



COUNTY SCHOOL OFFERS STUDENTS A ROUTE TO SOBRIETY. **PG. 5**



MEET THE 2024 NACo-NATIONWIDE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS. **PG. 6**



TRANSPORTATION DESERT? MICRO-TRANSIT TO THE RESCUE! **PG. 9**

## After hurricanes hit, county election staff roll up their sleeves

by **Meredith Moran**  
staff writer

On Sept. 26, Category 4 Hurricane Helene devastated counties across nearly 500 miles of the southeast, killing more than 230 people and causing billions of dollars' worth of damage. The day after the storm, Corinne Duncan, Buncombe County, N.C.'s election services director, headed to the elections office, passing through non-functioning stoplights and maneuvering around several fallen trees on her way, to continue preparing for the 2024 presidential election.

The office had no water or cell service, but the power did not go out (more than 36,000 customers still don't have power in the county, as of Oct. 10, according to Duke Energy), so Duncan got to work, messaging elections staff and poll workers — making sure that they were safe, had a place to stay and that they would be prepared to work when early voting opened in 20 days.

The county's election workers hadn't been trained, some poll workers were forced to evacuate, six polling sites had been flooded and roughly 8,000 ballots were sent out in the days before the storm hit,

meaning they would potentially never reach the voters who had requested them. There was a lot to do in 20 days.

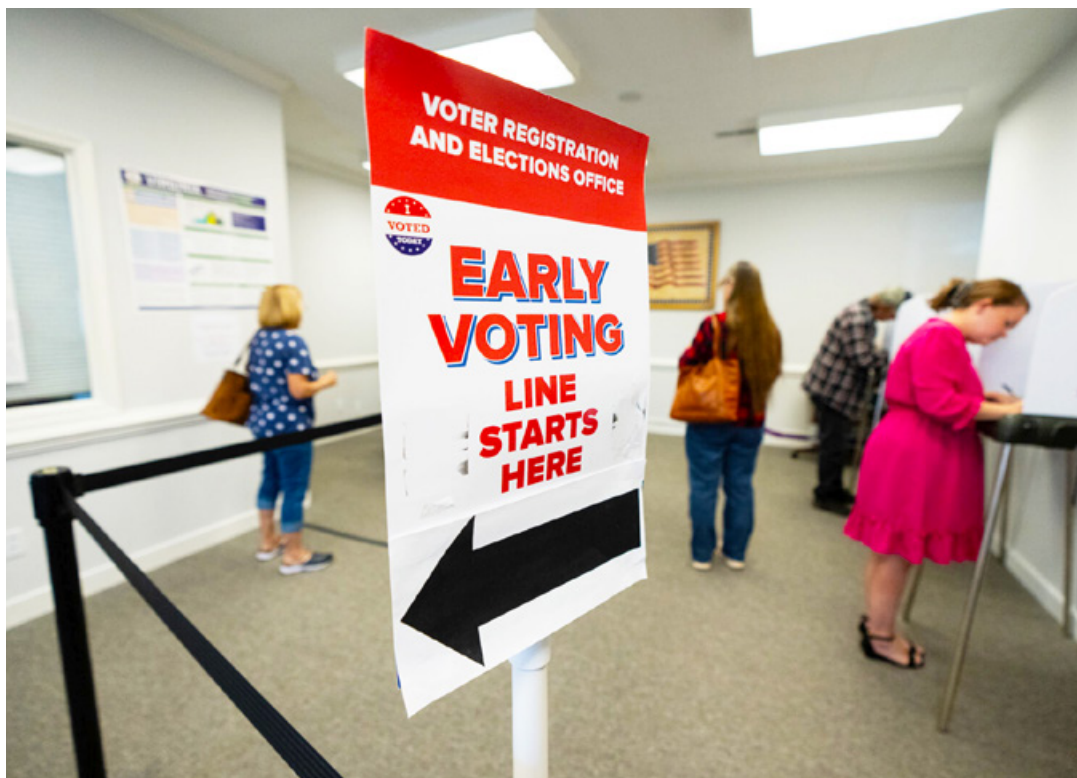
"We are definitely facing challenges and we're on a really tight timeline," Duncan said, a week before early voting started in the county. "... Sometimes, a saying turns into something different when you experience something, and for me, that has been 'Take it one day at a time.'"

### Back-to-back hurricanes

Two weeks after Hurricane Helene, Category 3 Hurricane Milton hit Florida. It was the second-most intense Atlantic hurricane over the Gulf of Mexico, on record. Manatee, Pinellas, Pasco and Sarasota counties experienced extensive damage from both Helene and Milton, and the latter unleashed destruction in a number of central and eastern Florida counties.

The damage to infrastructure from the storms, and the subsequent tornadoes, prompted Florida election supervisors to call on Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis to make changes to voting procedures for the General Election. On Oct. 16, DeSantis signed an executive order that

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Voters at the Orange County Voter Registration Office in Virginia take part in early voting. Early voting in the Commonwealth began Sept. 20. Across the country, counties in 47 states offer early voting. Photo by Bill Clark/CQ/Roll Call

## Counties hitting home stretch for presidential general election

by **Charlie Ban**  
senior writer

As the demands build up in the weeks approaching a presidential election, county election workers will take a break anywhere they can get it.

They got one in Georgia,

when, three weeks ahead of Election Day, a Fulton County judge invalidated a state Board of Elections rule that would have required poll workers to perform an additional hand count of ballots at the end of voting. It was a rule that Joseph Kirk, president of the Georgia

Association of Voter Registration and Election Officials, thought was unnecessary.

Kirk, the elections supervisor in Bartow County, Ga., said there were already processes in place in his county and the oth-

See **BALLOTS** page 2

## Participants get 'second chance' training in county jobs

by **Meredith Moran**  
staff writer

Jayden Wheeler, determined to keep incarceration in his past, wasn't sure what his future would, or could, look like. He was 25, in an in-patient rehab program and his most recent job was sorting through donations at a Goodwill thrift store.

"I really didn't know what I wanted to do, or where I wanted to be," Wheeler said. "I didn't have a lot of valuable work experience ... I was definitely in need of a second chance."

