

NACO National Association of Counties

# CountyNews

| The Voice of America's Counties

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## Obama meets with county delegation

By BEVERLY SCHLOTTERBECK  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

A delegation of 90 county leaders, led by NACo President Glen Whitley, heard from President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden and five Cabinet-level officials at a special White House briefing and dialogue on county issues, May 3.

The day ended with an appearance and remarks from President Obama, who opened on a serious note, extending his sympathies to anyone in the delegation whose county had been affected by the devastating outbreak of tornadoes a week earlier. He next acknowledged the tough decisions county officials make everyday and pledged his support to help them balance



Official White House Photo by Pete Souza

President Barack Obama delivers remarks at a briefing for the National Association of Counties in the South Court Auditorium in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, May 3. The audience is reflected in a mirror at left.

move forward with their plans.

He said that contrary to rumors he believes that states, and counties and cities can do their jobs, and the administration can help by facilitating best practices and getting resources in the right place.

He ended by referring to his announcement on Sunday, May 1 about the death of Osama bin Laden, noting that many people were moved by what the event symbolized. But what the event also symbolized, he said, is America's ability to accomplish its goals when the country puts it mind to it.

Before he left the stage he took time to sign Coconino County, Ariz. Supervisor Liz Archuleta's copy of "Of Thee I Sing: A Letter to My Daughters," which he co-authored with illustrator Loren Long.

The afternoon meeting at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building was arranged by the White House and featured a high-level lineup of administration experts and leaders who participated in three

See **DELEGATION** page 8

### QuickTakes

#### 5 Counties with the Highest TPI

(Total Personal Income / 2009)

Figures in Billions

Los Angeles County, Calif.	\$402.46
Cook County, Ill.	\$244.06
Harris County, Texas	\$196.78
Orange County, Calif.	\$148.37
Maricopa County, Ariz.	\$142.01

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2011

their budgets in a balanced way.

He talked about administration efforts to reduce regulatory and

administrative burdens so counties

can focus on achieving better outcomes at a lower cost. He repeated

his support for the Affordable Care

Act, noting there will be a need to show some flexibility as the states

## Senators decry Medicaid block-granting

By CHARLIE BAN  
STAFF WRITER

U.S. Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.V.) led six colleagues in voicing opposition to a U.S. House budget bill that would block-grant Medicaid at a rally that topped off a full day of Capitol Hill visits for NACo's Large Urban County Caucus. LUCC leaders were in Washington, D.C. for their annual spring fly-in.

Sens. Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.), Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), Al Franken (D-Minn.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) decried the budget proposed by Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) May 4 at a rally in the Senate Visitors Center.

"All of life can desert you, all



Photo by Jim Philipps

LUCC Chair Ilene Lieberman kicks off the Save Medicaid event at the U.S. Capitol May 4. Pictured left to right: Supervisor Liz Kniss, Santa Clara County, Calif.; NACo Executive Director Larry Naake; Commissioner Sharon Barnes Sutton, DeKalb County, Ga.; NACo Past President Don Stapley, Maricopa County, Ariz.; Sen. Richard Blumenthal (Conn.); Lieberman, Broward County, Fla.; Sen. Jay Rockefeller (W. Va.); LUCC Vice Chair Jim McDonough, Ramsey County, Minn.; Sen. Ron Wyden (Ore.); and Sen. Bernie Sanders (Vt.).

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# Counties take energy efforts community-wide

By JARED LANG  
PROGRAM MANAGER, CSD

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) is offering a workshop to help counties engage their communities in energy planning.

The Community Energy Strategic Planning (CESP) Academy provides direct assistance to counties, cities and tribes to develop robust plans that engage local residents and businesses in energy efficiency and renewable energy generation.

Counties are beginning to realize that their role as community leaders on energy issues is just as vital as their efforts to improve efficiency within their own facilities.

To note a few, Loudoun County, Va., Pitkin County, Colo., and King County, Wash. have developed innovative energy plans that involve local residents and businesses. The plans focus on improving quality of life for local residents, reducing the cost of doing business and increasing economic competitiveness.

The CESP Academy is based on plans already developed by leading local governments. NREL will provide the technical expertise needed to help interested counties take the first steps toward a community-wide energy plan.

The CESP Academy is delivered through online, facilitated workshops, with breakout sessions and custom one-on-one assistance.

If a set of collaborative regional local governments expresses interest, CESP Academy faculty and experts will travel to their region to host a workshop series. In addition, a CESP guidebook and resource toolkit are being developed to support the curriculum. These resources will be available to all local governments.

Tune in Thursday, May 12, from 1–2 p.m. EDT for an introductory webinar on how to apply for the program. To register for the webinar, visit: <http://www1.eere.energy.gov/wip/solutioncenter/webcasts/default.html>.

# 'Waters of the U.S.' broadens scope of Clean Water Act

By JULIE UFFNER  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) have released a draft "waters of the U.S." guidance that broadens the scope of the waters subject to regulation under the Clean Water Act.

This guidance was published in the Federal Register on May 2. There is a 60-day comment period, ending July 1.

Its purpose is to clarify for agency field staff what waters are considered "jurisdictional" under the Clean Water Act (CWA) based on Supreme Court cases, current statute and regulations, and relevant science. Jurisdictional determinations will be made on a case-by-case basis.

The document does concede that jurisdiction changes impact state, local and tribal governments, and private landowners.

What waters should and should not be regulated under the CWA has always been highly controversial, especially when discussing federal jurisdiction. Under CWA, "navigable waters" are defined as "waters of the U.S."

This guidance will affect all CWA programs including:

- Section 303: the water quality standards and total maximum daily load programs
- Section 311: oil spill program
- Section 401: state water quality certification process,
- Section 402: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program, and
- Section 404: discharges of dredged or fill material.

Under the guidance, a manmade or man-altered ditch, such as a roadside ditch or flood channel, is considered a tributary. A tributary (or a tributary of a tributary) can be regulated if it meets certain conditions. Non-navigable tributaries can be regulated if they connect through other tributaries to downstream navigable waters and there is a "seasonal" flow. Jurisdictional waters may include perennial, intermittent and ephemeral waters.

The draft guidance is not intended to be a rule and is non-binding. Once finalized, it will supersede existing 2003 and 2008 guidance. It's important to note that the EPA and the Corps hope to use the final guidance as a framework for future rulemaking.

NACo plans to submit comments and is seeking input from the members on how this guidance may impact county operations.

A copy of the proposed draft guidance is available through the Corps' Web page at [www.usace.army.mil/CECW/Pages/nnpi.aspx](http://www.usace.army.mil/CECW/Pages/nnpi.aspx), the EPA Web page at [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov), at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) (docket number EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0409), or the *Federal Register* at [www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=FR](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=FR).

You may submit comments, identified by docket number EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0409, by any of the following methods:

• **Federal eRulemaking Portal:** [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) at docket ID no. EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0409. See the *Federal Register* notice for instructions on submitting comments.

• **Email:** [owdocket@epa.gov](mailto:owdocket@epa.gov). Include EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0409 in the subject line of the message.

• **Mail:** Send the original and three copies of your comments to: Water Docket, Environmental Protection Agency, Mail Code 2822T, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20460, Attention: Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0409.



## In Case You Missed It ...

### News to Use from Past County News

#### ► NACo leadership appointments applications due June 3

Incoming NACo President Lenny Eliason is seeking applicants for a number of appointments to NACo's leadership team. These appointments are for one- to three-year terms, and membership on some of these committees has specific requirements.

The Presidential Appointments Application Form must be completed by anyone who wants to be considered for a leadership or committee appointment for the 2011–2012 presidential year. The application form is available online at NACo's website, [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org). You will find it under "About NACo" ► "Committees and Caucuses" ► "Presidential Appointments."

For more information, contact Karen McRunnel at 202/942-4238 or [kmcrunnel@naco.org](mailto:kmcrunnel@naco.org).

## Summary of 'Waters of the U.S.'

Based on the EPA and the Corps' interpretation of the statute, implementing regulations and relevant case law, the following waters are protected by the Clean Water Act:

- traditional navigable waters
- interstate waters
- wetlands adjacent to either traditional navigable waters or interstate waters
- non-navigable tributaries to traditional navigable waters that are relatively permanent, meaning they contain water at least seasonally, and
- wetlands that directly abut relatively permanent waters.

In addition, the following waters are protected by the Clean Water Act if a fact-specific analysis determines they have a "significant nexus" to a traditional navigable water or interstate water:

- tributaries to traditional navigable waters or interstate waters
- wetlands adjacent to jurisdictional tributaries to traditional navigable waters or interstate waters, and
- waters that fall under the "other waters" category of the regulations.

The guidance divides these waters into two categories, those that are physically proximate to other jurisdictional waters and those that are not, and discusses how each category should be evaluated.

The following aquatic areas are generally not protected by the Clean Water Act:

- wet areas that are not tributaries or open waters and do not meet the agencies' regulatory definition of "wetlands"
- waters excluded from coverage under the CWA by existing regulations
- waters that lack a "significant nexus" where one is required for a water to be protected by the CWA, and
- artificially irrigated areas that would revert to upland should irrigation cease.

## CountyNews

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# Harness the Power of the Information Age with Social Media

By D.I. SMITH

NACo President Glen Whitley's County Government Works (CGW) initiative is great motivation for county officials to get started on social media.

