

NACo National Association of Counties

CountyNews

California water wasters beware!

BY CHARLES TAYLOR, SENIOR STAFF WRITER

“Water wasters” in California’s Butte County can be reported via a county website. Stanislaus County has hired a groundwater manager.

Nearly 1,000 private water wells have run dry in Tulare County in the fertile San Joaquin Valley. The county is providing
See WATER WASTERS page 2



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES ■ WASHINGTON, D.C.

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New campaign will focus on keeping mentally ill out of jail

BY CHARLIE BAN
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

NACo will partner with the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the American Psychiatric Foundation to lead Stepping Up: A National Initiative to Reduce the Number of People with Mental Illnesses in Jails.

The initiative will kick off May 5 with events in Washington, D.C. and Johnson County, Kan.; May 6 in Miami-Dade County, Fla. and May 7 in Sacramento County, Calif. Those events will be live-streamed. An April 30 webinar from 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. EDT will preview the initiative.

“Counties are working to reduce

the number of people with behavioral health and substance abuse needs in jails across the country,” said NACo Executive Director Matt Chase. “This cutting-edge initiative will help counties focus on results and take their efforts to the next level. It will support action-oriented, comprehensive strategies to provide needed services in appropriate settings.”

The prevalence of mental illness in jails is now three-to-six times higher than in the general population. Currently, people with mental illnesses number more than 2 million in jails. And counties are spending more for mental health services in jails and getting worse results than community-based programs. Lack of appropriate care means longer jail stays, higher bills for counties and a higher likelihood of recidivism.

The initiative will convene representatives from organizations involved in the issue, including

county sheriffs, judges, jail administrators, treatment providers, and mental health and substance abuse counselors.

Stepping Up’s “call to action” will involve counties passing resolutions committing to the following:

- assembling a diverse group of leaders from involved agencies
- assessing needs based on the prevalence of inmates with mental illness in a county’s jail
- examining service capacity and policy, and funding barriers to adding to that capacity
- developing a plan to get those services to more people who need them
- implementing research-based approaches that advance the plans, and
- developing program evaluation processes.

A national summit, planned for

See STEPPING UP page 12

Estimated Percentage of Adults with Behavioral Health Disorders

Source: Guidelines for the Successful Transition of People with Behavioral Health Disorders from Jail and Prison, Council of State Governments Justice Center, November 2013

	GENERAL PUBLIC	STATE PRISONS	JAILS	PROBATION AND PAROLE
Serious Mental Disorders	5.4%	16%	17%	7-9%
Substance Use Disorders (Alcohol and Drugs)—Abuse and/or Dependence	16%	53%	68%	35-40%
A Co-occurring Substance Use Disorder When Serious Mental Disorder is Diagnosed	25%	59%	72%	49%
A Co-occurring Serious Mental Disorder When Substance Use Disorder is Diagnosed	14.4%	59.7%	33.3%	21%

Congress secures FY14-15 SRS funding

President Barack Obama is expected to sign the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (H.R. 2), nicknamed the “doc fix” bill.

The measure, which passed by the Senate April 14, includes good news for the nation’s counties. It reauthorizes the much-needed Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program retroactively for FY14 and through FY15, and extends the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Community Health Centers and other health care programs.

“Counties welcome this federal investment in services that will help millions of Americans,” said Matt Chase, NACo’s executive director. “We applaud the House and Senate for working in a bipartisan manner to provide greater budgetary certainty to counties.”

The measure authorizes \$500 million through the SRS program to support local schools, transportation infrastructure, emergency response and other critical services. SRS funds will help more than 720 counties and 4,000 school districts across 41 states affected by the decline in revenue from timber harvests on federal lands. The bill also expedites SRS payments to counties by requiring the federal government to make payments within 45 days of the bill’s enactment.

The doc fix legislation also extends several programs that counties use to maintain local health care systems. It extends CHIP, which helps to provide health coverage to more than 8 million children and pregnant women with incomes above Medicaid eligibility levels; Community Health Centers, National Health Service

Corps and Teaching Health Centers, which increase access to health care services in underserved areas, both urban and rural; and the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program — all by two years.

The bill helps counties provide Medicaid services by permanently extending programs benefiting low-income seniors and working families. Additionally, H.R. 2 delays reductions to Medicaid disproportionate share hospital (DSH) payments by one year. Delaying these cuts allows the 960 county-supported hospitals nationwide that serve Medicaid beneficiaries to continue to stabilize local health care systems.

“Each year, counties invest nearly \$70 billion to provide health care services to their residents,” Chase said. “This legislation will help counties deliver health care services to some of their most vulnerable populations — children, pregnant women, low-income individuals and families and elderly residents. We commend our partners on Capitol Hill for supporting services that have a direct impact on people’s health and well-being.”

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Pennsylvania counties pin hopes on Legislature for 911 support ► [Page 6](#)

Latest Census numbers show population growth on pace for most counties ► [Page 7](#)

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Hokama asks NACo members to support Stepping Up Campaign



Dear Fellow County Officials,
In May, the National Association of Counties, the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the American Psychiatric Foundation will announce the official launch of Stepping Up: A National Initiative to Reduce the Number of People with Mental Illnesses in Jails.

The Stepping Up Initiative is intended to support counties of all sizes in reducing prevalence rates and promoting recovery. Counties that sign on to the initiative will receive Web-based technical assistance on how to most effectively use limited resources to reduce the impact on their jail system, improve public safety and support recovery for people with mental illnesses.

All of us struggle with how to best address the needs of the growing number of people with mental illnesses in our communities and jails, and how to do so effectively with our limited budgets. This initiative will draw on the expertise and experience of state and local policymakers, criminal justice and behavioral health professionals and individuals with mental illnesses and their families. NACo and its partners are developing comprehensive resources to guide counties through their initiatives and providing opportunities for us to learn from each other's successes.

I encourage all counties — big and small, rural and urban, right and left — to sign on to the Call to Action in May to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails and to pass a resolution to participate in this initiative and make a difference in your communities and for this population.

Riki Hokama
NACo president
Council Member
Maui County, Hawai'i

Co-responders specialize in mental health-related police calls

Johnson County, Kan. approached its growing population of inmates with mental illness by embedding mental health clinicians with police officers when they respond to calls.

The mental health co-responder program has succeeded and grown since its 2010 introduction, with plans to spread it countywide.

For many, treating their behavior is better accomplished through the county's mental health services than through the more generalist approach to misbehavior — incarceration. The mental health clinicians, or co-responders, can more effectively assess situations and advise officers on whether the person at the center of an incident can be safely diverted from jail.

A \$320,000 Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance allowed the county to fund the clinicians in the police departments of its two largest municipalities, Overland Park and Olathe. A \$218,000 expansion grant has allowed the program to staff Shawnee and Lenexa's departments on the way to the county's goal of getting clinicians in every police station.

Co-responders work the shift that the police department identifies as having the most frequent behavioral-health-oriented calls, typically in the late afternoon to the evening. They join the officers once the scene is stable.

"It's made it possible for people who don't belong in jail to avoid it, and it's also been more efficient for law enforcement," said Robert Sullivan, the county's criminal justice coordinator. "Without trained assistance dealing with people with mental illnesses, it

could take an officer four hours to respond to a call, even longer if transport (to a hospital) was necessary. It frees up our people to do their jobs."

When co-responders are not responding to calls, they follow up on cases or handle referrals from officers on other shifts.

The co-responder program got its start in 2010 after a report on the incidence of mentally ill inmates in the jail's population revealed the depth of the problem.

In 2008, 17 percent of inmates were prescribed psychotropic medications and one-third were receiving on-site psychiatric services. For inmates whose stays in the county jail lasted more than 72 hours, those with mental illness stayed in jail for an average of 96 days, compared to other inmates' 44-day average.

Prior to 2010, the county had assessed the opportunities to pull someone out of the incarceration track — between the first point of contact with law enforcement to jail admission — and refer them to the appropriate caregiver.

The county police department had trained more than 350 officers as part of a crisis intervention team that can identify signs of mental distress and react appropriately, but that wasn't enough.

