

NACO National Association of Counties

# CountyNews

The Voice of America's Counties

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES ■ WASHINGTON, D.C.

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## New award highlights Nat'l County Government Month

By JIM PHILIPPS  
MEDIA RELATIONS MANAGER

With a new year comes a renewed opportunity for county officials to inform the communities they serve about the essential programs and services their counties provide. The best method to accomplish this task is through

See NCGM page 6



Photo by Associated Press

Members of the White House staff, and President Obama and Mrs. Obama observe a minute of silence Jan. 10 for the victims of the Jan. 8 shootings in Arizona.

## Arizona county officials jolted by Tucson shootings

By CHARLES TAYLOR, CHARLIE BAN AND CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON  
STAFF WRITERS

The shootings that wounded Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and killed an Arizona federal judge have ignited debate about cause and effect. Did a toxic environment of over-heated political rhetoric push a disturbed young man to pull the trigger? Or was his alleged mental instability alone enough to force his hand?

Arizona elected officials, including at the county level, vary in their opinions. But all agree that—cause or not—the rhetoric needs to be toned down. For one of them, there can be no doubt. Maricopa County Supervisor Mary Rose Wilcox has “been there.”

In 1997, while leaving a County Board meeting, Wilcox was shot from behind by a man

who later said he was angry at her support for a baseball stadium tax. As the first Hispanic woman elected to the board, Wilcox says she had been the target of talk-radio tirades.

“I knew that the hate had been caused by a lot of the negative rhetoric that had gone on,” she said. “At the trial, the man said, ‘I shot her because the radio said to take her out.’” She sees the same forces at work today.

After Wilcox’s shooting, Maricopa County beefed up security and there has not been another incident, according to Don Stapley, a Maricopa supervisor and NACo past president, but he hasn’t forgotten the trauma of that incident, nor has Wilcox.

“It makes you more cautious,” she said. “I still get nervous when people are behind me and I can’t see them, but you have to move on and work for the people as

best you can.” Larry Naman, a homeless man, was convicted of attempted first-degree murder in 1998 for wounding Wilcox.

Stapley is “still shocked by the magnitude of what happened” in Tucson, several days after the shootings. “To have killed a sitting federal judge, without being targeted, is just sobering.” U.S. District Judge John M. Roll among those killed.

“As county officials we’re always with people, and there’s no way to isolate yourself without hurting your ability to represent your constituents,” Stapley said. “Losing dedicated public servants and innocent citizens has left all of Arizona’s public officials heavy-hearted.”

Stapley spoke to *CountyNews* after attending the opening of the state’s legislative session,

See TUCSON page 8

## Feds will pay Stormwater fees under new law

By JULIE UFFNER  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

President Barack Obama signed into law a bill Jan. 4 requiring the federal government to finally pay its fair share of local stormwater management service.

Prior to this decision, in 15 states and in the District of Columbia, some federal installations such as post offices, other federal buildings and military bases refused to pay local stormwater fees, even though the stormwater program is a federal mandate.

The federal government claimed “sovereign immunity,” calling the charges a tax, rather than a fee, and thus, unconstitutional. This translated to millions of dollars of unpaid federal government stormwater bills for many local governments.

Gwinnett and DeKalb Counties in Georgia, for example, are owed

See STORMWATER page 6

### QuickTakes

#### 5 Counties with the Highest Agricultural Sales

Value of Sales \*

|                         |      |
|-------------------------|------|
| Fresno County, Calif.   | 3.73 |
| Tulare County, Calif.   | 3.33 |
| Kern County, Calif.     | 3.20 |
| Merced County, Calif.   | 2.33 |
| Monterey County, Calif. | 2.18 |

\* in millions of \$

Source: 2010 County and City Extra – Annual Metro, City and County Data Book

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# EPA plans release of new stormwater rule

In September 2011, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to release a new stormwater rule that will potentially impact all Phase I, Phase II, transportation and non-regulated Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4). The proposed rule, which has not yet been published in the Federal Register, will become final by November 2012.

According to EPA, the new rule would address the effect that rapid land-use development has on water quality. However, the agency recognizes the potential rule may also intrude into local land use authorities. Subsequently, it is requesting information from counties on the best way to implement the rule.

Specifically, it wants to know what proposals are valid and workable for local government. Some of the questions include: should EPA expand the area subject to federal stormwater regulations into currently non-regulated areas; should EPA establish specific requirements to control stormwater discharges from new development and redevelopment; and should it establish different requirements for transportation facilities, set retrofit requirements on MS4s, and add additional provisions specific to the Chesapeake Bay.

## The Proposal

EPA is considering performance standards for discharges from new, existing and redeveloped areas by requiring Low Impact Development (LID) strategies in stormwater management. Primarily, it plans to focus on using bioretention techniques, permeable pavements, modified parking and street designs, and green roofs.

Some of the proposed options for expanding the current MS4 boundaries include: extending coverage to jurisdictional boundaries of the MS4 rather than using the urbanized boundary; extending

coverage to urbanized clusters, Metropolitan Statistical Areas and Metropolitan Planning Areas; regulating based on population or impervious cover threshold or watershed boundaries; regulating all MS4s but allowing states to exempt areas or require states to designate additional MS4s.

The EPA may also require MS4s to develop and implement a stormwater retrofit plan to include: a list of all "sensitive" waters;

identifying specifically where stormwater plays a large part in degradation and impairment of water quality; setting goals and milestones to reduce stormwater pollution; pinpointing priority projects that meet long-term goals such as redevelopment retrofits or routine repair and maintenance; and creating inducements for retrofits on private property.

As part of a formal consultation process with state and local

governments, EPA has asked for written input on the proposal prior to Jan. 22.

To read the original Federal Register Notice, which contains detailed information on the proposal, visit [www.epa.gov/npdes/regulations/fedreg\\_swmanagement.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/npdes/regulations/fedreg_swmanagement.pdf).

The agency's stormwater rule proposals are also available on NACo's website. Go to: [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org) ► Legislation and

Policy ► Learn About Policies and Committees ► Issue Areas Environment ► Featured Environment, Energy and Land Use Documents, or download the presentation at: [www.naco.org/stormwaterproposal](http://www.naco.org/stormwaterproposal).

Please send comments to: Connie Bosma, USEPA Headquarters, Ariel Rios Building, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Mail Code 4203M, Washington, DC 20460.

## New year, new norm for federal spending

By Mike Belarmino  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The start of the 112th Congress signaled the beginning of a new attitude in Washington towards federal spending, an attitude that was foreshadowed during discussions in the months leading up to last year's midterm elections.

Fiscal responsibility became buzzwords even before the appointment of the president's National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform last year. The widely accepted fact, with little disagreement from either side of the aisle, has been that the nation's fiscal house must be put in order. Just how to do that, however, is where the debate usually stalled. The commission's final recommendations, released last December and available at [www.fiscalcommission.gov](http://www.fiscalcommission.gov), provide a preview of where the discussion may head.

A scan of the commission's plan shows that all areas of federal spending were considered fair game, and it should come as no surprise that if fully implemented some of the recommendations could impact counties in a range of areas. For example, the suggestions under tax reform include the elimination of the tax exemption for new municipal bond issues. Long hailed

as an effective and low-cost means to finance projects, this suggested change could diminish counties' ability to invest in productive assets like roads, bridges, and water and sewer systems.

Another example would be the elimination of all congressional earmarks. This provision, however, has been suggested before and urged by others outside of the commission. Although some in Washington feel that the outright ban is long overdue, others feel reforming the process would be more appropriate. Their argument is that some earmarks support worthy projects that otherwise might not see the light of day in local communities without federal funding.

The commission also recommended capping discretionary spending through 2020. This

provision's impact could be widespread as funding in areas such as education, housing and law enforcement, among others, would see reductions in attempts to meet the spending limits. As a result, counties would have to continue enduring the current challenge of doing more with less since state and local economies are still struggling to recover.

It is still too early to know with certainty which provisions of the commission's plan will see new life in this Congress. Early indications show that the focus in the new Republican House majority will start with spending. Just this month, the House adopted its new rules package that changes budget enforcement mechanisms. One such change is a new "CUTGO" rule that requires any new mandatory spending be offset by mandatory

spending cuts alone as opposed to offsetting new tax cuts or mandatory spending increases with tax increases or mandatory spending cuts under PAYGO.