If you as a county official have not tried using social media, think of it as another way you can help your residents understand what counties do — by networking directly to constituents using the communications tools they are using every day.

I set up Twitter, Facebook, MySpace and LinkedIn accounts in early 2007 as I announced my candidacy to seek election as a Madison County, Miss. supervisor. At first, I thought of it simply as a novelty that would get a chuckle when voters visited my website. I was not posting much new information.

But when Barack Obama's presidential campaign started getting positive press coverage for its use of social media and social networking, I decided that I would exploit these capabilities at the local level. I started reading all the articles I could find. I frequently added meaningful content. I worked to increase the number of my online "friends" and determined how to further leverage my new social media tools with my "eNews UPDATE" newsletter.

In the beginning, I didn't fully understand the capabilities of Facebook "accounts," "pages" and "groups." I only set up a Facebook account. I soon learned about the power of groups and pages when I attended a presentation by a member a member of Obama's presidential campaign staff. Facebook allows you to send messages

to members of specific groups and pages and to set up "events" to reach additional people.

The great thing about Facebook is that people look at their Facebook page many times each day. In fact, Facebook is used more than Google! Social media can be used to drive traffic to your county websites and disseminate time-sensitive information such as road and bridge closings and other local emergencies.

Recently in Madison County, there was an emergency closing of a bridge on a crucial connector road. We used social media to inform our citizens before the traditional media could get the word out. The timeliness of the notification allowed working mothers to adjust their routes while picking up their children from day care or school without first arriving at the closed

bridge and then having to take long, out-of-the-way detours.

Another example: A major water main break was discovered late on a Sunday night, shutting off water to a large subdivision. I was notified by a resident by email. Then, through texting, the utility district and maintenance alert teams were notified. Soon, the location of the break was discovered and repairs began less than 30 minutes later. All was accomplished without a single telephone call.

There are no silver bullets or shortcuts for harnessing the capabilities of social media. It requires thought and effort. There must be "fresh" information—updates that are useful and meaningful.

But how often should information be posted? I don't have a set schedule. Normally I post new

information at least four or five times a week and sometimes more often depending on the news.

Deciding what to post can be a challenge too, especially if you are new to using social media. A good technique is to announce agendas for board meetings and public hearings and then link to news media coverage of the meetings. I also leverage my "eNews UPDATE" newsletter by not only emailing it, but distributing it widely using my Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn networks.

I think most counties and county officials would find Facebook pages very useful since the information is automatically posted to the "wall" of everyone who "likes" the page. You can also send "message updates" to those who are connected.

See **COUNTY GOV** page 6

How did Gaston County, NC,  
save **28,500 hours** a year?

Since implementing Laserfiche in 2007, Gaston County has standardized enterprise content management across 8 county departments and processes, from finance and payroll to DSS and case management, saving over 28,500 man hours—the equivalent of 14 FTEs—a year. Three more departmental deployments are planned this year.

"Standardization is vital to the long-term success of the whole organization," says CIO Brandon Jackson. "We know that once we start deploying to larger departments, savings will mount up into the millions of dollars."



Visit [Laserfiche.com/gc](http://Laserfiche.com/gc) to download the Gaston County case study white paper.

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# Counties North and South mark Civil War sesquicentennial

By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

It's been called the "Gettysburg of the West." The Battle of Glorieta Pass, fought in present day Santa Fe and San Miguel counties, was a turning point of the Civil War in the New Mexico Territory.

A Union victory prevented "the Confederates from taking control of gold mines from Colorado to California in an effort to finance the Confederate Army and secure seaports on the West Coast..." according to a Santa Fe County proclamation marking "Battle of Glorieta Pass Days," in honor of the March 26–28, 1862 campaign.

The county issues a proclamation annually for the battle, whose significance, the county says, "has gone unrecognized" for more than 149 years.

But this year, which marks the sesquicentennial of the start of the Civil War, the proclamation took on added significance, beginning the run-up to the 150th anniversary of the battle next year.

In Santa Fe County and across the United States, counties are highlighting — or gearing up to do so — their roles in the war that tore the nation apart.

From well-known battles in Virginia, where 123 — the most of the war — were fought, to Colorado, Idaho and Indiana, each home to a single battle, according to the U.S. National Park Service, counties are honoring their Civil War histories in expected and unexpected places.

Santa Fe County Commissioner Kathy Holian, who introduced the Glorieta Pass resolution, said the county wants to work with the U.S. Postal Service to have a commemorative stamp produced. She and her husband own property on Glorieta Mesa, above the pass, where they often find "a button from a Civil War military jacket" or other artifacts.

## Guarding the Confederate Capital

Henrico County, Va. which virtually surrounds the former Capital of the Confederacy, Richmond, is one place where you would expect a sharp focus on the events of the war.

"Henrico, because of its location, was militarily strategic because there were no roads to Richmond that did not lead through Henrico County, and so we were almost the outer defenses," said Sarah Pace, president of the Henrico Historical Society, which is planning the county's official Civil War observance along the 400th anniversary, this year, of the county's founding. She is planning a "signature event" for September



Photo courtesy of the Public Opinion/Ryan Blackwell

The statue of a symbolic Union soldier faces South, on guard, as a laser light show April 16 simulates the burning of the Franklin County Courthouse in Chambersburg, Pa. by Confederate forces on July 30, 1864. The reenactment was part of the kick-off of the Pennsylvania Civil War 150 observance.

around the theme "Henrico County: Gateway to Richmond." The focus, she said, will be "the home front:" how day-to-day life unfolded in spite of — and because of — the war.

The county also commissioned a book about its role in the Civil War, *Henrico County Field of Honor*, by Louis Manarin. It chronicles every significant battle within the county's borders, which saw the most action of any Virginia jurisdiction.

In Charles City County southeast of Henrico, an annual Civil War reenactment, May 21 and 22, at Fort Pocahontas will this year help mark the war's sesquicentennial.

On May 24, 1864, the fort was attacked by Confederate Cavalry led by Maj. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee. The action resulted in a decisive victory for U.S. Colored Troops, who had built and manned the fort, and were outmanned by the larger attacking Confederate force.

## The Road to Gettysburg

A Union perspective on the war was on display in Franklin County, Pa. in April. It was in Greencastle in the county where the first soldier to be killed north of the Mason-Dixon Line — Union Cpl. William Rihl — was felled by musket fire.

Gen. Robert E. Lee and his 65,000 to 70,000 troops camped in and around Chambersburg, the county seat, early in what would become the Gettysburg Campaign in 1863. "Franklin County was integral to the prelude, and then you have the retreat from Gettysburg," said Janet Pollard, the county's director of tourism.

"Just days after the Battle of Gettysburg, the second largest battle on Pennsylvania soil was fought in

Franklin County, and it spilled over into Adams County and two counties in Maryland."

Almost a year later, refusal of a Confederate ransom demand for "100,000 in gold and 500,000 Yankee dollars" resulted in the burning of Chambersburg.

"They burned the core of town, and over 500 structures were burned — over 2,000 people were left homeless," Pollard said. The resulting \$1.5 million in real estate and personal property damage "was devastating."

The event was reenacted on a rainy evening, April 16, with a laser light show as stand-in for the flames.

## They Came from Everywhere

While many states saw no battles on their soil, soldiers from counties

throughout the Confederacy and the Union enlisted in the cause. Therefore, even the likes of Oakland County, Mich. are highlighting their partisans' roles in the Civil War.

With the 5th Michigan Regiment Band playing nearby, County Executive Brooks Patterson recently unveiled an "Oakland County in the Civil War" map. It highlights the stories of what the people of Oakland County accomplished during the Civil War. "This map is a treasure trove of stories and facts for Oakland County students," Patterson said. "Our goal is to get this map into every Oakland County classroom."

The county's Civil War stories include:

- a county woman who enlisted disguised as a man and later became a spy for the Union

- a soldier spared from a Confederate hanging because of the intervention of a Confederate family with whom he had shared his food rations, and

- a teacher from the county who became commander of Michigan's 102nd Colored Regiment.

The map also notes the locations of 12 confirmed Underground Railroad stations and 13 unconfirmed Underground Railroad stations that exist today in the county.

Meanwhile, back down South, Knox County, Tenn. Commissioner Mike Brown introduced a resolution last fall to form a commission to coordinate Civil War 150 activities in the county.

A confessed "Civil War buff wannabe," he said there were several skirmishes in Knox County. He said two of his ancestors, brothers, found themselves on opposite sides during the war. "One brother guarded his own brother at Andersonville Prison," according to stories handed down from Brown's grandmother

Not lost on any county is the fact that Civil War history sparks tourism, especially during this landmark focus. Throughout the next four years, there will be many sesquicentennials of specific events that happened between 1861 and 1865.

Tennessee's observance began in Nashville last November and will conclude in Knoxville, seat of Knox County, in 2015.

Civil War tourism "is big business," Brown said, but the sesquicentennial is also an opportunity to educate younger generations — "who don't know why it was or what it was about.

"We can turn it into a living, walking history... can take a step back in time."



Photo courtesy of Charles City County, Va.

