

NACo: Don't close deficit gap on backs of states, localities

By JIM PHILIPPS
MEDIA MANAGER

NACo President Lenny Eliason has urged the 12 members of the so-called congressional "super committee" to exercise a "balanced approach" as they search for ways to close the federal budget deficit by \$1.5 trillion.

In an Aug. 31 letter to the bipartisan and bicameral Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, Eliason said the deficit couldn't be reduced only by cutting domestic, non-military discretionary programs. He stressed that county governments are partners with the states and the federal government in providing important services and programs to the American people.

"Our 'special interests' are our constituents, who have put their trust in us as public servants to adopt sound fiscal policies while providing for the basic services they pay for," said Eliason, chairman of the Athens County, Ohio Board of Commissioners. "NACo supports a balanced approach to tackling America's debt."

Earlier this year, NACo adopted four key principles that Congress and the Obama administration should consider to guide their deficit-reduction discussions.

- The budgetary deficit cannot be solved only by cutting domestic, non-military discretionary programs.
- Deficit reduction should not be accomplished by shifting costs to counties, (e.g. cuts to Medicaid) imposing unfunded mandates, or by preempting county programs or taxing authority.
- Federal assistance to state and

See DEFICIT GAP page 9

Federal sign mandate proposed to be eliminated

By ROBERT FOGEL
SENIOR LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) announced Aug. 30 that it is proposing to eliminate dozens of regulations on traffic signs that are likely to save counties millions of dollars. Of specific interest to NACo members are federal requirements that certain signs be replaced by specific dates

to meet minimum retroreflectivity requirements.

Many county officials and county engineers, including representatives of the National Association of County Engineers (NACE), had expressed concerns about the compliance dates because of current economic conditions and the view that this was an unfunded mandate. Comments on this proposed rule are due on or before Oct. 31.

Compliance dates have been eliminated. In their place, the DOT proposes that local and state governments replace the signs when they wear out. Overall 46 deadlines, including timetables for minimum reflectivity, would be scrapped.

"A specific deadline for replacing street signs makes no sense and would have cost communities across America millions of dollars in unnecessary expenses," Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said.

See SIGN MANDATE page 9



Photo courtesy of Image Makers Advertising and Cornerstone Photography LLC.

Crowds gather to watch the Beach Boys at The Waukesha County Fair, the oldest in Wisconsin. As counties feel the pinch of a tightening budget, celebrations like this one face increasing challenges. (Read more in Research News on page 11)

Native heritage guides board's first Navajo chair

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

The Navajo people have a saying: *T'áá hwó aji t'éego* — "It's up to you." It could be Lena Fowler's personal creed.

While she has shaped a lot of her own destiny, the sentiment has more to do with community than with self-determinism.

"If you need something in life, it's up to you to do it," she explained of the philosophy. "If there's a need out there, it's up to you to help."

Fowler will have countless opportunities to do so over the next year, while she presides over the Coconino County, Ariz. Board of Supervisors, as the first Navajo in the county's history to chair the board. She assumed the post Aug. 15, selected by her fellow supervisors. Helping is part of her heritage.

"Where we live, I grew up riding horses, and I knew everybody's livestock. People would come to our house and my little brother, Ken, and I would be asked to go out and look for a certain horse; we knew the

brands and we helped out people that way," she said with a laugh. "That's the earliest that I can remember that we were helping people."

See NAVAJO CHAIR page 6

CountyNews Features

QuickTakes

Top 5 Corn Producing Counties in Texas

- 1 · Dallam County
- 2 · Hartley County
- 3 · Sherman County
- 4 · Castro County
- 5 · Moore County

Source: FarmLand.org

INSIDE »



Counties queue up for QR codes » Page 5

In a County News survey: Local leaders weigh in on cell phones and public order » Page 2

Chronic diseases kept in check with Living Well program » Page 4

Comics carry safety messages to Clackamas kids » Page 9

County News Survey ...

Should public order trump cellphone usage?



BART for interfering with First Amendment rights and suggested that all levels of government may now feel emboldened to follow BART's example.

In late August, *County News* asked a random sample of NACO members what they thought. Here are their responses.

■ We are all public officials who are paid by public tax dollars. People have the freedom of speech. And even though it is new technology they should have the freedom of speech via that tool. I cannot see any justification for this. Train disruption is not an element of public safety, which may be the only justification. We should not as government employees be looking for ways to limit freedoms. We should be looking for ways to better serve our customer, the public.

— Tina Kelle
Council Chairman
Morgan County, Utah

■ I do not feel that public officials are justified in curtailing cell phone service, unless deemed necessary by order of the president of the USA. I do feel that public officials are justified in curtailing cell phone usage in public meetings, including themselves. It is very disruptive to have someone in the audience or on the board to have a cell phone ring during a public meeting. There are times when it is necessary to be available, but the phone can be on vibrate.

— Janet McCartney
Commissioner
Cass County, Neb.

■ As an elected official, I do believe we have an obligation to try to maintain a certain level of functionality of public transportation services. However, I am concerned that some elements of our society are into disrupting things just because they can — they

seem to get a rush from the power they wield. My first thought when I heard about this shutdown of the towers was to reflect on how Saddam Hussein used to keep control of his countrymen. He would turn off power, water, whatever he needed to maintain control. I don't want us to go there.

— Charlie Castlen
Fiscal Court Commissioner
Davies County, Ky.

■ Even though it might be more "convenient" to the government for citizens not to have cell phones, it is more important for the citizens to have communications. More citizens will be hurt by having cell phones cut off than for the "lawbreakers" to lose their communications.

— J. Rives Manning, Jr.
County Commissioner
Halifax County, N.C.

■ Citizens are innocent until proven guilty. We should not curtail free speech. Shutting down cell towers is a violation of the First Amendment.

— Brad Harding
Board Member
Peoria County, Ill.

■ I believe that BART acted legally and I would support such actions in the future.

— Keith Swanson
County Commissioner
Grant County, Minn.

■ Any method used in the name of safety and security of our population should be used judiciously and I do not believe we can rule out the banning of cell phones as a methodology.

— Ann English
Supervisor
Cochise County, Ariz.

■ I believe it was wrong for BART to shut down cell service.

See CELLPHONES page 3

Are public officials justified in curtailing cellphone service to maintain public order?

On Aug. 18, the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system shut down cell towers at four of its stations. According to media reports, BART officials had gotten wind of planned protests over a BART police action and hoped to prevent organizers from recruiting protesters via social media.

A previous protest on July 11 resulted in train disruptions and multiple arrests. Many have criticized

Counties get by in the age of budget cuts

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

According to many public opinion polls, Americans want to see the government spend less. Thanks to the recent economic downturn, that's happening by force, and counties have, thus far been able to minimize the changes beyond internal administration. Next year, however, the public may see the budget cuts start to show up in their daily life.

Clark County, Wash. faced a shortfall of more than \$25 million in 2010. In balancing its budget, County Commission Chairman Tom Mielke said the county tailored its services to be more efficient. As it turned out, cutting permitting staff hours was a shrewd move, because with the recession, fewer people needed permits for building work.

He insists the cutbacks have been a catalyst for the county to improve its operations.

"It's become very positive for government," he said. "It forces us to look at how we're doing things and be more efficient. If we were flush, we would be a lot less likely to look at what we do as closely as we have. It puts more responsibility on us to find better ways to work."

One such way was enlisting more volunteer labor. When plans to close parks for four months met with public resistance, the county

came to an agreement with private fishing groups to do basic work in a steward's role, with the county providing support services like trash collection.

"We added a paid employee to coordinate volunteer work, which has ultimately saved us a lot of money," he said. "That position has paid for itself many times over."

The county gave 15 unions 2 percent cost-of-living increases in exchange for those employees contributing more to their health insurance plans.

There has been some pain, mostly absorbed by employees, like a two-year wage freeze and cutbacks on travel and delays in purchasing equipment. Worries about a second biennial shortfall are looming.

"We do see that light at the end of the tunnel is smaller than what we thought it was," he said.

Despite its cost relative to the shortfall, cutting a lifeguard's job from a swimming hole caused the county to get a lot of flack.

Hennepin County, Minn. tried to insulate the public from the impacts of budget cuts to balance a more-than \$10 million shortfall. County Administrator Richard Johnson said instituting unpaid leave for county employees and using more of the county's fund balance did a lot of the work, and contracting out some corrections services and revising the human services workflows

have also absorbed the damage.

If the shortfall continues, Johnson said the next step will be closing one of the county's seven service centers and tightening library hours.

