

National leaders pitch programs, positions at Legislative Conference



Conference Report

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Mike Mullen were among the prominent national leaders who addressed NACo members at the association's 2011 Legislative Conference, which wrapped up March 9 in Washington, D.C.

More than 1,500 county officials were on hand for the conference, which explored the

continuing challenges presented by the slow economic recovery and federal budget woes.

During his remarks, Holder advocated for increasing the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system and improving access to legal services. "We have to transition from a prosecution and incarceration model to an intervention and prevention model," he said. "How we treat our children answers the question of who we are as a nation. These reforms will also save money."

Mullen praised NACo's efforts, through President Glen Whitley's veteran-focused presidential initiative, to honor and assist veterans. "I'm looking for local leadership in your counties willing to take this on, tied to this initiative that you've put in place," he said. "And I think all of us — DoD, VA and you — can really make a difference for these young men and women and their families who have made such a difference for us as a country."

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Photo by David Hathcox

Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Mike Mullen spoke about returning veterans in his conference remarks.

Bankruptcy last resort for Idaho county

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Boise County, Idaho commissioners say they had no choice but to declare Chapter 9 bankruptcy earlier this month, when faced with a court judgment that's more than half their annual budget.

The county, whose operating budget is about \$9.4 million, was sued last year by a development company, Oaas Laney, LLC—and lost. Last December, a federal court jury in Idaho awarded the plaintiff \$4 million plus attorneys' fees, an additional \$1.4 million. The county has appealed, but that does not stop the judgment.

"We have a duty to our citizens to keep the county operating," said Jamie Anderson, chair of the Board of Commissioners. "Chapter 9 is unique as it recognizes the sovereignty of governments and allows us to continue to operate while we develop a plan. We all want to get this behind us."

See BOISE page 3

QuickTakes

5 Counties that Spend the Most on Federal Lobbying

- 1 – Miami-Dade County, Fla.
- 2 – Los Angeles County, Calif.
- 3 – Riverside County, Calif.
- 4 – Plaquemines Parish, La.
- 5 – Harris County, Texas

Source: Center for Responsive Politics, 2010

NACo survey: Recession's effects continue in counties

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Economists say the national recession is over. But local governments are still feeling the aftershocks of the economic slowdown, according to a new NACo survey released at the association's Legislative Conference.

The published report, *The Recession Continues: An Economic Status Survey of Counties*, highlights the continuing impact of the sluggish economy on county budgets and the actions counties are taking to cope

with decreased revenues.

"After multiple tough budget cycles, counties appear to be settling into the 'new normal' of revenue and staffing levels," said NACo President Glen Whitley. "However, the budget cuts have become increasingly more severe and are affecting more Americans."

Among the key findings:

- Declining revenues from the state are the number one contributor to lower revenue for counties (46 percent);
- Counties used rainy-day funds (40 percent), made administrative

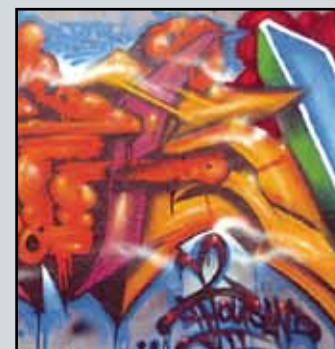
changes and adjusted personnel to help keep their budgets balanced; and

- More than half of the counties surveyed (53 percent) have fewer county staff than they did in 2010. Seventy-one percent of counties with fewer employees lost up to 5 percent of their workforce.

Five hundred counties with elected or hired administrators from 44 states responded to the survey, conducted in early February, making it the most comprehensive in the

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NACo, Nationwide announce 2011 scholarship recipients

It appears that the high school graduating class of 2011 has a clear understanding of why public employees should start saving as early as possible for retirement. These seniors will be entering the workforce in just a few short years, and some already plan to take immediate advantage of their future employers' retirement programs.

Hundreds of applicants vied for one of four \$2,000 awards available through the sixth annual NACo-Nationwide Scholarship fund. Graduating high school seniors whose parent or grandparent contributes to the NACo 457 Deferred Compensation Plan, administered by Nationwide Retirement Solutions, were eligible.

Applicants were asked to write a short essay on why it is important for a public sector employee to start early when saving for retirement. Here's what the four scholarship recipients had to say:

Retirement income must be funded by more than one source

"When it comes to financial matters, it's beyond important to begin planning and preparing for retirement as early as possible, especially while working in the public sector," wrote Jessica Anderson, a high school senior from Manville, N.J.

"One cannot depend upon their workplace to provide for them after retirement, especially in the state of current financial circumstances our country faces now," Anderson added.

I know retirement will be here before I know it

Blake Fonseca of Luling, La. knows that a public sector employee must make a commitment early on

to invest in their employer's retirement plan. He also understands the benefits of tax deferrals and the value of money.

Fonseca summed his entry up by saying "as a potential future public sector employee, I understand the race against time, and I plan to invest early in my employer's retirement plan and take the driver's seat in the management of my retirement portfolio."

The earlier someone begins, the easier it will be for them

"It's important to learn early that savings is a priority, and workers need to learn the principle of paying themselves before other expenses," said Colton Havel of Solon, Iowa.

Even as a teen, Havel understands young investors have the opportunity to take advantage of two key deferred compensation investment strategies: tax deferral and compound interest over time. "The longer a person waits

the harder and more stressful it's going to be. With compound interest and tax-deferred growth on your side, there is no reason not to start saving as soon as possible."

Savings lessons passed through generations

"My father learned from his father, who lived through the Great Depression, the importance of saving for the future," wrote Michael Lambert of Poway, Calif. Lambert explained that although it's never too late to start saving for retirement, the earlier one starts will allow you to accrue more over time and in a less painless manner.

"I know that most kids my age will find it difficult, or even ludicrous, to think about the idea of saving for retirement as we are just entering college. I know I would think differently myself if it was not for seeing the example set by my father and his father before him," Lambert said.

Getting to the 2011 WIR Conference in Wenatchee, Wash.

There are several travel options available for those planning to attend the Western Interstate Region (WIR) Conference in Chelan County (Wenatchee), Wash. May 18-20.

The Wenatchee Valley, located in the middle of Washington State along the Columbia River, is easily accessible by land and air. Nestled between the foothills of the Cascade Mountains and the Columbia River, arriving in the Valley from any direction is a scenic wonder.

Driving from the west, you'll encounter spectacular forests as you traverse the mountain passes. As you crest the passes, you'll usually notice a shift in the weather right at the top, as the west-side clouds, emptied of their rain, give way to east-side sun.

From the east, you'll travel by some of the country's richest farmland, then wind your way along the Columbia River Gorge, with its ancient rock layers and cold, clear water. Be sure to keep an eye out for the bighorn sheep that inhabit some of the jagged outcroppings.

If you choose to fly into the valley, you are treated to a spectacular aerial view of jagged mountain peaks or geometric-patterned cropland cut by the snaking paths of rivers. The landing is awe-inspiring as you crest

the bordering mountains and drop into the inviting green, orchard-filled valley, with the sister cities of Wenatchee and East Wenatchee glittering along the banks of the Columbia River.

By Plane



For those who prefer to fly, Horizon Air provides short 25-minute flights daily from SeaTac International Airport in suburban Seattle to Pangborn Memorial Airport.

Current flight schedules are available at www.alaskaair.com.

By Car



The Wenatchee Valley is a short scenic drive from any corner of the state. To Wenatchee from: Seattle – 138 miles, 2.5 hours; Spokane – 165 miles, 2 hours, 45 min; Pasco – 136 miles, 2.5 hours.

By Train



Transportation service is offered by Amtrak at www.amtrak.com.

For more information, contact Wendy Lesesne, director of marketing, Wenatchee Valley Visitors Bureau at wendy@wenatcheevalley.org.

Meet the scholarship recipients

Jessica Anderson • Manville, N.J.



Jessica Anderson is a student at Manville High School in the top percentile of her class. She is an active member of many of her school's clubs and holds officer positions in her Senior Class, National Honor Society, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) and Student Council.