Musket fire pierces the air in Charles City County, Va. during a past reenactment of the May 1864 Battle of Wilson's Wharf near Fort Pocahontas. The 14th annual reenactment of the event will take place May 21 and 22.



# NACo past-president champions technology in record keeping

By CHARLIE BAN  
STAFF WRITER

What Harvey Ruvin has learned from 43 years of local government service has also been what has kept him in the game.

"You have to swing that bat at every pitch," he said. "A legislator's job is to vote, but unless they sponsor bills, they aren't a dynamic part of the process. On the local level, when you pass laws, you can see results immediately and can modify and adjust."

That in-the-fray mentality has powered his career, which included 20 years on the Miami-Dade County, Fla. Commission, during which he served as NACo president in 1987-1988, and 19 years as clerk of Miami-Dade County courts, a position he holds now.

He is planning one more run for reelection next year, hoping that will give him time to oversee the complete digitization of records handled by his office, which includes 1,500 people.

The opportunity to use technology for public service is what motivated him to run for clerk in the first place and has been the theme throughout his tenure.



Harvey Ruvin  
Miami-Dade County Clerk

"When I started, our last technological upgrade was to ball point pens from quills," he joked.

So far, the family, traffic and probate courts have all gone paperless; deeds and mortgages from the 1960s are now available, and Ruvin is setting ambitious goals for archiving public meetings that should benefit any interested party.

Besides the tremendous cost savings — digitizing traffic courts saved \$30 million in personnel costs over a three-year period — putting records online has made them more accessible and streamlined his seven countywide offices' operations.

Copies of documents no longer cost \$1 per page, and one person viewing a file doesn't prevent someone else from seeing it at the same time. One project in the works should also alleviate an albatross of a storage issue.

Commissioners' meetings have been broadcast on the Internet for years, but indexing clips to meeting minutes has saved viewers hours of wading through footage. He hopes to broadcast subcommittee meetings, too, and will soon start digitizing years worth of VHS tapes of meetings dating back to the 1980s.

"This project makes Miami-Dade the most transparent county in the country," he said. "Every discussion that takes place is visible to anybody, and I really think different people can find it very helpful, knowing which commissioner says what."

"It's useful to community activists, lobbyists, the media — anybody. It says to the citizenry, 'We're not hiding anything,' and it will be a model of transparency for county government."

Ruvin has been a Floridian since he was 15, when his family moved briefly to Lakeland from Mount Vernon, N.Y., before moving again to Miami. He worked as a delivery

boy for his father's New York City deli, a job he cherished for the opportunity to listen to jazz great Count Basie, who rehearsed nearby and often ordered take-out.

Basie apparently remembered young Harvey, who awkwardly tapped his foot on the upbeat, as he listened during those practices. Years later, Basie made an exception to his policy against playing at political fundraisers, and played one for Ruvin in 1984 — just two weeks before succumbing to pancreatic cancer.

"I'm grateful for what I've been able to do in a career I have enjoyed," he said. "I've always felt my calling is in local government. Getting feedback from the people who are affected by policies I work on is enriching, and the opportunity to provide solutions for them is gratifying."

He remains a NACo board member and plans to make the trip to Multnomah County, Ore. for the 2011 national conference after years of absence.

He praises NACo as a focused avenue for input, particularly because it provides the only national county government perspective.

"Issues come and go, and obviously NACo can only represent a few issues with the most consensus among its members, but the organization does it so well that it plays an important policy role in Washington," he said.

"It's a vehicle for bonding the leaders and encouraging them to share their best practices, so every county is better off for having their officials participate."



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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# County recorders, registers of deeds: We're losing money to MERS

By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

One-point-three million dollars in Guilford County, N.C. since 2005; \$15 million in Montgomery County, Pa. since 2004—that's how much those counties' recorders or registers of deeds say they've lost in mortgage-related filing fees for the same reason—Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., more commonly known as MERS.

And those dollar estimates are “conservative,” registry officials say. They've called on their county and state treasurers to withdraw all government funds on deposit with MERS-affiliated banks as a “wake-up call.”

When a mortgage is sold or servicing interests are transferred, MERS tracks the transaction in its electronic database but doesn't record additional mortgage assignments, nor pay fees to local recorders and registers.

“If every county started pulling money from these banks, it would give them a wake-up call... It's like, wait a second, people are angry,” said Nancy Becker, Montgomery County's recorder of deeds.

MERS was created in 1998 by the mortgage banking industry “to streamline the mortgage process by using electronic commerce to eliminate paper,” according to its website. It's the only national, centralized database that tracks mortgage loans and was supposed to make counties' jobs easier. MERS-affiliated banks hold some 60 million mortgage loans.

“MERS greatly reduces the workload of county recorders, resulting in lower operating expenses for the county recorder's office,” MERS says in its mission statement. Other intended beneficiaries include mortgage originators, wholesale and retail lenders, title companies and consumers, among others.

Several county registers and recorders vehemently disagree.

“I have a sworn duty to record, preserve and protect the chain of title for all documents, and a fiduciary duty to collect recording fees,” Becker said, “and I feel MERS has undermined both of these duties.”

County land records officials say the problem with MERS began amid the overheated housing market that preceded the mortgage meltdown. MERS, acting as agent for its bank affiliates, pays recording fees when a mortgage is first recorded. But the county officials say when MERS banks began bundling mortgages and selling them as mortgage-backed securities, the subsequent multiple resellings

of mortgages deprived them of additional fees.

Things were moving fast in the mortgage banking industry in the go-go first decade of the 2000s, and MERS was created, in part, because the industry felt local land recording offices were paper-bound and insufficiently computerized to keep up.

John O'Brien is register of deeds for the Southern Essex District of Massachusetts. His office won a national award for putting public records online in 2000, and he rejects the notion that registers were stuck in the 20th century, if not earlier.

“They claim that we were back in the days of the quill pen and oil lamps,” he said. “Nothing could be further than the truth, I think, for registries across the county and in particular mine.”

In some states, foreclosures have been contested or overturned because MERS could not substantiate who owns the mortgage, and several state attorneys general have launched investigations into MERS's practices.

“It's very hard to determine ownership rights right now, and MERS has been an enabler of that,” said Jeff Thigpen, Guilford County register of deeds and a former county commissioner.

Becker said there have been instances when homeowners—who had not defaulted on their loan—have been foreclosed on by the wrong bank because MERS sold the same loan twice. While the homeowner faithfully paid one lender, the other found them in default. “None of this is malicious,” she said. “It's just the sheer volume of transactions happening...”

She thinks the concept of MERS, when it was first established, was a good one. “What happened was it just got sloppy.”

Two associations that represent registers and recorders—the International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers (IACREOT) and the National Association of County Recorders, Election Officials and Clerks (NACRC)—have not taken

official positions on the MERS issue.

However, Jack Cunningham, Kane County, Ill. register of deeds and president of NACRC, said the association “is very much aware of it and monitoring it” and is “cautiously watching” the issue.

O'Brien has also asked his state to pull its public funds from MERS-affiliated banks. He is scheduled to make a presentation about MERS at IACREOT's annual conference next month. His is a state office, but eight of the 21 register of deeds offices in Massachusetts are county offices. He said statewide, counties have lost “about \$200 million” in unpaid filing fees.

“Counties survive on fees,” he added, “so every time someone concocts a way to avoid a fee, it hurts everyone.”

In his state, as in others, mortgage filing fees support the land records office but also provide other community benefits. O'Brien's \$75 fee to record an assignment includes \$20 that funds community preservation in cities and towns, and \$5 to make computerization improvements in his office. Becker's \$54 fee includes \$13 for affordable housing in Montgomery County.

Thigpen maintains the lost recording fees would help local elected officials reduce budget deficits and maintain core services such as public education and public safety in this time of fiscal stress for counties.

In a letter to Massachusetts Atty. Gen. Martha Coakley (D) last November, O'Brien asked her office to investigate MERS, saying it “may have wrongfully bypassed Massachusetts recording requirements,

thereby frustrating the borrower's right to know the true identity of the holder of their mortgage.”

MERS Communications Manager Karmela Lejarde said in an email, “The use of MERS is in compliance with the purpose and intent of the state recording acts.

“MERS members pay recording fees when the mortgage is recorded,” she continued. “When Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. is the mortgagee (i.e., holds the legal title to the mortgage lien), there is no need for an assignment of the mortgage lien between its members because MERS remains the mortgagee holding legal title to the mortgage as the common agent for them. The need for an assignment is eliminated because title to the mortgage lien has been grounded in MERS.”

Nevertheless, O'Brien said as a result of MERS, “For the first time in my tenure ... I can't honestly look somebody in the eye that has a MERS mortgage and tell them who owns it, because they (MERS) have not followed the same rules as everyone else.”

As states' investigations into MERS's practices continue, O'Brien hopes recorders and registers of deeds will “have a seat at the table.”

“Anybody negotiating a settlement with these banks on these recording fees and the damage that they've done to the chain of title and such, registers of deeds should be in that room,” he said. “We're the front-line men and women who deal with this every single day. We need to be in that room before this thing is shuffled off to Buffalo.”