"Even though the officers were well trained, they still ended up having to call for help from us," said Tim DeWeese, the director of the Johnson County Mental Health Center. "Having a trained clinician embedded in the co-responder teams on site made all the difference."

Historic drought continues after four years

WATER WASTERS from page 1

bottled drinking water to more than 600 qualified families using state drought-relief funds.

Agricultural production is down in the state's Central Valley counties, and the prolonged drought is heightening wildfire danger.

This was the situation even before Gov. Jerry Brown (D) issued an historic executive order earlier this month, mandating that Californians reduce their water usage by 25 percent — compared to 2013 levels — or face penalties.

Counties are still figuring out what that means for them, according to Karen Keene, a senior lobbyist with the California State Association of Counties (CSAC). "For the most part, the implementation of the executive order applies to urban water suppliers, which for the most part are not counties," she said. "It'll be up to the individual counties to work with the water suppliers in making their own reductions in compliance with the 25 percent mandate that's imposed on the water entities."

Counties to Offer Short-term Help

One county-specific section of the governor's order directs the state's Office of Emergency Services and the Department of Housing and Community Development to work with counties to provide temporary assistance for residents who have had to leave their homes due to a "lack of potable water." This applies to homes served by private wells or water utilities with fewer than 15 connections, "where all reasonable attempts to find a potable water source have been exhausted."

California law defines "urban water supplier" as a publicly or privately owned supplier, that provides water for municipal purposes, directly or indirectly, to more than 3,000 customers or supplies more than 3,000 acre-feet of water annually. (One acre-foot is about 326,000 gallons, enough to supply the average household needs of two four-person families for one year.) The ultimate goal of Brown's order is to save about 1.3 million acre-feet of water statewide over the next nine months.

"At this point in time we're kind of in a wait-and-see mode to see how they're going to move forward," Keene said. The state scheduled an April 17 release date for a draft regulation for informal public comment. "There seems to be kind of a big gap in information as far as what happens if there is no water supply agency: What if a golf course is on a well? Do the counties have to enforce the mandate?"

The California State Water Re-

sources Board (SWRB) will establish the legal framework to carry out the executive order's mandates. In addition to the 25 percent reduction, other restrictions include limits on commercial and industrial potable water use and prohibition on using drinking water for irrigation of ornamental turf in street medians. The target date for implementing the regulation is between mid-May early June. Water agencies face fines of up to \$10,000 per day for failing to meet water reduction targets, according to the SWRB. The restrictions are to remain in place through February 2016.

The Golden State is in the fourth year of a severe drought, and previous emergency declarations from the governor have called for water conservation and other measures, but they haven't been enough, according to Vito Chiesa, a Stanislaus County supervisor and this year's CSAC president.

'We've got real problems'

"I try not to be an alarmist because that's not my nature," said Chiesa, whose family grows walnuts and almonds, "but we've got real problems, and it's going to have a profound effect on county government, on state government — and right now we're just trying to come to grips with that." Sacramento County Supervisor Don Nottoli represented counties at an April 9 drought briefing in the capital county that included local, state and federal officials, co-hosted by CSAC, along with water, environmental, public safety and other agencies. "I think that for the foreseeable future we're all in this together, and there's going to be a real need for each of us to do our part..."

Nottoli chronicled the drought-related impacts to some of the state's 58 counties.

Salty to Drinkable

San Luis Obispo County is working with one of its communities, Cambria, where a brackish-water desalination plant was constructed and is currently being tested. The county's involvement is in land use permitting, helping secure drought-related grant funding and

interagency coordination.

The Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors has developed a Domestic Well Recovery Loan Program — a means-tested program for residents who have experienced failed wells in the unincorporated area.

Tulare and Tuolumne counties are working with nonprofits to bring in — and connect to plumbing — 2,500-gallon tanks of potable water to owner-occupied homes whose wells are tapped out. In the latter county, funding was secured from various state agencies to permanently connect some homes with dry wells to their local utility district, providing a permanent fix, according to said Rob Kostlivy, Tuolumne's director of environmental health.

"I go out and try to inspect every single well or spring that goes dry so there's a single point of contact," he said. In addition, he's been conducting a series of meetings throughout the county, providing updates on conservation, the drought program, and status reports on the county's surface and groundwater.

Kostlivy has been the county's environmental health manager for six years and has an additional 16 years of experience in the field. Of the current drought, he said, "It's absolutely the worst that I've seen, and probably the worst ever in Tuolumne County."

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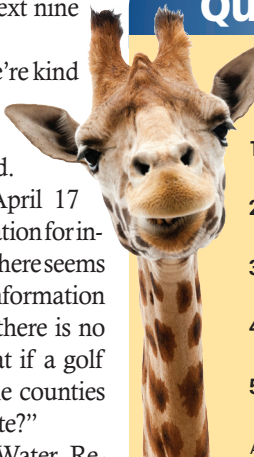
NACo National Association of Counties
The Voice of America's Counties

Quick Takes

TOP 5 ZOOS IN AMERICA

1. **Columbus Zoo**
(Franklin County, Ohio)
2. **San Diego Zoo**
(San Diego, Calif.)
3. **Lion Country Safari**
(Palm Beach County, Fla.)
4. **Phoenix Zoo**
(Maricopa County, Ariz.)
5. **Fort Worth Zoo**
(Tarrant County, Texas)

As ranked by: USA Travel Guide



Counties hold special activities to raise public awareness during NCGM

By TOM GOODMAN
PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIRECTOR

It's April, so that means that National County Government Month (NCGM) is in full swing in counties across the country.

Since 1991, NACo has encouraged the nation's counties to raise public awareness and understanding about the roles and responsibilities of county government.

The NCGM theme for 2015 is "Counties Moving America Forward: The Keys are Transportation and Infrastructure," which mirrors the presidential initiative of NACo President Riki Hokama.

such as bridges, roads and building projects, and public works activities.

Smith County is also releasing through social media a "Fact of the Day" about the county and its departments, and county employees are being asked to participate in a blood drive.

An essay contest has been offered to all county public high school students involved in Student Council or other government-related organizations or classes.

Yuma County, Ariz. encourages residents to play Counties Work

Yuma County, Ariz. is seeking

hundreds of miles of county roads during April as part of Pothole Palooza. The goal is to break the 2014 record of 1,000 potholes in April. The county is also partnering with municipalities and private sector groups for roadside beautification initiatives throughout the month. Communities are encouraged to get involved by adopting a road and organizing road cleanups.

The DeKalb Fire Rescue was holding open houses throughout the month, an electric car charging station was opening on April 23, a county services expo with 40 departments and agencies participating was planned for April 25, and an overhaul and rehabilitation of a premier county park was also scheduled for April 25.

CSAC releases videos showing county best practices

The California State Association of Counties has produced 16 videos on infrastructure and best practices in 14 counties in the Golden State as part of NCGM. A new video and post will be released each week.

The videos and blog posts look at four distinctly different types of infrastructure: energy, broadband, flood control and roads. For county best practices, the programs run the gamut, from an urban farm in Alameda County to prison-related social services program in Lassen County.

Indiana Association of Counties holds essay contest

The Association of Indiana Counties (AIC) is again holding an essay contest for elementary school students for NCGM. Indiana counties celebrate NCGM in many ways but on a statewide level the association encourages third graders to interview county officials to write a one-page essay and then submit it to the contest.

One winner in each of AIC's six districts is selected. Winners attend the AIC District Meeting in May to read their essays, pick up their certificates and \$100 cash prizes and meet with officials from their county.

Counties take NCGM to the airwaves

The Berks County, Pa. Board of Commissioners will use Berks Community TV and a local radio station to show the progress of improvements in transportation and infrastructure, the theme of

NCGM. Commission Chair Christian Leinbach, NACo's Northeast Region representative, said county officials will participate in TV and radio programs over the course of the month that will show that "counties matter when it comes to transportation and infrastructure."

Counties such as Pitt County, N.C. and Bernalillo County, N.M. have appeared on local TV news stations to promote county transportation and infrastructure services.

