

## Clean Water Restoration Act on tap ... again

By JULIE UFNER  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Conflict is again brewing over defining “waters of the U.S.” On April 2, Senator Russ Feingold (D-Wis.) reintroduced the Clean Water Restoration Act (CWRA), S. 787, a bill to reauthorize the original legislation passed in 1972 known as the Clean Water Act (CWA).

Feingold’s CWRA would eliminate the word “navigable” from the definition of “waters of the U.S.” just as a predecessor bill in the House did last session.

This seemingly minor edit places all bodies of water or “perceived” bodies of water under federal jurisdiction — even those waters seen as traditionally under state authority — with dramatic implications for states and countries.

The need for CWA permits would expand significantly as would the application of other federal laws and regulations such as environmental impact statements, the National Environmental Policy Act and Endangered Species Act.

The bill also seeks to regulate “activities affecting these waters.”

See **CWRA** page 4



Photo courtesy of Natural Resources Conservation Service

The fight is on again about defining the nature of “waters of the U.S.,” in new legislation introduced in the Senate to replace the Clean Water Act of 1972.

## Climate-change bill being debated

By JULIE UFNER  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

In the next several weeks, the House Energy and Commerce Committee plans to mark up a comprehensive energy and climate bill, the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009. This discussion draft bill has yet to be formally introduced and is sponsored by House Energy and Commerce Chairman Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) and Energy and Environment Subcommittee Chairman Edward Markey (D-Mass.)

The American Clean Energy and Security Act has four components:

- 1) a clean energy title that includes a federally mandated renewable portfolio standard (RPS) and transmission siting for renewable energy lines
- 2) energy efficiency standards
- 3) reduction of greenhouse

gases through a cap and trade program and

- 4) transitioning to a clean energy economy.

### Title I: Clean Energy

- Requires retail utilities to use a certain percentage of renewable resources for their commercial and residential energy loads. It begins with a 6 percent requirement for 2012 and ends with a 25 percent requirement by 2025.

- Establishes a new fuel standard for low-carbon fuels, such as biofuel. It also authorizes grants to qualified entities for large-scale electric vehicle demonstration projects.

- Promotes smart grid technology to help save energy and reduce costs.

- Allows the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to adopt national electricity grid planning principles.

## St. Lucie County, Fla. declares ‘local economic emergency’

By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Florida has been hit hard by the foreclosure crisis and construction slump. But St. Lucie County isn’t waiting for federal stimulus funds to start flowing its way.

The county recently declared a local economic emergency and passed a stimulus package of its own. The Board of Commissioners unanimously authorized the county administrator to use the competitive bid or proposal process “for local economic stimulus capital projects to be designated by Board resolution.”

Under the plan approved April 21, preference in awarding contracts will be given to firms

that agree to employ 75 percent local labor, suppliers and materials. The county has some \$25 million to \$30 million in projects that are eligible.

“Obviously, this is in concert with everything else that’s going on,” said Board Chair Paula Lewis. “We here on the ground know where the funds need to go. While we’re certainly hoping that the federal stimulus funds find their way here, while that’s happening we felt we

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**QuickTakes**


FOR RENTERS

5 Most Expensive Counties for Renters

1. Honolulu County, Hawaii
2. Nantucket County, Mass.
3. Orange County, Calif.
4. Marin County, Calif.
5. San Francisco County, Calif.

Source: 2007-2008 The National Low Income Housing Coalition

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# Sacramento County hosts final NACo health reform hearing

BY PAUL V. BEDDOE  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

President-elect Valerie Brown convened the third and final regional hearing of NACo's Health System Reform Working group on April 16 in the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors chambers in downtown Sacramento, Calif.

Witnesses were invited to present their views on national health reform and to offer comments on NACo's white paper, "Restoring the Partnership for American Health: Counties in a 21st Century Health System."

Richard Figueroa, one of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's top health policy advisors, offered a keynote describing California's recent drive to achieve comprehensive health reform. Among the lessons learned during the ultimately unsuccessful effort was the need to obtain broad, bipartisan agreement. He suggested that elements on the political far



Linda Langston  
Linn County, Iowa

right and far left were able to stop the proposal from going forward. Figueroa said federal leadership and legislation will be needed because even a state as large as California will not be able to accomplish comprehensive reform on its own.

Members of NACo's working group gave opening statements, including NACo Health Steering

Committee Chair Linda Langston. Langston, a Linn County, Iowa Supervisor, called on NACo members to bring their knowledge of local health systems and their creativity to bear to bring about change in Washington. "It is only by making sure our voices are heard among all our congressional delegations that we will gain the traction to have a continued seat at the table."

She added she hoped that more NACo members would ask their state associations to nominate them to the Health Steering Committee, concluding, "There is much to be done and county officials have an obligation to be a part of the solution."

Burrell Ellis, Large Urban County Caucus Chairman, and Don Knabe, chairman of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, offered testimony highlighting the priorities of metropolitan counties. Both described county



Don Knabe  
Los Angeles County, Calif.

health systems struggling to meet the needs of huge uninsured and underinsured populations.

They also noted their county hospitals and health systems served people from other states and counties as well as undocumented immigrants. Both called on NACo to fight for Medicaid and Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) payments

and robust federal support for local health care safety net systems. Knabe added that reform should expand coverage and stabilize funding for the safety net so that "surge capacity," emergency and trauma care needs can be met.

He suggested that a reformed system should build on and strengthen safety net systems that have many models of care and urged a strengthening of the national, state and local public health infrastructure. Finally he urged caution when looking at state reform efforts for guidance.

"We applaud Massachusetts for many positive aspects of their health reform plan," Knabe said. "However, it has been borne out that full coverage did not occur, and safety net institutions and the services they provide were compromised. We cannot let this happen

See HEALTH REFORM page 10

# LUCC meeting focuses on health care access, quality care

BY DALEN A. HARRIS  
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Health care reform and improving quality, care and access for residents in metropolitan communities were highlighted throughout the recent Large Urban County Caucus (LUCC) Annual Meeting held in Sacramento County, Calif. April 15 - 17.

Hosted by NACo President-elect Valerie Brown and Sacramento County, Calif. Supervisor Roger Dickinson, the meeting showcased technology, local innovation, emerging trends and national best practices in health care prevention, wellness and delivery systems.

The three-day meeting began with the final hearing of NACo's Health Reform Working Group (See above story).

Following the hearing, the LUCC meeting shifted gears a bit and showcased pioneering programs and technologies for improving health care quality and access. Throughout, guest speakers described model and creative programs in their communities for improved healthcare service delivery and prevention.

Some of the programs highlighted included the University of California at Berkeley's Healthy Communities Institute Web-based information system network and several Santa Clara County (Calif.) Department of Health prevention and wellness initiatives.

However, the underlying theme of the annual meeting was the

emerging importance and role of health information technology. This theme was repeated often and NACo has strongly supported federal, state and local efforts to implement and invest in innovative health information technology.

As a result, the meeting highlighted how health information technology can benefit federal, state and local coordination, reduce medical errors and improve health care quality, care and access for many.

One example is NACo's Network of Care service, an interactive Web-based service primarily for county residents, local governments and nonprofit organizations. It provides an easy-to-use directory of social service agencies within a community and includes supporting information, advocacy and state-of-the-art communication tools for delivery to residents. U.C. Berkley's Communities Institute Web-based information system digitizes multiple layers of health data, environmental data and other quality-of-life indicators for stakeholder assessment and planning purposes.

In addition to panel discussions, the annual meeting also featured tours of the Paul F. Hom Primary Care Center and the McClellan Park complex. The Hom Center provides primary care, walk-in and assorted other services for the medically indigent and other residents of Sacramento County; it is equipped with a pharmacy, public health laboratory, radiology department,



Participants in NACo's Large Urban County Caucus tour the Paul F. Hom Primary Care Center during the recent 2009 LUCC Annual Meeting held in Sacramento County, Calif.

and chest clinic. The center also has a health care for the homeless and refugee health clinic program for county residents.

McClellan Park has been hailed as a national model for innovation and was transformed from a former Air Force base to a new master-planned community consisting of more than 16 million square feet of industrial, retail, office, aviation and mixed-use facilities. Large corporations, small businesses and residential housing are located within the McClellan Park complex and the county continues

to be involved in this economic development project just outside of downtown Sacramento.

"As County governments are faced with the task of improving health care quality and access in today's reality, the annual meeting continues to provide NACo members with resources we need to improve the lives of people in our communities," said Burrell Ellis, LUCC chair and DeKalb County, Ga. Chief Executive Officer.

For more information on LUCC's 2009 annual meeting, go to [www.naco.org/LUCC](http://www.naco.org/LUCC).

## CORRECTION

In the article, "Collections Unit Revenue Recover Program Streamlines Collections Process," which ran on page 10 of the April 20 issue of *County News*, Amy Meeker-Berg, chief deputy treasurer of Johnson County, Kan. was incorrectly referred to as county treasurer. The current Johnson County treasurer is Charles M. Letcher.



# County passes local economic stimulus for construction industry

ST. LUCIE from page 1

would take a preemptive strike and get some activity going.”

The need is there. The county had more than 10,000 mortgage foreclosures in 2008—up from about 5,000 in 2007, the third-highest rate in the state and the eighth-highest in the nation. Its unemployment rate currently stands at 12.8 percent overall—for the building trades, the jobless rate bounces from 25 percent to 40 percent.

At last month’s meeting, Commissioner Doug Coward said, “Clearly the declaration of a local economic emergency sends a message of distress.” But, in an interview with *County News*, he tempered that assessment with a note of optimism.

Other sectors of the county’s economy are doing “quite well,” Coward said in a telephone interview. “I’m surprised — in this economy — we’ve got a million square feet of biotech coming out of the ground. Liberty Medical just did a job expansion, 800 new hires.”

County Attorney Dan McIntyre recently told the Board that “the county’s fiscal situation is stable and sound,” which enables the county



Photo courtesy of St. Lucie County, Fla.

St. Lucie County, Fla.’s 500-acre Research and Education Park is one of many local projects for which county commissioners plan to use local stimulus dollars to help jump-start the local economy.

to provide the local stimulus. The county still has emergency reserves of \$17.6 million.

Coward said the stimulus is an effort to help the county accelerate the recovery process. He and his Board colleagues took the first steps in that direction April 28, when they approved the first phase of construction to be covered by the stimulus ordinance — approximately \$12 million in capital projects.

