Board approves changes to governance structure

Would eliminate officer, add regional representatives to executive committee

**By Tom Goodman**
PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIRECTOR

The NACo Board of Directors, meeting at the Western Interstate Region Conference in Umatilla County, Ore. May 21, made significant changes in the association’s governance structure, approved a dental discount pilot program, and chose three sites for future Annual Conferences.

The changes in the governance structure included reducing the number of elected officers from five to four and adding four regional representatives to the NACo Executive Committee. The changes, which were recommended by the NACo Task Force on Governance and Structure after a nine-month review, also included guidelines for the election of officers.

Some of the 11 recommendations can be implemented immediately. Others require amending bylaws and must be approved by the NACo membership in a vote at the Annual Conference.

The three sites chosen for future Annual Conferences are Tarrant County (Fort Worth), Texas for 2013; Orleans Parish (New Orleans), La. for 2014; and Mecklenburg County (Charlotte), N.C. for 2015.

**Dental Plan**

The Board chose Careington as the vendor to partner with NACo to offer the discount dental program to member counties and their residents. Careington was selected for its combination of discounts, the size of its network of dentists and its track record of quality for the Hope for Homeowners program, which was created last year to help at-risk borrowers refinance into more stable loans backed by the Federal Housing Administration. It tightens standards for mortgage lending and curbs abuses that encouraged borrowers to take out mortgage loans they could not repay. It increases the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation’s borrowing authority to $100 billion. It also gives renters new protections.

**Mortgage reform legislation gets president’s signature**

**By Daria Daniel**
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

President Barack Obama recently signed the Help Families Save Their Homes Act of 2009, a mortgage reform bill adopted earlier by Congress to help homeowners prevent foreclosure and curb predatory lending practices.

The legislation expands eligibility for the Hope for Homeowners program, which was created last year to help at-risk borrowers refinance into more stable loans backed by the Federal Housing Administration. It tightens standards for mortgage lending and curbs abuses that encouraged borrowers to take out mortgage loans they could not repay. It increases the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation’s borrowing authority to $100 billion. It also gives renters new protections.

**Energy bill hot topic at 2009 WIR conference in Oregon**

**By Charles Taylor**
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Tim Josi, the new president of NACo’s Western Interstate Region, hails from “The Land of Cheese, Trees and Ocean Breeze” — a trio that also gives a hint to some of the issues on his plate this next year. Agriculture, forestry and natural resources will figure heavily into the Tillamook County, Ore., commissioner and dairy farmer’s portfolio as he leads WIR through mid-2010.

“The first thing I’m going to do is represent you and do your bidding,” Josi told his colleagues at the WIR officers’ installation banquet in Pendleton, Ore. May 22. Former NACo President Bill Hansell, a Umatilla County commissioner, welcomed attendees to the host county, and President Don Stapley swore in the executive committee.

Serving with Josi are: Mike Murray, first vice president and commissioner, Lewis and Clark County, Mont.; Ron Walter, commissioner Chelan County, Wash., who was elected second vice president at the conference; Mike Murray, first vice president and commissioner, Lewis and Clark County, Mont.; Tim Josi, president and commissioner, Tillamook County, Ore.; and Brian Dahle, immediate past president, a Lassen County, Calif., supervisor.
New WIR president calls for more diplomacy in engaging environmentalists

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Zone Management Association and the state’s Council of Forest Trust Land Counties. As one observer noted during dinner, “If you want something done, ask a busy person to do it.”

The banquet capped three days of committee meetings, workshops and a NACo Board of Directors meeting, as well as opportunities to explore Pendleton’s Wild West heritage and Native American culture.

One dominant theme during the three-day conference, May 20–22, was the energy and climate bill making its way through Congress. Public lands counties want biomass from federal forests included in the legislation as a renewable energy source. Proponents argue that harvesting forest biomass results in thinned, healthier forests that are less prone to fires and help store carbon dioxide — a greenhouse gas — and can provide a boost to local economies.

Among Josi’s priorities for the year will be lowering the temperature of the debate between public lands counties and environmentalists over energy and climate change issues. During the conference, he said he had “lashed out” at environmental extremists, but a more “diplomatic” approach is needed. “The Nature Conservancy gets it and they’re the white hats,” he said. “And if we’re going to be successful and they’re the white hats,” he said. “The Nature Conservancy gets it and so that we can get this done and get biomass in the energy bill.”

As a Democrat, he said, “Maybe I can talk some sense into some Democrats on the Hill.”

Former Oregon U.S. Senator Gordon Smith (R) addressed the energy bill in his keynote speech May 22. A Pendleton native, he served on the Senate Energy Committee during his two terms in office.

The American Climate and Energy Act of 2009 (ACES) recently cleared the House Energy and Commerce Committee. But Smith cautioned that its future remains uncertain.

“My experience is that, what barely passes the House of Representa- tives will never pass in the United States Senate,” he said, because the House is “majoritarian” while the Senate’s rules are designed to protect minority rights and small states.

Efforts to lower greenhouse gas emissions and generate more renewable energy will come at a high cost, Smith said.

“There is a long way to go until we have renewable resources that are cost-competitive, that are constant and that meet the load or growth that all of you hope to have in your counties.” He said renewable energy sources — such as wind — are intermittent. Citing a local example, he noted that windmills in the best wind corridors in Umatilla County turn only 38 percent of the time.

“The public generally doesn’t know that if you create electricity, you either use it or you lose it,” he continued. Intermittent generation is difficult to schedule on the grid and many renewable resources “are not where the grid exists.”

Beyond energy, Smith questioned the sustainability of federal government spending. “Our entitlements are on cruise control,” he said.

“When you add up the unfunded liability of Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare, it adds up to something north of 60 trillion dollars” — a figure greater than the net worth of the United States. Federal spending is starting to make those fabled spendthrifts “drunken sailors look good,” he said.

Other speakers during the conference included Victor Vasquez, deputy underserrectary for rural development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Idaho Lt. Gov. Brad Little (R) and Russell Hoeftlich, Oregon director, the Nature Conservancy.

Less than two weeks into his job, Vasquez — a Hermiston, Ore. native — was interested in listening to county officials’ concerns to take back to Washington. During the Clinton administration, he served as USDA assistant administrator in the Office of Community Development, where he helped launch the Rural Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community program.

Environmental attorney Tom Mullikin points out agriculture’s contribution to U.S. greenhouse gas emissions during his general session presentation May 22.

Vasquez discussed the $4.36 billion in the Recovery Act for rural development programs and the challenge in getting the funds out quickly and “smartly.”

In response to a question, Vasquez said: “Part of why I came on board is to look at how we can develop and put together a community development component in rural development specifically geared toward smaller communities that don’t have the capacity.” He said one way to assist localities with limited resources will be to increase USDA field staff’s knowledge about community development — and to provide direct training and assistance to communities.

“It will take time, but we’re walking in the door with that goal in mind,” he said.

Conference educational sessions included Delivery of Quality Health Care in Rural Western Counties, Western Interests in the Federal Transportation and Highway Bill Reauthorization, Forging Tribal-County Partnerships and Sustainable Relationships, and Sustaining Your County’s Agricultural Economy.