**See this story at www.countynews.org to access the game, Counties Work.*

SpeedRead » » »

- » The California State Association of Counties produced 16 videos on infrastructure and best practices in 14 counties in the Golden State.
- » Winners chosen for the 23rd annual poster contest for fourth graders in Cape May County, N.J.
- » DeKalb, County Ga. crews repair hundreds of miles of county roads during April Pothole Palooza.



Photo courtesy of DeKalb County, Ga.

DeKalb County, Ga.'s Pothole Palooza is in full swing during NCGM.

In participating in NCGM, counties are actively promoting their programs and services by hosting community events and activities.

They include tours of county facilities, recognition ceremonies for county employees and volunteers, distribution of program information, student essay and art contests, meetings with business and community leaders and adopting resolutions. Below is a sampling of what some counties are doing to celebrate NCGM.

In Texas: Barbecue Day at the Capitol

The Texas Association of Counties (TAC) is encouraging counties to participate in NCGM and also held a special event in the Texas Capitol that brought together legislators and county officials at a County Government Day barbeque.

One Texas county, Smith County, is following the theme and providing information to the public and the media to highlight key transportation and infrastructure projects,

to have residents learn more about counties and what they do by encouraging them to play Counties Work, an online game developed by NACo and iCivics to teach students about county government during NCGM.

Players get to run their own county and by becoming a virtual county official set tax rates, raise revenue, approve development and respond to citizen requests, while staying under budget. Those who have high enough citizen satisfaction to get re-elected can get a screen shot of their final score and post it on the Yuma County Facebook page.

DeKalb County kicks off NCGM with Pothole Palooza

DeKalb County Interim CEO Lee May said his county is planning a monthlong series of activities as part of NCGM. The county's government television channel and website will have video tours of the infrastructure and transportation projects and improvements.

County crews will be repairing



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COUNTY INNOVATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

Navajo County, Ariz.

Stories from the Periphery Warn of Drug Addiction

By CHARLIE BAN
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Drug addiction is an equal-opportunity offender, and Navajo County, Ariz. wanted to show much collateral damage could result from one person's use.

In the mid-2000s, as the methamphetamine epidemic spread the county addressed the problem in town hall meetings that initially saw great attendance, which, however, eventually waned.

"We realized the meeting place, the town hall, had moved online," said County Attorney Brad Carylton. "We had to use social media

to reach people."

In 2013, the Navajo County Drug Stories website debuted, presenting video testimonials from people in all nooks of a drug user's blast radius.

"We didn't want to focus our interviews on the user, we wanted to talk to people who are impacted by people who choose to use, and focus on the communities."

By collecting the stories of the addicts, their parents, nurses and law enforcement personnel, the program tells those stories in three-minute segments.

Emergency room nurse Bon-

nie, for example, talks about the abuse she witnesses in patients who are starting to resemble her teenaged son.

"You see younger and younger kids doing it now and that's what breaks your heart," she said, talking about the fear her son will begin using drugs. "It just takes once."

She also talks about the practical effects she sees in her profession.

"They take away from what we can do for true emergencies," she said about overdoses. "They exhaust our resources and our staff because it can be mentally wearing."

Wanda Jo talks about her son's cycle of addiction and incarceration, a stunning fall for a promising young man.

"He thought he could do it one time and walk away," she said ruefully.

Carylton said over the course of his and Sheriff Casey Clark's careers, they've come across enough advocates who are willing

to speak out about the threat of illegal drugs to find willing speakers for the videos.

"If just one person takes these messages to heart, they'll be worth it," he said.

The program costs \$9,000 annually, and so far nearly 2,000 people have liked the Facebook page. Carylton said a few people contact his office through the page every month looking for help dealing with addiction.

In addition to the videos, the website features additional resources for treatment centers and basic facts on the dangers various

illegal drugs can pose.

Navajo County Drug Stories has coordinated with community activists and law enforcement agencies and has been featured on a radio program called Drug Net.

These efforts: all part of capturing the attention of would-be town hall attendees.

**Read this story online at www.countynews.org to see videos from Navajo County Drug Stories.*

(County Innovations and Solutions features national award-winning programs.)

County moves make new international rail bridge happen

By CHARLIE BAN
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Even in the world of international commerce, there's a chance for county government to make an impact.

As the opening date for a new rail bridge between Texas and Mexico approaches, the first such new bridge in more than 100 years, Cameron County's work in securing land and funding for the redirected train tracks is being credited as bringing the plans to fruition.

Cameron County will see major public safety benefits as a result. The new rail line will eliminate 14 railroad crossings through the middle of downtown Brownsville, one of the main reasons the county had ranked eighth out of 254 in the Lone Star State for traffic deaths involving trains. The tracks will shift out of town into a rural area west of town.

The new tracks will also stop bisecting the town when trains were stopped waiting to cross the border. That had caused long blockages of the 14 intersections, separating parts of town on either side.

County Judge Pete Sepulveda has been working on the project for 15 years, mostly as county administrator, a role he left just a month ago. Over that time, he has contributed to construction of four automobile bridges over the Rio Grande.

"There were a lot of doubts about getting this done, but political leaders were committed to this, even when different people were elected," he said. "No matter who was in charge, they listened to the staff recommendations, and that was key to making this happen."

He added that one jurisdiction turning its back on the plans would have buried it at any point of the 15-year timeline.

Much like a locomotive gaining momentum from a full stop, the project picked up speed in 2009 when the environmental study came back, indicating the project ready to go.

"That was the hardest part because it was the only thing we couldn't control," Sepulveda said.

Funding was a challenge, too. Because the bridge would not have toll revenue, the costs would not be offset, stretching the costs

higher. The *Texas Tribune* reported that negotiations between local leaders and the Department of Homeland Security over costs of moving equipment slowed the project down.

Sepulveda said the county's investment will range from \$3-\$4 million out of the U.S.'s \$40 million total investment, most of which came from a variety of federal agencies (Mexico is paying roughly \$60 million). Sepulveda said the county has not calculated the cost of the time its staff spent on the project.

"We made our staff available to help anyone who was taking this project forward," he said. "Over 15 years, that's added up."

Once the money was secured, though, the rest of the project worked smoothly, and left the county with prime land in the middle of Brownsville.

"We were lucky we found a corridor that wasn't being used," Sepulveda said of the new tracks' path. "It was about 20 parcels. Now, where the old tracks are, we'll have eight miles of right of way to develop a new transportation corridor through the city. We could add bike trails, parks, all kinds of things."



Profiles in Service

Buddy Boe

Chair, Next Generation NACo
CAO, St. Charles Parish
St. Charles Parish, La.

Number of years active in NACo: Five

Years in public service: Five

Occupation: chief administrative officer, St. Charles Parish, La.

Education: Tulane University

The hardest thing I've ever done is: run a marathon.

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: Benjamin Franklin, my wife and Winston Churchill

A dream I have is to: skydive.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: went spelunking (caving).

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: cross the Mexican border to volunteer for a church-related service project.

My favorite way to relax is: book ... whiskey ... cigar

I'm most proud of: my collection of lapel pins and books.

Every morning I read: *Bloomberg Business* and *Bloomberg Politics*.

My favorite meal is: bacon-wrapped filet mignon with baked romaine prepared by my wife.

My pet peeve is: people who attend meetings without anything upon which they can write down tasks and action items.

My motto is: "Live your life so you'll have no regrets."

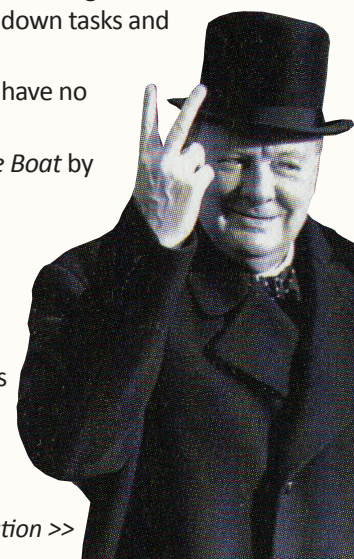
The last book I read was: *Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown.