## County supervisor touts social media's value

COUNTY GOV from page 3

Facebook “landing pages” are very powerful tools and should be considered by all who use Facebook. Check out my examples:

- <http://facebook.com/DISmithJR>
- <http://facebook.com/MadisonCo>
- <http://tinyurl.com/MadCoFB>

I am convinced that counties and elected officials must embrace social media just as they use print and broadcast media. Individual county officials should determine how blogs, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube and Plaxo (smart address book) can best fit in as part of the daily operations of local government. You,

as a county official, can make yourself more accessible and connected to the people you represent.

So get on board with your citizens and constituents with a first-class social media program. Just do it. You can continually change it and add to it to fit your needs. It is always a work in progress, just like serving in county government.

*D.I. Smith serves the citizens of Madison County, Miss., as supervisor, District 3. He is vice chair of NACo's Telecommunications and Technology Steering Committee and a member of the Information and Technology Committee. Find D.I. on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube using DISmithJ or [www.DISmith.com](http://www.DISmith.com).*

## Word Search

### Counties with National League MLB Teams

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

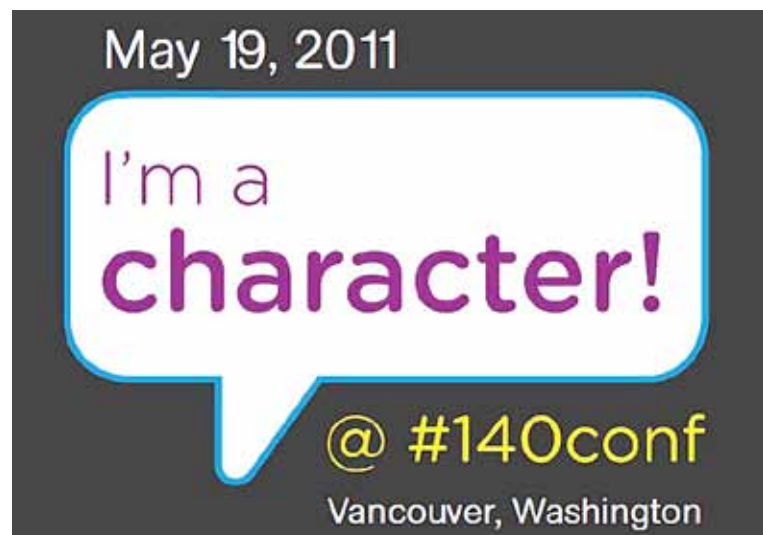
**ALLEGHENY**  
(Pittsburgh Pirates – Pa.)  
**COOK**  
(Chicago Cubs – Ill.)  
**DENVER**  
(Colorado Rockies – Colo.)  
**FULTON**  
(Atlanta Braves – Ga.)  
**HAMILTON**  
(Cincinnati Reds – Ohio)  
**HARRIS** (Houston Astros – Texas)  
**LOS ANGELES**  
(Los Angeles Dodgers – Calif.)

**MARICOPA**  
(Arizona Diamondbacks – Ariz.)  
**MIAMI-DADE**  
(Florida Marlins – Fla.)  
**PHILADELPHIA**  
(Philadelphia Phillies – Pa.)  
**QUEENS**  
(New York Mets – N.Y.)  
**SAN DIEGO**  
(San Diego Padres – Calif.)  
**SAN FRANCISCO**  
(San Francisco Giants – Calif.)

\*Washington, D.C. and St. Louis are not included because they are independent cities.  
Source: MLB.com • Created by: Christopher Johnson



## '140' social media online conference 2 b available



By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

"Sometimes what we say can't be said in 140 characters. Therefore we also have a Facebook home <http://on.fb.me/7q8uUY>," Mecklenburg County, N.C. "tweeted" on May 4.

Those 115 characters, not counting the comma and quotation marks, refer to the twin 800-pound gorillas of social media that the county uses — Twitter and Facebook.

For counties and their departments not already in the social media sphere, an upcoming free conference will offer an all-you-can-eat buffet of examples of how some local governments, and others, are using these tools. And it will be available nationwide via the Internet.

140ConferenceNW—so named for Twitter's 140-character message limit—will be a fast-paced, all-day conference May 19, 8 a.m.–5 p.m. PDT, featuring about 40 topics and 70 speakers. No PowerPoints, just stories ranging from 5 to 20 minutes long, said Cheryl Bledsoe, emergency manager for the Clark Regional Emergency Services Agency in Clark County, Wash., who is one of the event's organizers. The NW is for its Pacific Northwest point of origin.

Presenters will share their experiences, case studies, lessons learned, challenges and wisdom about social media — good, the bad and the ugly. For in-person attendees, the conference will be at the Vancouver Hilton, Vancouver, Wash.

"The unique thing about a 140 conference is it's also live-streamed out over the Internet, which means that folks can watch it all over the United States," she added, or anywhere in the world.

The conference is an outgrowth of an after-action report on Clark and three other southwest Washington counties' response to the H1N1 (swine) flu epidemic a year and a half ago, Bledsoe said. The other

three are Skamania, Wahkiakum and Cowlitz. One of the recommended "corrective actions" was improving the use of social media in government and government agencies — and addressing "attitudinal barriers" to doing so.

It's being funded through a grant awarded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to enhance social media understanding throughout the public sector.

"The cool thing about this conference is you get the three points that every speaker is supposed to make, and instead of an hour you get it in five to 10 minutes," said John Wiesman, Clark County public health director and vice president of the National Association of County/City Health Officials (NACCHO), who is a co-host of the event.

Eric Holdeman, blogger, emergency management consultant and former director of King County, Wash. emergency management (1996–2007), is another co-host. With so many speakers, he said, his main role will be to keep things moving — that and give a presentation titled "Adapting to 'No.'" It will offer advice for organizations that have "an anti-social social media policy."

Bledsoe will discuss the challenges of conducting an emergency drill in "a social sphere" that simulates a disaster with made-up, but realistic-sounding, scenarios. "The real challenge is putting fake information into a real data stream," she said.

For more information or to register for the conference, visit <http://nw.140conf.com>, or email Bledsoe at [cheryl.bledsoe@clark.wa.gov](mailto:cheryl.bledsoe@clark.wa.gov). Watch a YouTube video of Bledsoe talking about social media's role in emergency management at <http://youtu.be/AcmTh6goQ1g>.

## Spaceport nears completion, counties look for development

By CHARLIE BAN  
STAFF WRITER

As NASA prepares to retire the Space Shuttle, a new mode of space travel is nearing fruition in the New Mexico desert.

Spaceport America, the world's first commercial launching facility for space flight covering 18,000 acres, is close to 90 percent finished. As space tourists line up for launches costing approximately \$200,000 each, the two nearby counties in New Mexico are preparing to explore new frontiers—in development and industry.

Sierra and Doña Ana counties' voters narrowly approved creating a tax district to help fund the construction, in 2007 and 2008, respectively. Those counties are waiting to see what comes of their investment.

The first tourist flight is scheduled for early 2013, but it will happen "when it's safe and ready," according to Aaron Prescott, the spaceport's commercial division director. Until then, he projected the facility could see half-a-million visitors a year.

The anchor tenant, British billionaire Richard Branson's venture Virgin Galactic, has a lease running through 2028 and similar businesses are starting to follow in its wake.

"The hope was that in funding it, and the majority of the voters were convinced it will help make southwestern New Mexico the leader in the next phase of space exploration," said Doña Ana County spokesman Jess Williams. "It remains to be seen what the actual economic impact is, but we certainly hope to benefit beyond the temporary construction jobs."

Sierra County is looking to other areas that have seen rapid growth for guidance on how to handle it.

"We've been restricted by budget pressures, so we haven't done many infrastructure improvements yet," said Development Coordinator Jeff Cox. "We're trying to plan based on what we've seen happen in places like Arizona and El Paso, Texas when they have to take on thousands of troops for border security."

Cox said the spaceport is transforming the county's image. "People see we have space to grow, a great climate and lots of potential. We wouldn't have that attention without the spaceport."

Prescott said the past four years have been about "beating the drum of construction," now it's time to transition to operations.

Before full-time operations are



Photo courtesy of Spaceport America

Construction crews install energy-efficient glass on Spaceport America's Terminal Hangar Facility in Sierra County, N.M.

up and running, the spaceport will open a visitor's center, scheduled for this May.

"We think the economic impact from the spaceport initially will be terrestrial tourism, people coming to see the infrastructure that goes into space flight," he said. This will kick-start tourism for the communities, get dollars flowing, and at the same time we can get services in place, bugs worked out and keep the work going to prepare the spaceport for launches."

The spaceport will offer both vertical and horizontal launches and has seen a few vertical launches so far. Virgin's flights will be horizontal. The vertical, or traditional space launches, are by Armadillo Aerospace, which has been carrying payloads from area schools that validate basic laws of physics.

So far as the initial job infusion, the basic workforce should be around 500 jobs, Prescott said, with Virgin employing 75–150. When the spaceport is fully operational,

hospitality management could add another 300 jobs, and spaceport tenants are projected to create around 100 jobs each.

Davin Lopez, president and CEO of Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance, said Doña Ana County should ensure that it has the capacity to support ancillary industries related to spaceflight.

"Since (the spaceport is) not in Doña Ana County, our approach is to look at what industries will bud out as a result," he said, "...but we also have to make sure the supply chain is strong."

For all the spaceport's novelty, the excitement will amount to little if it doesn't become a regional economic engine.

