

NACo National Association of Counties

# CountyNews

The Voice of America's Counties

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES ■ WASHINGTON, D.C.

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## House passes Continuing Resolution

On Saturday, Feb. 19, the U.S. House passed H.R. 1, the Continuing Resolution (CR) which funds the federal government for the rest of the fiscal year, by a vote of 235–189. The current Continuing Resolution expires March 4.

House Appropriations Committee Chair Harold Rogers (R-Ky.) originally announced cutting domestic discretionary programs by \$40 billion. However, Republican freshmen and other conservatives insisted on \$100 billion in cuts forcing Rogers back to square one. The

See CR page 4

**QuickTakes**

**5 Most Conservative Counties\***

- 1 – Williamson County, Tenn.
- 2 – Forsyth County, Ga.
- 3 – Montgomery County, Texas
- 4 – Shelby County, Ala.
- 5 – Hamilton County, Ind.

\* As defined by voting in past elections  
Source: GovPro December 2010



(Clockwise, upper left) Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Mike Mullen; Sen. Chris Coons; Attorney General Eric Holder; and Rep. John Mica are among the featured guest speakers at NACo's 2011 Legislative Conference.

## Fiscal responsibility, creating jobs spotlight Legislative Conference

Jobs and the role of county governments in the economic recovery is the main focus for more than 1,300 elected and appointed county officials attending NACo's 2011 Legislative Conference, March 5–9, in Washington, D.C.

During the five-day conference, county officials will discuss NACo's 2011 Key Legislative Priorities, meet with Obama administration officials and members of Congress, and hear from prominent national leaders and commentators.



Featured guest speakers include Attorney General Eric Holder, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Mike Mullen, Housing and Development Secretary Shaun Donovan, Sen. Chris Coons (D-

Del.), Reps. John Mica (R-Fla.) and Doc Hastings (R-Wash.), as well as MSNBC talk show host and former congressman Joe Scarborough.

Holder has served as Attorney General since Feb. 3, 2009. He served as deputy attorney general in the Clinton Administration, the first African-American named to that post. Prior to that he served as U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia. He is a native of New York City and a

See CONFERENCE page 9

## House votes to protect PILT payments

By RYAN YATES  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The House of Representatives defeated an amendment to the FY11 Continuing Resolution (H.R. 1) Feb. 16 offered by Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio), which would have cut funding to the payment in lieu of taxes program (PILT) by 75 percent.

Upon learning of the amendment, NACo quickly developed an overnight grassroots campaign against the Kaptur amendment, which culminated in a vote of 394–32 in opposition.

During the House debate, Rep. Norm Dicks (D-Wash.) said, "I just want to rise in very strong opposition [to the Kaptur amendment]. Being a westerner, I have counties in my district that receive these payments. I think it's justified. I appreciate the fact that the new majority has tried to protect these

See PILT page 2

## CountyNews Features

- Model Programs
- News From the Nation's Counties
- Profiles in Service
- NACo on the Move
- Research News
- The H.R. Doctor Is in
- What's in a Seal?
- In Case You Missed It
- Financial Services News
- Job Market / Classifieds

### INSIDE »



Star treatment gets teen girls to participate in a Hennepin County, Minn.'s healthy living program » **Page 5**

See how President Obama's 2012 budget proposal stacks up against current spending for county programs » **Page 3**

First it was the kitchen cabinet with "Spice," now it's the tub with "bath salts," the latest synthetic drug » **Page 3**

Linn County, Iowa supervisor throws hat in ring for NACo VP » **Page 10**



# Major progress made on FAA bill

By ROBERT FOGEL  
SENIOR LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Both the Senate and House took big steps on reauthorizing the federal airport and aviation programs, a NACo priority for 2011. These programs expired in 2007 and are currently on their 17th short-term extension.

The Senate approved its version of the FAA bill on Feb. 17 by a vote of 87-8. S. 223 was the first major piece of legislation debated by the Senate in the new Congress. The final vote took place after a compromise was worked out on the contentious issues of long-distance flights from Washington, D.C.'s Reagan National Airport. The Senate bill would allow the number of those flights to double from 12 round-trip flights to 24 flights. This was one of the issues that had prevented legislation from passing last year.

The Senate's two-year bill is funded at \$34.6 billion. It funds the Airport Improvement Program at \$4.1 billion annually and does not include an increase in the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC).

The Senate defeated a NACo-opposed amendment from Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) to eliminate the Essential Air Service (EAS) program. However, two EAS amendments offered by Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) passed; the first limited EAS subsidies to the 16 airports that are 90 miles away from the nearest medium or large hub airport and a second that

would limit EAS subsidies to airports that average 10 or more enplanements per day, reportedly affecting 25 airports.

The House is slightly behind the Senate. By a vote of 34-25, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved H.R. 58, its version of the FAA bill. The four-year bill funds the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) at \$3 billion annually, a 15 percent cut from the current funding level of \$3.51.

Like the Senate bill, the House legislation does not include any increase in the PFC, currently capped at \$4.50 (In the last Congress the House proposed an increase of the PFC to \$7). Funding is gradually reduced for the Essential Air Service Program (EAS), and after FY13 the program is eliminated except in Alaska and Hawaii.

Rep. Bill Shuster (R-Pa.) offered and then withdrew an amendment to fully fund EAS and continue the program in all states. Shuster obtained an agreement with committee Chairman John Mica (R-Fla.) that discussions would continue on resolving differences over EAS. NACo had sent a letter to the committee opposing the budget cuts and elimination of EAS.

It is likely that H.R. 658 will be considered by the full House in the near future.

## PILT not a 'giveaway' for counties, Polis says

PILT from page 1

payments." Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo.) said of PILT: "This is not in any way, shape or form a giveaway to our counties. This is land we cannot tax, we cannot develop, we cannot benefit from. In fact, PILT payments are insufficient. They're too low to compensate for the burden of having all this land that's not part of our local tax base."

Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah) said, "PILT is not welfare; this is rent on the land [the Federal government] controls. To be honest, we'd rather have the land back, but until that time, pay for what you control."

NACo suggests that all county officials who receive significant annual

PILT funding review the roll call vote to see how their members of Congress voted. The roll call vote can be found at <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2011/roll117.xml>. Please thank members of Congress who voted "no" on the Kaptur amendment for their continued support for county government.

As the only national organization that advocates on behalf of the PILT program, NACo will continue to work diligently to maintain full funding for this program critical to sustaining local county governments.

For additional information, please contact Ryan Yates, NACo associate legislative director at [ryates@naco.org](mailto:ryates@naco.org).

# NACo testifies: rural development should be priority in next Farm Bill



Photo by Erik Johnston

Brookings County, S.D. Commissioner Don Larson (l) talks with House Agriculture Committee member, Rep. Jim Costa (D-Calif.).

By ERIK JOHNSTON  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Brookings County, S.D. Commissioner Don Larson testified Feb. 15 in support of making rural development a priority in the next Farm Bill before a House Agriculture Committee panel.

Larson, who chairs NACo's Agriculture and Rural Affairs Steering Committee, also told the panel that federal rural development programs in the next Farm Bill must allow counties greater flexibility to advance their strategic local and regional priorities.

Congress is in the early stages of considering reauthorization of the Farm Bill, which expires near the end of next year. Reauthorization and funding for key provisions such as rural business programs, rural community facilities, rural broadband deployment and rural water-wastewater infrastructure is a key 2011 legislative priority for NACo.

"Rural people and places are increasingly operating in dynamic

regional economies, and rural counties and regions are often arbitrarily placed into categories by academics and the federal government," Larson said. "We encourage you to focus on providing enhanced flexibility for USDA Rural Development's state offices to provide assistance that fits the uniquely rural nature of their states, by focusing on serving rural regions, both multi-town and multi-county, and by funding these regions' strategic priorities."

Larson urged Congress and the Obama administration to work together in a bipartisan manner to make rural development programs a priority within Farm Bill reauthorization.

"Our agricultural sector needs more investments in our rural community infrastructure to remain competitive, both from a quality-of-life perspective as well as the production, transport and safety of agricultural food and energy crops," Larson said.

"The agricultural sector is a primary beneficiary of just about every investment made by USDA

Rural Development, whether related to improved water and wastewater treatment facilities, improved housing options for workers, more affordable access to business financing, assistance for value-added production marketing, or cheaper and reliable services from rural electric, telephone and broadband cooperatives."

Larson testified before the House Subcommittee on Rural Development, Research, Biotechnology and Foreign Agriculture, which is reviewing rural programs operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The testimony was delivered on behalf of NACo and the National Association of Development Organizations, whose members are key rural development partners for rural counties. The subcommittee is chaired by Rep. Tim Johnson (R-Ill.).

(The full testimony is available at [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org). For more information, contact Erik Johnston at [ejohnston@naco.org](mailto:ejohnston@naco.org) or 202.942.4230.)

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## In Case You Missed It ...

### News to Use from Past County News

#### ► Registration now open for WIR Conference

Registration is now open for the 2011 Western Interstate Region Conference May 18-20 in Chelan County (Wenatchee), Wash.

NACo's WIR Conference focuses on public lands and other issues critical to the western region of the United States. It provides county officials with the opportunity to hear speakers, discuss legislation and network with other officials to exchange information on those issues.

For more information, call 202.942.4292 or register online today at [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org) ► Meetings and Education ► Attend a Conference.

# New ‘bath salts’ hide a synthetic drug similar to cocaine

By CHARLIE BAN  
STAFF WRITER

Word had evidently already reached retailers in Etowah County, Ala. Feb. 22 when county drug enforcement visited to spread the news about a ban on synthetic stimulants sold as bath salts or plant food.

A few hours after the state’s attorney general signed an order banning the substances in Alabama, workers at most of the 62 shops, mainly convenience stores, had already pulled the packages from their shelves. What the 46 law enforcement officers could do, however, was hammer home to the clerks that after midnight, any of those bath salts would be illegal to sell or possess.

“Our focus wasn’t on making arrests,” said Natalie Barton, Etowah County sheriff’s public information

officer. “We were simply taking the dangerous drugs out of circulation so people could not buy them.”