As a resident of Bernalillo County, N.M.'s CARE Campus — which provides substance use and mental health services including crisis intervention

and medication support — Wheeler was offered access to a Bernalillo County employability training workshop, which consists of 20 hours of "basic soft skills for keeping a job," such as resume writing and interviewing practice, according to Cindy WeaselBear, Bernalillo

See **EMPLOYMENT** page 3



# Ballot measures aim for counties

From **BALLOTS** page 1

er 159 counties in the state.

“My staff uses a flashlight and just looks in the box to make sure they came out of there,” he said. “This [was] at best redundant and at worst [gave] very, very tired senior citizens a chance to make a mistake.”

Kirk noted that in Bartow County, poll workers make manual counts as ballots are cast.

“If there was an issue, we’d know about it immediately,” he said.

His 200 poll workers, already putting in 14-hour-days, will no longer have to extend their workdays.

“We do audits of every single race I conduct. We go through

every ballot cast, one at a time, in teams, confirming they were tabulated properly,” he said, noting that the Board of Elections’ rule ran contrary to the Legislature’s desire for fast reporting of results.

“We don’t have an operation to get the results back first, then close everything down; a few counties do, but not very many,” he said.

### Taking initiative

Voters in several states will consider ballot measures that could affect county government operations, none perhaps as dramatically as in North Dakota.

Measure 4 would eliminate property taxes except to pay for bond debts, radically restructuring



**Bartow County, Ga. elections supervisor Joseph Kirk sits in his office’s ballot reader storage facility.**

Photo by Myava Mitchell

the funding mechanism counties have relied upon for decades, to the tune of \$1.3 billion annually. A similar measure failed in 2012.

“We object to it, obviously,” said Aaron Birst, executive director of the North Dakota Association of Counties. “There’s no plan to replace the funding.”

Options, like adding state taxes, would still require the cooperation of the Legislature, a position no county would want, he added.

“It’s something that hasn’t been done anywhere,” Birst said. “You could put to the voters a sales tax increase, but sales tax doesn’t work well in rural communities where there’s no economic development.”

In New Mexico, an initiative could give county boards of commissioners the power to set the salaries for county officers, an authority that currently rests with the Legislature.

Political candidates in Illinois could be subject to civil penalties if they attempt to interfere with an election worker’s official duties, if Advisory Question 1 passes.

In California, the Justice for Renters Act would keep the state from limiting local governments’ ability to impose rent control.

Arizona voters could allow property owners to apply for tax refunds if their municipality fails to enforce existing regulations prohibiting illegal camping, loitering, panhandling or other public nuisances.

### County veterans on the ballot

The second straight presidential race will include a candidate with county government experience. Vice President Kamala Harris (D) served as San Francisco County, Calif.’s district attorney from 2004-2011, after serving as an assistant district attorney there from 1998-2000 and as an assistant district attorney in Alameda County, Calif. from 1990-1994.

Nine current or former county officials are running for statewide office as governor or U.S. senator this year.

Washington will see a head-to-head matchup in the governor’s race between King County veterans: State Attorney General Bob Ferguson (D) and former U.S. Rep. Dave Reichert (R). Ferguson served on the King County Council from 2004-2013, including as chair of the Council from 2009-2013. Reichert, who served seven terms in the House, was a King County sheriff’s deputy from 1972-1997 before


County Executive Ron Sims appointed him sheriff in 1997, where he served until 2005.

Two incumbents are running for reelection — Utah Gov. Spencer Cox (R), who served as a Sanpete County commissioner from 2009-2013, and Missouri Gov. Mike Parson (R), who started his career in county law enforcement as a Hickory County deputy from 1981-1983 before working as a criminal investigator for Polk County 1983-1993 until his election to Polk County sheriff from 1993-2004.

In Delaware, current New Castle County Executive Matthew Meyer (D) is running for the open governor’s office.

Four former county officials are running for the U.S. Senate, two incumbents and two for open seats. Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) served as Hennepin County attorney from 1999-2007 and Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) served as a Dane County supervisor from 1987-1994.

Maryland’s Senate race will include second-term Prince George’s County Executive Angela Alsobrooks (D), who previously served as the county state’s attorney 2011-2019.

In Indiana, Rep. Jim Banks (R) served on the Whitley County Council from 2008-2010. 

## SNAP/STATS

### Housing Affordability



**HIGHEST 3 AVERAGE HOME VALUE**

1. Hawaii .....	\$986,887
2. California .....	\$806,674
3. Washington, D.C. ....	\$724,949

**LOWEST 3 AVERAGE HOME VALUE**

1. West Virginia.....	\$168,166
2. Mississippi .....	\$181,695
3. Louisiana.....	\$204,977

Source: The Ascent, Motley Fool

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# Each trainee is assigned a job coach and works in a number of county departments

From EMPLOYMENT page 1

County's talent manager.

Completing the employability training made Wheeler eligible to apply for the county's Foundational Learning Alliance for Maintaining Employment (FLAME) program, which places people in need of a "second chance," including homeless and justice-involved individuals, into job positions in four county departments over the course of a year. FLAME trainees receive a salary and benefits, including healthcare, through the county.

To be eligible for the FLAME program, an applicant must have a high school diploma, or equivalent, and have either interned for the county, completed the county's employability workshop or been honorably discharged from the military, according to WeaselBear.

The employability workshop, which Wheeler attended through CARE, will also soon be offered at the county jail, in an effort to support the county's justice-involved population upon release and reduce recidivism.

"I've talked to people who are living on the streets, I've talked to employers, and there's such a gap there that doesn't need to be there, so it's really about bringing people together for me," WeaselBear said, of FLAME.

"We're all one major catastrophe away from needing a second chance — have a major car accident, have a medical issue come up, that could put you out on the street too, so it's just about being human and recognizing that people have hardships."

WeaselBear said she herself was in need of a second chance, which has contributed to her passion in leading the FLAME program. At 15, she found herself out on her own, without a



**Bernalillo County, N.M. FLAME trainee Jayden Wheeler works with his job coach, Jennifer Bartholf.**

Photo courtesy of Cindy WeaselBear

home or support system.