Josi said WIR will also continue to focus on rural healthcare working to keep the word “navigable” in the Clean Water Act and transportation issues, with the transportation and highway bill up for reauthorization this year. Continuing Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PLIT) funding beyond its 2012 expiration is also a priority.

As is customary, the winner of this year’s Dale Sowards Award was announced during the conference. Mike Anaya, a Santa Fe County, N.M. commissioner, who was unable to attend. The award honors individuals who demonstrate outstanding service to public lands counties and draws attention to their accomplishments and the public policies they represent. It was named after the late Dale Sowards, a former Conejos County, Colo. commissioner, who was instrumental in the creation of WIR and was a tireless advocate for public lands counties. Anaya will receive his award at a later date.

Next year’s conference will be held May 19–21 in Yellowstone County (Billings), Mont.
NACo awards $80,000 in grants to wetland restoration projects

By Carrie Clingan
Community Services Associate

NACo recently announced the recipients of the 2009 Five Star Restoration Program grants. NACo and its partners will award a total of more than $765,420 to high-quality, community-based projects to support habitat and wetlands restoration in counties across the nation. This year’s NACo-managed grants are going to the following organizations and local governments:

- The Lucas County Conservation Board in Lucas County, Iowa
- The Lamoille County Natural Resources Conservation District and Nature Center, Lamoille County, Vt.
- The City of Gladstone in Delta County, Mich.
- The Ela Cliffs Nature Science Center in Hall County, Ga.

The Five Star Restoration Program funds projects involving a high degree of cooperation with local governmental agencies, elected officials, community groups, businesses, schools and environmental organizations. These groups work together to improve local water quality, reduce flood damage and restore impaired fish and wildlife habitats. The program is a partnership between NACo, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Wildlife Habitat Council, and corporate sponsors Southern Company, and Pacific Gas and Electric.

This year, as a part of the Five Star Partnership, NACo will award $80,000 in grants that will support four projects, located in four counties across the country to help implement locally driven wetland and watershed restoration projects. The Five Star funds that are made available act as seed money that leverages additional funds and services. On average, for each dollar of Five Star-sponsored funds, four additional dollars in matching contributions will be provided by local restoration partners in the form of funding, labor, materials, equipment or in-kind services. As of this year, communities have committed more than $28 million in matching contributions to these projects. Since 1997, NACo has helped fund projects in counties across the country, providing a total of more than $1,276,000 for community-based environmental restoration and education.

(For more information about the Five Star Program and the Coastal Counties Restoration Initiative and how to apply, please contact Carrie Clingan, NACo’s community services associate, at 202/942-4246 or cclingan@naco.org.)
Administrator Fugate confirmed; FEMA’s future debated

By Dale A. Harris
Associate Legislative Director

After some delay, the full Senate confirmed by voice vote W. Craig Fugate as the new administrator of the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Fugate has a long history of working with county governments, and is expected to understand the importance of strong federal, state and local government partnerships for disaster management. NACo supported his nomination. Fugate hails from state and local emergency management. He began his emergency management career as a volunteer firefighter, became a paramedic and a fire department lieutenant, and advanced to the position of emergency manager of Alachua County, Fla. In 2001, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush appointed Fugate as the state’s director of emergency management, and held the position until President Barack Obama nominated him to lead FEMA.

He comes to the agency prior to the start of the Atlantic hurricane season, which officially begins on June 1 and ends Nov. 30. Since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, FEMA has faced increased scrutiny while many initiatives have been enacted to increase the nation’s planning, preparedness, response and recovery from all-hazard future disasters.

However, some concerned lawmakers and local emergency managers have called for the removal of FEMA from DHS because the agency’s disaster response and recovery efforts have been reduced within the large federal department.

In February 2009, House Transportation Committee Chairman James Oberstar (D-Minn.) and Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.) introduced bills (H.R. 1174 and S. 412 respectively) removing FEMA from DHS. The legislation proposes to return FEMA to a Cabinet-level independent agency, with the FEMA administrator reporting directly to the president during a presidential disaster declaration. But, Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee Chairman Joseph Lieberman (I-Conn.), House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.), President Obama, DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano and Fugate have shown staunch opposition to this proposal and have vowed to fight any effort to remove the agency from DHS. NACo has not weighed in on this issue, but has worked closely in the past with Congress in enacting P.L. 109-295, the Post-Katrina Emergency Reform Act (PKERA) in 2006. This comprehensive legislation strengthened FEMA management, increased operational support for federal, state and local governments, and provided sustained funding for FEMA programs important to counties.

County leaders attend D.C. childhood obesity summit

By Anita Cardwell
Senior Associate

A number of NACo county officials from across the country recently attended Leadership for Healthy Communities’ (LHC) Childhood Obesity Prevention Summit, “Building a Bridge to Policy Action,” in Washington, D.C.

NACo is one of 11 national groups working in partnership with LHC, a program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation which helps local and state government leaders promote healthy eating and active living policies to prevent and reduce childhood obesity. The summit provided participants, the majority of whom were policymakers, an opportunity to share ideas and learn about a range of local efforts to reduce and prevent childhood obesity. Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) provided the opening day remarks and spoke about his recently proposed legislation to establish federal school nutrition standards for all foods sold on school grounds, as well as the increase in funding for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.

Other sessions at the summit focused on community partnerships to address childhood obesity, the economic benefits associated with promoting healthy communities, and perspectives from a panel of youth who shared their ideas about effective ways to encourage children to be active and eat healthy.

Attendees also had the opportunity to interact with each other in smaller workshops where topics were discussed such as ways that rural areas can address childhood obesity, barriers to healthy living in racial and ethnic minority communities, and how policymakers can promote healthy behavior and active environments in their localities.

Mayor Claude Ramsey of Hamilton County, Tenn. was one of the five local leaders who received the Healthy Communities Leadership Award in recognition of their efforts to address childhood obesity in their communities. In 2003 Mayor Ramsey initiated the creation of a program called Step ONE (Optimize with Nutrition and Exercise), which promotes healthy living policies such as joint-use agreements with local schools.

Profiles in Service

Frank Bigelow
Supervisor
Madera County, Calif.
NACo Board of Directors

Number of years active in NACo: 10 years
Years in public service: 10 years
Occupation: Cattle rancher
The hardest thing I’ve ever done: as a station captain, telling a volunteer firefighter on the front line that one of his family members got trapped in a structural fire and died. He now dedicates his life to working for the fire department.
Three people (living or dead) I’d invite to dinner: my father, grandfather and uncle
A dream I have is to: be the person my family and friends can look up to.
You’d be surprised to learn that I: hate public speaking.
The most adventurous thing I’ve ever done is: drive race cars for 13 years.
My favorite way to relax is: on the ranch with family and cattle.
I’m most proud of: my wife and children.
Every morning I read: local newspapers.
My favorite meal is: turkey dinner with all the fixings.
My pet peeve is: lack of accountability.
My motto is: “Every day is a good day. Some are just better than others.”
The last book I read was: The Bible.
My favorite movie is: The Sound of Music.
My favorite music is: country music and classical music.
My favorite president is: soon-to-be NACo President Valerie Brown.

