

Help on the way for broadband data

by Zach George

Congress is poised to pass sweeping legislation that would address the inaccuracies of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) national broadband coverage data.

The House and Senate recently passed the Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technological Availability (DATA) Act (S. 822/H.R. 4229). The bipartisan legislation would require wired, fixed wireless and satellite broadband providers to collect more service availability data and it instructs the FCC to develop a system for state and local governments to report verified coverage data. House and Senate lawmakers are currently resolving minor differences between the House and Senate versions before voting on a final a bill and sending it to the White House for the president's signature.

The Broadband Data Act makes several changes to the way the FCC collects, verifies and reports broadband data. Changes include:

• Eliminating the current data collection model and implementing the Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric, a system that utilizes geocoding to map coverage. Currently, mapping is based on U.S. Census blocks. Internet Service Providers (ISP) count a block "covered" if one household in that block has 25 Mbps (megabytes per second) internet service or higher. This can result in major data discrepancies as many households may be inaccurately marked as covered.

• Requiring the FCC to develop processes for any person or entity to submit broadband availability data to verify or challenge the FCC's database or maps.

• Directing the FCC to update the granular data every six months and to make it publicly available.

• Allowing the FCC to contract out the creation and maintenance of the mapping system to a private firm(s) for no longer than five years with a competitive, open and transparent bidding process.

The bill authorizes \$28 million total for FYs 2020 and 2021 for the FCC to issue rules, establish reporting requirements and hire contractors to establish a comprehensive broadband database and maps. Counties support the changes outlined in S. 1822/H.R. 4229.

The accuracy of the FCC's National Broadband Map has become the target of bipartisan

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CARTER CONTINUES TO MAKE MINNESOTA HISTORY



Ramsey County, Minn. Commissioner Toni Carter is sworn into office, surrounded by family members. Carter is the first African-American county Board chair in the state.

by Charlie Ban senior writer

Julie Ring feels she has to be somewhat protective of Ramsey County Commissioner Toni Carter. In her first year as the Minnesota Association of Counties' executive director, Ring saw just how hard Carter would go when opportunities arose, a willingness that continues six years later. "She says yes to everything," Ring said. "She wants to be involved, she wants to make sure the perspective she brings can be heard and she knows she's unique within Minnesota, so she takes seriously her role in being representative."

Carter became the first African-American county commissioner in the state in 2005 and this year is the first African-American county Board chair, on the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners. She serves on NACo's Board of Directors and Human Services and Education Steering Committee.

She traveled extensively during her years on the association's executive committee in the mid-2010s.

"Nobody outworks Toni. She

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Florida county nurse program streamlines ambulance service

by Rachel Looker staff writer

Volusia County, Fla., launched a new program that is saving time, money and county resources by reducing the use of emergency resources for non-emergency 911 calls.

The E-911 Redirect Nurse Triage program started as part of a strategic plan for budget improvements to better utilize facilities and resources in the county with the help of triage nurses working with callers that may have non-urgent medical situations.

Similar to other areas across the country, Volusia County's 911 dispatchers receive non-urgent calls that leave emergency vehicles sidetracked when other callers have life-threatening situations. According to EMS Medical Director Peter Springer, Volusia County EMS receives around 67,600 calls to 911 per year with 50,000 of those callers requiring EMS transport. The difference of

Non-emergency 911 calls diverted

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roughly 17.600 calls requires units to be dispatched to evaluate a caller's situation but does not result in transportation to the hospital.

"We've done as an industry a great job of promoting 911 and unfortunately we've done such a great job that we've kind of flooded the 911 dispatch centers with a lot of non-emergency calls," Springer said.

Since the program launched Dec. 9, lead EMS Triage Nurse Pam Cawood explained, 911 dispatchers now determine if a caller's situation is a true emergency. If the situation is deemed severe, the caller will never speak to a triage nurse and the dispatcher will immediately send emergency vehicles. If the dispatcher deter-



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The nurse triage team displays their telecommunication training certificates as they pause for a photo with county officials and administrators at the Florida State Telecommunicators education program graduation. Photo by Michael Semple

mines a call is non-urgent, they transfer the caller to the nurse triage line. Non-severe situations include flu-like symptoms, backaches, rashes, mild allergic reactions, mild cuts, abrasions and common cold symptoms. Cawood said.

When being transferred, the caller is never put on hold. After connecting to a triage nurse, the nurse asks specific questions about the caller's medical condition and uses a list of protocol question sets that were created by the medical director of the county and the triage nurses. The nurses use the question sets to recommend treatment and resources for the caller.

The county hired seven parttime nurses in addition to Cawood, Each nurse has FEMA certification, emergency department experience and triaging experience.

Their experience also includes completing training to be Florida state-certified telecommunicators to dispatch ambulances. law enforcement. fire and medical.

"Between the eight of us, we have over 100 years of nurs-

ing experience," Cawood said. "We're highly skilled, highly trained, well-experienced nurses."

The Volusia County Sheriff's Office held the training for the nurses to become certified telecommunicators.

Training Coordinator Debbie Rego taught the nurses the material during 280 hours of telecommunication training. This is the same training 911 dispatchers receive.

There are four different levels of treatment that triage nurses use, varying from dispatching an ambulance, which nurses are able to do because of the telecommunication certification, to providing home care instructions or asking callers if a friend, relative or neighbor can provide them transportation to an emergency department.

If the nurse determines a caller should be seen by a medical professional within 24 hours, they ask callers if they can see their primary care physician or visit an urgent care clinic. Triage nurses are able to call ahead to offices and urgent care locations to let them know

a patient is coming.