My favorite movie is: *The American President*.

My favorite music is: country.

My parish is a NACo member because: NACo represents the interests of local governments and assists in spreading the message of local officials.

Churchill would get a dinner invitation >>



Commentary

BRUSHING UP ON PAINT PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP

By Commissioners **Victoria Reinhardt**, chair, NACo Environment, Energy and Land Use Committee chair, and **Tim Josi**, NACo Western regional representative.

Throughout the nation, county household hazardous waste programs collect millions of gallons of discarded paint. Estimates put it as high as 69 million gallons annually. That's a lot of old paint. Dealing with it is expensive. But it needn't be because that drying latex in those old half-filled cans is a strong candidate for recycling. And strong candidates for recycling make old paint a good fit for a management technique called product stewardship.



Reinhardt



Josi

Product stewardship encourages manufacturers, retailers and consumers to treat products as resources rather than waste, changing how they think about the products they make, buy and use.

Paint product stewardship is worth pursuing – more paint will be recycled, manufacturers will be incentivized to move to more environmentally sound practices and counties will have lower costs.

Successful product stewardship occurs when all parties involved in the design, production, sale and use of a product take responsibility for minimizing the environmental impact throughout the stages of the product's life.

Over the past decade, several states have adopted paint product stewardship legislation. Oregon was the first in 2009. Now there are eight total: Connecticut, California, Oregon, Maine, Minnesota, Rhode Island, Vermont and Colorado. A new national industry organization — PaintCare — was

formed, as well, to help counties and other local governments practice good product stewardship.

The process in most states has been designed to work like this: State legislation authorizes PaintCare to collect fees on the sale of paint and use those fees to collect and manage paint. Counties get involved when PaintCare contracts to take the paint collected at household hazardous waste facilities and pay for the management (recycling) of the paint.

PaintCare also works with retail stores, which can collect old paint.

But that's not going well.

Many counties in states that have adopted product stewardship laws are experiencing problems

working with PaintCare.

For example, counties in Minnesota have been attempting to negotiate contracts with PaintCare for almost a year. In Oregon, after PaintCare terminated previous agreements, counties have been attempting to negotiate contracts with PaintCare since October 2013. Meanwhile, PaintCare sued California for adopting regulations related to program responsibilities. PaintCare lost at both the lower court and appellate level but may still appeal to the Supreme Court.

The lessons learned in Oregon,

California, Minnesota and other locations are worth considering when other states are looking at paint product stewardship legislation. We need to ensure that our programs can be replicated throughout the nation in a way that serves both rural and urban counties.

Paint product stewardship is worth pursuing — more paint will be recycled, manufacturers will be incentivized to move to more environmentally sound practices, and counties will have lower costs. But, laws need to recognize the challenges of working with industry organizations and address good faith negotiations, prevent stalling tactics, and make sure the industry obligations, timelines, goals and performance measures are clear and enforceable.

Because no national solutions are imminent and NACo has a strong paint product stewardship position, we need to work together to identify the issues and share lessons learned to protect counties nationwide. That's no whitewash.

(For more information, please contact Commissioner Reinhardt at 651.266.8363 and Commissioner Josi at 503.812.1932.)



911 fee hike tops Pa. counties' legislative agenda

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Back in the pre-cellphone days of calling 911, an emergency dispatcher could expect to get two or three calls — most likely from a pay phone — of reports about a highway accident.

In today's always-connected world, multiply that by a factor of 10 ... maybe 50. Do the math and you'll appreciate how higher call volume places increasing demands on 911 systems, which can also equate to higher costs for counties.

"Landline revenue is declining tremendously, and the wireless fees have pretty much flat-lined," according to Brian Melcer, Lawrence County, Pa. public safety director and president of the state's 911 number association.

As landline fee collections decrease, some local governments have had to pass along more 911 costs to taxpayers — by using general fund dollars to make up the shortfall.

Pennsylvania's counties have been responsible for 911 call systems since 1990, funded by monthly subscriber line charges, currently

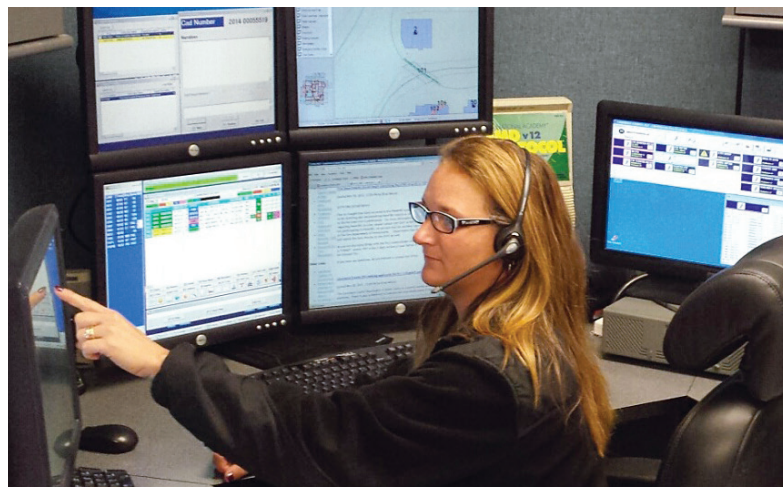


Photo courtesy of Lawrence County, Pa.

A 911 call-taker at her console in Lawrence County, Pa.

\$1 to \$1.50 on landlines depending on county population, and \$1 for cellphones, VoIP (voice over Internet Protocol) and pre-paid wireless. Therein lies the rub.

The higher fees are on the old, declining technology while the lower charge is on the new, and those revenues are leveling off. At the same time, new technologies are in the offing and there's no formula to deal with them.

Nationwide, roughly 45 percent of U.S. households are now

wireless-only, according to Brian Fontes, president of the National Emergency Number Association. He added that "many 911 centers today are tethered to 1960, 1970 voice-only communication."

The National Council of State Legislatures reports that 911-fee-related bills — 59 of them — were being considered by 23 state legislatures this year.

In 2005, Pennsylvania counties covered an \$18 million statewide shortfall in 911 fee collections.

County deficits in 2014 totaled about \$103 million, said Doug Hill, executive director of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP). "So obviously our (counties') contribution has increased far beyond what the law ever envisioned. The law, technically, intended to pay the whole cost," he explained.

Pennsylvania counties have turned to the state Legislature for relief — a rewrite of the state's Public Safety Emergency Telephone Act — that would raise fees. CCAP would like to see the surcharge set at \$2 per month across the board. But telecommunications industry officials, including the Broadband Cable Association of Pennsylvania and Verizon, have lobbied for a lower fee — closer to \$1.25.

The General Assembly is currently considering legislation, backed by the CCAP and emergency communications associations.

In Allegheny County (pop. 1.2 million), a regional 911 call center serves the needs of 130 municipalities, nearly 200 fire departments, more than 100 police departments and 51 EMS agencies, County

Executive Rich Fitzgerald recently told the state's House Veteran's Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, which has jurisdiction over 911 funding.

Despite regionalization, he said, fees haven't kept pace with eligible system costs. This year, county taxpayers could have to backfill a \$7.7 million deficit.

Inadequate 911 funding isn't unique to urban areas. In eastern Pennsylvania, Sullivan County has the same problem — if on a smaller scale — and with a twist. Its resident population is about 6,400, but being a vacation destination for campers, hikers and hunters, that number can increase threefold or fourfold between Memorial Day and deer-hunting season in December, according to county Commissioner Robert Getz.

During the high season, he said, 50 percent to 60 percent of 911 calls are via cellphones. And while the county participates in a regional 911 system, last year it had to provide a \$100,000 subsidy. "The only way we can raise money is to raise property

See 911 FEE page 7

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MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

911 fees lag behind mobile technology

911 FEE from page 6

taxes,” Getz said. Pennsylvania counties sought fee increases from the Legislature last year, but the bill languished in committee. However, the wireless fee, which was to sunset last June, was extended one year to June 30, 2015. It will expire if no action is taken.

Ultimately, counties want solutions that are “technology agnostic,” Melcer said, to cover future innovations over the next decade or more.