"I lost family, I lost friends, I lost everything," WeaselBear said. "You had to figure it out, you had to find your way and find the resources. And it wasn't easy. I had to find ways that I could manage. And it was rough, but I made it. And I'm in a really good position here now where I can pay that back and help others get back on their feet."

Each trainee is assigned a job coach, who supports them through their rotations.

The job placements are determined through both what openings the county has, as well as what the trainee's interests are or what they intend to pursue after "graduating" the

program, so that they're able to demonstrate some experience in the field to future employers, according to WeaselBear.

"Through that process, we have different things that we use to try to get an idea of what they would like to do, what they wouldn't like to do," WeaselBear said. "So, that way we can try to place them in a position that suits them and that's kind of up their alley."

Many FLAME trainees are people who are formerly incarcerated, homeless or veterans, so it's important to not place them in a situation that may be particularly triggering for them, WeaselBear said. For example, if somebody was traumatized in

the past by public interaction, the county wouldn't place them on a front desk, she added. Beyond that, it can vary widely where a trainee is placed.

"In one rotation, they might be doing marketing for animal care, and in another they might be working down at our fleet shop and helping with the mechanics," WeaselBear said.

"In another case, they might be in our media center or accounting, or they might be in probate, or even here in human resources."

Wheeler spent the past three months in the county's fleet and facilities accounting department, where he learned skills including data analysis and

reconciling credit card transactions, and recently started his second rotation in human resources, where he's helping out with event planning.

His next two rotations will be in the county's budgeting department and animal welfare marketing department.


"It's really opened my mind," Wheeler said. "Before going into accounting, I never thought that that would ever even be an option for me. I never thought that I'd have the opportunity, let alone the qualifications, to do anything like that."

Wheeler has ambitions of working in business management one day, and he's excited that his rotations are getting him a step closer, he said.

Biweekly, FLAME trainees go through four hours of professional development training, where they're taught skills such as public speaking, conflict resolution and project management, according to WeaselBear.

At the end of the year-long program, the FLAME trainees will have a "capstone project," that acts as a "reverse job fair" of sorts, where each trainee will have a table or booth where they share information about themselves to local employers, such as what knowledge and skills they have and what their goals are, with the aim of getting hired.

"Prior to working here, I had very little opportunity to really get involved in a workforce that I could excel in," Wheeler said. "Being here, I feel like I have a job where I serve a purpose, and I feel like they're giving me the opportunity to do things that I would have never had the opportunity to do before, whether it's due to my background or due to my qualifications."

"It's given me the opportunity of just that — of a second chance, a chance to really be something." 



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## Election officials look for flexibility in wake of Hurricanes Helene, Milton

### From HURRICANES page 1

allows for more flexibility in the elections process for counties affected by Milton, which include voting accommodations for first responders, line-men and relief workers who are assisting with recovery efforts throughout the state and allowing voters to request a mail-in ballot to an alternative address from the one they're registered at (in the event of displacement).

Thirteen Florida counties affected by Hurricane Helene were granted leeway in the elections process, as well, through an executive order DeSantis signed Oct. 3.

Hurricane Milton left some polling places in Hillsborough County, Fla. with five feet of flooding, damaging five election day sites (which will be moved and co-located to other nearby polling sites), according to Hillsborough County's Supervisor of Elections Craig Latimer.

"This is unprecedented that we had two back-to-back hurricanes, two weeks apart or so," Latimer said. "And they were two totally different storms.

Hurricane Helene was a tremendous flooding event, storm surge, and then Hurricane Milton was a wind and rain event."

The county elections office regained power Oct. 7 and reopened the next day, a week before early voting opens, and one early voting site is on a generator, according to Latimer. "I think we're in a good position right now. But this happened over night, and this takes planning. We're constantly planning for things like this, and making sure that we have contingencies in place."

### Staff bands together

The unprecedented nature of Helene's destruction in North Carolina has banded the county's Board of Elections Office staff together, Duncan said.

A few of the people who have wells have been bringing in water for those without water and a food-sharing area has been created at the office, to ensure that everyone has essentials.

"We talked to each other and hugged each other and had our tears and all of those kinds of things, which continue," Duncan said.

"It's going to be like that for a

while, but Elections has always been, we refer to it as family all the time, and that's really what happened, and I think that really enabled us to turn around really quick and start working.

"We were sending out absen-

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"Put simply, these measures will help eligible voters in the affected areas cast their ballot, either in-person or by mail," Brinson Bell said.

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tee ballots already [four days after the storm hit], coming together to make a plan and moving forward, and we've just done that every day since then."

On Oct. 7, the North Carolina State Board of Elections unanimously approved a series of emergency measures in the 13 counties, including Buncombe, that were hit the hardest by Helene.

Measures approved include allowing voters to request and receive absentee ballots at their

county board of elections office up until Nov. 4, allowing county boards to schedule Multipartisan Assistance Teams to assist with absentee voting and ballot requests at disaster shelters and allowing poll workers to serve at voting sites outside of their county.

All 100 county boards of elections in North Carolina are open to the public, and while early voting may look different than expected in some of the 13 hardest hit counties, it will go on, said Karen Brinson Bell, the executive director of the North Carolina state board of elections, in an Oct. 7 press conference.

"Put simply, these measures will help eligible voters in the affected areas cast their ballot, either in-person or by mail," Brinson Bell said. "And they will help county boards of elections in western North Carolina administer this election under extraordinarily difficult conditions."

Another measure approved in the resolution allows counties to modify their approved early voting sites, as well as days and hours through a bipartisan, majority vote.

Buncombe County added an extra day of early voting and expanded its hours, according to Duncan. Roughly two-thirds of the election workers slated to work early voting are still able to, enough to staff the county's 10 early voting sites, Duncan said. For election day, 501 out of the original 537 election workers have confirmed they will still be available.

In Haywood County, N.C., many people who were not set to work this election, but have worked past elections, have stepped up to fill in the gaps, according to Doyle Teague, the county election board's deputy director. With the extra help, the county is "ready to go" for early voting, Teague said.