"We have partnerships with most of the quick care clinics, urgent care centers in Volusia County and they are expecting our phone calls," Cawood said.

She emphasized if a caller insists on an ambulance, they will always dispatch one.

"We always triage up and when in doubt, we always dis-

For callers who are not sent an ambulance, the triage nurses complete "callbacks" within 24 to 72 hours of the initial call

Volusia County created their own software for the program with the help of the IT department in the Emergency Operations Center instead of purchasing a third-party software. The system allows nurses to create files within the software that can store a patient's med-

Currently, the nurse triage line is available Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Cawood said they are tracking the hours of their calls and may alter their hours in the future.

Since the program has

launched, Springer said the nurse triage line is receiving about 15 calls on average per day.

"The benefit for patients is we're going to try to find places for them to be seen and treated that are most appropriate for what they're calling for," he

Springer and Cawood both stressed the importance of collaborating with other departments to launch the E-911 Redirect Nurse Triage program. The program is a collaboration of the Human Resources department, the sheriff's office, the Emergency Operations Center, area hospitals, urgent care clinics, health departments and other community partners.

Washington D.C., Las Vegas, Nev.; Reno, Nev.; Fort Worth, Texas and Richmond, Va. have all implemented similar nurse triage programs for 911.

"You have to make sure that people understand that this is a positive thing for the community," Springer said. "...Not only are the citizens benefiting from it, but so is the system as a

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ical record.

patch an ambulance," she said.

to follow up with the caller.

whole." CN

Act changes FCC data collection

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concern within Congress. The FCC requires Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to submit data indicating broadband availability and speed twice a year to determine network coverage and service levels. However, there is no mechanism to verify the accuracy of the data provided, leaving the potential for speed and availability to be significantly overstated.

The lack of competition also means customers fortunate enough to have service often pay high prices for broadband. Anecdotal evidence suggests an entire ZIP code is oftentimes marked as "served" with broadband if just one home in the census block has coverage. As a result, the FCC routinely declares these markets connected and competitive when reality tells a different story.

Access to affordable highspeed internet is widely recognized as essential to compete in today's economy. Accurate connectivity data is the foundation for investments in broadband infrastructure. Unfortunately, connectivity data provided to the FCC is often inaccurate and inflated — leaving many rural communities overlooked and disconnected.

Connectivity issues continue to plague counties across the United States. According to the FCC, approximately 19 million Americans - 6 percent of the population — lack access to even basic broadband services. Connectivity is imperative for economic competitiveness in the 21st century. From e-commerce and the gig economy to distance learning and tele-health facilities - county residents' daily lives are increasingly reliant on a certain level of connectivity. As demand for access to affordable high-speed internet grows, economic opportunities for the unconnected continue to slip away. Counties lacking access to even basic broadband infrastructure are at a competitive disadvantage, exacerbating the economic divide between rural and urban areas. CN

Nearly 225,000 to lose food stamps starting April 1 under USDA rule

by Rachel Merker

Under new rules that roll out April 1, 76 percent of counties (712 total) currently eligible for waivers to the food stamp or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will no longer have that flexibility, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The USDA projects an initial 224,000 individuals immediately losing access to the program and once the limit on carry-over exemptions takes effect in October, that number will grow to an estimated nearly 700,000 able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) leaving the program.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FN) recently finalized a rule narrowing state options to waive work requirements for ABAWDs participating in SNAP, formerly known as food stamps.

Under current law, ABAWDs — individuals 18 through 49 who are not disabled or caring for children or other dependents — may only access food assistance through SNAP for three months in a 36-month period unless they are working 20 hours a week or enrolled in an employment or training program. In 2017, 2.8 million ABAWDs participated in SNAP, representing 7 percent of total program enrollees.

States have long had the option to request state-wide waivers or partial (county or county-equivalent) waivers to exempt this population from the time-limit by meeting certain criteria for high levels of unemployment or limited available jobs. The final rule, which goes into effect April 1, significantly reduces the ability of states to receive these waivers by limiting the qualifying criteria and geographic scope. Specifically, the rule:

• Narrows the unemployment threshold: Areas are currently eligible for waivers when their unemployment rate exceeds the national average by 20 percent over a 24-month period or reaches an average rate of at least 10 percent over a 12-month period. The final rule does not alter the latter standard, but it adds a floor to the former: areas exceeding the national average by 20 percent must also have at least 6 percent unemployment over that same period. USDA estimates that 371 counties will lose area-waiver eligibility under this provision.

• Eliminates Extended Unemployment Benefit criterion: The rule will also eliminate the existing option for states to qualify for waivers when, due to rapid spikes in unemployment (as often happens during a recession) they qualify for extra federal unemployment benefits under the U.S. Department of Labor (referred to as Extended Unemployment Benefits, or EUB). USDA acknowledges that though no states currently qualify for EUB, eliminating it as a criterion that could delay waiver approval during a national or state economic downturn.

• Removes flexibility for geographic areas eligible for waivers: Under the final rule, states will also no longer be able to request state-wide or county-level waivers but instead must apply to exempt Labor Market Areas as defined by the Department of Labor. While some single counties constitute a whole LMA, others are grouped together. USDA estimates that 408 counties will lose area-waiver eligibility due to these changes.

• Limits carryover options: Under current law, states can exempt up to 12 percent of their ABAWD population from work each year. If states do not use these exemptions, they can be "rolled over" for future years, which has permitted states to build up large surpluses of exemptions, which may then be used during economic downturns. The final rule limits this carry-over allowance to just one year, meaning states and counties will have fewer exemptions stored in the event of a future economic downturn. Unlike other provisions of this rule, the carry-over limitation will not take effect until Oct. 1.