The stimulant causes effects similar to cocaine or methamphetamine and is sold under the names “Ivory Wave,” “Vanilla Sky,” “Meow Meow” and “Bliss,” among others. Bath salts sold at mainstream retailers or national brands list their ingredients; these substances do not.

The situation is similar to how synthetic marijuana has recently been sold as incense. The substances themselves are legal in most places, but despite the packaging warning against human consumption, people, particularly young adults have been smoking or snorting them, the Drug Enforcement Agency reports.

Several states in addition to Alabama, including Louisiana and Florida, have enacted temporary

bans on the products and others, including Mississippi, Kentucky, Michigan, Hawaii and North Dakota, are in the process of writing and ratifying bans.

Although the chemicals in these products are fundamentally different from banned narcotics, they have a comparable effect when consumed. “Bath salts” can cause hallucinations, paranoia, a rapid heart rate and suicidal inclinations. They also cause insomnia, irritability and panic attacks.

The culprit, DEA spokesman Dave Levey said, is a pair of chemicals that his agency lists as chemicals of concern—methadone and methylenedioxypyrovalerone (MDPV), neither of which is banned federally.

“They are so dangerous because they are unregulated,” Levey said.

“There’s no quality control, no potency control. The effect someone might experience from one hit can be 100 times stronger from another batch.”

“Although we lack sufficient data to understand exactly how prevalent the use of these stimulants are, we know they pose a serious threat to the health and well-being of young people and anyone who may use them,” U.S. Drug Czar Gil Kerlikowske wrote in an Office of National Drug Control Policy release on synthetic stimulants.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers reported 236 calls to U.S. poison centers in 2010 traced to synthetic stimulant use and 251 similar calls in January 2011 alone.

Levey said synthetic stimulants started appearing in the United

States in 2009, but became more prevalent after states and counties started combating “Spice” use. He said they tended to be developed in Europe, mainly Germany and the United Kingdom, where they started showing in the mid 2000s.

Currently, the DEA is not prepared to enact a federal ban of bath salts. Because their ingredients are not listed, authorities have yet to determine what the active ingredients are. Banning them is complicated by the ease with which the creators can change the composition and circumvent a ban.

“It is possible to tweak them, so it’s a challenge to keep up with a ban unless we know exactly what we’re outlawing,” Levey said. “That’s what makes dealing with synthetic drugs difficult, the effect can come from any combination of ingredients.”

## FY12 Budget Request vs. Current Enacted Spending Levels

The following chart illustrates the impact on county programs of President Obama’s 2012 budget request by comparing the request with the last enacted budget in 2010.

Program Name	FY10 Enacted (in thousands)	FY12 President's Request	% Change
<b>Energy and Environment</b>			
• EPA	\$10,300,000	\$8,973,000	-13%
Clean Water SRF	\$2,100,000	\$1,550,000	-26%
Drinking Water SRF	\$1,387,000	\$990,000	-29%
• DOE	\$26,400,000	\$29,500,000	12%
<b>• USDA Rural Development Programs</b>			
Rural Business - Cooperative Service	\$190,000	\$186,000	-2%
Rural Utilities Service	\$694,000	\$577,000	-17%
Rural Housing Service	\$1,893,000	\$1,446,000	-24%
<b>Health</b>			
• HRSA			
Community Health Centers	\$2,141,000	\$3,222,000	50%
National Health Service Corps	\$141,000	\$418,000	196%
Maternal and Child Health Block Grant	\$661,000	\$654,000	-1%
HIV/AIDS	\$2,315,000	\$2,401,000	4%
Rural Health	\$186,000	\$124,000	-33%
• CDC			
State and Local Preparedness and Response Capability	\$761,000	\$651,000	-14%
• SAMHSA			
Substance Abuse Block Grant*	\$1,799,000	\$1,889,000	5%
Mental Health Block Grant	\$421,000	\$43,500	-90%
*new Substance Abuse State Prevention Grant included in total			
<b>Homeland Security</b>			
FEMA - State and Local Programs	\$3,748,000	\$3,653,000	-3%
Disaster Relief Fund	\$1,600,000	\$1,800,000	13%
Flood Map Modernization Fund	\$220,000	\$102,712	-53%
National Predisaster Mitigation Fund	\$100,000	\$85,000	-15%
Training, Measurement, and Exercise Programs	\$267,200	\$191,663	-28%
Emergency Food and Shelter	\$200,000	\$100,000	-50%
<b>HUD</b>			
CDBG Formula	\$3,940,000	\$3,640,000	-8%
Sustainable Communties	\$150,000	\$150,000	0%
HOME	\$1,825,000	\$1,650,000	-10%
Choice Neighborhoods	\$65,000	\$250,000	285%
HOPE VI	\$135,000	\$0	-100%
Section 8 Housing Vouchers	\$18,200,000	\$19,200,000	5%
Homeless Assistance	\$1,865,000	\$2,372,000	27%
Brownfields Redevelopment	\$18,000	\$0	-100%

Program Name	FY10 Enacted (in thousands)	FY12 President's Request	% Change
<b>Human Services and Education</b>			
<b>• Dept. of Education</b>			
ESEA Title I	\$14,492,400	\$14,792,400	2%
Special Ed Grants to States	\$11,505,200	\$11,705,200	2%
Vocational Education	\$1,271,700	\$1,007,900	-21%
<b>• Dept. of Health &amp; Human Services</b>			
Child Care Discretionary	\$2,127,000	\$2,927,000	38%
Head Start	\$7,234,000	\$8,100,000	12%
LIHEAP	\$5,099,000	\$2,570,000	-50%
Community Services Block Grant	\$700,000	\$350,000	-50%
Seniors Home & Community Based Svcs.	\$368,000	\$416,000	13%
National Caregiver Support Program	\$154,000	\$192,000	25%
Senior Nutrtition Programs	\$819,000	\$819,000	0%
<b>• Department of Agriculture</b>			
WIC	\$7,252,000	\$7,390,000	2%
<b>Interior, Forest Service</b>			
<b>• Department of the Interior</b>			
Payment in Lieu of Taxes	\$358,000	\$380,000	6%
<b>• USDA Forest Service</b>			
Secure Rural Schools	\$416,000	\$328,000	-21%
<b>Justice and Public Safety</b>			
Bryne/Justice Assistance Grants (JAG)	\$519,000	\$519,000	0%
State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP)	\$330,000	\$136,000	-59%
Second Chance Act	\$100,000	\$100,000	0%
Mentally Ill Offender Act	\$12,000	\$0	-100%
Drug, Mental Health and Problem Solving Courts (*Drug Court Assistance was a separate line item in FY10, and previous years)	\$45,000	\$57,000	27%
Juvenile Justice Account	\$424,000	\$280,000	-34%
Violence Against Women Programs	\$419,000	\$431,750	3%
Community Oriented Policing Services	\$792,000	\$669,500	-15%
<b>Labor</b>			
WIA Title I Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker Funding Grants	\$3,829,000	\$3,627,000	-5%
<b>Transportation</b>			
Federal Highway	\$41,107,000	\$69,675,000	69%
Federal Transit	\$10,730,000	\$22,201,000	107%
Airport Improvement Program	\$3,515,000	\$2,242,000	-36%
Essential Air Service	\$200,000	\$173,000	-14%
Amtrak	\$1,583,000	\$4,046,000	156%
High-Speed Rail	\$2,500,000	\$4,000,000	60%
Total Transportation Funding	\$76,385,000	\$123,940,000	62%



# House makes deep cuts in domestic discretionary spending

## RESOLUTION from page 1

bill that was taken up by the House had approximately \$60 billion cut from the president's FY11 budget request.

H.R. 1 targets many programs of interest to counties for deep cuts or elimination, including adult and youth job training, the Community Development Block Grant, Community Services Block Grant, and Juvenile Accountability Block Grant programs, and Community Health Centers.

Despite these cuts, there were several positive amendments among the nearly 500 that were considered. County allies easily defeated an amendment by Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) to cut funding to the payment in lieu of taxes program (PILT) by 75 percent. The amendment was defeated by a margin of 394 to 32. (See "PILT Package Survives," p. 1)

Initially, the legislation sought to eliminate hiring grants for law enforcement and emergency personnel, however, amendments to provide \$298 million for COPS hiring, and \$510 million for SAFER

grants restored funding for these important public safety needs.

There is still a long way to go before the bill is enacted. The Senate took up its own version of the CR after the Presidents' Day recess, and Senate Appropriations Chairman Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) has already rejected the House version.

The Senate bill is likely to be a funding freeze instead of deeper cuts. Additionally, the president has already indicated that he will veto the House bill in its present form. If Congress and the president cannot agree by March 4, the federal government may shut down, the first time this has happened in 15 years.

Following is a summary of other program cuts and amendments in H.R. 1.

### Agriculture and Rural Development

The agriculture portion of the CR includes a total of \$18.1 billion in funding, which is \$5 billion, or 22 percent, below the president's FY11 request. These totals reflect spending cuts below FY10 in every agriculture account, including conservation, rural development, domestic and

foreign food assistance programs, and the Food and Drug Administration.

The House CR targets USDA Rural Development's Rural Utilities Service and Rural Business-Cooperative Service for reductions of 24 percent below the president's FY11 proposal. Subsequently, county-supported business development programs and key utility programs such as water and waste disposal fare much worse under the CR.

The Water and Waste Disposal programs receive \$405.5 million or \$118 million less than Obama's FY11 proposal, for a cut of 22 percent. The Rural Housing Service (RHS) programs receive nearly the same level of cuts as the president's FY11 proposal. However, community facility grants, which are the key county-supported account within RHS, receive \$11.5 million less in the CR, representing a cut of 26 percent below the president's FY11 request of \$44 million.

### Community and Economic Development

The bill cuts the Community Development Block Grant fund-

ing by 62 percent — from \$3.94 billion currently to \$1.5 billion. It would cut HOME Investment Partnership funding by 10 percent, from \$1.82 billion to \$1.65 billion. It would also eliminate funding for the Sustainable Communities Initiative and HOPE VI/Choice Neighborhoods programs.