“There are a lot of different voice-over-IP-type technologies, software-based phones, Wi-Fi phones that are coming out on the market,” he said. “Right now we really don’t have a way to capture the funding, and there’s really no standard as to how those calls get into our system so that they provide the right data to our dispatchers. We’re always chasing technology — which is what it boils down to.”

Shine a light on solar energy in your county

If you are ready to meet this challenge, it might be worth a cool million or three to your county: Reduce the permit-to-plug-in times for installing solar energy systems — towards seven days for small photovoltaic (PV) systems or seven weeks for large PV systems. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative, the SunShot Prize: Race to 7-Day Solar aims to encourage local governments, communities, solar companies and electric utilities to collaborate towards improving the “going solar” experience from permit to plug-in for all Americans.

This competition offers a total of \$10 million in cash awards to the best teams that bring certainty to the process and reduce the permit-to-plug-in time from current durations. SunShot will provide seed funding to help support up to 20 teams during a set 18-month performance period that begins in September 2015.

SunShot will run two contests for 18 months and award two cash grand prizes in each contest by the end based on performance. In each contest, the first-place grand prize is \$3 million and the second-place grand prize is \$1 million.

For more information, visit <http://energy.gov/eere/sunshot/sunshot-prize-race-7-day-solar>; send questions to sunshot.prize@ee.doe.gov.

2014 County Population: Growth Remains Stable

By BRIAN KNUDSEN
RESEARCH ANALYST

Population growth is an important component of regional economic vitality. Understanding population trends helps county-elected and other stakeholders to plan services for their residents and help local businesses. The U.S. Census 2014 county population data released last month are key tools for county leaders to use toward that end.

Overall, county populations exhibited continuity in their growth patterns. Half of the 3,069 counties experienced population growth from 2013 to 2014 (See the counties marked in blue on Map 1). The largest U.S. counties — those with populations over 500,000 — grew most consistently, with 92 percent of the 126 large counties adding population. Sonoma County, Calif. and Montgomery County, Texas passed the 500,000 residents threshold last year.

Seventy percent of mid-sized counties — with populations between 50,000 and 500,000 — added residents, as did 40 percent of the smallest ones, those with fewer than 50,000 people. Kerr County, Texas and Lincoln County, S.D. grew beyond 50,000 residents in 2014.

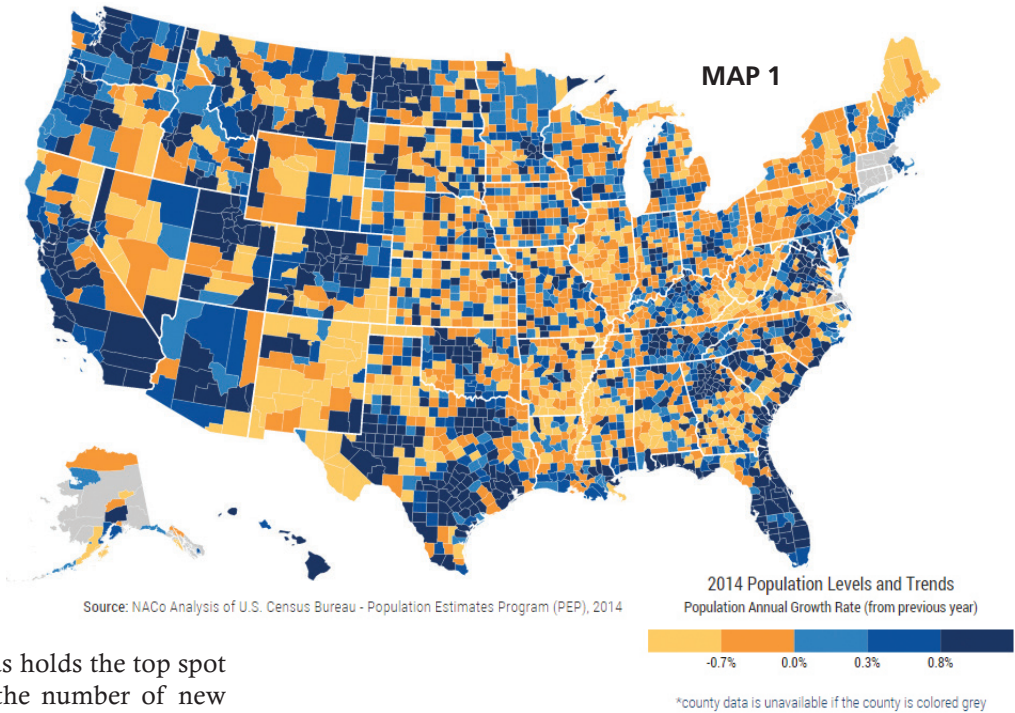
Population expansion in about a fifth of counties outpaced the U.S. average in 2014. The majority of these high-growth counties are located in the South, mostly mid-sized, with populations between 50,000 and 500,000 people. Texas alone has more than 100 such high-growth counties. Harris

County, Texas holds the top spot in terms of the number of new residents added in 2014 — almost 90,000. But one North Dakota county remains the fastest growing county in the country; McKenzie County, N.D.’s population expanded at more than 18 percent between 2013 and 2014 (See Map 2). Oil production in McKenzie County, located on the Bakken Formation, reached 11.8 million barrels in January 2015, the most of any county in North Dakota.

Regional and state differences are also apparent. Similar to 2013, western and southern counties were most likely to experience population growth. Sixty percent of western counties and 53 percent of southern counties expanded in terms of population. Northeastern and midwestern counties lagged, with only 42 percent and 39 percent of them adding residents last year. Several small states — Hawaii, Delaware and Massachusetts — saw all of their counties add population between 2013 and 2014.

Among larger states, Washington, Florida, California, Arizona, Idaho and Oregon had more than 70 percent of their counties grow. More counties in Idaho, Maine, New Hampshire and Washington added population in 2014 than in the previous year.

These findings highlight some of the county population trends from 2014. The demands on county officials and governments to provide essential services only increase as counties grow.



WORD SEARCH
Dickinson County, Kan. Facts

Learn more about this featured county in ‘What’s in a Seal?’

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- ABILENE** (county seat)
- CHEEVER** (township)
- CHISHOLM TRAIL** (historic cattle-driving trail that ended in Dickinson County)
- C.W. PARKER CAROUSEL** (hand-carved, functioning carousel created in 1901)
- DROUGHT** (is a significant problem for Dickinson County residents)
- EISENHOWER** (Dwight D., grew up in Dickinson County)
- PERMIAN** (fossils have been located in Dickinson County)
- GREYHOUNDS** (Dickinson County houses the Greyhound Hall of Fame, a.k.a. “The Greyhound Capital of the World,” a museum devoted to the dogs)
- HOPE** (a pumping station for the Keystone-Cushing pipeline, located in Dickinson County)
- HY VANDENBERG** (major league baseball player from Dickinson County)
- INDEPENDENT TELEPHONY** (the museum of; chronicles the history of the telephone)

- LONE TREE CREEK** (named for the solitary Cottonwood tree that stood as a landmark for Native Americans and settlers for generations)
- MARION** (adjacent county to the southwest)
- QUARRIES** (of limestone can be found in the eastern parts of the county)
- SOIL** (Dickinson County’s different soils are all fertile and good for agricultural use)
- SUTPHEN** (unincorporated community)
- VALENTINE DINERS** (a string of metal-sided, portable eateries that popped up in Dickinson County in the late 1940s)
- VOLKMAN LOG CABIN** (historic cabin built in 1858)
- WASA-TUSA** (a product developed by Dickinson County doctor A.B. Seelye; Native American term meaning “to heal”)
- WILD BILL** (a historic “wild west” town marshal for Dickinson County in the 1870s)

Created by Sarah Foote

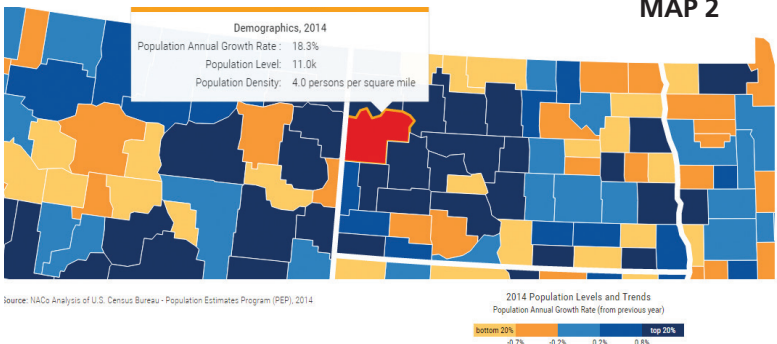




Photo by Jon Collins, Minnesota Public Radio News. © 2015 Minnesota Public Radio. Used by permission. All rights reserved

Volunteers from a local nonprofit pack food boxes that Hennepin County, Minn. sheriff's deputies will deliver while on duty.