As NACo suggested when the rule was proposed, these changes could impact counties in numerous ways. With individuals struggling to find employment leave the federal SNAP program due to the stricter requirements, counties may see increased demand for other services. Limited access to county-level waivers, restrictions on carry-over exemptions and the loss of the EUB criterion could further impede a county's ability to leverage SNAP to meet basic needs and stimulate local economies during unexpected economic downturns. County agencies may also face additional administrative and financial burden due to increased time spent screening and tracking beneficiaries as they move on and off SNAP.

The majority of the final rule will take effect on April 1, though any legal challenges could cause delays in the implementation date of the rule.

Rachel Merker is associate legislative director for Human Services and Education in NACo's Government Affairs department.



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was really committed to getting outside of her own county and understanding how policies play out in counties across the state and really put her money where her mouth was," Ring said. "She went out of her way to understand all counties in our state, which made her very popular, she formed some deep friendships."

The position is giving her a chance to lead many initiatives she has worked to advance in her 15 years on the Board. Since 2017, the Board has been pursuing work to advance racial and health equity in its decision-making in the county.

"I think it's an opportunity, not just for me, but for our county to move into that space and for all of our community to see what work we are doing together," Carter said. "We've been building work together that's about transformation, that's about addressing the kinds of racial disparities that we've seen in Ramsey County. We have a need to lead in the step forward for equity such as no other county in the state, our entire success and prosperity depends on our ability to make sure everyone is able to be successful."

"As a Board, we've been going on a journey to understand what that's about and to deconstruct the imbalances that we have even in our work to benefit people."

People of color make up 20 percent of the population in Minnesota, according to 2018 estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau, and the state's African-American population has grown by 36 percent between 2010-2018. Ramsey and neighboring Hennepin counties are the most racially diverse in the state.

Leslie Richmond, president of the Minneapolis chapter of the NAACP, called Carter's role historic, but focused on the work that remains ahead.

"It very important in a state like Minnesota, where we have some of the worst racial disparities in the nation, we recognize that representation matters," she said. "Having voices that look like the community members their serving is important."

Toni Carter talks to Marian Wright Edelman during the 2018 NACo Legislative Conference. Arapahoe County, Colo. Commissioner Nancy Sharpe looks on. Photo by Jason Dixson

Carter's son, St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter III, sees her race as secondary to the results of her efforts in county government.

"Her impact goes so far beyond communities of color," he said. "What she's been so instrumental at is helping rethink and realign systems; so often our systems exist for the system's benefit. To make it easiest to administer but not to serve people. She wants to make sure what the county does first and foremost benefits people. She's always pushing for results and outcomes."

An Alabama native, Toni Carter grew up in Cleveland, where she worked on Carl Stokes' successful campaign in 1968 to be the first black elected mayor of a major U.S. city. She came to Minnesota to attend Carleton College.

After a career in the private sector and as a middle school teacher, she served on the St. Paul Board of Education, and she saw her work there intersecting with Ramsey County's.

"Our goal was to secure a quality education for all, but it's hard to learn if you haven't eaten or you haven't had a safe place to lay your head," she said. "I found myself needing to work with the county and other partners in the community to ensure that children had dental insurance or homes or transportation."

She got an inside look at how Ramsey County's services could complement the school system's efforts.

"I started to see there is so much that children need, that families need, that whole generations need, so much that counties are responsible for in the safety net services that we provide and in the ability to help get people onto the right track," she said. "There's so many things that we do, whether its workforce services or social service, even economic development in areas of concentrated poverty that is so important to ensuring that every child can achieve and grow to be included in our economy and to be successful."

With that realization and seeing the chance to do more, she ran for county office in 2005.

"I saw it as the fabric of creating healthy communities," she said. "Making sure young people can have good starts and be supported while they grow and work. The county is a great place with all of the services and investments and employment opportunities to be able to do that."

Helen Holton, executive director of the National Organization of Black County Officials, has known Carter since Holton, then a Baltimore City councilwoman, was involved in NACo. She sees Carter as a leader grounded and rooted in inclusion and what is possible.

"The browning of America is rapidly approaching and it's only realistic to expect that the leadership will follow suit," she said. "This is a generational shift in leadership and it's creating a different picture of what America looks like and how it is governed. It takes a lot of small steps like this to change how we think about the accessibility of leadership."

Carter tried to encourage her son to pursue a career in the private sector, but her example and that of his father, a retired St. Paul police officer, were too hard to shake. He's the first African American in Minnesota to serve as a mayor.

"She has the benefit of working intergenerationally," he said. "She's grooming the next generation to lead."

"I think he learned a lot hanging out with his mom," his mother said, "but frankly I learned a lot hanging out with him."

Richmond said that Carter's role and the recent election of Hennepin County Commissioner Angela Conley have helped draw the attention of the state's African American community to county government.

"Now that you have people of color running for these positions, that's bringing some more attention to them," she said. "They are roles that have been traditionally overlooked and a lot of times we see names on the ballot but don't know anything about them. We, as a community, aren't teaching people about government and how it operates — to be able to have faces that represent us not just in the city, but in these county positions like commissioner and judge."

Ring acknowledges that the sparse representation among African Americans in Minnesota county government means more work falls on Carter's shoulders.

"Like many states, our population is diversifying and we are seeing that to some extent in our county commissioners, but it's a slow trajectory," she said. "We have a limited number of county commissioners of color and so those folks get called on a lot to try to bring their perspective into our work. I think Toni has just been a model of that, in her own county and in our whole state, where we have pockets of refugees or immigrants and commissioners are still learning about those new communities.