### Employment and Training Programs

H.R. 1 includes more than \$2 billion in cuts to Department of Labor-administered employment and job training programs, including the elimination of all funding for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in Program Year (PY) 2011. Other programs targeted for deep cuts or elimination include YouthBuild, Job Corps, green jobs training and reintegration of ex-offenders.

In documents published by the House Appropriations Committee, the committee seeks to explain its reduction to workforce programs by implying that the workforce system can be sustained through next year with current-year funding and carryover. The

committee claims, "These programs have significant carryover balances from prior year appropriations and have already received \$1.5 billion in advance funding available for the current fiscal year."

While it is true that \$1.5 billion was advanced this year as part of WIA's 2010 allotment, these funds were intended to support WIA activities for the current 2010 program year — from October 2010 through June 2011. If the cuts to WIA in H.R. 1 become law, no new funds will be appropriated for workforce programs in PY11, and as a result, states and local communities would not receive new funding to enroll participants and operate programs beginning July 1 of this year.

### Environment

In FY10, the EPA received the largest funding boost since its inception. However, the CR slashes EPA's budget by close to \$3 billion to approximately \$7.2 billion.

Some of the largest EPA cuts are in the arena of the Clean Water (CW) and Drinking Water

See CR page 6

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**Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, Washington, DC**  
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RSVP's are required for this lunch, so please contact John Samartzis at JSamartzis@naco.org to attend the lunch.

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

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# Teen Moxie program has girls 'taking steps together'

By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

A white stretch Hummer pulls up, and out spills a group of excited, chattering teenage girls — not for girls-night-out at a Justin Bieber concert, but at a county medical clinic.

The 20 or so girls come to this Hennepin County, Minn. building every Thursday night to show their Teen Moxie, or rather, to participate in a program by that name. The nutrition and healthy lifestyle education sessions are a spin-off of Hennepin County Medical Center's successful Taking Steps Together program for kids and their families.

Participants discuss meal planning, body image, time management and other topics in a safe environment with their peers — and get physical — all under the watchful eye of Rachel Newby, the program's coordinator. Most were referred by their doctors or nutritionists in the county's public health system because of high body mass index ratios. Others tagged along with friends or relatives.

"The limo rides are a great way to build their self esteem, get them excited about coming to our program and treat them like queens," Newby said. The swanky rides are discounted through a partnership the hospital developed with a local limousine company, and — to Newby's surprise — turned out to be cheaper than renting school buses or vans.

Teen Moxie is an outgrowth of the Taking Steps program, which began about four years ago. The Taking Steps curriculum includes nutrition education, physical activities for families and individuals, trying new cooking techniques and recipes, and stressing the value of eating meals together as a family.

That 16-week program had a waiting list to get in, but the two groups most interested in Taking Steps didn't have much in common, Newby explained.

"Our wait list started to break down to 8-to-11-year-old boys and 11-to-18-year-old girls," she said. "You can imagine that those two groups of people don't always love hanging out together. If you're a teenage girl, it's not cool to be hanging out with your little brother."

So the hospital created Teen Moxie, a 20-week program just for "tween" and teen girls. Participating girls' weights and other vital statistics are measured at the start of the program to track their progress.

Lizbet Becerra, 13, is an eighth-grader whose cousin invited her to come with her. "She told me it was really fun. You got to meet new



Photos courtesy of Hennepin County Medical Center

Kaley Patch, 13, steps out of limousine as she arrives — not at a movie premiere — but at Hennepin County Medical Center's Teen Moxie program for girls in Minneapolis.



Teen Moxie program participants did Zoomba dance aerobics at a recent session of the 20-week program that stresses healthy eating, fitness and self esteem.

people and play lots of games and stuff, so I decided to go with her," Lizbet said.

She's enjoying learning "new ways to be healthy and how it's really fun to meet new people."

On one recent Thursday, the girls did Zoomba, a form of dance aerobics to Latin, reggaeton and hip-beats. "There are two rules," Newby said: "Keep moving and have fun."

The program is funded as part of Taking Steps, which received about \$170,000 from the local United Way, and the General Mills and Minnesota Twins foundations.

Newby said free transportation is an important part of the program, because it is "logistically hard" for the girls' parents — many of whom don't own cars — to drop off and pick up their daughters. Limos like the Hummer are chosen for their "wow factor." Two are needed each week to transport participants who come

from all corners of the 557-square-miles county.

Traveling as a group also gives the girls and Newby extra time together that can be put to good use. Recently, while in transit, the girls did yoga stretching and breathing exercises in the limo before arriving at the clinic, Newby said. The extra "program time" also facilitates positive conversation en route.

Diana Cutts, M.D., a pediatrician at the county hospital, said the program fills a "real void," especially for inner-city families with limited resources and poor access to full-service grocery stores. Those families often live in neighborhoods where fast food may be more affordable than more nutritious offerings.

She said it's paradoxical to some that people can come from lower-income families but yet be able to eat enough food to become overweight. "When you look at studies

of what brings the least expensive sense of satisfaction, it tends to be foods which are less healthful," she explained, such as fast or junk foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt.

The program hopes to show increased consumption of fruits and vegetables in the girls' diets, increased physical activity and better decision making about food. "We hope also to give the participants a sense of their own power and their active participation in their health," Cutts said.

"Girl power" may be a new concept for some in the program. About half of the participants come from families who speak Spanish at home, said Newby, a former Peace Corps volunteer in Paraguay who is bilingual. Working with girls from different cultures requires an understanding of cultural norms, such as how that culture values physical activity and competition for girls, Cutts said.

"The value of daily physical activity and the whole sort of fitness movement and working out is a very

middle-class concept," she said. And the way many girls are introduced to physical activity in school is through team or competitive activities, which may not be seen as having value for girls in some cultures.

"I think there are a lot of cultural barriers that get in the way in some situations," she said, "so we're still learning and thinking about this together."

Teen Moxie is about a month old, and Newby says so far feedback from the girls has been "phenomenally positive."

"I had three girls at the beginning who were very hesitant to come. They didn't want to meet any new people; they weren't really sure they wanted to try any new activities, and they weren't jiving with it," Newby said. She convinced them to come to one class, saying if they hated it, they never had to return.

"All three of those girls called me after the first time they came to class and said, 'I know I said I didn't really want to come again, but would it be OK if I came again?'"

## Profiles in Service



### » Leigh Lenzmeier

NACo Board Member  
Commissioner  
Stearns County, Minn.

**Number of years active in NACo:** 14

**Years in public service:** 20

**Occupation:** Commercial real estate appraiser, litigation support

**Education:** MBA, St. Cloud State University (Minn.)

**The hardest thing I've ever done:** bury my son.

**Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner:** my son, Mom and Dad.

**A dream I have is to:** beat diabetes.

**You'd be surprised to learn that I:** once worked as a prison guard.

**The most adventurous thing I've ever done is:** I owned an auto thrill show for three years.

**My favorite way to relax is:** being a dedicated quality control volunteer for Bulleit bourbon.

**I'm most proud of:** Alice, my wife.

**Every morning I read:** the local paper online.

**My favorite meal is:** Cold Spring beer and pizza.

**My pet peeve is:** control freaks.

**My motto is:** "I'll start my diet tomorrow."

**The last book I read was:** *Minnesota 13* — The History of Bootlegging in Stearns County.

**My favorite movie is:** *Slap Shot*, a '70s comedy about a minor league hockey team.

**My favorite music is:** BB King, Willie Nelson and Pink Floyd.

**My favorite president is:** the next one, or maybe the one after that.



# First NACo rail conference on track in April

By Bob Fogel

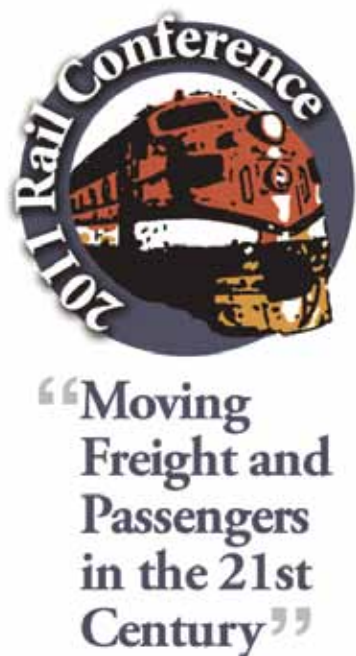
SENIOR LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

NACo will hold its first rail conference April 27–29 at the Wyndham Lisle-Chicago Hotel and Executive Conference Center in Lisle, Ill., a suburb of Chicago.

The conference, *Moving Freight and Passengers in the 21st Century*, will focus on the impact of freight and passenger rail on county, city and state governments and their communities. It will look at the movement of freight in the urban, suburban and rural communities of the United States and discuss who will pay to modernize and expand passenger and freight rail systems.

Participants will get to meet and hear from experts in the field, including representatives of the rail industry, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the shippers who use the system, commuter rail experts, Amtrak and proponents of high-speed rail. The conference will conclude with a half-day discussion on how city, county, regional and state governments can work together with the freight and passenger industry to influence federal policy; and both reduce the negative impacts from freight rail movement and improve passenger rail service in America.

Also sponsoring the conference are the National League of Cities and the National Association of Regional Councils.



NACo encourages county officials to register early at [www.naco.org/railconference](http://www.naco.org/railconference). The registration fee for this conference is \$150 and includes an opening reception, breakfast both days, a luncheon, and refreshments throughout the day.

Hotel rates are \$112 per night and should be made directly through the hotel at 866.615.4206 or 1.800.WYNDHAM and be sure to reference "NACo 2011 Rail Conference" to receive the group rate.

Please e-mail questions to [nacomeeting@naco.org](mailto:nacomeeting@naco.org) or contact Bob Fogel at 202.942.4217 or [bfogel@naco.org](mailto:bfogel@naco.org).