Voting may be more difficult in certain parts of the county, particularly in one community that sits on the Tennessee border, where the post office was destroyed in Helene, Teague said.

"There're only 25 voters in that little isolated community, but their main access road, it was right beside the Pigeon River and washed away, and the post office was in there from the Tennessee side," Teague said.

"There's another access road that's all back roads and park service roads to get to them, but they're at least getting mail once a week, and we're going to be able to open that precinct on election day, so that they won't have to rely on the mail service."

With only three weeks between the deadliest inland hurricane on record and the opening of early voting for the 2024 presidential election, Western North Carolina's counties and elections offices have been able to come together, with support from the State Board of Elections and the Army National Guard, to ensure that voting remains accessible, safe and secure, Duncan said.

"So many counties have reached out to support us," Duncan said. "Offering supplies, offering help, to come to the office ... and seeing my team support each other and be able to come together again with our mission of providing people their right to vote has been magical." **CN**



The area of Swannanoa River Road in Buncombe County, N.C. saw major damage after Tropical Storm Helene swept through Western North Carolina. Photo by Colby Rabon / Carolina Public Press



# King County school offers students a route to sobriety

by Annie Qing

Walking into Seattle Public Schools Interagency Recovery Campus is like stepping into any other high school building. The familiar buzz of student chatter echoing off the linoleum floors conjures a familiar image to anyone who's attended one of America's thousands of other public schools.

So familiar that a visitor might overlook a wooden board displaying 34 names and dates.

These names belong to students at the campus, and the dates mark the number of days that they've been sober. Each name represents a story that speaks to the transformative impact of Interagency Recovery Campus, which was funded in part by the King County, Wash. Behavioral Health and Recovery Division of the Department of Community and Human Services.

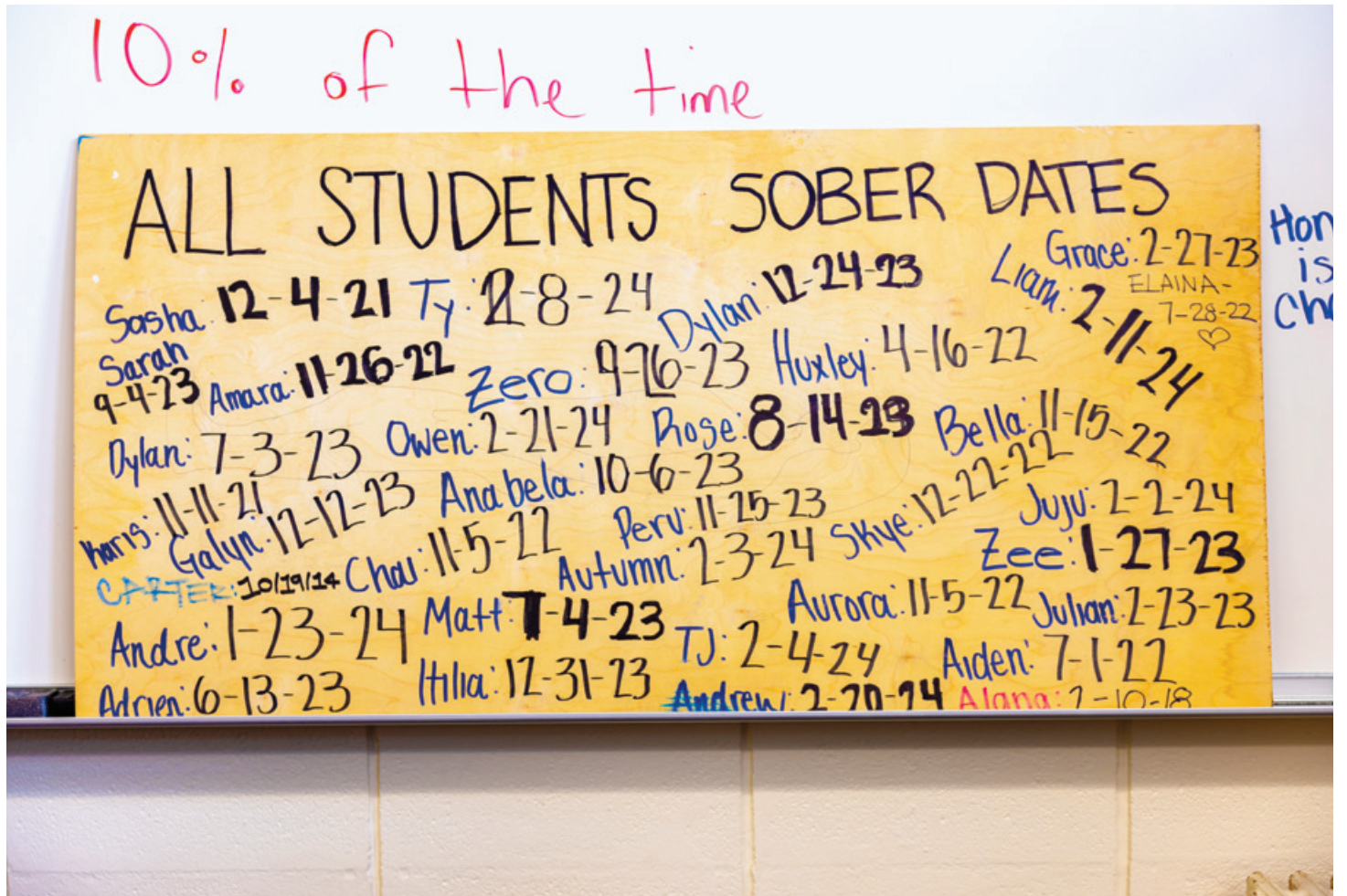
For one senior, attending the program broke a cycle of addiction that began at 11 years old with cannabis and alcohol use, escalating to three opioid-related overdoses by the end of their freshman year. For another student, the campus' intervention after a fifth stay in juvenile detention provided the stability to start healing from the trauma of their father's murder and mother's cancer diagnosis.