The money for these and other projects will come from local funds from several sources, including: impact fees paid by developers; sales taxes; bed taxes (from tourists); transportation funds; property taxes; and of other existing dollars. Coward said the county is “reprioritizing and expediting” the investment of existing county revenue sources.

“While there are similarities between what we’re proposing and what the federal government is doing with their stimulus proposal, there are some major differences,” he said. “We are not proposing any tax increase whatsoever. Nor are we talking about providing any additional indebtedness on future generations.”

During an earlier public hearing on the ordinance, an official with the local chapter of the Associated General Contractors applauded the stimulus effort but questioned whether the county would be able to verify contractor compliance.

“It’s going to be hard on you guys to track when you’ve got different employees that come in and out of a project, which is normal to construction,” said Bob Schafer, president, Florida East Coast Chapter, Associated General Contractors. “I don’t know that you’re going to get what you’re looking for.”

County Administrator Faye Outlaw conceded that administering the program might be challenging, especially since the county staff has been downsized by one-third. “I would hope that those contractors who are able to get awards under this program — they are going to be challenged along with me,” she said at the April 21 meeting. “But they are going to do their level best at providing whatever documentation we put in place, and then we’re going to move forward; we’re going to make it work.”

## St. Lucie County Stimulus Ordinance

As it pertains to competitively bid contracts or proposals, St. Lucie County, Fla.’s local stimulus ordinance states, in part, that:

- In order to obtain an award, a contractor must agree to use a minimum of 75 percent local laborers and local material suppliers and local subcontractors (based on headcount) on the project.
- The contractor must provide the county with proof of compliance with this local-hire requirement in a form that is verifiable by the county prior to signing a contract with the county or issuance of a notice to proceed, whichever occurs later.
- Unless the local-hire requirement is waived by the county, failure of the contractor to demonstrate compliance with the requirement shall result in the contractor’s bid being deemed nonresponsive and, if the bid has been awarded to the contractor, shall automatically result in revocation of the bid award to the contractor.
- The local-hire requirement shall be a continuing requirement throughout the project. The contract shall provide for continuing proof of compliance at appropriate intervals and shall provide the county with the right to terminate the contract in the event of noncompliance. The county shall aggressively pursue remedies available in its purchasing manual in the event of fraud or misrepresentation.
- Preference will be given to local contractors that would use more than 75 percent local laborers, local material suppliers and local subcontractors on the project that are within 5 percent of the lowest bid of a non-local contractor that would also use more than 75 percent local laborers, local material suppliers and local subcontractors on the project.
- If bids are identical, the contractor with the highest percentage of local laborers and subcontractors shall be awarded the bid or proposal.

The Board of Commissioners may waive the local hiring requirement under certain circumstances, namely:

- if no contractor can comply with the local hire requirement, or
- if the contractor can demonstrate that local laborers, local material suppliers and local subcontractors are not available despite a good faith effort on the contractor’s part to hire local laborers and local subcontractors and to purchase materials from local material suppliers.

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# 'Waters of U.S.' could bring federal regulation of ditches, gutters

CWRA from page 1

While the intent may be to limit direct and indirect pollution going into major waterways, the phrase could be interpreted quite differently to allow federal regulation of any and all activities that "affect" waters. It is possible, for example, that a non-direct pollution source such as road runoff 10 miles to hundreds of miles away could be regulated even though there is no direct hydrological connection. A delineation of activities "affecting these waters" does not exist anywhere in current law or regulation.

## Navigable Waters Background

Currently, the CWA uses the term "navigable" to determine

### SpeedRead » » »

- » Clean Water Restoration Act reintroduced.
- » "Navigable" would be struck from definition of "waters of the U.S."
- » Language change would place burdens on counties.
- » Could bring federal regulation of all activities that "affect" waters.

federal jurisdiction. "Navigable" is used more than 80 times in the CWA. The term originally stems from the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, the oldest federal environmental law, and closely tied to the

U.S. Commerce Clause because of its relation to interstate commerce. The Rivers and Harbors Act dealt with interstate commerce, defining a federal waterway versus a state waterway. This act gives authority to states to govern waters within their states.

The current proposed bill raises the difficult question: What waters or wetlands should be under federal protection? Should all waters or areas where water might flow be under federal jurisdiction? The latter question has become one of the most controversial environmental policy issues pitting environmentalists against land rights advocates. All agree on the need for clean, available water; however, all sides differ on the methods for achieving that goal.

For example, if a county project is deemed "jurisdictional" under federal regulation, the county would have to get a federal wetlands permit before starting the project. Many counties nationwide have experienced months, if not years of permitting delays associated with a jurisdictional project. Additionally, the cost associated with getting these permits can be significant, especially for a rural county that does not have the staff, knowledge or the extra monies.

Supporters of the bill argue that removing the word "navigable" will clear up much of this existing confusion and help streamline the permitting process. However, NACO believes that CWRA will not accomplish its lofty goal of clean water. Instead it will create more confusion and uncertainty.

NACO opposes any efforts to remove the word "navigable" from the definition of "waters of the U.S." within the CWA. The word "navigable" has meaning — it has been fought over and clarified through court battles. It sets boundaries between federal and state waters; it states where federal waters end and state waters begin. Changing the definition from "navigable waters of the U.S." to "waters of the U.S." removes those boundaries and sets the effort back at square one. Definitions for what a "water of the U.S." is and is not will need to be written. This, in turn, will lead to even more confusion and costly lawsuits.

If the term "navigable" is removed from the definition of the CWA, it is possible that roadside ditches, pipes, streets, gutters, manmade ponds, drainage features, desert washes and other features could be regulated. Additionally, activities such as mosquito and fire abatement prohibitions — and regulating rain gutters beside homes could also be regulated.

The Senate version of CWRA currently has 23 cosponsors. They are Democrats Barbara Boxer (Calif.), Sherrod Brown (Ohio), Maria Cantwell (Wash.), Ben Cardin (Md.), Thomas Carper (Del.), Chris Dodd (Conn.), Dick Durbin (Ill.), Kirsten Gillibrand (N.Y.), John Kerry (Mass.), Herb Kohl (Wis.), Frank Lautenberg

(N.J.), Patrick Leahy (Vt.), Carl Levin (Mich.), Robert Menendez (N.J.), Jeff Merkley (Ore.) Jack Reed (R.I.), Charles Schumer (N.Y.), Jean Shaheen (N.H.), Debbie Stabenow (Mich.), Sheldon Whitehouse (R.I.) and Ron Wyden (Ore.), and Independents Joe Lieberman (Conn.) and Bernard Sanders (Vt.)

## Legal Analysis

### The legislative language for S. 787, the Clean Water Restoration Act, is as follows:

"The term 'waters of the United States' means all waters subject to the ebb and flow of the tide, the territorial seas and all interstate and intrastate waters and their tributaries, including lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), mudflats, sandflats, wetlands, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, natural ponds, and all impoundments of the foregoing, to the fullest extent that these waters, or activities affecting these waters, are subject to the legislative power of Congress under the Constitution."

### There are several key terms and phrases in CWRA that cause concern:

**Intrastate waters** — Historically, states have been responsible for setting water quality standards in intrastate waters. What this language does, essentially, is preempt a state's right to oversee its own waterways, while at the same time imposing significant new administrative requirements: States would be required to expand their current water quality designations to include all waters within their boundaries, set additional reporting and attainment standards, and because most states now oversee the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting authority, states would also need to issue many new NPDES permits for any point-source discharges to the expanded inventory of "waters" — and potentially devise regulatory programs for another key term "activities affecting these waters."

The effects on state nonpoint-source control programs are difficult to determine, but they could be equally dramatic, without a significant funding source to pay for the proposed changes.

Many counties, in the role of regulator, have their own watershed/storm water management plans that would also need to be modified based on federal and state changes. Changes at the state level would impact comprehensive land use plans, floodplain regulations, building and/or special codes, watershed and storm water plans.

**Tributaries** — The word tributary is very important, especially since the 2001 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Solid Waste Association of Northern Cook County (SWANCC) v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers*.

Prior to 2001, ditches were never considered "jurisdictional," however, since 2001, both the courts and the Army Corps of Engineers have classified ditches, including roadside ditches, as tributaries.

**Including** — Courts and federal agencies generally do not consider use of the word "including" in a statute as limiting the meaning to the listed items. Instead, such wording is likely to be read to mean the listed types of waters are simply examples, rather than a self-contained list. Therefore, other potential sources of water, such as ditches, pipes, streets, gutters, manmade ponds, drainage features, desert washes and other features could be regulated, even though they are not specifically listed.

**Activities affecting these waters** — The definition of "activities affecting these waters" does not exist in current law or regulations. This language could be interpreted broadly to allow the federal regulation of any and all activities that "affect" waters.

**Subject to the legislative power of Congress under the Constitution** — This phrase expands the existing CWA authority. Currently, CWA is tied to the Congress' authority under the Commerce Clause, not to the Constitution. To subject the CWA to the provisions under the Constitution may open up other provisions in the Constitution for interpretation.

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# NACo, counties recognized for ENERGY STAR pledges

BY SUZANNE ANDREWS  
ENVIRONMENTAL INTERN

On Earth Day, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR program recognized NACo and the nation's counties for their efforts in the 2008 Annual County Change the World, Start with ENERGY STAR competition. NACo was both a top overall national pledge-driver and the Number One nonprofit pledge driver.

Durham County, N.C., Broward County, Fla. and Monmouth County, N.J. all made the top five list in the government category, along with two state and federal organizations: Change a Light N.C. and the Department of Defense.

In NACo's county competition last year, which ran from July 1 through Nov. 30, participating counties collected pledges from 7,135 county employees and residents to replace 72,199 incandescent bulbs or fixtures in their homes with compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL) with a government ENERGY STAR label.

Nationwide pledge-drivers collected pledges from Earth Day 2008 to this year's Earth Day celebration

April 22. Totals will now be reset to zero and NACo's county competition will begin again July 1.

The EPA and ENERGY STAR also released estimates of total energy savings from the competition. Through NACo's competition, participating counties will help prevent more than 123 million pounds of greenhouse gas emissions, reduce energy use by 67.5 million kilowatt-hours and save county residents nearly \$10 million on their electric bills.

