of Finance Director.

The city has a population of 45,500 residents, has a vibrant downtown district

and is home to the University of Miami. It is proud to be ranked by Forbes.com ninth, out of America's Top 25 Towns to Live Well and America's sixth most successful walkable suburb by the Wall Street Journal. The City Manager appoints the Finance Director to serve as the chief financial advisor. The candidate must possess the ability to navigate through complex issues, including but not limited to accounting functions, revenue and expenditure forecasting, operating and capital budgeting, pension and debt administration, procurement of goods and services, and providing the City with sound financial policy direction.

The Department of Finance has over thirty employees, requiring the candidate to have a proven ability to supervise staff, and a budget of approximately 3.7 million dollars.

Qualifications: Candidates interested in applying must have a bachelor's degree with major coursework in accounting or finance from an accredited school with a minimum of eight years' progressively responsible experience in local government finance. Advanced degree desirable; CPA strongly preferred. Salary and benefits package includes: The annual salary is negotiable depending on qualifications. Benefits include: vehicle allowance of \$450 per month, medical, dental and life insurance, retirement plan, leave allowances, and more.

Deadline: Open until filled.

To ensure consideration for this position, interested candidates should forward resume, cover letter, current salary, and five references immediately, via email, to [HRD@coralgables.com](mailto:HRD@coralgables.com) or fax to 305.460.5518. The City of Coral Gables is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Drug Free Workplace.

## NACo on the Move

### ► NACo Officers and Elected Officials

Glen Whitley, NACo president, spoke on how counties can get their message to Congress and constituents and NACo's National County Government Month initiative at the County Commissioners of Pennsylvania annual conference March 27 in Dauphin County (Harrisburg).

### ► NACo Staff

• **Ryan Yates**, associate legislative director, has been appointed by Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and Secretary of Agriculture Thomas Vilsack as a member of the Wildlife Fire Executive Council representing NACo for a three-year term. The purpose of the council is to provide advice on policy leadership, direction and program oversight in support of the Wildland Fire Leadership Council.

• **Carrie Clingan**, senior associate, community services, spoke about NACo's Digital Coast Partnership at the Coastal Geotools conference in Horry County (Myrtle Beach), S.C. March 22.



Ryan Yates

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

## ► DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTOR – CITY OF CORAL GABLES, FLA.

Salary: \$102,337–\$140,546 annually; DOQ.

A beautiful, progressive, international, coastal and historic city is seeking a highly qualified professional who is inspired by interesting challenges of an established, but dynamic community for the position of Development Services Director. The City has a population of 45,500 residents, has a vibrant downtown district and is home to the University of Miami. It is proud to be ranked by Forbes.com ninth, out of America's Top 25 Towns to Live Well and America's sixth most successful walkable suburb by the Wall Street Journal. The City Manager appoints the Development Services Director to serve as the chief strategic advisor for the department's three divisions: Building, Planning and Zoning, and Code Enforcement. The candidate must possess the ability to navigate through complex issues and direct and manage

## Hire Quality Staff

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Visit [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org) ► Programs & Services ► Hire Quality Staff for more information, or contact Christopher Johnson at 202.942.4256 or [cjohnson@naco.org](mailto:cjohnson@naco.org).

# New York, Colorado counties to get EPA smart growth help

## NEWS FROM from page 10

\$1.2 million in funding to eight participating communities, leading to 37 new businesses, as well as assistance to 753 small businesses. The county has sponsored 26 community input workshops designed to engage residents in the long-term planning process.

The International Development Council recognized Allegheny Together's accomplishments with its 2009 Excellence in Economic Development Award.

## ► VIRGINIA

ARLINGTON COUNTY's Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources (PRCR) was

re-accredited by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies.

Only 99 out of more than 10,000 park and recreation agencies nationwide have achieved this designation, county officials said.

"Considering the cuts in staffing and funding over the last two years, it is quite an accomplishment that PRCR was able to maintain this high standard," said PRCR Director Dinesh Tiwari.

Accredited agencies must meet 36 standards deemed fundamental to a quality agency and at least 92 remaining standards necessary for achieving excellence in operations and service. Accreditation is valid for five years.

## ► WYOMING

It won't quite be an ox roast, but LINCOLN COUNTY officials are looking to the past for inspiration to celebrate the county's centennial.



Commissioners Kent Connelly, Paul Jenkins and T. Deb Wolfley announced a barbecue June 25 at the courthouse in Kemmerer, the county seat. The event is similar to the original ox roast celebrating the vote approving the new county on June 10, 1911.

Then, coal mining and agriculture

spurred the local economy. Today, mineral-related industries, tourism, and firearms and aircraft manufacturing provide jobs for residents.

## ► Counties receive EPA tech help

ERIE COUNTY, N.Y. and the Pikes Peak Council of Governments in Colorado will receive technical assistance from the EPA on using smart growth to produce fiscal and economic health. The Pikes Peak COG includes EL PASO, PARK and TELLER counties.