Mayor Claude Ramsey, Hamilton County, Tenn. (second from right) shows off his Healthy Communities Leadership Award presented during the Childhood Obesity Prevention Summit held in Washington, D.C. in early May. Also pictured are: (l-r) Maya Rockeymore, director, Leadership for Healthy Communities; Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, president and CEO, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; Ramsey and Larry Naake, NACo executive director.
State, local government plan to expand Secure Communities Program

BY MARIUMA SANZ
ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

At the same time the Obama administration has proposed eliminating the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program, which reimburses state and local governments for the cost of incarcerating criminal aliens, it is planning to expand the Secure Communities Program, which uses technology to identify and deport high-risk criminal aliens.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), began Secure Communities as a pilot project in 2008. The Obama administration has set a goal of expanding the program nationwide by 2012.

Secure Communities uses biometric technology and conducts integrated DHS and Department of Justice record checks on all arrested and incarcerated persons, as well as criminals previously released from custody.

Currently, local law enforcement submits fingerprints through the Federal Bureau of Investigation to check criminal history. Under the secure communities process, the information submitted to the FBI would be automatically checked against the DHS database to access immigration information.

Secure Communities sets three priority levels for the types of criminals that will be identified, detained and deported. Level 1 includes individuals who have been convicted of major drug offenses and violent offenses such as murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery and kidnapping. Level 2 includes individuals who have been convicted of minor drug offenses, property offenses, larceny, fraud and money laundering. Level 3 includes individuals convicted of other offenses.

From October 2008 to April 2009, ICE deported 2,500 Level 1 individuals using the Secure Communities process.

Two workshops at NACo Annual Conference to focus on childhood obesity

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that allow children and families greater use of school facilities for physical activity.

He has also initiated a community gardening program, partnered with schools, restaurants and community groups to develop a campaign that promotes healthy food choices, and has established plans to develop multi-use trails to encourage walking and biking.

Thirty-three percent of children and adolescents in the U.S. are considered overweight or obese. Obesity increases the chance that individuals will develop serious health problems, such as Type 2 diabetes, heart disease or other chronic health issues. Additionally, studies assessing the broader economic effects associated with rising obesity rates show that nationwide more than $117 billion is spent annually to pay for obesity-related medical expenses and other costs related to reduced productivity and absenteeism.

As part of the childhood obesity prevention grant, NACo is providing direct technical assistance to four counties and convening community dialogues that bring local stakeholders together to develop a childhood obesity community-wide action plan.

A monthly newsletter is sent to NACo’s Healthy Communities Network and provides program highlights, grant opportunities and updates on childhood obesity prevention efforts around the country.

Additionally, at NACo’s 2009 Annual Conference July 24–28 in Nashville, Tenn., two workshops will focus on the issue of childhood obesity.

One workshop will highlight creative and comprehensive childhood obesity prevention and reduction programs developed by particular counties and the other will allow participants to visit the Nashville Collaborative, a partnership to reduce pediatric obesity between the Metro Nashville Parks and Recreation Department and Vanderbilt University’s Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital.

For more information on NACo’s childhood obesity prevention program, please contact Anita Cardwell, acardwell@naco.org or 202/942-4267.

Register now for NACo Green Competitions...

Change the World, Start with ENERGY STAR Campaign... and Drive $marter Challenge

Two Competitions, Two Ways to...

• Go Green • Save Money
• Help the Environment • Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions
• Improve Air Quality • Promote Energy Independence

New this Year... Win $5,000 or $3,500 Grants! Courtesy of Wal-Mart and AutoZone

These annual competitions will run July 1 through November 30. Counties must be registered in order to participate. To register your county visit: www.naco.org/competitionregistration.

• Change the World, Start with ENERGY STAR Campaign – through this competition, counties collect pledges from county employees and residents to change a light in their home to an energy-efficient one and choose among a variety of other actions they can take to help save energy.

• Drive $marter Challenge – counties motivate and empower county employees and residents to educate themselves on how to reduce gasoline use by keeping their cars in good working order, driving less, and driving more fuel efficiently.

For more information contact Kelly Zonderwyk at kzonderwyk@naco.org.
NACo board recommends eliminating president-elect position

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administering discount dental programs. The founder of the network is a dentist. The Careington program offers an average discount on dental services of 38 percent through a network of 62,000 dentists. The firm can include another 18,000 dentists by adding another network with which it is associated. Careington has dentists in all but two states — Vermont and Montana — and has expressed a willingness to recruit dentists in Montana for its network with NACo’s assistance.

The program will work differently than NACo’s free prescription drug card program. An individual would pay an annual fee of $59 for the discount card. With the card, the individual gets a discount on a full schedule of services. A consultant, working with NACo on the program, determined that if the individual spends $170 on dental services in a year, then the card would pay for itself through the savings. The fee for a family of two or more people would be $69 per year.

Careington was recommended by a task force of county officials, chaired by Kent County, Del. Commissioner Alan Angel, following a bid and review process and the assistance of an outside consultant. The Board authorized NACo staff to negotiate a contract with Careington to launch the program. NACo will begin the one-year pilot program with 30–35 counties participating.

NACo President Don Stapley, who appointed the task force to review NACo’s governance and structure, supported the 11 recommendations saying he believes they will make the association stronger. Stapley and Greg Cox, task force chair and supervisor from San Diego County, Calif., led a forum for Board members prior to the meeting to explain and discuss the recommendations.

Governance Changes

At the Board meeting, Cox presented the 11 recommendations. Several Board members opposed an initial effort by former NACo President Bill Hansell, to have all recommendations adopted in the same motion. “There are many things on the table,” said Kathay Rennels, Larimer County, Colo. commissioner. “I hate to see the work of the task force be lost because of voting all at once.”

Rennels successfully called for a substitute motion that allowed a separate vote on each recommendation. Subsequently, the Board approved all 11 recommendations with three amendments. The first amendment applied to Recommendation I and suggested that candidates for second vice president voluntarily limit travel to states that decide which candidate to support at in-state meetings. A second amendment affected Recommendation 2 and would require states to submit in writing their votes for second vice president at the Annual Conference.

The third amendment concerned Recommendation 8 and the selection of regional representatives to the Executive Committee. It would give each state one vote when the regions caucus to choose representatives. Some Board members questioned the state make-up of the four regions. Former NACo President Karen Miller, who had offered the amendments, accepted a friendly amendment that would require staff to produce three options of the regional divisions of the country for the Board to consider.