Hennepin County deputies deliver the goods

By CHARLES TAYLOR
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Lately it seems that every other week brings bad news about friction between police and the public.

The Hennepin County, Minn. Sheriff's Office is presenting a kinder, gentler face of law enforcement through a new partnership to distribute healthy foods to those in need.

Working with the nonprofit, Matter, deputies hand out food boxes while on patrol in Minneapolis and throughout the county.

"Our deputies are out every day, walking beats, answering 911 calls around the county, coming in contact with individuals — kids, adults, some less fortunate than others," said Sheriff Richard W. Stanek, "and this gives them another unique opportunity to engage them in conversation and leave with a good interaction between local law

enforcement and the public."

Joe Newhouse is director of public engagement for Matter, which sought a partner in its effort to combat "food insecurity." He said their light-bulb moment came after a recent community needs assessment. One key finding was "a real need to reach people and connect them with healthy food." This was especially true of some urban and low-income areas. Newhouse's colleague, Quenton Marty, president of Matter, said in some parts of the county you might find 15 fast food restaurants within a five-block radius. "With limited mobility and resources, [people are] going to gravitate toward the food that's closest to them," he explained, "which tends to be over-processed, high in sodium and sugar."

Newhouse said the assessment also pointed to the need to reach people in nontraditional ways and

One key finding was "a real need to reach people and connect them with healthy food."



connect with them outside of existing means of distribution, such as food pantries.

"We started looking at the people that were kind of on the front lines, and police officers and sheriffs definitely fit that category," he said.

There are three types of food boxes available, one family-sized, a breakfast box and a lunch box. The breakfast box consists of six individually packed meals, including instant oatmeal, a "healthy" granola bar and a juice box. A lunch might include packaged tuna, crackers, an apple and some type of vegetable, Matter officials said.

Another county entity, the Hennepin County Medical Center, helped the nonprofit determine which foods to include with advice from its diabetes team dietitians, Newhouse said. The boxes also include educational material such the U.S. Department

of Agriculture's MyPlate literature, which recommends the food groups and portions that constitute a nutritionally sound diet.

So far, it appears that the partnership will be a double-win, benefiting Matter and the Sheriff's Office.

"When we can link with the sheriff's department, there's a level of credibility that's established for us with this program," Marty said. "We hope on the other side there's maybe a win in it for the sheriff's department," he added, acknowledging some of the recent unflattering characterizations of law enforcement officers.

Stanek certainly sees it as a plus. "We practice the philosophy of community-oriented policing. This is just another step or piece of that," he said.

"I think it's a unique partnership with a nonprofit... first and second responders; it fits right in. We're proud of it."

Financial Services News

NACo, Nationwide Announce Aspire Award for Plan Sponsors; Public Finance Authority Closes 100 Deals

NACo and Nationwide Retirement Solutions have announced the first Aspire Award: Honoring Innovative Leadership in Promoting County Employee Retirement Savings to recognize two counties that have gone above and beyond in empowering their employees

for retirement success.

Counties who offer their employees the opportunity to participate in the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, administered by Nationwide Retirement Solutions, are eligible for nomination for the Aspire Award.

As an employer, a county serves as plan sponsor to its employees' retirement programs. Some counties have developed and implemented innovative approaches to create opportunities for their employees to be retirement ready.

The first annual Aspire Award will be presented during NACo's Annual Conference, July 10–13, in Mecklenburg County (Charlotte), N.C.

Two awards will be presented. Consideration will be given to the plan sponsors who present measurable outcomes that result from unique, unusual and original efforts to successfully engage county employees in their retirement futures.

For more information and applications visit <http://www.naco.org/aspire>.

NACo must receive applications by 5 p.m. EDT, Friday, May 15.

Applications may be submitted to plansponsor2015@naco.org or mailed to Aspire Award,

NACo, 25 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20001.

Public Finance Authority makes it a 100

The Public Finance Authority (PFA) has closed more than 100 bond issuances representing over \$2.65 billion in economic development projects throughout 36 states since its inception in 2010.

The PFA, sponsored by NACo, the National League of Cities, the Wisconsin Counties Association and the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, partners with local governments to assist in the financing of public benefit projects that create temporary and permanent jobs, affordable housing, and community infrastructure and improve the overall quality of life in local communities.

As a national conduit issuer of taxable and tax-exempt bonds, PFA provides the ability to finance multistate projects and

has rapidly become a valuable local resource for bond financings across the country.

In 2014, the number of issuances by PFA grew 90 percent from 2013 and financings for 2015 are up 150 percent in the first quarter compared to the first quarter in 2014.

Working with numerous underwriters and bond counsel firms, the PFA has financed various types of public-benefit projects including educational facilities, affordable housing, continuing care and energy efficiency upgrades.

"The experience and capabilities the PFA provides as a national conduit bond issuer brings efficiencies to the bond issuance process that may result in savings borrowers might not otherwise realize," said Matt Chase, NACo executive director.

For further information about PFA, please contact Lisa Cole, senior director, NACo Financial Services at lc@naco.org or 202.942.4270.

NACo on the Move

► NACo Officers and County Officials

• April 8–10, President **Riki Hokama** and Executive Director **Matt Chase** represented NACo at the California State Association of Counties Executive Meeting.

• Second Vice President **Bryan Desloge** spoke about the importance of NACo membership at the ACCG-Advancing Georgia's Counties Annual Conference in Chatham County (Savannah), April 18.

► NACo Staff

• On April 13, **Bert Jarreau**, chief innovation officer, served as the keynote speaker at Montgomery County, Md.'s Innovation Week. He provided opening remarks at the session entitled What is the Internet of Things?



Solomon

• **Brian Namey** has been promoted to director of communications and will spearhead a new team with responsibility for media relations, NACo.org, social media, digital media (i.e. podcasts and videos), Web interactive media, mapping and other digital communications.

• **Katy Solomon** has joined NACo as junior graphic designer. She will create and implement graphic design solutions for all NACo clients.

• **Eryn Hurley** has joined NACo as a legislative assistant. She holds a bachelor's degree in environmental studies from Denison University in Granville, Ohio.



Hurley

• **Austin Igleheart** has joined NACo as a legislative assistant. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science and sociology from the University of Denver, Colo.



Igleheart

• **Kelly Boggs** has been promoted to marketing specialist for the NACo Financial Services Corporation.

► Coming Up:

• **Andrew Goldschmidt**, director of membership marketing, will be exhibiting on behalf of NACo at the 86th Annual West Texas County Judges and Commissioners Association Conference in Wichita County April 27–May 1. Goldschmidt will also be exhibiting on behalf of NACo at the New Jersey Association of Counties' Annual Celebration of County Government in Atlantic County on May 6–8, 2015.

• **Alex Koroknay-Palicz**, membership coordinator, will be exhibiting and speaking on the benefits of NACo membership at the Illinois Association of County Officials Spring Conference in Sangamon County April 27–29.

2015 ASPIRE AWARD:

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News From the Nation's Counties



The Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission's 2015 poster, *Lagoon*, by Brian McCormick.

Image courtesy of Dane County, Wis.

► WISCONSIN

DANE COUNTY'S Cultural Affairs Commission has announced its **annual art poster**, a four-decades-long tradition showcasing a local artist. Donations for the posters support the commission's programs.