Anderson intends to study nursing, with the eventual goal of being a nurse practitioner. She also hopes to continue her study of the Spanish language, while undertaking study of American Sign Language.

Anderson's mom, Carol, works for the Somerset County Prosecutor's Office.

Blake Fonseca • Luling, La.

Blake Fonseca is a senior at Hahnville High School. He is a member of the concert and marching bands. Blake has volunteered his time as an assistant coach and buddy in the St. Charles Parish Challenger Baseball and Shooting Stars Basketball Programs for special-needs children, and also as a staff member at River Region Rehab assisting clients with their rehabilitation exercises.

This fall, Fonseca will attend Nicholls State University to pursue of a bachelor of science degree in athletic training. He hopes to continue his education to eventually become a physical therapist.

Fonseca is the son of Clarence Fonseca and Holly Fonseca, who is a participant in the NACo deferred compensation plan and an employee of St. Charles Parish.



Colton Havel • Solon, Iowa



Colton Havel is a senior at Solon Community High School. He was a member of both the football and track teams during his freshman and sophomore years. He has also been involved in the men's choir and was accepted into the honor choir program this year.

Havel is also actively involved in mission work through the Solon United Methodist Youth Group. Last summer he went on a mission trip

to Tallulah, La. to help an impoverished community and will be participating in another mission trip this June in Marvell, Ark.

Havel is currently planning on attending Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa this fall.

Havel's father, Richard, is an employee of Johnson County.

Michael Lambert • Poway, Calif.

Michael Lambert is a senior at Poway High School, where he holds a 4.03 grade point average. He's a member of the California Scholastic Federation and the National Honors Society. Lambert is a four-year member of his high school marching band and became a section leader during his senior year. He also plays clarinet in the Wind Symphony which is the school's top band.

Lambert has been involved in scouting for many years and earned his Eagle Scout rank during his sophomore year. He enjoys camping and backpacking, and has completed two different 70 mile treks at the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico. He also is active in the Venture Crew, a scouting program for older youth, where he has held leadership positions.

Lambert currently works at Northrop Grumman through his high school internship program and hopes to be hired this summer as a student intern.

Michael enjoys science and math and plans to major in mechanical and aerospace engineering at UC Davis or UCSD.

Lambert's father, Thomas, is an employee of San Diego County.



Share your point of view ...

Letters to the Editor

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

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San Diego County tags graffiti artists

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Whether it's considered art, vandalism or the tip of a criminal iceberg, graffiti is getting attention from San Diego County, Calif. law enforcement.

The county has started an 18-month pilot program with Graffiti Tracker to make a stronger case against the county's vandals and hopefully reduce tagging in all municipalities.

Graffiti Tracker is a Web-based graffiti analysis service. After county personnel photograph and upload pictures of graffiti, analysts identify whether it is gang-related and report back to the county. In addition, analysts can match distinguishing characteristics of graffiti from several locations to a particular vandal, tracking trends and migration, and consolidating data for the county to prosecute vandals.

The county is paying \$126,000 toward the program's \$361,000 cost. Every city in the county will contribute, plus the Metropolitan Transit System, North County Tran-



sit District and Unified Port District. Private contributions from AT&T, San Diego Gas and Electric and Cox Cable helped purchase cameras.

The city of Escondido had used Graffiti Tracker for years and

seen good results, so it encouraged county officials to unify various municipalities in the county borders.

"If we were really going to have an aggressive campaign against graffiti, we needed a regional ef-

fort," said Greg Cox, San Diego County supervisor. "Chances are these vandals are riding the trolley or taking a bus somewhere else and doing more graffiti, so we need to keep track of it over a larger area."

The cities and county hope that restitution from vandals, once they are caught, will pay for the service's cost.

Cox's spokesman Luis Monpeagudo said the county was able to get nearly \$90,000 in restitution from the family of one youth who sprayed about 100 different pieces of "art."

Using digital cameras that include GPS stamps on photos, public works crews can photograph graffiti and upload it to Graffiti Tracker's server. The county and various municipalities previously sent police officers to take graffiti reports, but Cox said that was rarely a good allocation of personnel

unless a crime was in progress. Now, public works crews can file a report and paint over the graffiti in one trip.

"It's most valuable for restitution because now we can pin a number of tags on one guy," Cox said. "Before, police would take a Polaroid and it would wind up as an afterthought, but now we can file a series of tags one guy might have done, and when we catch him we can look into whether or not he's responsible. These graffiti artists take some pride in their work, so sometimes they'll take credit for other tags, even if it gets them in trouble."

If the program pays for itself, Cox said the county will move to make it permanent.

"We'll see pretty dramatic results, I expect," he said. "It's a smarter way of cutting down on an expensive nuisance."

Lawsuit loss leads county to bankruptcy court

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There were six municipal bankruptcies in the United States in 2010 and about eight per year over the past 40 years, according to Jim Spiotto, an expert on Chapter 9 bankruptcy with the law firm Chapman and Cutler LLP. Boise County's is a first for an Idaho county in living memory, according to Dan Chadwick, executive director of the Idaho Association of Counties.

Oaas Laney sued the county claiming it violated the Fair Housing Act by placing onerous zoning conditions on a group home the company wanted to build in the rural county, population about 7,500. Despite its name, the county is not home to the capital city of

Boise in neighboring Ada County, where Oaas Laney is based.

County officials said it was impossible to meet their statutory obligations — "including to pay for indigent sick, roads, jails, courts, solid waste programs, and other services" — and pay the judgment.

Chadwick, who is also an attorney, has represented personal and corporate bankruptcy clients. He said there is no law in Idaho that would allow a county to levy to pay the judgment.

After settlement talks broke down between the county and Oaas Laney, the company planned to immediately seize whatever cash it could from the county, Chadwick said, and Boise County's "back was against the wall."

"They had to protect their cash

Municipal Bankruptcy

Municipal bankruptcies are rare. There were six in 2010 and about eight per year over the past 40 years, according to Jim Spiotto, an expert on Chapter 9 bankruptcy with the law firm Chapman and Cutler LLP. One of the most famous was Orange County, Calif. in 1994; one of the most recent was Vallejo, Calif. in 2008.

Chapter 9 bankruptcy is designed to provide a financially distressed municipality protection from creditors while it develops and negotiates a plan for adjusting its debts. Though similar to other forms of bankruptcy, it differs in that there are no provisions for a municipality to liquidate its assets and distribute the proceeds to creditors, according to *uscourts.gov*.

The term "municipality" is defined in the Bankruptcy Code as a "political subdivision or public agency or instrumentality of a State."

position and give themselves a little bit of breathing room while they sorted out what they could or could not pay."

Boise County Commissioner Robert Fry ran for the office last fall to help the county sort out the financial mess. He had served on the three-member commission in the early 1980s, and later was a state legislator and a member of the state's Tax Commission.

"It's not like I didn't know the facts before I ran for office," he said. "I knew that the county was in serious trouble, and I knew that my experience — both in the legislature and the tax commission — could prove to be valuable to the county."

He doesn't think the county will suffer much because of the bankruptcy. "I think the primary negative consequence will be that

should we ever ... want to issue bonds, I think it would be much, much more difficult," said Fry, 64. "But the fact of the matter is, in my lifetime, the county has never issued bonds. So that may be a consequence without consequence."

Chadwick said municipalities in Chapter 9 bankruptcy are given "wide latitude" as to what debts they satisfy and when. "The plaintiff could end up getting nothing in the deal," he said, which could be a bargaining chip.

"They may come to an agreement on a settlement. Something that's affordable for the county and the county citizens," he added. "But it at least protects them from the plaintiff scooping up county cash and assets, and pretty much bankrupting the county and taking away their ability to operate."

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In Case You Missed It ...

News to Use from Past County News

► Apply Now for EPA's National Award for Smart Growth Achievement

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has announced that the application period for the 10th annual National Award for Smart Growth Achievement is now open. Through this award, EPA recognizes communities that have successfully used smart growth principles in the following areas: programs, policies and regulations; smart growth and green building; civic places and rural smart growth.

Winners will be recognized at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. in December. Entry deadline is Wednesday, April 6.

