

County News

Vol. 37 No. 8 • April 25, 2005

"The wisdom to know and the courage to defend the public interest"

National Association of Counties • Washington, D.C.

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As County News Went to Press...



Local land-use control took a beating, manufacturers of the contaminant MTBE got a free pass and ANWR drilling was given a thumbs-up in the House-passed energy bill April 20. Action now moves to the Senate, which is expected to craft its own bill early next month. A full report on the House bill will be posted on NACO's Web site and published in the next issue of *County News*.

Bankruptcy reform now law of the land

Includes major changes in collection of delinquent taxes

By Alysoun McLaughlin
Associate Legislative Director

President George W. Bush signed legislation that will make the most sweeping changes to federal bankruptcy law since 1978, including provisions that will make it easier to collect delinquent property taxes. The law is designed to crack down on abuse of Chapter 7 bankruptcy, which can permit individuals to wipe out significant debt.

Instead, the legislation will force filers that meet an eligibility formula to file under Chapter 13, which requires filers to make a repayment plan. The law would also lengthen the time during which filers are required to continue repaying debts and before which an individual can file for bankruptcy again.

The final bill passed the House of Representatives by an overwhelming margin of 302-126, after passing the Senate by the even greater margin of 74-25, despite the efforts of critics who argued that the legislation will make it more difficult for eligible individuals to file for bankruptcy and characterized it as a major giveaway to industries that hold consumer debt.

Very little of the controversy, however, had to do with Title VII, which affects the treatment of tax liens in a bankruptcy filing. Title VII contains major changes to the treatment of ad valorem property taxes, including:

- reestablishing the priority of tax liens

■ See **BANKRUPTCY** on page 2



Photo by David Hatheox

Polk County, Iowa's Volunteer Guardianship and Conservatorship Program won NACO's Legacy Award for Excellence and Innovation. County officials and volunteers were honored at the annual Acts of Caring Awards Luncheon April 13. To see who won, go to pages 6 - 9. Pictured (l to r): Larry Naake, NACO executive director; Matthew Riebel, president, Nationwide Retirement Solutions; Roxanne Petersen, Attorney's Office supervisor; Tom Smith, volunteer; Sherri Pollard, legal assistant; and Angelo Kyle, NACO president.

Congress reignites effort to revise state, local first responders grants

By Dalen A. Harris
Associate Legislative Director

As homeland security funding to state and local first responders continues to decrease, an effort is again underway in the 109th Congress to revise the Department of

Homeland Security's (DHS) grant programs for state and local first responders.

Recently, both the Senate and House of Representatives worked systematically on legislation to revise grants to state and local first

responders. This action comes on the heels of similar legislation (S. 1245/H.R. 3266) that the two chambers approved in the 108th Congress, which was never signed into law.

In the Senate, the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee unanimously approved S. 21, the Homeland Security Grant Enhancement Act of 2005 on April 13. In the House, the Committee on Homeland Security held several recent hearings on H.R. 1544, the Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders Act of 2005, and is

Healthy gardens make healthy homes

California county project helps reduce pesticide use

By M. Mindy Moretti
Senior Staff Writer

In backyards across the country, the yearly clash of the titans is beginning anew as homeowners struggle to control the weeds and bugs that threaten to take over their sylvan retreat and ruin backyard gatherings from now through the fall.

For most foot soldiers in the battle against weeds and pests, their immediate reaction is to spray, spray, spray. However, pesticides can prove not only harmful to children and pets,

but more and more they are turning up in area waterways.

San Diego County recently launched the *Healthy Garden, Healthy Home* initiative that aims to educate county residents about using integrated pest management (IPM) solutions to reduce pesticide use and increase use of less-toxic alternatives.

"While the first instinct may be to reach for a can of bug spray, we're here to tell everyone that pesticides

County News

Quik Takes

Median Household Income

Somerset County, N.J.	\$ 89,289
Howard County, Md.	\$ 88,555
Prince William County, Va.	\$ 82,926
Morris County, N.J.	\$ 82,025
Fairfax County, Va.	\$ 80,753

Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

■ See **REVISION** on page 10

■ See **GARDENS** on page 3

Landkamer details impact of unfunded mandates

BY ALYSOUN McLAUGHLIN
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

During testimony on unfunded mandates reform before the Senate Homeland Security and Government Reform Committee, NACo First Vice President Colleen Landkamer highlighted a recently released NACo snapshot survey showing that unfunded mandates continue to have a major impact on counties' budgets.

Landkamer spotlighted results from her county — Blue Earth County, Minn. — which showed that over the past three years, the county has spent the following:

- \$8 for every family of four to comply with Americans With Disabilities Act
- \$8 for every family of four to comply with the Help America Vote Act

- \$3 for every family of four to comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

- \$11 for every family of four under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act; and
- More than \$26 for every family of four to comply with the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Landkamer noted that "this may not be too much to spend to ensure that our public buildings and transportation systems are accessible, to purchase new voting equipment, or to ensure the privacy of health information or safe drinking water." However, the costs add up and in Minnesota, Landkamer indicated, counties are estimated to spend \$7 out of every \$10 to comply with state and federal mandates.

Enacted 10 years ago, the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) was intended to reduce the burden of unfunded mandates by estimating the cost of proposed mandates and preventing Congress from imposing a mandate without specifically voting to do so.

Landkamer provided a list of loopholes in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, including:

- It identifies only the anticipated

costs of proposed new mandates, not the actual costs.

- It gets the federal government off the hook for paying its share of mandates in politically sensitive areas such as enforcing constitutional rights or providing for the national security.



Photo courtesy of the National League of Cities

Colleen Landkamer speaks to the Senate Homeland Security and Government Reform Committee about unfunded mandates.

- The definition of a mandate is narrow and doesn't include conditions of federal aid or federal laws that indirectly erode tax bases or drive up costs.

- It turns a blind eye to several sneaky ways that Congress can impose a mandate, such as including the mandate in an end-of-session appropriations bill.

- Certain federal agencies are excluded and the rest do not always consult with state and local governments in estimating the cost of regulatory mandates.

- UMRA addresses only the nationwide cost of mandates, not mandates that have a disproportionate impact on a single local government or region.

- It is relatively easy for Congress to impose a mandate even after it has been labeled as such under UMRA.

Sen. George Voinovich (R-Ohio), the chairman of the subcommittee before which Landkamer testified on April 14 has indicated a willingness to introduce legislation to strengthen the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act. NACo is working with Sen. Voinovich and his staff to develop the outlines of such legislation.

Counties celebrate National County Government Week

Many highlight services, staff, community



Counties across the country celebrated National County Government Week (NCGW), using the week to promote the many services county governments provide its citizens.

Miami-Dade County kicked off National County Government Week by unveiling an exhibit celebrating the county's commitment to excellence, entitled, "Miami-Dade County: A Part of Your Day. A Part of Your Life. 24/7 Delivering Excellence Every Day." Other activities included student tours of the Emergency Operations Center, a discussion for high school students with the county budget director, a classroom lecture about jails, and a public service effort to clean up Biscayne Bay.

In Yolo County, Calif., Supervisor Helen Thomson spoke to the local paper about the importance of county government. "Counties represent diverse and vibrant communities and are in the best position to deliver government services that are closest to the people," she said. Yolo County's hometown heroes, Thomson stated, are the nurses who immunize kids to keep them healthy. They're maintenance workers who keep county parks safe and clean. They are the public works staff who maintain roadways and the environmental planners who assure clean environments and livable communities. They are job counselors who train the unemployed at career centers. County government is the local government voice for all residents, providing solutions that bring communities together, she emphasized.

Henry County, Ohio held a public rally on the steps of the county courthouse. The county unveiled a new Web portal, which will connect the sites of various public and private Web sites, including sites from the county, city, economic development, Chamber of Commerce and schools. A county commissioner accompanied 40 high school seniors on a field trip to the state capital to try to foster an interest in public service. The county also issued a proclamation.

Blue Earth County, Minn. created a coloring book for children emphasizing the services provided by the county. The county library held two special story

hours in honor of National County Government Week. The county held an employee appreciation lunch and also issued a proclamation.

In other National County Government Week activities:

- Salt Lake County gave special recognition to the 7,000 county workers and 30,000 volunteers as part of NCGW.

- Taylor County, Ga. celebrated NCGW for the first time. The county hosted an appreciation program for all of its volunteer departments.

- The Jasper County, Mo. commission reached out to its citizens by writing a guest column for the daily newspaper. The column was full of facts, statistics and real numbers that showed how the county helps its citizens.

- Habersham County, Ga. recognized employees involved with recovery efforts associated with the recent hurricanes and tropical storms. The county also issued a proclamation.

- Jackson County, Ore., Elk County, Pa. and Hopkins County, Ky. both issued proclamations declaring April 10-16 National County Government Week.

- Oakland County, Mich. has a Youth in Government Day scheduled for April 28.

- The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) helped California counties celebrate NCGW by preparing sample press releases, sample event outlines and fun facts counties could use to promote the week. The Maine County Commissioners Association also provided county sample press releases and proclamations.

First celebrated in 1990, National County Government Week was initiated to raise public awareness about counties. Counties represent diverse and vibrant communities in every region of the country. The activities during NCGW help citizens better understand how counties respond to their needs and, by extension, how counties across America serve the nation.