A third student was able to re-engage with their education after the program's unwavering support helped them to regain sobriety following a relapse into opioids and methamphetamine use, which had led to nearly a year of being unsheltered. All three students are now in long-term recovery.

## About the program

The school day at Interagency Recovery Campus combines both academic and recovery supports as students work toward graduation from 9 a.m.-2:05 p.m.

Unlike traditional high schools, students at the Recovery Campus don't have to navigate the path to sobriety alone. They are surrounded by an environment designed to foster it.



Interagency Recovery Campus students' names and sobriety dates decorate a wooden board on display in the school.

"They go shopping, they go to the movies, they go go-karting, they go to the parks, they go swimming. They have 12-step meetings," said Interagency's Outreach Coordinator Jessica Levy. "We're really creating a strong support system for kids in early recovery where they are in a routine and busy

were working toward their high school diplomas.

Additionally, 18% transferred to continue their schooling elsewhere. Just over half of students maintained more than one year of recovery following their enrolling.

Interagency's students emphasize the unprecedented

recovery Division. Today, the program is jointly funded by the county and Seattle Public Schools. Interagency Academy covers the academic side, while King County provides behavioral health and recovery support.

There are 44 recovery schools in operation nation-

Solutions Leadership Network who visited Interagency's Recovery Campus in September, might consider investing opioid settlement dollars into these life-changing spaces across the country.

Regardless of the funding structure, the return on investment is clear.

For youth affected by substance use in King County, effective treatment and support at this most critical time have saved decades of their lives. The Recovery Campus has done this and more, creating an ever-expanding community of youth in recovery that has a ripple effect beyond the program.

"Every time I get a call from a random number, I pick it up," a student told members of NACo's Opioid Solutions Leadership Network.

"But I know that people here have my number, so I pick up in case I can help."

Students like this are ready to inspire other youth into recovery across the country. With county support, recovery schools can multiply their impact exponentially. **CN**

*Qing is a senior program manager in NACo's Counties Futures Lab.*

'We're really creating a strong support system for kids in early recovery, where they are in a routine and busy all day.'

— Jessica Levy

all day."

Since its inception in 2014, Washington's only public sober high school has had a measurable impact on both academic achievement and recovery. The program was established in response to a 2013 report that found only 25% of young people in publicly funded substance use disorder (SUD) treatment graduated from high school.

For youth with co-occurring mental health disorders, this number dropped to 17%. However, from 2015-2022, 63% of Interagency Recovery Campus students who attended 90 days or more have earned or

longevity of their recovery, with the program's focus on peer community and connection helping them build and sustain a recovery lifestyle.

"I've never stayed sober just because of rehab," a senior at the campus recounts. Before coming to the program, they had cycled through four facilities and regularly through emergency services. Today, the student is 22 months sober.

## About the funding

The Interagency Recovery Campus was founded thanks to \$250,000 in startup funds from the King County, Wash. Behavioral Health and Re-

covery Division. Today, the program is jointly funded by the county and Seattle Public Schools. Interagency Academy covers the academic side, while King County provides behavioral health and recovery support.

There are 44 recovery schools in operation nationwide. Although funding models across the network vary, Interagency Recovery Campus staff encourage state and local governments to follow in the footsteps of Oregon's example, where recovery schools are entirely state-funded.

County decision-makers, like those in NACo's Opioid





## DUCHESNE COUNTY, UTAH

The Duchesne County Centennial Committee designed a belt buckle for the 2015 Centennial Celebration and now uses it as its logo.

The mountains represent Kings Peak, the highest peak in Utah at 13,528 feet.

Petroglyphs represent the Archaic Fremont and Ute Rock Art, the world's longest art gallery, with rock art by the Fremont and Ute Indians.

The cattle represent agriculture, one of Duchesne County's largest industries. Early farmers and ranchers date back to 1905.



The pumpjack represents the oil and gas industry, resources that were discovered in the county in the 1930s but saw a strong resurgence in the 1960s and 1970s.

Freedom Bridge over Starvation Reservoir is the longest bridge in Utah, and a connection to the diverse land and culture.

The boat represents numerous diverse outdoor activities, including access to public lands. Duchesne County has a total area of 3,256 square miles, of which 3,241 is land and 15 square miles is water.

Would you like to see your county seal featured in County News? Please contact Charlie Ban at [cban@naco.org](mailto:cban@naco.org).

# NACo/Nationwide Scholarship Winners Share Thoughts on Retirement Readiness

For over 20 years, the NACo/Nationwide scholarship essay contest has been an educational opportunity for high school students transitioning into a new stage of their lives. Engaging young people in civic life and responsibilities is an important way to show high school students the valuable roles counties play in their residents' lives.

The program's goal is to help ensure that young people get involved and stay involved in local government — and understand the importance of being good stewards of their future finances.

Children and grandchildren of NACo 457 Deferred Compensation Program contributors were eligible to apply for this scholarship. They were asked to write a short essay on the importance of retirement readiness, especially when considering the implications of AI.

Each winning senior received a \$2,500 college scholarship from Nationwide and the National Association of Counties.

### The 2024 NACo/Nationwide Scholarship winners

#### Agnes Ndoma-Ogar

My name is Agnes Ndoma-Ogar, and I am passionate about pursuing a chemical engineering degree at ASU. My interest in chemical engineer-



**Ndoma-Ogar**



ing begins with its usefulness in the pharmaceutical industry to research and design experiments to scale and produce drugs in large quantities. This scholarship will help fund my education to pursue my dreams of working for a pharmaceutical company.

#### Aniya Flowers

My name is Aniya Flowers. I will be attending Prairie View A&M University in the fall and majoring in psychology! I am very interested in photography, so I also plan to minor in photography.

As for activities, I live to dance and play video games. I like to think that I am very simple and minimalistic, so I don't really do much or have too much to say about myself, but I am very grateful for this opportunity. Thank you, guys, so much for deciding to choose me.

#### Kayah Ixchel Damián

My name is Kayah Ixchel Damián, and I am honored to be the recipient of The Nationwide/NACo College Scholarship.