To view the application and complete entry guidelines, please visit www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/awards.htm#2011app or contact Ted Cochin by e-mail cochin.ted@epa.gov or call 202.566.2181.



Profiles in Service

» Mike Murray

NACo Board Member
Commissioner, Lewis and Clark County, Mont.

Number of years active in NACo: 15

Years in public service: 20

Occupation: Commissioner, small business owner (Helena Time and Temp)

Education: B.A. plus credits

The hardest thing I've ever done: deal with my youngest child's diagnosis of cystic fibrosis

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Pope John Paul II, Bobby Kennedy and Kay McKenna (local former mayor)

A dream I have is to: win a lottery.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: was a school teacher at the Montana State Prison.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: fish and backpack across the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

My favorite way to relax is: sit in my recliner

with the TV remote and watch several programs at the same time.

I'm most proud of: my children.

Every morning I read: *Helena Independent Record* and *Great Falls Tribune*.

My favorite meal is: turkey dinner with trimmings.

My pet peeve is: people who think they must be rude and loud when presenting a problem about government.

My motto is: "Find the goodness in each individual you come in contact with."

The last book I read was: *Strange Empire* by Joseph Kinsey Howard.

My favorite movie is: *Shane*.

My favorite music is: "oldies" easy listening.

My favorite president is: John F. Kennedy.

Counties cutting services to balance budgets

SURVEY from page 1

series of seven economic surveys NACo has conducted since 2007. The largest counties had populations of 1 million or higher; the smallest, less than 100,000.

The survey shows that counties are cutting services and employees to a greater degree, rather than the less painful budget adjustments reported in previous NACo surveys, such as delaying purchases and across-the-board budget cuts.

Consistent with earlier surveys, only a small percentage (15 percent) of counties reported increasing property tax rates, and only 2 percent have increased their local option sales tax rates to make up their shortfalls. Of responding counties, 50 percent said their states cap their ability to raise taxes, and 6 percent have county caps.

Instead, most counties have adjusted their budgets through actions such as follow (Counties were asked to indicate all actions taken):

- 47 percent have delayed pur-

chases and repairs

- 47 percent have postponed capital investments

- 45 percent have frozen salary or pay

- 41 percent have instituted hiring freezes

- 40 percent have dipped into rainy-day funds

- 37 percent have imposed employee travel restrictions

- 31 percent have delayed construction, and

- 24 percent have laid off county workers.

Other actions by counties include scaling back employee benefits (22 percent) and offering early retirement to eligible employees (9 percent).

The survey data shows that "counties are not out of the woods," Whitley said. "Additional state aid cuts are looming, increased energy and operating costs are nearly certain, and increasing demands for public services remain."

To view the complete survey report, visit www.naco.org/research ▶ "Surveys."

NACo Prescription Discount Card FREE to your county and your residents

BREVARD
COUNTY, FL

Total Savings
To-Date
\$4,103,389

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Spotlight on Brevard County, Florida

Brevard County, FL launched the NACo Prescription Discount Card Program in August 2008. Since the program's inception, 7% of the population of 580,000 in Brevard County have utilized the program and saved millions of dollars.

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

Operated by CVS Caremark.

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

Smart phone users
scan code to access
the NACo website.



Board adopts new policy positions at conference



Conference Report

Agriculture and Rural Affairs

■ Oppose Cuts to USDA Rural Development Programs in FY11 and FY12

Issue: Proposed cuts to USDA Rural Development Programs.

Adopted Policy: NACo strongly supports USDA Rural Development programs and urges Congress to oppose proposed cuts to these programs in FY11 and FY12.

Community and Economic Development

■ Strong Support for Freeze on CDBG Formula Funding at \$3.948 Billion in FY11 and FY12

Issue: Reducing or eliminating funding for CDBG.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) hereby strongly urges Congress to freeze funding in FY11 and FY12 for the CDBG program at the FY10 level of \$3.948 billion.

■ The Department of Housing and Urban Development FY2012 Appropriations

Issue: Support for FY12 Appropriations for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to support a freeze in FY2012 funding for core programs of the Department of Housing and

Urban Development at the FY 2010 levels. These include: \$3.948 billion in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) formula funding; \$1.825 billion in formula funding for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME); \$1.865 billion for Homeless Housing Assistance grants, plus an additional amount to fully fund expiring supportive housing and Shelter Plus Care rent subsidy contracts; full funding for existing Section 8 project-based and tenant-based contracts; and \$275 million in Section 108 Loan Guarantee authority; and \$150 million for Sustainable Communities Initiative grants.

■ Retain the Administration's Foreclosure and Neighborhood Stabilization Programs

Issue: Support federal programs that are intended to prevent and address the foreclosure crisis that has been proposed for elimination in Congress.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to support three foreclosure programs — Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP), the FHA Refinancing Program and the Neighborhood Stabilization Program 3.

Environment, Energy and Land Use

■ Exempting Renewable Biomass Emissions from the EPA's Tailoring Rule

Issue: Renewable biomass emissions and the Greenhouse Gas Tailoring Rule.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports the permanent exemption of emis-



Photos by David Hathcox

Community and Economic Development Steering Committee Chair Lee May, DeKalb County, Ga. commissioner, and Daria Daniel, NACo associate legislative director, await their turn to present the committee's policy recommendations to NACo's Board of Directors.

sions from renewable biomass combustion from the Environmental Protection Agency's "Greenhouse Gas Tailoring Rule" and supports policy that recognizes the full carbon benefits of biomass combustion for energy consistent with established and well-supported science.

■ EPA's Boiler MACT Rule

Issue: EPA's upcoming Boiler MACT rule.

Adopted Policy: NACo urges Congress and the Administration to oppose EPA's final Boiler Maximum Achievable Control Technology (MACT) rule until accurate data is available and the feasibility of implementation concerns are addressed.

NACo further supports EPA's reconsideration process regarding the Boiler MACT rule provided that local government is involved in the reconsideration process.

■ Stormwater Runoff from Logging Roads

Issue: A statutory exemption for stormwater runoff from logging roads.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports legislation that enacts into law the Silvicultural Rule.

■ USFWS Wind Siting Guidelines under the Bald And Golden Eagle Act, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act

Issue: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wind Siting Guidelines and the Bald and Golden Eagle Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Adopted Policy: NACo urges the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to reopen the public process and include local governments and consider mitigation and incidental take as they develop the Wind Siting Guidelines under the Bald and Golden Eagle Act and

Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

■ Support Gulf Coast Recovery and Restoration

Issue: Environmental and economic recovery from the 2010 Gulf Coast oil spill.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports short and long-term plans for Gulf Coast recovery. NACo calls on the U.S. Congress to authorize a Gulf Coast Recovery Fund to ensure the environmental and economic recovery of the Gulf region. The recovery fund should be overseen by a Gulf Coast Recovery Council that includes strong local governmental representation. Gulf Coast recovery funds should go directly to local governments.

■ Pesticide Use

Issue: National permit program for pesticides.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports H.R. 872, the "Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2011." NACo opposes extension of the EPA's jurisdiction regarding pesticide use in (and around) county streets, gutters, and ditches. Such expansion of authority preempts state and local government authority and creates unfunded mandates. NACo supports using pesticides in accordance with the instructions on the label and supports strong penalties for those who misuse pesticides in FIFRA.

■ Responsible Military Overwater Practices

Issue: Military sonar use in marine waters.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports focused dialogue and collaboration between counties and the U.S. Military to continue to improve practices and to mitigate impacts to marine mammals, fisheries, local economies, and natural resources.

■ Ocean Acidification

Issue: Addressing rising carbon dioxide levels.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports federal funding for continued education and scientific study of ocean acidification.

Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs

■ Urge Congress to Repeal Expanded 1099 Reporting Requirements

Issue: Form 1099 reporting requirements.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports the repeal of Section 9006 of Public Law 111-148 that expands IRS Form 1099 reporting requirements for counties.

■ Control the Rising Budget Deficit

Issue: Proposed measures to reduce the federal deficit and their effects on counties.