Governance Recommendations

The first seven recommendations can be implemented immediately. The last four require bylaws changes. Following are the recommendations:

1. Duration and Costs of Campaigns for NACo Vice President: The task force recommends that candidates for the position of second vice president:
   • notify the NACo president in writing of his or her intent to run for NACo second vice president between Jan. 1 and Jan. 31 of the year of the election
   • include in that letter a resume or other description stating how the candidate’s background and experience meets or exceeds the certification requirements established by the Board of Directors
   • voluntarily agree to limit non-travel-related campaign expenses to no more than $25,000
   • agree to complete a candidate certification questionnaire as adopted by the Board of Directors, and
   • agree that campaigning, and spending campaign funds, would be restricted to the period beginning on the first day the Legislative Conference and ending on the day of the election at the Annual Conference

The Task Force also recommends that:

• all candidates’ letters of intent and completed questionnaires be published in a February edition of County News and posted on the NACo Web site, and
• each candidate for NACo second vice president be introduced at a Legislative Conference general session and be allowed to briefly address the delegates.

2. Election Challenges: Specify the procedure for challenging an election at the Annual Conference Business Meeting.

A simple procedure for challenging an election at the Annual Conference Business Meeting would be to require a time interval of at least 30 minutes between the time the last state’s member counties cast their votes and the time the results of the election are announced. The president would ask if there are any objections or challenges, and then require the challenger (a voting delegate) to state the reasons for such objection or challenge.

3. NACo Affiliate Organizations: Review the current criteria established for recognizing affiliate organizations.

4. Steering Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs: Develop guidelines, to be approved by the Board of Directors, for the presidential appointments of steering committee chairs and vice chairs.

5. Administrative Procedures Manual: Direct NACo staff to compile and publish an Administrative Procedures Manual for adoption by the Board of Directors. Procedures for applying for an appointment to a NACo steering or standing committee, credentialing procedures, and the NACo policy process currently are found in separate documents. They should be restated and published in an Administrative Procedures Manual.

6. Board of Directors Responsibilities: The Board of Directors should review the existing guidelines, expectations and responsibilities for members of the NACo Board of Directors, modify them as necessary, and reaffirm them.

7. Steering Committee Action and Votes: Revise the process for reporting actions and votes taken by steering committees, to require that minority votes be reported to the Board of Directors sitting as a resolutions committee, and permitting a minority report if there is a “substantial voting minority.” “A substantial voting minority” is defined as 25 percent of those present and voting.

8. NACo Officers: Reduce the number of elected officers of NACo to four: the President, First Vice President, Second Vice President and Immediate Past President. The primary reason for this recommendation is the belief that many persons are unable to make the current five-year commitment necessary to move up the chairs in the leadership structure, especially for county officials in counties with term limits.

NACo Officer Responsibilities: The responsibilities of the NACO officers shall be the same as stated in the existing bylaws for the existing Executive Committee. These responsibilities include: responsible for the property, funds and business affairs of the association in the absence of the Board of Directors; have and exercise all powers of authority granted by the Board of Directors; establish such positions and salary schedules as necessary to conduct the affairs of the association subject to the approval of the Board of Directors.

The other responsibility in the existing bylaws relating to “recommending the appointment and compensation of the Executive Director to the Board of Directors” would, in part, become the

![Photo courtesy of Blue Earth County, Minn.](image-url)
Four regional members proposed for NACo board of directors

BOARD MEETING from page 6

9. NACo Executive Committee: Increase the size of the Executive Committee by adding four regional (geographic) members from among the members of the Board of Directors and define their responsibilities.

An expanded Executive Committee would provide closer contact with counties within each region, keep members in those regions better informed, and allow for membership recruitment activities and appropriate visits to in-district state association meetings by the geographic representatives. The four new members of the Executive Committee would help bridge the gap between the relatively small number of officers (four) and the large number of members of the Board of Directors (131).

Although not having responsibility for the day-to-day policy matters of the association, the new Executive Committee members could provide input to the president and the other officers with respect to policy and business matters on behalf of their regional members between Board meetings. They would meet with the officers at the Legislative Conference, the Western Interstate Region Conference, the Annual Conference and the full Board meeting. This would not be an additional expense to NACo, since they would be attending the Board of Directors meetings.

The new Executive Committee would recommend the appointment of the executive director to the Board of Directors. Rather than recommending the compensation of the executive director to the Board of Directors, the new Executive Committee would act as a “compensation committee” that would review and set, subject to budgetary approval, the compensation of the Executive Director each year. This practice is in keeping with practices in other like NACo’s.

The Regional Executive Committee election process would be as follows:

- The Board members from the states comprising each region would caucus immediately following the conclusion of the organizational meeting of the Board of Directors at the 2010 Annual Conference.
- Each Board member from a region is entitled to vote for their regional representative on the Executive Committee.
- Any Board member from the region may nominate any other Board member from the region who is an elected official (except current officers and NACo Past Presidents).
- The Board of Directors will make the final determination of the states that comprise the four regions, a decision that must be made prior to the organizational meeting of the Board of Directors at the 2010 Annual Conference. The task force made no recommendation on regional state composition, but suggests that several factors could be considered, including the population of the states, the number of member counties per state, the population of member counties in each state and the number of Board members that represent each state.

10. Candidate Certification Requirements: The NACo Board of Directors should establish the certification requirements for potential candidates for NACo offices. This recommendation would apply to candidates for second vice president. The Task Force recommends that the Board establish objective candidate certification requirements that reflect such matters as each candidate’s prior service with NACo and whether the candidate has the support of his or her home county board and/or state association.

A candidate questionnaire should be developed and used as a method for assembling this information. The Nominating Committee would review candidates’ completed questionnaires after receipt of candidates’ letters of intent, which must be submitted prior to the Legislative Conference each year. Nominations could still be made from the floor at the Annual Conference. If the Nominating Committee determined that a candidate did not meet all of the certification requirements that would not prevent a candidate from continuing to seek election.

11. Chief Elected Officer and Chief Executive Officer: Amend the NACo bylaws to indicate that the president is the chief elected officer of the organization and that the executive director is the chief executive officer.
In the face of dwindling revenues and rising unemployment, county officials have stepped up their efforts to recruit or retain businesses in their communities. The following is a snapshot of their endeavors.

Fairfield County, Ohio
Fairfield County hosted an Economic Development Summit with about 70 business leaders from throughout the county. In conjunction with the Pickerington Area Chamber of Commerce, the Fairfield County Economic Development Department organized the summit with representatives from state and local agencies to discuss the resources available for area businesses, such as funding for training, workforce development, and creating business strategies. Representatives from Ohio University also highlighted funding available for businesses to participate in the university’s employee training program.

Monmouth County, N.J.
After meeting with about 100 business owners, leaders in Monmouth County, N.J. created a new program to help business leaders navigate the numerous government incentives for job creation and growth. The new program, called BizConnect, is a one-stop location for current financial information and for resources to find qualified workers. For those owners who cannot stop by the location, the program also has a telephone hotline where owners can leave messages. Most inquires are responded to within 24 hours.

El Dorado County, Colo.
The Board of Supervisors in El Dorado County, Colo. helped sponsor a summit for business leaders to discuss opportunities for local businesses and provide information regarding how the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act applies to county businesses. The summit explained the funding opportunities provided by the act and the reporting requirements attached to the funding. The summit also provided an opportunity to discuss local projects and workforce resources in the county with other business leaders.