I have a wide range of interests, including cooking, baking, swimming, hiking, drawing, painting, crafting, reading, and

teaching. During high school, I was an active member of the swim team and the AP Club. I also worked part-time as a lifeguard and swim instructor.

Additionally, I dedicated time to volunteering with various local organizations outside of school. While I am currently undeclared/undecided, I plan



**Flowers**

to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Public Health Sciences at the University of California, Irvine (UCI). My diverse interests and strong community involvement reflect my commitment to making a positive impact in my future endeavors.

I hope to pursue a career in the medical field and aim to return to the Coachella Valley to help address the scarcity of healthcare providers and inaccessibility to healthcare resources.

#### Sofia Flores

My name is Sofia Flores, and I am a dedicated and passionate student who will attend Florida Gulf Coast University in the fall, where I will be pursuing a major in pre-med/pre-health to become an optometrist.

My academic journey has been enhanced by dual enrollment at Florida SouthWestern State College and earning



**Damlan**

credits from the AICE Cambridge Program. Outside my studies, I enjoy physical activities such as walking and exercising.

Additionally, I am deeply involved in my community through volunteering at my church and have gained valuable experience by participating in research with my biology professor this past spring. These interests help me maintain a balanced and healthy lifestyle while fostering intellectual and personal growth. My commitment to my education and individual well-being is a driving factor in all my endeavors. I am excited about the opportunities ahead as I work toward my professional aspirations.

### Scholarship honors 40-plus years of partnership

Nationwide and NACo are committed to helping participants plan for retirement as well as their family's future. Nationwide sponsors the NACo-Nationwide scholarship to recognize its four-decade-long partnership with NACo and its member counties.



**Flores**

For additional information about the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, please contact Carlos Greene at [cgreene@naco.org](mailto:cgreene@naco.org) or 404.263.3656, or David Belnick at [Belnid1@nationwide.com](mailto:Belnid1@nationwide.com) or 410.790.5440.

NACo swag is now available online!

# Fall vaccines: How county leaders can get the word out

by Maddie Kapur

Respiratory virus season is quickly approaching, which means that now is the ideal time to vaccinate against the latest variants of common respiratory viruses. Updated flu and COVID-19 vaccines are available and recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older, and individuals can receive both vaccines in the same visit. Both vaccines are proven to protect against severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) vaccines are still recommended for older adults ages 65 and above. The RSV is not an annual vaccine, so only older adults who have never received an RSV vaccine are eligible.

## What should county officials know about these vaccines?

The spread of false rumors about vaccines has led some people to think that vaccines are not safe. This is not true.

The new flu and COVID-19 vaccines have gone through an extensive standardized testing process and are safe and effective. They are the most powerful tool available to protect individuals from severe illness, hospitalization and death.

Bottom line: encouraging people to get vaccinated can help reduce sick leave, missed school, high medical bills, and even death in your community this winter.

## What can county officials do to encourage people to get vaccinated this fall?

Many elected officials leverage their own annual vaccine appointment to publicize the safety and importance of getting vaccinated. Inviting media to accompany you and take photos is one way to broadcast your support for vaccination efforts. Receiving the vaccines at your county health department, too, can help promote any vaccine clinics or events your local health department may be planning.

**Bottom line:**  
Encouraging people to get vaccinated can help reduce sick leave, missed school, high medical bills and even death in your community this winter.

Given the recent polarization around vaccines, the de Beaumont Foundation conducted message testing with groups across the political spectrum to better understand the most effective ways to encourage everyone to get vaccinated. Below are some tips for county officials to use when communicating with colleagues and constituents about vaccines:

**Lead with the scientific rigor of vaccine development:** Emphasizing that each vaccine goes through an extensive, standardized testing process to ensure safety and efficacy — even during an emergency

— helps put people’s minds at ease about vaccine safety.

**Remind people about the seriousness of the illnesses that vaccines can protect against:** Vaccines help prevent illnesses with potentially serious effects, such as cancer, pneumonia, blindness, deafness and even death. Reminding people of these consequences can be a powerful motivator to get vaccinated.

**Explain the long track record of vaccine effectiveness:** Vaccines have a proven track record of reducing and eradicating diseases that were once very common and caused serious illness or death. The polio vaccine, for example, developed in the

1950s, has reduced polio cases worldwide by more than 99%.

**Empower people to make their own health decisions:** Individuals will ultimately decide whether to get vaccinated, and people respond well to vaccination messaging when they feel their personal freedom is acknowledged and respected. Reminding people that they are the ultimate decision-makers about their vaccine plan and encouraging them to review trusted sources communicates that you genuinely have the community’s best interest in mind.

*Kapur is a program officer at the de Beaumont Foundation.*

**WORD SEARCH**

## MACKINAC COUNTY, MICH.

Created by Mary Ann Barton

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

**BRIDGE:** The Mackinac Bridge is a suspension bridge spanning the Straits of Mackinac.

**CARS:** Motorized vehicles are not allowed on the county’s Mackinac Island.

**DUNES:** The county has 3,781 acres of protected sand dunes.

**HOTEL:** The Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island was built in 1887 and has a 660-foot front porch.

**IGNACE:** The county seat of Mackinac County is St. Ignace. The name comes from St. Ignatius of Loyola. The area was settled in 1671 by French Jesuit missionaries.

**LAKES:** The county is bordered by Lake Huron to the west and Lake Michigan to the east.

**LAND:** State and federal land ownership of the county is 54%.

**MACKINAC:** The county name comes from an Indian name, Mitchimakinak.

**NEWSPAPER:** The county newspaper is the *Mackinac Island Town Crier*, a family-owned business that began in 1957.

**PARK:** Mackinac Island became the nation’s second national park in 1875, after Yellowstone. It is now a 1,044-acre state park, making up more than 80% of the island.