Adopted Policy: National Association of Counties asserts the following:

- Congress cannot solve the budget deficit by only cutting domestic, non-military discretionary programs.
- Federal assistance to state and local governments will help mitigate further layoffs.
- Federal investment in state and local infrastructure produces private sector jobs.
- Deficit reduction should not be accomplished by shifting costs to counties (e.g. cuts to Medicaid), imposing unfunded mandates, or pre-empting county programs or taxing authority.

The National Association of Counties supports maintaining federal financial assistance for county programs at the 2010 fiscal year levels.

See RESOLUTIONS page 6



NACo Board members Liz Kniss and Roy Brooks confer during policy presentations.

Keep up with NACo online ...

www.naco.org



Hospital charity care, county safety net featured in resolutions

RESOLUTIONS from page 5

Health

■ Support for Charity Care Requirements For Non-Profit Health Care Facilities

Issue: Charity care requirements for non-profit and tax-exempt health care facilities.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports imposing charity care requirements on non-profit and tax-exempt health care facilities, including standards that measure facilities' access to and utilization of tax-exempt capital, to objectively determine the amount of actual health care providers tender to those in need against the value of tax exemptions that the facilities receive.

■ Support for the Healthy Food Financing Initiative

Issue: Access to Healthy Foods.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) and urges Congress and the Administration to authorize and provide adequate resources to implement the initiative in partnership with counties and local jurisdictions.

Specifically, NACo supports the extension of affordable health coverage and benefits—including expanding Medicaid—to uninsured and underinsured residents who rely on county health care delivery systems; the coordination of services to ensure that everyone has a medical/health home for efficient, accessible and cost-effective care; the enhancement of access to preventive care and health promotion, for underserved populations; and the promotion of the use of peer supports and counselors, together with effective care coordination that spans health and social support services.

Human Services and Education

■ Support Community Services Block Grants

Issue: The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) has been targeted for serious cuts and program changes.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports full funding for CSBG as well as the program's formula grant structure.



Photos by David Hathcox

NACo President Glen Whitley lays down debate rules during policy deliberations.

residents can revise and amend FEMA's Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps. Additionally, NACo urges the federal government to enhance flood hazard mapping outreach and technical assistance in local communities.

■ Support of Levees and Flood Control Structures

Issue: Addressing Treatment of Existing Levees and Flood Control Structures in FEMA Flood Insurance Studies producing new Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMS).

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties supports H.R. 764 and similar bills that ensure fair treatment of existing levees and flood control structures under the national flood insurance program.

■ Support for the National Initiative on Cyber Education (NICE)

Issue: Support of the National Initiative on Cyber Education

Adopted Policy: NACo supports the National Initiative on Cyber Education.

serve to promote job training and employment services to veterans and military service members.

Public Lands

■ Changing Forest Service Employee Supervision

Issue: Chain of command for Forest Service Law Enforcement Personnel

Adopted Policy: NACo supports a change in Forest Service personnel organization to place law enforcement officers under the direction of Forest Supervisors.

■ Department of Interior Secretarial Order 3310

Issue: Rescind DOI Secretarial Order 3310.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties strongly

urges that Secretary Salazar immediately rescind Order 3310 that calls for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to inventory "Wild Lands" and manage them for wilderness without Congressional approval. NACo urges Congress to enact legislation stating unequivocally that Congressional approval is required prior to any special designation of federally managed public lands.

Telecommunications and Technology

■ Support of the White House Wireless Innovation and Infrastructure Initiative

Issue: Support of the White House wireless innovation and infrastructure initiative.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports the goals of the Administration's Wireless Innovation and Infrastructure Initiative.

Transportation

■ Eligibility for Funding through the Federal Lands Highway Program

Issue: Eligibility for road improvement funding.

Adopted Policy: Congress should amend the Federal Lands Highway Program to make it available to fund improvements to any road that accesses or passes through federally managed forest lands, specifically including lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management.



Presenting a steering committee's recommendations is not always a ponderous event as evidenced by Environment, Energy and Land Use Steering Committee Chair Brian Dahle and NACo environmental lobbyist Julie Ufner.

■ Support of Provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act That Help County Safety Net and Behavioral Health Programs

Issue: Essential need to implement key features of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (PPACA).

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties supports full funding for, and implementation of, the provisions of PPACA that support the ability of counties to meet the service needs of low income and disabled populations.

Justice and Public Safety

■ Support of Strengthened FEMA Outreach and Technical Assistance For Flood Hazard Mapping

Issue: Flood Hazard Mapping and Strengthening FEMA's outreach and technical assistance with counties.

Adopted Policy: NACo urges the U.S. Congress to fully support a transparent and fiscally reasonable process by which counties and

Labor and Employment

■ Supporting Goals of NACo's Veterans and Military Service Task Force with Respect to Job Training and Access to Employment Services

Issue: Veterans access to job training and employment services.

Adopted Policy: NACo supports the goals of the NACo Veterans and Military Service Task Force (VMSTF) to develop county best practices and policies that



Labor and Employment Steering Committee Chair Carol Holden (r) stands at the ready to present her committee's report while her back-up, Deseree Gardner, NACo associate legislative director, moves into position.

Congressman Mica touts transportation as jobs creator

CONFERENCE from page 1

Also speaking at the conference were top domestic leaders: Natural Resources Chair Doc Hastings (R-Wash.)

Secretary Shaun Donovan, House Transportation Committee Chair John Mica (R-Fla.) and House Housing and Urban Development

Donovan urged county officials to contact their members of Congress to defend Neighborhood Stabilization funds. The program, he said, has invested

\$7 billion across the country to buy foreclosed and abandoned properties, reducing vacancy rates in those neighborhoods by 50 to 75 percent.

Mica spoke to delegates about improving the nation's infrastructure and how transportation is important both on a national and county level. "Our challenge is taking diminishing revenues and making them go further," Mica said. "We have to be committed to create jobs, cut waste and do more with less."

Hastings threw his support behind a NACo resolution urging Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar to withdraw an order to the BLM to inventory the wild lands under its jurisdiction.

The featured speaker at the Opening General Session March 7 was "Morning Joe" — Joe Scarborough, a former Republican congressman from northwestern Florida — who told county officials that the federal budget was balanced four years in a row when he was in Congress and can be balanced again with proper leadership on Capitol Hill.

He said county officials need

to tell their members of Congress that the national deficit cannot be reduced on the backs of counties, cities and states. "They can't just focus on reductions to domestic, discretionary spending programs that will affect the American people," he said.

General Session participants also heard from Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.), former New Castle County executive, Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.) and Dr. David Brown, a military psychologist with a special interest in reintegrating returning military into the community.

During its conference meeting, NACo's Board of Directors accepted 26 new interim policy recommendations from the association's 11 steering committees, which met over two days at the conference. The new policies range from positions on charity care at nonprofit hospitals to controlling the federal budget deficit. (See pages 5 and 7 for a full report.)

(A complete report on the conference, including photo coverage, will be published in the March 28 issue)

Word Search

Source: 2010 U.S. Census • Created by: Christopher Johnson

Poorest U.S. Counties

(Based on Median Income)

ALLEDALE (S.C.)
APACHE (Ariz.)
BREATHITT (Ky.)
BROOKS (Texas)
BUFFALO (S.D.)
CHICOT (Ark.)
CORSON (S.D.)
LEE (Ky.)
LEFLORE (Miss.)
MAGOFFIN (Ky.)
MAVERICK (Texas)
OWSLEY (Ky.)
SHANNON (S.D.)
SIOUX (N.D.)
STARR (Texas)
TODD (S.D.)
WADE HAMPTON (Alaska)
ZAPATA (Texas)
ZIEBACH (S.D.)

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L M C G B T H X R E F U J I K I S V M T

The 2011 Rail Conference — Moving Freight and Passengers in the 21st Century

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, April 27-29

Wyndham Lisle-Chicago Hotel and Executive Conference Center, Lisle/Naperville, Illinois

Make plans now to attend the 2011 Rail Conference — Moving Freight and Passengers in the 21st Century, in Lisle/Naperville, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, conveniently located between Chicago's O'Hare Airport and Midway Airport.