Bankruptcy reform finally successful after seven years

■ **BANKRUPTCY** from page 1

- closing loopholes that make it possible for attorneys to downgrade the priority status of a tax lien

- reducing the authority for bankruptcy judges to unilaterally reduce property tax assessments and interest rates charged on delinquent amounts

- extending the timeframe for repayment to five years after the date of the relief order, rather than six years from the date of assessment; and
- permitting administrative cost recovery of attorney fees and other expenses incurred by counties to tax claims where authorized by the state.

Ray Valdes, tax collector for Seminole County, Fla. hailed the language as "a major victory for local governments" and pointed out that it serves as a model for county officials' lobbying efforts in Washington, D.C., since "a significant accomplishment

has taken place because there was a consolidated effort by a small number of concerned and dedicated individuals that refused to give up or give in."

Valdes, who played a critical role in drafting provisions of the bill, is the past president of the National Association of County Treasurers and Finance Officers (NACTFO) and chairman of NACo's Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs Committee.

Similar legislation had passed either the Senate or House of Representatives every year from 1998 to 2005 and has passed both chambers twice. Once it was vetoed by President Bill Clinton; the second time a House-Senate conference committee deadlocked over a controversial amendment related to bankruptcy filings of abortion clinic protestors. This year, the abortion clinic amendment was defeated on the Senate floor.

Ghost hunters to investigate county courthouse

By DAN MILLER
STAFF WRITER

At the April 5 meeting of the Porter County, Ind. Commission, officials filled a vacancy in its wildlife management advisory board and authorized the construction of a fence. They also heard a petition from a team of ghost hunters.

Mike McDowell, president and

CEO of Indiana Ghost Trackers (IGT), won unanimous approval from the commissioners to search the county's 152-year-old courthouse for signs of paranormal activity.

"I felt kind of like the little guy," McDowell said. "They were talking about bonds and zoning, but here I was talking about ghosts."

The nonprofit group is tentatively planning to search the courthouse after-hours on April 29.

"When they made the request obviously we were a little surprised, but we get all sorts of requests for access to the courthouse," Commissioner Robert Harper said. "In the environment we're working in, a local government with few tax dollars,

it was a pleasant distraction to have to deal with this."

The building dates back to 1853, and a portion of the building was rebuilt after a fire in 1934. McDowell isn't sure what he'll find at the courthouse.

"It's very old and a lot of criminals have come through there — a lot of emotional cases," McDowell.

"Whenever there's trauma, that stigma could stay behind to haunt almost any site."

Employees told Harper about their experiences after IGT petitioned the commission.

"Some of the employees think they see shadows and different

■ See GHOSTS on page 5

San Diego County program emphasizes integrated pest management

■ GARDENS from page 1

may kill creepy bugs and pests, but at a serious cost the environment," County Supervisor Greg Cox said at a press conference launching the initiative. "Even if you can't see the coastline from your backyard ... the garden pesticides that you are using are washing out to the beaches."

Integrated pest management uses environmentally sound ways to keep pests under control. IPM programs usually combine several pest control methods for long-term prevention and management of problems without harming people, pets or the environment.

The \$1 million program, funded by a three-year grant from the state, will use a network of county departments, local scientists, nurseries and volunteers to publicize less harmful ways to kill pests.

"We'd wanted to do a residential IPM program for a long time," explained Michele Stress, supervising environmental health specialist and project director. "IPM has been done with agriculture and the schools, but we didn't have a comprehensive residential IPM program for the county."

Stress said studies indicate that residential pesticide use is a main contributor to storm water pollution. People don't often realize that when they use pesticides or



too much fertilizer on their laws, those poisons end up in the rivers, bays and oceans.

"People think that a watershed is just the flood plain around a river," Stress said. "But actually it's surfaces around the places we live that drain into a common water body."

In addition to a massive media campaign that featured some creative television ads about IPM, the *Healthy Garden Healthy Home* Web site provides a wealth of information including printable tip cards to help residents deal with everything from ants, aphids and cockroaches to snails and slugs. The tip sheets also cover what are good bugs — spiders and ladybeetles — to how to safely administer pesticides when it's necessary to use them.

Two other key elements of the program are working with the Extension

Service's Master Gardener program and focusing on point-of-purchase locations to educate homeowners about the hazards of pesticide usage. The county is setting up programs to train retail nurseries and is working to get materials into big volume stores. So far they've been able to place educational materials in four Lowe's stores.

"Because so much of the pest control products are purchased there, we're really hoping this gets embraced by the nurseries and home improvement stores," Stress said.

There is a Master Gardener hotline for residents to call with questions and the Master Gardeners are currently being trained to present workshops at area home improvement stores or community meetings.

"When we created this program, we wanted a bigger umbrella so other departments could dive into it," Stress said. "We're targeting behavior, so

we're working with as many departments and experts as possible."

The pesticide problem exists nationwide. American Rivers, a national nonprofit dedicated to keeping America's waterways clean, recently released its annual list of the most endangered rivers in the country. One of the dangers facing the rivers, including the Susquehanna River — the most endangered of them all — was the high level of pesticides found in the rivers.

Stress believes that *Healthy Garden, Healthy Home* program is something any county could replicate with the right resources and partners.

"We looked at lot of other resources out there when we were creating this program," Stress said. "I think the difference with ours is that when you're thinking about resources, you have to focus on the bigger image. There are lots of messages out there, and we've

brought them all together. It's the image of integration."

Stress is confident the program will catch on with Southern California homeowners and she hopes to eventually integrate the San Diego program with a similar program in Orange County to make it more of a regional approach. Still, she knows there is a battle ahead with those who believe that for greener lawns and bigger tomatoes you have to spray, spray, spray.

"Don't supersize your pest control. That's our message," Stress said. "It's not about no pesticides, it's about using them safely and responsibly."

(For more information about San Diego County's Healthy Garden, Healthy Home project contact Michele Stress, supervising environmental health specialist at 858/694-2794 or visit the Web site at www.projectcleanwater.org/html/imp.html.)



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- Plant pest-resistant or well-adapted plant varieties like native plants.
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- Squash, trap, wash off or prune out pests.
- Rely on good bugs in the garden to eat pests.
- Only use pesticides when non-chemical controls are ineffective and pests are reaching intolerable levels.
- Choose pesticides carefully so that the least toxic, most effective material is used to protect human health and the environment.

Source: San Diego County's Healthy Garden Healthy Home program

PROFILES

In Service...



Mindy Moretti

Senior Staff Writer
County News

National Association
of Counties

Education: Bachelor of Arts, West Virginia University

The hardest thing I've ever done: Live in Indiana for two years away from all of my friends and family.

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: My grandfather, Frank H. Harris, Anderson Cooper and my best friend Bryan.

A dream I have is to: Trek to base camp of Mount Everest.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Am a locally elected official in the District of Columbia.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: Eat a deep fried scorpion while traveling in Thailand.

My favorite way to relax is: Exploring neighborhoods in D.C. or spending time with my friends.

I'm most proud of: The student I used to mentor who made it through high school and is now in college studying to be a teacher.

Every morning I read: *The Washington Post*.

My favorite meal is: Maryland steamed crabs and beer on a hot summer day.

My pet peeve is: Drivers who fail to yield to pedestrians.

My motto is: Good girls go to heaven; bad girls go everywhere.

The last book I read was: *How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization* by Franklin Foer.

My favorite movie is: *Trainspotting*.

My favorite music is: Whatever is currently playing on U92FM, my college radio station (I listen via the Web).

My favorite president is: Nelson Mandela.



County News invites Letters to the Editor

If you have a compliment, complaint or different point of view, let us know.

Please include a phone number with your letter. Mail, fax or e-mail to: County News, NACo, 440 First St., N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2080; (202) 393-2630; cnews@naco.org.

Retiree visits nation's counties

By DAN MILLER
STAFF WRITER

When most people retire, they spend time on the golf course, work in the garden or lay out on the beach. Jim Stevens, 80, is no such retiree — he grabbed his maps, packed his bags and pursued his goal of visiting every county in the country.

After retiring from his job at AT&T in 1982, Stevens had already seen all 50 states, but felt there was more of the country left to see. After setting his goal, Stevens began a methodical planning process that included buying a large map and coloring in all of the counties he had already been to.

"I always had my AAA maps marked with where I had been for all those trips, so it wasn't hard to compile it once I tried for the whole shebang," Stevens said. "I did not revisit counties I had been to in my childhood years because I figured I had already seen them."

Stevens' plan entailed driving around the nation's coastline in its entirety and then making concentric circles until he reached the center. In all, he made 26 separate trips to fulfill his goal.



Jim Stevens stands in front of his map of the nation's counties. Stevens methodically planned his journey to visit every county, taking 26 separate trips to accomplish it.

"I had a lot of fun planning the whole thing as much as doing it," he said.

Stevens, a resident of Los Angeles, included all of the counties in Hawaii and all of Alaska's boroughs in his travels. Some of the boroughs he visited by ferry rather than driving through them.

On some legs of the journey, he was joined by one of his sons or his wife.

"My wife wasn't along on all of the trips — she got bored," he said.

Stevens completed his goal on Oct. 11, 1986 when he reached Jackson County, Mo. He still has four books full of maps and annotated lists of the counties he visited.