"Toni has been so willing to be engaged with those folks as they're working to understand the changing demographic," Ring noted. "She's had to serve as a representative all by herself for a while."

Melvin aspires to wield his mother's interpersonal skills.

"We'll have a conversation with someone who's angry, or sad or crying or upset or is drunk and I'll find something ridiculous and she'll come away with a half dozen policy ideas. she finds value in everyone's experience," he said. "She keeps herself open to allow people to touch her on a humanistic level and I think it gives her access to a set of relationships that aren't accessible to everyone because she has mastered the process of listening very deeply to everyone she meets. People [who] other people are ignoring. That's something I try to emulate from her." CN

Up to \$906 million available for transportation, infrastructure

by Zach George

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) recently announced up to \$906 million in available funds through the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) program. INFRA grants provide federal funding for transportation infrastructure projects aimed at addressing critical issues facing America's highways and bridges. The deadline to apply is Feb. 25 and instructions for submitting applications can be found at: *https://www.transportation. gov/buildamerica/infragrants.*

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act of 2015 established the IN-FRA program, which awarded \$902.5 million to 20 projects in Fiscal Year 2019.

In this new round of INFRA funding, DOT intends to award both large and small projects. Large and small projects must meet a threshold of at least \$25 million and \$5 million, respec-



tively, and no less than 10 percent of available funds will be made available for small projects. Additionally, DOT will direct at least 25 percent of INFRA grant funding to rural projects.

According to DOT, INFRA grants may be used to fund a variety of infrastructure projects, though shovel-ready projects that have a significant local match are typically favored. Eligible projects include reconstruction, rehabilitation and acquisition of property (including land related to the project and improvements to the land), environmental mitigation, construction contingencies, equipment acquisition and operational improvements directly related to system performance. 🕅

Zach George is a legislative assistant in NACo's Government Affairs department.

BEHIND THE SEAL BERKS COUNTY, Pa.

he Berks County seal is a variation of the Pennsylvania State seal.

The seal includes a shield in the center with the crest of an eagle, a ship, a plow and stalks of wheat.



The eagle symbolizes the state's sovereignty and the ship represents commerce.

The plow and wheat represent labor, perseverance and the importance of agriculture to the economy.

An olive branch is on the right side of the seal while a stalk of Indian corn is on the left side. Both represent the state's recognition of its past and its hopes for the future.

Unlike the state seal, the county seal includes the words "virtue," "liberty" and "independence," which surround the outer portion of the seal.

If you would like your county's seal featured in "Behind the Seal," contact Rachel Looker at rlooker@naco.org.

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Justin Arnold Analyst Laramie County, Wyo.

Christi Haswell County Commissioner Sheridan County, Wyo.

Brook Kaufman Commissioner Natrona County, Wyo.

Robert Moore Commissioner Carbon County, Wyo.

Holly Richardson Commissioners' Assistant Converse County, Wyo.

Jeanine West Director Laramie County, Wyo.

ON営MOVE ······

NACo OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

• President **Mary Ann Borgeson** and Executive Director **Matt Chase** participated in the U.S. Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting Jan. 22-24 in Washington, D.C.

• **Borgeson** also spoke at the County Commissioners Association of West Virginia Legislative Meeting Jan. 27 in Kanawha County.

• Borgeson, Chase and Second Vice President Gary Moore spoke at the California State Association of Counties Leadership Forum, held Jan. 29-31 in San Diego County.

NACo STAFF

• **Azeb Libabo** has joined NACo as a staff accountant. Before joining NACo, she worked as senior staff accountant for the American International Health Alliance and as staff accountant for Forest Trends. She earned a bachelor's degree in Accounting from Strayer University.

• Adam Pugh has joined NACo as an associate legislative director. He will staff the Environment, Energy and Land Use Steering Committee. Prior to joining NACo, he worked for the National Association of Conservation Districts and Rep. Tom McClintock (Calif.). He earned a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Rochester.

• Danielle Rador has joined NACo as a project manager for the Financial Services Revenue Recovery Program. Before joining NACo, Danielle worked as a project manager for Jacobs Engineering Group and as a senior project manager and management consultant for Sun Mountain, LLC. Danielle earned a bachelor's degree in public health from American Military University.

• Program Manager **Kirsty Fontaine**, Program Manager **Pamela Mann**, Digital Communications Manager **Hugh Clarke** and Health Associate **Josef Burkart** conducted a Rural Impact County Challenge convening, held Jan. 14-16 in Franklin County, Mo.

• Chief Public Affairs Officer **Brian Namey** presented at the New Mexico Counties Legislative Conference, held Jan. 21-23 in Santa Fe, N.M.

• Associate Program Director **Nastassia Walsh** and Senior Associate **Vernon Smith** attended and presented at the DOJ-sponsored initiative to Build Bridges Between Jail and Community-Based Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder Meeting, held Jan. 22-23 in Arlington, Va.







Pugh



Rado

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES COUNTY NEWS

REGISTER

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2020 NACo LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE





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WORKSHOPS

The NACo 2020 Legislative Conference features over 25 workshops on critical county issues. Featuring engaging speakers, interactive panels and an emphasis on practical, actionable advice from county officials, thought leaders, federal officials and more, you'll find workshops on:

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- Cyber Disaster Recovery
- Outlook for the 116th Congress
- Competing in the Global Market
- USDA Programs
- Addressing Homelessness

- Navigating the Federal Permitting Process
- Future of Work
- Protecting Your County's Election System
- County Workforce
 Development
- 2020 Census
- Justice Reform

PFAS emerging as issue for counties

by Miranda Paley

Chemicals called PFAS (Perand Polyfluoroalkyl Substances) are an emerging issue for county governments across the country.