Oakland County, Mich.
A new tool kit developed by Oakland County, Mich. seeks to collaborate with its municipalities in attracting new technology based businesses. The Technology Planning tool kit contains suggestions for local governments to modify ordinances, modernize master plans and other proposals in order to be more flexible to the needs of technology-driven businesses. The county hopes to work with all the local communities in order to make Oakland County an attractive place for potential employers.

L.A. County
A small-business development program provided by Los Angeles County is the Business Technology Center incubator run by the county’s Community Economic Commission. The self-supporting program provides below-market rent for office space, free mentoring and consulting and some fee-based services for start-up companies. The center also offers resources on federal funding opportunities available, including grants through the Recovery Act.

NACo Scholarship Winners Offer Retirement Insights

For the fourth year in a row, Nationwide and NACo teamed up to encourage high-school seniors to think about retirement through the annual NACo-Nationwide scholarship. Graduating high-school seniors whose parent or grandparent contributes to the NACo 457 Deferred Compensation Plan were eligible.

They were asked to write a short essay describing the most important actions a public sector employee or the new president and Congress can take in 2009 concerning retirement savings. Not an easy question given the state of the financial industry.

Lisa Cole, director of the NACo Financial Services Corporation, said this year’s entries were strong. “Nearly 600 students responded and the answers they gave developed an impressive list of actions and strategies to help Americans to take responsibility for their retirement.”

Louie Watson, Nationwide’s vice president of strategic relationships, agreed: “If these entries represent a sample of how America’s high-school seniors are thinking, our country has a bright future ahead,” he said.

A Larger Field Produces Quality Submissions
Four entries were selected by Nationwide and NACo to receive the $2,000 scholarship. Many entries focused on personal accountability, as did the winners.

The opening statement, written by Ciara Brown from Haralson County, Ga., captures a theme of many submissions. She wrote, “In light of today’s economy, the most important action for the public sector employee to take is to become active in their own retirement investment decisions.”

Sara Jones from Orange County, Calif. offered similar thoughts: “The single most important action that a public sector employee can take in 2009 in order to prepare for retirement is to be proactive about educating themselves about their retirement.”

Other entries also looked at actions the government should take to help improve Americans’ retirement futures.

About the Winners
This year’s scholarship winners are winners in the classroom and in their communities as well. Ciara Alexandra Brown, a senior at Haralson County High School in Tallapoosa, Ga., has participated in volleyball, serving two years as captain, and earned recognition as All-Region following her senior-year season. She also participated in track and field, throwing the shot put and discus; has been a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, BETA Club, and Spanish Club serving as president her junior year.

Brown has also been active in student government, having served as president of the junior class and as president of the Student Government Organization during her senior year. She plans to attend West Central Technical College pursuing a degree in dental hygiene. Her grandmother, Carol Brown, is employed by Haralson County.

Allan Faircloth from Durham County, N.C. felt leaders in Washington should be proactive and “develop policies to resuscitate the economy and bring back consumer confidence . . . pass a bill that enforces all high school students to pass a personal finance course, to meet graduation requirements . . . [and require] automatic enrollment and payroll-deduction [in retirement plans].”

Retirement plans auto-enrollment led a list of “five areas in which the government could encourage education and participation” suggested by Matthew Khosropour from Lafayette, La. He also called for increased employer education, mandatory retirement plan availability, and more matching funds both from employers and the government, especially for lower-income employees.

NACo Scholarship Winners Offer Retirement Insights

“If these entries represent a sample of how America’s high-school seniors are thinking, our country has a bright future ahead...”

Sara Jones, a junior at Aliso Niguel High School in Aliso Viejo, Calif. has consistently made the Principal’s Honor Roll while competing with the school’s soccer, cross country, track and field, lacrosse and surf teams, earning 12 junior varsity and varsity letters and three special honors: Rookie of the Year, Scholar Athlete and the highly coveted Tri-Sport Varsity Athlete awards.

While at Manhattan College in Riverdale, N.Y., she will pursue a degree in chemical engineering. “It is my dream to work in the cosmetics and/or pharmaceuticals industry,” Jones said. Her father, Jon Jones, serves as battalion chief for the Orange County Fire Authority, which sponsors the NACo deferred compensation program for its employees.

Throughout his life Matthew Tyler Khosropour has pursued two passions: sports and music. He has played competitive sports including hockey, baseball, football, basketball and tennis. A recent graduate of Catholic High School in New Iberia, La., he will enroll in the University of Louisiana at Lafayette’s nursing program. He is especially interested in the fields of trauma, emergency room and orthopedic care.

Khosropour is the son of Tonia Khosropour, who is employed by the Lafayette Consolidated Government in Louisiana.

Research News

County Programs Promote Business Incentives

In the face of dwindling revenues and rising unemployment, county officials have stepped up their efforts to recruit or retain businesses in their communities. The following is a snapshot of their endeavors.

Fairfield County, Ohio
Fairfield County hosted an Economic Development Summit with about 70 business leaders from throughout the county. In conjunction with the Pickerington Area Chamber of Commerce, the Fairfield County Economic Development Department organized the summit with representatives from state and local agencies to discuss the resources available for area businesses, such as funding for training, workforce development, and creating business strategies. Representatives from Ohio University also highlighted funding available for businesses to participate in the university’s employee training program.

Monmouth County, N.J.
After meeting with about 100 business owners, leaders in Monmouth County, N.J. created a new program to help business leaders navigate the numerous government incentives for job creation and growth. The new program, called BizConnect, is a one-stop location for current financial information and for resources to find qualified workers. For those owners who cannot stop by the location, the program also has a telephone hotline where owners can leave messages. Most inquires are responded to within 24 hours.

El Dorado County, Colo.
The Board of Supervisors in El Dorado County, Colo. helped sponsor a summit for business leaders to discuss opportunities for local businesses and provide information regarding how the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act applies to county businesses. The summit explained the funding opportunities provided by the act and the reporting requirements attached to the funding. The summit also provided an opportunity to discuss local projects and workforce resources in the county with other business leaders.

Oakland County, Mich.
A new tool kit developed by Oakland County, Mich. seeks to collaborate with its municipalities in attracting new technology based businesses. The Technology Planning tool kit contains suggestions for local governments to modify ordinances, modernize master plans and other proposals in order to be more flexible to the needs of technology-driven businesses. The county hopes to work with all the local communities in order to make Oakland County an attractive place for potential employers.

L.A. County
A small-business development program provided by Los Angeles County is the Business Technology Center incubator run by the county’s Community Economic Commission. The self-supporting program provides below-market rent for office space, free mentoring and consulting and some fee-based services for start-up companies. The center also offers resources on federal funding opportunities available, including grants through the Recovery Act.

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

Scholarship Honors 29 Years of Partnership
Nationwide sponsors the Nationwide NACo Scholarship to recognize its nearly three-decade continuing partnership with NACo and its member counties. As provider of the NACo deferred compensation program, Nationwide regularly reports to the NACo Deferred Compensation Advisory Committee on industry trends, updates statistics on the program and provides ongoing education on retirement issues.