## Superfund, drinking water, waste water programs face significant reductions

CR from page 4

(DW) State Revolving Fund (SRF) programs. SRF programs provide water grants to eligible communities based on state water priority projects. The FY11 budget proposed giving the CW fund \$2 billion and the DW fund \$1.3 billion. The House Continuing Resolution on the other hand, contains much lower numbers, \$690 million for the CW fund and \$830 million for the DW fund.

For FY11, the president proposed giving the Superfund program \$1.3 billion, the CR reduces the amount to \$1.27 billion. Superfund is a federal program used to clean up uncontrolled hazardous waste sites nationwide.

In previous budget years, the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) received \$60 million a year but CR cuts the program to \$50 million. DERA funds are used to convert diesel engines to lower-pollution engines.

The CR contains a number of environmental policy provisions that may be of interest to counties:

- The bill states that no funds made available by the CR may be used by the EPA to implement, administer or enforce a change to a rule or guidance document in regards to the "waters of the U.S." definition under the Clean Water Act (CWA)

- The CR also prohibits its funds from being used to enforce any greenhouse gas emissions regulations.

- Regarding the particulate matter National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), Rep. Kristi Noem (R-S.D.) sponsored a successful amendment to stop this regulation. The EPA planned to release a draft proposal later this year. Many rural local governments have expressed concerns with this proposal because they would be considered in non-attainment from naturally occurring events, such as driving down a dusty road, wildfires and wind storms.

- Rep. Tom Rooney's (R-Fla.) approved amendment forbids the EPA from using federal funds to implement new water quality Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) standards in Florida. New standards were issued by the EPA in November and since then, the state of Florida, along with many local governments, have filed suit against the EPA.

- Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) successfully offered an amendment prohibiting federal monies from being used to implement TMDLs or water implementation plans in the Chesapeake Bay.

### Energy

The CR contains a provision to eliminate any unobligated funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). This is especially important for local governments who have yet to spend their Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) funds. According to the House Appropriations Committee, the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) accounts have more than \$10 billion in unspent ARRA stimulus funds. EECBG funds come out of EERE.

The CR gives mentions Yucca Mountain and prohibits the Nuclear Regulatory Commission from terminating Yucca Mountain's license review as a nuclear waste dump without due process.

### Health

The CR makes deep cuts to health programs that will significantly reduce the ability of county governments to deliver health services. Implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) was, as expected, the target of a number of amendments.

Community Health Centers would lose over \$1 billion, which would, according to the National Association of Community Health Centers, eliminate their capacity to serve about 11 million patients and require 127 new health centers to close.

An amendment by Rep. Mike Pence (R-Ind.) to cut off all federal funding to Planned Parenthood and its affiliates was also adopted. Counties with indigent care responsibilities and those that operate or support public hospitals and clinics will likely see dramatic increases in demands for health services in their facilities as a result of these reductions.

An amendment offered by Rep. Alcee Hastings (D-Fla.) was adopted by voice vote which reallocated \$42 million from agencies within HHS to boost AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAP), which support HIV treatments for low-income, uninsured or underinsured individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

The CR cuts \$142 million from the National Health Service

Corps which places health professionals in underserved rural and urban areas and \$269 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Public Health Preparedness and Response. The proposal also uses the entire Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF) to offset or partially backfill cuts to other ongoing CDC functions and programs.

NACo strongly supports the purpose of the PPHF, which is to significantly reduce high and costly rates of preventable disease by expanding the use of strategies for prevention that are based on scientific evidence of effectiveness, and opposes redirecting the funding.

The CR cuts support for state and local mental health, and substance abuse prevention and treatment programs by \$14 million plus an additional "general reduction" of \$200 million. These cuts will reduce the ability of county behavioral health agencies to serve clients with mental illness or substance use disorders, who may as a result require treatment in county hospital emergency rooms or become involved in the justice system.

The following amendments targeting implementation of ACA were adopted:

- Freshman Rep. Cory Gardner's (R-Colo.) amendment to bar HHS from paying salaries for any officials to develop regulations for the state-based health insurance exchanges

See CR page 7

## Apply now for EPA's National Award for Smart Growth Achievement

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced that the application period for the 10th annual National Award for Smart Growth Achievement is now open. Through this award, EPA recognizes communities that have successfully used smart growth principles in the following areas: Programs, Policies, and Regulations; Smart Growth and Green Building; Civic Places; Rural Smart Growth.

Winners will be recognized at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., in December. Entry deadline is April 6, 2011.

To view the application and complete entry guidelines, please visit: [www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/awards.htm#2011app](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/awards.htm#2011app) or contact Ted Cochin, [cochin.ted@epa.gov](mailto:cochin.ted@epa.gov), 202.566.2181.



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](mailto:cnews@naco.org)



# Health care reform, LIHEAP, Head Start take hits

CR from page 6

• Rep. Jo Ann Emerson's (R-Mo.) amendment to bar the IRS from enforcing its part of the ACA

• An amendment to cut off funding for the new Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight, offered by Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas)

• Two sweeping amendments offered by Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) to prohibit any funds to implement the ACA and to prohibit paying salaries to officials to carry out any provisions of the ACA

• Rep. Tom Price's (R-Ga.) amendment to block HHS from implementing the medical loss ratio requirements

• Salaries would be denied for HHS, Labor and Treasury Department officials taking action to define essential health benefits as required by the ACA under an amendment proposed by Rep. Joseph Pitts (R-Pa.), and

• Rep. Denny Rehberg's (R-Mont.) comprehensive de-funding amendment to prohibit paying any employee, officer, contractor, or grantee of any department or agency funded by the Labor-HHS-

Education portion of the CR to implement the provisions of the ACA.

## Human Services and Education

The effect of the House's Continuing Resolution on human services and education programs is mixed. The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) are the most affected county programs, with a reduction of 43 percent, from \$700 million to \$395 million for CSBG; and 11 percent, from \$5.3 billion to \$4.7 billion, for LIHEAP.

Even popular programs such as Head Start and WIC received significant cuts. On the other hand, programs for the elderly and many of the education programs were not affected, with Elementary and Secondary Education Title I grants receiving a slight increase.

The maximum Pell Grant amount would be cut from \$5,500 to \$4,700, an issue of great concern to community colleges.

## Interior

House Republicans, led by

Interior Appropriations Chairman Mike Simpson (R-Idaho), included a provision to defund the Department of the Interior's "Wildlands" policy. Secretarial Order 3310, which was signed by Secretary Ken Salazar on Dec. 23, 2010, would direct the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to begin to inventory, designate and manage federal lands as "wilderness" independent of the United States Congress.

The order undermines the established public process for land use planning and expressly violates the intent of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) as only Congress has the authority to designate lands as wilderness, according to House Republicans.

NACo actively opposes the order and has publically called on Salazar to rescind it.

## Justice and Public Safety

For the Department of Homeland Security, H.R. 1 provides \$1.9 billion for DHS State and Local Grant Programs (\$2 billion enacted in FY10), \$65 million for FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants (\$100 million enacted in FY10), \$204 million for State and

Local Training and Exercises (\$267 million enacted in FY10) and \$100 million for FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter Program.

The CR eliminates Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grants, Buffer Zone Protection, Interoperable Emergency Communication Grants, but provides a record \$3.1 billion for FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund.

For the Department of Justice, the CR eliminates the Byrne Discretionary Grant program and the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Program. Other key assistance programs administered by DOJ's Bureau of Justice (BJA) Assistance will also be reduced, but the impact remains unclear.

The CR proposes \$954 million for BJA's State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance account, however, the legislation does not contain specific line items for many critical programs such as the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program, Byrne/JAG Grants, Second Chance Act and countless others. Therefore, it remains unclear to NACo how countless programs important to counties will fare if the House CR

is ultimately adopted. The Senate version of the CR will likely contain specific line items for these programs, but the total account is \$581 million less than what was enacted in FY10.

## Transportation

H.R. 1 would cut a number of transportation programs. The federal transit program is reduced by 4 percent from \$10.78 billion to \$10.23 billion, mainly through reductions in the New Starts and Small Starts programs. Amtrak is cut from \$1.637 billion to \$1.435 billion, a 12 percent reduction, and funding for High-Speed Rail is eliminated. In addition, funds are rescinded that have been previously appropriated in several programs, including \$3.72 billion in stimulus funding for High-Speed Rail and \$600 million in TIGER grants.

No cuts are proposed to a number of other programs, including the Federal Highway Program, which is continued at \$41.363 billion, the Airport Improvement Program, at \$3.52 billion, and the Essential Air Service program at \$200 million.



# 2011

## NACo Annual Conference and Exposition

July 15-19, 2011 • Multnomah County • Portland, Oregon

## Registration Is Now Open!

If you attend one meeting this year, attend this meeting, your association's conference. Network with your colleagues, assist them, learn from them, learn from experts on financial matters, safety and health experts, let your voice be heard on issues from tax cuts to energy policy that affect counties of all sizes.

Conference updates and online registration available at [www.NACo.org](http://www.NACo.org).

Questions? Please call or e-mail us at ...



(202) 942-4292



[nacomeetings@naco.org](mailto:nacomeetings@naco.org)

# Celebrate National County Government Month

## Serving Our Veterans, Armed Forces and Their Families

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

Counties should try to link activities to this theme by recognizing, honoring and thanking veterans and military personnel for their service.

A new feature this year of NCGM is the National County Government Month Award. The purpose of the award program is to encourage counties to participate in NCGM and to recognize those counties that sponsor outstanding programs to educate residents about county government during the month of April.

Check the NACo website for more information about specific judging criteria. Applications must be received by May 31 to be eligible for the competition.

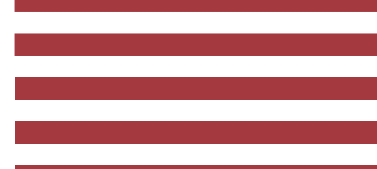


[www.naco.org/NCGM](http://www.naco.org/NCGM)

*Sponsored by the National Association of Counties to raise public awareness about the roles and responsibilities of counties.*



National County Government Month  
April • 2011





# Congressman Mica, Doc Hastings to address general sessions

## CONFERENCE from page 1

graduate of Columbia Law School.