This conference will focus on the impact of freight and passenger rail on county, city and state governments and their citizens and businesses. It will look at the movement of freight in the urban, suburban and rural communities of the United States and discuss who will pay to modernize and expand passenger and freight rail systems.

This conference is for you if you have ever asked why the freight industry operates the way it does, had questions about economic growth and the availability and affordability of freight rail, wanted to have commuter rail in your region or wondered about the future of high-speed rail.

Participants will meet and hear from experts in the field, including representatives of the rail industry, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the shippers who use the system, commuter rail experts, Amtrak and proponents of high-speed rail.

Register Today!

The registration fee for this conference is \$150 and includes an opening reception, breakfast both mornings, a luncheon, and refreshments during the day.

For more information and to access the registration form please visit www.naco.org/railconference.



Tentative Agenda

Wednesday, April 27

1:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Optional Tour of Rail Facilities at the Joliet Rail Yard

5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Opening Reception

Thursday, April 28

8:30 am - 10:30 am

Panel 1 - Movement of Freight Rail Today

10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Panel 2 - Passenger Rail - Present and Future Issues

12:00 pm - 1:30 pm

Lunch and Main Speaker

1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Panel 3 - The Next Twenty-Five Years

4:00 pm - 5:30 pm

Panel 4 - Long Term Investment/Needs and Impact of Expansion of Freight on State and Local Governments

Friday, April 29

9:00 - 12:00 Noon

Where Do We Go From Here: A Conversation Among Local, State and Federal Officials



Model Programs FROM THE NATION'S COUNTIES

Cobb County, Ga.

Safety Village Gives Children Hands-on Training

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

When a disaster strikes and panic sets in, instincts take over. But what if, in the middle of a house fire, a child forgets his or her preparation and training, and fear blocks their escape?

Cobb County, Ga. is hoping to give children the experience that may save their lives one day using the Safety Village, an eight-acre comprehensive safety training facility that serves Cobb County and Marietta city school systems, as well as home-schooled or private school students.

The village includes a small-scale neighborhood with variety of environments in which children might encounter threats to their safety from criminals, fires or accidents. Residential, commercial and industrial areas — along with their inherent dangers — are represented.

The village's centerpiece is a replica finished home, dubbed "Sparky's House," which provides a multitude of fire-safety training scenarios — a kitchen with an oven and electric appliances, a living room with a space heater and a bedroom.

After instructors point out the hot spots for fire safety in the house, children participate in a viscerally-real fire drill. A smoke machine mimics the dark environment of a house fire, and children have to crawl below the smoke to the door. When they feel the door knob, they will notice it is hot (thanks to a steam machine connected to it). They also practice descending a safety ladder from the window and meeting family members a safe distance from the house.

"The kids benefit much more by actually having a hands-on experience rather than being talked to in a classroom," said Capt. Scott



Photo courtesy of Cobb County, Ga.

An elementary school student practices climbing out of a window using a safety ladder during a fire drill at the Cobb County, Ga. Safety Village.

Dodson, Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services Department. "The information is lasting much longer now and their practical skills make sense to them."

In addition, students can make

sample calls to 911, with an operator on the other end of the phone to show them what they would encounter if they need to call for help.

"We can serve many more students, up to 250 per day, than we

could before," Dodson said. "We can free up staff and actually save money in the end."

Previously, the department towed a fire-safety trailer to individual schools and paid overtime to firefighters who staff it. Now four firefighters and two police officers work at the village as part of their regular duties.

The fire department's budget paid for the \$5.2 million construction of the main facility, including a building with six classrooms. The rest of the eight-acre site has been paid for by corporate and individual sponsors, including local businesses that built replicas of their buildings in the village.

The village's annual budget is \$284,000, paid for by the county's general fund.

Safe Kids Cobb County maintains a car seat inspection garage at the Safety Village several days a month, with Spanish translators available once a week. The organization used to have to do inspections outside of fire stations, with no protection from the sun or rain.

"We're seeing so many people come to have their car seats checked, which is great news because four out of five seats are installed incorrectly, so that gives us a chance to correct them," said Lisa Gardner, coordinator for Safe Kids Cobb County which inspects car seats. She is a representative for WellStar Health System, a safety village sponsor.

Gardner said the increase in inspections at the Safety Village has helped Safe Kids earn the distinction of having done the most car seat inspections in Georgia.

Gardner serves on the Safety Village's curriculum board, and praises the staff's evaluation of their teaching.

"They're very attentive to figuring out where they can do a better job," she said. "This is a situation where filling in a knowledge gap doesn't just mean better test scores, it means more lives are being saved."

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

The H.R. Doctor Is In

Some Luddite Thoughts for 21st Century Government

There are few people in my neighborhood who are as tech-curious, tech-geeky, or, as the beautiful HR Spouse might say, as tech-obsessed as the HR Doctor. Technology is fascinating as a way of extending our potential, our capabilities and our success as humans in exploring the universe and improving the world.

By the same token, technology also wields immense physical destructive power, such as weapons, or through catastrophic system failures. A great many people use it as a substitute for living and working among other people.

Technology advances far more rapidly than does human understanding of the problems we face psychologically, socially and politically. Ironically, technology can enable almost instantaneous communications between people at the opposite ends of the earth, but it can also separate us from family members only two rooms away.

We can hide in our technology bubbles at home, in an office or just about anywhere by being sub-



H.R. Doctor's personal observatory in Marion County, Fla.

merged within the addictive power of a smart phone, computer or i-Anything. None of these can substitute, however, for strong personal bonds resulting from direct non-tech contact with others. Although the supercomputer Watson defeated human *Jeopardy* champions, as

one of his opponents pointed out, "Watson will never know the touch of a woman."

It is perhaps not a coincidence that about 200 years ago, the defeat of humanity by technology was recognized as a great danger by the "Luddites" — a movement

protesting the effects of machinery on human workers. Even during its 15 minutes of fame, the Luddite movement was not successful because the idea of protesting by destroying machines was occurring at the beginning an epoch of huge economic transformation.

As agriculture was giving way to industrial economy, human power was giving way to machine power. An economic path to success and progress meant using the latest innovations, such as power weaving looms or rifled-barrel guns instead of muskets. Even then, there was a growing sense that success should be measured by tech possessions rather than by human contact.

One of the HR Doctor's super-tech toys is the realization of a childhood dream to have a personal observatory located away from big-city light pollution. It is located in a pastoral, natural setting in Marion County, Fla. near Ocala — on a little farm we call Sanctuary. Inside the motorized dome lives a large

See **H.R. DOCTOR** page 12



News From the Nation's Counties

► ARIZONA

PINAL COUNTY supervisors are rejecting a call by Gila River Indian Community officials not to locate **pot dispensaries** within a mile of their borders because the tribe doesn't recognize medical marijuana.

Tribal Gov. William R. Rhodes said in a letter the county's cooperation would support his community's stance against medical marijuana and help reduce safety hazards and criminal behavior that could arise from dispensaries located within a mile of the community's boundary.

The *Arizona Republic* reported Pinal supervisors last week approved a medical-marijuana ordinance without accommodating the tribe's request. The ordinance dictates zoning rules for dispensaries and related facilities.

County Supervisor David Snider says supervisors could consider the tribe's request on a case-by-case basis when dispensaries seek to operate on unincorporated county land.

► CALIFORNIA

Historic **Union Station** is now property of the **LOS ANGELES COUNTY** Metropolitan Transportation Authority — a \$75 million purchase that will clear the way for the expansion of transit operations and new development on the property.

The deal includes 38 acres and development rights to 5.9 million square feet of property around the station.

"Union Station is absolutely critical to the current and future mobility of our region," said county Supervisor Don Knabe, chairman of the MTA board. "We now have the ability to retain the historic nature of Union Station and prepare it to serve as a world-class, 21st century transportation hub."

► FLORIDA

• **GULF COUNTY** commissioners put a **moratorium on recreational vehicles** in its tourist corridor from the **BAY to FRANKLIN** county lines. They're trying to prevent people turning the temporary accommodations into permanent residences, especially along the beach front. Though commissioners are concerned about the areas becoming eyesores, they are also concerned about the impact on the environment.