"We'll have to reduce access to our collection — only lend to county residents, cut the number of items people can check out at one time — maybe reduce hours and probably reduce the amount we spend on the collection," he said. "Downloadable items are more popular and don't prevent more than one person from using them at the same time, so that stretches our collection."

Alamance County, N.C. Manager Craig Honeycutt said after cutting back to cover an \$8 million

shortfall from its \$125 million total budget, the county is down to its bare bones.

"We're trying our best to limp by and not to let the public feel the pain from these cuts, but that won't last forever," he said. "Our next cuts will be more drastic."

Alamance got by with vacant positions and by closing the county administrative offices for five days in 2010 and two days in 2011. Honeycutt said a few people called to ask why the office was closed. The next step will be cutting services, including library hours.

"You can't get blood from a turnip," he said. "We're getting to the point where people will notice we've had to cut services."

In Case You Missed It ...

News to Use from Past County News

▶ Live Learning Center available to conference attendees

The NACO Live Learning Center is available for those who attended NACO's annual and legislative conferences. Log-in today to view and download the handouts and audio-synched presentations for the workshops presented at the Annual Conference and Exposition. The workshop presentations along with the speakers are available by logging on <http://naco.sclivelearningcenter.com>.

Click "Log In" from the navigation panel on the left, enter the username and password that you received by email. After logging in, click "My Content" and look for the sessions that you'd like to view.

If you have any questions about the Live Learning Center, contact Kim Struble at kstruble@naco.org.

CountyNews

The Voice of America's Counties

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

ADVERTISING STAFF

Job Market/Classifieds representative
Christopher Johnson

National Accounts representative

Beverly Schlotterbeck
(202) 393-6226 • FAX (202) 393-2630

Published biweekly except August by:
National Association of Counties

Research Foundation, Inc.

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

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

E-mail | cnews@naco.org

Online address | www.countynews.org

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

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

POSTMASTER: send address changes to

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

(USPS 704-620) ■ (ISSN: 0744-9798)

© National Association of Counties
Research Foundation, Inc.

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

Cellphone shutdown challenges First Amendment rights

CELLPHONES from page 2

If it inhibited just one emergency (and not necessarily 911) call, it was dangerous. Freedom of speech is messy and comes with a price. This same technology brought about a move towards democracy in the Middle East just this year. What would Americans have said if the Egyptian government did what BART did?

— **Heather Carruthers**
Mayor
Monroe County, Fla.

■ When such action is done that it is to stop bodily harm or massive property damage...I would think that it would be in the best interest of citizens (except for those in violation of such a threat). If it is done for control and convenience reasons ...then it would be wrong. Example above was for convenience....note.... "they got wind" "of a possible protest." It is the right to protest PEACEFULLY. If they have wind of an angry armed mob...well yes... it fits the above-mentioned statement. Also if you get "WIND" of a social media [mob] growing to burn down the local St. Joseph County Commissioners Farm, please shut down the towers. If you get wind that they are just showing up to picket: well let's just hope it doesn't turn into a riot.

— **Don Eaton**
Commissioner
St. Joseph, Mich.

■ Free speech is free speech. While I believe in civilized protests, it is not okay to disrupt transportation in the name of free speech. The bigger issue is the authority of BART to disrupt communications, many of which had nothing to do with the planned protest. This definitely should not set a precedent for any form of government to disrupt communications. They should have dealt with the protest if and when it happened, and if it disrupted transportation. To take the action BART did out of fear of a possible disruption was overreacting, and they should have to take the responsibility for any negative outcomes when honest unrelated citizens were put out of service and harm was done. They had the authority to close down the transit system for safety concerns but not to shut down cell towers.

— **Linda Reynolds**
Councilmember
City and County of Broomfield, Colo.

■ Is this all you have for the facts? I'm guessing there's more to it. No? I've learned the hard way not to

react to just one or two paragraphs. and disruptions, the "right of the people peaceably to assemble" was threatened. Therefore, if in fact, officials can show that the cell phone towers were used to disrupt, they had every right to shut down towers. However, they may have infringed on those using

— **Anne Strauch**
Supervisor
Outagamie County, Wis.

■ First Amendment Rights do not state how fast. Due to the fact of the previous protest, the arrests

cell phones for different purpose. But, still ... a safe and healthy environment is a right in almost all states.

— **Todd Devlin**
Commissioner
Prairie, Mont.

■ I think in today's fast-paced driven work and social lifestyles we need to have cell phones.

— **Daryl Dukart**
Chairman
Dunn County, N.D.

See CELLPHONES page 5

MUNICIPAL SOLUTIONS

See how we help Santa Ana promote sustainability citywide.



"Our partnership with Waste Management has allowed Santa Ana to lead in developing and implementing sound environmental practices citywide, and in adopting responsible options for recycling and proper waste disposal."

Miguel Pulido
Mayor, City of Santa Ana, California

ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATIONS

New fleet of 75 clean-air trucks

- CNG powered for reduced carbon footprint
- 23% fewer greenhouse gas emissions
- Equivalent of taking 10,000 cars off the road

New food and organics recycling facility

- First of its kind in Southern California
- Reduces landfill waste to achieve diversion goals
- Transforms unused food and other organics into new sustainable products

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

- Curbside used-oil and filter collection
- Curbside universal waste collection
- Safe sharps disposal
- Large waste (bulk) collection
- Construction debris recycling

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

- Household Hazardous Collection Events
- Sponsor: Santa Ana Earth and Health Fest
- Sponsor: Santa Ana Boys/Girls Club
- Sponsor: Santa Ana YMCA
- Support: Santa Ana Neighborhood Associations

In Santa Ana, California, sustainability lives and works at the corner of partnership and innovation. With our help, and through the environmental commitment of its citizens and community leaders, this sterling California city has achieved an admirable 69% waste diversion rate, lowered greenhouse gas emissions, and reduced their operating costs. From clean-air collection trucks to a new food and organics recycling facility, Waste Management is proud to provide the expertise and infrastructure central to Santa Ana's green success story.

Take your cue on sustainability from a great example like Santa Ana, and let's talk about sustainable solutions for your city. Call Paul Pistono, Vice President of Public Sector Solutions, at 1 888 558 6390, or learn more at wm.com/partner.



THINK GREEN®

Counties promote 'living well' to fight chronic diseases

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

It's been said that living well is the best revenge. It may be an even better prescription for people coping with chronic medical conditions.

Fulton County, Ga. earlier this month began offering its latest round of Living Well, a chronic disease self-management program that was developed at the Stanford University Patient Education Research Center. Similar programs are being offered across the United States — and internationally — and have been shown to improve several health indicators for persons living with conditions such as diabetes, arthritis and heart disease.

The county's Department of Housing and Human Services Office of Aging has offered the program since 2006 but recently expanded it, according to Regine Denis, interim human services program manager — beyond senior centers and facilities, and into more community-based settings, including churches.

"Here in Fulton County, health care disparities is a huge issue for us, and so we really are trying to tackle this in multiple ways," she said.

Counties in Hawaii and Washington state also offer the program under varying names. Stanford licenses the curriculum to organizations and nonprofits that wish to adopt it for

\$500 to offer 10 or fewer workshops in a year. Stanford also charges \$1,600 and \$900, respectively, to train health professionals and lay trainees. (Details at <http://patienteducation.stanford.edu/programs/cdsmp.html>.)

The Living Well program is a workshop given two-and-a-half hours, once a week, for six weeks in community settings such as senior centers, libraries and hospitals. People with different chronic health problems attend together. Workshops are facilitated by two trained leaders, one or both of whom are non-health professionals with chronic diseases themselves. This is an essential component of the program, said Chris Hawkins, active healthy communities coordinator for Thurston County, Wash.'s Department of Public Health and Social Services.

"It helps people feel they're not alone — seeing someone have success in managing their chronic condition and engaging in healthy behavior," he said.

Workshop topics include:

- techniques to deal with problems such as frustration, fatigue, pain and isolation,
- appropriate exercise for maintaining and improving strength, flexibility and endurance,
- appropriate use of medications,
- communicating effectively with family, friends and health



Photo courtesy of City & County of Honolulu

Matu Morero (far left) and Lei Shimizu (third from left), Elderly Affairs Division, City & County of Honolulu, pause for a group photo with graduates of Living Well, a chronic disease self-management program. Also pictured is Ming Jung Engle (fourth from left), a social work intern from Hawaii Pacific University.

professionals,

- nutrition, and
- how to evaluate new treatments.