Mullen is the highest-ranking officer in the Armed Forces and the president's principal military advisor. Since taking office as chairman in October 2007, he has focused on three main priorities: 1) defending vital national interests in the Middle East; 2) resetting, revitalizing and reconstituting the Armed Forces; and 3) properly balancing global risk.

He has placed significant emphasis on the expansion of counter-insurgency warfare training and resources and was an early advocate for a greater focus on operations in Afghanistan.

Mica chairs the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, one of the largest congressional panels in Congress. As chair, he serves on all six subcommittees, which include Aviation; Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation; Economic Development, Public Building and Emergency Management; Highways and Transit; Railroads, Pipelines and

Hazardous Materials, and Water Resources and Environment. He is a national leader on a variety of transportation issues.

Hastings chairs the House Natural Resources Committee. This committee has jurisdiction over most federal land use and water policies, including national forests, national parks and monuments, wilderness areas, national scenic areas, Indian reservations and Bureau of Land Management lands. The committee has a major role in producing more American-made energy, with control over hydropower, and oil and gas reserves on public lands and waters.

Also speaking are Paul Ballew, chief economist for Nationwide, and David Brown, Psy.D., a Special Operations combat veteran who will share his knowledge on service member issues related to deployment and community re-integration.

## Educational Opportunities

A variety of educational workshops are offered at the conference. A sampling of the titles includes A

New World in Transportation; Affordable Care Act: Prevention and Public Health Investments; Government Initiatives to Lower Jail and Prison Populations; Renewable Energy Siting Issues: What You Need To Know; Homeland Security in 2011: Federal Initiatives to Secure Your County; and The Next Farm Bill: Advocating for Rural County Priorities

## Other Business at NACo's Legislative Conference

NACo's 11 steering committees will meet during the conference to review and make recommendations on issues and legislation important to counties and communities. The issues that the committees cover include justice and public safety, agriculture and rural affairs, taxes, environment and energy, telecommunications, economic and community development, health care, human services, education, labor and employment, public lands and transportation.

The policy development process initiated by the steering committees leads to the publication of the American County Platform, which NACo uses as a guide to deliver the county government message to the

administration, Congress and the American public.

In addition to the steering committees, NACo has organized caucuses — the Rural Action Caucus and the Large Urban County Caucus — to perform targeted

advocacy efforts focused on specific needs of large urban counties and rural counties.

(Chris Johnson and Jim Philipps contributed to this report.)

## Georgia leader in veterans' services to address task force

Laurie Ott is proud of how her Augusta, Ga., community came together to support veterans, active duty service members and military families.

She will share the Augusta success story at the Veterans and Military Service Task Force meeting March 7 at the Legislative Conference.

Ott, a former television news reporter and anchor, is the executive director of the Central Savannah River Area Wounded Warrior Care Project in Augusta. She was so moved by a story she did on a veteran's struggle with a prosthesis that she changed careers to work implementing the Sea of Goodwill program.

The Sea of Goodwill program is Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Mike Mullen's community organizing concept to support veterans, active duty service members and military families by matching donors to the need, community by community.

"We are thrilled to have NACo interested in what we have developed in Augusta as a community-based model for harnessing warrior care resources," Ott said. "We have been looking a long time for an organization with the will and the national network to implement programs we have found critical to our transitioning service members, veterans and their families."

## Word Search

### Counties with Most Martial Arts Schools

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

LOS ANGELES (Calif. - 534)  
ORANGE (Calif. - 198)  
MARICOPA (Ariz. - 191)  
MIAMI-DADE (Fla. - 138)  
BROWARD (Fla. - 134)  
HARTFORD (Conn. - 97)  
FAIRFIELD (Conn. - 91)  
GWINNETT (Ga. - 67)  
PIMA (Ariz. - 61)  
FULTON (Ga. - 53)

EL PASO (Colo. - 51)  
ARAPAHOE (Colo. - 46)  
PULASKI (Ark. - 25)  
JEFFERSON (Ala. - 23)  
MADISON (Ala. - 23)  
FAYETTE (Ky. - 13)  
FAULKNER (Ark. - 10)  
SUSSEX (Del. - 9)  
KENT (Del. - 8)  
KENTON (Ky. - 8)

Source: www.dojolocator.com • Created by: Christopher Johnson

## New Web resources added for green county projects

NACo has launched a revamped Green Government Database that provides short case studies and links to successful county programs, plans, policies and capital projects. The goal is to provide quick reference for county elected officials and staff on sustainability best practices.

Case studies highlighted include those related to county sustainability management, energy efficiency, renewable energy generation; green building, green jobs, economic development, air quality, green fleets, green purchasing, local food systems; smart land use; water conservation and waste management.

The Green Government Database overhaul included a significant effort to improve ease-of-use for NACo members. A short format with contacts and links enables counties to quickly review sustainability practices and connect to the right places for more detail. In addition, the tool is now searchable by topic area, information type, county size, program year and keyword.

To access the database, visit  
**[www.naco.org/greendatabase](http://www.naco.org/greendatabase)**.

To submit information on your county's projects, contact Jared Lang, Green Government Initiative program manager, at [jlang@naco.org](mailto:jlang@naco.org) or 202.942.4224.





# 2011 Candidate for NACo Second Vice President

According to bylaws changes adopted by the membership at NACo's 2009 Annual Meeting in Davidson County, Tenn. prospective candidates for NACo office are required to submit letters of intent by Jan. 31 of the year of the election, along with completed candidate questionnaires that highlight their qualifications.

The candidate questionnaire is to be published in a February edition of County News. This year NACo received one letter of intent from Linn County, Iowa Supervisor Linda Langston.

## Linda Langston

► **Name:** Linda Langston

► **Current Elected Office Held:** Supervisor

► **County:** Linn

► **State:** Iowa

► **Expiration of Term:** December 2012

► **Are you term limited?** No.

► **Is your county a NACo member (required)?** Yes.

► **Have you been endorsed by your state association of counties?** Yes.

► **Please list all NACo service, including steering and standing committees, Executive Committee, task forces, caucuses and affiliates. For each, list the year(s) of service, and any leadership positions held.**

- Arts and Culture Commission 2004–2011 — (Vice Chair '04–'06) (Chair ('06–'08))

- Restore the Partnership 2006–2008

- Health Steering Committee 2004–present — (Chair 2008–2010)
- Health Reform Task Force 2008–2010

- Health Disparities Sub-Committee 2006–2008 (Vice Chair)

- Health Reform Sub-Committee 2010–present — (Vice Chair 2010–present)

- RAC — member 2010–present
- WON — 2004–present

- Inaugural class of County Leadership Institute 2004

► **Please list all state county association service, such**



**as Board of Directors, committees, and task forces, the year(s) of service, and leadership positions held.**

- ISAC – District VI – President
- ISAC – Transportation Committee 2004–2008

- ISAC – Human Services Committee 2009

- ISAC – Supervisors Affiliate 2009–present; 2nd Vice President 2010

- Governor's Innovation Fund Committee (ISAC recommendation) 2005–2006

- Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities Commission for Iowa (ISAC recommendation) 2009–present

► **Why are you interested in serving as a NACo officer?**

Being an officer of NACo will be a way to contribute in a new and meaningful way to NACo. Challenges abound for all elected officials in our present political environment and finding new ways to advance NACo, provide members with valuable learning tools, educate our constituents and other elected officials about county government and promote public service as a high calling are things that I would like to be a part of.

NACo's work on legislative priorities is something I have been

active in, and I would like the chance to work even more actively in this area. I am committed to leadership and public service and know that being an officer of NACo will be a wonderful, new opportunity to be a part of a truly excellent organization.

► **What do you consider to have been your most important contribution to the National Association of Counties to date and to your state association of counties?**

**NACo** – It is difficult to decide between my service as the chair of the Health Steering Committee and advancing then President Val Brown's initiative of Health Reform and being a part of the Restore the Partnership Campaign. As the caucus competition begins in Iowa again, I am reminded of how significant it is to participate and work with Presidential candidates to encourage them to work with their local governments as partners in bringing excellent services to all of our citizens. Health reform as promoted by NACo is still relevant as the national discussion continues as to the best way to promote improved measures in health delivery, health promotion, and responsible partnerships for a healthy community.

**ISAC – Iowa State Association of Counties** – Coordinating the Restore the Partnership campaign with our Iowa members and encouraging the Presidential candidates to commit to NACo's priorities. I also think that my participation as a member of the state's Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities Commission has been significant as mental health reform advances.

► **What do you consider to be the two or three most important challenges facing NACo in the near future on which the Officers/ Executive Committee/ Board of Directors should focus? Why?**

With a new presidential campaign only a year away, I think the need for partnerships remains a challenge for NACo. I believe that with similar commitment to activities such as those in the 2008 Restore the Partnership campaign, we can play an important role in the upcoming presidential campaign. It

is vital that all presidential candidates, as well as the president, see local government as a meaningful partner in providing services to our citizens. This must happen at all levels of government. Our citizens want government to work and to work for them. That is often best exemplified in county government. Educating candidates as well as the president about our desire and effort to build partnerships that work and work for the benefit of citizens should continue to be an important goal for NACo.

With many new members in Congress, NACo faces new challenges in educating Congress about the importance of local government, the need for collaborative efforts, and broadening NACo members' involvement in these educational and lobbying efforts. There are few areas in which local government does not intersect with the federal government. The relationships that are built at NACo and with NACo are important in moving our legislative priorities forward. As I look to former NACo members who now have positions in this administration, it is apparent that the relationships that were built at NACo have enduring importance as they move forward in their public service.

I believe that NACo provides an important service to its members in building relationships that assist us in advancing our legislative priorities. Also, relationships built at NACo assist in learning best practices, new ideas, promoting the value of public leadership, and continuing education for ourselves.

And while it is clear that webinars provide excellent opportunities to our members and should continue, it is also clear that learning and networking must also be available in person at conferences and through other educational opportunities. There is value in the support and new ideas that are generated when we are together.