"It is unique, because it gets us toward greater diversification of industry," Lopez said. "We have a lot of government work here, the spaceport will serve to open the door to private development, and that will ultimately make the region more economically sustainable."

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



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

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[www.twitter.com/NACoTweets](http://www.twitter.com/NACoTweets)  
[www.facebook.com/NACoDC](http://www.facebook.com/NACoDC)



# Mark Craft installed as new NACE president

Mark A. Craft was installed as president of the National Association of County Engineers (NACE) at its 2011 Annual Management and Technical Conference in Minneapolis April 17–21. He is engineer manager of the Gratiot County, Mich. Road Commission.

Highlights of the opening ceremonies included remarks from Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) and

Mike Opat, chair, Hennepin County, Minn. Board of County Commissioners. Remarks were provided at the General Legislative Session from NACo President Glen Whitley, county judge, Tarrant County, Texas; John Horsley, executive director, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials; Tom K. Sorel, commissioner, Minnesota Department of

Transportation and Robert J. Fogel, senior legislative director, NACo.

Craft has served in county engineering for the past 23 years. He has been the county engineer and the managing director for all operations of the Gratiot County Road Commission since 2006. He and his staff are responsible for the management of 1,183 miles of roadway and 120 bridges.

Prior to joining the Gratiot County Road Commission, Craft spent 17 years serving the Eaton County Road Commission in Charlotte, Mich. He previously has served as NACE president-elect, secretary-treasurer and Michigan's state director to the NACE Board and is a member of the County Road Association of Michigan.

He holds a B.S. in civil engineering from Michigan State University and earned his Master's in Business Administration from Western Michigan University. He is also a registered professional engineer in the state of Michigan. Active in

local community activities, he and his wife Colleen have three children.

Other officers elected or installed included Richie Beyer, county engineer, Elmore County, Ala. as president-elect; Mark K. Servi, highway commissioner, Barron County, Wis. as secretary-treasurer; Ramon D. Gavarrete, county engineer, Highlands County, Fla. as Southeast Region vice president; Duane J. Ratermann, county engineer, Knox County Ill. as North Central Region vice president; Jon F. Rice, managing director, Kent County Road Commission, Mich. as Northeast Region vice president; George A. Johnson, director of transportation and land management Agency, Riverside County, Calif. as Western Region vice president, and Tom Stoner, county engineer, Harrison County, Iowa as South Central Region vice president.

Additionally, Gregory A. Isakson, county engineer, Goodhue County Minn. was selected as Rural County Engineer of the Year,

and James W. Piekarczyk, county engineer; Kankakee County Ill. was selected as Urban County Engineer of the Year. Heather Smith, assistant engineer, Barry County, Mich. Road Commission was selected the Project/Program Manager of the Year.

The National Association of County Engineers, with approximately 1,900 members in 50 states and Canada, has a four-fold objective:

- to advance county engineering and management by providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and information,
- to foster and stimulate the growth of individual state organizations of county engineers,
- to improve relations and the spirit of cooperation among county engineers and other agencies in the solution of mutual problems, and
- to monitor national legislation affecting county transportation and public works departments and through NACo, provide NACE legislative opinions.

## White House cabinet officials fielded questions

DELEGATION from page 1

panel sessions and Q&A sessions.

The day opened with remarks from Ron Sims, former King County, Wash. executive and now HUD deputy secretary. The popular, effervescent Sims drew a large group of well wishers as he mingled with the county officials before his formal introductions of the day's first panelists.

The panel discussions alternated with remarks from DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano, and Heath and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. Vice President Biden, who soon abandoned the lectern and the stage in favor of a closer engagement with the audience, followed them.

He worked the room like a popular professor, entertaining but also offering sober reflections on the country's economy, future as a world economic leader and the two visions of America that are driving the current deficit debate.

The three panel sessions explored major domestic issues that critically affect counties. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan

and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson handled panelist duties for the Infrastructure and Sustainable Communities session. Assistant Attorney General Laurie Robinson; Pamela Hyde, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration head; and John Linton, director, Office of Correctional Education, Department of Education fielded questions for the "Breaking the Cycle of Jail And Poverty" panel.

The final panel, "Health Reform Implementation and Medicaid," prompted the most comments and questions from county officials, many of whom expressed concern about the future of Medicaid and public hospitals. Cecilia Munoz, White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs director, moderated the panel, which included Cindy Mann, deputy administrator, Center for Medicaid, CHIP and Survey and Certification at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, HHS; and Jeanne Lambrew, deputy assistant to the president for health policy, White House Domestic Policy Council.

## Senators frame Medicaid preservation as moral and responsible to counties

MEDICAID from page 1

of fortune can desert you, all of opportunity can desert you, but Medicaid does not, as it currently stands," Rockefeller said. "If you turn Medicaid into a block grant, and you force it onto the counties or the states, they will do what they have to do and raise property taxes, and they will do it because they care about these people, because otherwise they are helpless."

Rockefeller, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, pledged his opposition to a budget that block-granted or capped Medicaid, but warned that the Ryan budget was not the worst-case scenario.

"Poor people don't vote, don't organize, and those who don't like them do organize, they're a vulnerable target," he said. "It's a heartless town, and this is a heartless budget, but frankly, some of the amendments that are being offered in the Senate are even worse than the House budget."

Wyden pointed out the illusory nature of the Medicaid proposal.

"These state block grants proposals are not about flexibility, they are a mirage," he said. "They are a back-door cost shift on the local governments that are already walking on an economic tightrope."

Sanders, a staunch single-payer health care supporter, said "What we're talking about when we talk about slashing Medicaid is a death sentence for God-knows how many thousands of Americans."

LUCC Chairwoman Ilene Lieberman, Broward County, Fla. commissioner, pointed out that the health problems of Medicaid-qualified people don't go away just because Medicaid has been capped or block-granted. She mentioned that in 23 states, counties are required to provide health care services to low-income residents.

"This is why we are alarmed by proposals like those in the House-passed Budget Resolution which would turn Medicaid into a block grant — or other proposals to cap Medicaid," she said. "We fear that what looks like helpful Medicaid 'flexibility' in Washington and Tallahassee may be experienced quite differently out in our counties."

"In fact, Medicaid 'savings' for the U.S. Treasury on the scale proposed by the House budget would necessarily require deep cuts to eligibility and benefits, reimbursements to public and private providers — and terrible choices for county officials. Commissioners would be forced to cut local services or to raise property taxes to sustain them.

Both options will harm people and put a drag on our fragile economy."

Lieberman was joined at the rally by NACo board of directors member Tim McCormick, commissioner, Ohio County, W. Va. McCormick said for 50 years Medicaid has been the way resources have been deployed to ensure a basic level of health care security for the country's most vulnerable low-income children, seniors and disabled.

"The deep pockets of persistent poverty in rural America made Medicaid a literal lifeline for many in our communities," McCormick said. "Rural residents — both those under 65 years of age and seniors — are more likely to be enrolled in Medicaid compared to their urban counterparts."

"Rural residents, and especially in Appalachia, face substantial challenges in terms of health outcomes and access to health care," McCormick said. "The deep cuts that would be required to achieve the savings called for in the House-passed budget or in the artificial spending caps under discussion would make an already bad situation much, much worse."

(NACo Media Relations Manager Jim Philipps contributed to this report.)



**CONTACT US**

**"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](http://www.NACo.org)

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



# NACo at the White House

## County officials meet with Obama administration

All photos by Tom Goodman and Bev Schlotterbeck



HUD Deputy Secretary Ron Sims introduces the day's first discussion topic: poverty and jails.



All eyes are on Vice President Joe Biden during his remarks to NACo members.



NACo Second Vice President Chris Rodgers adds his question about re-entry to the mix for the first panel.



Benton County, Wash. Commission Chair Leo Bowman raises the issue of gang prevention and intervention with the poverty and jail panelists.



# County officials meet with Obama administration



Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano talked about DHS' "See Something. Say Something" campaign, Fusion Centers and FEMA efforts to provide better response at disaster sites through local liaisons.



HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius takes her turn at the lectern during the five-hour-long meeting with top administration officials.



Cook County, Ill. Board President Toni Preckwinkle engages the health care implementation panel in a discussion about Medicaid.



White House Intergovernmental Affairs Deputy Director David Agnew, who worked closely with NACo in organizing the day's events, introduces Vice President Joe Biden.



Sonoma County, Calif. Supervisor Shirlee Zane takes a turn at questioning the health reform implementation panel.



# County officials meet with Obama administration



Cumberland County, N.J. Freeholder Lou Magazzu (above), and Tarrant County, Texas Commissioner Roy Brooks (below) discuss health care reform implementation issues with the panelists.



Vice President Joe Biden works the room at the May 3 meeting of county officials and the Obama administration.



Michael Strautmanis, deputy assistant to the president, introduces members of the day's second panel: (l-r) EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan; and Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood.



Jeanne Lambrew, deputy assistant to the president for health policy (center), responds to a question from the audience about health care reform. She and Cindy Mann (r), deputy administrator and director, Center for Medicaid at the HHS Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, staffed the panel on Health Reform Implementation and Medicaid, which was moderated by Cecilia Munoz (l), director, White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.



# County officials meet with Obama administration



Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon questions the panel on infrastructure and sustainability.