Stanford conducted a five-year research evaluation of the workshops and found that participants lived healthier lifestyles through exercise, management of emotional and mental symptoms, coping strategies and improvement of their communications with physicians.

Participants also improved health status indicators such as less fatigue and disability, and increased social activities, which decreased the number of doctors' visits and hospital stays. Stanford's assessment of the program identified a cost-to-savings ratio of approximately 1:4 with many of the participants' positive results lasting up to three years, according to the program website.

In Thurston County, the Live Well program was an outgrowth of an existing workplace-oriented program called WorkWell. It reached out to employers, including public agencies, local governments and private sector employers.

"What we tried to foster among employers in our community was the sort of organizational change that would make it possible for employees to attend a chronic disease self-management program workshop on work time," Hawkins said. "We started with our own county government in terms of offering the workshops, and were able to get them established as one of the trainings offered through human resources to all employees."

Michiyo Tomioka, a researcher with the University of Hawaii, has helped evaluate programs in the Aloha State's counties. There, and also in Fulton County, some modifications have been made, with Stanford's blessing, to address more multicultural populations — particularly in Hawaii where Native Hawaiians and Asian Pacific Islanders (API) abound.

As in many places, Hawaii counties have shied away from the clinical-sounding title Chronic Disease Self-Management Program

(CDSMP). There it's known as Live Well, but in its Hawaiian translation, *Ke Ola Pono*, which means health in balance. Culturally sensitive features of the program there include serving food, which Tomioka said is typical at meetings in Hawaii, and presenting a certificate at the end of the program.

In a report co-authored by Tomioka, it states: "Our experience suggests that CDSMP can be modified for increased cultural appropriateness for [Asian Pacific Islander] communities while maintaining the key components responsible for behavior change."

In Georgia, Denis said the program chose not to use an optional baseline survey that asked participants questions about activities such as bicycling and playing golf, which was a turn-off to some inner-city residents who have few to no opportunities to engage in those pursuits. She said some people who were asked those questions were "offended" and did not come back for future sessions.

In all three states, program success is based on self-reporting by participants, not on dollars saved. Tomioka said Hawaii will be performing a cost-benefit analysis. But those interviewed agree the program is achieving positive results.

"They are making choices that are different, so we're clear that they are taking charge and they are making their own decisions versus waiting for the doctor to tell that this is what you need to do," Denis said. "They are actually walking in and saying 'What can I do?' or 'I'd like to try this.' That's what we've heard."



Profiles in Service

» Joyce Dickerson

Councilwoman, Richland County, S.C. • Steering Committee Chairwoman

Number of years active in NACo: 7 years

Years in public service: 12 years

Occupation: Retired accounting compliance auditor

Education: B.A. in business administration, Benedict College

The hardest thing I've ever done: stand on a runway in the arms of my husband, saying goodbye to him prior to his boarding the aircraft en route to Viet Nam for the second time

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Michelle Obama, Nancy Pelosi and Oprah Winfrey

A dream I have is to: travel on Air Force One with President Barack Obama on a fact-finding economic development tour.

You'd be surprised to learn that: I have been extended an invitation to visit Queen Elizabeth for tea and conversation at Buckingham Palace.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: walk the Great Wall of China.

My favorite way to relax is: listen to jazz and read.

I'm most proud of: being a self-published author, *A Tribute to 101 Incredible Women Who Influence My Life from My House to the White House*.

Every morning I read: scriptures from the book of Psalms, a daily Proverb, a chapter from Old and New Testament and one Epistle for inspirational empowerment.

My favorite meal is: southern fried chicken, potatoes salad, sweet peas and rolls with cream cheese pound cake for desert.

My pet peeve is: someone who does not demonstrate pride and respect for their neighbors and their neighborhood.

My motto is: "I cannot go back to change anything in my life; I cannot stay in this place in life lest I will be consumed, therefore, I have to keep moving forward toward the mark of a higher calling."

The last book I read was: *You've Come a Long Way, Maybe* by Leslie Sanchez.

My favorite movie is: "Imitation of Life."

My favorite music is: 1960s – 70s Jazz.

My favorite president is: Barack Obama.

Plan it and scan it: QR codes find fans in counties

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

The bar code of the future has arrived in many counties, helping them accelerate commerce and spread information.

Quick Response codes (QR codes) — the square matrices that have the look of a magic-eye picture — can be scanned by smartphone cameras and pull up websites, akin to scanning a bar code at a supermarket. In doing so, users can avoid entering long and sometimes complicated URLs to reach websites. Creating a QR code is similar to using the website “Tiny URL” to compress long Web addresses. Users can plug in a URL to <http://qrcode.kaywa.com/> and generate a QR code.

For Sedgewick County, Kan., the QR code is a helpful shortcut, one that will soon have more institutional support.

“It allows us to maintain our effort to brand our website,” said Communications Coordinator Amanda Matthews. “People can

scan the codes and go straight to a page like the Developmental Disability Organization without having to remember slashes and acronyms in the web address.”

At this point, Sedgewick County employees are using QR codes unofficially — in situations including email signatures — but Matthews said a multi-departmental committee is discussing how to further integrate them into regular use that will be formally supported by the county.

She said the optimal situation the committee has discussed places QR codes on posts in county parks, codes that would lead users to maps and more information about the park from that particular location.

“The code can be as small as a stamp, much smaller than a sign or bulletin board,” she said. “It would fit in a lot more, visually, in the park than a sign with the same purpose.”

Matthews sees QR codes as an extension of the county’s social media presence, but emphasized that however the county uses them, it will have to dedicate personnel



to keep the destination websites updated.

In Montgomery County, Md., parking meters in one garage feature QR codes that allow drivers to pay using a smartphone more accurately than a previous system. The QR code for each parking meter is unique and scanning it ensures that the driver pays for the correct space, an improvement over the previous pay-by-phone method that saw more than 163,000 transactions in the first seven months of 2011, according to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT). After the pilot program is assessed, the department will consider expanding the technology.

“We have a contractor who handles the pay-by-cell program and that contractor was looking at ways to extend the technology,” MCDOT spokesman Tom Pogue said. “It helped a great deal to eliminate human error in entering parking space digits.”

The West Volusia County Tourism Advertising Authority in Florida was an early adopter of QR code technology — it began marking its territory with the codes in June 2010.

“It was a new type of technology then,” said Jessi Smith, the authority’s multimedia marketing manager. “She [Executive Director Renee Tallevast] wanted to see how the agency could use it to promote the county while making it very easy to access information.”

The front door of the authority’s office bears the code, so anyone who comes by after hours can still get tourism information. The authority has also included the QR codes in advertisements in regional, national and international publications.

“It’s instant gratification, easy access anywhere and any time,” Smith said.

In Martin County, Fla., the

Advocates for the Rights of the Challenged organization used QR codes in a scavenger hunt thought up by Community Development Director Tracy Howse after she attended a workshop about them in the spring.

“I was sitting in the workshop and immediately wanted to use QR codes somehow,” she said. “When I got back to the office, nobody else had heard about them, but we all got familiar with them pretty quickly.”

The scavenger hunt involved families doing group activities at a variety of county and nonprofit organizations’ locations, then scanning the code after their task — creating a fire evacuation plan, for example — was complete.

“We had great feedback from participants and participating businesses,” Howse said. “It helped familiarize people with their use, because it seems like everyone has a smartphone these days.

“They’re great for nonprofits because it’s so easy to direct people to a website where they can donate. People have QR codes on their business cards now. They’re everywhere.”

Word Search

NFC Football Counties

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

- BERGEN COUNTY (New York Giants)
- BROWN COUNTY (Green Bay Packers)
- COOK COUNTY (Chicago Bears)
- FULTON COUNTY (Atlanta Falcons)
- HENNEPIN COUNTY (Minnesota Vikings)
- HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY (Tampa Bay Buccaneers)
- KING COUNTY (Seattle Seahawks)
- MARICOPA COUNTY (Arizona Cardinals)

- MECKLENBURG COUNTY (Carolina Panthers)
 - ORLEANS PARISH (New Orleans Saints)
 - PHILADELPHIA CITY/COUNTY (Philadelphia Eagles)
 - SAN FRANCISCO CIYT/COUNTY (San Francisco 49ers)
 - TARRANT COUNTY (Dallas Cowboys)
 - WAYNE COUNTY (Detroit Lions)
- (St. Louis, Mo. and Washington, D.C. are independent cities.)

Created by: Christopher Johnson

Opinions vary on cellphone shutdown

CELLPHONES from page 3

■ I think the problem rests with the term “public order.” If the action was taken in an effort to protect “public safety,” that may be one thing. But I submit we need to clearly define the term “public order,” and understand said definition, in order to make a reasonable decision on a firm position.