I believe we must also continue to assist our members in developing and providing tools to increase the efficiency and evolution of government. With an eye to the future, the need to find new ways of doing business will be as important for county government as it is for any business. Cultivating ourselves as linchpins in the future of our community is something that will take creative effort and can produce stunning results.

► **What do you consider to be the two or three most important issues local officials are facing in their counties that should be on the NACo agenda? Why?**

It is an ever-growing challenge to run for public office. Learning new ways of doing business and addressing growing budgetary challenges no matter where one lives is becoming a constant way of life for most elected officials. Learning and sharing how others are confronting the constant demands of public life is valuable. Learning to use technology and to advance technology in our workplaces and our communities must continue. Technology and integrating technology into more of our government services and our communications will be important if we are to improve our service delivery.

Building pride in public service and renewing trust in our public servants is important if we are to create the changes that will allow us to sustain local government that *works* for our citizens. The work that President Glen Whitley has begun assists local officials in educating our communities about what county government does. It will be important that this work continue so that citizens learn in relevant and meaningful ways what county government does. It is so often true that if we are doing our jobs well, no one notices, but if we make a mistake everyone notices.

We must become better at proclaiming our successes, identifying new ways of doing things, and integrating change into our lives as public officials. We must also reach out a hand to a younger generation so that they believe that public service is a calling and demand that they be active participants.

To accomplish this we must have a network of support and renewal. I continue to rely on colleagues that I first met at the County Leadership Institute in 2004 for their advice and support. It is so valuable to know colleagues that you can call to ask questions and to rely on for support.

Finally, all around us civil discourse is a point of discussion. I have always valued NACo for the thoughtful discussions and relationships that develop at conferences. NACo has often set the example of the possibility of civil discourse. We are a bi-partisan organization



## Financial Services News

# Are County Employees Missing 'Hidden Treasure?'

With income-tax time approaching, county employees might miss a bright spot on their returns. That bright spot is the Saver's Credit, a hidden gem in the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 (EGTRRA) that was made permanent and indexed for inflation by the Pension Protection Act of 2006 (PPA). Qualified workers can claim the credit to receive up to a \$1,000 tax credit for retirement savings.

The problem is most workers don't know about it. According to the 11th annual Transamerica Retirement Survey, only 12 percent of full-time American workers with annual household incomes of less than \$50,000 are aware of the Saver's Credit. Chances are, if your employees are not aware of the credit, they're not claiming it.

The credit benefits county employees by making participation in their deferred compensation plan a lot more affordable—helping some to continue saving for retirement and others to start.

By helping your employees understand the value of the Saver's Credit, you're helping them stay on a path toward long-term financial security. You also reinforce the goodwill you're working to earn among your employees. They see

that you're committed to everyone's success through your deferred compensation plan, not just those who "can afford it."

Eligibility depends on the participant's filing status and modified adjusted gross income. Through the Saver's Credit, the federal government in effect gives qualified participants up to half of what they contribute each year, up to a maximum total credit of \$1,000.

So as county employees are filing their taxes, it is important that they claim this credit if they qualify. And if they are looking for a reason to continue or start saving for retirement in 2011, the Saver's Credit may be it. As the nearby table shows, the credit covers a significant cross-section of wage earners — households

with earnings as high as \$56,500 can qualify for it.

### Get Help for Promoting the Saver's Credit

NACo and the provider of the NACo Deferred Compensation Plan, Nationwide Retirement Solutions, can help if you would

like to find out more information about the Saver's Credit and how saving for retirement through a deferred compensation plan can benefit your employees.

For additional information about the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, please contact Lisa Cole at [lc@naco.org](mailto:lc@naco.org) or by

phone 202.942.4270, or contact Louie Watson with Nationwide at [WatsonL2@Nationwide.com](mailto:WatsonL2@Nationwide.com) or by phone 614.854.8895.

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

### Who qualifies for the Saver's Credit

For tax year 2010	Filing Status / Adjusted Gross Income		
Amount of Credit	Joint	Head of Household	Single/Others
50% of first \$2,000 deferred	\$0 to \$33,500	\$0 to \$25,125	\$0 to \$16,750
20% of first \$2,000 deferred	\$33,501 to \$36,000	\$25,126 to \$27,000	\$16,751 to \$18,000
10% of first \$2,000 deferred	\$36,001 to \$55,500	\$27,001 to \$41,625	\$18,001 to \$27,750
For tax year 2011	Filing Status / Adjusted Gross Income		
Amount of Credit	Joint	Head of Household	Single/Others
50% of first \$2,000 deferred	\$0 to \$34,000	\$0 to \$25,500	\$0 to \$17,000
20% of first \$2,000 deferred	\$34,001 to \$36,500	\$25,501 to \$27,375	\$17,001 to \$18,250
10% of first \$2,000 deferred	\$36,501 to \$56,500	\$27,376 to \$42,375	\$18,251 to \$28,250

Source: "IRS Announces Pension Plan Limitations for 2011," IR-2010-108, Oct. 28, 2010.

## Linda Langston seeks NACo 2nd vice presidency

LANGSTON from page 10

that must renew our members to a committed life of leadership and public service.

We all must continue to set the example for our communities that we can get important work done by working together in an atmosphere of respect and trust. I think NACo has offered us valuable education, networking, ideas and structure to advance both civility and the work we do to improve our communities and the lives of citizens. This must continue.

► **What measures would you recommend to increase and retain NACo membership and to encourage broad participation in NACo by elected officials and employees of NACo member counties? What specific role would you be willing to assume to help build and sustain membership in NACo?**

Education and educational opportunities are key to promoting membership in NACo. Webinars, conferences, and the advancements

in the NACo website are a host of membership benefits.

I also think that programs such as the CVS/Caremark Drug card are real driving forces to promote membership and membership retention. Continuing to work with our sponsors to find new opportunities to leverage our power as a large organization will also enhance commitment to membership.

In these fiscally demanding times, people are always looking for efficiencies and ways to do things that they might not be able to do on their own. Unique services such as Network of Care can also be another tool in our membership expansion.

As monies are tight and budgets shrink, we must be mindful of constituents' concerns related to our travel. Special efforts must be made regarding the benefits and opportunities of conference participation prior to the conferences, as well as after. Locations of conferences must be key in maximizing travel dollars.

Since most government travel and training dollars are constrained, NACo leadership opportunities and webinars offer a relatively inexpensive way to stretch the limited resources within our budgets.

It is important for members of the Executive Committee to be seen at State Association meetings. The promotional activities that

are done in the states should also be supported by those who are already active NACo members. I would be willing to commit to going to as many State Association meetings as possible. If those people who are involved in NACo leadership could get together at their state meetings, they might develop outreach activities.

The LUCC and RAC committees have done a wonderful job in advancing the priorities that are unique to their constituencies. I do believe there might need to be some consideration and thought given to a group that is neither large urban or rural. There are very many counties/communities that are in-between. Each of these groups has its own challenges and commonalities. I would be happy to work on the development of this idea.

Finally, there may be opportunities for the development of a survey that would help NACo, its members and general citizens understand what they think about local government, what they want to know, and what is important to them. This could be the work of the Membership Committee. This was developed in relationship to the cultural community by Americans for the Arts and may be able to be duplicated by NACo. I would also be happy to assist in the development of this kind of program or serve on the Membership Committee.

## Job Market & Classifieds

### ► HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR – GENESSEE COUNTY, MICH.

Salary: DOQ.

Genesee County is recruiting for a Human Resources Director. To review the job announcement and related information, please visit Genesee County's website at [www.co.genesee.mi.us](http://www.co.genesee.mi.us).

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

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

► **Programs & Services**

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more information, or contact Christopher Johnson at 202.942.4256 or [cjohnson@naco.org](mailto:cjohnson@naco.org).

## NACo on the Move

### » NACo Officers and Elected Officials

Glen Whitley, NACo president, spoke on what NACo can offer counties through membership and the latest on NACo and Congress at the Police Jury Association of Louisiana annual convention in Caddo Parish (Shreveport) Feb. 19.

### » Coming Up

Ilene Manster, membership coordinator, will speak about member benefits and exhibit on behalf of NACo membership recruitment and retention at the County Commissioners Association of Ohio newly elected officials training in Madison County Feb. 27–March 1.

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

Keep up with NACo online ...

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





# Model Programs FROM THE NATION'S COUNTIES

Boulder County, Colo.

## Talking Brings Immigrants into Community

By CHARLIE BAN  
STAFF WRITER

Boulder County, Colo. is almost 600 miles from the closest international border, yet it has become a diverse multicultural area. Residents from 70 countries speak more than 40 languages and live in a county whose foreign-born population is increasing faster than the U.S.-born population.

Boulder County became part of a tier of inland immigrant magnets in the early 2000s, along with Atlanta and Chicago.

"It's a place where they knew family and knew there would be a community for them," said Leslie Irwin, a policy analyst for the county commissioners who served as program director for Dialogues on Immigrant Integration, an amalgamation of various social service agencies.

There were jobs, too. Farming, hospitality and service industries offered common entry jobs traditionally filled by immigrants. But Irwin said immigrants frequently stayed in the communities they

knew, and divisions among groups became entrenched.

"We noticed immigrants were coming to Boulder, but weren't integrating into the community," she said. The Colorado Trust, which had been funding grants for service delivery, changed the terms to immigrant integration," she added. "That was the impetus that got this started."

A 22-person steering committee representing various stakeholders planned Immigrant Integration Collaborative (IIC), which was funded with \$300,000 over four years. The committee settled on three goals:

- building understanding between immigrant and established communities through inclusive community conversations;
- improving relationships between communities; and
- helping to generate cooperative, community-based actions for addressing issues related to immigrant integration.

In 2006, the dialogues debuted as a series of facilitated discussions starting with individual



Photo courtesy of Boulder County, Colo.

Boulder County, Colo. Commissioner Ben Pearlman (l) speaks to a group participating in the county's Dialogues on Immigrant Integration program. Several of the participants wear headphones to receive translations from an interpreter.

introductions and conversation starters, followed by open-ended questions to start a discussion. The goal was to create mutual understanding.