With belts already tightened, as the work in the 112th Congress picks up, counties may soon find themselves running out of belt holes on their belts as everyone adjusts to the new norm in federal spending.

## CountyNews

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**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

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**E-mail** | [cnws@naco.org](mailto:cnws@naco.org)

**Online address** | [www.countynews.org](http://www.countynews.org)

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## In Case You Missed It ... News to Use from Past County News

### ► Apply online for NACo's 2011 Achievement Awards

Applications for NACo's 2011 Achievement Awards are now available. The annual program is non-competitive and recognizes innovative county government programs.

Last year, more than 470 programs were recognized from 107 counties in 31 states. Deadline for application is Feb. 11.

For the 2011 application information, please visit [www.naco.org/achievementawards](http://www.naco.org/achievementawards).

### ► NACo-Nationwide Scholarship now accepting entries

This spring, four high school seniors will earn \$2,000 for college from the NACo-Nationwide Scholarship. Winning applicants will have written a short essay describing why it's important for a public-sector employee to start saving early for retirement. This is the sixth consecutive year Nationwide and NACo have teamed up to encourage high school seniors to think about retirement.

The application and essay entry must be submitted online no later than Jan. 31.

For more information, go to [www.naco.org/retirementscholarship](http://www.naco.org/retirementscholarship) or [www.nrsforu.com/scholarship](http://www.nrsforu.com/scholarship).

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# COUNTY GOVERNMENT WORKS

*An Initiative to Raise Awareness and Understanding of Counties*

## Student Government Day, innovative partnership for tomorrow's leaders

By MICHELLE GORMICAN THOMPSON  
WISCONSIN COUNTIES ASSOCIATION

Every March in Calumet County, Wis., a few things are certain: the damp and cold grasp of winter still holding on for a few more weeks, people itching for spring break somewhere warm, and students around the county taking part in an innovative Student Government Day program.

For this rural county of roughly 40,000, Student Government Day is a successful 40-year partnership between the Calumet County Board of Supervisors and the Calumet County American Legion Council.

"Every year we are struck with how little students know about county government and the role it plays in their lives," said Alice Connors, Calumet County supervisor and Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) immediate past president. "If we are to educate our

youth and prepare them for a role of service someday in the future, then we need to invest the time and resources today to ensure this happens."

Although there is one day at the courthouse, there are weeks of work in the schools leading up to the actual event educating students on all aspects of county government. This includes holding elections in the classrooms for county constitutional officers, and researching and discussing mock resolutions on topics such as texting and driving or no-smoking ordinances.

On the actual day, the students work with county supervisors who have volunteered to participate, and they go before a county committee to discuss the resolutions, learn about how the committee process works and even elect a chair and secretary of the committee.

Those County Board volunteers then take the students through the

committee process, and the students discuss the resolutions and take their own action. After that happens, the supervisors then set up a County Board format on that day, and the students, with the help of the supervisors, bring the resolutions forward, discuss them and then vote on them.

Once the County Board meeting is over, students then visit the offices of the constitutional officers and have a lunch with county supervisors, American Legion officials and student advisors. In the afternoon, the students then sit in on a court session, where they learn about the role of counties in operating the state's justice system and the process of a case going through the court. For the kids, some of

See COUNTY GOV page 5

## NACo Leadership Series webinars begin Feb. 2

Are you a new NACo member? Or beginning your first term of office in a NACo-member county? Perhaps you're a veteran who wants to find ideas that will help you engage your residents in discussions about decisions that face your county in 2011.

On Feb. 2, NACo's Training and Education Division launches the 2011 Web-based leadership series on citizen engagement with the first of a three-part program, Working Together for Lasting Solutions. The three webinars are designed to assist county officials as they strive to involve local residents in creating innovative solutions to emerging issues.

Citizen engagement begins by increasing civic understanding, a key initiative of NACo President Glen Whitley. The series continues on Feb. 9 and 16 with discussion and examples of tools that increase public participation and build effective leadership.

The series presenter is Trudy Rice, 2010-11 NACo Tabor Fellow on loan from Kansas State University Research and Extension. Rice will share her 25 years' experience in educating the public about county services, and applying tools and strategies that engage the public and diversify the base for county leadership. In preparing the series Rice said, "As a county government official, you most likely have noticed that not only are the demographics and financial

picture of your counties changing but, the way you get things done to provide needed services and regulate community activities is also being transformed.

"To get something done community leaders have to deal with more individuals and more groups, each with their own take on things. This can be viewed as a leadership challenge that can also be a source of creativity and strength," she said.

Plan now to join the series. You'll be able to participate from your own computer and telephone. NACo suggests inviting others from your county to join you in the series—either at your computer or at their own. By inviting others, you can continue the discussion of how you can work together to use these strategies in your own county.

NACo leadership webinars are available at no cost to elected and appointed officials in NACo-member counties. Using online software, participants are able to view the presentations from their own computers and hear the presenters using either the telephone or computer speakers. In 2010, more than 5,000 people attended one or more NACo webinars.

For more information on this series and links to registration pages, visit [www.naco.org/webinars](http://www.naco.org/webinars) or contact Amanda Odorimah, training and education associate, at [aodorimah@naco.org](mailto:aodorimah@naco.org) or 202.942.4225.



Photo courtesy of CSAC

California State Association of Counties President John Tavaglione addresses the media after CSAC's meeting with Gov. Jerry Brown (D). In background, from left, CSAC 1st Vice President Mike McGowan, Brown and CSAC Executive Director Paul McIntosh.

Brown met with CSAC leaders during his first full day in office. They discussed his plan for a broad restructuring of the relationship between the state and local governments.

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# County libraries see benefits in lending e-readers

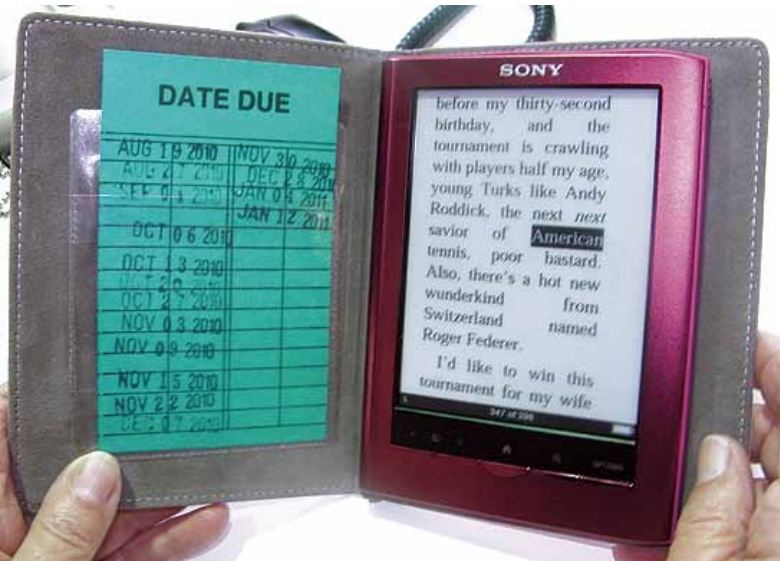
By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Want to read a good book? You could curl up in a nook at your local public library. Or you could check out a Nook — or other e-reader — from a growing number of county libraries, and take it home with you.

Loath to be Luddites, libraries in Grand County, Colo., Broward County, Fla. and Howard County, Md. have added e-readers to the list of items they circulate.

Librarians say they're keeping pace with their patrons' demands while also benefiting their bottom lines, according to Shelly Kilgas, director of technology for Grand County Library District.

"We benefit because it is more cost effective," she explained. One e-reader manufacturer she deals with allows libraries to purchase one copy of an e-book and load it on six devices.



The five Broward County, Fla. libraries that circulate e-readers, like the one pictured above, allow patrons to check them out for two weeks at a time.

In addition to lending hardware, county libraries nationwide are beefing up their e-collections of books that can be downloaded online or at the library. And they're training their staffs to help patrons with their personal e-book devices — Kindles, Kobos and Sony e-readers, in addition to Nooks.

"Our library patrons turn to us for new formats and for gaining the skills to use these new resources effectively," said Larra Clark, a spokeswoman for the American Library Association. "Nearly 90 percent of public libraries provide formal or informal technology training to patrons."