NACo receives from Nationwide payment for NACo’s endorsement and license of its name and logo for use by Nationwide in connection with the NACo Deferred Compensation Plan and related products and services. These funds are used by NACo to sponsor the scholarship and services for the benefit of its members.

(Research News was written by Bob Beasley, communications consultant, Nationwide Retirement Solutions.)
It wasn’t long ago that visitors to Santa Clara County, Calif. Department of Corrections could only see inmates on weekends, if they could get an appointment over the phone, or were among the lucky few to get to the jail early enough in the morning to get place in line.

Joyce Wing, chief information officer, Information Services Department, said the process was similar to that of many other county correctional facilities.

“It was weekends only, first come, first serve,” she said. The tension level was extremely high for the visitors, inmates and staff. An inmate would know he had visitors, but he wasn’t allowed to see them.

A Web-based application developed by the Corrections and Information Services departments speeded up the jail visitation process, allowing visitors to be pre-screened, schedule visits, and obtain booking and bail information via the county’s Web site. The program was recently named one of 16 finalists for the Department of Corrections or finding a computer at their homes.

This meant they had to access the Web site from computer kiosks set up at the front desk at the Department of Corrections or find a computer at a public library. In the end, computer access appeared to be no problem. Wing said public response to the system was immediate, with a spike of more than 1,000 new registrants in one month when it debuted online in January 2006, and the number of visits scheduled went from 6,000 to 10,000. Today, more than half of all visits scheduled went from 6,000 to 10,000.

The jail early enough in the morning to get appointments over the phone, and inmates on weekends, if they could get an appointment over the phone, or were among the lucky few to get to the jail early enough in the morning to get place in line.

“This has been one of our top used applications,” she said. “We were very pleased to hear that it was accepted so quickly.” The Department of Corrections was thrilled because the amount of calls coming to them reduced incredibly.”

Wing said staff and administrators were able to increase the number of possible visitation days from two to six, and visitors to the jail have expressed enthusiasm at the convenience of use, notification of schedule changes, and increased frequency of visits. She said some of the visitors coming from a distance are glad to be able to visit with friends and loved ones more than once a week.

“I find them to be friendly and they started to see how we incorporated the Web into improving county services. It became part of the county’s 2002 e-Government Strategic Plan, a detailed plan for Internet and intranet services.

The system began Jan. 30, 2004 at the men’s facility and expanded to the women’s facility and the main jail two years later. Implementation costs were $384,000. The current operating budget is $726,000, including corrections and technical staff, as well as infrastructure and support.

According to figures from the Department of Corrections, the jail is one of the 20 largest systems in the United States, housing an average of 4,632 inmates per day. The number of inmates booked through the system every year is approximately 65,000 in the three facilities. Most of the inmates stay 110 days and a majority of the inmate population has a history of drug and alcohol problems. The total number of inmates with information in the online system equals more than 26,000 and the number of visits from July 2007 to June 2008 was 121,305.

Potential visitors register online, automated warrant and background checks are conducted and requests for visits are approved or denied via e-mail. Once approved, visits can be scheduled online as far as three weeks in advance. The system also coordinates with the county’s Criminal Justice Information Control System, sending out alerts if visits need to be rescheduled or canceled, and tracking inmate information, including number of visits and status of incarceration, hearings, booking and bail information. If an inmate is released before a scheduled visit, it is automatically canceled and the visitor is notified.

The idea for the online reservation system came about when representatives from 37 county departments met with officials to incorporate the Web into improving county services. It became part of the county’s 2002 e-Government Strategic Plan, a detailed plan for Internet and intranet services.

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There was concern initially that visitors would not be able to use the new system, since many visitors did not have access to computers in their homes.

This meant they had to access the Web site from computer kiosks set up at the front desk at the Department of Corrections or find a computer at a public library. In the end, computer access appeared to be no problem. Wing said public response to the system was immediate, with a spike of more than 1,000 new registrants in one month when it debuted online in January 2006, and the number of visits scheduled went from 6,000 to 10,000. Today, more than half of all visits scheduled went from 6,000 to 10,000.

“IT’S very rewarding because, as far as the technology side goes, we don’t always get to see that,” she said. “It makes you feel like you made a difference, and that’s what it’s about.”

Wing said the program remains the only one of its kind to her knowledge and has an “end-to-end system supporting the visit scheduling process,” but many other jurisdictions have come calling, interested in creating their own systems, including several county sheriff’s offices in the state.

She advised counties interested in creating similar programs to look at how they are changing their processes. She said members of the Department of Corrections staff who were using remaining the only one of its kind to her knowl- edge has an “end-to-end system supporting the visit scheduling process,” but many other jurisdictions have come calling, interested in creating their own systems, including several county sheriff’s offices in the state.

She advised counties interested in creating similar programs to look at how they are changing their processes. She said members of the Department of Corrections staff who were using computerized applications were surprised at the admiration that the system has received. The system is now being used in other jurisdictions throughout the United States, including the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, and is being considered for use in other areas of the country.

There is no fee to display a poster; however you are responsible for getting your poster materials to the conference and at least one person from each participating county must be registered to attend the conference. Detailed information on poster size, content and setup will be emailed to you upon receipt of your registration.

Space is limited. Take advantage of this opportunity to showcase your county’s health work by registering as a participant no later than June 11, 2009. To register or for more information about the poster session, please visit www.naco.org/healthyposters or contact Anita Cardwell at 202-942-4267 or acardwell@naco.org.
News From the Nation’s Counties

**CALIFORNIA**

The U.S. Supreme Court refused to review a lawsuit brought by SAN BERNARDINO and SAN DIEGO counties, challenging a California law that requires counties to issue medical marijuana IDs. According to the Oakland Tribune, the lawsuit filed in 2006 argues the federal ban on marijuana trumps the state Medical Marijuana Act, so counties did not have to comply. Several other counties also opted not to issue the cards until a Supreme Court decision was rendered. Diane Jacob, chair of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, said the board was hoping for a resolution to what they saw as a conflict between state and local law. “In my opinion, there remains a gray area that will continue to pose challenges for law enforcement and users,” she told the Tribune.

**FLORIDA**

ST. LUCIE COUNTY is lobby- ing the state to get hospitals to charge Medicaid rates for inmate care. County commissioners say a large portion of hospital expenses for walk-in indigent patients is covered under Medicaid, but since inmate patients do not receive Medicaid, their bills are much higher. According to zpalm.com, the county housed 1,484 inmates a day in 2008, and paid more than $1.6 million to cover inmate hospital expenses.

**INDIANA**

- Approximately 1,092 meth labs were found in counties across the state last year, indystar.com reported. The majority of the labs were found in abandoned houses, trailers and apartments in NOBLE and ELKHART counties.

Health officials are finding it difficult enforce state regulations requiring property owners to pay for cleanup, especially when it costs at least $1,300 for a contaminated testing and much more to decontaminate an apartment. Cleanup of contaminated buildings is important because meth residue and contaminants can cause health problems and be detected for more than 10 years.