— Norm Roche
Commissioner At-Large
Pinellas County, Fla.

■ No we are not, it is a First Amendment right.

— Andy Goleman
Board Member
Sangamon County, Ill.

■ It sounds like Syria. It will only anger citizens more by trying to stop the communication. Violent protesting is not acceptable. When people break the law they should be punished.

— Alex Oliphant
County Council
Chester County S.C.

■ The social media is making it possible to contact many people in seconds. I consider moves like

this similar to yelling fire in a theater: Innocent people can get hurt. People just going about their normal routine get caught up in the crowds and don’t know which way to turn. I worry about 911 service, but in the fire service when an alarm system is out of service, we post a “Fire Watch,” one or more persons whose only job is to watch for problems and use alternate methods to communicate the alarm. I don’t like the idea of shutting down the cells, and believe in the First Amendment rights, but I think this could easily stop the growth of the problem. Safety first.

— Jim Hubbard
Commissioner
Cherokee County, Ga.

■ No disruption of cell service should have been done. It was a safety violation.

— Kenneth Jenkins
Board Chairman
Westchester County, N.Y.

■ All have a right to protest. Government does not have the right to shut down anything that is legal.

— Bill Askins
Commissioner
Lincoln County, Tenn.

■ Yes

— Valerie Brown
Supervisor
Sonoma County, Calif.

■ The right of free speech without the interference of Government is central to the American way and our way of life. A power to shut down cell towers to curtail communication is wrong.

— Roger Morley
Commissioner
Jerome County, Idaho



Share your point of view ...

Letters to the Editor

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

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

Navajo 'peaceful mind' advice keeps county supervisor centered

NAVAJO CHAIR from page 1

In the county of 134,421 residents, whose Native American population exceeds 27 percent, Fowler is perfectly situated to be the "bridge builder" she is by nature.

"Everything in this world is having to understand what we don't understand. And part of that is people, whether you're Native or even your next-door neighbor," she said.

Always a Democrat, she bridged party lines from 1990 to 1996 to serve as a northern Arizona-based staff assistant to U.S. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), who at the time was chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs. While in college, she was McCain's first Native American student intern.

She spanned a cultural divide

when she married George Hardeen, a Connecticut Yankee and great-nephew of Harry Houdini, becoming one of the first women in her community to marry across racial lines. Hardeen would go on to become press secretary to a Navajo Nation president. They have three children, ages 26, 22 and 17.

Prior to election to the County Board in 2008, Fowler was vice chairwoman of the Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission, where she served with distinction, according to Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly.

"Her expertise has helped the Navajo Nation establish so much," he said in an email. "One example, she has helped the Navajo Nation form the water rights in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. I appreciate

her support for her people and the Navajo Nation."

But Fowler knows she's more than just "the Navajo supervisor" on the board. "I've worked on issues that affect all people," she said — both now and before her election. It was her community activism that gained her the name recognition that would help her, a first-time candidate, defeat three challengers in the 2008 primary for her seat. Years before her election, Fowler helped found Tuba City Concerned Citizens, in her hometown, along with Louise Yellowman, the former county supervisor whose district seat Fowler now holds. She later served as a deputy registrar for the Navajo Nation, for which she was twice recognized for registering the most voters in the county. From 2002 to 2005, she served as president of the Association for Indian Self-Determination in Healthcare.

Though she never intended to run for elective office, she came to realize how much more she might be able to accomplish.

"Being a volunteer in the community and having volunteered for many years, sometimes it's really difficult to do what you want to do with no money and everything (being) volunteer, and everything takes so long," she said. "Once I decided that I wanted to run for office, I knew that was the way to go."

She sees being on the Board of Supervisors as "an opportunity to be able to have more influence and create the change that I want to change."

It wasn't long after Fowler took office that she became active in NACo and started changing things. Within a few months, she attended the Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., and was surprised by some of what she heard. "The first time I came, there were quite a few resolutions that were very negative towards Native American tribes," she recalled.

She went back home and drafted her own resolution, calling on NACo to form a liaison relationship with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), within the U.S. Department of the Interior. The model would be based on the Bureau of Land Management's liaison who works with NACo.

Fowler shepherded the resolution through her County Board, the Arizona County Supervisors Association and through NACo's policy process. The BIA is in the process of making it happen.

"Eventually, maybe we'll graduate from that and we'll be able to work directly with tribes within our counties or surrounding our counties," she said, "and then have a better



Lena Fowler (l) meets with World War II-era Navajo Code talkers, weeks before she was chosen to chair the Coconino County, Ariz. Board of Supervisors for the coming year. She delivered a \$5,000 check from the county to support the National Navajo Code Talkers Museum and Veterans Center.

understanding of why tribes take the position that they take. And maybe the tribes will understand why counties take the position that we take."

Born in Tuba City, Fowler was raised in the traditional Navajo culture: She spoke no English during her early childhood. She is the third-eldest of eight children, all of whom were influenced by her late father's passion for them to become educated. Keith Fowler was a Korean War veteran. Upon his return, he would tell his daughter, Lena, and her siblings: "There's a new world coming, and you have to be ready for it. You have to know how to live in that world."

As a child, she attended BIA boarding schools, where at the time, assimilation was the goal: A kid could be punished for speaking her native language.

She also participated in the Indian Placement Program, run by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which placed her with a Mormon family in Phoenix, 220 miles away from her rural home.

"I think this was my father's dream," Fowler said, "to be able to live in [the mainstream culture], but at the same time be grounded in your own traditional teachings and ways."

"And I believe that's who I am, and I really believe in the Navajo teachings and I live it every day. Without that, I wouldn't be where I am."

Along the way, she also learned great lessons from her "political mentor," Annie Dodge Wauneka, a legendary figure in the Navajo Nation, who would become the first Native American to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her efforts on behalf of Indian self-determination.

During college in 1988, Fowler was an intern for Wauneka, lived with her and served as her personal secretary for a summer. The life-lesson from Wauneka that she carries with her to this day is "to have dignity and respect yourself."

Wauneka advised her that if you couldn't go to sleep at night with peace of mind that you had done your best that day, then change your ways.

"So I go to sleep with a peaceful mind every night," Fowler said.

The little girl who grew up herding sheep and riding horses still enjoys riding, along with her husband, helping with roundup at their friends' ranch. In her spare time, of which there is increasingly less, she also grows corn in her garden, which looks like "house plants" now due to the drought.

From the dirt floor of the hogan to the halls of county government, Fowler is also on the verge of earning a doctoral degree — and is shepherding policy through local and national government bureaucracies.

Her father would approve.

NACo grassroots Network

Maintaining up-to-date contact information is essential to NACo's advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill and allows us to better serve you, our members. If we know who you know, whether it be Congressional staffers or members of the House or Senate, we will be better able to address your needs.

Please go to www.naco.org/grassroots and fill out the NACo Grassroots Network form.

We'll keep you informed about legislation that could impact your county's bottom line as we use your information to lobby more forcefully and effectively on your behalf.

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

Solar trees sprouting up in Santa Clara County, Calif.

By CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

A new kind of tree is growing in parking lots across Santa Clara County, Calif. but not the kind you'd expect.

Much like natural trees, solar trees provide shelter from the rain and shade paths on scorching hot days. While silently generating renewable energy, the trees add a clever design twist to an oft neglected area — the parking lot. Compared to roof-mounted systems, the trees — raised horizontal solar panels — are considerably easier to install. Solar groves are sprouting up in parking lots at Santa Clara County government buildings, health clinics and a local jail.

"Most people think of this as covered parking," said Lin Ortega, Santa Clara's utilities engineer and program manager. "In reality, it's saving money and creating renewable energy for the county."

The shade they create for cars is just a popular side benefit, though cutting off the sun's glare also will save energy by reducing the

need for motorists to turn on air conditioning in hot weather. The primary benefit of the parking lot projects is that the power they produce will save the county nearly \$18 million in electrical costs over a 25-year period. The project has also created 92 temporary jobs.

Most solar power in California is still generated by rooftop panels. But parking lot arrays have been springing up, including at University of California-San Diego, where they have been planted on the top floor of two parking garages, and at Google's headquarters in Mountain View.

By March 2012, the county will have installed more than 15,000 solar panels in nine parking lots at eight sites. County officials estimate that the projects will reduce carbon dioxide by 4,116 metric tons — the equivalent of taking 800 cars a year off the road.