(Above) County officials line up for their turn at the mic. Each panel fielded comments and questions. Over the course of the afternoon, panelists responded to more than 50 questions or comments.



Audience members listen to Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius.



Hennepin County, Minn. Commissioner Peter McLaughlin (r) tells administration officials on the Breaking the Cycle of Jail & Poverty panel that his county is "getting crunched" by rising corrections costs. Panel members included (l-r) Assistant Attorney General Laurie Robinson; Pamela Hyde, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration head; and John Linton, director, Office of Correctional Education, Department of Education.



Fulton County, Ga. Commission Chair John Eaves suggests to members of the jail and poverty panel that the correctional system is dealing with the shortcomings of educational systems and that there is a need for an "early warning" system to identify, at a very young age, children who are at risk of failing.



# Paid on-call system cuts emergency response costs

By **CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON**  
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

When historic flooding hit southeastern Minnesota in 2007, Terry Stoltzman sprang into action. Stoltzman is Anoka County, Minn. emergency services manager, and when the sirens sound he's ready, regardless of where calls for help take him.

After helping people get to higher ground with a Houston County, Minn. counterpart for 36 straight hours, Stoltzman knew there had to be an easier way for emergency services to handle disasters as well as training. The answer: create a paid on-call system.

"With budgets the way they are, we needed to find an economical way to have depth in the department," he said. "Then I thought of the days I was an on-call fireman and the idea was born."

Stoltzman developed a plan, unique in Minnesota, that allows more emergency-services personnel to band together and coordinate plans to move distressed citizens away from catastrophic natural disasters.

Working within the county framework for budget and staffing, the department is able to use the "temporary employee" classification to hire paid on-call team members. This allows the flexibility of staffing to meet the need rather the number of hours a full-time equivalent would work if there is plenty of work. But if there is little work — or reduction in funding through grants — hours

can be modified without eliminating staff.

By adopting a similar staffing system used by most fire departments, Anoka County is able to achieve appropriate staffing levels for the department. When the call goes out, the paid on-call staff provide quick and effective support to their department.

The system allows the county to realize significant cost savings. As in most parts of the country, including Minnesota, a large amount of grant funding is spent on contractors' work that can be easily accomplished by county staff for considerable savings. It is typical for contractors to make \$100 or more per hour for projects based on homeland security grants. All paid on-call staff are paid \$20 dollars an hour. The savings can be used for other projects.

"Models vary depending on counties," Stoltzman said. "Some are geared more toward response or administrative. Counties need to stick with what works best for them and their citizens."

Anoka County is Minnesota's first county to employ such a system. For Stoltzman and the county's effort, they were recently named a 2010–11 Local Government Innovations Award winner by the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.

For more information on this program and how it can benefit your county, email Terry Stoltzman at [Terry.Stoltzman@co.anoka.mn.us](mailto:Terry.Stoltzman@co.anoka.mn.us).

## See the best of Chelan County on WIR pre-conference tour

Chelan County, Wash. tourism officials visiting Washington, D.C. for NACo's Legislative Conference in March often were asked: "What is the one thing that I need to see when I arrive in Chelan County?" for the Western Interstate Region (WIR) conference May 18–20.

Without fail, the tourism boosters answered, "Why see one thing when you can get a much better picture with a tour?"

Two tours of the area are being offered for conference delegates — both educational and fun. Attendees may choose to explore the area's wineries, farms, a hydroelectric plant, aluminum smelter and even a visit to the region's first craft distillery, just to name a few highlights.

Your step-on tour guides will be Chelan County Commissioners Ron Walter and Keith Goehner. It doesn't get any better than that! Register now at [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org).

While you're in Chelan County and Wenatchee, explore the food, wine and industry of North Central Washington and enjoy a few of its 300 days of sunshine. The county offers more than 30 award-winning and picturesque wineries, and a variety of unbeatable cultural and recreational opportunities.

For more information or to register for the conference and pre-conference tours visit [www.regonline.com/Register/Checkin.aspx?EventID=945650](http://www.regonline.com/Register/Checkin.aspx?EventID=945650).

# Model Programs

## FROM THE NATION'S COUNTIES

Pinellas County, Fla.

## Video-Equipped Buses Make Inmate Visitation Convenient

By **CHARLIE BAN**  
STAFF WRITER

Family members of inmates at the Pinellas County, Fla. Jail can still talk to their loved ones, look into their eyes and show them how their children have grown.

But they don't have to travel up to two hours each way to do so.

A video visitation bus has been making the rounds to four different locations throughout the 280-square-mile county, making a heart-wrenching trip the least pressing issue at hand.

"It's a long trip, it could be a two-hour bus ride with transfers, and some folks can't afford to drive, so it provides a service to our residents," said Pinellas County Sheriff Jim Coats. "Family members shouldn't be penalized because their friend or relative is in jail."

The county started doing video visitation in 1997. It put an end to the myriad of security concerns inherent in making personal visitation possible on a 55-acre jail campus. After 11 years of having a central visitation location, though, the demand grew and visitors congested the jail. The economic downturn in 2008 made Coats and his staff aware of the mounting financial demands associated with traveling to the



Photo courtesy of Pinellas County, Fla. Sheriff's Office.

Pinellas County, Fla. sheriff's deputies test computer terminals in the county's video visitation bus.

jail from far-flung parts of the county to visit family members during a relatively limited visitation period.

With a Department of Justice State Criminal Alien Assistance Program award, the department bought a bus at auction and outfitted it with five computers and video cameras, and rolled it out to communities within the county to supplement opportunities to visit inmates. For the sheriff's department, it also meant fewer people clamoring to travel to the jail for visits.

The bus made its debut in February 2009 and its pilot trips to South St. Petersburg were a hit. After expansion to Tarpon Springs yielded similar results, the bus, replaced by a new model bought with grant funding, became a daily feature.

The center also moved to a Web-based scheduling system in late February 2011, an improvement over the previous telephone scheduling system. The buses can accommodate up to 30 visitors per day, in 40-minute sessions.

"With the number of visitations we have now in the communities, I'm not sure if we could serve the number we can if we didn't have the bus," Coats said. "We haven't had to use any general funds to do it, so it has been beneficial for everyone."

The program has been named one of the 25 semifinalists for the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government's Innovations in American Government Award.

*(Model Programs from the Nation's Counties highlights exemplary county programs. For more information on this and other Innovations in Government semifinalists, including other county programs, visit [www.ash.harvard.edu/Home/News-Events/Press-Releases/](http://www.ash.harvard.edu/Home/News-Events/Press-Releases/).)*

## NACo on the Move

### » NACo Staff

- **Andrew Goldschmidt**, director, membership marketing, presented a workshop entitled: "Membership in the National Association of Counties (NACo): What Does it Mean for your County?" at the Kansas Association of County Commissioners Conference in Sedgwick County May 5.

- **Jackie Byers**, director of research and outreach, presented a workshop titled "Restoring the Fine Art of Civility to County Government" at the Kansas Association of County Commissioners Conference May 4.

### » Coming Up

**Andrew Goldschmidt**, director, membership marketing, will speak about member benefits and exhibit on behalf of NACo membership recruitment and retention at the Illinois Association of County Officials Annual Conference in Sangamon County May 10.

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



## The H.R. Doctor Is In

# The Power of 'No'

While my beautiful granddaughter Evie is not even 1 year old yet, we and her parents will be looking forward to the folklore of the parenting business in which the favorite word of kids in their second year of life is "no." That is a time in which they are limited in their vocabulary. They have fewer other words available for them to use as they interact with others. Besides, loud and dramatic use of no gets attention and results.

When we fast-forward in life, however, we find remarkably that when we are confronted by bullying in school, or workplace ugliness such as unlawful discrimination, sexual harassment, threatening behavior and bullying, many people seem to have forgotten how to say no.

In the HR Doctor seminars, there is reference to a survey confirming that when confronted by verbal abuse, more than three-quarters of respondents say they

"... just put up with it." In many of the specific cases in which the HR Doctor has helped investigate or intervene, the perpetrator of those uncivil, if not also unlawful behaviors, is often met by victims who react with silence or just walk away shaking their heads. They may say to others words like, "Oh, that's just Oscar. He's harmless. Ignore him and he will go away." In fact, he will not "just go away." The perpetrator wins in these cases. The victim may have moved on from that one particular encounter, but there is a lingering fear, loss of sleep or sadness about the situation. There is a worry that there will be another such encounter, perhaps tomorrow or the next day.

Without the very clear use of the word no, the discriminator, harasser or bully will feel empowered or enabled to continue with the evil behavior and do more of it. A great disservice is done in the world of

human resources, not to mention sound and ethical public or business management, when we fail to say no in strong and definitive ways at appropriate times.

In fact, making clear in a strong, assertive manner that you object to unlawful behavior, such as race discrimination or sexual harassment, is the first legal step in bringing about an effective management intervention. Just saying no is very powerful. Failing to say it is dangerous and can be deadly.

Alexander the Great is reputed to have said that the people of Asia during his lifetime were slaves because they had not learned to pronounce the word "no." Winston Churchill added that if only the nations of Europe had said in concert "No! Stop!" to Adolph Hitler, the world of the 1930s and 1940s would have been far more peaceful and had

far fewer horrors than it ultimately witnessed.