**PORTS:** The county is home to three commercial ports.

**TAVERN:** The Mustang Lounge claims to be the oldest tavern, giving patrons the flavor of Mackinac in the 1820s.

**TOTEM:** The county features a totem pole museum.

**ECONOMY:** The county economy is mainly tourism but also includes forestry and agriculture.

**GEOGRAPHY:** The county is 2,101 square miles with about half land and half water.

## Palm Beach County Public Auction

(Thrift Store)

**Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners**

# SATURDAY

# NOVEMBER 2, 2024

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# PROFILES IN SERVICE

## MICHAEL LOGSDON

**NACo Board member**  
Magistrate  
Oldham County, Ky.

**Number of years active in NACo:** Eight

**Years in public service:** 16

**Occupation:** Real estate sales

**Education:** Associate's degree, 12 credits short of four-year degree.

**The hardest thing I've ever done:** Overcoming public speaking challenges. It's an ongoing journey that underscores my determination to master this skill.



LOGSDON

**Four people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner:** Ronald Reagan, my Dad, Warren Buffett, Ben Carson

**A dream I have is to:** Own 300 acres

**You'd be surprised to learn that I:** Love to sell real estate and help a family find their perfect home.

**My favorite way to relax is:** I find relaxation in the immer-

sive engagement of my work, a testament to my passion and dedication in the real estate sales industry.

**I'm most proud of:** Surviving real estate for 38 years.

**Every morning I read:** Different news outlets

**My favorite meal is:** A great homemade chicken pot pie

**My pet peeve is:** People who can work, but don't, expecting someone to pay for their survival.

**My motto is:** I live by the motto inspired by Calvin Coolidge, emphasizing the importance of persistence and determination in achieving success, underscoring my steadfast commitment to overcoming challenges: "Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not. Nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not. Unrewarded

genius is almost a proverb. Education will not. The world is full of education derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent."

**The last book I read was:** I am reading four books currently: "The Obstacle in the Way" by Ryan Holiday, "Becoming

**The most adventurous thing I've ever done is:** Stand at the top of a 13,000-foot mountain, wondering how I was going to ski down!

"Bulletproof" by Evy Poumpouras, "Hillbilly Elegy" by J.D. Vance, and "Buy Back Your Time" by Dan Martell.

**My favorite movies are:** "Tombstone" and "Forrest Gump"

**My favorite music is:** Country, especially from the '70s and '80s

**My favorite U.S. president is:** Ronald Reagan holds a special place in my admiration for his leadership, policies and vision for the country.

**My county is a NACo member because:** Through many voices, we become one voice... I believe my county benefits from NACo membership because it amplifies local voices into a unified force, addressing critical issues and advocating for improvements that benefit counties nationwide.

## GET TO KNOW...

### Anoka County, Minnesota

by Meredith Moran  
staff writer

Established in 1857, Anoka County, Minn., was named for the Dakota word "anoka-tanhan," which means "on both sides," and the Ojibwa word "onokay," which means "working waters," in reference to the Rum River running through the county.

**The county seat, the city of Anoka, held the first documented Halloween celebration in the United**

**States. In 1920, the city hosted a parade in the hopes that it would distract children from playing pranks, which eventually evolved into an annual monthlong celebration that attracts tens of thousands of people each year to the city's themed block parties, games, concerts, costume contests and a storefront-decorating competition among Anoka business owners.**

**In 1937, Anoka was**

**formally recognized as the "Halloween Capital of the World" by Congress, after 12-year-old newspaper carrier Harold Blair, from Anoka, petitioned Minnesota Representative Millard Rice for the title.**

Blair was one of 200 Minneapolis Journal paperboys sent to D.C. on an all-expenses paid trip, and Anoka locals saw it as an opportunity to bring more attention to the city's Halloween celebration, so a patch designed by a local

artist that read "Halloween Capitol: Anoka, Minnesota" was sewn into Blair's sweater for his visit. Following Congress' recognition of Anoka as the "Halloween Capital," Life Magazine came to capture the celebration, shining a national spotlight on the small county seat, which had a population of roughly 6,426, according to the 1940 census.

An 8-ft. wide, neon-lit pumpkin named "Winkie" has sat atop Anoka City Hall since 1972, when Anoka and the neighboring city of Blaine held a contest to see which city could grow the largest pumpkin.

It was decided in the bet that the losing city would have to donate its pumpkin to the winner, and when Anoka won the weigh-in, it not only received the losing pumpkin, but also a giant pumpkin made of lights, created by a Blaine City councilman who was also a glass blower, that remains on top of City Hall today.

*Get to Know features new NACo member counties.*



## ON THE MOVE

### NACo STAFF



Santana

• **Madeline Santana** has joined NACo as a program manager. She previously served as a program manager at Prosperity Now. She earned a bachelor's degree in International Affairs, History and Economics from the University of California-Riverside.

• **Alyx Hawkins** has been promoted to special assistant to the CEO.



Hawkins

• **Grace Blanchard** has been promoted to senior program manager.



Blanchard



## BRIGHT IDEAS | ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLA.

# Florida County's 'Micro-Transit' Program Offers First and Last-Mile Solutions for Areas Without Bus Routes

### PROBLEM:

Parts of St. Lucie County, Fla., were not serviced by bus routes, making it difficult for some people to get to work, visit the grocery store or drop children off at daycare.

### SOLUTION:

The county began offering free van service to those in "transportation deserts."

by Meredith Moran  
staff writer

Jay Foxe was seven months pregnant and new to St. Lucie County, Fla. when she got into a car accident. Her vehicle was totaled, and Foxe — who lives in a rural part of the county — was left unsure how she would get to her new job, drop her two young children off at school or even get groceries. Then she heard about St. Lucie County's micro-transit program, which provides free transportation for people who live in areas not serviced by the county's fixed bus route system.

"I was able to keep my kids in school because of it," Foxe said. "I feel like I use it for everything, and I was able to keep my employment — that was a really good benefit for me.

"I didn't have to choose [between] keeping my job and trying to figure out how I'm going to pay for transportation every day, how much the cost of an Uber is."

St. Lucie County currently offers the micro-transit system in three "zones," which were mapped out to serve transportation deserts and people who most need access to public transit, based on income, according to Adolfo Covelli, St. Lucie County's transit director. Over 6,000 trips each month are provided through the service across the three zones.

The micro-transit vehicles, which are five-passenger vans, will take a passenger anywhere within the same zone. If someone is traveling outside of their

current zone, the vehicle will drop them off at the fixed bus route that can get them to that next zone, Covelli said. Users can access the services through a county micro-transit app.