With the urging of supervisors Dave Cortese and Ken Yeager, the county decided to embark on planting the solar groves, financing the four largest projects through a combination of government incentive programs, including \$7.4



Photo courtesy of Envision Solar

Solar trees, like the ones shown here in this parking lot at the University of San Diego, will help Santa Clara County save money and generate electricity.

million from the California Solar Initiative Program and interest-rate discounts on bonds subsidized by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The county's share will be about \$13 million of the \$20 million cost, and it will own the arrays.

For the four smaller projects, the

county is paying through a Solar Power Purchasing Agreement (SPPA) with several cities. Under that arrangement, private firms build and own the solar arrays while the county and other cities buy the power at a discounted rate. However, the estimated savings from the SPPA turned out to be

negligible — only about \$2 million over 20 years. Construction on those will begin in January 2012.

The parking lots are not only going to be "greener" but they will also do so without affecting drivers. The solar trees at the eight sites will take up only six additional spots of more than 1,000 parking spaces.

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 to download the Gaston County case study white paper.

Run Smarter®

Laserfiche®

Financial Services News

Get a Ballpark E\$timate of Your Retirement Needs

Forget, for a moment, the complexity of planning and saving for a comfortable retirement. Use the adjacent form Ballpark E\$timate Worksheet to get an initial fix. Want a more “sophisticated” number? Go online at www.choosetosave.org and use the interactive version with more assumptions that you can change.



By simplifying some issues, such as projected Social Security benefits and earnings assumptions on savings, the print version of Ballpark offers users a way to obtain a rough first estimate of what Americans need for retirement. The worksheet assumes you'll realize a constant real rate of return of 3 percent and that wages will grow at the same rate as inflation; however, it does provide the user an opportunity to take into account longevity risk.

For example, let's say Jane is a 35-year-old woman with two children, earning \$30,000 per year. Jane has determined that she will need 70 percent of her current annual income to maintain her standard of living in retirement. Seventy percent of Jane's current annual income (\$30,000) is \$21,000 (Question 1). Jane would then subtract the income she expects to receive from Social Security (\$12,000 in her case) from \$21,000, equaling \$9,000 (Question 2). This is how much Jane needs to make up for each retirement year.

Jane expects to retire at age 65, and if she is willing to assume that her life expectancy will be equal to the average female at that age (86), she would multiply \$9,000 by 15.77 for a result of \$141,930 (Question 3). Since Jane does not expect to retire before age 65, she does not answer Question 4.

Jane has already saved \$2,000 in her 401(k) plan. She plans to retire in 30 years so she multiplies \$2,000 by 2.4 equaling \$4,800 (Ques-

tion 5). She subtracts that from her total, making her projected total savings needed at retirement \$137,130. Jane then multiplies \$137,130 times 0.020 for a total of \$2,742 (Question 6). This is the amount Jane will need to save in the current year for her retirement (it is assumed the annual contribution will increase with inflation in future years).

It is important to note that the calculation above assumed Jane would have an average life expectancy for a female already age 65. However, this will produce an amount that is too low in approximately half of all cases. If instead Jane wanted to have a sufficient amount three-fourths of the time, she would base her calculations on a life expectancy of 92 (see the grid on step three of the calculation). This would necessitate multiplying \$9,000 by 18.79 for a result of \$169,110. All the remaining calculations would be similar and the contribution for the first year would increase to \$3,286.

If Jane would prefer to save enough to have a sufficient amount 90 percent of the time, she would assume a life expectancy of 97. This would require a first year contribution of \$3,671.

Planning for retirement is not a one-size-fits-all exercise. The purpose of Ballpark is simply to give you a basic idea of the savings you'll need to make today for when you plan to retire.

Helping Americans learn about savings and retirement planning is American Savings Education Council's (ASEC) primary mission. A coalition of private- and public-sector organizations, ASEC's goal is to make saving and planning a vital concern of Americans. Through the Choose to Save national education program and other initiatives, ASEC works to raise public awareness about what is needed to successfully ensure long-term personal financial independence.

For additional information on the Ballpark E\$timate worksheet, visit www.asec.org and www.choosetosave.org.

ASEC is a program of the Employee Benefit Research Institute Education and Research Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, educational organization.

(Financial Services News was provided by the ASEC.)

Ballpark E\$timate Worksheet

1. How much annual income will you want in retirement? Figure at least 70% of your current annual gross income just to maintain your current standard of living; however, you may want to enter a larger number. (See the tips below*.) \$ _____

2. Subtract the income you expect to receive annually from:

Social Security — If you make under \$25,000, enter \$8,000; between \$25,000 – \$40,000, enter \$12,000; over \$40,000, enter \$14,500 (For married couples, the lower earning spouse should enter either their own benefit based on their income or 50% of the higher earning spouse's benefit, whichever is higher.) \$ _____

Traditional Employer Pension — a plan that pays a set dollar amount for life, where the dollar amount depends on salary and years of service (in today's dollars) \$ _____

Part-time income: \$ _____

Other (reverse annuity mortgage payments, earnings on assets, etc.) \$ _____

This is how much you need to make up for each retirement year: \$ _____

Now you want a Ballpark E\$timate of how much money you'll need in the bank the day you retire. For the record, we assume you'll realize a constant real rate of return of 3% after inflation and you'll begin to receive income from Social Security at age 65.

3. To determine the amount you'll need to save, multiply the amount you need to make up by the factor below.

Age you expect to retire:	Choose your factor based on life expectancy (at age 65):					
	Male, 50th percentile (age 82)	Female, 50th percentile (age 86)	Male, 75th percentile (age 89)	Female, 75th percentile (age 92)	Male, 90th percentile (age 94)	Female, 90th percentile (age 97)
55	18.79	20.53	21.71	22.79	23.46	24.40
60	16.31	18.32	19.68	20.93	21.71	22.79
65	13.45	15.77	17.35	18.79	19.68	20.93
70	10.15	12.83	14.65	16.31	17.35	18.79

\$ _____

4. If you expect to retire before age 65, multiply your Social Security benefit from line 2 by the factor below.

Age you expect to retire:	55	Your factor is:	8.8
	60		4.7

\$ _____

5. Multiply your savings to date by the factor below (include money accumulated in a 401(k), IRA, or similar retirement plan).

If you plan to retire in:	Your factor is:	If you plan to retire in:	Your factor is:
10 years	1.3	30 years	2.4
15 years	1.6	35 years	2.8
20 years	1.8	40 years	3.3
25 years	2.1		

\$ _____

Total additional savings needed at retirement: \$ _____

Don't panic. We devised another formula to show you how much to save each year in order to reach your goal amount. This factors in compounding. That's where your money not only makes interest, your interest starts making interest as well, creating a snowball effect.

6. To determine the ANNUAL amount you'll need to save, multiply the TOTAL amount by the factor below.

If you plan to retire in:	Your factor is:	If you plan to retire in:	Your factor is:
10 years	0.085	30 years	0.020
15 years	0.052	35 years	0.016
20 years	0.036	40 years	0.013
25 years	0.027		

\$ _____

*** Tips to help you select a goal:**

70% to 80% — You will need to pay for the basics in retirement, but you won't have to pay many medical expenses as your employer pays the Medicare Part B and D premium and provides employer-paid retiree health insurance. You're planning for a comfortable retirement without much travel. You are older and/or in your prime earning years.

80% to 90% — You will need to pay your Medicare Part B and D premiums and pay for insurance to cover medical costs above Medicare, which on average covers about 55%. You plan to take some small trips, and you know that you will need to continue saving some money.

100% to 120% — You will need to cover all Medicare and other health care costs. You are very young and/or your prime earning years are ahead of you. You would like a retirement lifestyle that is more than comfortable. You need to save for the possibility of long-term care.

Model Programs From the Nation's Counties

Clackamas County, Ore.

Canine Police Officers' Illustrated Adventures Educate Kids

By CHARLIE BAN
STAFF WRITER

Lassie cemented the dog's place in American culture as a loyal protector. Two canines in Clackamas County, Ore. are riding her coattails to help teach safety skills to its youth.

Just as Lassie's black and white television adventures may repel modern children's interests, Mike Russell and Patrick Sherman of the Clackamas Sheriff's Office found existing safety-oriented literature lacking the cachet that attracts kids' attention.

"What we saw in terms of earlier safety and crime literature for kids looked pretty much like public service announcements with pictures," Sherman said. "They didn't resonate with us, and we knew they would never resonate with the kids."