PFAS refers to an entire class of approximately 600 per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances in commerce, of which perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) were historically the most widely used throughout the United States. These chemicals have been found in people, the environment, wildlife and fish all over the world: do not break down easily in the environment; might affect people's health and are the subject of increasing regulation worldwide.

On March 3, NACo and select federal partners are holding a session on the topic of PFAS and the county level perspective at NACo's Legislative Conference. Speakers will include representatives of the Department of Defense, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Department of Agriculture (USDA). Here's more about the speakers and subjects of the federal panel.

Rebeckah Adcock will speak on behalf of the USDA. Adcock serves as a senior advisor to Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. Upon her arrival, the Secretary designated Adcock as Regulatory Reform Officer (RRO) and Regulatory Policy Officer (RPO), where she leads the effort to ease the burden of overregulation and ensure that regulatory actions are properly prioritized and implemented.

Since November 2018, US-DA's Food Safety & Inspection Service (FSIS) has worked with FDA and other federal partners on defining the potential exposure to PFAS through meat. Recently, the focus was on an isolated PFAS contamination incident at a dairy in New Mexico where FSIS conducted a collaborative study regarding impacts to the herd and to derive data that may be used to establish risk management options in other exposure situations. FSIS has worked with FDA to determine the framework of an approach that can be used in isolated incidents. Adcock will discuss current efforts to assist agricultural producers and ensure a safe food supply.

Susan T. Mayne, Ph.D., will speak for the FDA. Mayne is the director of the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition at FDA. In this position, Mayne leads the center's development and implementation of programs and policies related to the composition, quality, safety, and labeling of foods, food and color additives, and cosmetics. The FDA foods program is responsible for approximately 80 percent of the U.S. food supply, which includes approximately \$400 billion in domestic food and \$50 billion in imported food.

The FDA reviews all available scientific evidence when determining the safety of foods and food packaging and conducts our own research to fill in gaps in scientific data. This includes the FDA's work to ensure the safety of foods when detectable levels of PFAS are found. The FDA has been working to develop new methods to quantify certain PFAS in foods and, at the end of October, posted a scientifically validated method for testing for 16 types of PFAS in representative food groups on its website.

Mayne will be updating participants on FDA's work measuring PFAS concentrations in food and assessing exposure from foods. She will also speak to FDA's efforts to support state and local governments in responding to known or possible contamination events that may have implications for human or animal food.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Environment, Maureen Sullivan, will represent the Department of Defense (DoD). Her responsibilities include DoD's policies and programs related to cleanup of contaminated sites, compliance with environmental laws, fire and emergency services, strategic sustainability planning and addressing emerging contaminants such as PFAS. Sullivan will discuss the actions the DoD has taken to achieve the department's three goals with regard to addressing PFAS, including future plans and actions under the FY20 NDAA.

The DoD's three goals are:



• mitigating and eliminating the use of AFFF

• better understanding the impacts of PFAS on human health

• fulfilling our cleanup responsibility related to PFOS and PFOA.

DoD remains committed to the health and safety of our men and women in uniform, their families and the communities in which they serve. DoD proactively addressed drinking water impacted by DoD releases. No one is currently drinking water above the health advisory level, on or off base, where DoD is the known source.

DoD follows the CERCLA process to fully investigate releases, prioritize responses, and determine appropriate cleanup actions based on risk. CERCLA stands for the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, known also as Superfund. It was passed in 1980 in response to some alarming and hazardous waste practices and management going on in the 1970s.

EPA

NACo members will also hear from the Environmental Protection Agency. The EPA is committed to supporting states, tribes and local communities in addressing challenges with PFAS. As a part of this effort, the EPA is taking action to identify solutions to address PFAS in the environment.

In 2016, the EPA issued a lifetime health advisory for PFOS and PFOA in drinking water of 70 parts per trillion. In February 2019, EPA published their PFAS Action plan, which outlines concrete steps the agency is taking to address PFAS and to protect public health. The plan is available here: *https://www. epa.gov/pfas/epas-pfas-actionplan*. CN

Paley is the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and Technology Policy Fellow in the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Environment.



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BRIGHT IDEAS MONTGOMERY COUNTY, Md. Reunification Program Helps Latino Families

PROBLEM:

Latino parents and children of immigrant families face reunification challenges after being separated.

SOLUTION:

Establish a family reunification program for Latino families to reconnect and rebuild relationships.

by Rachel Looker staff writer

The Latino Health Initiative in Montgomery County, Md., developed a new program to tackle one of the challenges facing immigrant families who have experienced separation.

The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services established the Family Reunification Program as part of the Latino Health Initiative to repair the relationships between immigrant children and parents after separation.

Latino Health Initiative Program Manager David Del Pozo described how after families are reconnected, the situation is "unlike pressing 'play' on a button that has been paused."

"Those family bonds, those relationships of a parent to a child, a child to a parent, they had not been nurtured and had really been kind of atrophied in a way, in that period of a time, in which the family members had been separated," he said.

Del Pozo explained how Montgomery County has seen an increased flow of immigrant families.

Many of these individuals who have immigrated to the United States often face challenges getting to the border from their countries of origin, he said.

Latino Health Initiative Senior Manager Sonia Mora said the county specifically has seen a surge of children who were facing violence in Latin American countries immigrating to the county without adults.