Counties celebrate Earth Day all year round

By JUSTIN CARMODY
COMMUNITY SERVICES INTERN

Each year on April 22, the country observes Earth Day — a day designed to shed light on environmental concerns and promote a clean and healthy planet for future generations. This year marked the 35th commemoration of Earth Day, and across the country, counties offered Earth Day fairs, river and roadside clean-ups, tree plantings, educational workshops, as well as television and radio public service announcements focusing on environmental issues.

However, to keep the spirit of Earth Day alive throughout the year, a number of counties have taken the lead in introducing environmental programs. An increasing number of counties have started to incorporate "green" considerations into their institutional purchasing policies.

In 1999, Chatham County, N.C. passed an Environmental Leadership Policy that included a price preference for recycled content, the adoption of a more efficient lighting system and the promotion of purchasing more durable products. Chatham County's policy also contains specific measures on integrated pest management and the use of less toxic cleaning products by their Building and Grounds Department.

King County, Wash. established a Recycled Product Procurement Policy that requires recycled paper be used for all printed material. The program also institutes a 15 percent price preference for recycled-content paper and a 10 percent preference for the use of refined lubricating and motor oil for auto services within the county.

King County's program has expanded to include energy-efficient purchases, the utilization

of low-toxicity cleaning products and resource-efficient green buildings. One of the county's "green" buildings uses natural cooling instead of air conditioning and another collects rainwater to operate the building's toilets.

Overall, counties have found voluntary purchasing policies to be rewarding experiences. In addition to vastly improving a county's

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County News

"The wisdom to know and the courage to defend the public interest"

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Published biweekly except August by: National Association of Counties Research Foundation, Inc.
440 First Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 393-6226 • FAX (202) 393-2630

E-mail: cnews@naco.org • Online address: www.countynews.org

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Mail subscriptions are \$100 per year for non-members. \$60 per year for non-members purchasing multiple copies. Educational institution rate, \$50 per year. Member county supplemental subscriptions are \$20 each. Send payment with order and address changes to NACo, 440 First St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to County News, 440 First St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001
(USPS 704-620) • (ISSN: 0744-9798)

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NACo offers green programs to help counties

■ EARTH DAY from page 4

environmental performance and public health in the region, many county governments have actually saved money in the process.

According to King County's 2003 Annual Report their Environmental Purchasing Policy Program yielded \$585,000 in savings to county agencies. Over the past decade, King County's policy has become a model for counties across the country. Chatham County's introduction of an integrated pest management plan has helped save money by significantly reducing its use of pesticides. Also, the county's use of green cleaning products has promoted better public health throughout the region.

NACo's "green" programs

NACo offers a number of environmental services for counties interested in developing an institutional

purchase policy or who would just like to get more information on environmental issues. In its U.S. Communities Program, NACo partners with Office Depot to supply counties with nationally-solicited contracts that offer lower prices and guaranteed delivery options. This year Office Depot has released its "Green Book" for 2005 — a catalogue containing more than 2,500 environmentally preferable products, with information on the products' environmental benefits.

"Our customers, including local and national governmental organizations, view us as more than a provider of office supplies and services — we are their business partner," said Tyler Elm, Office Depot's director of environmental affairs. "And as their partner, we help them achieve their business goals, including those related to the environment."

To learn more about NACo's environmental training and

technical assistance, view the topics on NACo's Web site at www.naco.org. Simply go to the *County Resource Center* tab, and click on *Training and Technical Assistance*.

In coordination with EPA, NACo provides counties with a step-by-step process to improve the energy efficiency of county courthouses and office buildings through the NACo ENERGY STAR® Courthouse Campaign. ENERGY STAR also offers purchasing and procurement resources online at www.energystar.gov with lists of qualifying products, key product criteria, drop-in procurement language and savings calculators. Counties can use these resources to facilitate the procurement of ENERGY STAR products, prevent greenhouse gas emissions, and help their county move closer to obtaining an ENERGY STAR label.

(For more information on NACo's environmental programs contact Abby Friedman at afriedma@naco.org, or at 202/942-4225. For more information about U.S. Communities visit www.uscommunities.org, or contact Steve Swendiman at sswendim@naco.org, or at 202/942-4282. Office Depot's Green Book is available at www.officedepot.com/environment.)

Jail museum seems to be hub of local hauntings

■ GHOSTS from page 3

things so we thought we'd let them come in and do their investigations," Harper said.

IGT has previously documented ghost activity at the nearby Old Jail Museum, which is run by the Porter County Historical Society.

For instance, McDowell has discovered electronic voice phenomenon (EVP) at the museum. EVP is when a voice appears on audio recordings made at a site.

On one occasion, he asked any apparitions in the room who they were. When he played the tape back later, a voice responded "Everett Daniels, U.S.A. Army." Upon further research, McDowell discovered that Everett Daniels was a real person, some of whose belongings were kept in the museum.

On other occasions, he has been sworn at by apparitions via EVP. Another apparition commented that a female investigator was "cute."

These phenomenons have led McDowell to want to investigate the courthouse, where he will conduct several tests with a variety of equipment. He plans to use electromagnetic field meters (EMF meters). EMF meters can discover fields that move around. Such activity would indicate paranormal activity.

In addition, he plans on using an

ion counter to detect large shifts in the number of positive and negative ions in the area as well as infrared thermometers to detect temperature fluctuations.

According to Commissioner Carole Knoblock, she has heard a variety of comments from citizens about the investigation. Some residents are skeptical while others find it exciting.

"I think some people think it's scary, but to each his own," Knoblock said. "We're just allowing them to come in, I don't think there's anything to be gained by it."

Knoblock said that the only conditions they have for allowing IGT access to the courthouse is that they pay for their own liability insurance and have police accompaniment because of the sensitive information kept in the courthouse.


Before going into the courthouse, McDowell plans on interviewing county employees and maintenance staff to see if they have had any strange encounters.

"We hope to see if we can find proof — one way or another — of ghosts. We don't know what we'll find but unless you do the investigation you don't have a chance of finding anything," McDowell said.

(To visit Indiana Ghost Trackers online, visit www.indianaghosts.org.)

In Service to Counties

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Mark Your Calendars!

NACo 2005

Health, Human Services and Workforce Conference

November 17-19

New Orleans

Registration will Open in Late Summer!

2005 ACTS OF *Caring* AWARDS

All photos by David Hathcox

The 2005 Annual Acts of Caring Awards were presented at a luncheon ceremony on Capitol Hill April 13 during National County Government Week. Winners from around the nation were on hand to receive their awards from NACo President Angelo Kyle and Nationwide Retirement Solutions (NRS) President Matthew Riebel. NRS sponsors the awards program.

New this year were cash awards for the Youth Service Award, won by Gwinnett County, Ga.; and the Legacy Award for Excellence and Innovation, won by Polk County, Iowa.

Several members of Congress also attended the ceremonies including Rep. Jim Moran (D-Va.); Rep. Jo Ann Davis (R-Va.); Rep. William Delahunt (D-Mass.); Rep. Sue Kelly (R-N.Y.); and Rep. Ellen Tauscher (D-Calif.).

Ruben Barrales, White House director of intergovernmental affairs, addressed attendees.



Fairfax County, Va. received an award in the category of Programs for Children and Youth for their SACC Children Helping Children program. Pictured (l to r): Kyle; Rep. Jim Moran; Supervisor Gerry Hyland; Pat Diehl, SACC director; Riebel; Steve Miller, SACC supervisor; Eileen Filler-Corn, chair of Fairfax County Childcare Advisory Council; and Judith Rosen, director of the Office for Children.



Gloucester County, Va. won a Community Improvement award for Park Partners, Inc. Pictured (l to r): Kyle; Supervisor Teresa Altemus; Carol Steele, director of Parks, Recreation and Tourism; Rep. Jo Ann Davis; and Kim Robins, chair of Park Partners, Inc.



A Community Improvement award was presented to Barnstable County, Mass. for the AmeriCorps Cape Cod program. Pictured (l to r): Danielle Deluca, volunteer; Rep. William Delahunt; Commissioner Mary LeClair; and Ben Wright, volunteer.



Dutchess County, N.Y. was presented with an Elderly Services award for the Office for the Aging's Senior Exercise Program. Pictured (l to r): Rep. Sue Kelly; Jean Curlee, program development consultant; and Kyle.



DuPage County, Ill. won a Community Improvement award for Giving DuPage. Pictured (l to r): Riebel; Jennifer Jones, manager of Giving DuPage; Commissioner Robert Schillerstrom; and Kyle.



Orange County, Calif. collected a Criminal Justice/Emergency Management for its Angels of Love Volunteer Program. Pictured (l to r): Riebel; Sharron Gibson Casler, director of inmate services, Orange County Sheriff's Department; Sally Cryder; Rick Cryder, volunteer; Dan Connolly, correctional programs supervisor; and Kyle.



The CERT program of Washoe County, Nev. won a Criminal Justice/Emergency Management award. Pictured (l to r): Riebel; Kaydie Paschall, CERT coordinator 2005; Debbie Bunch, CERT coordinator 2004; and Kyle.