Winners of NACo's county competition (determined by the percent of the county's population taking the pledge) — Durham County (large population category), Riley County, Kan. (medium population county) and Fluvanna County, Va. (small population category) — were recently awarded 1,000 CFL bulbs donated by Office Depot, a founding sponsor of NACo's Green Government Initiative.

These counties are currently hosting a series of educational expositions and press conferences, and are distributing their CFLs to low-income and diverse areas of their communities.

Beginning April 20, Durham



Photo courtesy of Durham County, N.C.

Ruby Butler (l) receives bulbs from Durham County, N.C. Social Services staff Russell McKoy and Earlene Bullock.

County's Department of Social Services' employees distributed CFLs to families in need of energy bill assistance.

"Our county and city employees' pledges to save energy at home displayed their commitment to protect our environment and improve the lives of our residents," said Tobin Freid, manager for the Durham City-County Sustainability Office. "I am excited about this public-service opportunity for employees to educate

residents on energy-saving tips, enabling families to use less electricity at home."

To kick off Earth Week, Riley County featured its CFLs at a press conference. The CFLs will be distributed through local charitable organizations, along with materials on energy efficiency and proper care and disposal of the light bulbs.

"Energy efficiency is the quickest, cheapest, cleanest way to extend our nation's fossil fuel resource

supply. Learning to be more energy conscious and efficient is something that everyone can do to help ease the rising costs of energy," said Jennifer Wilson, County Extension director and coordinator of the county's energy efficiency outreach campaign.

Fluvanna County hosted a Children's Day Celebration in a local school, distributing CFLs and educational information to adults attending the event.

The county also hosted a Farm Safety Day inviting local farmers to learn more about energy efficiency. Fluvanna presented farmers with CFLs and information on energy-efficient appliances.

NACo is now gearing up for the 2009 Change the World, Start with ENERGY STAR Competition, along with its other annual green competition — the County Drive Smarter Challenge. Guidelines for this year's competitions will be announced in late May, with exciting new prizes for winning counties.

For more information on NACo's Green Government Initiative please visit [www.greencounties.org](http://www.greencounties.org) or contact Kelly Zonderwyk at [kzonderwyk@naco.org](mailto:kzonderwyk@naco.org) or 202/942.4224.

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# County recorders on front lines of battle against property fraud

By ELIZABETH PERRY  
STAFF WRITER

When the Empire State Building was stolen last December, most New Yorkers never even knew it was missing.

The theft was a prank by the *Daily News* to demonstrate how easy it is to steal property on paper, even a \$2 billion, 102-story Art Deco landmark. The reason the prank was successful was because of a loophole in the city's deed recording system for deeds and mortgages whereby clerks are not required to verify the information.

If the heist had been real, the thieves might have been able to apply for a mortgage on the building, grab the money and run. Instead, the *News* returned the building the same day.

Property fraud is also a growing problem for county recorders who find themselves blindsided by tech-savvy criminals who pull off heists right under their noses. A scammer attempting to steal a home will submit a fraudulent deed to a

local recorder's office without the home-owner's knowledge, a mortgage is applied for and the money is pocketed. The homeowner does not find out about the fraud until months later, when they are knee-deep in missed payments on a mortgage they never authorized.

Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller and Allen County, Ind. Recorder John McGauley addressed the issue at a recent Indiana Recorders Association conference. Zoeller said property fraud victims in the state are mostly retired elderly people, whose first mortgages are paid off and their homes vacant because they have moved to nursing homes or are living somewhere else for part of the year.

"The actual homeowners, through no fault of their own, are at risk of losing their homes to foreclosure," he said. "Correcting the problem and clearing the cloud off the title could cost the homeowners thousands of dollars."

McGauley said fraud incidents in his county are happening in small numbers, "and we want to keep it

**SpeedRead » » »**

- » Property thefts succeed because clerks are not required to verify deed transfer information.
- » Cook County, Ill. will introduce a four-year thumb print pilot program this summer.
- » Since it began in 2005, Wayne County, Mich. Property Fraud Task Force has opened 500 cases, obtained 55 convictions, returned 162 stolen homes, and issued more than 70 arrest warrants.

that way." He said perpetrating property fraud is as easy as buying the needed documents at an office supply store, downloading them off the Internet, or preparing them by hand, and transferring the title from one person to another based on easily available public information.

"It depends on the willingness of a notary to attest to the fact that these two people agreed to do this," he said. "At this point we've seen this happen [with] family members who have tried to defraud one another, not the stranger-on-stranger kinds of crimes that we have seen in other parts of the country."

Eugene Moore, Cook County, Ill. recorder of deeds, learned about property fraud first-hand in 2007 when he discovered his cousin's house had been stolen out from underneath her. He subsequently instituted an early warning postcard system to alert homeowners when deeds were forged and transferred. Still, scammers were able to outwit the system easily by taking the postcards out of mailboxes or putting vacation holds on mail, ensuring the real owners would not get the warning notices.

The Illinois General Assembly passed legislation in March to require notaries to record thumbprints of on all notarizations related to property transactions. A similar law enacted in California in 1993, has been widely successful, with no fraud cases related to records thumb-printed by the state's 250,000 notaries. Cook County will introduce its own four-year thumb print pilot program this summer.

Wayne County, Mich. has been actively battling property fraud with the help of its Property Fraud Task Force since 2005, "back when nobody thought it was needed," said Bernard Youngblood, register of deeds. "Law enforcement agencies did not know how to investigate the thefts because they did not understand what was happening," he said.

Prior to taking office in 2001, Youngblood was a 30-year veteran of the real estate profession and was very familiar with the process of real estate transactions. He approached the sheriff's and prosecutor's offices with the idea of starting a task force, but met with resistance because there was no money in the county budget for such a program. They struck a deal, where Youngblood's office pays the \$800,000 annual cost for the task force, and sheriff's and prosecutor's offices supply the personnel. The budget includes staff salaries, rent and police transportation, communication and surveillance equipment.

The task force consists of a squad room with four sheriff's deputies, two prosecuting attorneys and members of the records office staff. Youngblood said since it began in 2005, the task force has achieved a 100 percent conviction rate. It has

opened 500 cases, obtained 55 convictions, returned 162 stolen homes and issued more than 70 arrest warrants. It has also shared information with the FBI and Secret Service, and served as a model for other task forces around the country. He said the program benefits significantly from its "war room" setting.

"So when my personnel takes an intake call they can immediately turn to the prosecutor in the same room and give them a heads up," he said. "The prosecutor can immediately go to the sheriff's deputies with how he wants it investigated. If that particular case goes to a full trial, he's got all the evidence he wants in front of him to use in front of the jury to get this 100 percent conviction rate."

(For more information, Bernard Youngblood can be reached at 313/224-5856.)



Ron Sims (l), King County, Wash. executive and nominee for HUD deputy secretary, had an easy time at his Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee nomination hearing last month. He received unanimous support and is expected to have smooth sailing towards final confirmation. Pictured with Sims after the hearing is Larry Naake, NACo executive director, who attended the hearing along with other NACo staff to support Sims' nomination.

## Word Search

### Warmest Counties in the U.S.

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

BEXAR (Texas)  
CLARK (Nev.)  
DALLAS (Texas)  
DUVAL (Fla.)  
EL PASO (Texas)  
FORT BEND (Texas)  
FRESNO (Calif.)  
HARRIS (Texas)  
HAYES (Texas)  
LOS ANGELES (Calif.)

MARICOPA (Ariz.)  
MONTGOMERY (Texas)  
PIMA (Ariz.)  
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# Counties respond to tainted Chinese drywall

By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

It's a good thing Mary Flannigan was running late for work one day last month. Now, she and her husband, Dan, think they've solved the mystery of what's been making them sick and tired.

That morning, Mary saw a segment on *The Today Show* about Florida homes and their residents affected by tainted Chinese drywall. The Flannigans, who live in Holly Springs, N.C., are suing their homebuilder in Wake County Superior Court to correct the problems Dan says are making him tired, giving them allergy symptoms and "constant sore throats." Mary Flannigan has had pneumonia three times in recent years, her husband said.

"We're moving out. We're going to get an apartment soon," he said. "But right now, we just want to see if the builder's going to step up and stand behind the house he built, or are we on our own?"

Tainted Chinese wallboard gives off a "rotten egg" sulfurous smell and has been blamed for corroding copper pipes and wiring in homes mainly in Florida, but also in Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi and now, North Carolina. In Broward County, Fla., local elected officials have asked the state for help.

## Broward County, Fla. Calls for Help

Broward County Mayor Stacy Ritter recently toured a house in her community with Chinese drywall problems. "Within minutes of entering that home, my eyes started to water; my throat started to hurt," she said at a recent news conference. She has called on the state to provide funding so the county health department can test more homes.

"Today, we are also calling on the legislature to pass emergency



Photo courtesy of Broward County, Fla.

Broward County, Fla. Mayor Stacy Ritter (l) met with residents of the city of Parkland concerned about homes in their neighborhood built with Chinese drywall. The couple explained the health hazards as well as the financial problems that homeowners are facing.

legislation to place a moratorium on foreclosures of homes affected by Chinese drywall where the residents are forced to move out until a more formal state and federal remediation program is announced," Ritter said.

In Manatee County, Fla., Jeff Camden is the local government point man on the issue. Two home builders in the county have "remediation efforts" underway to remove toxic drywall from about 20 homes.

The county has expedited its process for alteration or renovation permits so builders can remove and replace the drywall. "We move forward from the point of demolition, just like we would in new construction. Every single system is reinspected — all trades — as if it were a new home."

When the housing industry was booming, it would take 10 to 15 days to get the necessary permit.

But the county has made the new operation "cash and carry, as much as possible." Camden said they've made every effort to issue permits "on-demand."

## Diagnosing the Problem

The symptoms of a home with the faulty drywall — in addition to the smell — include premature air conditioner compressor failure; in some cases new units are breaking down in just one year.

Broward County's Ritter said, "It seems that there are impurities in the gypsum used in the manufacturing of these boards which causes the release of certain sulfuric gases.

"The first sign of the release of the gas is seen in a home's copper wiring and in the copper air conditioning coils. A black corrosion becomes evident and the cooper starts to break down."