What the pair did to spark interest was adopt a state-of-the-art style that caught kids' eyes, a Japanese drawing technique that emphasizes movement and creates an up-tempo pace. In their department's two Belgian Malinois shepherd dogs, Mik and Nero, they had messengers for the institutional public safety knowledge that would be readily accepted by children. In the first comic book, *Methed Up!*, the dogs carry on a conversation about the dangers of methamphetamine use while chasing down an addict.

Though Mik died in 2010, his cartoon representation continues to serve Clackamas County by educating its youth about dangers



Courtesy of the Clackamas County, Ore. Sheriff's Office

A page from the comic book *Methed Up!* depicts the educational and entertaining interplay between Clackamas County, Ore. Sheriff's Office dogs, Mik and Nero.

in daily life.

"We can't think of a better way to honor Mik's service than by letting him live on in these comics," Sheriff Craig Roberts said.

In the books, Mik personifies the severe veteran officer, while Nero acts relaxed and happy-go-lucky.

The target audience for the books varies with the subject matter, with younger children grasping more of the basic lessons in *Safety Street!* and early teenagers getting more attention in the underage drinking warnings in *The Hardest Lesson*.

Each book's production is

underwritten by organizations including the U.S. Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Methamphetamine Initiative, the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Clackamas County Health, Housing and Human Services department. Clackamas County has paid \$5,700 to produce the series, with the rest of the funding coming from grants. A local artist illustrates the books.

"We go where the money leads us," Sherman said. "All of these organizations have been pleased with the lessons we've taught."

The key, he said, is to be distinctive enough to reach the kids. With sensory input coming from televisions, computers, cell phones and elsewhere distracting them, kids have a delicate balance in terms of what they will embrace.

"Whenever you're doing something like this, there's a dynamic tension between making it new and exciting, but also making it close

enough to what they have seen before that they aren't confused or disoriented," Sherman said.

The sheriff's office has seen a lot of success, printing 126,000 copies of the books. They are popular items at public safety fairs, with many children collecting the entire series of five books.

"That's the most gratifying," Sherman said. "The feedback has been stunningly good. Our reception from the kids has exceeded our wildest dreams, we just hope the lessons stick with them as they grow."

The books are also available at the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office website <http://www.clackamas.us/sheriff/kids/>.

Model Programs from the Nation's Counties highlights Award-winning programs. For more information on this NACo Achievement Award winner, visit NACo's Web site, www.naco.org ▶ Research & Publications ▶ Find Solutions.

Retroreflectivity standard postponed for now

SIGN MANDATE from page 1

Three requirements for retroreflectivity were published in 2009. The first requires every local and state agency to establish an assessment or management method for implementing retroreflectivity standards. This requirement remains but is postponed until two years from the effective date of the revised regulations. The two date-certain requirements for minimum reflectivity, Jan. 22, 2015 and Jan. 22, 2018, are eliminated and replaced by a requirement to replace these signs when they reach the end of their useful service life, which local and state agencies will determine based on their particular climates

and environment.

One standard that is maintained, unrelated to reflectivity, is the requirement that sign posts on roads that are posted at 50 MPH or more meet a crashworthy standard or be replaced by January 2013. No action was taken on a pending federal rulemaking on minimum reflectivity standards for pavement markings, an item that has also been of concern to county officials. The comment period for that rulemaking has closed. The DOT is evaluating the comments and presumably at some point a rule will be proposed.

To review the entire proposed rule, go to the Federal Register for Aug. 31 at www.gpoaccess.gov.

Deficit committee urged to use balanced approach

DEFICIT GAP from page 1

local governments will help mitigate further public-sector layoffs, and

- Federal investment in state and local infrastructure produces private sector jobs.

Of particular concern to counties is the potential shifting of costs to state and local governments in order to "find elusive savings."

"State and local governments, which must balance their budgets annually, will need flexibility in

dealing with unnecessary and onerous government regulations and increased mandates, which should be rejected," Eliason wrote in the letter. "With regard to tax reform, we urge the committee to reject ideas that may limit our ability to seek new revenues in order to balance our budgets and to provide for constituent needs."

The select committee is charged with recommending by Nov. 23 at least \$1.5 trillion in additional deficit-reduction steps to happen

over a 10-year period. The committee's recommendations will then be put to a simple up-or-down vote by Congress by Dec. 23. If the committee fails to agree on a package or the full Congress fails to pass it, "trigger mechanisms" would enact \$1.2 trillion in automatic spending cuts to serve as the second installment of deficit reduction measures.

The full text of the letter, which was also sent to congressional leadership, is available by visiting the NACo website at www.naco.org.

Keep up with NACo online ...

www.naco.org





News From the Nation's Counties

► COLORADO

JEFFERSON COUNTY commissioners are considering permitting **short-term rental properties**.

"The rights of neighbors don't supersede the rights of property owners," said Commissioner Donald Rosier, noting that neighbors have claimed renters can make a lot of noise and take up several parking spaces in the neighborhoods of rental properties.

Short-term vacation rental websites list 30 to 70 opportunities in Jefferson County or near it, zoning administrator Mike Chadwick told the *Denver Post*.

► FLORIDA

While counties across the country are appeasing the invading forces, **LEE COUNTY** is drawing the line — **no chickens in residential areas**.

County commissioners declined to change an ordinance to allow people in residential areas of unincorporated areas of the county to raise chickens, according to the *News-Press*. Presently the ordinance allows the growing of chickens only on agriculturally zoned lots.

► GEORGIA

• **DEKALB COUNTY** officials protested the exclusion of the proposed **I-20 heavy rail transit system** from a preliminary list of projects being considered for funding through a possible regional sales tax.

"We currently have no rail stops in south DeKalb County at all," said County Commissioner Lee May during an Aug. 9 press conference and rally. "And now we're being asked to support another 1-cent sales tax. If I-20 is not included in the projects, I cannot be supportive of the transportation referendum."

Nearly a week after the rally, the executive committee of the Atlanta Regional Transportation Roundtable voted to partially fund the project. MARTA Executive Director Beverly Scott said the transportation roundtable left \$225 million on the proposed list for the I-20 East project.

"We believe that if we don't have rail, we can't support that additional penny," Commissioner Larry Johnson said.

• Attorney General Sam Olens wants to **update the state's Sunshine Law** that requires state and local government meetings and documents to be public except in limited exceptions. His proposal, House Bill 397, would boost the fine for violations to \$1,000. The current fine for withholding documents is

\$100 and \$500 for illegal meetings.

It would also give Olens the power to make a civil case rather than the current requirement to try for criminal charges with their higher burden of proof.

"We are seeing more and more what I call background meetings where the issues are settled before the formal meeting," he said.

An example would be a city commission that completes 20 items on its agenda in 15 minutes with little debate because the discussions were taking place privately beforehand, he told the *Rome News-Tribune*.

► HAWAII

MAUI COUNTY has partnered with Gen-X Energy Development to use **solar energy** to power 25 county government buildings.

Haleakala Solar has agreed to install solar panels on fire stations, wastewater treatment centers and senior centers. The county will be purchasing energy per watt from Gen-X Energy Development, but Haleakala Solar will handle installation and maintenance at their cost.

County Energy Commissioner Doug McLeod said in the first year of the agreement, the county will pay 14.7 cents per kilowatt-hour for solar power, compared with the 28 to 29 cents it currently pays, *The Maui News* reported.

► IDAHO

• **BOISE COUNTY**'s attempt to win **bankruptcy protection** failed. The county was unable to prove its insolvency to the U.S. Bankruptcy Court and will not be protected from a \$4 million judgment.

Last year, a jury found that the county violated the federal Fair Housing Act in trying to limit a development firm's proposal to build a teen treatment center. The developer was awarded damages against the county, which says it also owes attorney fees of about \$1.4 million.

The county's operating budget is approximately \$9.4 million, the *Idaho Statesman* reported.

To meet that burden, according to federal law, would mean "generally not paying its debts as they become due unless such debts are the subject of a bona fide dispute, or unable to pay its debts as they become due."

• Rural Idaho counties that rely on **federal timber sales** for money for roads and schools may ask the federal government to let the state handle timber deals, in hopes of a larger, steadier supply of funding.

Gov. Butch Otter (R) and other

members of the Idaho Land Board approved a plan brought by several county commissioners that needs federal legislation in Congress to make the shift to state management. The board will send a letter of support to Idaho's congressional delegation and commissioners saying board members had preliminary talks about a small pilot project to see if state land managers can do a better job than the feds, the *Coeur d'Alene Press* reported.

"Rural counties face an extreme situation right now," said Dan Dinning, a **BOUNDARY COUNTY** commissioner.