- JEFFERSON COUNTY officials are worried a cache of deeds, marriage certificates, adoption records and other documents dating back to the early 1800s were destroyed in a fire that damaged the 154-year-old courthouse.

The Courier-Journal reported there was no loss of life, but damages to the three-story wood and brick building included the newly renovated gold dome bell and clock tower and the roof. Workers put the finishing touches on the building just hours before the fire broke out.

**KANSAS**

You’ll find the latest majority-minority county not in California, Florida or Texas, but in the heartland of America. FINNEY COUNTY is one of six counties across the nation that became majority-minority between 2007 and 2008, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The Census Bureau defines majority-minority as a county where more than half the population is made up of a group that is not single-race, non-Hispanic white.

The five other counties are: Orange County, Fla., the nation’s 35th most populous county; Stanislaus County, Calif.; Warren County, Miss.; and Edwards and Schleicher counties in Texas.

Nearly 10 percent (309) of the nation’s counties were majority-minority as of July 1, 2008.

**MARYLAND**

- In some counties the Civil War is never far away. A ST. MARY’S COUNTY landfill employee who was rummaging through the trash recently on a search for recyclable materials came across a Civil War-era projectile, The Washington Post reported.

The bullet-shaped 16-inch piece of metal was taken to an undisclosed location in the county and destroyed. No one knows how it got to the landfill.

- MONTGOMERY and PRINCE GEORGE’S counties were hoping to balance their budgets by cutting education funding below the state minimum, but the Maryland Board of Education rejected the move, The Washington Post reported. Montgomery County officials were trying to plug a $79.5 million hole in the budget, and Prince George’s officials wanted to save $23.6 million. The state also rejected a similar request from WICOMICO COUNTY, saying that the other 24 counties in Maryland have paid their share.

**MINNESOTA**

The county’s checkbook program should be phased out “as quickly as practicable to minimize risks to the county, taxpayers and clients.”

The program consists of checking accounts for families of people with disabilities, where they can access a $15 million common fund of state and federal grant money, to purchase goods and services for their disabled loved ones.

The Star Tribune reported almost 700 families use the checkbooks.

**OREGON**

It’s a conundrum faced by counties everywhere: whether to restore service with funding that may or may not be available down the road, or continue with the status quo. That’s the choice LANE COUNTY faces as it debates increasing capacity at its already strained county jail. The jail has made more than 3,700 early releases since July.

Lane County commissioners are debating whether to increase capacity in the fiscal year starting July 1 by spending $3.2 million in federal timber payments, according to The Register-Guard in an online report.

Pending more information on the state’s 2010 budget, Board Chairman Pete Sorenson and others are opposed to the proposal. Sorenson said he does not want to fund projects that could eventually result in new taxes or deep cuts in other services because the project’s funding source is not assured beyond a few years. And that is the case with the timber payments, won last year in a hard-fought battle at the federal level, but only guaranteed until 2012.

The controversy needs to be resolved by July 1 when the new fiscal year begins.

**TEXAS**

It’s gotten hog wild in PALO PINTO COUNTY — so much so that the county commissioners took steps last month toward re-implementing a governmental trapper program.

The goal of the program is to reduce or eliminate damage caused by wildlife, particularly feral hogs and coyotes, according to county officials.

“We need it very badly because the hogs are a big problem in our area,” said Palo Pinto County Agriculture Life Service Extension Agent Scott Mauney.

County Judge Mike Smiddy said an earlier public hearing paved the way for the county to seek reinstatement of the trapper program. “After the public meeting the evening of May 14, which was attended by more than 25 interested persons, it became clear that we needed to act to re-join the trapper program,” Smiddy said.

The federal government trapper program would cost the county $2,200 per month.

**UTAH**

Transmitters that track and report a car’s emissions could help DAVIS COUNTY clean up its air. The county has outfitted 15 of its vehicles with the devices, which plug into onboard diagnostics chips, or OBDs.
My very deepest sympathies go to my friend Neil on the death of his mother, who was 87 years old. Losing a loved one is a traumatic event. It is a time when memories of a life well lived keep jumping out at us at unexpected times and places. We may walk into a closet and find an article of clothing that belonged to our mom. We may have to stop and deal with the flood of memories of seeing that old dress or pair of shoes.

We seek “closure” as the counselor would say but it never quite comes. Over time, however, grief turns to great memories of great times and sometimes of difficult times. Memories evolve into thoughts of legacy and how a departed loved one affected our lives.

The immediate weeks and months after the death of a loved one should be a time of remembrance and a time for peaceful coming to grips with what has happened. It is of course a time to deal with the inevitable crop of end-of-life issues, often involving insurance companies, real-estate transactions, the inevitable horde of orbiting lawyers, and, yes, government agencies.

This article, however, is about one government agency encounter following the death of my friend’s loved one. It is really about a double death — the death of person we love, known in Social Security parlance as a “recipient,” and the death of common sense which results from the blunt trauma injury of crashing into a bureaucracy. It could take the form of a letter to the Commissioner of Social Security which might read something like this:

Dear Commissioner, I want to share with you the story of my recent encounter with the Social Security Administration over the matter of the $255 death benefit claimed as a result of the death of a loved one. Mother was many things in life, but you may know her best perhaps as a “recipient.” She was a client of the Social Security Administration, arguably a “customer.” So is my father who is now 90. In the worst of all possible times, immediately following the death of a loved one, our encounter with Social Security required crawling over broken glass. It required an “encounter of the bureaucratic type” which should hardly be cause for additional grief. This is especially true since many of the claimants of the $255 death benefit are themselves frail senior citizens, perhaps with reduced or impaired cognitive abilities.

When things are at their worst for a customer, organizations should be at their very best, at their most sympathetic, and at their greatest simplicity in terms of transactions. Bearing all that in mind, here is what happened when I flew across the country to help my father cope with the many matters resulting from the death of his wife of 65 years. One of those was the Social Security death benefit claim.

First, we found out that a claim had to be made in person. It could not be made online. We noted, ironically, that you could apply for Social Security pension benefits online without ever stepping into the office. We noted that the pension benefits may pay out thousands of dollars a month for decades and it can be done online, at home. For the $255 benefit, however, the process required a personal visit to the Social Security office. Surely, the full weight of the federal government could be somehow brought to bear to make it possible for this claim to be made from the quiet solitude of a grieving person’s home.

In any event, I drove my father to the office where we had the pleasure and privilege of waiting for more than two hours to be helped. Of course during these two hours there were many other people in the office frustrated, sad and worried about the impact of the death of their loved one on benefits. During this period my father and I overheard many people sharing their tragic stories, which of course we found neither therapeutic nor desirable at this particular time.

In any event, after our enjoyable wait we were seen by a very helpful person. She was so helpful that she told us, after various forms were filled out, that we had to come back and visit again. This time we had to bring an original or certified copy of the marriage license back to the Social Security office in order to claim the $255.