"Just putting up with it" is the wrong response to wrong behavior or performance. In a modern world of instant communications it is far less personally dangerous for the victim to than it once was. The current turmoil in the Middle East is generated by dissatisfaction with oppressive rulers and a perception of the lack of rights and freedoms. Standing on a corner in downtown Cairo, Egypt and shouting out words regarded by the government as revolutionary would have and still does in many places, resulted in a quick response from large men with automatic weapons.

Doing the same thing, however, to large, even worldwide crowds through instant messaging, Twitter, Facebook and smartphone cameras and applications is far less likely to

result in a hostile response to that protester by the agents of a ruthless government. Witness the fact that in the past several months, some of those who have ruled their countries with iron fists were brought down, not by military power but by the power of the collective and creative use of the word "no."

Take a lesson from 2-year-olds. Saying no is important. Failing to say it at the right time and in the right circumstances can create long-term harm to a child, to an adult, to a government employee, and to those who would otherwise get away with doing things that are just plain wrong. Behaving like a 2-year-old can be a very powerful tool to prevent being a victim.



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

## What's in a Seal?

» **Fulton County, Ga.**  
[www.fultoncountygga.gov](http://www.fultoncountygga.gov)



Fulton County, named after famed steamboat innovator Robert Fulton, was created from the western half of DeKalb, an adjacent county, along with Milton and Campbell counties in 1853.

Initially governed by a panel of five justices known as the "Inferior Court," or "Court of the Ordinary," the Georgia General Assembly created a Board of Commissioners of Roads and Revenues in 1880. The five-member board was elected by the Grand Jury and served four-year terms. In 1955, the board was reduced to three members but was increased to seven in 1975.

The county seal was created in 1989 and symbolizes a more progressive county. The tree represents birth, fertility, life and art. The 12 horizontal graphic bars represent a forward look with a horizon-like effect symbolizing vision and progress. The white tree against the dark background emerges boldly symbolizing a break from the past.

These elements work together to present a message of boldness, art, diversity and vision — all of which characterize Fulton County.

*(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).)*

Keep up with NACo online ...

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



## Financial Services News

# Deferred Compensation Program Achieves Assets Milestone

County workers across the U.S. have entrusted the NACo Deferred Compensation Program with more than \$10 billion of their retirement assets, according to year-end data from Nationwide Retirement Solutions.

"This latest milestone is the product of a relationship between NACo and Nationwide that reaches back more than 30 years," Anne Arvia, president of Nationwide Retirement Solutions, said. "Since its inception, the NACo Deferred Compensation Program has grown to become the largest supplemental retirement savings program available to county employees — due to the commitment of Nationwide working in concert with NACo to meet the needs of county employers and workers."

The NACo-Nationwide relationship began in 1980 when the NACo Deferred Compensation Program was designed exclusively for counties to help their employees save for retirement. Nationwide, the administrator of the program, delivers to counties the tools to understand regulatory and legislative issues, plans to increase employee education and participa-

tion, and plan-sponsor reporting and updates.

The program:

- is county employee-focused and technology-based so participants have easy, 24/7 access to their retirement accounts
- offers the On Your Side Interactive Retirement Planner, which provides an in-depth look at retirement savings, and helps individuals to calculate how much they may need to reach their financial goal at retirement and provides tips on how to get there
- offers the Morningstar Guidance Online service, an independent and interactive resource that can provide objective information about investing for retirement, developed from participant-provided information and program data
- provides local Nationwide Retirement specialists, licensed professionals who can help county workers understand the benefits and features of the program
- receives oversight from an advisory committee composed of participating county officials from around the country
- surveys participants every two years to determine ways to better

promote the program to eligible counties that do not offer it, help counties that do offer the program to encourage increased participation, and help county workers recognize the program as a valuable benefit in their compensation package, and

- is endorsed by 41 state associations of counties.

Seven NACo staff members are dedicated to the growth and success of the 457 Deferred Compensation Program. Nationwide and NACo work together to keep the 457 Deferred Compensation Program competitive and strive to deliver an overall value for counties and their employees.

For additional information about the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, please contact Lisa Cole with NACo by email [lc@naco.org](mailto:lc@naco.org) or by phone 202.942.4270 or contact Louie Watson with Nationwide, by email [WatsonL2@Nationwide.com](mailto:WatsonL2@Nationwide.com), or by phone 614.854.8895.

*(Financial Services News was written by Bob Beasley, Communications Consultant, Nationwide Retirement Solutions.)*





# News From the Nation's Counties

## ► ARIZONA

The “**Start Our State**” committee filed paperwork to circulate petitions that would ask the Legislature to allow **PIMA COUNTY** to seek statehood, the *Tucson Sentinel* reported.

The initiative, which would appear on the November 2012 ballot if enough signatures are collected, wouldn't directly seek to create a new state. It would ask the Legislature to give Pima County permission to request that Congress consider statehood for what some call Baja Arizona.

The Maricopa County-dominated Legislature doesn't serve Pima County's interests, attorney Peter Hormel, one of the organizers of the drive, said.

“Our representatives are overwhelmed,” he said. The Legislature “is not sending us law enforcement money for the border. Most of our taxes are paying for infrastructure and construction in Maricopa.”

## ► CALIFORNIA

California counties are one signature away from **easier access to jail financing** as they prepare to house 40,000 inmates who will be transferred from state prisons.

The State Assembly passed a budget bill amendment that would allow counties to put up 10 percent of a jail's overall cost, rather than the current 25 percent. The Senate already approved the revision to Assembly Bill 94, which goes to Gov. Jerry Brown (D) for signing.

The change would make it easier for counties to tap into \$1.2 billion approved for jail financing by the Legislature in 2007. That money would help build more county jail space as the state hands down oversight of some lower-level convicts and parolees. Brown also is trying to shift other state responsibilities to counties to close the state budget deficit.

The amendment's supporters say counties need more money to handle so many new inmates, but are struggling to come up with the matching money because their revenues have fallen amid the recession. Under the new version of AB 94, no county could receive more than \$100 million.

## ► FLORIDA

A year-long project aimed at helping youngsters stay out of trouble has culminated with a new handbook.

The **ST. JOHNS COUNTY** Sheriff's Office, the State Attorney's Office, St. Johns County School Board and the PACT Prevention Coalition worked together to create the *Know the Law* handbook for middle and high school students in the county.



Photos courtesy of Cook County, Ill. Clerk's Office

Cook County Clerk David Orr marries Nandika Doobay and Matt Gervais on the 10th anniversary of their meeting.

## ► ILLINOIS

**COOK COUNTY** Clerk David Orr gave two local couples a reason to care about Prince William and Kate Middleton's wedding.

Orr made plans to crown the first couple to get a marriage license April 29 as the county's “**royal**” couple. He ended up crowning two couples — Brad Gentert and Jamie Kempinski, who came in for a license, and Matt Gervais and Nandika Doobay, who were married that morning. The couples celebrated with a three-tiered wedding cake donated by a local bakery and got to take a second cake home.

The clerk's office held a similar event in 1981 when Prince William's parents — Prince Charles and the late Princess Diana — got married.

The four agencies contributed experts who spent the past year researching and writing to come up with relevant, important information. Drugs, alcohol, tobacco, parties, weapons, cyber crimes, gangs and even driving are covered in the handbook, which explores the consequences of poor choices and actions.

## ► IOWA

In a move to save money, **WEBSTER COUNTY** may **cremate residents** who cannot afford a funeral or don't have family to cover the costs. The county currently buries indigent residents. *The Messenger* reported that the county pays \$1,100 per burial, compared to \$700 for each cremation.

Webster County officials say the county pays for about 30 burials a year. They say the ordinance does not pay for a funeral service, flowers, obituaries or grave services.

## ► KANSAS

**DOUGLAS COUNTY** commissioners are being asked to consider extending **health care coverage to domestic partners**.

If the commission approves, Douglas County could become one

of the first Kansas counties to extend health care coverage to domestic partners.

County Commissioner Mike Gaughan told the *Lawrence Journal World* that the move would help the county retain employees and remain competitive.

Sarah Plinsky, assistant county administrator, said each employee covered under the county's insurance costs \$4,380 annually. The county estimated that extending coverage would add seven to 10 people to the plan.

## ► NEW YORK

The **ULSTER COUNTY** Legislature is digging into its wallet to **combat welfare fraud**. The body approved giving nearly \$26,000 to the county district attorney's office to hire a part-time investigator to prosecute food stamp recipients involved in a \$1 million scam, the *Daily Freeman* reported.

Last November, police raided a gas station and convenience store, and arrested the owner and two employees on charges they stole up to \$1 million from the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

## ► NORTH CAROLINA

• **ROWAN COUNTY** is getting out of the **baseball stadium business**. It's selling its 75 percent stake in Fieldcrest Cannon Stadium to the city of Kannapolis, according to the *Salisbury Post*.

The stadium, built 16 years ago, is home to the Kannapolis Intimidators, a Class A farm team of the Chicago White Sox.

The \$3 million deal will make the city the sole owner of the stadium. Under an agreement, Kannapolis will pay the county in \$60,000 annual payments over 50 years starting in 2013–14.