"We think there are environmental damages from grey water from storm surge, those different kind of issues, so there are a lot of moving parts," said Commissioner Bill Williams. The moratorium would not

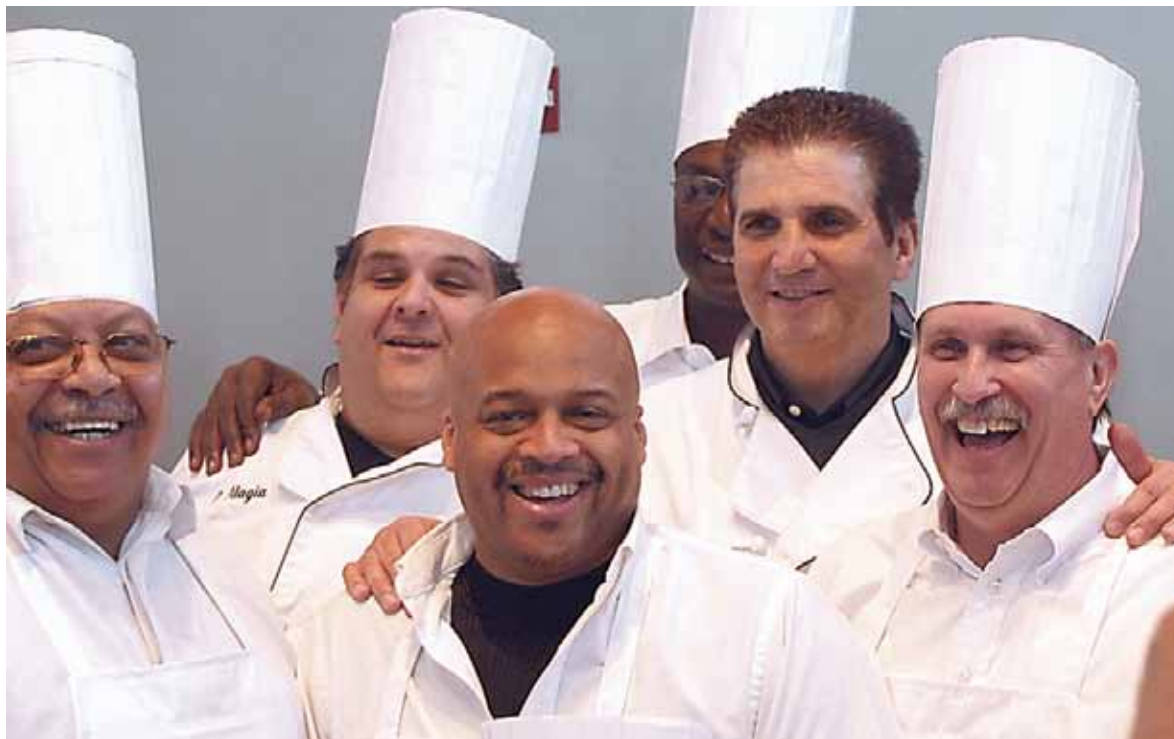


Photo by Chris Nesi, Verona-Cedar Grove Patch

Joseph DiVincenzo (second from right), Essex County, N.J. executive, poses with other county officials who participated in the Essex Men Who Cook fundraiser. Also pictured are (l-r): Ernest Williams, ECW Consultants; Phil Alagia, DiVincenzo's chief of staff; Mark Beckett, a county teacher; Freeholder Rufus Johnson and Leo Adriaenssens, Essex County Housing and Community Development.

► NEW JERSEY

ESSEX COUNTY Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo Jr. cooked his signature dish, cavatelli pasta and broccoli. Freeholder Rufus Johnson whipped up three flavors of chicken: jerk, garlic and herb, and teriyaki — all for a good cause.

The county officials were among the celebrity chefs who recently participated in **Essex Men Who Cook**, a county-run fundraiser for Essex County Economic Development Corporation, which makes small loans to up-and-coming entrepreneurs.

"I love to cook," DiVincenzo told the *Verona-Cedar Grove Patch* newspaper, adding that he learned from his mother.

affect homeowners, who park their RV's in their yards. Commissioners say they will be sympathetic towards people who already live in the RV parks, WJHG-TV reported.

• Panhandlers on **HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY**'s state roads won't be able to fly under the radar anymore. Commissioners voted to add state roads to the county's **anti-panhandling ordinance**. State roads fell under a Florida Department of Transportation policy, which also prohibits solicitation of motor vehicle operators on roadways.

Prior to the vote, deputies had to determine whether they were in state or county jurisdiction when enforcing the ordinances, ABC Action News reported.

► KANSAS

With hopes that more residents will be able to attend, **SEDGWICK COUNTY** Commissioner Richard Ranzau says he wants to explore having some **meetings at night**.

The commission now meets at 9 a.m. Wednesdays at the courthouse.

Commissioner Tim Norton said he didn't think the courthouse would

be a suitable place for a night meeting because having the courthouse open at night would require security, which would be an added cost.

Ranzau said if the board doesn't want to meet as a group some nights, he would be willing to have meetings with the public on his own, the *Wichita Eagle* reported.

► MARYLAND

BALTIMORE COUNTY has begun implementing 23 **new technology initiatives** that will be rolled out within the next six to 18 months.

The county designed the initiatives as a fast-tracked solution to reduce costs and improve efficiency. The initiatives span the county government and include tasks such as automating work processes for faster turnaround times, improving information sharing and increasing public access to information.

The information technology department partnered with the office of budget and finance to review county government operations that could be improved through effective use of technology and find cost savings within the various county agencies, according to *Government Technology*.

The county anticipates a return on investment for some of its new initiatives, such as the enterprise learning management system and virtual desktop infrastructure within their first year of implementation.

► MONTANA

• **STILLWATER COUNTY** is suing Beartooth Electric Cooperative, saying the utility is responsible for causing a **900-acre fire** in September 2009.

The lawsuit says a report from the Bureau of Land Management concluded that the blaze was caused by a malfunction in a live electric wire in the member-owned utility's right of way. It said the wire shorted and ignited a tree.

The fire spread through grass and timber, burning farm and ranch equipment, fences and other property belonging to Stillwater County and residents causing an estimated \$638,163 in damages.

The county wants reimbursement for its fire-suppression costs, but County Commissioner Dennis Shupak said he did not immediately know what the county's costs were, the Associated Press reported.

• The state Senate passed a bill preventing resigning county commissioners from **voting on their replacements**.

The legislation was prompted by former **CASCADE COUNTY** Commissioner Peggy Beltrone, who argued when she resigned last September that she had the right to vote for her replacement, said Sen. Brad Hamlett, sponsor of Senate Bill 357. The current Montana law states that "remaining" county commissioners shall fill a vacancy created by a resignation.

Beltrone argued Sept. 2, the day before she left office, that she was a "remaining" commissioner until Sept. 3, the effective date on her resignation letter, and therefore could vote on her replacement, the *Great Falls Tribune* reported.

Beltrone did not end up voting.

► NEW MEXICO

A database of how much every county employee earns would be available online, if **BERNALILLO COUNTY** Commissioner Wayne Johnson has his way.

He believes it's a matter of **government transparency**. "... [I]f it's the perception or the reality that we are giving out too much money in any particular job position?" Johnson said in an interview with KOB-TV. The county has about 2,500 employees, and county commissioners' salaries would be included.

The information is already public record, but it's never been as easily accessible as it would be on the county's website if his proposal succeeds.

Johnson said county employees must realize that they are "on stage." "It's important that the people that are in the audience know what they are doing and how much they are getting paid for it."

► OHIO

CUYAHOGA COUNTY Executive Ed FitzGerald, wants to let more sunshine into county purchasing and procurement operations by **posting their expenditures online**. The information can be found at www.cuyahogacounty.us ► "Open & Transparent Government," *The Plain Dealer* reported.

Locally, there's been some outrage over a Juvenile Justice Center project morphing from a \$50 million detention center to a \$189 million court complex, which includes a \$23,000 custom conference table.