Needless to say a marriage of 65 years’ duration, complete with migration from the “old country” to America, is not amenable or consistent with a modern electronic home filing system. After all of that effort, I drove my father back home amidst head shaking and considerable moaning and groaning. Later, while going through a box of photos, I found a weathered original marriage license now in three different pieces reflecting the obvious signs of being 65 years of age.

This was more than twice the age of the very nice clerk. She informed us that the marriage license was a requirement, because, after all, we may be claiming the $255 for a 65-year marriage that never really existed. After all, an affidavit signed under penalty of perjury, on behalf of a grieving 87-year-old widower was not enough.

Yet again, we journeyed to the Social Security office, marriage license in hand and presented it for the necessary processing. I am sure that the death benefit will appear in a timely manner and that my father will come to forget the memories of our encounter, as well as my re-peated offer to reduce the intentional infliction of pain and suffering by paying the $255 myself.

I do have another well-intentioned suggestion, dear commissioner, besides the automated processing option, to help make my father’s and my experience one of the last such painful ones in Social Security’s long history. It would be a recommendation that rules and processes be better mixed with the need for simplicity, tolerance and understanding.

Perhaps a “process improvement seminar” could be held to review this kind of experience and look for ways to make it simpler — such as submitting online claims for the $255. Perhaps accepting a sworn affidavit, even one signed off electronically, would be within the realm of scientific and bureaucratic possibility. I would recommend that the facilitator of the session, which should be mandatory for all higher-level Social Security administrators, be at least 87 years old. I further recommend that the seminar last several days and that it begin with an unanticipated two-hour period of waiting before anything happens.

Finally, to get credit for attendance at this mandatory seminar, perhaps connected to any pay increases, all attendees should be required to return after several days with an original or certified copy of their birth certificate and a physician’s note to establish that they were actually alive. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,
A friend of the HR Doctor

In life, and even in bureaucracies, be at your best when things are at their worst.

Phil Rosenberg
The HR Doctor • www.hrdc.net
**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR – ALLEGANY COUNTY, MD.**

**Salary:** DOQ.

Chief Administrative Officer of the County responsible to the Board of County Commissioners for the administration of all County affairs placed in the Administrator’s charge by or under the County code or other applicable law.

**KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES:** Considerable knowledge of: the principles and practices of public administration; county government organization; and management decision-making principles. Strong financial and strategic planning skills and experience. Demonstrated ability to: oral and written communication; development of policies and programs for public administration; and supervision of a staff of professionals. Strong interpersonal skills. Ability to be proactive, question, insightful, and innovative; to deal with sensitive information and issues; and to negotiate agreements. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential tasks.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** Bachelor's Degree in Public or Business Administration or related field from an accredited college or university and at least six years of experience in public administration/government service. A Master's Degree in Business or Public Administration or related field preferred. (A comparable amount of training and experience may be substituted for the minimum qualifications.)

**SALARY AND BENEFITS:** Salary commensurate with experience and qualifications; comprehensive County benefits package including health and life insurance, paid leave, and pension/retirement. Allegany County is classified as a “code home rule” county under Article XI-F of the Constitution of Maryland, with an annual budget of $129,137,765, and approximately 600 full-time employees. Allegany County is situated in the heart of Western Md. equidistant from Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and Pittsburgh, Pa. with a total population of 73,000. The County’s diverse businesses and industries produce a myriad of different products including high-quality paper and packaging, raw resources for energy, and national defense equipment and materials, and employ approximately 35,000. The terrain of Allegany County is predominately rolling hills with rich forestation and open pastures. Long known for its heritage as a transportation hub, Allegany County offers an enviable quality of life, with low cost of living, good schools, low crime rates, and numerous cultural and recreational activities. Please visit our Web site at: www.gov.allconet.org/ for information on governmental structure and links to community, educational, and recreational resources. Applications and Complete Job Description may be obtained from: Allegany County Office Complex, 701 Kelly Road Cumberland, MD 21502-2803 or from our website: www.gov.allconet.org/https/jobs.html/ Please submit application, resume, and letter of interest to the Director of Human Resources at the above address.

**No phone calls please. Deadline for applications is June 30, 2021. ALLEGANY COUNTY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER.**

**WATER WASTEWATER DIVISION DIRECTOR – SANTA FE, N.M.**

**Salary:** $83,200 annually ($3,200 biweekly); DOQ.

Santa Fe County is seeking applicants for the position of Water and Wastewater Division Director. The primary purpose of this position is: Management, Operation, and supervision of the Water and Wastewater Division. The minimum qualifications for this position include: A Bachelor’s degree in engineering or other technical fields and a combination of education and experience sufficient to successfully perform the essential duties of the job such as those listed above.

**Chief Operations Officer – County of Berks, PA.**

**Salary:** $85,401–$115,542; DOQ.

The County of Berks, located in Southeastern Pennsylvania, is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Chief Operations officer. We are searching for a candidate with an innovative style to help meet the exciting challenges of our 3rd class County with approximately 2,600 employees and a $472 million budget. This position serves at the discretion of the Board of Commissioners and is responsible for the administration and management of all departments under the authority of the Board of Commissioners. Additional areas of responsibility include but are not limited to budgetary and fiscal operations, general administrative duties, purchasing, and liaison support to the court system, row officers, boards, and commissions of the County. Position requires a Master’s Degree in Public Administration, Business Administration, or related field with 10 years of progressively responsible managerial experience with previous experience in government preferred. Successful candidates will have executive level experience managing an organization of similar size/scope with an understanding of the function/organization of County government and thorough knowledge of public administration principles/practices. Position requires a high level of written/oral communication skills to interact and develop effective relationships with department heads, agency directors, elected officials, private contractors, media representatives, and the public. The ability to lead, organize, direct, coordinate, and mediate the activities of 50 plus diverse departments is essential. Salary includes an excellent benefits package including retirement plans and tuition reimbursement. Interested candidates should submit a confidential resume with salary requirements to: County of Berks, 633 Court Street, 8th Floor, Reading, PA 19601. Attention: Chief Operations Officer E.O.E. M/F/D/V.

**Loudoun County, Va.**

www.loudoun.gov

The Loudoun County seal is a genuine coat-of-arms devised in 1668 by the College of Arms in London. Based on the coat-of-arms of the Earl of Loudoun, for whom the county was named, it was the first official seal acceded by the College of Arms to an American county.

The coat-of-arms, attendant flag and a 300-pound stone from Loudoun Castle in Scotland were presented to the county by the Countess of Loudoun and the queen’s representative, the Rouge Dragon, in a ceremony never before held in the United States.

More information about the Loudoun County coat of arms can be found at www.loudoun.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=545 or johnson@naco.org.

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

*Job Market / Classifieds*

**What’s in a Seal?**

**Loudoun County, Va.**

www.loudoun.gov

The Loudoun County seal is a genuine coat-of-arms devised in 1668 by the College of Arms in London. Based on the coat-of-arms of the Earl of Loudoun, for whom the county was named, it was the first official seal acceded by the College of Arms to an American county.

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

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Join your county official colleagues for:

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- business solutions and services
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**NACO**

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION**

**July 24-28, 2009**