Columbia County, Fla. picked up an award for its volunteer fire departments in the category of Criminal Justice/Emergency Management. Pictured (l to r): Riebel; Chief Jerry Stanley, West Columbia VFD; Commissioner Jennifer Flinn; Chief Edmond Hudson, South Columbia VFD; and Kyle.



In the category of Elderly Services, Contra Costa County, Calif. garnered an award for its Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program. Pictured (l to r): Riebel; Leah McIntosh, volunteer and outreach coordinator; and Kyle.



Charles City/County, Va. won an Elderly Services award for its Brown Bag Program. Pictured (l to r): Riebel; Harrison Jones, building and grounds supervisor; Marcie Jones, social services eligibility worker; Angela Yancey, county administrator; Daniel Greene, fleet supervisor; and Kyle.



San Diego County, Calif.'s Volunteering to Fill Health Care Gaps earned a Health/Social Services award. Pictured (l to r): Riebel; Dr. Harriet Seldin, DDS; Peggy Yamagata, RDH, med. dental health specialist; and Kyle.



The good folks in Polk County, Iowa accepted a Health/Social Services award for Volunteer Guardianship and Conservatorship Program. Pictured (l to r): Riebel; Sherri Pollard, legal assistant; Tom Smith, volunteer; Roxanne Peterson, County Attorney's office supervisor; and Kyle.



Caroline County, Va.'s Dental Program picked up a Health/Social Services award. Pictured (l to r): Riebel; Dr. Donald Stern, director, Fredericksburg Area Health District; Dr. Nancy Cole, Caroline County Dental Clinic; Cynthia Green, director of Social Services; Supervisor Wayne Acors; Percy Ashcraft, county administrator; and Kyle.



The Each One Teach One Program of Broward County, Fla. picked up a Libraries award. Pictured (l to r): Riebel; Charles Cary, library specialist I; Vonda Ward Bryant, literacy coordinator; Maria Gebhardt, marketing and development manager of Broward County Library; and Kyle.



Representatives from Washoe County, Nev. accepted a Libraries award for Gold Spinners: Booksale Volunteers Turn Used Books into Gold. Pictured (l to r): Riebel; Susan Bruno, president of the Friends of Washoe County Library; Mattie Gammon, treasurer of the Friends; and Kyle.



Flagler County, Fla.'s Friends of the Library program won a Libraries award. Pictured (l to r): Sandra Rose Friedman, president emeritus of the Friends of Flagler County Library; Riebel; Terry Jones, president of the Friends; Kyle; and Mary Ann Clark, chairman of the Library Board of trustees.



Butler County, Pa. accepted a Programs for Children and Youth award for The Reality Tour Drug Prevention Program. Pictured (l to r): Riebel; Norma Norris, executive director; Darren Norris, board member; Jan David, board member; and Kyle.



Contra Costa County, Calif.'s Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program garnered a Programs for Children and Youth award. Pictured (l to r): Riebel; Leah McIntosh, volunteer and outreach coordinator; Rep. Ellen Tauscher; and Kyle.



Sutter County, Calif. picked up an award for Bright Futures in the Programs for Children and Youth category. Pictured (l to r): Riebel; Rupi Bail, program director; Supervisor Dan Silva; Deborah Coulter, Bright Futures director; Bev DalPorto, program assistant; and Kyle.



The Caroline County Dental Program of Caroline County, Va. won a Health/Social Services award. Pictured (l to r): Kyle; Percy Ashcraft, county administrator; Rep. Jo Ann Davis; Dr. Nancy Cole, DDS; Cynthia Green, director, Caroline County Department of Social Services; Supervisor Wayne Acors; and Dr. Donald Stern, director of the Fredericksburg Area Health District.



Gwinnet County, Ga.'s Youth Volunteer Center was recognized with the Youth Service Award. Pictured (l to r): Naake; Ralph Forsht, senior vice president of America's Promise — The Alliance for Youth; Riebel; Ari Russell, executive director of GUIDE, Inc.; and Kyle.

NACo urges Congress to provide some assistance to all first responders

■ REVISION from page 1

expected to pass the bill before the end of April.

Once again, central to the debate is how the federal government will award future DHS' first responder grants to state and local governments? Should awards only go to the nation's metropolitan areas or should funding be provided to build a minimum capacity to prepare, prevent, respond and recover from all hazards in all of the nation's states and 3,066 counties?

Currently, awards to states are based primarily on population, and each state has been awarded a minimum amount of funding for its terrorism preparedness, prevention, response and recovery efforts. This baseline funding equates to 0.75 percent of amounts allocated under DHS' State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) and Local Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Grant Program (LLETP).

In turn, states are required to sub-allocate 80 percent of these resources to units of local government. DHS also provides a separate competitive grant for metropolitan regions through the Urban Area Security Initiative Grant Program (UASI). Under this program, only "high threat" metropolitan regions are awarded additional resources.

Many experts have argued that the current formula system has distributed more funding per capita to less populated and at-risk states. According to a recent report by the nonpartisan think tank, the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, "States in rural, less populated areas, or populated areas — but less likely to be targeted areas by terrorist acts — often receive a disproportionate amount of grant money."

DHS and the administration have indicated they favor revising the current formula. Along with a proposal to change the base allocation formula to 0.25 percent, the president's FY06 budget request states that "the [current] formula previously used to allocate these funds does not account for the unique threats, vulnerabilities and unmet needs of each state, [as a result] the budget proposes to award these grants on a discretionary basis incorporating evaluations of risk, and an application-based review of need, and consistency with national priorities."

This issue continues to provoke a split between lawmakers from urban states where there is high population of people and those from rural states who argue that the entire country should be strengthened against terrorist attacks and all hazards. As a result, both the Senate and House

of Representatives have worked systematically to enact legislation; however, they have yet to reach a compromise on the issue.

The revised legislation in both the House and Senate would allocate most of the funding based on the risk of and vulnerability to future terrorist threats, but differs on the distribution structure for awarding the grants to state and local first responders.

Sponsored by Chair Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Ranking Member Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.), S. 21 would consolidate the Department of Homeland's State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP), Local Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Grant Program (LLETP) and Urban Area Security Initiative Grant Program (UASI). Under the legislation, each state would first receive a minimum baseline amount of funding, but the formula would change from 0.75 percent to 0.55 percent.

While all states would be eligible for the baseline amount, the bill authorizes a higher minimum — based on a formula that combines the presence of critical infrastructure and other vulnerabilities or risk factors — to states that are larger or more densely populated. These states would opt for the higher award.

Remaining funds would be awarded to state and local first responders based on risk, threat and vulnerability. States would be required to sub allocate 80 percent of any award to units of local government.

In the House

Sponsored by House Committee on Homeland Security Chair Christopher Cox (R-Calif.) and Ranking Member Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.), H.R. 1544 would also change the current formula and criteria for the distribution of first responder grants to state and

local governments, and target funds based on based on risk, threat and vulnerability.

The legislation also presumably consolidates the SHSGP, LLETP and UASI grant programs; but the bill proposes that each state be guaranteed no less than 0.25 percent of the baseline formula.

States with an international land border or international port would receive at least 0.45 percent of the baseline formula. With the remaining funding, awards to states and regions would be granted strictly based on risk, threat and vulnerability.

Similar to S.21, H.R. 1544 instructs states to award 80 percent of funds to units of local governments and/or regions.

The House bill differs from S. 21 because the legislation instructs DHS to first prioritize and then award states and regions based on risk, threat and vulnerability, with the stipulation that all states and regions would receive no less than 0.25 percent of the baseline formula. The Senate bill would first award a baseline amount of 0.55 percent to all states prior to any assessment of risk, threat or vulnerability. Experts have noted that H.R. 1544 would provide a higher award to large states and metropolitan regions, and closely mirrors DHS and the administration's proposal for these grant programs.

NACo has not taken a position on the methods of homeland security funding distribution; nonetheless, the organization has urged Congress to provide some assistance to all of the nation's first responders, and "ensure a base level of national preparedness."

Both the Senate and House of Representatives have not indicated when their respective bills will come to a full vote. According to congressional aides, S.21 and H.R. 1544 will be enacted and signed by the president before the end of

the year. Although there remains a significant division regarding the distribution structure for awards, both bills have much in common.

For instance, both bills emphasize local regional collaboration, the prioritization of national homeland security goals and objectives, flexibility in spending homeland security funding, national standards for homeland security equipment and training,

and accountability to prevent wasteful spending and fraud.

Additionally, S. 21 and H.R. 1544 both call for the creation of interagency, and state and local advisory boards to oversee, analyze and advise the DHS secretary, and coordinate the revised risk-based DHS grant programs. NACo will continue to keep members posted on future developments.

web watch



■ Online Resource Room Provides Tips on Running Effective Meetings

Are you sick of meetings that go on forever, go off topic or aren't even necessary in the first place? The folks at *Effectivemeetings.com* aim to relieve all of your meeting

woes. This Web site provides advice and strategies to streamline your meetings and maximize their effectiveness. Subjects in this online resource room range from Meetings 101 to Holding Off-site Meetings.

■ Association Announces Call for Entries in Web Site Competition

The Web Marketing Association has announced a call for entries for its ninth annual international WebAward Competition (www.2005webaward.org). The competition is accepting entries for the Best Government Web site of 2005. A complete list of past winners and the entry form for counties who wish to compete can be found at government.webaward.org. The deadline for entries is June 1.