The tainted drywall has been imported into the United States since 2004 or 2005, according to David Jaffe, a National Association of Homebuilders' (NAHB) spokesman.

Most of the product appears to have entered the country in 2006 when markets in Florida and elsewhere across the country were experiencing shortages of construction materials following the devastation from hurricanes in 2004 and 2005.

Citing the U.S. Department of Commerce, NAHB said the drywall entered the U.S. through ports in states that included: Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia and Washington.

Ritter advised Broward County residents who think they might be

affected — those in homes built between 2003 and 2007 — to check their air conditioners. "[A]n inspection of the copper coils in the return air of your air-conditioning system is a good first place to look." By some estimates, 35,000 homes in Florida may be affected.

She also warned the public to watch out for scammers, noting that she's heard stories of people offering to test homes for Chinese drywall for \$3,000.

"I am told that there is no commercial testing kit on the market," Ritter said, "so if someone appears at your door and offers to sell you a kit or to perform testing on your house, please call the state attorney general's office and report it."

NAHB's Jaffe said not all Chinese drywall is problematic. Some

builders "were as unknowing about the problems with Chinese drywall as the homeowners who are now discovering the problems."

## Congress Gets Involved

U.S. Rep. Robert Wexler (D), who represents part of Broward County, has introduced legislation in Congress calling for an immediate study and federal ban on hazardous drywall. The Drywall Safety Act of 2009 requires the U.S. Consumer Product and Safety Commission to examine Chinese drywall and assess whether new safety standards are needed to ensure drywall is safe to use in residential construction.

The bill is a companion to a measure recently introduced by Sens. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) and Mary Landrieu (D-La.).

Keep up with the latest information on the

Swine Flu outbreak ...

Go to The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov/swineflu/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/index.htm).

For resources at the local level, visit [www.naccho.org/topics/HPDP/infectious/index.cfm](http://www.naccho.org/topics/HPDP/infectious/index.cfm), Web site of the National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO), a NACo affiliate.

**NACCO** National Association of Counties  
The Voice of America's Counties

## LEADING in TOUGH TIMES

### GAO, congressional oversight of Recovery Act begins

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued its first bimonthly review of Recovery Act implementation April 23. On the same day, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee held its first oversight hearing of the Recovery Act, where GAO testified.

GAO has targeted 16 states and a sample of local jurisdictions in

those states for ongoing evaluation. See [www.gao.gov/recovery/bimonthly](http://www.gao.gov/recovery/bimonthly) for more information. At the Senate hearing, a representative of state governments expressed concern about the law's limitations on administrative expenses. The Office of Management and Budget is due to release updated guidance on allowable administrative costs in May or June.



# Green loans improve energy efficiency, local economies

BY SUZANNE ANDREWS  
NACO INTERN

For savvy homeowners ready to improve the energy efficiency of their homes but hesitant to make the investment in today's troubled economy, HELP is on the way.

HELP, Montgomery County, Md.'s Home Energy Loan Program, is one of several low-interest loan programs initiated this year to make it easier for homeowners to invest in energy efficiency improvements in spite of the weak economy.

While program specifics vary, the county initiatives share an innovative idea to enable county residents to fund renewable energy, energy efficiency and water efficiency upgrades to their homes or businesses through the property tax system. By tying the assessment to properties, not owners,



homeowners can confidently invest in energy efficiency improvements. If a person moves, the loan stays with the house.

The recently approved HELP program will provide loans of up to \$10,000 to county residents for home energy audits and renovations to make homes more energy efficient with proper insulation,

tightly sealed windows and other energy-saving measures. The low-interest loans can be repaid over at least 15 years.

Montgomery County's Department of Environmental Protection estimates that residents will start to see financial savings from their energy-efficiency improvements in seven to eight years.

In Sonoma County, Calif., green lending is already underway. Sonoma is the first county in the nation to offer green loans through the new Sonoma County Energy Independence Program (SCEIP).

The program is supported by the California Assembly Bill 811, passed last September, with the aim of increasing funding for energy efficiency. The bill makes it legal for cities and counties in California to create districts to permit property owners to "finance" installation of energy-efficient and green-power systems via payments on property tax bills.

"This program is an innovative new way for people to make energy-saving improvements to their homes and businesses," said Valerie Brown, Sonoma County supervisor and NACo president-elect. "The improvements will add value to their properties, provide energy and cost savings throughout their lifetimes, and help the environment," she said. "It's a triple whammy."

Green loans will also create more green jobs in the hard-hit construction and building trade industries. "We are trying to make this as broad and easy as possible," said Amy Bolton, Sonoma County public information officer. "Any

licensed contractor will be able to do the work."

In Boulder County, Colo., voters approved the ClimateSmart loan program authorizing the government to provide \$40 million in loans to homeowners to make energy-efficiency upgrades. The loans can be used for everything from insulation and storm windows to evaporative coolers and photovoltaic panels, and are payable through property taxes.

## Green loans will also create more green jobs in the hard-hit construction and trade industries.

"We definitely see this as a boon," said Julie Herman, executive director of the Boulder Green Building Guild. "It is an economic stimulus that will help keep local people employed, which helps keep dollars in the community."

ClimateSmart is predicted to create up to 800 new construction sites in the county this year, putting thousands of unemployed construction workers back to work. Currently there are 17 workers for each available construction job, according to Workforce Boulder County.

By the first application deadline (April 10), 512 households applied for \$9.4 million in energy efficiency loans in Boulder County. Anyone who owns their property and who hasn't been delinquent on property taxes over the last three years will likely qualify.

"I think a lot of counties are probably watching what happens in Boulder," said Alice Madden, the governor's climate change coordinator and the bill's sponsor. "It's a wonderful program. No one should be shut out of the new energy economy."

In New Mexico, Gov. Bill Richardson also signed a bill that will allow cities and counties to form financing districts to issue bonds for renewable energy and energy-efficiency upgrades.

Similar legislation has passed in Connecticut and California, and bills are under consideration in Montana, Oregon and Washington.

Legislation is also under review to provide federal and Recovery Act funding for energy efficiency loans. Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) proposed the National Home Energy Savings Act in March to distribute \$5 billion to local governments for the next two fiscal years to create revolving homeowner loan programs for energy upgrades through a National Home Energy Savings Revolving Fund Act.

If implemented at a national level, it could help up to one million households nationwide to make energy improvements. According to Van Hollen, "Energy efficiency helps reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, helps the environment and saves homeowners some money."

(For more information on NACo's Green Government Initiative please visit [www.greencounties.org](http://www.greencounties.org) or contact Kelly Zonderwyk at [kzonderwyk@naco.org](mailto:kzonderwyk@naco.org) or 202/942-4224.)



## Donald Murray celebrates 40 years at NACo

Donald Murray, NACo's senior legislative director for Justice and Public Safety, joined NACo on April 30, 1969. Donald has worked for four NACo executive directors and is a proud Brooklyn native.

Donald has a bachelor's degree in political science from Wilkes College in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. and did graduate work in American government at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York. He is a member of the National Sheriffs' Association's Accreditation, Detention and Corrections Committee and is a board member of the National Committee on Community Corrections.

A special celebration for Donald's service to NACo will be held later this year.

## Polarizing sections of bill may keep climate change from passing this year

CLIMATE from page 1

and loans for energy-efficiency projects.

### Title III: Reducing Global Warming Pollution

- Sets up a federal cap and trade program for sources that emit more than 25,000 tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) per year. The program requires each "source" to have a set number of "allowances" based on the number of tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted per year. Each year, the number of allowances will be reduced — by 3 percent below 2005 levels in 2012; 20 percent below 2005 levels in 2020; 42 percent below 2005 levels in 2030, and 83 percent below 2005 levels in 2050.

- The bill allows regulated sources to obtain additional allowances from other sources, as long as they do not exceed 2 billion tons. It also allows banking and borrowing of allowances.

### Title IV: Transitioning to a Clean Energy Economy

- To ensure that the U.S. economy is not negatively affected by a cap and trade program, the bill authorizes "rebates" to industries that use large amounts of energy and make items that are sold internationally.

- The bill contains several programs to promote green jobs. It would provide funding to the higher education sector to set up renewable energy, energy efficiency, and climate change

types of training programs.

While the House would like to pass climate change legislation this year, the ultimate outcome of this bill remains uncertain. Many sections of the bill are highly polarizing and may be modified significantly, if not ultimately removed.

Added to the political mix, the EPA has released its proposed finding that greenhouse gases are dangerous to both the environment and public health. This lays the groundwork for EPA to set up its own framework for regulating greenhouse gases, a move opposed in the Waxman-Markey bill.

The bill clearly states that EPA cannot regulate any greenhouse gases, including CO<sub>2</sub>, as an air pollutant, under the Clean Air Act.



# 'Ladder Project' helps female ex-offenders reach job goals

## Program reduces cycle of recidivism; gives women tools and skills necessary to succeed

By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Rung by rung, six female former inmates have the chance to climb out of poverty and into a field more commonly associated with men. They recently completed Santa Clara County, Calif.'s Ladder Project, learning skills in the building trades.

"For the women who participated, for their families, the Ladder Project was an amazing opportunity for them to break the cycle of incarceration," said Carla Collins, a policy analyst with the county's Office of Women's Policy.

Thanks to Habitat for Humanity, they also, literally, have the tools to ply their trade. Each woman received a tool belt, tape measure and "three or four different basic tools" at their recent graduation, according to David McCreath, a Presbyterian minister and Habitat volunteer who was the program's "instigator."

Prospective participants in the Ladder Project were recruited at the county's Elmwood Correctional Complex in Milpitas and went through an extensive application process. Many of the women were repeat offenders who had been jailed "anywhere from two to a dozen



(l-r) Esther Peralez-Dieckmann, director, Santa Clara County, Calif. Office of Women's Policy; Carla Collins, policy analyst; and Supervisor Liz Kniss pose with graduates of the county's Ladder Project, which teaches construction skills to female former inmates. Supervisor George Shirakawa (far right) and family members of program participants are also pictured.

Photo courtesy of Santa Clara County, Calif.

times," Collins said.

Once selected, the women, while still incarcerated, participated in a math tutorial program designed around construction. Out of jail,

participants completed a stipend-based internship of approximately 100 hours within eight weeks. Interns received childcare support, shelter and housing services, communication skills and college credit through Foothill College. Working on Habitat for Humanity homes, they earned \$10 per hour. The program's budget was funded by a Justice Assistance Grant from the U.S. Department of Justice.