That's how Grand County Library District got into the e-reader game last year. "We brought in e-readers in February 2010, initially just to get our staff familiar with the

SpeedRead » » »

- » More libraries lending e-readers
- » E-reader clinics help patrons decide: check out an e-reader or buy
- » Libraries may provide other county documents on e-readers

devices that our customers might be utilizing," Kilgas said. "And then we decided we would do a pilot at one of our five branches." After a positive evaluation by customers, the district expanded the program to all five libraries last July.

Howard County Library began lending 60 Nook e-readers to card holders on Dec. 1. Broward County libraries began its pilot Dec. 8.

"Not only is it something that's new, but it has a direct link with libraries," said Frank Marin, head of audiovisual popular reading services at the Broward's North

The county's other 32 branches are not yet part of the program. The devices were purchased with a grant from the Broward Public Library Foundation, Marin said.

The e-readers circulate for two weeks — three weeks in Grand County — and typically are not immediately renewable, because the libraries have a backlog of customers waiting to check out the devices.

In Broward, and elsewhere, having a variety of e-readers available has enabled library patrons who might want to purchase their own to try out the technology.

Kilgas said, "Essentially, we thought of it as a try-before-you-buy model, knowing that before they make their investment they might want to see if they'd enjoy reading on an e-reader."

E-readers were one of the hottest Christmas gifts last month, and new owners have been eager to take advantage of related services offered by county libraries, said Maureen Karl, chief of materials and technology management, Arlington County, Va. Public Library. The library doesn't lend e-readers but rather focuses on content for all types of electronic devices. A recent e-reader training clinic was attended by about 80 people.

"Right before we did the e-reader clinic, we took a snapshot of how much of our collections were checked out," she said. "For the e-pubs, we are at 74 percent of the collection checked out. That compares to our print collections, our physical collections at 20 percent checked out at any one time. So there's really a growing demand for this."

Most of the e-readers that libraries lend are checked out preloaded with content, and patrons cannot add to that. Two of the devices that Broward's libraries circulate are password-protected, Marin said. For the Kindle, "people agree in writing to not buy anything on the device and to be responsible for the cost if they do," he added.

Thus far, library patrons have been kind to their Nooks and Kindles — "We didn't lose a single



Photo courtesy of Grand County, Colo. Library District  
(l-r) Laura Veenstra and Suzie Cruse, library service specialists at Grand County Library District's Fraser Valley (Colo.) Library, inspect one of the library's e-readers that patrons can check out.

one; we didn't have any major damage," Marin said, and Kilgas echoed the same experience.

While libraries have mostly focused on e-book content, e-readers also offer the potential of accessing other kinds of documents. All of the devices have the ability to read PDF files — presenting the possibility of libraries offering original content or other county documents, such as board agendas, which Kilgas said she is willing to consider.

Libraries see their foray into

e-readers as an evolutionary step, but don't think bound books will go extinct anytime soon.

"We don't see it as something that's going to replace what we have, because if you look at new technology people often talk about one thing replacing another," Marin said. "And the reality is that most often these things exist side by side. The movie theaters didn't go away when VCRs came along, and certainly we're always going to have books. I think there'll be new ways of accessing them."

## Just for Fun: Who Represents More?

Ninety-six freshmen representatives took the oath of office Jan. 5 in a historic shift of power in the U.S. House. Just for the record, each House member represents approximately 710,000 constituents. Many county leaders serve a far larger number of constituents and some serve just a fraction.

Here's a snapshot of the highs and lows of constituent numbers for county leaders.

|                     | State      | 2009 Population (Est.) | Number of County Districts | Average Number County Board Member Represents* |
|---------------------|------------|------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| 5 Largest Counties  |            |                        |                            |  |
| Los Angeles County  | California | 9,848,011              | 5                          | 1,969,602                                      |
| Cook County         | Illinois   | 5,287,037              | 17                         | 311,002  |
| Harris County       | Texas      | 4,070,989              | 4                          | 1,017,747                                      |
| Maricopa County     | Arizona    | 4,023,132              | 5                          | 804,626  |
| San Diego County    | California | 3,053,793              | 5                          | 610,759  |
| 5 Smallest Counties |            |                        |                            |  |
| Loving County       | Texas      | 45                     | 4                          | 11   |
| King County         | Texas      | 286                    | 4                          | 72   |
| Kenedy County       | Texas      | 369                    | 4                          | 92   |
| Arthur County       | Nebraska   | 339                    | 3                          | 113  |
| Petroleum County    | Montana    | 440                    | 3                          | 147  |

\*An average of 710,000 people live in each U.S. Congressional district

Source: NACo Research Division



County News invites Letters to the Editor

Do you have a compliment, complaint or different point of view?  
LET US KNOW.

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.



# Food safety overhaul becomes law

By Erik Johnston  
Associate Legislative Director

President Barack Obama signed a long-delayed overhaul of the nation's food safety regulations into law Jan. 4. The Food Safety Modernization Act, S.510, passed both the Senate and House in the waning days of the lame duck session of Congress after Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.), who had threatened to filibuster the bill in November, dropped his objections at the last minute.

The law will give the Food and Drug Administration authority to recall tainted products, increase inspections of imported food and all food processors, and require producers to follow stricter standards for keeping food safe. NACo does not have policy on the overall law, but did work to support inclusion of key provisions.

NACo supported provisions that help to strengthen local, state and

federal partnerships by creating a working group on foodborne illness surveillance, and requiring the Department of Health and Human Services to develop and implement strategies to enhance the food safety and defense capacities of public health agencies. NACo also advocated for the law's provisions that strengthen federal authority to improve the safety of imported food.

Full implementation of the law is contingent upon funding from congressional appropriators. Congress will need to appropriate \$1.4 billion over five years for the FDA to fully implement the law, and senior Republican appropriators in the House have already expressed their opposition to full funding.

NACo will work to support full funding of the provisions which bolster inspections of imported foods and authorize grants to states, county and city health departments, and Indian tribes to enhance food safety.

# New kidney gives county commissioner boost of health

By Charlie Ban  
Staff Writer

Cook County Commissioner Robert Steele's malfunctioning kidneys took their toll over the years. The fluid trapped in his body made movement a chore and greatly limited him. Two years of dialysis treatments drained his schedule faster than it drained his body. His 27-year struggle with Type 2 diabetes was exhausting him.

"I was carrying around 50 pounds of useless fluid," he said. "I couldn't drive myself around, and I might be able to do more than one event a day if I got lucky. It wasn't the way I wanted to represent my district."

That all changed in November after his sister, Joyce Mosely, donated one of her kidneys to Steele. Doctors tested his six siblings for a match, and on the last try found one in Joyce.

"I was lucky that I had my family nearby," said Steele, 47, a Chicago native. "So many people who live in Cook County don't have local family; that's just the nature of a city like Chicago."

That experience made Steele aware of the need for organ donation program awareness. Illinois currently has more than 5,000 people on its organ donation waiting list, and Steele sees that as an opportunity to make Chicago, and Cook County in general, a hotbed for organ matchups, drawing specifically from Wisconsin and Indiana.

"The best thing people can do is get on a donor list and have themselves screened," he said. "That could be for just their blood type or their bone marrow, because those registries work wonders."

Also, signing up as an organ donor can benefit many, because organs from one person can go to up to seven people on transplant lists.

"That's the opportunity to be a real hero," Steele said. "Either registering as an organ donor or even doing a live donation. It's scary to do that — give up a part of yourself or pledge to do so when you die — but it can make a difference for a lot of people. I hope to use my public profile to show what an organ donation can do for recipients' quality of life."



Photo courtesy of Robert Steele

Cook County, Ill. Commissioner Robert Steele and his sister, Joyce Mosely, whose kidney donation relieved his body of years of Type 2 diabetes and kidney failure, and has allowed him to resume an aggressive work schedule.

## Profiles in Service



» John Sandoval

Board Member  
Commissioner  
Conejos County, Colo.