■ Web Site Lists Local Wildlife

Enature.com has an online resource for people curious about wildlife in their region. By going to www.enature.com/localguide/localguide_home.asp, visitors can view listings of the birds, butterflies, mammals, reptiles, trees, wild-

flowers, native gardening plants and invasive plants in their region. In addition, it offers guides to poisonous and endangered species in the region. The site requires an e-mail address to access the guides.

■ Club Web Site Offers Community to Nation's Travelers

Think you're a hotshot because you've been to all 50 states? The members of the Extra Miler Club (www.extramilerclub.org) strive to visit every county in the nation, just like Jim Stevens (see story, page 4). The site lists a roster of members, information about its annual meeting as well as a page of helpful links for anyone who wants to make the trek.

(Web Watch is compiled by Dan Miller, staff writer. If you have an item you would like to see featured, please e-mail it to him at dmiller@naco.org.)

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FOCUS ON ACHIEVEMENT

Wishes Fulfilled in San Diego County

By M. MINDY MORETTI
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

There are bridal registries and baby registries and even registries for people headed off to college for the first time to make sure the recipients get everything they need for the next phase of their life. But for public libraries?

Faced with an annual book budget that amounted to about \$3.50 per resident, San Diego County came up with an idea for the Amazon Wish List Project.

Amazon.com provides a section on its Web site that allows people to fill out wish lists of products they want and then anyone can visit the

list, purchase the product and have it shipped directly to the wisher.

In 2003, Betty Waznis, principal librarian, asked six of the county's branches to participate in a pilot program that would have each branch create its own "wish list" on Amazon. The pilot group took notes on how much time they had to spend setting up and maintaining the list and what sort of kinks they ran into along the way. When it was determined that the entire process was easy and, most importantly, didn't cost any additional money, Waznis invited all the branches to participate. Currently nearly all of the county's branches and bookmobiles are participating.

"I feel that this is something that any library could do very easily," Waznis said. "You don't need anything except an Internet connection and a minimal amount of time to monitor your wish list and add new titles. It's worth a little extra time at the beginning, to describe your library in an appealing way, so readers know why you need their donations."

The first year, the county received 107 donated items with an average value of \$2,000. One branch, Ramona, had its entire list purchased by a donor. To date, the library has received more than 600 items through the wish list program.

However, Waznis is certain that

number would be higher with more PR about the wish list program. Customized flyers for each branch were developed, along with bookmarks to be distributed when customers check out books. There is an icon on the library Web site, the local newspaper wrote an article and librarians in each of the branches display the published articles in high traffic areas.

"PR is still the biggest hurdle," Waznis said. "This is true not just for the Amazon wish list, but many of our activities and services."

For more information about San Diego County's Amazon Wish List Project, contact Betty Waznis, principal librarian, at 858/694-2438 or betty.waznis@sdcounty.ca.gov.

(Focus on Achievement highlights NACo Achievement Award Winners. To learn more about other winners, the program or how to submit your county program for an award visit the NACo Web site at www.naco.org/awards or contact Jackie Byers, research director at jbyers@naco.org or 202/942-4285.)

FINANCIAL SERVICES NEWS

The Retirement Gap

As American workers of all ages plan for retirement, they wonder, "Will I have enough to retire, or will I have a retirement gap?" The difference between additional sources of income such as a pension plan, Social Security or individual investments and what is needed during retirement is the retirement-income gap.

Employees should consider all sources of retirement income to ensure that contributions to retirement funds and any earnings are likely to cover the gap between other sources of retirement income and income needs during retirement.

The 2005 Retirement Confidence Survey, released in early April by Washington, D.C.-based Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI), examines income sources of current retirees and current worker expectations of retirement. EBRI surveyed 1,200 working and retired Americans 25 and older.

The following results from the study illustrate why many Americans have a retirement gap.

- 52 percent of workers report that the total value of their savings and investments is less than \$25,000 excluding the value of their primary home.

- 65 percent of workers were somewhat to very confident in their financial security in retirement. Thirty-seven percent of workers who had not saved at all for retirement were at least somewhat confident that

they would have enough savings for retirement.

- 55 percent of workers believe that they are behind schedule in planning and saving for retirement.

- 42 percent of workers have performed a retirement needs calculation, but 37 percent of these workers performed their own retirement needs calculation and estimated their retirement outcomes. An additional 10 percent guessed how much it would take to fund their retirement.

A similar EBRI study conducted in 2003 reported that pensions made up less than 25 percent of a current retiree's income sources. Social security accounted for about 44 percent of the average retiree's income. Nearly 65 percent of workers who responded to the survey said they are not confident Social Security would continue to provide equivalent benefits at retirement. These statistics remain relatively unchanged and continue to impact the decisions workers make regarding participation in a retirement program and how much to save.

As a result of this gap in retirement, many workers are postponing retirement. This strategy may work for some; however, due to health or workplace stress, others find themselves forced to retire with fewer sources of income than they would like to have or need. Retirees who must retire often experience a decline in their quality of life and some end up

living in poverty or needing federal assistance.

When employees retire, they may be faced with challenges on how to keep financially afloat.

One solution is to participate in their employer's 457 deferred compensation plan. Retirement planning and education provided by an employer-based deferred compensation program can help prepare workers to close the gap in retirement.

Deferred compensation plan participants can take advantage of the following:

- investing money for retirement
- deferring taxes until withdrawal; and
- taking advantage of a variety of investment options.

NACo provides the nation's largest 457 deferred compensation program administered by Nationwide Retirement Solutions (NRS). This year marks the program's 25th anniversary. Currently the deferred compensation program serves more than 380,000 county employees and retirees. Employees who participate in the NACo deferred compensation program can find out if they have a retirement gap by contacting a Nationwide toll-free at 877/677-3678.

(Financial Services News was written by Renata Hart Lipscomb, Enterprise Services membership/marketing director of NACo.)



Visit www.naco.org/2005annual
for more information.



NEWS FROM THE NATION'S COUNTIES

ALASKA

The **FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH** will appeal a state **tax assessment** of the value of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline, Mayor Jim Whitaker told the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*.

Borough officials take issue with the state petroleum property assessor's \$3 billion value for the pipeline and its associated property for 2005. This is a decline in value from \$3.017 billion in 2004.

"We think it is nearly inconceivable that a devaluation can be made for the trans-Alaska pipeline," Whitaker said to the *News-Miner*.

Owners of the pipeline pay around \$4 million in taxes per year and are the borough's biggest taxpayers.

According to Whitaker, the borough was willing to take the case to the Alaskan Supreme Court. North Slope Borough and the City of Valdez will also appeal the assessment.

FLORIDA

At a recent fish fry in **BAKER COUNTY**, the fatty foods weren't the only bad-for-you things being sold.

The Baker County Sheriff's Office conducted several days worth of **drug stings** with the help of 22 deputies sent from Orange County. The stings, called Operation Fish Fry, resulted in 20 arrests, most of which involved crack cocaine.

Sheriff Joey Dobson told *The Baker County Press* that there would have been more arrests if not for steady rains.

Baker County paid to house and feed the visiting deputies. According to Dobson, one of the benefits of having outside officers work undercover is that members of the local drug culture don't know them.

INDIANA

Coming just in time for tornado season, **PORTER COUNTY** will finish installing 22 **disaster-warning sirens** by the end of April.

According to the *Post-Times*, nearly half of the sirens will be placed in the county's largest city of Portage. Each siren can be heard from within a one mile radius, according to Portage Fire Chief Tim Sosby.

The county had previously been unable to install the sirens because of their high cost. However, the county used a portion of a Department of Homeland Security grant of \$685,000 to fund the sirens, which cost \$15,000 each.

The sirens are used to alert the public of any kind of disaster, but are often used for severe weather.

IOWA

While Polk County has its Victims Services agency (see April 11's *County News*), another Iowa county has developed another program to serve **crime victims**.

The **STORY COUNTY** Victim Identification and Notification Everyday (VINE) program automatically calls victims who register with the program when an offender's status changes, according to The Iowa Channel.

By subscribing to the system, victims stay informed of court dates and the possibility of release, Sheriff Paul Fitzgerald told the channel.

The system only tracks offenders in the Story County justice system. People who register with the service remain anonymous.

KANSAS

Citizens in **JOHNSON COUNTY** now have a centralized location to answer their questions about **county services**.

At her State of the County Speech last month, County Commission Chairwoman Annabeth Surbaugh launched the Office of Constituent Services. The office, which is staffed by three county employees, is a free and confidential answer center for residents with big and small problems.

Team Member Josie Stramberg said the goal of the office was to provide residents with a "one-stop shop" for information about county government, its services and programs.

"I've said my personal goal is to bring the county government to the people and the people to county government," Surbaugh told *The Kansas City Star*.

MARYLAND

Homeless advocates in **HOWARD COUNTY** are celebrating County Executive James Robey's intent to spend \$1.5 million over the next two years to expand and upgrade the Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center, a 32-bed **homeless shelter**.

Shelter Executive Director Andrea Ingram told the *Howard County Times* that the shelter would leverage the money for a long-awaited expansion she expects to cost \$4 million.

The proposed expansion would nearly double the size of the shelter to 55 beds, according to Ingram, and provide additional counseling rooms and showers.