A family participates in the Family Reunification Program as part of the Latino Health Initiative in Montgomery County, Md. Photo courtesy of Montgomery County

Many of these children reunited with their families after years of separation.

"As children began to come in, they had to adapt to coming back and, in some instances, living with parents who they had not seen for many years," Mora said.

Reunification challenges include reacquainting children with parents and meeting new siblings or even meeting stepparents who are now included in the family. Many children don't recognize the authority of their parents after reuniting with them, Mora added.

Del Pozo said for some parents living in the county without their children, their relationships with their kids overseas consisted of occasional phone calls and financial support to help with living expenses.

"Typically, these children were arriving after the family members here were able to save up some money, pay somebody to help them make the journey over and eventually get to Maryland," he said.

The Family Reunification Program, which is free to families, aims to repair children and parents' relationships after separation while addressing challenges immigrant families face.

Participants in the program take part in psycho-educational workshops, social and family support services and are often referred to community resources to focus on rebuilding family relationships and improving communication. Children are referred to the workshops mainly through the school system, according to Mora.

Since its launch in 2015, the program served 362 parents/ caregivers and 399 adolescents.

Bilingual and internationally trained behavioral health professionals serve as facilitators and receive training from the Latino Health Initiative to run the workshops.

"The programs that we develop at the Latino Initiative are based on the needs of the population so we try to respond to what the specific needs are but we do this really taking into consideration the culture of the community and also looking at the assets that people bring," Mora said.

Family Re-Encounter workshops are held for parents and children and use group-based approaches to discuss family changes, children's behavioral issues, cultural conflict and school participation. Cara y Corazon workshops, held specifically for parents, aim to strengthen the parent-child relationship through integrating family values and traditions.

"Participants were able to learn a lot about themselves and about the situations that they have been through just by hearing other people who have gone through it as well and commiserating over those experiences," Del Pozo said.

As part of the workshops, participants completed preand post-test questionnaires. Results from the questionnaires show parents' self-confidence increased from 77 percent to 97.5 percent. Adolescents' relationships with their parents increased from 48.9 percent to 70 percent.

Each workshop provides food and childcare to incentivize individuals to engage in the program and meet the needs of participants who face challenges that make attending the workshops difficult.

"Because of the strong anti-immigrant climate that we're having at the national level, it becomes more difficult to reach the families and get them to attend the program because people are very, very fearful these days," Mora said.

"...It's something to bear in mind, but that doesn't mean that people don't need help and we don't have to find creative ways to try to reach them."

Montgomery County's Latino Health Initiative, Family Reunification Program is the recipient of a 2019 NACo Achievement Award in the Human Services category.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES COUNTY NEWS

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Looking forward to hearing from you, Mary Ann, Charlie and Rachel

WORD SEARCH

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, Maryland

Created by: Mary Ann Barton

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ACADEMY: The county is home to the Naval Academy.

AIRPORT: Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport is located in the county.

ANNAPOLIS: The county seat and state capital.

COUNCILMEMBER: Residents elect county council members to the County Council. A county executive oversees the executive branch of county government.

CRABS: Area restaurants serve up blue crabs practically year-round, but the best time to eat them, according to locals, is June to August.

EMPLOYMENT: The largest employer in the county is the National Security Agency, with 53,733 employees, at Fort Meade.

ENGLAND: The county gets its name from Lady Anne Arundell, of Cornwall, England. She was the wife of Cecil Calvert, 2nd Baron Baltimore, founder and first Lord Proprietor of the colony Province of Maryland.

HISTORIC: The county seat features more than 1,100 historic buildings, the largest concentration of 18th-century architecture in the country. **NEWSPAPER:** The county is served by the *Capital Gazette*, aka *The Capital*, which first began publishing in 1884. The newspaper was the site of a mass shooting in 2018.

SAILING: The area is considered the sailing capital of the world.

SHORE: The county has 520 miles of shoreline, mainly from the Chesapeake Bay, to the east.

SWIMMING: The county has two aquatic centers.

TAVERN: Dating to 1750, Middleton Tavern is believed to be the oldest continuously operating tavern in the country, hosting George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Ben Franklin.

TOURISM: The tourism industry generates \$3.4 billion a year.

WASHINGTON: In 1783, George Washington announced his resignation from the Continental Army at the State House.

WILDLIFE: The nearly 13,000-acre Patuxent Wildlife Research Center is located in the county, as well as in neighboring Prince George's County.

PROFILES IN SERVICE

JOEL BOUSMAN

Board Member Commissioner Sublette County, Wyo.

Number of years involved in NACo: 13

Years in public service: About 30 years, counting serving on the local school board, state and national livestock organizations

Occupation: Cattle rancher

Education: BS in Ag. Econ, Farm and Ranch Management from the University of Wyoming

The hardest thing I've ever done is: Dig post holes in rocky ground without giving up



Bousman

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and President Trump

A dream I have is to: Spend more time with my grandchildren and great-grandchildren

You'd be surprised to learn that: I do not enjoy hanging around airports.

My favorite way to relax is to: Explore the local two-track roads with my wife in our side-by-side.

I'm most proud of: My accomplishments in working with the federal agencies on natural resource issues, bringing the decision-making process closer to the ground.

Every morning I read: The weather report

My favorite meal is: Steak and potatoes

My pet peeve is: Observing hungry critters

My motto is: Take every day as it comes and do what you can.

The last book I read was: *Vicksburg: Grant's Campaign That Broke the Confederacy* by Donald L. Miller

My favorite music is: Willie's Roadhouse SIRIUS XM channel

My favorite U.S. president: George Washington

My county is a NACo member because: My county realizes the benefits of participating in NACo and Wyoming is a 100 percent state.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is:

Getting lost horseback riding in the wilderness.