**Number of years active in NACo:** 4

**Years in public service:** 16

**Occupation:** Marketing associate for Sysco

**Education:** High school diploma

**The hardest thing I've ever done:** pack an Elk several miles out of a wilderness area with no pack.

**Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner:** Larry the Cable Guy, Julius Caesar, King Tut

**A dream I have is to:** cure autism.

**You'd be surprised to learn that I:** played in a band at age 11.

**The most adventurous thing I've ever done is:** entered and finished a 35-mile pack burro race.

**My favorite way to relax is:** playing Texas Hold 'em.

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

**Every morning I read:** *The Wall Street Journal*.

**My favorite meal is:** Elk steak fajitas (wilderness elk).

**My pet peeve is:** people who roll their eyes while you talk to them.

**My motto is:** "The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few."

**The last book I read was:** *Of Mice and Men*.

**My favorite movie is:** *The Wizard of Oz*.

**My favorite music is:** Mostly country; favorite band is Nickelback.

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

## Camulet County, Wis. pairs students with American Legion members

COUNTY GOV from page 3

the cases that involve speeding or drunk driving could have a deterrent effect.

"Our target audience is high school juniors and seniors, as well as international exchange students," Connors said. "Each year, about 50 students participate in this program, as well as faculty advisors, county supervisors that volunteer to attend and America Legion representatives. The feedback we receive is tremendous, and you can see a light coming on in these kids."

Connors believes the project is successful because there is open communication between the American Legion, Calumet County and the schools. In addition, the program is held every year at the same time and location, so county and school staff, as well as students, plan for it.

"This program continues year after year because it works," she said. "It has been successful

because it gets students learning about county government in the classroom, and then gives them an opportunity to put what they've learned into action before a real county board. They are given the unique chance to see how government works first hand.

Funding is always a concern for the event, but it is our hope to see this valuable program continue for many, many years."

During her term as president, as well as during her years of service to the Calumet County Board, Connors has been a strong advocate of educating and engaging youth.

"Students need to be educated on the role of government, get involved and ultimately make their community a better place," she said. "They are our future and this program is just one way we can ensure today's kids are tomorrow's leaders."

To learn more about the Student Government Day program, contact Connors at [acnrs@frontiernet.net](mailto:acnrs@frontiernet.net).

Keep up with NACo online ...

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



# New NCGM Award to recognize counties that celebrate best

NCGM from page 1

a carefully planned and executed celebration of National County Government Month (NCGM) in April.

And this year, for the first time, there is an incentive program to reward counties for the best NCGM celebration. But first things first.

This year's NCGM theme is "Serving Our Veterans, Armed Forces and Their Families." It is an important and timely theme as more veterans, military service members and their families turn to their county government for services and help.

Counties should try to link activities to this theme by recognizing, honoring and thanking veterans and military personnel for their service. A booklet filled with specific ideas to consider is being mailed to every member county and is available on the NACo website.

Since 1991, NACo has encour-

aged counties to actively promote county government services and programs. Formerly National County Government Week, the designation was expanded to a full month to offer counties more opportunities to participate.

Popular events include holding public tours of county facilities; talking to students, community organizations and business leaders about county programs and services; holding essay and art contests; and sponsoring County Family Day events on the courthouse grounds. Counties can hold media events, write newspaper columns, or appear on local TV and radio shows. The key is to find effective ways to discuss new county services and programs, highlight existing ones, or otherwise explain the roles and responsibilities of county government.

A new feature this year of NCGM is the National County Government Month Award. The

NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT MONTH



purpose of the award program is to encourage counties to participate in NCGM and to recognize those counties that sponsor outstanding programs to educate residents about county government during the month of April.

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, 2011 to be eligible for the competition.

NACo President Glen Whitley noted that his presidential initiative—County Government Works—calls on NACo member counties to raise public awareness about counties throughout his term as president. He said he is excited about this year's NCGM theme: Serving Our Veterans, Armed Forces and Their Families.

"In addition to my County Government Works initiative, I have created a Veterans and Military Service Task Force to encourage NACo members to develop and highlight best practices and to promote innovative programs, services and benefits for our heroes," Whitley said.

"Counties should do what they can to meet the diverse needs of our veterans and work hard to help service members and families successfully transition after deployment. I encourage all county officials to

learn more about the activities and initiatives of our new task force and work them into your National County Government Month plans."

NCGM activities do not have to be limited to specific veterans services. You can highlight programs that assist seniors, disabled persons and low-income families by pointing out that veterans and military families are being helped by these programs every day.

Does your county participate in the NACo Prescription Discount Card Program? If so, why not visit community centers and hold public events highlighting the success of the program? Tout the total money saved and how easy it is for residents to obtain and use the free discount cards. NACo can provide you with the specific statistics from your county in terms of money saved and the number of prescriptions filled.

Regardless of your county's approach, the best plan is to plan ahead. Review the NCGM planning booklet, form a county planning committee and get started today.

NACo wants to know what activities and programs you have planned for NCGM. NACo will share this information with other counties to help them have a successful celebration.

Send your activities to Jim Philipps via fax at 202.393.2630 or e-mail at [jphilipps@naco.org](mailto:jphilipps@naco.org).

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

## ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS • 2011

**Last year, more than 470 programs were recognized from 107 counties in 31 states. Apply today for this year's Achievement Award program and put your county's innovations in the spotlight.**

The Achievement Award program provides a way for counties to recognize not only innovative programs, but also the dedicated employees who make these programs successful.

The annual program is non-competitive and recognizes innovative county government programs. Since it is not competitive, each submission is judged on its own merits based on the criteria outlined in the application information.

**For more information including the 2011 application instructions, please visit [www.naco.org/achievementawards](http://www.naco.org/achievementawards).**

**All applications and materials must be postmarked by Feb. 11, 2011.**

## Feds, like localities, must pay stormwater fees

STORMWATER from page 1

approximately \$300,000 each from federal installations, generally post offices, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Health and Human Resources buildings. In Seattle, it's \$1.6 million.

The bill, S. 3481, cosponsored by Sens. Ben Cardin (D-Md.) and James Inhofe (R-Okla.), unanimously passed in both the Senate and the House. The new law makes it clear that the federal government is responsible for paying stormwater fees. It goes on to state that stormwater fees are "reasonable service charges," and not a tax.

On passage of the bill, Cardin said, "At stake has been a fundamental issue of equity: polluters should be financially responsible for the pollution that they cause, including the federal government."

The federal government mandates that local governments manage stormwater runoff and

preserve surface water quality through the Clean Water Act, particularly through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting process and the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program. To secure adequate funding to address these mandates, more than 400 stormwater utilities have been formed throughout the United States.

A stormwater utility is funded by user fees, with a rate structure designed so that all property owners, including those that are tax-exempt, pay a fee based on the relative amount of stormwater runoff they put into a public storm drainage system. The amount is based on a calculation of the amount of impervious area on the property.

Stormwater fees are essential to maintain and upgrade the infrastructure needed to meet federal mandates while reducing polluted stormwater runoff.



# EPA seeks to delay ozone, boiler emissions rules

By JULIE UFFNER  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is turning to the courts for help in postponing the publication of two new rules due out this month. Both rules, about ozone levels and boiler emissions, could have a broad impact on counties.

## Boiler Rule

In a motion filed Dec. 7, EPA asked the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to extend final publication on upcoming emission standard rules for existing and new industrial, commercial and

institutional boilers until April 2012. Currently, the EPA is under a court-ordered deadline to produce a final rule by Jan. 16, 2011.

The proposed rule, first published in April 2010, set a tight timetable to reduce emissions such as mercury, particulate matter (PM) and carbon monoxide (CO) from boilers. It established emission standards based on boiler size, design (what type of fuel it burns) and age.

As proposed, it could have a significant impact on local governments that use boilers or process heaters to produce electricity or heat. It would affect boilers used

in county buildings such as courthouses, jails, schools, hospitals, clinics or other institutions that use natural gas, fuel oil, coal or biomass.

EPA received more than 4,800 public comments on the proposed boiler rule, including information about available emissions-control technologies. Based on these comments, EPA believes it needs more time to completely redraft the rules based on the information received.

As of press time, the court has not announced its decision.

## Ozone Rule

One day later, EPA submitted a

request to the same court to delay the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) ozone rule. This is the third time EPA has requested an extension. In January 2010, it proposed to change the current primary ozone standard of 75 parts per billion (ppb) to a range of 60–70 ppb. The rule was to be finalized in August 2010, however, EPA asked for another extension, pushing the decision into December 2010. If the extension is granted, the ozone rule will be issued in July 2011.

Approximately 650 rural and urban counties would be considered in non-attainment under the proposed standards. Most of the responsibility for implementing the new standards would fall on state and local governments who are responsible for developing air quality plans and implementing

strategies to meet the new federally set goals.