This year's poster is *Lagoon*, by Brian McCormick, a watercolor inspired by McCormick's local park.

► ALABAMA

MOBILE COUNTY is seeing impressive results from its **recycling partnership** with Goodwill Easter Seals. In just its fourth month, the recycling program has received more than 690,000 pounds of material. That puts it on par to exceed a projected first-year total of 1.5 million pounds.

"The new numbers are a tribute to the capabilities of our partner agency," said Commissioner Merceria Ludgood, "and a clear indication that this project provides a much-wanted service for our county."

Mobile County built the facility by tapping federal grants to Gulf Coast states from offshore gas and oil revenues; Goodwill Easter Seals operates it, relying heavily on volunteers.

Seven paid staff members are augmented by more than 70 volunteers, 12 court-appointed community service workers and 11 students from a local school.

The power agreement is projected to save the county about \$40 million over 20 years. However, that depends on a federal benefit that requires the panels to be connected to the grid by November 2016.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY has developed a game plan to **crack down on physicians** who over-prescribe powerful psychiatric drugs to kids in the foster care and juvenile delinquency systems, according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

The newspaper reported that the county's Department of Mental Health is scheduled to launch a program May 1 that will use computerized analysis to identify doctors with a pattern of inappropriately prescribing psychoactive medicines, or unsafe quantities of the drugs.

The mental health department will recommend that judges no longer allow problematic doctors to write prescriptions for youths under court supervision.

The **SAN DIEGO COUNTY** Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to rescind its **Climate Action Plan** after losing a court case to preserve it.

The Sierra Club had sued the block the plan, saying the blueprint to combat climate change lacked enforceable measures, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act. An appeals court judge agreed, upholding a lower court's earlier ruling against the plan.

The supervisors were legally bound to rescind the plan within 30 days of the state Supreme Court's decision.

► DELAWARE

With the stroke of a pen, **NEW CASTLE COUNTY** Executive Tom Gordon has **banned govern-**

ment travel to Indiana in response to the Hoosier State's new Religious Freedom Restoration Act, according to *The News Journal*.

"Indiana just repealed 50 years of progress in civil rights laws and now can discriminate broadly based on religious belief, and we want to send a message on behalf of New Castle County," said David Grimaldi, the county's chief administrative officer.

Gordon said he was unaware of any pending county government travel to Indiana, adding that his executive order "is more sending a message out to everybody."

Meanwhile, back home in Indiana, **DELAWARE COUNTY** commissioners approved a resolution reaffirming that the county does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identification.

► FLORIDA

BROWARD COUNTY commissioners sided with tradition—and, some said, against censorship—when they voted to allow a **Confederate-themed display** to be exhibited at a county library. For the past decade, it's been set up during April in honor of Confederate History Month.

Commissioners voted 4–1 against changing an existing policy allowing displays by outside groups at county libraries, *USA Today* reported. "I do not want to start censoring," said Commissioner Trudie Infantini, who voted with the majority.

The local chapter of the NAACP had filed a request seeking to prevent the display erected by a chapter of the Confederate Sons Association of Florida.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

commissioners agreed to let a **non-biotech business** build on 30 acres intended as part of a biotech hub.

They're making the exception for United Technologies Corp., which proposes building 250,000-square-foot facility that develops "intelligent building" technologies including security systems and escalators, according to the *Sun-Sentinel*.

The land is part of 100 acres that are already home to the Scripps Florida biotech research campus, which was to have been the biotech magnet.

County and state incentives of nearly \$11 million attracted United Technologies, including \$3 million in tax refund incentives and other local financial support—if the company meets job-creation requirements.

County officials say they're not giving up on biotech, but United Technologies could bring 500 new high-tech jobs.

► ILLINOIS

The **MARSHALL COUNTY** Board of Commissioners wants **former U.S. Rep. Aaron Schock** (R) to pay for the elections to replace him. They voted recently to bill him \$76,000, according to the *Chicago Tribune*.

Schock resigned recently over questions about his spending. The county has asked for a certified check or an agreement that Schock will pay the costs of a special election this summer and the general election.

► IOWA

LINN COUNTY Public Health is the first health department in the state to be accredited by the **Public Health Accreditation Board** (PHAB), and one of only 59 local

departments accredited by PHAB nationwide.

To receive accreditation, a health department must undergo a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed assessment process to ensure it meets or exceeds a set of quality standards and measures.

► MARYLAND

CARROLL COUNTY commissioners approved a drug enforcement program recommended by sheriff's and the state's attorney's offices. It would form a Repeat Offender Proactive Enforcement Team and the **Drug Overdose Response Team**.

They agreed to fund almost \$1 million to start the "Not in Carroll" program in FY16, which starts July 1, *The Baltimore Sun* reported. Overall, the program is expected to cost about \$2.2 million over the next three years. According to the Sheriff's Office, there were 29 overdose deaths in the county last year, of which at least 12 were caused by heroin or other opioid drugs.

► MISSOURI

ST. LOUIS COUNTY taxpayers are off the hook. Gov. Jay Nixon's (D) office recently notified the county that its "participation would not be necessary" in a deal to **build a riverfront stadium** for the NFL's Rams, stlouistoday.com reported.

That will deprive the proposed \$985 million sports arena of \$6 million per year that would have come from the county.

County Executive Steve Stenger has long maintained that he would not support county tax dollars being used for a new stadium without allowing county voters to decide.

In the meantime, the clock is *See NEWS FROM page 11*

The H.R. Doctor Is In

All This from a Crème Brûlée

One of my favorite desserts is that great 17th century creation called a crème brûlée. It is a sweet custard pudding-like treat with a caramelized crust on top. The crust is created by exposure to the flame of a small torch for a few seconds so that it can harden.

The highlight of feasting on this great dessert occurs before you even take the first bite. It occurs the moment your spoon breaks through the crust to get to the creamy essence within.

The crust is like a barrier or obstacle which must be overcome in order to enjoy the next level of success.

Supervisors and managers have a particular role in being “crème brûlée coaches.” They have a job, a responsibility and an opportunity to recognize when a colleague is facing

“It is important in life to search for and find that inner spirit and allow it to come forward as a tool to do the impossible and overcome the unimaginable.”

some kind of barrier to their success. They have the chance to help facilitate the removal of the obstacle their colleague faces. Watching another person overcoming an obstacle is rewarding for the supervisor in and of itself. It will certainly be more rewarding for persons who have finally faced down the “devils” keeping them from the next level of success or enjoyment.

At work, common barriers may be a fear of public speaking, moving out of your comfort zone to accept a

new responsibility, or accepting your first opportunity to be a supervisor. There may well be personal health or family dysfunction issues which attack their personal sense of self-confidence.

There may be workplace obstacles which come from the “dark side of the force.” Perhaps another person is a source of bullying or harassment. It may be the person whose poor work habits and performance get in the way of success in the agency. You want to help that person succeed as a colleague and perhaps a friend. However, you also want to overcome the burden of having someone else’s work to do. Supervisors sometimes don’t want to deal with the situation, or don’t know how to deal with it.

For many people — women, more often than not — going home

after a day at work does not offer relief from obstacles. In fact, going home may compound a person’s problems. They may be going home to fears of domestic abuse, economic hardship or family situations which are very hard to handle.

I recall conducting a seminar years ago where I touched on the concept I learned about in Africa involving lessons from the history of Zulu culture. That turned into an HR Doctor article called *The Warrior Inside Each of Us*. The article is about the fact that no matter what we face or how afraid we are to finally take action in our own best interest, deep inside each of us is the spirit of the Zulu warrior. It is important in life to search for and find that inner spirit and allow it to come forward as a tool to do the impossible and overcome the unimaginable.

A couple of years later, a lady approached me at another seminar. She had attended the prior one and now proclaimed proudly: “Because of you I divorced my husband!”

All I could think to ask at that moment was “Is your husband in the room?”