"It's the public's checkbook, and they should be able to see

Research News

Counties Hope to Put the Spring Back in Tourism

Spring break kicks off for many schools around March 7–12 and ends somewhere near the end of March. Counties along Florida's coast, and the Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana Gulf coasts are gearing up for a huge influx of visitors hoping that this will kick off a great tourist season for 2011 and wash away last year's memories of oil covered debris and tar balls along the usually pristine beaches.

Even though many of these counties never experienced any of

the side effects from the oil spill, their tourist economies suffered significantly as people stayed away in droves regardless.

Louisiana and New Orleans Parish get a big boost this year because the start of spring break coincides with Mardi Gras for the first time in many years — a coincidence not lost on the New Orleans convention bureau.

Many spring breakers are finding this an irresistible combination as the visitors bureau has mounted a huge advertising campaign target-

ing teens and "20 somethings."

In addition to visiting campuses to encourage spring breakers, counties that don't have large tourism budgets are relying on social media such as Facebook and Twitter and the always reliable word of mouth about great party spots to bring people to New Orleans.

Harrison County, Miss., home of Biloxi and beaches, is conducting a marketing tour that includes meeting planners, group tour leaders and journalists who will all get to ride on floats in the Biloxi Mardi

Gras parade.

The Florida counties along the panhandle, which has 200 miles of normally white sand beaches, have programs through their Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau that send representatives to visit universities in Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin and other Midwestern states that have early spring break dates.

The convention bureaus are doing things such as giving away gift cards and providing information about flights to the new Northwest

Florida Beaches International Airport for potential partygoers and spring breakers. This outreach may be paying off because Southwest Airlines has reported that its flights going into several panhandle locations are sold out for the first two weekends of spring break. Bay County's Panama City Beach ticket sales are up 156 percent according to online ticket sales, as are its April sales.

Some of the Florida counties have had an unexpected boost from the older generation because of the severity of the winter in the Midwest. The local economy received a steady flow of retirees creating an 8 percent increase in spending in December 2010 over December 2009. Panama City created winter resident appreciation days to encourage more northern snowbirds to come south to the warmth.

Many of the vendors that cater to tourists in these counties have said they hope the crowds will come back. Many are family-run businesses and say that last year was the worst on record.

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

Food scraps headed to compost pile in Berks County, Pa.

NEWS FROM *from page 9*

what they're writing checks for," said FitzGerald, who took office in January as the county's first executive. "It was so opaque and difficult to penetrate under the old system that something like this slipped through."

► PENNSYLVANIA

• A new **food waste composting** program will help **BERKS COUNTY** keep more table scraps out of area landfills. The program encourages restaurants, businesses and schools to separate food waste from other trash.

The county's Solid Waste Authority contracted with a waste-hauling company to haul the scraps to a facility where they will be composted, the *Reading Eagle* reported. The program is funded by a \$80,000 state grant, and the authority will offer 400 free bins to collect the food waste.

According to industry experts, 60 percent to 80 percent of what supermarkets discard can be composted.

"It is valuable material that does not need to go into a landfill," said Jane Meeks, authority director.

• **LANCASTER COUNTY** has received the Federal Communications Commission's okay to take over a television communications band (T-band) for its emergency radio system. The county currently operates on a 1960s-era VHF system, according to *lancasteronline.com*.

A local television station had won FCC approval to use the frequency, but decided to relinquish it.

Paul Quinn, WGAL-TV president and general manager, said,

"When we did the research and realized that was one of the only options that the county had — and we had other less-desirable options — we were glad to do this."

► VIRGINIA

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY'S Fire Department recently implemented changes designed to **limit vehicle accidents** and improve re-

sponse times on fire and emergency medical calls.

Fire and rescue squad volunteers will no longer be allowed to use red warning lights in their personal vehicles while responding to emergency calls. Further, they won't be automatically dispatched to alarms if there are no members at their stations who are ready to respond, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* reported.



Photo courtesy of Equinox Industries Ltd.

Dane County, Wis.'s "snowbulance" is similar to the one pictured above. Both were manufactured in Canada, where the vehicles are much more common, by Equinox Industries Ltd.

► WISCONSIN

The **DANE COUNTY** Sheriff's Office recently used its "**snowbulance**" for the first time — to rescue a woman with a cross-country skiing injury.

Essentially an ambulance on skis, the snowbulance is an enclosed toboggan-like vehicle towed by a snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle. The Sheriff's Office acquired it to help with rescues in hard-to-access locations.

Despite its nickname, it can be fitted with skis or ATV tires and used in all types of weather. The unit has a polypropylene (plastic) enclosure with enough room for a patient and one or two attendants. It's also equipped with an electric heater, a gas shock suspension and interior lights for nighttime rescues.

Dane County Council of Snowmobile Clubs raised \$6,619 to buy the snowbulance and donated it to the Sheriff's Office. The county's Emergency Management Department purchased a second one, according to the *Wisconsin State Journal*.

Mark Sacra, Chesterfield deputy fire chief, told the newspaper the department reviewed best practices in other states. "And we asked, 'Are (your volunteers) still responding from home to answer calls?' ... With traffic and safety concerns, most people stopped doing that several years ago."

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

NACo on the Move

► NACo Officers and Elected Officials

Glen Whitley, NACo president; **Lenny Eliaison**, NACo first vice president; **Christopher Rogers**, NACo second vice President and **Valerie Brown**, NACo immediate past president, along with Larry Naake, NACo executive director and Ed Rosado, NACo legislative director, made Capitol Hill visits with members and staff from the offices of Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio), Minority Leader Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Minority Whip Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), as well as Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), Sen. Ben Nelson (D-Neb.) and other congressional leaders' offices in anticipation of NACo's Legislative Conference to discuss the NACo 2011 Legislative Priorities and the federal budget March 3–4.

► NACo Staff

Stephanie Osborn, deputy director, County Services, spoke as a national partner at the annual recognition event for grantees of the Five Star Restoration Program, in Fulton County (Atlanta), Ga. Feb. 24.

► Coming Up

Andrew Goldschmidt, director, membership marketing, will be exhibiting on behalf of membership recruitment and retention at the Michigan Association of Counties Legislative Conference in Ingham County March 29–30.

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



Andrew Goldschmidt

Financial Services News

Interactive Retirement Planner Enhances NACo Deferred Compensation Program

County employees who want to get a better understanding of how well-prepared they are for their financial needs in retirement now have a new online resource through the NACo Deferred Compensation Program. Nationwide Retirement Solutions has enhanced the program with its new "On Your Side Interactive Retirement Planner," found at www.NRSforu.com/planner. This resource can help retirement investors set goals, track progress and find suggestions to improve their unique retirement outlook — all in about 10 minutes.

"We are excited about this new online resource and its ability to allow users to see what adjustments

they can make to reach a retirement goal," said Anne Arvia, president of Nationwide Retirement Solutions. "County leaders told us Nationwide could enhance the NACo program if we incorporated a simple, but meaningful retirement tool that would help county employees make informed decisions. This guided the development of the Interactive Retirement Planner."

Arvia encourages county leaders, especially decision makers in human resources and benefits offices, to try the Interactive Retirement Planner for themselves. "Once you see how easy it is to use and how informative it can be, its value to NACo program participants becomes a lot clearer."

How the On Your Side Interactive Retirement Planner works

County leaders said their employees wanted online resources that help them set a retirement income goal, provide them with guidance on how to reach that goal, and allow them to compare their results with peers and the market. The Interactive Retirement Planner is designed to meet those objectives. Users can tweak the hypothetical scenarios — years until an investor reaches retirement, contribution levels, years in retirement and annual income in retirement — to see how changes in these categories can impact each other and the retirement planning process.

Nationwide understands that the retirement planning process can be overwhelming. Many tools that provide a big number for a retirement income goal aren't always helpful, and people don't want to be forced into an immediate decision. The new online planner allows individuals to feel confident in preparing for retirement by helping them establish their retirement goals, and then shows them graphically how they can stay on track to reach those goals.