Along with Erie, they were the only counties among the first participants in the Sustainable Communities Building Blocks program. Each community will

participate in a day-long session that will help them achieve their sustainable planning goals, which EPA says "helps safeguard the environment and spur economic development while also improving Americans' health."

Thirty-two communities from 354 applicants were selected through a competitive process in consultation with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

(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](mailto:ctaylor@naco.org) or [cbn@naco.org](mailto:cbn@naco.org).)



# States await guidance from feds on health exchanges

## HEALTH CARE from page 3

forward with legislation to set up the exchanges.

However, states are also waiting on further guidance from the administration on the exchanges, such as what constitutes an essential

health benefits package for plans offered through the exchanges. There are unanswered questions about:

- how coverage will be maintained for individuals with incomes that fluctuate causing their eligibility for Medicaid and plans on the exchanges,

- whether wrap-around services traditionally provided through Medicaid will be available to individuals who qualify for private plan coverage on the exchange, and

- how an exchange will be structured if a state chooses not to operate one and the federal govern-

ment must run the exchange. This will be the case in Louisiana, which recently decided to not establish an exchange.

Also, the role that county agencies may have in determining eligibility and enrollment is uncertain, although they will most

likely be involved to some degree in assisting individuals in finding coverage through the exchange.

Because county human services agency staff already have significant expertise in conducting outreach and helping individuals enroll in Medicaid and other programs, they may be able to provide this assistance by participating in the official Navigator program called for in the PPACA. The program will provide grants to entities that can conduct outreach and help the application process, although at this point the criteria to be able to serve in this capacity have not been defined.

## Public Health Issues

NACo will continue to work with Congress and the Obama administration to improve the provisions of the PPACA, so that they reflect county priorities and implement the provisions that help counties build healthy communities and ensure affordable access to health care.

In particular, NACo supports efforts to strengthen the county public health infrastructure through the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF). The PPHF provides dedicated funding for state and local prevention and public health activities, totaling \$15 billion in funding over 10 years.

County public health department programs will be eligible for many of the potential funding opportunities, and NACo advocates that public health programs which are administered at the state level — whether they are new PPHF-funded initiatives or other federal programs — should require concurrence by localities regarding both the budgets and objectives of any of these grant programs.

While the PPHF requires mandatory spending and the administration has indicated that it is prepared to issue grant funding announcements as soon as possible, the monies could be reallocated for other non-health-related programs or priorities. At recent hearings of the House Energy and Commerce Committee's Health Subcommittee, legislation was introduced to convert the fund and other mandatory funding streams into discretionary funding, and NACo submitted a letter to the committee leadership opposing the efforts to reclassify the PPHF.

To view the Feb. 24 webinar, find out about upcoming webinars and for other health reform implementation information, visit [www.naco.org/healthreformimplement](http://www.naco.org/healthreformimplement). To send health reform implementation questions or sign up for updates, email [healthreforminfo@naco.org](mailto:healthreforminfo@naco.org).

**"In Fort Worth when you say 'Partner,' it means something. With Waste Management as our partner, we are improving the quality of life for residents and visitors alike."**

Mike Moncrief  
Mayor, City of Fort Worth

At Waste Management, we're proud to partner with the community to create environmental solutions that deliver economic and environmental benefits.

### Environmental Services:

- Approximately 200,000 households serviced weekly
- Recycling participation – 85%
- Waste diversion – 21%
- Green waste collection
- Large waste (bulk) collection
- Pay-as-you-throw system

### Community Projects:

- **Sponsor** – Police and Firefighters Memorial
- **Sponsor** – Riverside Neighborhood Association
- **Sponsor** – Great American Cleanup
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Marsha McLean  
Mayor, City of Santa Clarita

As active members of the community, Waste Management is pleased to initiate and implement solutions that help sustain Santa Clarita's economic growth while safeguarding its environmental integrity.

### Environmental Services:

- Waste diversion – 60%
- Doubled multi-family recycling
- Manure recycling
- Safe Sharps disposal
- Green Squad

### Community Projects:

- **Sponsor** – Clothes for Community
- **Co-Sponsor** – Santa Clarita Green Guide
- Comprehensive Public Education Plan

**There's no better time than now to start making your community more sustainable. Call Paul Pistono, Vice President of Public Sector Solutions, at 1-888-558-6390, and let's talk. In the meantime, learn more at [wm.com/partner](http://wm.com/partner).**



THINK GREEN.



SPOTLIGHT: Fort Worth, TX

Population: 736,200

Rank: 17th-largest city in the U.S.

Known For: Western heritage; Top 10 U.S. Art Cities; A safe place to live and work

Slogan: Fort Worth – City of Cowboys and Culture

Nickname: "Cowtown"



SPOTLIGHT: Santa Clarita, CA

Population: 177,641

Rank: 4th-largest city in Los Angeles County

Known for: First authenticated discovery of gold in California; Popular location for major films and TV series; FBI-ranked as one of the nation's safest cities