The shelter is already seeking money from the state of Maryland as well as private sources.

"The county money is a real starting point," Ingram said. "I'm very happy about this."

MICHIGAN

WAYNE COUNTY has become one of the latest jurisdictions to **ban smoking** in the workplace.

The Wayne County Commission passed the Clean Indoor Air Regulation to protect the health of people who are affected by secondhand smoke.

"My hope is that our smoking regulation will set the tone for other counties, and eventually the entire state, to follow our pro-health lead," said Commissioner Alisha Bell. "Until then, the Wayne County Clean Indoor Air Regulation is a step in the right direction to promoting good health for our citizens."

Secondhand smoke has been classified by the Environmental Protection Agency as a known cause of cancer in humans.

NEW MEXICO

During tight financial times, projects like road construction often must wait until the money is avail-

able, but **TORRANCE COUNTY** has come up with a new way to find the money.

Comptroller Tracy Sedillo came up with the idea to consider taking out a **low-interest loan** to repair and upgrade area roads. Under Sedillo's plan, the county would apply for a low-interest loan from the New Mexico Finance Authority and use the money to quickly upgrade as many county roads as possible. The loan would be paid off with revenue generated by the recently approved infrastructure and capital improvements gross receipts taxes.

"We've got a lot of work to do," County Manager Bob Ayer told the *Mountain View Telegraph*. "This way, we could fix a lot of roads quickly and I think people would be appreciative of that."

NORTH CAROLINA

Randy Thomas Sowell Jr. has come up with an interesting way to pay his phone bill, his cable bill and even bail himself out of jail.

Somehow — and officials aren't quite sure how yet — Sowell managed to tap into **ALAMANCE COUNTY** government accounts. Sowell was able to remove \$2,346 via direct draft from a **county bank account**.

Sheriff's Department spokesman Randy Johnson told *The Dispatch* that is isn't clear how Sowell got the county's bank account number. Jones said it could have been from a check stub or a copy of a check. Sowell has never been an employee of the county, although he has been a guest of the county when he served time in the county jail.

Officials believe Sowell used money from the Alamance County account to bail himself out of Durham County jail.

Sowell is currently awaiting trial, charged with five counts of financial identity fraud and five counts of obtaining property by false pretense.

- According to a recent survey, employees in **MECKLENBURG COUNTY** are happier than most people around the country in their jobs. The survey found that 77 percent of **county workers were satisfied on the job** according to the FY03-04 Employee Climate Survey. That figure is up from 75 percent for the previous reporting year.

Fifty-eight percent of the county's 4,500 full-time employees responded to the survey that asked 13 questions

■ See **NEWS FROM** on page 14

AFFILIATE SPOTLIGHT

The National Association of County Recorders, Election Officials and Clerks

The idea for a national association of county recorders emerged in 1948 at the Ohio Recorders' Association Annual Conference. The National Association of County Recorders was actually formed at NACo's 1949 Annual Conference in Oakland, Calif. During the 1960s, a splinter group formed the International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers (IACREOT).

Over the years, the association incorporated other county officials and today is known as the National Association of County Recorders, Election Officials and Clerks (NACRC). The bylaws provide for the membership to include any county official "acting as the Auditor, Clerk, Clerk of the Governing Body, Court Clerk, Election Official, Recorder, Recorder of Marriages or Register of Deeds."

NACRC schedules conferences in conjunction with each of NACo's conferences in order to promote strong ties and the opportunity to share issues facing each of the associations.

A 32-member Board of Directors, which includes six officers and any past presidents still in office, governs the association. The Board, with the valuable assistance of the various committees, develops the educational sessions offered during NACRC's conferences. The Board of Directors also decide how best to meet the challenges facing NACRC.

These challenges include reversing a decline in membership. Several years ago the membership total approached 1,000. It is currently just over the 700 mark. NACRC is working to increase the value of membership through strengthening its Certified Public Official Program

as well as increasing the educational offerings at conferences, on the Web site (www.nacrc.org) and in the newsletter.

County officials across the nation are continually called upon to deal with ever-changing demands without raising taxes. Participation in NACo and its affiliates is invaluable in helping meet those demands with innovative and cost-efficient solutions. If you are not a member, JOIN...if you are a member, GET INVOLVED.

I have a sign on the wall of my office that reads, "We Learn, In Order To Do Better, That Which We Already Do Well." Networking provides the best method for learning.

(Affiliate Spotlight was written by Duane Smith, NACRC representative to NACo.)

RESEARCH NEWS

Counties Improve School Security

The problem of school violence is quickly becoming epidemic in this country.

As evidenced by the high profile shootings in Red Lake, Minn., Littleton, Colo., Pearl, Miss. and Springfield, Ore., to name a few, school violence affects everyone in a community.

The National Center for Education Statistics, in conjunction with the Bureau of Justice Statistics, released a report in November 2004 that reveals some very frightening statistics.

According to the report, in 1999-2000, an estimated 1.5 million violent incidents occurred in public elementary and secondary schools. Furthermore, 71 percent of public schools experienced one or more violent incidents.

These problems can come from different sources. The NCES report

claims that while the percentage of students carrying weapons to school has declined over the past decade, it is still at 6 percent, with 17 percent of students saying that they carry weapons "anywhere."

In a survey of school resource officers, 78 percent reported that they had taken a weapon away from a student the year prior to the survey. More than one-quarter of schools reported daily or weekly school bullying as well as listing a host of other disciplinary problems, including verbal abuse of teachers, racial tensions and classroom disorder.

While responding to any of these contributing factors is an ongoing challenge, schools and local officials are enhancing security to provide better protection. With a rash of violence, including the beating of a teacher, a fight involving 25 students and a student making death threats, the problems in Clayton County, Ga.

are indicative of the entire country. The county school superintendent ordered random use of hand-held metal detectors, earmarked funds for more security personnel and recently approved a pilot program using dogs that sniff out drugs and gunpowder in the schools, but will not search the students themselves. The school system is also working with parents to teach them to better educate their children about gangs and drugs, and restricting access to the schools and hallways.

Counties throughout the country have instituted heightened security measures, but these measures are constantly evolving and changing due to the differing threats. Montgomery County, Md. officials have added cameras, regular safety drills and have developed a close relationship with police. In response to the Minnesota school shootings, the Texas State Senate passed a school security bill that would require school districts to adopt emergency plans, conduct school drills and undergo a security audit once every three years. School districts are remodeling and designing new school buildings with safety in mind.

It is becoming commonplace for schools to install security cameras on school grounds. Wake County, N.C. purchased cameras with federal school-security grants. Wake County security vehicles will soon have remote access to camera feeds, allowing officials to monitor any activity from anywhere.

Metal detectors are also becoming more common, and some districts have even gone as far as arming guards with tasers, though this creates many questions about their use against children.

The relationship between the schools and the local law enforcement is key in combating school violence. In Dubuque County, Iowa, part-time local police patrol the halls at high schools. Law enforcement and emergency personnel there have also collaborated on an emergency plan for the schools. The Delaware County, Ind. SWAT team held training sessions in schools, updating and refining their emergency response plans and going through a mock exercise.

The improving relationships between schools, local law enforcement and parents will continue to be a challenge, but a challenge that is necessary to alleviate this national crisis.

(Research News was written by Joseph Hansen, research associate)

NACo ON THE MOVE

NACo IN THE NEWS

The Examiner in Washington, D.C. published a letter from NACo Executive Director Larry Naake April 14 about the strain the meth crisis places on county governments.

Paul Beddoe, associate legislative director, spoke to The Idaho Statesman for an April 13 editorial entitled "Otter-Simpson bill won't beef up payments to counties."

Beddoe also spoke to the Las Vegas Review-Journal for an April 11 article called "BLM mandates land use input."

Dalen Harris, associate legislative director, spoke to The State for an April 12 article entitled "Federal funds for police shrink."

Don Stapley, chairman of NACo's Large Urban County Caucus, appeared on a segment on CNN's Lou Dobbs Tonight April 8.

NACo OFFICERS & COUNTY OFFICIALS

President Angelo Kyle attended the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia's Annual Meeting April 23-26 in Chatham County (Savannah) and spoke to attendees about NACo's priorities, especially CDBG.

President-elect Bill Hansell spoke about his Advocates for Children initiative at the annual conference of the National Court Appointed Special Advocates Association, April 18 in Fulton County, Ga. (Atlanta).

Colleen Landkamer, NACo First Vice President, testified April 14 before the subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia of the United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

NACo STAFF

Kevin Neimond, Geospatial Information Technology Specialist, provided an overview of national GIS collaboration initiatives at the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania GIS Coordination and Tool meeting April 25 in Dauphin County (Harrisburg), Pa.

Daria Daniel, associate legislative director, was a presenter at the WIA Plus: What Will It Mean for States? workshop session April 14, during the National Conference of State Legislatures Spring Forum in Washington, D.C.

Bert Jarreau, chief information officer, attended the Public Technology Institute 2005: Congress for Technology Leadership in Multnomah County (Portland), Ore. April 13-15. He moderated a workshop April 14 entitled "Voice Over IP (VoIP): What is it and Why Should I Care?"

(On the Move is compiled by Dan Miller, staff writer, and Allison Mall, editorial assistant.)