Irwin described the program as a structured, but safe, dialogue between people who wouldn't otherwise interact.

The county offered free childcare, language interpretation and food to encourage people to participate. All events were free, held in schools or nonprofits' offices and open to the public.

The program was timely. Anti-immigrant groups became active in Colorado in 2006, and the state legislature passed anti-immigrant legislation.

"It was a charged and emotional time for lots of people, but the way we handled it gave us a chance to address it from our perspective," Irwin said. "We gave immigrants a voice to explain their story, that immigration wasn't always as simple as getting a visa and moving. Other people could explain how they felt about the importance of obeying the law. Sometimes there would be no agreement, but people came away with understanding of the complexity of the solution."

The program was successful in a number of ways. More than 2,250 people in Boulder County participated. Evaluation forms overwhelmingly indicated that respondents' understanding of other cultures increased. Friendships developed among different groups, and the U.S.-born participants became much more sympathetic to immigrants' perspectives.

Participants returned to dialogues to learn how to facilitate similar discussions in other places, which prompted the DII personnel to create a capacity-building how-to manual so other communities

could adapt the strategy for their own use.

In 2010, the Colorado Trust grant ended, but the effort continued at the University of Colorado and Boulder, which adapted dialogues for its Residential Academic Program.

Professor Ellen Aiken implemented dialogues in the program where she teaches, where house-keeping and dining workers, who are mostly immigrants, work and maintain the building. She saw that despite the cultural diversity in the building, there was little interaction. After beginning dialogues in 2007, she saw benefits for both students and staff. The students gained an appreciation for the staff members' cultures. The staff members gained a little more visibility from the students.

"The staff told us there were very few messes made by the students and they believed it was attributable to the relationship the students and staff had," said Greg Boothe, former Housing and Dining Services manager.

For more information about the IIC, contact Carmen Atilano at [atilanoc@bouldercolorado.gov](mailto:atilanoc@bouldercolorado.gov) or 303.441.3141.

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

## Research News

### Cops Use Social Media to Fight Crime

As the use of social media has increased, recent data shows that local law enforcement agencies are seeking to integrate the use of social media tools into their everyday operations.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police recently conducted a survey on the use of social media by local law enforcement. The survey addressed current practices as well as the issues and challenges law enforcement agencies encountered in adopting social media in local jurisdictions.

The respondents include 728 local law enforcement agencies representing 48 states and the District of Columbia. Of those surveyed, 81 percent said they use some type of social media.

Those agencies that use social

media are not only using it to inform the public, but also to investigate crimes. In addition to using social media to notify the public of crimes (44 percent) or notifying the public of emergencies (40 percent), 62 percent of respondents said they use it for investigating crime, 40 percent for soliciting tips on crimes and 37 percent for vetting or background investigations.

Although agencies are still adapting to find the best use of social media to conduct investigations, some agencies have already had success. Slightly more than 45 percent of respondents indicated that the use of social media by the agency had helped to solve a crime. As agencies continue to explore the best practices of exploiting these

tools, this number is expected to grow.

Overwhelmingly, Facebook was the most popular tool with almost 67 percent of the responding agencies having a Facebook page. Some agencies are also operating other social media pages including Twitter (30 percent), Nixle (30 percent), MySpace (22 percent) and YouTube (18 percent).

Despite the increase in use, agencies still faced barriers when developing and implementing a social media policy. Respondents indicated they needed to overcome security concerns (47 percent), resource constraints in terms of time (45 percent), privacy concerns (42 percent) and resource constraints

See NETWORKING page 13





## News From the Nation's Counties

### ► ARKANSAS

Former game show host Bob Barker has weighed in on **PULASKI COUNTY**'s proposal for a **spay and neuter program**.

Barker, who for decades reminded viewers to spay and neuter their pets at the end of every broadcast of *The Price is Right*, called County Judge Buddy Villines to voice his support for the proposal, the *Arkansas Times* reported.

### ► CALIFORNIA

Matt Rexroad, chairman of the **YOLO COUNTY** Board of Supervisors, says he'll introduce his own version of the so-called **crash tax** enacted by the Sacramento City Council.

That measure assesses a \$495 fee to out-of-town victims of accidents within the city limits. Rexroad said the measure is unfair and would affect how and when accidents might be reported.

The controversial proposal was enacted to offset the Sacramento fire department's cost of responding to accidents. The fees would raise \$300,000 to \$500,000, enough to prevent service cutbacks at four fire stations. Proponents argued that out-of-town drivers don't pay property taxes that support emergency services.

But Rexroad told KTXL TV, "If they can't provide basic public services to their residents or people who are around them, you're not meeting your basic obligation."

### ► FLORIDA

To bolster its crime-fighting arsenal, the **MIAMI-DADE COUNTY** Police Department is in the process of **purchasing a drone**, an un-

manned aircraft akin to the type hovering over the battlefields in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Police officials would use the drones to act as another set of "eyes" as they patrol areas.

Some groups and residents are concerned that a drone may threaten their privacy, but experts say a drone might be very effective in SWAT or search and rescue situations.

### ► GEORGIA

**ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY** commissioners are considering creating a civil **code enforcement board** made up of non-lawyers that would rule instead of a judge on quality-of-life violations.

Quality-of-life cases such as parking a car in a front yard or leaving trash cans on the curb for more than a day are now heard in Athens-Clarke Municipal Court.

The board would try such cases as civil offenses, not crimes, making it easier to force people to testify and lowering the burden of proof from beyond a reasonable doubt to a preponderance of evidence. The board could not hand down as large fines as a judge and would need an outside attorney to advise it on procedure and other legal matters, he said.

Former Municipal Court Judge Kay Giese suggested the civil board as a way to reduce her workload. The Municipal Court judge also hears thousands of misdemeanors like traffic offenses and drinking charges each year.

About 20 quality-of-life cases a month end up in Municipal Court, said John Spagna, head of the Community Protection Division,

the county's code enforcement arm. Many of those are plea-bargained before going to trial, the *Athens Banner-Herald* reported.

### ► IDAHO

**BLAINE COUNTY** commissioners want to expand the **Wood River Wolf Project**.

"It has shown that non-lethal control can work," Commissioner Larry Schoen told *Ag Weekly*. "We still need to promote acceptance of that fact. What the project hasn't done yet is demonstrate the economics of it."

The project uses a combination of methods including portable fencing with red flags, noise boxes, guard dogs and human presence to keep sheep and wolves apart when sheep are grazing on public lands. The drawback is the cost because it's labor intensive. Most of the bill has been footed by Defenders of Wildlife, and the group is working on raising more money.

The USDA Forest Service and Idaho Department of Fish and Game have been partners in the research. Idaho's congressional delegation is backing a bill to declassify wolves as endangered species, so they may be hunted.

### ► LOUISIANA

A **whistleblower hotline** started by **JEFFERSON PARISH** President John Young has led to five arrests of people for stealing from parish government. Those arrested include two parish employees, a parish contractor and a fire chief.

"We've received dozens of anonymous letters and tips, and we've looked into every one," Young said at a news conference. "The message here is that this administration has zero tolerance when it comes to illegal or unethical activity."

The alleged thefts range from \$100 worth of dog food to \$125,000 in fraudulent charges by a parish contractor.

Young told the *Times-Picayune* that the Sheriff's Office had completed investigations for half of the 34 tips received.

### ► MARYLAND

Taxpayer money will no longer be used to pay for **liquor, beer or wine purchases** by **ALLEGANY COUNTY** employees.

Commission President Michael McKay said the practice of allowing county employees to make purchases of alcoholic beverages during county-related functions will also likely be banned. Commissioner Bill Valentine said the policy opened up the county to

liability, should someone drinking on the county dollar injure himself or someone else.

The existing policy prohibits county employees from purchasing or using alcohol during the work day, and does not allow employees to be reimbursed for alcohol purchased for themselves at all, but does not prohibit employee consumption at dinner events when entertaining potential business development contacts, the *Times-News* reported.

### ► MICHIGAN

**OAKLAND COUNTY** has launched an **online public forum** to engage residents in local government decision making.

Oakland County will pose questions about local government priorities, program development and other topics for public consideration on the county's website. Residents will be able to respond to questions, make suggestions, post comments, and rank proposals by voting for the ideas they like best. This public input will then be used to shape the future development of Oakland County government programs and services.

"Staying connected to the grassroots is fundamental to the democratic process," said County Executive L. Brooks Patterson. "This will be an invaluable tool for measuring the impact our decisions could have on our constituents."

### ► MINNESOTA

The **RAMSEY COUNTY** Board of Commissioners voted to begin **discussions with the Minnesota Vikings** about building a new stadium, according to the Associated Press.

The stadium would be located at the site of a former Army ammunition plant in Arden Hills, about 10 miles northeast of Minneapolis. Ramsey County is the first municipality to officially express interest in becoming the Vikings' next home. Team officials told the AP that the Metrodome in Hennepin County is outdated and no longer profitable as an NFL venue.

### ► NEW JERSEY

The **CAPE MAY COUNTY** Library and Atlantic Cape Community College are offering **Basic Job Readiness Computer Training** classes for job seekers geared toward improving their computer and job search skills.

The training, beginning in March, is part of a \$5.1 million National Telecommunications and Information Administration American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant to support the New

Jersey State Library's Broadband Technology Opportunity Program (BTOP).

### ► NEW YORK

It's a nice problem to have for **WARREN COUNTY** supervisors: What to do with nearly \$1 million in **surplus occupancy tax money** that county officials did not know existed.

The bed tax money comes from a 4 percent surcharge on hotel and motel rooms, and is required to be spent for tourism-related expenses.

County Treasurer Frank O'Keefe said the money came from unused occupancy tax money that was put toward the Tourism Department's budget, but was not spent, over the years, *The Post-Star* reported.

### ► NORTH CAROLINA

- The U.S. Navy will not pursue building a landing strip in northeastern North Carolina until at least 2014, a development hailed by **CAMDEN** and **CURRITUCK counties**.