"It actually cost less than \$15,000 to do this whole program, which is huge," Collins said — "when you consider that if we can keep these women from reoffending for one year, this represents a cost saving of almost half a million dollars. So rehabilitation is far less expensive than reincarcerating."

Other supporters of the project included the Santa Clara and San Benito Building and Trades Council, Vision Literacy and InnVision the Way Home, a local shelter provider.

McCreath said, "What we proved is that we could draw together a variety of resources in the community and put together a program that had some merit."

It was he who approached the Office of Women's Policy after learning that women in the county jail had fewer rehabilitation programs than male inmates, and a pilot program was created. Collins calls the project "gender-responsive."

"At first, we weren't sure," she recalled. "We were wondering, 'Is there a pool of women who would be interested in this?' And it's been confirmed: absolutely yes." More women applied for the program than there were slots available. Eight women started in the program; one

**"What we proved is that we could draw together a variety of resources in the community and put together a program that had some merit."**

dropped out and another found a job early on. All who completed the program have remained out of jail for at least the last four months.

Collins said, "One of the reasons we chose the construction industry was because we did some research and even in this tough economy, it's going to be hard to find work anywhere.

"But construction is one of the few industries that's likely to be a little more friendly to those with a criminal record. So it was chosen on purpose."

The internship also provided mentors through the Jewish Community Relations Council of Silicon Valley, which recruited volunteers. Its director, Diane Fisher, said her

group was looking for a way to work on the "gender and poverty issue."

Julie Plott volunteered to help and remains in contact with her intern. "What we were there for was to be a sounding board, someone they could call who was going to be nonjudgmental," she said. "Someone who might be able to help them navigate housing and insurance, and someone that they could turn to if they felt the need to speak with someone or just needed some direction or wanted to vent."

Collins said the mentoring provided the interns an opportunity to meet successful women in the community whose paths might never have crossed. It was important to the interns "to know that someone was rooting for and supporting them, which is really one of the keys for women to succeed. We know that women are relational and they respond to that sort of energy."

Monica Galindo, a 29-year-old mother of four, had been in jail for seven months for "something petty" before being accepted into the Ladder Project. She says she's "sticking with it" after completing the program and is now studying carpentry at Foothill College with plans to transfer to San Jose City College. She keeps in touch with her mentor and wishes programs like this one had been available sooner. "Maybe it would have kept more of the girls out of trouble."

An open question, however, is whether the program will be available later. Collins said the county has a \$270 million budget deficit, and her department could face consolidation or elimination. She's "hopeful" that policy makers "will see the importance of including women and girls in policy and bringing this perspective to the table."

Whatever happens, Collins is proud of the women who completed the pilot program, because it wasn't easy. "We gave them a lot of the things that we hoped would help them succeed. Like transportation is often an issue, so they got a monthly pass.

"That still meant for almost all of them leaving home at 6 a.m., taking several buses and then a light rail, and then still walking a mile and a half to get to the job site. And then spending the day swinging a hammer" — followed by a reverse commute.

"It was a really hard thing, but they did it, and we're really proud of them."



## What's in a Seal?

» Prince George County, Va.

[www.princegeorgeva.org](http://www.princegeorgeva.org)

Prince George County was established in 1702 and named in honor of Prince George of Denmark, husband of England's reigning monarch Queen Anne. It was formed from Charles City County, one of the original eight shires, and its boundaries stretched from south of the James River to the North Carolina line.

The seal was designed following a request for permission to acquire a Devisal of Arms, coats of arms that are granted for use by counties or person, from the College of Arms in England, and subsequently approved by the Board of Supervisors on March 8, 1977.

The Cross of St. George on the shield is a reminder that the county was named for Prince George. The dogwood blossom, holly, anchor, cardinals and pine branches are all objects that are seen every day in the county. The seal is a statement of the great pride the county has in the history, heritage and development of Prince George County.

(If you would like your county's seal featured, please contact Christopher Johnson at 202/942-4256 or [cjohnson@naco.org](mailto:cjohnson@naco.org).)



# Program manages mental health needs of children, teens

BY CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON  
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

According to the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, less than 20 percent of young people get the mental health help they need.

Many factors lead to mental illness in children and teens. Arguments between parents, abuse and other factors contribute to this growing trend of children and teens battling behavioral and emotional issues that could potentially turn them into social outcasts without any help.

Wraparound Milwaukee is a Milwaukee County, Wis. community-based system of care that provides comprehensive services to youth with serious emotional, behavioral or mental health needs along with help for their families. The program uses a “wraparound” concept which focuses on strength-based, individualized care.

“The wraparound approach integrates child services and many other departments to create a community-based alternative to institutional-based care for youths,” said Bruce Kamradt, director.

Started in 1995 with a six-year, \$15 million federal grant from the Center for Mental Health Services, the program’s chief focus is to serve children and adolescents who have serious emotional disorders and are identified by the Child Welfare or Juvenile Justice System as “being at immediate risk of residential or correctional placement or psychiatric hospitalization.” The program serves an average enrollment of 570 youths and their families.

“We look at kids and families strengths rather than their weaknesses,” added Kamradt. “We build a plan around what each individual family needs so that we can make sure they get the care they need.”

## Funding

A combination of state and county agencies, including the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, county Delinquency and Court Services, Behavioral Health Division and the State Division of Health Care Financing — which administers Medicaid — provide funding for the program. About \$40 million from the agencies are pooled to create maximum flex-

ibility and sufficient funds to meet the needs of families served. Part of the Behavioral Health Division, Wraparound Milwaukee oversees management and distribution of those funds acting as a public care management entity.

## Care Coordination Services

The program contracts with nine community agencies for the approximately 72 care coordinators who facilitate the delivery of services to families. The program can tap an extensive provider network of 204 agency and individual providers that offer an array of more than 80 services to families. A Mobile Urgent Treatment team ensures families have access to crisis intervention services.

## Results

The Wraparound Milwaukee program sees up to 900 children and teens per day throughout the county between inpatient, hospital and home treatment. Since 1995, the use of residential treatment has been reduced from 375 to 80 in placement. Psychiatric inpatient care has seen a reduction in hospitalization from 5,000 inpatient days to 250 days, with most children and teens averaging only 2.5 days of hospitalization. Wraparound treatment costs \$3,800 compared to more than \$9,000 in residential treatment centers.

With better clinical outcomes, better school attendance, more permanency for child welfare placements and reduced delinquency of

teens, this program has shown a lot of success in the past 14 years. The program has also been recognized as one of several candidates for the Innovation Award at the Harvard Kennedy School.

The overall goal of Wraparound Milwaukee is to support, strengthen and empower families and children so they may live happier, healthier and productive lives safely in a community without prejudice or discrimination, and to encourage hope, self-worth and the ability to reach their dreams.

For more information, call Bruce Kamradt, Wraparound Milwaukee director, at 414/257-7611 or e-mail [Bruce.Kamradt@milcnty.com](mailto:Bruce.Kamradt@milcnty.com) or visit [www.milwaukeecounty.org/WraparoundMilwaukee7851.htm](http://www.milwaukeecounty.org/WraparoundMilwaukee7851.htm).

## Panel hears San Francisco’s approach to providing health care for uninsured

HEALTH REFORM from page 2

to the patients who will continue to need the safety net and because county governments, in many cases, risk being negatively financially impacted.”

Brian Dahle, president of NACo’s Western Interstate Region (WIR), testified on behalf of rural counties. He expressed support for much of NACo’s health reform agenda and observed that rural western counties had many of the same concerns as LUCC counties, noting.

“The only difference is the number of zeroes.” Dahle, a Lassen County Calif. supervisor, also made the case that rural counties need additional support to fulfill their public health obligations because of their staffing limitations and the logistical challenges of serving small populations spread over large areas. Observing that small business is the backbone of rural economies, he urged coverage expansion that would not disadvantage those small employers.

Marin County, Calif. Supervisor Susan Adams wove her experience as a research scholar, professor and nurse into her testimony. She made the case that a single-payer plan should be on the table for discussion, both by NACo, and in Washington — arguing that the current system had too many inefficiencies and inequities built into it to be a sound foundation for a reformed system.

Adams, a vice chair of the Health Steering Committee, also called on NACo to address the high costs of pharmaceuticals and to explicitly

call for integrating behavioral health into a comprehensive universal affordable system of health care that treats the whole human being.

“The intersect between inadequately treated mental illness and the criminal justice system costs the taxpayers significantly for housing and caring for the incarcerated as well as the lost productivity of life,” she said.

Dr. Mitch Katz, health director, City and County of San Francisco, briefed the panel on the progress of the new Healthy San Francisco (HSF) program, which provides universal, comprehensive, affordable health care to uninsured adults in the county.

The program builds on existing health care safety net resources and includes an employer spending requirement. If employers do not provide coverage for employees at

a minimum level, they are required to contribute to HSF for those employees. He argued that some of the features of the program could be adopted successfully by other urban counties. “The most critical feature imbedded in HSF is for an urban area to identify all of the existing safety net providers (public and private) and knit them together into a comprehensive health care delivery system.”

Representatives from California’s public hospitals, mental health directors and county-organized health systems also presented testimony.

The working group will review the testimony provided at the Sacramento hearing over the next several weeks. If you would like to submit written testimony please send it to Associate Legislative Director Paul Beddoe at [pbeddoe@naco.org](mailto:pbeddoe@naco.org).

## NACo Healthy Counties Database

Is Your County Interested In...

- Childhood Obesity Prevention
- Creating Healthy Communities
- Building Robust Economies
- Agricultural Preservation

Visit ...

[www.healthycounties.org/database](http://www.healthycounties.org/database)

We are continually seeking county submissions in order to build the database. Please submit or nominate best practices to Anita Cardwell at [acardwell@naco.org](mailto:acardwell@naco.org) or 202.942.4267.

## In Case You Missed It ...

### News to Use from Past County News

#### ► NACo leadership appointments applications due May 22

Incoming NACo President Valerie Brown is seeking applicants for a number of appointments to NACo’s leadership team. These appointments are for one- to three-year terms, and membership on some of the committees have specific requirements.