• The **CHATHAM COUNTY** Board of Commissioners has **rescinded a policy** approved by last year's board requiring all new county buildings or renovations (of at least 20,000 square feet) to be designed and built to LEED Silver standards.

Board Chair Brian Bock said the change gives the county more flexibility in pursuing environmental sustainability.

“This should be decided on a case-by-case basis to ensure the best use of county funds to meet our goal of being energy-efficient and environmentally friendly,” he said. The U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a voluntary program to improve buildings' resource use and energy efficiency.

## ► OREGON

Scammers have been contacting local establishments in **BENTON COUNTY** claiming to be **health inspectors** and asking for personal information, county officials are warning the public.

County Health Department officials have received three reports within the past five months of individuals contacting restaurants or stores within the county claiming to be health inspectors. The current scam seems to be targeting Asian restaurants and grocery stores, county officials said.

“We are very fortunate that in Benton County most of the restaurant managers and owners know our inspectors and will call us as soon as they notice something suspicious,” said Bill Emminger, Benton County Environmental Health Manager. “That is what has happened in every instance so far.”

## ► PENNSYLVANIA

**BRADFORD COUNTY** officials say they were not notified immediately — as state law requires — when a blowout at a natural gas well April 19 allowed

**hydrofracturing fluids to leak** from the well, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported.

Ninety percent of fracking fluid, used to break up subterranean shale formations and release gas, is typically sand and water, with less than 1 percent of it made up of a mix of potentially toxic chemicals.

Francis Roupp, deputy director of Bradford County Emergency Management, said the first sign of a problem was when the Chesapeake Energy well lost pressure, indicating that “something broke” around 11:45 p.m.

He said the county wasn't notified until almost 2 a.m.

## ► VIRGINIA

• The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center has named **ARLINGTON COUNTY** a gold-level **Walk Friendly Community**, the only county among the freshman class of honorees.

The program, in its first year, recognizes localities nationwide for their commitment to improving walkability and pedestrian safety. It was launched in October 2010 and is funded by FedEx and the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration.

The 26-square-mile Arlington shares gold status with Ann Arbor, Mich., Hoboken, N.J. and Santa Barbara, Calif. Higher-level platinum honors went to Seattle. More information about the program is available at [www.walkfriendly.org](http://www.walkfriendly.org).

• **STAFFORD COUNTY** is starting a **high-speed Internet mapping campaign** using the Accelerate Virginia speed test. Residents are asked to test the speed of their Internet connections, which will help identify areas in the county in need of broadband availability.

The campaign's goal is to obtain results from a minimum of 300–500 speed tests taken throughout the county. This data will help to identify any broadband dead zones.

“Broadband has become a ‘utility,’ similar to gas, electric and telephone service, and not just a convenience,” said Mark Dudenhefer, chairman of the Stafford Board of Supervisors. “Stafford County needs community-wide broadband coverage so that our residents, students and business owners can get connected to the Internet no matter where they are — home, work, or school.”

(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).)



## Research News

# Counties Cope with Gas-price Déjà Vu

If memory serves, didn't we just go through a major increase in gasoline prices in a short period just a few years ago? But here we go again. And just as counties were seeing the daylight on the horizon with their finances many are really feeling the pain of higher gasoline prices on their budgets.

The counties getting hit the hardest are those that have a July to June fiscal year and have just started their final fiscal quarter. Continuing revenue shortfalls throughout the fiscal year have already created the need for many counties to revisit their budgets adopted last July. The sudden and continuing increase in fuel prices is hitting them at a difficult time.

Broward County, Fla., whose budget year starts in August, has a large fleet of vehicles and has been forced to go into its reserves to keep the county's cars, trucks and buses on the job. Even though the county had allocated a nearly \$15 million fuel budget and increased bus fares last October, it expects to have to go into the reserve to the tune of

\$1.68 million to meet the financial requirements of the transit system.

The Sheriff's Office thought it had provided sufficient insulation for an increase in fuel prices but wasn't expecting prices to go up as fast and as high as they have, but it still hopes not to exceed its current \$8 million budget. To be on the safe side, the Board of Supervisors is adding an additional \$500,000 for fuel for the next fiscal year.

Montgomery County, Texas Sheriff's Department says that the price of gas in the greater Houston area is usually below the average in most other parts of the country but the recent sharp increase has hit law enforcement, transit districts and school districts pretty hard. Chief Randy McDaniel expects that the continuing increases in fuel prices will put the Sheriff's Office budget in the red before the end of the year.

The increased fuel costs have forced the Sheriff's Office to make changes in patrol routes and how it transfers prisoners. It has contracted with fueling stations, other than the one designated for sheriff's patrol

use, so that cruisers can fill up without having to drive to the county seat to fill up. What is so different this time is that because of a tighter budget there are no other line-item areas to "borrow from."

Many counties across the country also have a sales tax on gasoline. The uptick in gas prices is likely to mean a decrease in anticipated revenue as drivers cut back their trips because of the price jump. Except for counties in New York that is.

The state of New York may be one of the few states that allow counties to charge gasoline tax as a percentage of the cost per gallon. As other counties dig further into their budgets to make up for increased fuel prices or declining sales tax revenue, Onondaga, Saratoga and Warren counties are all experiencing windfalls. Even though the state and federal taxes on gasoline are charged per each gallon of gasoline, the counties have the authority to tax gas as a percentage of the total price.

Taxes on gasoline in New York average about 65.6 cents per gallon, normally making it the second high-

est tax burden in the nation behind California. Even though the counties see additional revenue, some officials say the increase in the cost for the county's own gasoline needs likely outweighs the spike in revenue.

Onondaga County has experienced some tough times recently, but it is suddenly experiencing an increase in revenue to the tune of \$12 million above its fund balance goal, according to County Comptroller Robert Antonacci. A modest recovery and increased sales tax revenue from rising gasoline prices could account for the bump. The surplus could mean a cut in taxes, and with county legislators and the county

executive up for reelection this year, what county official wouldn't want to run on a platform of what to do with the surplus?

Suffolk County, N.Y., on the other hand, is one of several New York counties that passed a gas cap that will provide some gas tax relief to its residents. This cap, effective June 1, 2011 will cap the portion of the cost that a county can tax on a gallon of gas at \$3. Several other counties took similar steps back in 2008.

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

## Job Market & Classifieds

### ► ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER FOR FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT – CITY OF CORAL GABLES, FLA.

*Salary: \$102,357–\$140,546; DOQ.*

The City of Coral Gables, Fla., a beautiful, a progressive, international, coastal and historic city, is seeking a highly qualified professional who is inspired by interesting challenges of an established, but dynamic community for the position of Assistant City Manager. The city has a population of 45,500 residents, has a vibrant downtown district and is home to the University of Miami. It is proud to be ranked by *Forbes.com* ninth, out of America's Top 25 Towns to Live Well and America's sixth most successful walkable suburb by the Wall Street Journal. Coral Gables operates under a commission/manager form of government and is well known for its active and involved citizenry.

Under the guidance of the City Manager this position serves as a key member of the city's leadership team with direct responsibility for the effective implementation of City-wide strategic and operating initiatives and policies. The Assistant City Manager will direct and oversee operations of the City of Coral Gables corporate internal services, including the Finance, Human Resources and Information Technology Departments, as well as the intergovernmental relations function, and the Internal Audit and Communication Divisions of the City Manager's Office. Also, serves as liaison to the Offices of the City Attorney and the City Clerk. This is an exceptional opportunity for a

seasoned professional at the forefront of their profession and who is committed to the highest level of customer service and community collaboration.

The ideal candidate must be able to think strategically and exercise considerable initiative and independent judgment. Must also be a creative thinker, a visionary leader and is a person who understands responsibility and accountability. The position requires strong organizational development skills, experience in developing policies and procedures. This is a highly visible position which demands excellent communication, presentation, negotiation and management skills.

**Qualifications:** Candidates interested in applying must have a Bachelor's degree in Finance, Accounting, Business Administration, or a related field. Master's degree in Finance, Accounting, Business Administration or CPA preferred. A minimum of eight years' progressively responsible and relevant management experience in a municipal or county government. Salary and benefits package includes: The annual salary is negotiable depending on qualifications.

**Benefits include:** vehicle allowance of \$450 per month, medical, dental and life insurance, retirement plan, leave allowances, and more. Deadline: Open until filled. To ensure consideration for this position, interested candidates should forward resume, cover letter and five references immediately, via email, to [HRD@coralgables.com](mailto:HRD@coralgables.com) or fax to 305.460.5518. The City of Coral Gables is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Drug Free Workplace.



*Photo courtesy of the Birmingham News/Mark Allmond*

Workers begin cleaning up debris from an EF4 tornado that struck Cullman County Ala. April 23. The twister tore off part of the courthouse roof (seen here) and cut a wide path of destruction through historic downtown Cullman. Across the state hundreds of county employees and officials experienced damage to their homes and property, according to Sonny Brasfield, executive director of the Association of County Commissioners of Alabama.

ACCA has established a fund to assist county employees throughout the state. Contributions can be mailed to ACCA, 100 N. Jackson St., Montgomery, AL 36104. Checks can be made out to ACCA, but note "County Employee Relief" in the memo line. "It's horrible," Brasfield said. "Pictures don't really give you the idea of what it's like."

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