One of the five potential sites being evaluated for an **outlying landing field (OLF)** was in Camden County, overlapping the border of Currituck County.

"The Navy made the right decision," said Vance Aydtlett Jr., chairman of Currituck County Board of Commissioners. "The Navy promised that it would not build an OLF in a community that did not want it and today it followed through on the promise."

A Navy spokesman said the search for a site will now focus on the West Coast, where the Navy plans to locate air squadrons first.

- COLUMBUS COUNTY** commissioners have joined in an **employee weight-loss challenge** that mimics the popular television show *The Biggest Loser*.

The six-week competition was conceived by the county Health Department. Each participant contributes \$5 and the "biggest loser" will take home the pot.

Columbus is ranked last among Tar Heel counties in health outcomes in County Health Rankings ([www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)) developed by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin.

### ► OREGON

Music downloads that are free and legal? Why, you could call them Freegal.

Someone already did, **and**

## Social networking helps law enforcement agencies

**NETWORKING** from page 12

in terms of personnel (40 percent) among other challenges.

Even those agencies not currently using social media are contemplating its use. Of those respondents indicating they do not currently use social media, nearly 62 percent say they are considering the adoption of social media and more than 52 percent say they are looking to start within the next year. Facebook (77 percent) and Twitter (37 percent) are the most common tools that these agencies are considering.

The challenges faced by those

who are considering implementation are similar to those faced by agencies already using a social media strategy. Respondents indicated that resources pose the largest challenge in participating in social media with 66 percent indicating resource constraints in personnel and 62 percent indicating resource constraints in time were hampering the agency's use of social media.

To view the survey results and to access other resources for local law enforcement using social media, please visit [www.iacpsocialmedia.org](http://www.iacpsocialmedia.org).

(Research News was written by Kathryn Murphy, research associate.)





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# The H.R. Doctor Is In

## When the Best and the Brightest Leave

Government employees work in the ancient and venerable organizational model called bureaucracy. That means, among other things, many rules codified in formal law and administrative regulation, including civil service rules and labor agreements.

It also means informal rules, traditions and past practices. Bureaucracy means hierarchical structure — the stuff of which organizational charts are made. In theory, another of the hallmarks of bureaucracy is hiring, promoting and compensating based on merit rather than nepotism, political cronyism or spoils, sexual harassment or unlawful discrimination.

The bureaucratic model is really at the center of the current heated political debate over what is economically viable and sustainable in public agencies. It is this model and the accompanying legislation, court decisions and labor agreements that have led to a growing clamor to reduce pension entitlements, automatic pay increases, civil service job protections and bargaining rights.

The outcry, or perhaps jealousy, has been around for many years. It is rising again driven by economic unrest and worries about the future. Do these definitions of what it

means to be a public employee really improve government and insure that public service wins out over self service? Or are they the stone-etched remnants of a way of doing business which is outdated, inflexible and pours retardant on the sparks of creativity and innovation?

There is considerable validity to

**Leaders in government need these best and brightest more than ever before.**

raising these concerns and debating them. They are the material around which demagoguery, pundits and tea parties are organized. How can we have an affordable government in the face of these entrenched financial and entitlement barriers? How can we have a responsive, flexible government in the face of trench warfare between political parties?

Amid the controversy, which will go on for many years, this article will highlight one important and often sad consequence. Inside bureaucracies there are a host of people who are well-intentioned

and comfortable adhering to the rules and doing what it takes to establish a record of satisfactory service. They embrace a career life lived in a safe harbor of bureaucratic mediocrity ending with a lifelong defined benefit pension.

However, there are employees who are truly gifted, caring and concerned not only about sticking to the current rules, but about how to fundamentally change or eliminate those rules for the better. They are the risk-takers and the innovators offering ideas and suggestions not just for the sake of improving the processes used in counting paper-clips, but for a noble purpose of creating a significantly better way to do business or serve others.

These “uber-employees” will not long endure becoming transactors rather than transformers. They become frustrated at how the hopes they brought into the organization in the first place are being dashed or undervalued. They crash into union contracts or personnel rules which provide one-size-fits-all pay increases (or budgetary pay cut decisions) regardless of individual employee contribution.

They may run into elected

officials with agendas or policy perspectives narrowly limited to looking good at the next election, rather than doing good work for the next generation. They may find themselves listening to mottos and mission statements about an organization of excellence, but then find that the hurdles to actually getting anything accomplished are massive headache inducing.

Often these best and brightest become particularly annoyed with running high-hurdle events in procurement, finance and human resources. Their frustrations can ultimately lead to decisions to leave public service.

Leaders in government need these best and brightest more than ever before. Leaders need to be thoughtful enough to be champions for their development and success, recognizing their contributions and appreciating them publicly and individually.

Unions need to recognize that the same pay increase amount for everybody will not work in the long-term best interests of the organization, and ironically, therefore, will not be in the union's best interests. That recognition takes great courage

by union leaders.

The same is true of the so-called “merit increase” concept. Overwhelmingly, the increases are almost universally given as a reward for remaining conscious at the workplace for one year rather than for clear and sustained excellence. Supervisors may often prefer to just sign the paperwork, rather than to confront constructively an employee with performance and behavior deficiencies.

There is much that can be said for leaders having the courage to leave their self-imposed fears about rocking the boat in order to prevent the best and the brightest people — the people they need the most — from leaving the organization.

The HR Doctor recalls vividly a lead newspaper editorial wishing a departing county chief administrative officer well and bemoaning the fact that the county and state should be more concerned than ever about the debilitation which follows the preventable loss of such persons.



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

## What's in a Seal?

» **Roanoke County, Va.**  
[www.roanokecountyva.gov](http://www.roanokecountyva.gov)



Roanoke County was established by an act of the Virginia Legislature on March 30, 1838 from the southern part of Botetourt County. It was named for the Roanoke River, which in turn was derived from a Native American term for money. Additional territory was transferred to Roanoke County from Montgomery County in 1845.

In the 1740s, the first Scotch-Irish and German settlers reached the upper Roanoke Valley by traveling from Pennsylvania through the Shenandoah Valley. They were joined by Tidewater Virginians of English ancestry who journeyed up the valleys of the James and Roanoke rivers.

Roanoke County's pioneering spirit extends to modern times. The county was the first in the state to have curbside recycling. It also has been nationally recognized for governmental cooperation, quality of life and support of the Explore Park.

The seal shows depicts an Indian pioneer along the Roanoke River where the county is located.

(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).)

## Pa. counties seek mandate relief from state

NEWS FROM *from page 13*

**MULTNOMAH COUNTY** libraries are among the latest to offer the **free music download** service.

Freegal, a service of Sony Music Entertainment, allows library cardholders to enter a PIN and download three free songs per week. No special software is needed, and there are no digital rights management restrictions.

Library systems in Orange County, Fla., Douglas County, Colo., Mesa County, Ariz. and Santa Clara County, Calif. are among those that provide the service.

### ► PENNSYLVANIA

**Mandate relief** is at the top of counties' list of legislative priorities for the current session of the General Assembly.

“Our mandate relief priority list is about finding more cost-effective ways to do business and to maximize the use of today's very limited public dollars for programs and services to our residents,” said Mark Hamilton, Tioga County

commissioner and the 2011 president of the **COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA**.

The association's priorities include: funding for transportation infrastructure, restoring the ability to assess oil and gas as real property, capping inmate medical charges, supporting new revenue opportunities and increasing tax fairness, and continuing investments in farmland preservation.

### ► UTAH

**WEBER COUNTY** Jail inmates now have one less thing to deal with when they get letters from home: envelopes. All mail, except for official government correspondence, has to be by **postcard**, according to the *Standard-Examiner*.

“No envelopes, with the exception of legal mail,” said sheriff's Lt. Mark Lowther.

The jail has more than 700 inmates, and opening and searching letters for contraband is labor-intensive, he said, adding: “The primary reason is for safety and security.”

### ► WASHINGTON

Indigent veterans would benefit from a bill being pushed by **KITSAP COUNTY** officials. The measure would separate tax collections for the county's **Veterans Assistance Fund** from the general fund levy.

County Commissioner Josh Brown said veterans' needs currently compete with other services covered by the general fund, such as public safety and law enforcement, according to the *Kitsap Sun*. Isolating the discussion of the veterans fund tax rate would decrease the competition.

The bill's lead sponsor, state Rep. Larry Seaquist, said: “I continue to be concerned about the growing number of veterans and their families that are indigent. We just need to make sure that we're extra careful to watch out for them.”

(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).)

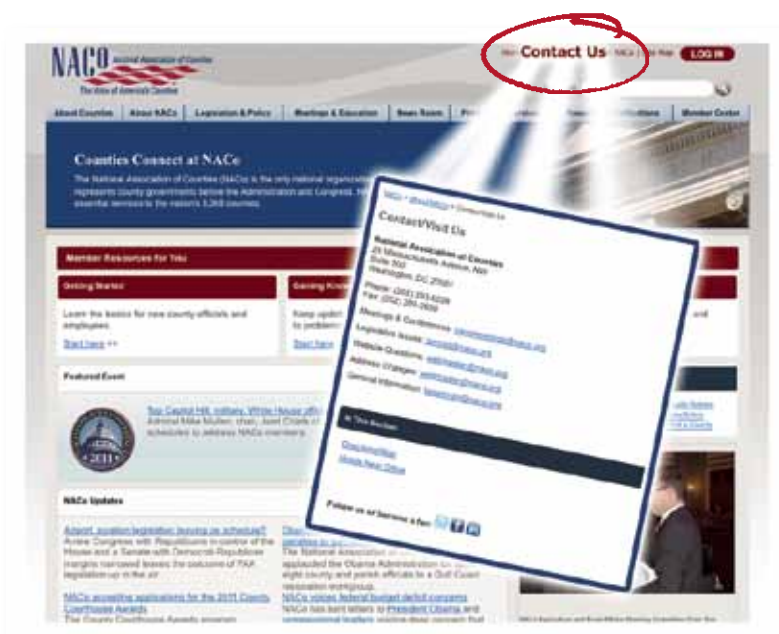




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