Ozone, a key component of smog, is blamed for increased health care costs for bronchitis, acute asthma, hospital and emergency room visits, non-fatal heart attacks and premature deaths. Ozone is primarily created through emissions from cars, power plants, industrial facilities, electric utilities and other sources. Since both sunlight and hot weather precipitate its formation, ozone is known as primarily a summer pollutant. Both urban and rural areas can have high levels of ozone due to airborne transport of pollutants from hundreds of miles away.

In its extension request to the courts, the EPA stated it needs additional time to consult with its scientific advisors before proposing a final rule.

No decision has been made.

## The Bet: Tarrant vs. Dane

When the Texas Christian University's Horned Frogs and the University of Wisconsin Badgers football teams locked horns on New Year's Day in the 97th Rose Bowl game in Pasadena, Calif., there was a little something extra riding on the game.

NACo President Glen Whitley and Dane County Executive Scott McDonell made a small friendly wager on the outcome of the game between the Frog from Tarrant County and the Badger from Dane.

The county leader whose team lost the Rose Bowl had to wear the winning team's shirt the next time county officials met and also ship out one case of beer to boot.

Whitley said he was confident the Badger couldn't beat the Frog, and the 21–19 score proved him right.



Photo courtesy of Tarrant County, Texas

On TCU's campus, NACo President Glen Whitley (l) shows off the Rose Bowl Champion's jersey and TCU's famed Horned Frog mascot.



Photo by Josh Wescott

Dane County, Wis. Board of Supervisors make a "W" with their hands as County Executive Scott McDonell in a purple TCU shirt tries his best to make an impersonation of TCU's Horned Frog mascot.

By wearing a TCU jersey at his board meeting, McDonell fulfilled the terms of his wager with Tarrant County, Texas Judge and NACo President Glen Whitley.

And, despite their loss, the Badgers still held onto their Dane County Board fans, who surprised McDonell at their meeting by proudly wearing their Wisconsin Badgers red and white!

## Federal grants to help in pipeline safety efforts

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Administration (PHMSA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation is accepting applications for Technical Assistance Grants (TAG) from Jan. 3 through Feb. 28.

The TAG program is designed to provide funding to communities and nonprofit groups for engineering or other scientific analysis of natural gas and hazardous liquid pipeline safety issues.

The funding can also be used to help promote public participation in official proceedings pertaining to pipeline safety. The maximum

award for a single grantee is \$50,000, and a total of \$1 million is available.

To learn more about the TAG program, visit <http://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/comm/DamagePreventionGrantsToStates.htm>. To sign up to receive an e-mail notice when the TAG solicitation is published, go to [www.grants.gov/search/subscribeAdvanced.do](http://www.grants.gov/search/subscribeAdvanced.do) and enter your e-mail address and CFDA Number 20.710.

For more information, contact Sam Hall, TAG program manager for PHMSA, at [sam.hall@dot.gov](mailto:sam.hall@dot.gov).

## NACo gears up public safety and congestion project

In December 2010, NACo was awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Motorola Foundation to help counties address traffic congestion and safety challenges. Congestion is influenced not only by the season of the year, the day of the week and the time of day, but also by inclement weather, work zones, traffic incidents, or other non-recurring events.

NACo, with support from the Motorola Foundation, will work to build county capacity in addressing traffic congestion and safety. Through a series of workshops, forums, webinars and fact sheets, NACo will present tools and resources counties can use to reduce the impacts of congestion on their residents. Program areas for the new project include: employer-implemented tools to reduce rush-hour congestion, incident management, and peripheral impacts of congestion-reduction programs on local roads.

If congestion and road safety are significant problems in your county and you are interested in more information about the project, please contact James Davenport at [jdavenport@naco.org](mailto:jdavenport@naco.org) or 202.661.8807.



## Financial Services News

# Texas, Colorado Counties to Install Network of Care for Returning Troops

Tarrant County, Texas and the Pikes Peak region of Colorado recently selected the Network of Care to be a critical resource for military service members returning from war or other service to the country. They join counties in California, Maryland and Oregon that have already installed Network of Care Military Service sites. The Network of Care is a project of NACo in partnership with Trilogy Integrated Resources.

The Network of Care meets the counties' desires to provide service members and their families with critical, comprehensive information to help them reintegrate into their communities upon return from active duty. The site uses advanced Internet communication technology to deliver community-based Web portals that integrate and share virtually all pertinent information from federal agencies and organizations, state and local services, along with a wide variety of interactive functionality for education and networking. Website features are accessible by professionals who are service providers to military members and their families.

Tarrant County will become the first county in Texas to install the Network of Care for Service Members.

"We are excited to bring this groundbreaking, Web-based program to our citizens," said Glen Whitley, Tarrant County judge and NACo president. "This is a terrific way to help our new generation of men and women veterans returning home from war. With the Network of Care, all resources can be put in a single, local place, which makes it easy for veterans and their families to find what they need."

The Network of Care provides a user-friendly service directory that can search all services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense, National Guard, the state, the county, local service providers and local grassroots organizations. It also features a continuously updated jobs board for all government, Fortune 1000

companies, and veterans-preferred job openings.

In addition, it provides access to crisis intervention and emergency services including all emergency shelters. A sophisticated reintegration and outreach e-mail platform has been developed to incorporate the Network of Care tools for direct, personal outreach to military personnel returning from deployment.

The Pikes Peak area will also be the first region in Colorado to install the Network of Care for Service Members.



"The Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments is pleased to develop this for the Pikes Peak Region," said Robert MacDonald, executive director. "Developing a primary

point of entry for our active-duty service members, veterans and family members is one of the highest priority recommendations of the Fort Carson regional growth plan." PPACG represents 16 municipal and county governments, including El Paso and Teller counties, and parts of Pueblo and Fremont counties.

The Network of Care was also selected by Fairfax County, Va. through a nationally solicited competitive bid process. The NACo contract is available immediately

and most public agencies can "piggyback" on this contract, eliminating the need to bid for the services themselves.

For more information about the Network of Care for Military Service, Veterans and their Families, please visit <http://veterans.trilogyr.com> or contact Jim Sawyer, NACo Financial Services Corporation, at 202.661.8868 or [jsawyer@naco.org](mailto:jsawyer@naco.org).

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

## Arizona shootings strike close to home for local pols

**TUCSON** from page 1

during which Gov. Jan Brewer (R) postponed her state of the state speech to talk about the shootings.

"The only thing we can do is maintain decorum and civil discourse, and remember the place for civility in any of our disagreements," Stapley said. "We should avoid inflaming rhetoric that excites people who are close to the edge, though she (Giffords) was among the most upbeat and peaceful people I have known. It has become clear this man did not care about life because he took all that he could." Six people were killed in the rampage and 14 injured.

Manuel Ruiz, chairman, Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, has worked with Giffords, who represents a portion of his county.

"It really puts into question the security of our elected officials whether they're on the federal level or a local level," he said of the shootings.

He characterized the most recent political cycle in Arizona as "very dirty." "The nastiness was there; I just hated to turn on the TV...."

"I know that Ms. Palin's website has been mentioned — the crosshairs. Did that have anything to do with it? I don't know."

When Pinal County Board of Supervisors Chair Pete Rios heard about the shootings, the incident hit him especially hard. He worked with Giffords in the Arizona State Senate for nearly four years before she stepped down to run for Congress.

"It hit me like a ton of bricks," Rios said. "I was concerned for everyone, but to hear that one of your friends was shot in the head sends chills of shock and disbelief."

It also brought back memories from his 20 years as state senator. While serving as president of the State Senate in 1988, televised hearings were held on members who were being charged with bribery along with the impeachment of Gov. Evan Mecham.

"I remember receiving death threats saying they didn't like the questions I asked and that we had no right impeaching the governor they elected," Rios said.

Coconino County Board of Supervisors Chair Liz Archuleta often holds town hall-style meetings in rural Arizona fire stations. She encounters impassioned people and strong opinions all the time, which gives her pause to think about security when controversial topics are discussed.

"We can honor the victims by asking ourselves if we can do anything differently when addressing a contentious topic," she said. "I don't want to see this county move toward running the risk of violent retaliation whenever you say anything, but we have to take individual responsibility to make sure we're not contributing to increased polarization."