Learn more about the Interactive Retirement Planner

Arvia says the new online planner can be an important feature for promoting the NACo Deferred Compensation Program to workers who have yet to enroll. NACo and Nationwide Retirement Solutions can help you find out more information about the Interactive Retirement Planner, how saving for retirement can benefit counties and their employees, and how adding the NACo program to your benefits package can enhance employee welfare and goodwill.

For additional information about the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, please contact Lisa Cole at NACo, lcole@naco.org or 202.942.4270, or contact Louie Watson with Nationwide at watsonl2@nationwide.com or 614.854.8895.

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

What's in a Seal?



» Santa Clara County, Calif.

www.sccgov.org

Santa Clara County was one of the original counties of California, formed in 1850 at the time of statehood. The original inhabitants included the Ohlone Native American tribe, residing on the Coyote and Calaveras creeks.

The county is named after Mission Santa Clara, which was established in 1777, and named for Saint Clare of Assisi.

In 1882, Santa Clara County tried to levy taxes upon property of the Southern Pacific Railroad within county boundaries. The result was the U.S. Supreme Court case of *Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad*, 118 U.S. 394 (1886), in which the court extended due process rights to artificial legal entities.

After two centuries of an agricultural economy started by the Spanish missionaries, the focus has shifted to technology. Hewlett Packard was founded in 1939 and Fairchild Semiconductor, along with other early innovators were located in the county by the late 1950s. The term "Silicon Valley" was coined in 1971. The trend accelerated in the 1980s and 1990s, and agriculture has been nearly eliminated from the northern part of the county.

Today, Santa Clara County is the headquarters for such companies as Apple, Sun Microsystems, Hewlett Packard, Google, Yahoo, eBay, Intel and many others. The county is the main area of Silicon Valley, which includes several other counties both north and south of Santa Clara.

The seal shows a sunrise over the San Andreas valley along the Guadalupe River.

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

Job Market & Classifieds

► DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND EMERGENCY SERVICES – GILA COUNTY, ARIZ.

Salary: DOQ.

B.A. in Public Health or related field and 3 years' public health exp, 5 years supervisory/mgmt exp; or equiv educ, training and exp. MD pref. AZ Driver's License; County Health Officer Cert. www.gila-countyaz.gov.

► COUNTY MANAGER – CARTERET COUNTY, N.C.

Salary: DOQ.

This position is located in a beautiful resort area (Crystal Coast) on the southeastern coast of N.C. Population is 65,367 and over 219,000 seasonal. Seeking a talented, results oriented professional to serve as the County's next Manager. The County is governed by a seven member Board of Commissioners. Candidate will manage an organization with over 550 employees and a total operating budget of \$90 million.

A minimum of five (5) to seven (7) years of progressively responsible local government and/or private sector experience in management of an organization comparable to Carteret County is required, with an appropriate amount of time spent in a supervisory/managerial role in the public sector. Experience beyond the minimum stated, in a variety of local government or private sector settings, is also highly desirable. The ideal candidate should also possess experience in finance, personnel, public relations, growth management and coastal issues. The salary for the position is negotiable based on the candidate's qualifications and experience and is supplemented by an excellent benefit package.

Please submit detailed résumé with salary history, work related references and County application available at www.carteretcountygov.org to: Myles McLoughlin, Director of Human Resources, Carteret County, 302 Courthouse Square, Suite 215, Beaufort, NC 28516. Closing date for applications, March 31. EOE.

► COUNTY ATTORNEY – GARFIELD COUNTY, COLO.

Salary: \$104,096–\$130,121 annually; DOQ.

The Garfield County Attorney

is appointed by the Board of County Commissioners and supervises the Attorney's office made up of 4 attorneys and 1 paralegal/office manager. Provides advice to the Board, represents the County and its elected officials, represents the Department of Human Services in certain civil matters, prosecutes zoning and building violations, and is heavily involved with the energy industry and its activities in the County.

Looking for an Attorney with excellent management skills. County seat is Glenwood Springs, a gateway to Colorado recreation. Hiring range includes relocation assistance and competitive benefits. Please send your cover letter and resume electronically to apply@peckhamandmckenney.com.

For more information or to request a detailed brochure, call Phil McKenney at 866.912.1919. The brochure is also available at www.peckhamandmckenney.com. Filing deadline is April 4.

► COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER – COUNTY OF TRINITY, CALIF.

Salary: \$93,681–\$107,064 annually; DOQ.

The County of Trinity is seeking a results oriented individual to take a leading role in creating and implementing needed organizational and management strategies necessary to meet the County's current challenges and to develop strategies for future success.

The ideal candidate will possess no less than five years of increasingly responsible experience performing complex budgetary, financial, policy and organizational analysis duties preferable for a county or other large governmental agency, including experience working directly with an elected board or council. A BS or BA degree in business, public administration or a related field or equivalent professional experience is desirable. A Master's degree is preferred. A broad background in planning, monitoring and executing general local government programs and operations as well as experience as a County Administrative Officer, Deputy CAO or Department Head of a California County is beneficial. Salary may include an additional 10 percent salary incentive program.

Apply by 4 p.m. March 31. Contact Monica Stygar at 530.623.1325, Fax 530.623.4222 or e-mail mstygar@trinitycounty.org.

Join the NACo social network ...



www.twitter.com/NACoTweets

www.facebook.com/NACoDC

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

H.R. Doctor: We need to temper our use of technology

H.R. DOCTOR from page 8

telescope driven by the interaction of a computer and GPS system. It is also home to a new advanced digital camera just dripping with megapixels, which will be used in the future for astrophotography, once I learn how to take the lens cap off.

Recently, one of nature's greatest masterworks was visible — a total lunar eclipse. The HR Doctor spent the entire time of the event, about five hours, in the observatory watching with humility and awe at this spectacle.

As the eclipse unfolded, I realized that it was much more beautiful to watch the event with the naked eye or low-power binoculars than it was through the close up view of a high-power telescope. Something profoundly human was lost in the fiddling, eyepiece changing and focusing compared with just watching nature's majesty from a more human and humbler perspective.

In government, there is an obsession in the name of progress and budget-whacking to substitute humans with bytes and bits.

Amid all of my technology, the simple beauty of just watching nature's power was almost lost. Technology gave way to human awe. The danger of losing ourselves to the allure of high-tech is very real.

If you doubt me, think of the last time you needed technical support. You had to leap over high hurdles, likely accidental telephone disconnects, and hours of your life passing by to finally speak with a, no doubt well-intentioned, person in Mumbai or Delhi.

We risk losing our ability to solve our own problems ourselves or with the help of family members, friends or neighbors. We overrely on technology at the expense of helping each other directly. The caring and expert touch of a physician, like HR Daughter Dr. Rachel, is giving way to impersonal medicine by lab work and body scans looked over during the 17-minute duration of the average doctor visit.

In government, there is an obsession in the name of progress and budget-whacking to substitute humans with bytes and bits. In human resources, records can be scanned and indexed, job information and applications can be

submitted online, test scores can be determined and persons put on eligible lists for hiring without much human involvement at all.

As the digital camera and telescope versus the naked eye contest suggested to the HR Doctor, the touch of one of my two-legged

friends (or a four-legged friend like HR Dog Kamala) can be more powerful and more rewarding, then using the latest and greatest 16-megapixel camera.

Telescopes, microscopes, computers and cameras extend our view of the amazing phenomena

of the natural world. They can be truly inspiring and provoke wonder, amazement and curiosity. However, if our technology is not balanced by being able to hold another person's hand, appreciate simple gifts of nature or human endeavor, or work out difficulties directly with a col-

league as well as celebrate success with others, all of our technology will ultimately destroy our society rather than enrich it.

Phil Rosenberg

Phil Rosenberg
The HR Doctor • www.hrdr.net



"Contact Us" provides members with information and answers!

NACo has a free, easy way to ask questions and get information from NACo staff. Just use the "Contact Us" feature on the NACo website to e-mail your question to us. It's in the upper right corner of the NACo website ...



www.NACo.org

If you have a question about meetings, conferences, the website, legislative issues, or want to make an address change, just click "Contact Us" and send an e-mail. Of course, you could also give us a call. The phone number is listed there, too.

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