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ALABAMA

County residents in **BALD**-**WIN COUNTY** will soon have the option to **text 911** during an emergency. The system in Baldwin County is currently in a training phase while the county works to make a new 911 center fully operational and hire more operators, WPMI reported. Around 80 percent of the state's population has access to a 911 texting service.

ARIZONA

• The Board of Supervisors in MARICOPA COUNTY approved a resolution in support of the Smart Region Consortium, a public-private partnership that connects governments with technology-based innovations. The Smart Region Consortium connects public, private, university and community partners in 22 cities and towns. The consortium aims to identify problems and ask partners to use technology to find solutions.

• A new program in **PIMA COUNTY** is helping county residents and landscape businesses **reduce pollution**. The county's Department of Environmental Quality established the Cut Down Pollution Program, KOLD News 13 reported. Individuals using gas-powered equipment such as lawn mowers, chainsaws or leaf blowers may receive up to a \$400 voucher to purchase zero-emission lawn equipment.

CALIFORNIA

• The LOS ANGELES COUN-

TY Board of Supervisors voted to approve subpoena power for the Civilian Oversight Commission to ensure the Sheriff's Department complies with information requests. The approval comes after the Office of Inspector General has said it has been blocked from obtaining internal records to monitor the agency, the Los Angeles Times reported. The commission will direct the Office of Inspector General to compel records from the Sheriff's Department that it deems necessary.

• A temporary outdoor shelter for the homeless in SONOMA COUNTY is under construction. The emergency outdoor homeless shelter is located at the county's Los Guilicos campus, KRON 4 reported. The space will provide 60 units, restrooms, a warming station and security to the homeless living along a trail in Santa Rosa. The county has approved purchasing four properties that will be used as shared housing for the homeless.

ILLINOIS

A **COOK COUNTY** program is giving families of fallen police, military and rescue workers a **break on property taxes**. The Cook County Surviving Spouse Tax Abatement cuts up to 30 percent off property



CALIFORNIA

• A program in **ALAMEDA COUNTY** is increasing **access to jobs and fresh produce** for low-income residents. A 3,300-square-foot space called the "Food Hub" will provide a commercial kitchen for food entrepreneurs, land for growing produce and an area to redistribute leftover food from local schools to residents in affordable housing complexes, *The Mercury News* reported. The food hub is a collaboration among the county's Sheriff's Office, Deputy Sheriffs' Activities League and All IN Alameda County, a countywide initiative that combats poverty. Photo by Hilary Bass

taxes, ABC7 Chicago reported. The ordinance applies to spouses of those who have died on duty since 2012.

MARYLAND

• The ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY Council has passed a resolution that declares suicide a public health crisis. The resolution directs county health officials to offer services for individuals with mental illness, WTOP reported. Out of 209 documented deaths caused by guns between 2013 and 2017 in the county, 67 percent were determined to be suicides.

MICHIGAN

Funding for **KALAMAZOO COUNTY'S** first team of **public defenders** has been renewed. Kalamazoo Defenders, a non-profit, took over the county's indigent criminal defense program last July, *MLive.com* reported. Previously, the county contracted directly with local



ARKANSAS

CRAIGHEAD COUNTY recently opened the state's fourth crisis stabilization unit. The facility will provide law enforcement access to refer and transport individuals who are experiencing a mental health crisis in 20 northeastern counties. State legislation passed in 2017 required the creation of four crisis stabilization units in the state and mandated crisis intervention training for law enforcement officers to deescalate mental-illness crises.

Arkansas state and local officials attend the ribbon cutting at the Craighhead County Crisis Stabilization Unit. Photo by Holland Doran attorneys to serve as public defenders. As part of the partnership, Kalamazoo Defenders will hold an expungement event and a weekly, drop-in expungement clinic.

NEW YORK

Job hunters in NIAGARA COUNTY are guaranteed a job interview if they complete a six-hour course held by the county's Employment and Training Department. The program develops "soft skills" including effective communication, conflict resolution strategies, problem-solving and critical thinking, dependability, adaptability and teamwork. Several employers told the county they had seen deficiencies in those soft skills from local applicants. Those companies helped develop the curriculum to address those shortcomings and they will be offering the interviews.

NORTH CAROLINA

Fears of radioactive contaminants have prompted **WAKE COUNTY's** Water

NEVADA

Three Nevada counties sport some of the best **"I voted" sticker** designs, as judged by the Election Assistance Commission. **CLARK, DOUGLAS** and **WASHOE counties** shared the distinction with the states of Alaska and Louisiana as Most Creative and Original in the EAC Clearinghouse Awards.



The Clark County Election Department coordinates with the graphics and materials used for the elections division's outreach slogan of "Don't Lose Your Voice, Vote."

MARYLAND

• New legislation will require

Quality Division to offer free

tests for means-tested home-

owners who rely on private

Environmental managers

project one-fifth of private

wells could be contaminat-

ed with naturally occurring

groundwater contaminants

including radon, radium and

uranium, Raleigh's ABC affil-

wells for **drinking water**.

more security at gun shops and gun

shows in BALTIMORE COUNTY. The bill,

the Secure All Firearms Effectively (SAFE)

Act, requires firearms stores and tempo-

rary gun shows to obtain a new license to



Douglas County's Treasurer's Office collaborated with the Nevada's Office of the Secretary of State and a local artist to create an accessible braille "I voted" sticker for use in the 2020 elections.