The Presidential Appointments Application Form must be completed by anyone who wants to be considered for a leadership or committee appointment for the 2009–2010 presidential year. The application form is available online at NACo’s Web site, [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org). You will find it under “About NACo” ► “Committees and Caucuses” ► “Presidential Appointments.” For more information, contact Karen McRunnel at 202/942-4238 or [kmcrunnel@naco.org](mailto:kmcrunnel@naco.org).





# Model Programs

## FROM THE NATION'S COUNTIES

### Family Court Program Speeds Up Child Custody Proceedings

By ELIZABETH PERRY  
STAFF WRITER

The Hennepin County, Minn. Family Court Services Early Neutral Evaluation (ENE) program allows divorced parents to forgo lengthy child custody hearings in favor of a less time-consuming process.

Gunnar Bankovics, division manager, said the program has become so successful in its five-year history that the Minnesota Supreme Court made it a priority for all other judicial districts in the state to implement similar programs. The program was also named one of Harvard Kennedy School of Government's Top 50 Innovations.

The ENE process takes six to nine hours, with the courts sending couples to attend a case management conference within two weeks, instead of a custody hearing in court. A male-female evaluation team meets with the parents and their attorneys to find out who their children are, what kind of arrangements they think would be best for the children, as well as to assess developmental needs and options.

Bankovics said a mixed-gender team is used to offset concerns about gender bias that could influence a case and to provide an example of how to handle conflict for the parents. After one parent is allowed to state his or her viewpoint, the other parent does the same. The evaluators meet privately to discuss the case while the parents meet with their attorneys to discuss the settlement.

He said more than half of the cases are settled during the first session, and 75 percent reach partial agreement. Cases that do not resolve on their own or with mediation are referred to the Fourth District Family Court for trial, but Bankovics said most parents are motivated to work it out.

"I think the idea of keeping the parents in charge is really critical," he said. "The parents are the ones who have the responsibility for the resolution of the dispute, rather



Photo courtesy of Hennepin County, Minn.

Hennepin County Family Services staff role-play an Early Neutral Evaluation program session. A typical meeting consists of a team of evaluators, parents and their attorneys.

than the judge deciding what the net resolution will be. People who have things foisted upon them are far less likely to engage in that and work with it."

The ENE program began in 2004 with 88 cases out of 1,320 on the court's calendar, 25 ENE evaluators and no startup costs. Bankovics said the money was already in the budget to conduct evaluations; they just elected to do them in a more streamlined way.

From a peak of 1,612 custody cases in 2006, the number of cases dropped to 1,558 in 2008, of which 537 were ENE cases handled by 20 evaluators. The program saves the court money because it cuts down on the number of cases that go to trial, Bankovics said.

The idea for the program came from meeting in 2003 between administrators with the county's Family Court Services Department and State Court administrators to examine how family court was serving its clients in resolving disputes. The primary means of resolving custody and visitation disputes was through litigation, a model that was not working.

Bankovics said each of the custody evaluations would take between 40 hours and 45 hours to complete, including assessment interviews with the family.

Some cases dragged on for months, even years and ended up in

court. He said he has seen cases where custody battles that began when the children were toddlers lasted until they were teenagers.

"One of the most damaging things to children is ongoing conflict between their parents," Bankovics said. "If you look at the custody evaluation, it is [usually] anywhere from a three- to five-month process.

"While the parents are embroiled in that, the kids are really sensitive to the tension and conflict. Sometimes they get unwittingly pulled in; sometimes they get purposely pulled into it. The more expeditiously the dispute can be resolved, the better it is for the kids."

Bankovics invited counties interested in beginning their own Early Neutral Evaluation programs to contact him via e-mail for information on two-day trainings offered by his office, or to come and observe an ENE session in progress. His e-mail address is [Gunnar.Bankovics@co.hennepin.mn.us](mailto:Gunnar.Bankovics@co.hennepin.mn.us).

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

## Research News

### Innovative Ways to Gain Citizen Input

As counties across the nation face cutting their budgets, county officials are seeking community input on budget reductions in a variety of new and innovative ways.

Multnomah County, Ore. is holding more than 100 meetings on the budget before the July 1 budget deadline. These meetings both explain the budget to residents and seek input on cutbacks. In addition, the county is holding two large public meetings on key issue areas, public safety, and health and human services. These meetings seek to engage residents in decision-making by dividing into small groups and debating spending priorities in each area.

For the convenience of residents, many counties are also using the Internet to solicit ideas. Charlotte County, Fla. placed a poll on the county Web site to gain input from the community. In the survey, residents specify if current services should be increased, kept the same, reduced or eliminated. The results will provide commissioners with tough budget decisions this year.

Washoe County, Nev. is also using an online survey that is a part of a budget priorities survey developed in 2002, and citizens' group Charting Our Course, is conducting a telephone survey of residents to gain feedback on planning and budget priorities. The results from both the telephone and online surveys will be presented by the County Board.

In addition to using the county Web site to gather suggestions on how to cut costs, Hennepin County, Minn. is placing suggestion boxes throughout the county to encourage feedback from residents as they use county services. The main locations include 41 county libraries and seven county

service centers. Officials hope that by making the feedback process more convenient, more residents will participate in the process. The county administrator will report suggestions to the Board on a regular basis.

Through an initiative called LEAP, which stands for Lean, Efficient and Accountable Pasco, Pasco County, Fla. is seeking to proactively manage budget shortfalls. The initiative began a year ago with county departments' identifying cost-cutting measures. The county is also conducting an extensive outreach program. In addition to both written and online surveys, the county is conducting focus groups with citizens to gain insight into the services that can be reduced. The county is also using the local newspaper to not only announce additional budget meetings, but also to publish columns explaining the budget process.

In Fairfax County, Va., residents have numerous opportunities to provide feedback on the budget proposals. Throughout the month of March, the county held smaller meetings in the community to explain the budget process and allow residents to discuss specific services and concerns. For those unable to attend one of the meetings, residents could submit comments and questions online or over the phone by calling the county's budget hotline.

The county Web site provided a citizens' guide to the budget and the presentation of the budget by the county executive. The site also included a section that provides answers to both frequently asked questions by residents and questions posed by the Board of Supervisors to the county executive.

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

County News invites

# Letters to the Editor

Do 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, 25 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20001; 202/393-2630; [cnews@naco.org](mailto:cnews@naco.org).





## News From the Nation's Counties

### ► CALIFORNIA

**SHASTA, EL DORADO, PLACER, SACRAMENTO, YOLO and TEHAMA county** assessors have been receiving complaints about a company called Property Tax Reassessment of Los Angeles, the Associated Press reported. The company sent out letters to area property owners offering to **reassess property taxes for a fee**. The letters also claim to be able to save residents thousands of dollars in taxes every year. County officials said the letters are part of a scam.

### ► COLORADO

**MORGAN COUNTY** is considering adopting a **home-rule charter**, the *Fort Morgan Times* reported. If the county decides to go ahead with the plan it will be the fourth in the state to be able to write its own governing rules. The charter would be written by a commission that will be elected this fall. County Commissioner Jon Becker said that while the commission does not know how the change would impact the county, home-rule could help achieve improved collaboration with other municipalities.

### ► IOWA

**POLK COUNTY** was the first in the state to issue a **same-sex marriage license** April 27, according to the *Des Moines Register*. The required three-day waiting period

between issue of the license and the ceremony was waived by Judge Karen Romano. No reason was given for the waiver. Waivers are given on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the judge.

### ► INDIANA

● **WHITE COUNTY** is constructing a 200-megawatt **wind turbine farm** project called Meadow Lake One, *wthr.com* reported. The farm will create some 400 temporary and 20 permanent jobs. The first phase of the project is already under construction and includes 121 turbines and a substation. According to Horizon, the developer of the project, it will be able to power 60,000 homes — the equivalent greenhouse gas savings of removing 64,000 vehicles from the road.

● **TIPTON COUNTY** is trying to recover about \$10 million from Chrysler Corp. and a business partner over a clutch transmission plant **project that went bust**.

Last September, the county issued \$5.5 million in bonds each to Chrysler and Getrag Transmission for the factory, ABC News reported. Chrysler promised to reimburse the county for third-party costs related to the project. Chrysler offered to repay the bonds, but not to cover expenses of about \$4.5 million. County Commissioner Jane Harper said they wouldn't have issued the bonds had they known Chrysler was going bail out of the project.



Photo courtesy of Ellis County, Texas

Ellis County, Texas officials participated in a pandemic flu tabletop exercise April 28, as the swine flu outbreak continued to be monitored internationally. At the table are (clockwise from right) Ellis County Judge Carol Bush, Commissioner Bill Dodson and John Patterson, Emergency Management coordinator. A full-scale exercise is set for May 16.

### ► NEW YORK

The **OSWEGO COUNTY** Legislature would like **taxes instead of payments in lieu of taxes** on three nuclear power plants located in the county. The legislature recently approved three resolutions to hire a Washington, D.C.-based law firm to negotiate with Entergy, the plants' owner.

The plants "could be back on the tax rolls in a couple of years," Legislature Chairman Barry Leemann told *Oswego County Today*. "Or, we might consider another Payment In Lieu Of Taxes agreement." The current agreement allows the utility to make payments to the county on a sliding scale. Over the life of such agreements, payment amounts

typically become almost negligible at the end of the period.

### ► NORTH CAROLINA

Happy 230th birthday to **WARREN COUNTY**, which celebrated the occasion April 25. Warren was **formed in 1779** out of the former Bute County. It was named in honor of Joseph Warren, a Massachusetts soldier of who fell while fighting at Bunker Hill. Warrenton is the county seat, and the county — population about 19,400 — is bounded by **NORTHAMPTON, HALIFAX, FRANKLIN and VANCE counties** in North Carolina. The Virginia state line forms its northern border.

### ► OHIO

**PREBLE COUNTY** Sheriff Michael Simpson and his chief deputy Terry Snowden are backriding street patrols — to help make up for a **shortage of deputies**. Due to budget cuts, Simpson has had to reduce his staff by nearly half, the *Middletown Journal* reported. "I won't let any of the guys work alone, that is how you get people killed," Simpson said.

Preble County Commission President Chris Day praised Simpson's office for doing more with less. "It would be nice to have full staff, but we have to live within our budget. It is very tight," he said.