Rural counties get a quarter of the money from timber sales on federal land in their county, thanks to the Secure Rural Schools Act, which expires at the end of the year.

"If it doesn't get reauthorized, we're in a world of hurt," said **VALLEY COUNTY** Commissioner Gordon Cruickshank. Dinning and other commissioners want to include a small pilot project in the act's reauthorization to let the state manage 200,000 acres of federal timber land. That's a small drop in the bucket of the 33 million acres of federal land in Idaho, which includes 11 million acres of national forest. The feds would still own the land in the project.

► MARYLAND

Developers, not **FREDERICK COUNTY** employees, will handle the contracts, inspections and supervision of some **water and sewer construction projects** for the next 18 months, under a new pilot program.

The commissioners approved a pilot intended to make it easier for developers to do work in the county by reducing costs and streamlining the building process.

Commission President Blaine Young said the program will enable county employees to work with the private sector on water and sewer projects, since the inspectors will have to provide the county with updates and reports when the work is ongoing and completed. Young said this program is an example of the "hybrid" approach to privatization, in which county employees and private companies work together on projects.

Currently, commissioners and county staff administer the construction contract, including inspections. During the next 18 months, the developer would hire a private company to inspect the construction work. The county will determine which water and sewer projects will be included in the pilot program. Not all projects will be completely

turned over to developers, the *Fredrick News Post* reported.

► MINNESOTA

The Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC) has received a **Waste-to-Energy Excellence Award** from the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA).

SWANA's Excellence Awards Program recognizes outstanding solid waste programs and facilities that advance the practice of environmentally and economically sound solid waste management.

The Excellence Award was presented to **HENNEPIN COUNTY** at SWANA's annual conference, WASTECON, in Nashville, Tenn.

HERC was judged on a wide variety of criteria, including engineering and technology, operational performance and efficiency, environmental compliance, aesthetics, other recycling and solid waste management programs in the county, public relations and education, and innovation and creativity.

► NEW JERSEY

• Animal-rights activist Bob Barker would, no doubt, approve.

From Sept. 1–15, the **BERGEN COUNTY** animal shelter is letting residents **adopt pets for as little as \$10** — part of a campaign dubbed "Your Price Is Right."

Usual adoption fees are \$100 for dogs under 6 years old, \$75 for cats that age, and \$35 for rabbits and ferrets. No bargain, though, on Guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils and mice. They usually go for 10 bucks anyway.

All adoptions include spaying or neutering, and vaccinations. Adopters must be at least 21 years old and are subject to application approval.

Shelter Manager Matt Craig said they're doing this at the tail end of "kitten season," when new kittens

are born, and because September is usually their quietest month. "We see it as a way to keep awareness up and the foot traffic at the shelter to prevent overcrowding during a month that is usually quiet."

• A common "enemy" of sorts brought two counties together who have been at odds in the past over a local lake and dam.

Hurricane Irene saw **CUMBERLAND** and **SALEM counties** cooperating to prevent Willow Grove Lake from flooding the area. The counties and the Nature Conservancy have spent several years in court arguing about the condition of the lake and dam. All three own property property at, near or in the lake, according to the *Courier-Post*. "It's a question of cost and who's responsible for what," said William Whelan, Cumberland County freeholder director.

Conditions at Willow Grove Lake recently saw the counties working closely to prevent a hurricane-driven flood from inundating the area.

"We're not drawing a line someplace when we've got an urgent situation," Whelan said.

► NEW YORK

It's not that **MONTGOMERY COUNTY** doesn't love New York, but the Board of Supervisors has voted to opt out of the state's "**ILove NY**" matching-funds program to promote tourism.

The board recently agreed to decline the state match, citing a lack of adequate local funding, among other reasons. This makes the county the second one in New York to decline the funding. **YATES COUNTY** has not participated in the program

See NEWS FROM page 12

NACo on the Move

» In the News

Lenny Eliason, NACo president, and **Glen Whitley**, NACo immediate past president, were quoted in the article "Getting Squeezed" in *American City and County* magazine August 2011.



Lenny Eliason

» Coming Up

Andrew Goldschmidt, director, membership marketing, will speak about the NACo Prescription Discount Card Program and exhibit on behalf of NACo Membership at the Wyoming County Commissioners Association and Wyoming Association of Counties Annual Conference in Teton County Sept. 20–23.

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

Research News

How Counties are 'Fairing'

Cotton candy, carnival rides, baby animals, 4-H expos, funnel cakes, bingo. For many Americans the county fair is one of the most exciting events of the summer. However, in some counties this age-old tradition was different this year. The current economic situation has affected county budgets and citizen incomes, which have had varying impacts on county fairs across the nation.

Budget cuts are being felt across the board, and county fair budgets are no exception. The county fair's 72-year tradition in Butte County, Calif. was in major jeopardy when Gov. Jerry Brown (D) cut the \$220,000 funding it received in previous years. Despite the setback, Butte County Fair CEO Sean Early promised to get creative so residents would still have their fair.



The full-time staff have reduced their salaries and taken furloughs. Early believes that with the help of the community the fair can go on without state funding.

"Rather than paying for someone to take care of it, we're having volunteers take care of it," Early said. He also acknowledged that in the end, attendance is what matters.

"We need people to come out,

that's what we need to happen," he concluded.

High attendance is a goal every year for county fairs, but this year is particularly important since it could have a direct effect on funding allocations for next year. Many counties struggled this year with attendance, including Chautauqua County, N.Y. Attendance dropped nearly 12 percent this year compared to both 2010 and 2009's numbers.

"I believe some of that reflects the economy, everyone is watching their pennies these days," said Jason Merritt, a spokesman for the Chautauqua County wFair. He added the fair's board is working on a plan to make the fair more appealing to cost-conscious families, such as selling discounted tickets online.

For at least one county, there were no innovative tactics that could save this year's fair. St. John's County, Fla. decided to cancel the annual fair this October. Attendance has declined for the past seven years, and the fair has been barely able to generate enough money for the next year's event. Last year there was no cash sponsorship and not enough money to support fair entertainment, which greatly hurt attendance. Fred Springer, who serves as the volunteer fair manager, hopes that by canceling this year's fair there will be enough funds to support the

fair in 2012 and that the county fair will not be shut down indefinitely.

Although the economy is having a negative effect on county fairs in many places, this is not the case everywhere. In fact, in some counties it is having the opposite effect. This is true for the Clark County Fair in Clark County, Ohio, where attendance has jumped over 25 percent in the last two years.

"I think people are doing and staying in more for local entertainment," said Allan Hess, executive

See RESEARCH page 12

The H.R. Doctor Is In

The 'E's in Email

So, you think that the "e" in email stands for "electronic?" Only partially. The impact of email on our lives at work and at home is so "everywhere" that some additional synonyms become proper and necessary.

First to come to mind is explosive. In 2010, *Business Insider* reported that 1.9 billion people sent emails. In fact, they sent about 107 trillion emails (mostly to me apparently.) For the finance directors reading this article, that translates into about 294 billion per day. It is hard to evade email intrusion, certainly not at the office, certainly not in government, where it constitutes a new breed of public records.

They also can't be avoided as you drive along watching people checking their emails while driving or walking like zombies not watching where they are going.

The volume is just one part of our society's entrapment in a tsunami of electronic communications. There are about 700 million people on Facebook, for example. They have the power to make revolutions happen in the Middle East and to foster uncivil, violent and destructive disturbances in England.

Emails have the same power to wreak havoc at work. They are, or can be, "embarrassing" and pop up later as evidence in administrative



complaints and lawsuits. They can be used by a carnivorous media to devour the lives and careers of people, regardless of their guilt or innocence, in matters such as sexual harassment, poor judgment or incitement to violence.

Another element of email is that none of us can "escape" from it—yet another "e" word. About 89 percent of emails sent consist of spam. This evil, but profitable, monster invades our privacy and disrupts our efforts at peaceful contemplation.

Spam can take away from our ability to innovate and to spend time in more valuable interpersonal contacts. These neglected pursuits include our spouses and children. They include our time, which should be spent in encouragement and recognition of our colleagues at work.

It is so easy to hit the send button on emails even though the result of something written in anger or in a

moment of testosterone overdose may surface later to embarrass us, or the people around us. Sexually explicit emails hurt congressional members from New York as well as the many others who are entrapped and enticed by the ease, thinking that email is somehow private. In reality, the hordes of hackers can tell you that it cannot be excluded from their sight. Such emails can also be picked up and deposited in a YouTube video and create viral havoc on people and organizations.