Two of Giffords' colleagues in Congress, from neighboring districts, are former Arizona county supervisors. Rep. Ed Pastor (D) was a Maricopa County supervisor from 1979 to 1991. Rep. Raul Grijalva (D) served on the Pima County board from 1989 to 2002.

Grijalva's office is handling constituent relations for Giffords' office while she is incapacitated. He, too, has been touched by violence and threatening language.

Last April, an enraged man called Grijalva's Tucson office, brimming with anger over immigration. The caller said he was going to "come down there and blow the brains out" of the congressman and his staff, an aide later recalled, according to *Newsweek*. In July, someone shot out the window of his office in Yuma.

In a recent statement, Grijalva called the Tucson melee "a tragedy for Arizona, our nation, and our democracy," adding that Giffords "never let fear or intimidation prevent her from serving the people of Arizona."

Arizona elected officials expect there to be ongoing heated disagreements in the political sphere — it's the Arizona way. But Rios is hopeful that something good can come of this tragedy.

"We have had many issues as of late, such as immigration, that have divided us," he said. "Just yesterday, I was at the Governor's State of the State Address, and a lot of people had dropped negative rhetoric, were reaching across the aisle, hugging and being civil. I know all of this won't last, but I am hoping some of it will."

## Broward County considers increased security measures

In response to the Tucson shootings, Broward County, Fla. commissioners are considering options to increase security at the Broward County Governmental Center and possibly other county government buildings.

"We've had some very angry people pass through these doors," Commissioner Stacy Ritter said at a board meeting days after the shootings in Arizona. "I would like to look into installing a metal detector at the entrance. I think it would give us a little bit more of a comfort level. I don't think it would do anyone any harm."

Vice-Mayor John Rodstrom directed county staff to explore cost-effective security options and report back to the Board of County Commissioners.

"As elected officials, we make decisions and at times we aggravate people," he said. "I would like to look at a variety of security options that would not be too expensive, but would better protect us and the public."



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# Model Programs

## FROM THE NATION'S COUNTIES

### Clark County, Nevada

## Amnesty Program Raises Awareness of Building Permit Laws

By CHARLIE BAN  
STAFF WRITER

What seems like a victimless crime, doing home improvements without a building permit, actually ends up hurting homeowners.

Whether unpermitted work ends up reducing insurance reimbursements or ruining home sale deals when home inspections reveal such work, the trouble usually is not worth the shortcut, and Clark County, Nev. saw this as a teachable moment.

The county development services office took that opportunity to, aside from enforce development laws on violators, hammer home the importance of proper building permits for residential projects.

"It was clear that our building permit process was not user-friendly," said Clark County Development Services spokeswoman

Dawn Rivard. "We had to make it easier for folks who weren't professionally familiar with building codes and processes to obtain a permit."

The first effort, the "Got Permits? Protect Your Home Improvements" campaign, included English and Spanish radio and TV public service announcements, brochures, websites and flyers and an "Ask an Inspector" booth that appears at home shows and community events.

"Contractors should know when to get a permit, but it's more difficult for homeowners to navigate the system, especially if they think they're just doing a small project, like a patio cover," Rivard said.

Although the program tried to educate homeowners about when permits and inspections were required, the process for obtaining them, and the protective benefits they provide for families and homes, the organizers were skeptical it

would have an impact. So, they took a turn for the pseudo-controversial.

The word "amnesty" carries a lot of weight, especially as a hot-button issue in immigration law reform. By applying an amnesty program to the building codes enforcement program, Rivard said the department hoped to get a public relations boost.

"Without the amnesty program, we would have had to pay for advertisements all over the place to place 'Got Permits?' where people would see the materials," Rivard said. "It was great for free publicity."

It wasn't all a ploy. Although the county had no legal obligation to offer building permit amnesty, doing so would help protect the value of homes in the county and their residents' safety.

Thomas Austin, a residential designer interviewed for KLAS TV's coverage of the amnesty program, confirmed the importance

of getting permits for viewers. He said, "People do complete remodels on their home without any correct permitting and no inspections done and they wonder why their wall catches fire. It decreases the value of the home. It's got poor resale. It's just important to do it right the first time."

Though the county waived penalty fees for unpermitted work between June 2 and Sept. 2, 2009, homeowners still had to prove to Development Services plan examiners and inspectors that the unpermitted renovations met the county's building codes before a permit was issued, the inspections were performed, and the project was legalized.

The amnesty ploy worked, bringing in a total of 116 amnesty requests for unpermitted work. Over the same 90-day period in 2008, 51 permits were issued for previously unpermitted work.

Though building permit amnesty was not a revenue generator, it was not meant to be. Though the program meant forfeiting fees, the program helped keep the county's property records up to date, for the most part increasing home values, which will be reflected in property taxes.

"It worked, because it got people's attention, whether they thought they were sneaking around the system or just were unaware they had to have a permit for a particular project," Rivard said.

*(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](http://www.naco.org) ► Resource Library ► Model County Programs.)*

## Research News

# A New Year Brings New Rules

It is a new year with new U.S. senators, representatives, governors, state representatives and local elected officials all taking office, most of them in January. In addition to the change in governing officials, 45 states and the District of Columbia have changed many existing laws or enacted new laws that are going into effect this month. A sampling of the new laws reflects a response to recent trends and activities.

Hawaii, New York, Massachusetts and Texas enacted new laws that impose penalties, fines or jail sentences of up to a year for those who impersonate others on the Internet, and more specifically through social networking sites. Illinois moved to change the penalties for "sexting" pictures of a minor by another minor to avoid the charge of child pornography which carries a stiffer penalty. Illinois also created a law making it a crime to sexually exploit children via Internet chat rooms or online cameras for the purpose of sex with a child.

California went a bit further with its impersonation laws saying that "malicious, credible impersonation

through a website, e-mail account or social media" is a crime punishable by up to a \$1,000 fine and a year in county jail. This new law also makes "harming, intimidating, threatening or defrauding another person online" a misdemeanor.

Arizona has new legislation that creates individual and corporate income tax credits tied to the amount of electricity generated from renewable sources. These sources include wind, biomass and solar. A facility can claim up to \$2 million a year for a maximum of 10 years with a cap on total annual distribution to all facilities of \$20 million.

Montana's new legislation affects payday lenders by limiting the interest rates and fees they can charge. The new rate cap is 36 percent annually. The legislation also prohibits lenders from structuring transactions with the intent of avoiding the rate limit.

In light of recent statements from the Governmental Accounting Standards Board requiring governments to show pensions and "other post-employment benefits" in their annual accounting statements and

the realization that many governments have promised more than they can realistically pay, several states have changed the laws in this area.

Missouri now requires that all members of certain state pension systems make a mandatory pretax contribution of 4 percent of their salaries if hired after Jan. 1. There was no previous contribution required from employees.

Pennsylvania made changes to the public school employees' and state employees' retirement programs for new employees. All new members will belong to a shared-risk defined benefit plan, and employee contributions will be based on the available funding.

Illinois' new law affects all state-wide pension plans by increasing the age for retirement to 67, reducing the cost-of-living adjustment for retirees and requiring a longer period of service before becoming eligible to retire.

In Colorado, teachers and government employees with less than five years of service saw a higher retirement age and a longer service

requirement for eligibility to retire. In Michigan, new laws prohibit retirees from electing additional health coverage other than what is provided by the state Civil Service Commission. If the employees do select alternative retiree health coverage, they are required to pay the full cost themselves.

Delaware banned hand-held phones and text messaging for all for drivers, and Kansas banned texting while driving, imposing a \$60 fine for each violation. Kentucky also banned texting while driving, imposing a \$25 fine for the first offense and a \$50 fine for each additional offense. Drivers under 18 are also prohibited from cell phone use while driving.

Minors in Louisiana will now be required to complete 50 hours of supervised time driving before they can receive their driver's license. Fifteen hours of this time must be nighttime driving. The law also restricts minors from driving between the hours of 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Alaska enacted a law that extends foster care benefits and

supports children who have passed the age of 18, at which time federal support ends. This new law allows continued state custody for those who become homeless because of the federal termination of benefits, and allows them to continue school or other training that will prepare them to live independently.