### ► PENNSYLVANIA

The **ALLEGHENY COUNTY** Council's president thinks the county should stop just sitting on a valuable asset and rather tap into it. The county lies atop the Marcellus shale, a subterranean rock formation that's believed to hold huge **reserves of natural gas** — among the nation's largest.

Council President Rich Fitzgerald believes that gas could be used "at the very least, to heat our own buildings, explore natural gas electric generators and sell our excess on the open market," the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* reported. He recently introduced legislation to encourage the county to extract, use and sell its natural gas assets. It could net the county \$55 million, which could be used to provide tax relief to residents.

### ► SOUTH DAKOTA

The **GRANT COUNTY** Commission has revised an ordinance that deals with **transmission of electricity** to be produced by proposed wind farms.

A county official told the Associated Press the ordinance opens

## Financial Services News

# Save Money on Inmate Health Care Costs

Counties can save money on the billions of dollars they spend each year to provide medical care to jail inmates.

NACo has a medical insurance and medical claims management program that controls costs, diminishes the need for mid-year budget adjustments and reduces expenses.

Hickman County, Tenn. used the medical claims management program to save 59 percent on its offsite medical claims for inmates. It submitted \$85,627 for 16 claims and was reimbursed \$50,922 through a discovery of billing and coding errors, and application of PPO network discounts for medical care.

Medical claims management helps counties manage inmate offsite medical claims to monitor the necessity of medical treatment, audit medical charges to assure services were actually performed, and

provide detailed claims reports.

Medical claims are managed on a contingency-fee basis, and fees are paid only if savings are found. Grainger County, Tenn. submitted \$65,365 for 18 claims and was reimbursed \$42,487, saving the county 65 percent on medical claims.

"It takes the hassle out of billing issues. It cuts down on a lot of paperwork for us. It saves time and money," said Tracy Titus, nurse manager, Vanderburgh County, Ind.

The service also reviews medical charges to identify billing errors. In 2007, a coding error was discovered when the medical provider charged Pulaski County, Ark. for 102 body scans for one inmate. The medical charges were corrected to reflect the two body scans administered to the inmate and PPO discounts were applied resulting in \$122,277

savings to the county.

The inmate excess medical insurance policy limits a county's liability for paying an inmate's offsite medical costs. The policy is tailored to a county's needs and allows each county to set its own self-insurance levels. Even with a single claim of \$16,281.86, Lawrence County, Tenn. was able to save 30 percent with a reimbursement of \$4,884.55.

Counties give the program high marks. "It pays for itself after just one open heart surgery," said Mayor Greg Lynch of Unicoi County, Tenn.

Through a nationally awarded RPF by Dallas County, Texas, NACo partners with Correctional Risk Services, Inc. (CRS) to control inmate health care costs by offering counties an insurance policy and medical claims management

service. This program, coupled with national PPO buying power, assures discounts and saves counties money.

Because Dallas County bid for the services on behalf of all state and local governments, counties are able to piggyback onto the award and begin using the program right away without bidding the services themselves.

To learn more about the inmate medical claims management and excess medical insurance program, contact Jim Sawyer with NACo's Financial Services Center at 202/661-8868 or by e-mail at [jsawyer@naco.org](mailto:jsawyer@naco.org).

(Financial Services News was written by Jim Sawyer, director, NACo Financial Services Corp. NACo FSC intern Stephanie Raphael contributed to this article.)



## The H.R. Doctor Is In

# The Wind in What's Left of My Hair

What a beautiful spring morning in otherwise humid and hot South Florida. I have left for work at 7:30 a.m. on my half-hour commute.

The top is down on the Jeep convertible, the temperature is 70 degrees and satellite radio is featuring the Bach "Tocatta and Fugue." I have it turned up loud, although I sadly lack a high-powered booming sub-woofer so that I can thoroughly annoy all the surrounding drivers when I stop at a traffic light. It is one of those mornings where you are very glad you are alive.

**How many mass transit executives rely on mass transit to go to work? How many environmental protection professionals rely on mass transit?**

On the other hand, I realize that the gas mileage on my beautiful yellow Jeep is terrible and that it is certainly not a vehicle which reflects care and stewardship of the planet. Perhaps it can be replaced in the future by a yellow, four-wheel drive Prius.

That's the subject of this article — the internal conflict in the American conscience about being "green" and living in a nation that consumes more energy than any other in the history of the planet. This is an international conflict, a local one and one occurring inside this author's mind even while dictating this article.

The moments of joy we find in that celebrated American institution, the car, and its first cousin, the long commute, will be evolving. This evolution has implications for each of us, our families and our communities, and certainly for the workplace.

For most of America, mass transit is not popular and not the transportation method of choice. As we ran out of "frontiers" to explore and to move to in the last century, the internal combustion engine and the chance to "go for a drive" began appearing as a substitute to the adventure of moving

west to settle in a new frontier.

While about 17 percent of Americans move every year, probably none pack up everything in a covered wagon and move to a farm homestead on a prairie. That engrained American concept of going off to the frontier with its unknowns, its excitement and its dangers was replaced in the past couple of generations by auto trips, RVs and SUVs.

Despite how exciting this can be, and with love and respect for the auto and RV industries, we are approaching a point during my children's lifetime where that engrained behavior will come crashing into reality. The reality is that the internal combustion engine is increasingly inconsistent with long-term human survival. We are whittling down the remaining oil supplies on the planet and the huge worldwide infrastructure built around oil.

We face geopolitical consequences such as a continuing or growing instability in oil-producing countries, political "mischief" to align ourselves with oil-producing governments, and debates about the nuclear versus coal versus oil power industries.

We will find increasing social and economic challenges to our current models of thinking and behaving at work and at home.

After all, how many mass transit executives rely on mass transit to go to work? How many environmental protection professionals rely on mass transit? The answers are indicators of the essential problem. Imagining that we will always remain at the top of the international "food chain" is unrealistic and leads to poor and destructive public policy decisions.

If our transit is to truly become "mass" rather than a social service underpinning disguised as viable mass transit, there is considerable work for the planning community to undertake to make living in a higher-density urban area more attractive, economically viable, socially acceptable and personally convenient.

If we harness America's advertising and marketing machine to

See H.R. DOC page 14

## NACo on the Move

### » In the News

• NACo was mentioned in a report on counties hit hard by the economic downturn on CNN Headline News *Morning Express* with Robin Meade April 22.

• Kelly Zonderwyk, NACo project manager, was quoted in *The Washington Post's* article "Eco agenda goes the next mile on 3 wheels" April 18.

• NACo's **Large Urban County Caucus Annual Meeting** was mentioned in the *Sacramento Bee* article "Counties seek voice in the national health care debate" April 17.

### » NACo Officers and Elected Officials

Harvey Ruvin, Miami-Dade County clerk of courts and past NACo president, has been selected as the first recipient of the Reitmeister-Abess Center Environmental Stewardship Award. The University of Miami's Reitmeister Award was presented to Ruvin April 18 during opening ceremonies of Miami's 27th Annual Baynanza Biscayne Bay Beach Cleanup. The award honors individuals who have made a singularly significant contribution to conservation, particularly related to water resources or endangered species.

### » NACo Staff

• **Jim Sawyer**, director of financial services, attended the National Association of County Engineers (NACE) annual conference in Peoria County (Peoria), Ill. April 19–23. Sawyer made a presentation about U.S. Communities, NACo's national cooperative purchasing program.

• **James Davenport**, project manager, conducted a Federal Highway Administration-sponsored information forum on rural roads safety in partnership with NACE. The forum was held on April 23 in Peoria County as part of NACE's Annual Conference.

• **Robert Fogel**, senior legislative director, briefed the NACE Legislative Committee and gave a speech on the reauthorization of the Federal Surface Transportation Program at NACE's Annual Conference in Peoria County.

• **Rocky Lopes**, program director, facilitated a U.S. Department of Homeland Security-sponsored Interoperable Communications Policy Forum in Jackson County (Kansas City), Mo., April 30–May 1. Some 40 elected county officials and department heads participated.

*On the Move is compiled by Christopher Johnson.*



Photo by Bob Fogel

County Executive Chris Coons of New Castle County, Del. and Council Member Nancy Floreen of Montgomery County, Md. represented NACo at an event on April 16 at the Old Executive Office Building at which President Obama, Vice President Biden and Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced the administration's program for a high-speed rail initiative.



Photo by J. Scahill

NACo President-elect Valerie Brown visited the County Commissioners of Pennsylvania's (CCAP) annual legislative meeting March 29–31 in Harrisburg, Pa. She is pictured here with CCAP President Jim James, commissioner, Butler County; and his fellow Board members James Lokhaiser, Board chairman, and A. Dale Pinkerton, commissioner. Pinkerton has gained notoriety for his colorful suits.



# Brain transplants needed to live in harmony with the earth

H.R. DOC from page 13

help by showing our celebrity gods and goddesses using bus systems, it might be more exciting and more acceptable.

Perhaps Jason Taylor, the football player, can be photographed dancing down the aisle of a 40-passenger diesel bus — with only two or three other passengers on board!

In most mass transit systems, fare box revenue simply does not pay for the cost of the service.

The answer might include boldly eliminating passenger fares entirely. We must come to recognize that only by making mass transit compellingly attractive, will we begin to chip away at the habits and entitlements commuters see. We must come to realize that a better model is worth a try. This will be a long climb for an entrenched mindset to change.

Significant amounts of the work that government executives do can be done by remote technology, including video conferencing. Besides remote technology as a more commonly accepted basis for work, we must focus more on work team

efficiency and cohesiveness, and personal self actualization.

The time wasted on our average daily 43-mile commutes could be used far more wisely in relaxation, learning, coaching our children, volunteering in the community

“...Americans live to work while Europeans work to live.”

or dreaming. As someone who has visited Europe many times speaking at public administration conferences and engaging many of my European friends, I believe the saying is true that “Americans live to work while Europeans work to live.” We take less vacation time. We are not as well traveled or fluent in multiple languages, nor as comfortable in multiple cultures.

As the HR Doctor’s family discovered, it is amazing to see the positive impact on your children’s growth and maturity when you invite exchange students to live with your family. In the case of the Rosenbergs, our house was honored to have seven exchange

students over the years. The result had a significant and positive effect on the beautiful HR daughters.