Despite the dangers and risks of the misuse of emails, despite warnings and signatures on employee handbook pages spelling out that emails are for business use only and the computer systems are agency property, emails are a part of our lives from which we cannot hide. Like many other parts of our technoworld, we have created a communications monster which will result in culture-changing consequences beyond our current comprehension.

After emailing this article, the HR Doctor has decided to take a long walk with the HR Dog Kamala, but without my smartphone, so that I can send off a few Zen emails to the trees and the sky.

Phil Rosenberg
The HR Doctor • www.hrd.net

2011 Coastal Counties Forum

Building Resilient Coastal Ecosystems and Economies

October 27–28 • Savannah, Georgia

Join NACo at the University of Georgia's Coastal Georgia Center in Chatham County for a one and a half day forum to discuss how your coastal county can take better advantage of public and private resources to build resilient, sustainable ecosystems and economies.

To register, visit

www.naco.org/coastalforum

or contact Carrie Clingan at 202.942.4246 or cclingan@naco.org for questions.

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

Counties in Ohio, Virginia pick up national awards

NEWS FROM *from page 10*

for several years, *The Daily Gazette* reported.

Montgomery Supervisors' Chairman Thomas Quackenbush said the change could be temporary if the county's financial situation improves. "It doesn't mean that we're not going to try to do it again," he said.

Till then, the county will continue to do its own tourism promotion.

► OHIO

PORTAGE COUNTY was recently awarded the **2011 GMISG2C Award** from Government Management Information Sciences (GMIS) for successfully implementing a county-wide enterprise geographical information system (GIS).

"This competitive international award program recognizes the GMIS member agency whose information technology project exhibits the best example of Government-to-Community (G2C) of the year

in collaborating with and serving other entities," said Brian Kelley, Portage County CIO.

The award was presented at the recent GMIS International Educational Conference recently held in Santa Fe, N.M.

► SOUTH CAROLINA

Add **CHESTERFIELD COUNTY** to the list of counties making it illegal "to advertise, possess, purchase, sell or use bath salts, bath salt-like substances or synthetic marijuana" within incorporated areas of the county, *scnow.com* reported.

The County Council recently passed an emergency ordinance outlawing the substances at the county sheriff's request.

"We don't need our citizens, especially our young people, suffering from this poison," Chesterfield County Council Chairman Matt Rivers said. "We have all heard how serious it can be to use it, and I'm glad we have a sheriff who is willing

to stand up and fight for us."

As an emergency ordinance, it expires in 61 days and would have to be renewed.

► UTAH

And the winner by a landslide for president of the United States... "None of the above."

Seventy percent of kids who voted in a **mock election** at the **WEBER COUNTY Fair** last month voted for write-in candidates. President Obama got 30 percent of the votes, according to County Clerk/Auditor Ricky Hatch, whose office ran the election for youths aged 18 and under. It was part of the county government booth.

The voters also cast ballots on

Fairs impact local economies

RESEARCH *from page 11*

director for the fair. County fairs offer a relatively cheap entertainment option for residents who are struggling financially and may not be able to go on a vacation or participate in other more expensive summer activities.

County fairs that are thriving this year also have a positive impact on the local economy. A recent study done by the Fiscal and Economic Research Center at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater found that the county fair in Waukesha County, Wis. generates \$3.7 million in economic activity.

"When we look at economic development, the fair itself is an industry," said Russ Kashian, principal researcher. "It's a real investment in the community."

The study found that for every dollar spent at the fair, an additional 11 cents were spent elsewhere in the county.

Along with boosting the local economy, county fairs can also impact local businesses that may be experiencing a downturn. In Obion County, Tenn., fair attendees this year saw an increase in the number of local businesses on hand to promote their products and services.

"This is the best place to showcase your business. You'll have more contact with the people of Obion County here than any other time of year," said Linda Baker, president of the fair board.

(Research News was written by Sarah Sunderman, research associate.)

burning issues such as favorite candy bar (Kit Kat, by a hair), movie and school subject.

"Although it's just for fun, we're hopefully planting the seeds of citizen participation in our community, which is crucial to maintaining good government," Hatch said.

► VIRGINIA

The **FAIRFAX COUNTY Park Authority (FCPA)** was chosen for **Best Overall Commitment to Aquatics** by *Aquatics International* magazine.

The recognition is part of the 13th annual Best of Aquatics contest that celebrates outstanding facilities of all varieties—including government, nonprofit and privately owned operations. Thirteen other facilities from around the country were also acknowledged.

Entries were judged by an independent panel of industry experts who considered programming, promotional materials, aquatic amenities and community involvement.

The county's aquatic facilities include a Western-themed, outdoor water park known as The Water Mine, an indoor leisure water park

and a spray ground at a family recreation area.

► WASHINGTON

You might want to think twice before having one more for the road in **KING, PIERCE and SNOHOMISH counties**. Or better yet, check the Web.

As of last month, the counties were the only ones participating in a two-year Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC) project that allows county residents to visit a website that shows when and where police will be conducting **DUI sweeps** in their communities, *The Seattle Times* reported.

"If you can look online and see that this is going on in your neighborhood and backyard that will be a deterrent," said Mark Medalen, a WTSC spokesman.

Between 2004 and 2008, the three counties—the state's most populous—led the state in deaths related to impaired drivers, according to WTSC.

(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 email ctaylor@naco.org or cban@naco.org.)

Job Market & Classifieds

► COUNTY MANAGER – LA PLATA COUNTY, COLO.

Salary: \$125,000—\$145,000 DOQ.

The BoCC is seeking a strong, visionary leader with solid management, organizational and financial skills. The County Manager will provide strategic leadership, focus and direction to the BoCC, the Leadership Team, and community as a whole. Critical success factors for the new County Manager will include strategic planning, economic development, financial oversight, regionalism, succession planning, collaboration and consensus-building skills, innovative problem solving, long and short-term planning, and strong, enthusiastic leadership.

The new County Manager will have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university in Public or Business Administration or closely related field, Master's degree strongly preferred; and eight to ten years of increasingly responsible public sector experience with a minimum of five years' senior management experience; or any combination of education, training and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the essential functions of the position. For a more detailed job description please visit www.co.laplata.co.us/jobs. Appointment will be based on competency, education, training, experience and suitability as it relates

to the position of County Manager and the successful completion of a thorough background investigation. Colorado law provides that finalist resumes and related materials submitted to La Plata County may be publicly disclosed.

Compensation and Benefits: DOQ. Medical Insurance, Dental Insurance, Vision insurance Life Insurance, 401(a) Retirement with County Contributions, Choice of two 457 Deferred Compensation Plans, Long Term Disability Employee Assistance Program, Voluntary Fitness Program, Flexible Spending Account, Annual leave (vacation and holiday time off), Sick Leave and Sick Leave Bank, Aflac, Child Care Subsidy Program To apply for this outstanding career opportunity, please visit www.co.laplata.co.us/jobs and follow the application process. Please do not hesitate to call La Plata County at 970.382.6361 if you have any questions regarding this position or recruitment process. La Plata County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

► REAL ESTATE ASSESSOR – COUNTY OF PRINCE GEORGE, VA.

Salary: DOQ.

Prince George County is now accepting applications for the position of Real Estate Assessor. For a County application and job description, please visit the County's website at www.princegeorgeva.org.

Hire Quality Staff

Get rate schedules for the Job Market/Classifieds both online and in print.

Visit www.naco.org ► Programs & Services ► Hire Quality Staff for more information, or contact Christopher Johnson at 202.942.4256 or cjohnson@naco.org.

What's in a Seal?



► Newaygo County, Mich.
www.countyofnewaygo.com

Newaygo County was named after Chippewa Indian Chief Nawwagoo, one of the signers of the Treaty of Saginaw in 1812. Settlement of the county began in 1836 when Michel Charleau took a group of businessmen from Chicago up the Muskegon River and observed the great expanse of white pine forests. The first sawmill was built a few years later at the junction of the Muskegon River and a tributary that would be named Pennoyer Creek, after one of the businessmen.

The lumber boom in the last half of the 1800s helped put the county on the map. The Muskegon River, Michigan's largest, became the lifeblood of the county for transporting lumber and generating hydroelectric power.

Today, Newaygo relies on tourism as its main economic support, with agriculture and small manufacturing secondary. The Muskegon River continues to be the main attraction for summer cottage residents and fishermen, and half the county is contained in the Manistee National Forest.

The seal shows a deer and a white pine tree symbolizing the Manistee Forest.

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