The Washoe County Registrar of Voters wanted a new original sticker to go with the fresh look of the new voting machines and operations. iate reported.

The county's extensive education campaign aims to reach up to 20,000 residents in the eastern part of the county.

county.

OHIO

The **CUYAHOGA COUNTY** Probate Court has launched the Guardian Partners program, which aims to help **protect adults** who are unable to care for themselves due to mental and often times also physical disabilities.

Guardians, appointed by the Probate Court, care for nearly 7,000 adults in Cuyahoga County, assisting with medical concerns and bank accounts, and the court's 25 new guardian partners will visit the adults at home, speak to their guardians and report any issues that may affect the person's health and welfare. The partners all have a background in social work or human services, Cleveland's ABC affiliate reported.

PENNSYLVANIA

• Officials from the ALLEGH-ENY COUNTY Health Department will receive training to help develop and implement new policies to address birth disparities. County data shows that black infants are dying at three to four times the rate of white babies. *The Tribune Review* reported that the training will focus on research and best practices in women's health, the history of social constructs

surrounding race, how to effecd- tively work with communities, to nonprofits, hospitals and resi-

dents and more.

sell firearms, The Baltimore Sun reported.

The legislation requires gun shops to install

alarm and video systems registered with the

• With new voting machines on the way, the **BUCKS COUN-TY** Board of Elections will hold a series of **public training sessions** to help voters familiarize themselves with the machines.



• With more than 45,000 students at its main campus, Penn State University can be a sizable voting bloc if students turn out on Election Day. **CENTRE COUNTY** is hoping to make that day a little easier, so the Board of Elections has filed a petition to **change the boundary lines** of six precincts in the Borough of State College and on Penn State's campus. *The Centre* *Daily Times* reported that approval of that petition will create one precinct for the Penn State Campus and another for part of State College. That will combine the boundaries for Penn State students, making election day easier by having one centralized location.

VIRGINIA

• FAIRFAX COUNTY's Department of Family Services is introducing the Father Engagement Unit, which includes classes, services, activities and an online video series to help fathers build their parenting skills. Classes touch on the practicalities of childproofing a home, the human development process, how to handle discipline and instill self confidence. The county also offers an online series of parenting videos for fathers called Pocket Dad Videos.

• Flattered, but uninterested. That's how **FREDERICK COUNTY** Board of Supervisors Chairman-at-large Charles De-Haven Jr. rebuffed his neighboring state's **offer to defect**, according to *The Herald-Mail*. The West Virginia Senate adopted a resolution to remind residents of Frederick County, Va., that they have a standing invite from 158 years ago to become part of West Virginia.

WASHINGTON

A small-off schedule election in KING COUNTY will be the first in the country to allow votes cast by smartphone. The King Conservation Board of Supervisors usually gets just 1 percent turnout, due in large part to a state law that requires elections for the volunteer position, with no regulatory power, to be held in the first three months of the year. Sending out paper ballots to all 1.2 million eligible voters in the district would eat up about a quarter of the small agency's annual budget, the Seattle Times reported.

News from Across the Nation is compiled by Charlie Ban and Rachel Looker. If your county has an item we should consider, please contact cban@naco.org or rlooker@naco.org.

the HR DOCTOR with Becky Comet

hat would you do if s o m e o n e c o l l a p s e d in your office or courthouse? What would happen if you collapsed in your office?

I was on the NBC television show, "The Biggest Loser," in 2011. My instructor for half of my time on the "Biggest Loser" ranch was the well-known trainer Bob Harper. In February 2017, Bob, at the age of 51, collapsed with sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) while working out in a New York City gym. He said later he is thankful to be alive.

"I was in full cardiac arrest. I was dead, on that ground dead," Harper said. "I was so lucky. They started performing CPR on me. They pulled out the AEDs (automatic external

IT'S AMERICAN HEART MONTH: Are You Prepared?

defibrillator) and used those on me twice before the paramedics got there and jolted me one more time."

With that in mind, I go back to the original question. What would you do if someone in your office or courthouse collapsed from sudden cardiac arrest? Is there an automatic external defibrillator that you can get to and back within two minutes? If you have one, has it been checked monthly and serviced yearly? Is anyone in the courthouse cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) trained?

Sudden cardiac arrest is not the same as a heart attack, which usually is caused by blockage in an artery. SCA causes the heart to suddenly and unexpectedly stop beating, according to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. A person with no signs of heart disease can suddenly pass out and appear lifeless. Here are three shocking statistics about sudden cardiac arrest, according to the Occupational Health and Safety Administration:

• 10,000 SCAs occur in the workplace each year. Even the fastest paramedics could take eight to 12 minutes to get to a patient after he or she collapses. Quick access to an AED by an engaged bystander could increase the odds of survival from about 5 percent to 40 percent and higher. For each minute defibrillation is delayed, the chance of survival is reduced by about 10 percent.

• Each year, more than 356,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests (OHCA) occur in the United States. About 90 percent of the people who experience an OHCA will die. While these numbers are staggering, the American Heart Association also notes that CPR, especially if administered immediately after cardiac arrest, can double or triple a person's chance of survival.



• 45 percent of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest victims survive when bystander CPR is administered.

If you are interested in CPR and AED training for yourself and/or a group in your courthouse, contact the American Heart Association or the American Red Cross. Both groups offer class options that can fit your needs. They use highly trained and certified instructors.

In about three hours, your group can be trained in the use of an AED as well as CPR.

Participants will receive certification that lasts two years.

Becky Comet is the member benefits manager at the Association of Arkansas Counties.