These exchange students are smart, adventurous, multilingual and kind people who have a lot to share and a lot to be curious about. In a global economy, having business and government “exchange” colleagues spend time as a regular feature in your agency will have a similar enriching impact on staff development. As a side benefit, imagine the great answering machine recordings by a person with a classy British, French, Spanish or other accent.

Thinking about the future of our planet and our communities creates considerable dissonance when it is stacked up against the reality of how our society is structured.

The HR Doctor, who loves national parks, is a member of the Sierra Club, has planted 10,000 trees on forest land in California and enjoys hiking, is having a wonderful time in a vehicle which is fuel inefficient. He lives in overcrowded South Florida society. This is a region of perhaps 100 different public agencies competing with one another on issues as diverse as how

many fire departments or police agencies (or HR departments, for that matter) are really needed, how many poorly regulated zoning areas are tolerable, how many high school students will not graduate, and much more.

Agencies are often quick to make sweeping and positive commitments, such as “anywhere in 20 minutes” but only marginally able to marshal the resources and the will power to deliver on the promises. That must change—and soon. Our traditional reliance on the hope of some breakthrough technology to save the day is not likely to appear fast enough or strongly enough to overcome the tremendous inertia of ingrained political and personal habits.

Resolving dissonance means

having a vision and taking deliberate and consistent steps to bring vision and reality closer together. The opposite of dissonance is harmony.

While this article might have started out about the joy of driving a favorite car with the wind blowing in what’s left of my hair, it is really about the increasingly urgent policy and behavioral “brain transplants” needed to be in harmony with the survival of the our real community — the earth!

As that famous retired elected official, Kermit the Commissioner, said, “It’s not easy being green.” However it is increasingly critical and compelling.

  
Phil Rosenberg

The HR Doctor • [www.hrdr.net](http://www.hrdr.net)

## Washington county seeks company to turn green trash into cash

NEWS FROM from page 12

the door to using public rights of way in some cases. Wind energy developers have expressed interest in constructing wind turbines in the county’s Couteau Ridge area.

**BROOKINGS COUNTY** has had some wind farm development, and its ordinance has been used as a model by other counties updating their statutes.

### ► TENNESSEE

Surveys, focus and discussion groups — they’re all part of **KNOX COUNTY**’s new **Together! Healthy Knox** effort. It’s designed to assess the state of the community’s health and how it can be improved. Anyone who lives, works, worships or plays in the county can take part.

Mark Jones, Knox County Health Department director, said the information collected “will provide a baseline for moving forward.” County officials said Tennessee ranks 47th in the nation when it comes to the health of its citizens. While Knox County is among the top five healthiest counties in the state, it still sees room for

improvement. For more information, visit [www.healthyknox.org](http://www.healthyknox.org).

### ► VIRGINIA

**FLUVANNA COUNTY** has voted to join neighboring **LOUISA COUNTY** in forming a **water authority**. The Fluvanna County Board recently voted 4–2 to create the James River Water Authority. Louisa’s Board of Supervisors approved the authority last month—in a unanimous vote.

It’s estimated the project will cost \$45 million to \$50 million; the counties would split the cost evenly, the *Charlottesville Daily Progress* reported. It could provide 3 million to 6 million gallons per day of drinking water.

### ► WASHINGTON

**BENTON COUNTY** is looking for ways to turn organic trash into greenbacks. With \$12,500 of its money and a \$37,000 state grant, the county is looking for help to **identify organic waste sources** — and alternatives to burning that waste or sending it to landfills.

The county wants to find a private business that will run a facility that is accessible, affordable and profit-

able, the *News Tribune* reported. “We want to find a company that can take something nobody wants and turn it into something people want to buy,” said Donna Holmes of the Benton County Public Works Department. **YAKIMA** and **KITTITAS counties** are pursuing similar projects.

### ► WISCONSIN

**FOND DU LAC COUNTY** Executive Allen Buechel made history recently, becoming the **longest-serving county executive** in Wisconsin history. He was first elected to the post in 1993, after serving 17 years on the county Board of Supervisors, according to *The Reporter*. He was sworn in to his fifth consecutive term as executive on April 21.

Buechel also serves as second vice president of the **WISCONSIN COUNTIES ASSOCIATION**, placing him in line to serve as the state association’s president.

(News From the Nation’s Counties is compiled by Charles Taylor and Elizabeth Perry, staff writers. If you have an item for News From, please e-mail [ctaylor@naco.org](mailto:ctaylor@naco.org) or [eperry@naco.org](mailto:eperry@naco.org).)



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# Job Market / Classifieds

## ► HEALTH OFFICER/ADMINISTRATIVE HEALTH OFFICER – GENESEE COUNTY, MICH.

Salary: DOQ.

Genesee County, Mich. is recruiting for a Health Officer or an Administrative Health Officer. Health Officer minimum qualifications include: Michigan licensed M.D. or D.O. and one of the following: Board certified in preventive medicine or public health; or Master's in Public Health or Master's of Science in Public Health degree and not less than 2 years' full-time public health practice. Administrative Health Officer minimum qualifications include: Master's in Public Health or Master's of Science in Public Health degree and three (3) years' full-time public health administrative experience; — OR — Related graduate degree and five (5) years' full-time public health administrative experience; — OR — Bachelor's degree and eight (8) years of full-time public health experience, five (5) year's of which shall have been in the administration of a broad range of public health programs. Interested applicants must submit a detailed resume, copy of college transcripts and current certifications/license to: Genesee County Human Resources Department (Health Officer Vacancy), 1101 Beach Street – Room 337, Flint, MI 48502. 810/257-3034 Fax: 810/768-7097. E-mail resumes to [dpikes@co.genesee.mi.us](mailto:dpikes@co.genesee.mi.us).

## ► DIRECTOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES – SHEBOYGAN COUNTY, WISC.

Salary: DOQ.

Sheboygan County is seeking a creative and energetic individual to fill the position of Health and Human Services Director, which will be vacant due to retirement. Primary responsibility is to direct, manage and improve the health and human service programs

and delivery systems in Sheboygan County, and to develop and administer the annual budget reflecting a combination of county funds and Federal and State Grants. Qualified applicants will possess a bachelor's degree in Social Work, Public Administration, Business Administration, or Public Health Administration from an accredited college and 10 years' related experience. A Master's Degree is desirable with eight (8) years' experience in the Human Services field. Required skills include a comprehensive knowledge of social, economic, and health problems of basic human behavior and of available assistance and rehabilitative services and techniques along with a thorough knowledge of Federal and State Statutes and other regulations regarding Health and Human Services. Residency within Sheboygan County is required within six months of employment. This position offers a competitive salary along with excellent fringe benefits. Interested applicants shall submit a resume, including salary requirements, by Friday, May 22 to: Sheboygan County, Human Resources Department, 508 New York Avenue, Sheboygan, WI 53081 or the Job Center, 3620 Wilgus Avenue, Sheboygan, WI 53081. Applications may be downloaded online at [www.co.sheboygan.wi.us/county\\_depts/human\\_res/Employment/APPLICATION\\_FORM\\_1.pdf](http://www.co.sheboygan.wi.us/county_depts/human_res/Employment/APPLICATION_FORM_1.pdf).

## ► LIBRARY DIRECTOR – CITY OF MOLINE, ILL.

Salary: DOQ.

The City of Moline is located in the heart of the Midwest, nestled between the banks of the Mississippi and Rock Rivers in Rock Island County, Ill. Home to 43,768 people, Moline is one of four cities making up the Quad Cities, a metropolitan area of more than 350,000 people residing in Moline and Rock Island, Ill., and Bettendorf and

Davenport, Iowa. Moline has a full service, stable Council/Administrator form of government. The Moline Public Library is governed by the 9-member Moline Public Library Board (Board). Board members are appointed to specified terms by the Mayor and are vested with full governance responsibility for the Library. The Library Director is the Library's chief executive officer and is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Board. The Director is responsible to the Board to provide proper management and leadership to the Library. The facility is a new, state-of-the-art \$12.5 million library which offers a vast collection of print and non-print materials. Library resources and services also include wireless access and cabling technology, meeting rooms, fax services, public copiers, notary public, voter registration, service to the homebound, art displays, tax forms, public typewriters, word processing computers, and the Copper Café coffee shop. The library is

ADA compliant and has room for future collection growth. The current annual budget is \$2.85 million and there are 29 FTE's. Requires a Master's degree in library science and at least five (5) years of professional librarian experience to include management/supervisory responsibility over budget and finance as well as the provision of a wide breadth of municipal library services or any equivalent combination of training and experience that provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities. The City will provide a competitive salary with excellent benefits. Beginning salary is negotiable depending on qualifications. Send confidential resume immediately to: Robert E. Slavin, President, Slavin Management Consultants, 3040 Holcomb Bridge Road, Suite A-1 Norcross, GA 30071 Phone: 770/449-4656. Fax: 770/416-0848. E-mail [slavin@bellsouth.net](mailto:slavin@bellsouth.net). Website: [www.slavinweb.com](http://www.slavinweb.com). AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY RECRUITER/EMPLOYER.

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- Be sure to include billing information along with copy.
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For more information, contact the Job Market representative at 202/942-4256.



## NACo Webinar

# Methamphetamine in our Nation's Counties

You are invited to NACo's free webinar on methamphetamine prevention: Addressing Methamphetamine in our Nation's Counties.

**Thursday, May 14  
2 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. EDT**

This webinar will explore the unique ways in which methamphetamine affects counties, including social and economic costs.

Participants will also receive additional information regarding national and local meth prevention programs.

To register for the webinar, please visit [www.naco.org/methforum](http://www.naco.org/methforum).

For questions, please contact Kati Guerra at [kguerra@naco.org](mailto:kguerra@naco.org) or 202/942-4279.

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# Knowledge Share

## A Peer-to-Peer Network

**TOOLS for  
TOUGH TIMES**

### What is it?

- \* An opportunity to learn from other county officials
- \* A resource center for technical assistance with new county projects
- \* Up-to-date list of people across the country who have already addressed some of the same problems that you are now facing in your county
- \* A database of officials who will share knowledge, information and resources



### How does it work?

Go to [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org). Under "County Resource Center," select "Peer Advice" and log in. Then select the issue that you are addressing. You can also choose to select peers from your own state or region. Once your selection has been made, a list of peers and their contact information will be generated especially for you.

**This is an *exclusive* Members Only Web site feature!**