Word Search

Alabama Counties

Word search grid containing letters for Alabama counties.

AUTAUGA BARBOUR BLOUNT CHILTON CHOCTAW COFFEE COLBERT

CONECUH DALE ELMORE ETOWAH HOUSTON LAMAR LOWNDES

MARENGO MARION MOBILE PIKE SHELBY SUMTER

Created by Allison Mall

THE H.R. DOCTOR IS IN

Who are You, and What Have You Done with My Co-Worker?

All of us display attitude and behavioral characteristics which mark us and define us in the eyes of others. For example, you may be a fortunate person with a cheerful, optimistic disposition who makes others feel good with your mere presence.

You may be a "go to" person regarded by others as someone to approach with any project no matter how difficult it is to get the job done. You may, on the other hand, walk around with a nimbus cloud over your head, seeing the negative side of events, shunning opportunities to step out and try something new, and wanting to disengage from others rather than be more sociable.

Whether we recognize it or not, our attitudes and behaviors towards others define us in the eyes of others, as much if not more, than physical characteristics such as gender, height or skin color. Most people come to accept who they are or create an image of who they are in their own minds. This may be the case even as they are quick to identify and typecast others.

Unfortunately, this typecasting can lead to the wrong response to workplace behaviors which should be interrupted and changed. In the most cases, the victims of threatening behavior at work just put up with it. Most do not report such incidences even though the inappropriate behaviors will get worse if not properly challenged and changed.

The HR Doctor's new book, *Don't*

Walk by Something Wrong!, did not get its title by accident. Ignoring threatening, sexually inappropriate or racist behaviors is bad for the workplace and the coworkers. Ironically, it is also bad for the perpetrator since the unchecked behaviors will lead the perpetrator to believe that this kind of offensive conduct is a path to achieving his goals. The use of the masculine "his" is not accidental since most such perpetrators are male.

This article, however, focuses on another workplace reality. Occasionally, some rather spectacular transformation can occur in the attitude, outlook or demeanor of a colleague at work. The transformation may lead you to suspect that the "real" person whose behavior has changed so much so quickly has been kidnapped by aliens and some form of clone has been sent back to earth in the person's place.

Sometimes, the change in attitude is derived from some major life event such as divorce, death of a relative, marriage, graduation of children from college or the safe return of a child/soldier from an assignment in Iraq. These transformations can lift burdens and lift spirits. These life events can cause a colleague to appear to have been reborn in the eyes of the coworkers who have difficulties believing that it is the same person.

An Employee Assistance program (EAP) can sometimes be a great asset



PHIL ROSENBERG
THE HR DOCTOR

in helping an individual or workplace accelerate a positive rebirth of attitude and work habits. The counseling, the privacy and the coaching which a great EAP professional, such as Florida's Pat Erichsen or Jennifer Pechenik, can deliver can become a catalyst in literally changing the life of a coworker. Just as plastic surgeons will tout the value of a facelift to make you look and feel younger (if not also much poorer), so too can a lift in spirits change the way a person views herself and the way others view her.

Events can also create a "negative rebirth," turning a person previously regarded as pleasant and thoughtful into a mini version of Godzilla. The inverse of some of the events described above can induce depression, change personal health for the worse and replace a sunny disposition with one clouded by negative behaviors. The reality is that major negative

events such as widowhood or a runaway child will affect anyone's behavior at work and elsewhere. A substance abuse problem or a serious health problem will also change behavior for the worse.

A lesson for a great manager or supervisor is very clear. Be on the lookout for changes in behavior for the good and for the bad. To recognize a change in behavior, however, a great manager must first know what baseline "normal" is. Then any significant change or anomaly can be detected. Once an anomaly pops up, the manager has an opportunity — and arguably an obligation — to do some kind of intervention. Hopefully, it is a positive one such as congratulating the coworker on the perseverance and the success of their weight loss program, or acknowledging the fact that their work has improved and that others have noticed.

It may involve encouraging the person to continue in their positive development such as enrolling in a graduate education program after they have completed a bachelor's degree.

The manager has an equal obligation and opportunity, perhaps a greater one considering the liability, to intervene promptly and respectfully when behavior troubles surface. Behavior and performance are closely linked — one affects the other. The behavior of a threatening bully at work affects the

bully's performance as well as the performance of others. Not walking by a problem is the critical step that a manager must take to keep a virus of poor behavior from spreading and growing in the workplace.

Not sure how to get help about a problem? The answer is, or should be, a proactive HR Department.

Great HR is marked by responsiveness and a sympathetic, collegial willingness to understand what is going on in the workplace and to offer sound and timely advice. If that is the kind of HR which exists in your organization, take full advantage of it. When a behavior transplant is appropriate, don't be shy and don't be afraid to ask for advice and help. However, if the HR organization in your agency doesn't respond, or if they focus only on process and not outcome, then steps should be taken with agency leaders right away to diagnosis the problem in HR and apply the right treatment. In such a case where the HR organization itself is in need of help, the quicker the organization's leadership can intervene and help, the better.

The HR Doctor hopes your stay on a deserted island is with a positive "go to" colleague!

Phil Rosenberg
The HR Doctor
www.hrdr.net

County considers dangerous dog registry after series of fatal attacks

NEWS FROM *from page 12*

related to employee motivation and satisfaction. Ninety-four percent of the respondents said the county is a good place to work.

The Conference Board is a non-profit research organization that surveyed employee satisfaction across the country. The survey found job satisfaction across all ages and incomes was at 50 percent, down from 60 percent 10 years ago.

OHIO

After more than five years of negotiations, **HAMILTON COUNTY** has agreed to pay U.S. Bank Arena **\$4.25 million to settle a lawsuit** over parking at the riverfront concert and sports venue.

According to the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, the amount includes \$2.8

million the county paid in 2004 in anticipation of a settlement or verdict. The settlement avoids a trial which was scheduled to begin at press time.

"It's a great deal for the county and county taxpayers," Commissioner Todd Portune told the *Enquirer*. "We assembled a good legal team to drive a hard bargain. We instructed them not to give in, give up or give away."

The previous owners of the field had sued the county for removing parking and pedestrian access when the county began demolishing Cinergy Field in 2000.

The settlement includes a new agreement for sharing parking revenue that is more favorable to the county.

VIRGINIA

In the wake of two recent fatal dog

attacks in nearby counties, **FAIRFAX COUNTY** is considering creating a **dangerous dog registry**.

Dogs that are classified as dangerous by the court system — currently there are 39 identified in the county — would be listed on the Internet so county residents know if a dangerous dog lives nearby.

"It's a way the community can be cognizant," county Supervisor Dana Kauffman told the *Connection Newspapers*. "It's a workable solution to a difficult problem."

The registry would be similar one established by Tampa, Fla. that lists the dog's picture, name, breed and location.

Of the 39 dogs currently on the county list there are: 10 huskies, nine German shepherds, six mix-breeds, four pit bulls, two Labradors, two rottweilers, a malamute, a mastiff,

a Norwegian elkhound, a beagle, a Great Dane and a golden retriever.

WISCONSIN

And while Virginia may be going to the dogs, counties throughout Wisconsin are going to the cats. **Feral cats**.

In all 72 counties across the state, meetings were held recently to consider reclassifying free-roaming domestic feral cats as an unprotected species.

By a vote of 146 to 75, residents of **LA CROSSE COUNTY** voted to approve the reclassification that would allow anyone with a Wisconsin small-game hunting license to shoot feral cats.

The statewide push to allow for the reclassification began last year with the La Crosse County branch of the Conservation Congress — an

elected body with the duty to advise the state Legislature and Department of Natural Resources on natural resource issues.

The proposal considers a feral cat any feline not under its owner's direct control or without a collar. It's estimated that feral cats kill anywhere from 47 million to 139 million songbirds per year.

The results of the La Crosse meeting and the other statewide meetings will be forwarded to the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board.

(News From the Nation's Counties is written by Dan Miller, staff writer, and M. Mindy Moretti, senior staff writer. If you have news about your county, please e-mail them at dmiller@naco.org or mmoretti@naco.org.)

JOB MARKET/CLASSIFIEDS

■ COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR — DESOTO COUNTY, FLA.

Salary: \$90,000 – \$110,000 DOQ
DeSoto County (pop. 34,000) is located in South Central Florida, covering 637 square miles. DeSoto County's economic base has been dominated by agriculture and cattle, and the influence of these industries is mirrored throughout the community.

Due to its geographic proximity to the coast, its quality of life, and the availability of land, DeSoto County is being "discovered" by developers and businesses. County leaders want to assure that the flavor and traditions of the county are maintained throughout the growth process.

DeSoto has 175 employees. General fund budget is \$19 million, total budget of \$80 million.

Ideal candidate understands economic development, agricultural communities, and finances very well. Bachelor's degree and at least five year's experience in county or municipal government as the manager or other high-level position. Florida experience preferred; experience in agricultural communities is important.

Cover letter, resume, and salary history by May 2 to: Tom D. Freijo, Ph.D., Senior Vice President, The Mercer Group, Inc., Freijo@Mercerfl.com P.O. Box 9328, Winter Haven, FL 33883. T: 863/299-3571, F: 863/299-6737. EOE. Applications in Florida become a matter of public record upon receipt.