California enacted a truancy law that applies to parents of K-8 school children who miss more than 10 percent of the school year's classes without a valid excuse. The parents can be charged with a misdemeanor, a \$2,000 fine or up to one year in jail. The state also enacted a law providing an electronic monitoring program as an alternative to incarceration for female inmates, pregnant inmates or primary caregivers of children. To be eligible, the inmates must participate in specific rehabilitative programs such as substance abuse treatment.

*(Information for this article was taken from [www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org). Research News was written by Jacqueline Byers, director of research and outreach.)*





## News From the Nation's Counties

### ► CALIFORNIA

The **MARIN COUNTY** Board of Supervisors approved a one-year moratorium on the installation of Pacific Gas and Electric Co.'s **SmartMeters** in unincorporated areas of the county.

"It's a way for us to tell PG&E that we want you to stop implementing this until the risks are better known, and it's a way to tell our citizens that we hear them," Supervisor Charles McGlashan said.

Opponents consider the meters' wireless radiation a health risk. They also question the meters' accuracy and say the devices collect too much personal information.

Although other local governments have tried to ban SmartMeters, authority to stop their installation rests with the California Public Utilities Commission. Growing opposition to the meters prompted an incident in December in which two women were arrested for blocking a caravan of meter installation trucks, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

### ► FLORIDA

**MANATEE COUNTY** commissioners extended an emergency ordinance preventing the proliferation of and regulating existing "illegitimate pain clinics" in the county. An earlier,

almost identical ordinance passed in June 2010.

County Attorney Jim Mannix said if no state ordinance is passed by the Florida Legislature, the emergency ordinance in place would still regulate permitting of these pain management clinics within Manatee County, the *Bradenton Times* reported.

A county medical examiner's report showed that deaths due to abuse of the pain-killing drug Oxycodone have risen more than 25 percent over last year at this time.

### ► IDAHO

**CASSIA COUNTY** will fund half the cost of **10 sets of body armor** for officers at the Mini-Cassia jail. A grant from the Sheriff's Office will pay the other half.

Mini-Cassia Criminal Justice Center Deputy Director Russ Rasmussen said the county sheriff and retired Jail Director Rob Neiwert were concerned about officer safety during inmate transfers, the *Times-News* reported.

"We carry weapons, and we're out there in the public and can be shot at as easily as anyone from the Sheriff's Office," Rasmussen said.

### ► MARYLAND

**BALTIMORE COUNTY** will consolidate several departments

and eliminate more than 140 positions in an attempt to save about \$8 million.

County Executive Kevin Kamenetz' plan calls for folding the community conservation, sustainability and workforce development offices into existing departments, combining the jobs of labor commissioner and human resources director, and merging the duties of three other positions into an Office of Administrative Law.

The plan would cut four department head positions and 143 vacant jobs will not be filled, *The Baltimore Sun* reported.

### ► MICHIGAN

• **OGEMAW COUNTY** Road Commissioner Mark Williams has patented a design for a mailbox post containing a spring that will survive winters with close-driving snow plows and trucks.

He told ABC12 he came up with the idea for the **Rebounding Mailbox Post** after hearing countless complaints as a road commissioner and after trying to repair his own damaged mailbox during the winter.

• **OTTAWA COUNTY** is now staffing a part-time position in its formerly vacant **Department of Veterans Affairs**.

A \$25,000 allocation will hire an administrator to help the more than 16,583 veterans in the county to register for government benefits.

Ottawa currently ranks last among Michigan's 83 counties in terms of federal benefits received per veteran, at less than \$1,800, the *Grand Rapids Press* reported.

### ► NEW JERSEY

**GLOUCESTER COUNTY** Freeholder Director Robert M. Damming is calling for all part-time elected officials and certain board appointees to **give up medical coverage** by the end of the year.

"Public service is about service, not about benefits. This is the right thing to do and the right time to do it," he said.

According to county spokesperson Debra Sellitto, 21 of the 30 eligible for coverage take advantage of the benefit, including two freeholders, according to *nj.com*.

"I want the people of Gloucester County to know that we put our residents first, not ourselves," Damming said.

### ► NEW YORK

• Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) reached across party lines to appoint **MONROE COUNTY**

Executive Maggie Brooks (R) to his Mandate Relief Redesign Team.

A frequent critic of **unfunded mandates**, Brooks recently said 82 percent of county spending is mandated by the state.

"We all have been telling the governor a property tax cap is a great first step," she told the *Democrat and Chronicle*, adding that reducing mandates is an important way to "really reduce" costs.

• **SENECA and CAYUGA counties** have begun foreclosure proceedings against the Cayuga (Indian) Nation of New York to collect **delinquent property taxes** owed by the tribe, *The Citizen* reported.

The tribe has until June to pay more than \$60,000 in property taxes owed to Cayuga County since 2008 on five properties, according to Cayuga County Attorney Fred Westphal. Otherwise, the county will seek to have the properties foreclosed upon and auctioned off.

The amount of money owed Seneca County was not available.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral arguments on Feb. 23 in a case involving whether nearby **MADISON COUNTY** can foreclose on Oneida Nation property.

• A **gunshot detection system** will be deployed across a 2-square-mile area of **SUFFOLK COUNTY** in March and could be expanded to other parts of the county plagued by gun violence, County Executive Steve Levy said.

The \$450,000 pilot program, approved by the County Legislature and Levy, will use the same proprietary ShotSpotter system that neighboring **NASSAU COUNTY** uses, according to *Newsday*.

The system places highly advanced microphones in densely populated areas. It "listens" for the sound of gunfire and immediately reports its location to the police. Legislator Jon Cooper championed the measure.

### ► NORTH CAROLINA

A proposed **public gun range** in **CLEVELAND COUNTY** could create new recreational opportunities, spur economic development and teach gun safety to area children, *The Star* reported.

"We need it so we can teach the kids the safe and proper way to handle weapons," said Johnny Hutchins, chairman of the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners.

The proposed site is located at a new county landfill. Hutchins

said it could include a pistol range, 250-yard rifle range and skeet range.

### ► UTAH

Dog breeders don't like it, but the **SALT LAKE COUNTY** Council recently passed the state's first **ordinance regulating "puppy mills,"** according to *The Deseret News* reported.

The "volume dog breeders" ordinance requires anyone in unincorporated parts of the county to obtain an annual license if they breed more than one litter of dogs per year.

It also prohibits anyone's obtaining a license if they've been convicted of an animal cruelty charge within five years of seeking a permit.

### ► WASHINGTON

**KITSAP COUNTY** commissioners recently passed an emergency ordinance that allows for a range of **temporary housing for the homeless**, including tent camps that could accommodate up to 75 people.

The ordinance will be in place for a year; however, it will be reviewed by county officials, social service agencies and faith-based organizations after this year's severe weather season, the *Kitsap Sun* reported.

Under the ordinance, permits also may be granted for a single RV located on private property. It also allows establishment of a "safe park" area with up to six vehicles or RVs used to shelter individuals or families.

### ► CONGRATULATIONS...

Two county librarians are among 10 winners of this year's *I Love My Librarian Awards*, presented by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and *The New York Times*. More than 2,000 librarians were nominated nationwide.

Paul Clark of the **CLAY COUNTY** (Fla.) Library System was recognized for his advocacy for library funding at the State Legislature. Melissa McCollum, a **LOS ANGELES COUNTY** librarian, was honored, in part, for her work to secure grants to preserve library programming.

Each of the winners received a \$5,000 cash award and was honored at a ceremony and reception in New York last month hosted by *The Times*.

(*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 [cban@naco.org](mailto:cban@naco.org).)

## What's in a Seal?

### » Coconino County, Ariz.

[www.coconino.az.gov](http://www.coconino.az.gov)



After the building of the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad in 1883, the region of northern Yavapai County, Ariz. began experiencing rapid growth. The people of the northern reaches had tired of the rigors of travelling all the way to Prescott for county business. They also believed that they were a significant enough entity that they should have their own county jurisdiction. Therefore, they decided in 1887 to petition for secession from Yavapai and create a new Frisco County. They remained part of Yavapai, however, until 1891 when Coconino County was formed and its seat declared to be Flagstaff.

Coconino County contains Grand Canyon National Park, the Havasupai, and parts of the Navajo, Hualapai and Hopi nations. It takes its name from *Cosnino*, a name applied to the Havasupai.

Native Americans comprise nearly 30 percent of the county's total population.