Fortunately, he wasn’t. And better yet, she had come to recognize an obstacle that she was previously unable to overcome. Having recognized the problem of domestic abuse, she realized that with the support of friends, she could choose a path that empowered her to climb out of the situation. Her bravery took her to a more productive, less stressful and more rewarding state.

Imagine — all that from a crème brûlée.

Phil Quinby

HHS proposes rule to extend mental health parity to Medicaid, CHIP programs

By BRIAN BOWDEN
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced a proposed rule, April 6, to apply the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 to Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

The federal law was meant to ensure that coverage for mental health and substance abuse treatment was on par with medical and surgical care. Up until now, the government has only spelled out how the law applied to commercial plans.

The rule would affect the majority of the 70 million people on Medicaid who are in managed care plans and the 8 million children covered by CHIP.

The proposal would mean that plans no longer could have hard limits on coverage such as a certain number of mental health visits in a year. And if a patient were to be denied treatment for a mental health or substance use disorder, the insurer would have to explain why.

Stating “the new rule does not disappoint,” Ron Manderscheid, executive director of the National

Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors, explained, “we have been waiting for this rule ever since the original rule for large-group private insurance programs was released early in 2010. Both rules proceed from the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act passed in 2008, after being championed by then-Rep. Patrick Kennedy (D-R.I.) and his father, Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.).”

Counties are the local safety net and play an integral role in providing services for 296 million residents and health coverage to more than 3.3 million county employees and their dependents.

Counties in 26 states serve as the local behavioral health authority. Through counties’ roles as employers and providers of behavioral health services, parity helps ensure Americans with mental illness and substance abuse conditions gain access to appropriate community-based services.

**To read the proposed rule, an article by Manderscheid or the NACo publication on Why Parity Matters to Counties, see this story online at www.naco.org/countynews.*

N.Y. counties land FEMA anti-terrorism funds

NEWS FROM *from page 10*

ticking as the team’s owners consider moving the franchise back to Los Angeles, which it left two decades ago.

► NEW MEXICO

BERNALILLO COUNTY is threatening to charge Albuquerque for each inmate dropped off at the jail by police, which county administration estimates to be 61 percent of inmates. Albuquerque residents make up about 83 percent of Bernalillo County’s population.

In a three-page letter delivered this week, County Manager Tom Zdunek asked the city to “pay its fair share” for operations of the Metropolitan Detention Center. The county pays \$93 million a year to operate the jail, an 88 percent increase since 2007.

The city and county once split the cost of running the jail evenly, though that was when the city managed the lockup. The county demanded control of the jail in 2006, and the city phased out its funding, the *Albuquerque Journal* reported.

► NEW YORK

More than \$7.3 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Homeland Security grant program will fund **local counterterrorism** and emergency preparedness operations in 50 counties throughout the state.

Local governments may use the funding for a slew of projects, including development of cybersecurity programs and coordinating emergency management plans.

Regional law enforcement agencies, with the support of

the state Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, can partner to improve information sharing among departments, *The Citizen* reported.

See NEWS FROM *page 12*

What’s in a Seal?

Dickinson County, Kan.



Until the early 2000s, Dickinson County, Kan. did not have an official county seal. That all changed when around 2004, a contest was held among county employees to see who could design a seal that would be most representative of their county. Gina Bell, who at the time was the planning and zoning director, won and her design was incorporated as the official seal.

The seal highlights Interstate 70 as the “road to success” in prominent capital letters. The road stretches from one end of the county to the other, east to west, and runs through or near three of the nine unincorporated communities in Dickinson County. The communities are marked by stars which match the stars on the seal’s border. The name of the county is written in bronze, Western-looking letters, a subtle tribute to Dickinson County’s days as a cow town.

Since the seal’s adoption over a decade ago, it has appeared on all legal documents, government buildings and road signs within the county. Dickinson County is dedicated to consistently using the seal as a sign of the county’s unity, including the unincorporated communities, which continue to play a crucial role in county dynamics and with whom county officials interact regularly.

Brad Homman, county administrator, contributed.

Craig County, Va. officials object to natural gas pipeline's potential routes

NEWS FROM *from page 11*

►NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina's intermediate appeals court said sheriff's employees aren't subject to the same **job protections** as county government workers when it comes to political activity.

A split three-judge panel of the Court of Appeals upheld firings of two former **MECKLENBURG COUNTY** Sheriff's Department workers.

A deputy and counselor claim they were fired for failing to contribute to and volunteer on the then-sheriff's re-election campaign. Two of the three judges agreed the sheriff's workers didn't have safeguards "county employees" get under the law, the Associated Press reported.

Car owners in 27 counties may no longer need to get **state emissions inspections** for their cars.

Donald R. Van Der Vaart, state secretary of North Carolina's Department of Environment and Natural Resources, is recommending the state get rid of emissions testing for cars and trucks in the counties by 2016. Emission tests are currently required in 48 counties at a cost of \$16.40.

Van Der Vaart cited improved air quality since testing requirements

were expanded for cars in the early 2000s. He said the tests could be eliminated without hurting air quality or violating federal standards.

A new law that went into effect April 1 exempts newer cars from emissions tests. However, all cars still have to get an annual safety test that costs \$13.60 per car.

►PENNSYLVANIA

A new draft plan calling for the **consolidation of five area bus services** has the potential of saving seven county governments a combined \$2 million and an additional \$3 million per year.

Officials from **ADAMS, CUMBERLAND, DAUPHIN, FRANKLIN, LEBANON, PERRY** and **YORK counties** met with PennDOT to discuss the findings of the second phase of the South Central Pennsylvania Transit Regionalization Study.

If combined into one agency, most of the money would be saved in administrative costs. PennLive reported PennDOT officials hope to have a final draft of the study prepared by summer.

A similar study in 2012 showed that **LACKAWANNA** and **LUZERNE counties** could realize a savings of \$1.7 million over five years through a similar merger of services.

LANCASTER and **BERKS counties** took the plunge in November and consolidated their two transportation authorities.

►TEXAS

CAMERON COUNTY will implement a "no refusal" policy for **DWI cases**.

Starting June 1, blood alcohol exams will be mandatory, if ordered. Brownsville already has a policy, and neighboring **HIDALGO COUNTY** is considering adding one, *Valley Central* reported.

►VIRGINIA

CRAIG COUNTY is opposing routes that would take a **natural gas pipeline** through the county. County officials sent a letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), putting the opposition on record.

The letter details Mountain Valley Pipeline has been late in making the county and residents aware of alternative pipeline routes and has allowed limited public input.

FERC will decide whether the \$3.2 billion pipeline project should move forward. Mountain Valley is in the "pre-filing" phase of seeking FERC approval and hopes to submit a formal application in the fall, according to

the *Roanoke Times*.

The route of the 300-mile pipeline, which would travel from Wetzel County, W.Va., to another pipeline in Pittsylvania County, Va., via Craig, Giles, Roanoke and Franklin counties in Virginia.

►WASHINGTON

When **KING COUNTY** officials say they want to cut down on the **number of youth in detention**, they mean it. County Executive Dow Constantine announced that the design for the new Children and Family Justice Center will now only allow for 112 beds, down from 144 in initial designs. This is almost a 50 percent reduction from the 212 beds in the current Youth Services Center. Officials say that the need to separate boys and girls, and rival gangs will reduce the facility's practical capacity to 80.

That change reflects the county's emphasis on restorative justice, initiated by the Superior Court, according to the *Kent Reporter*.

The court has identified two goals for reducing the youth population in detention: avoiding the use of detention for status offenders such as truants or foster-care runaways, except when their lives or safety are in danger, and reducing by half the

use of detention for young probation violators.

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

First counties will lead others

STEPPING UP *from page 1*

Spring 2016 in Washington, D.C., will gather counties that have signed the call to action and consist of activities to help advance their plans. Attendees will form the core group of counties that will lead others in the effort.

Techniques to accomplish this goal, will include law enforcement training, changing funding mechanisms for mental and behavioral health, and increased collaboration between state and local leaders, all adding up to systemic changes in the approach the criminal justice system takes in interacting with people with mental illness.

**Read this story online at www.countynews.org to find a link to a April 30 webinar about Stepping Up.*



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