■ COUNTY HIGHWAY MANAGER — TOMPKINS COUNTY, N.Y.

Salary: DOQ

BS in civil or agricultural engineering, construction management, business management or public administration AND four years managing the construction and/or maintenance of roads, bridges, and right-of-way, one year supervisory or administrative on highway or bridge construction projects including responsibility for project budgeting; OR Associate's degree in construction technology and six years as specified. NYS driver's license within 30 days of appointment. Tompkins County Personnel, 125 E. Court St., Ithaca, NY 14850. 607/274-5526. Women and minority candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

■ DIRECTOR, CHILDREN AND YOUTH DEPARTMENT — MERCER COUNTY, PA.

Salary: \$43,523 – \$59,406 DOQ

The County of Mercer is seeking applicants for the position of director of the children and youth services department. The position is responsible for overseeing the social services to the county's children under 18 years of age.

Major duties:

- Direction of the department through the supervisory staff.
- Preparation of the annual services plan and budget estimate.
- Coordinate programs with community needs, available resources and evaluate program and staff effectiveness.

Applicant must have knowledge of state, federal and county standards, regulations and policies governing CYS programs; knowledge of the principals and practices of administration, supervision,

community organizations and operations of juvenile court; ability to effectively handle potentially dangerous situations and the ability to exercise judgment in implementing situations where laws have been broken.

Experience: Applicants should have at least five years of experience in the field of social services, three of which should be in a supervisory capacity in a CYS agency.

Education: Amaster's degree in social work or related field.

Resume should be submitted to the Mercer County office of administrative services no later than May 16. Mail to: Mercer County Courthouse, Box 17, Mercer, PA 16137. EOE.

■ DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF PARKS, RECREATION & CONSERVATION — ORANGE COUNTY, N.Y.

Salary: DOQ

Applications are now being accepted for the position of Deputy Commissioner of Parks, Recreation & Conservation. This position is responsible for assisting the Commissioner in the administration, management, supervision and development of the comprehensive Orange County park system.

Suggested standards: Bachelor's degree and three (3) years experience in the administration or management of park or recreation-related programs.

This position requires a background investigation. A competitive examination is not required.

Send resume and salary requirements to: Lou Corda, Deputy Commissioner of Personnel, Orange County Department of Personnel, 255-275 Main Street, Goshen, NY 10924. Fax 845/291-2736. www.orangecountygov.com. Equal Opportunity Employer.

■ DIRECTOR OF BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PLANNING — JOHNSON COUNTY, KAN.

Salary: \$80,000 – \$120,000

This position will serve as the point person on the budget process for Johnson County, Kan. This highly visible role will present and explain the annual operating and capital budgets of \$347M to the Board of County Commissioners and the media.

Responsibilities include:

- Monitor the annual review and expenditure budget for various departments/agencies to anticipate potential financial and/or operational issues
- Modify the budget as requested by the Board of County Commissioners and County Manager
- Formulate and implement policies and procedures around the Budget and Financial Planning Process; and
- Direct and supervise the budget and financial planning management team in support of goals and objectives by providing strategic direction and procedural guidance.

Johnson County is a highly prestigious county that is ranked in the top 50 of wealthiest counties in the United States! It is in a beautiful suburban

location that provides excellent quality of life. The county has a population of 450,000 people with 21 incorporated cities and 477 square miles.

To be considered for this position you must have experience working in a governmental sector, i.e. city, county, state, etc. in a finance/budgeting role. Excellent communication skills. B.S. required. Master's preferred. Minimum of 10 years of practical work experience with 2 years in a management role.

For consideration please fax resume to 913/234-0126 or send to *Meghan.Lovetere@spencerreed.com*. Spencer Reed Group, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

■ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR — ALBERMARLE, N.C. EDC

Salary: DOQ

The Albemarle EDC, serving Elizabeth City, Pasquotank & Camden Counties, North Carolina is seeking an economic developer. Five years experience in economic development, marketing, planning or combination of education/experience required. A mastery of business needs and excellent communication skills are necessary. Knowledge of industrial recruitment techniques and the ability to work with existing businesses to facilitate expansion are preferred. Degree in economic development or related field is a plus. Submit resumes by 6/1/05 to: AEDC, P.O. Box 70, Elizabeth City, NC 27907-0070. aedc@simflex.com.

■ GROWTH MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR — OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLA.

Salary: \$62,067 – \$105,497

NW Florida's Emerald Coast. A dynamic, growing NW Florida county, home of the world's most beautiful beaches, is seeking Growth Management Director for Planning and Inspection functions. Bachelor's in urban and regional planning, civil engineering or closely related and 10 years responsible experience in professional planning, growth management, land development codes, building codes and code enforcement; 5 years in a supervisory/management capacity, including fiscal management experience; municipal or institutional organization experience preferred. Equivalent combination of education, training and experience considered. Requires valid driver license and permanent resident status in

Okaloosa County within 3 months of employment. Salary range: \$62,067.20 – \$105,497.60, commensurate with experience. Excellent benefits including FRS pension. An *Okaloosa County Application for Employment* form must be submitted to be considered for this position. OPEN UNTIL FILLED. Apply to: Okaloosa County Human Resources, 601-B, N. Pearl St., Crestview, FL 32536, 850/ 689-5870, or download application at www.co.okaloosa.fl.us and mail. Pre-employment drug screening. AA/EEEO

■ MANAGEMENT INTERN — LEON COUNTY, FLA. BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Req. #073-05

Salary: \$24,000 or \$29,000 (DOQ) + full benefits

Beginning Date of Internship: August 1, 2005

Ending Date of Internship: July 31, 2006

This is full-time professional management internship work for one year. The Management Intern assists the County Administrator and key senior management staff with program and policy development. The Management Intern receives specific to general direction, exercises discretion and independent judgment, conducts research, analysis, confers with staff and other stakeholders, and makes programmatic and administrative recommendations. Must have received a Master's Degree in Public Administration or a similar field, within twelve (12) months prior to or before the start date of the Management Internship Program; or must possess a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science, Business, or a related field, and be currently enrolled as a graduate student (less than four courses away from earning a master's degree) and be able to obtain a master's degree before the ending date of the Management Internship Program. Must be in good standing at the attending university. Applicants are encouraged to visit our Leon County Home page at www.leoncountyfl.gov. Applicant may send inquiries to our e-mail address: boatwright1@leoncountyfl.gov. A completed Leon County Board of County Commissioners application is required, and must be postmarked no later than Friday, June 3. **Apply online, in person or by mail to:** Leon County Human Resources Division, Leon County Courthouse, Suite 108, Tallahassee, FL 32301, 850/487-2220.

NOTICES

■ Conferences

• A **National Conference on Inclusionary Housing** will be held in Washington, D.C. Oct. 5-7. National experts will participate in panel sessions on subjects including passing effective inclusionary housing ordinances (coalition building, policy issues, overcoming objections); program administration (best practices nationwide, working with the development community, asking the experts); and the latest research and findings on Inclusionary Housing. The conference will include tours of successful DC Metro area inclusionary housing communities.

The organizations coordinating the conference are The National Housing Conference, PolicyLink, the Innovative Housing Institute (IHI) and Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI). For more information, go to www.inhousing.org/conf.

■ Summit

• The **National Center for State Courts (NCSC)** will convene a summit of national leaders representing virtually every sector of the "court community" to expand NCSC's 10-Point Plan for Court Safety into a national approach for improving safety and security in America's courtrooms and courthouses in Washington, D.C. April 21.

NCSC key partners include the National Sheriffs' Association as well as other members of the state and federal judiciary community. Thomas Moyer, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Ohio, will chair the Summit.

Summit participants include local, state, and federal officials, members of Congress, administration representatives and members from the public safety and courtroom security communities. For more information, e-mail dsummer@michaeldbaker.com.

(Notices is compiled by Allison Mall, editorial assistant. If you have an item for Notices, you can e-mail it to her at amall@naco.org or fax 202/393-2630.)

Job Market - Classified Rate Schedule

- **Line Rates:** \$7 per line, NACo member counties; \$10 per line, others.
- **Display Classified:** \$50 per column inch, NACo member counties; \$70 per column inch, others.
- **Billing:** Invoices will be sent after publication.
- **Mail advertising copy to:** Job Market, County News, 440 First St., N.W., Washington, DC 20001.
- **FAX advertising copy to:** Job Market, County News, (202)393-2630.
- **E-mail advertising copy to:** edassist@naco.org.
- Be sure to include billing information along with copy.
- Estimates given prior to publication are approximations only and do not necessarily reflect final cost.

For more information, contact the Job Market representative at (202) 942-4256.

Participate in a Live Legislative Update on Current Actions before Congress



Monday, May 9 • 2 p.m. (EDT)

Issues to be covered in the Web cast:

- Unfunded Mandates
- Future of CDBG
- Reauthorization of TEA-21
- Cuts to Medicaid

NACo President Angelo Kyle and **Executive Director Larry Naake** will moderate a discussion of key legislative issues affecting counties that Congress is currently considering.

Members of Congress and congressional staff have been invited to offer their views and report on the current status of critical legislation.

Through your computer at the office or at home you will be able to ...

- receive the latest information on federal legislation and how it will affect counties across the country, and
- ask questions or add your input to the discussion.



To sign on, log into: www.naco.org/webcast