The seal shows the Grand Canyon inside the shape of an arrowhead, symbolizing the Native American population in the state.

(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).)



# The H.R. Doctor Is In

## God Save the 'King'

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would have been 82 years old this year. Were he still with us, he would have lived through decades of amazing technological changes and continuing progress in America's search to close gaps and narrow inequalities between race, gender, persons of different sexual orientations, and persons of different languages and national origins.

He would have seen tens of millions of immigrants continuing to come to America to realize their own versions of the American dream. How proud he would have been attending the inauguration of Barack Obama — in person as well as in spirit. It's hard to even imagine how much more progress would have been made in creating a great and equitable society if he had been able to continue as a passionate advocate.

Conventional wisdom recounts that his great contribution to the world was in the advancement of civil rights through non-violence. The HR Doctor, however, will focus in this article on another lesson from Dr. King that all of us as

managers and administrators, not to mention as parents, community members and friends need to learn and practice every day. That is the importance of creating a vision and enlisting others to share in that vision to help make it a reality.

The greatest weakness in public service, in this writer's opinion, is the narrowness of our vision. We spend too much time counting paper clips and not enough time looking at the long-range vision of what our city, county or community could be like. We focus on the memo of the day and not on the momentous changes which could happen in our world if we only created the opening in thought and action to make these changes happen. Dr. King was able to speak with amazing eloquence at what he saw in his own mind when he went to a metaphorical mountaintop and looked at the "promised land."

That land could be a county or a country in which all children had health care coverage. It could be a place in which senior citizens are not prevented from enjoying their final years in dignity because of the cost

of prescription drugs, or the lack of health insurance, or the scourge of loneliness. It could be a society in which no one dropped out of school or in which the unemployment rate was statistically insignificant.

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The only hope for visions like the ones above to become real is to create a vision of the future that is so compelling and so articulately presented that persons throughout the society agree to put aside lesser divisions to focus on a higher loyalty toward a common vision.

We have done this historically in times of war, and we have done this historically in times of other national opportunities, such as the mass polio vaccination program of the 1950s. We do it every day in a sense in commercial America when we create cultural icons or heroes or products which sell in the millions. If only we could do this in a "micro" way in terms of the way we live and practice public administration day-to-day.

The HR Doctor recently received a gift of the book, *If I Live to be 100...* by Neenah Ellis. What common characteristics do people with extraordinary longevity share? Based on the interviews in the book, the overriding common theme is not diet, occupation, genetics or fish oil. The common characteristic is optimism. This is also the enduring

legacy of Dr. King. In his case, the optimism was focused on closing racial and economic divides.

However, his legacy can also be profoundly positive for us as individuals. It can mean a commitment to career development and personal growth on the job, or it can mean looking at a vacant lot filled with litter and imagining a new senior citizens' health and recreation facility. It can mean a personal commitment to stop smoking, begin exercising, or finish that college degree.

There is no end to the number of positive visions which can turn into reality if we learn to move with commitment and optimism to make the changes happen.

Here are several of the HR Doctor's favorites:

- Make a commitment as a manager or executive in government to be a mentor to subordinates at work and children in the community. Be a Big Brother or Big Sister, or a high school mentor. Be a teacher and a champion of the career development and success of others.

- Find a teacher as well as being one. Commit to learn new skills. Learn to speak Spanish, Chinese or some other second language. Learn to take up hiking or photography, or one of the HR Doctor's favorites, music. Review the previous HR Doctor article "Learn as though you were going to live forever" to be reminded of the importance of this concept.

- Commit to personal health improvement by getting a check up and following through on actions to reduce health risks by regular exercise, weight loss, smoking cessation and other steps already mentioned. Do these things and do them soon.

- While you're at it, take some-

one with you such as a colleague at work or a member of the family. It is easier to succeed in a plan if you have support from an understanding friend.

- Make a major difference in the community. Be the catalyst to turn that vacant lot into a senior health center. Be a United Way champion. Be a go-to person for charities so that your own reputation is enhanced and your own leadership skills are developed. What better way to improve these personal elements in your life than by also helping other people on the way. There are no shortages of charities in the neighborhood, in the county or in the world that need your help.

- Spend time with people you care about, including private time with yourself away from the excessive intrusions of the modern world. The HR Dog Kamala and I make time almost every morning for this purpose by taking walks together. It's harder and harder to find privacy, meditation — call it what you will — but the more our lives are intruded upon by cell phones, horns honking, telemarketers and loud neighbors, the more we lose some part of the essence of our individuality.

- Spend some time away from the television and away from the computer to pursue some personal passion.

- Plan ahead for what your own life may be like after retirement. Invest energy in not only saving for financial security but also in taking steps to increase your long-term "intellectual security" as well.

- Think about things like where and when you might retire, and what active steps, including other employment, you will take to keep alert, alive and contributing.

Do all these things and you will have a significant set of New Year's resolutions. You will also be walking in the pathway of Dr. King. Each of us individually can make the choice of whether to live our lives surrounded by large piles of paper clips or surrounded by a legacy that will make our children look back at us and say that we stood for something wonderful.

The HR Doctor wishes Dr. King a very happy birthday and hopes that you will spend some time reliving the great "I Have a Dream" speech and remembering the power of those words.

*Phil Rosenberg*

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

## Word Search

### 20 Most Populous Counties

A J A M L H Y N Q M D R N E W Y O R K R  
P P E B A O K R I G A A O C H O G P O I  
S B O R J I S A U I L X I X E I E I H F  
A N R C N X M A R T L E G R S D I K P B  
W I E G I I C G N D A B R R A R D W V P  
S A U E D R K I N G S T L C N U N S A I  
O G Y A U B A P U R E Q O C T O A E T J  
G N D N J Q S M Y K E L G Q A U S Y H P  
X E W X E A T G H M W X E V C W E B N J  
S A N B E R N A R D I N O S L C A L J Z  
C L Y W A D U X R N D N P C A S B M F J  
I A M A I U J C C R T Y F J R A D Z X G  
R G O D Y F T U O R A R C K A R B C N K  
N E B U T U P F P D G N Q H A H D D S M  
F A A F P G H U A B X A T W K X P J Y M  
H F H I P E X E F C X B O C Z Y K C K B  
E I L P B R T Y Q L F R L Q Z R E O E V  
P E D I S R E V I R B E G N A R O O V P  
K H V X X B E B A F L O C L J Y G K N Z  
S H M A D R Z Z C O E Y C N I W G Y N E

MARICOPA (Ariz.)  
LOS ANGELES (Calif.)  
ORANGE (Calif.)  
RIVERSIDE (Calif.)  
SAN BERNARDINO (Calif.)  
SAN DIEGO (Calif.)

SANTA CLARA (Calif.)  
BROWARD (Fla.)  
MIAMI-DADE (Fla.)  
COOK (Ill.)  
WAYNE (Mich.)  
CLARK (Nev.)  
KINGS (N.Y.)

NEW YORK (N.Y.)  
QUEENS (N.Y.)  
BEXAR (Texas)  
DALLAS (Texas)  
HARRIS (Texas)  
TARRANT (Texas)  
KING (Wash.)

Source: Census.gov / Created By: Christopher Johnson

## NACo on the Move

### » NACo Officers and Elected Officials



Carol Holden

- **Carol Holden**, Hillsborough County, N.H. commissioner and NACo board member, was presented the President's Award at the New Hampshire Association of Counties (NHAC) annual conference in October. This award is presented to a person who has demonstrated great commitment to the NHAC over their career.

### » NACo Staff

- **Erik Johnston**, associate legislative director, delivered a presentation about NACo's Farm Bill priorities at the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition's 2012 Farm Bill Summit in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 12.

*On the Move is compiled by Christopher Johnson.*



# Maximize the Potential of Your Public Library



## ***A new report from ICMA***

Learn how public libraries can help local governments tackle critical community priorities such as economic development, public safety, environmental sustainability, cultural diversity, education, and literacy. This new report and accompanying case studies provide examples and instructive guides on how public libraries in jurisdictions large and small are partnering with local governments and organizations to develop innovative solutions for important strategic community initiatives.

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*The ICMA Public Library Innovations program was made possible with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.*

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777 North Capitol Street, NE ■ Suite 500 ■ Washington, DC 20002-4201 ■ 202-962-ICMA ■ [icma.org](http://icma.org)