"If someone lives in one zone, and their job is in another zone or off of a main road, they'll take the micro-transit to a fixed route bus stop and then take the fixed route bus stop to their final destination," Covelli said. "So, it's kind of like a first and last mile, if you will, for riders who don't live close [to a fixed route]."

Foxe, who lives in one of the three zones, can get directly to her children's school, her

"Its flexibility and peace of mind [that] ensures I can stay on top of my responsibilities," Foxe said.

work and to doctor's appointments for her newborn child, all through the micro-transit system, without having to connect to a fixed bus route, she said. Before she found out about the service, there were times she got stuck in the city, because there was no bus to get her home, as the one fixed route that runs through her area has limited hours, Foxe said.

"Its flexibility and peace of mind [that] ensures I can stay on top of my responsibilities," Foxe said. "Without worrying about being stranded or late, because the service is dependable and tailored to meet real world needs."

Before the first micro-transit zone was created in 2019, there were eight fixed bus routes across the county's 572 square miles, according to Covelli. In the past few decades, St. Lucie County has grown tremen-

dously — from 2000 to 2010, the county population increased by 80,000, making it one of the fastest-growing counties in the country.

St. Lucie County could not afford to create fixed routes for every main road throughout the county (a fixed route bus is \$600,000 and costs about \$90 an hour to run, while a micro-transit van is \$70,000 and costs about \$26 an hour to run), so creating a micro-transit system has been the most efficient way for the county to increase transportation access to its growing population, Covelli said.

"For us, being a large square-mile county, and the fact that our county has grown tremendously, residentially and commercially," Covelli said. "If you're going to get into the transportation world or you're trying to find ways to increase service throughout the community, micro-transit is the way to go."

The average wait time for a ride through the micro-transit system is around 20 minutes, which the county uses as a gauge for how many vans to have throughout a given zone, Covelli said.

"If our wait time creeps up to 25 or 30 minutes, it might be time for an additional vehicle in that zone," Covelli said. "And if our wait time goes down to 10 minutes — yes, it's way more productive, but we may take a vehicle from there. It's a free service, so it's popular, of course, but we're trying to also sustain it over the course of its lifetime."

The micro-transit system has also increased the county's awareness of transportation use, meaning if a fixed bus route is underutilized, the county can get rid of it and turn it into a micro-transit zone, and vice-versa, if there's a high volume of


ridership that the micro-transit system can't properly accommodate for, then the county can turn it into a fixed bus route, Covelli said.

"Right now, 23% of our trips are a shared ride, so about a quarter of our riders are strangers on the trips together — it's based on availability," Covelli said. "You can book a trip right now from your house to the library."

Prior to the creation of the micro-transit system, paratransit — a door-to-door service — was the most accessible form of public transportation for St. Lucie County residents with disabilities. All of the micro-transit vehicles are ADA-accessible, streamlining the process and also saving St. Lucie County money — an average paratransit trip costs the county \$50, while the average micro-transit visit costs \$14.

Over the past five years, St. Lucie County has seen 4,279 unique riders sign up for the micro-transit app and 2,467 unique riders have completed trips throughout the three zones, according to county data. Plans have been mapped out for three additional zones, meaning micro-transit will eventually expand county-wide across six total zones.

Foxe said the micro-transit system is a "remarkable service" that she feels benefits the whole community, and particularly people in a similar situation to hers, who are in a single-income household with no car, she said.

"Transportation, to me, is very important — it's how you get around, it's how you stay connected," Foxe said. "This service is so important for somebody like me, a mother of three small children. I depend on it for everything — it's my lifeline." 

*St. Lucie County's Micro-Transit Program won the 2024 Achievement Award for Best in Category in the Transportation category.*







NEWS FROM

# ACROSS THE NATION

## FLORIDA

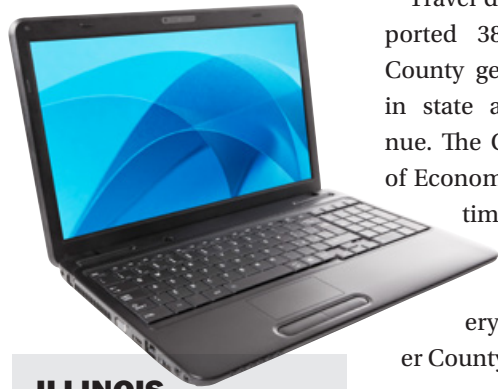
- A **POLK COUNTY** employee, **Bruce Kinsler**, was killed when he was struck by a vehicle while he was cutting down a tree that had fallen after Hurricane Milton. “The tragedy of this incident is compounded by the fact that Bruce Kinsler was killed serving the residents of this county,” said Bill Braswell, Polk County Commission board chair in a statement. “We ask a lot of the employees as public servants, and they

respond to the call. For this to happen is just a tragedy.”

## GEORGIA

A tourism report found **visitors spent \$43.6 million** in **WALKER COUNTY** on lodging, food and beverage, recreation, retail and transportation in 2023 resulting in a growth rate of 1.6%, AllonGeorgia reported. The growth was mainly attributed to gains in the food and beverage and recreation sectors.

Travel demand in 2023 supported 384 jobs in Walker County generating \$3 million in state and local tax revenue. The Georgia Department of Economic Development estimates tourism revenue replaced \$116 in taxes for every household in Walker County last year.



## ILLINOIS

The **LAKE COUNTY** Board authorized an application for a \$12 million grant recently to help address a **digital gap** for some residents in the county, *Government Technology* reported. The funds would come from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program, which promotes digital inclusion and equitable access to technology. An answer to the application is expected by April 2025.

## IOWA

The **POLK COUNTY** Board of Supervisors is acquiring nine unused lots from the city of Des Moines with two goals in mind: expand **affordable housing** options and address homelessness.

Residents have been calling on city leaders to invest in the expansion of housing resources. Those calls intensified one week ago, when the Des Moines City Council approved an ordinance that bans camping in public spaces.

Federal funding will be used to build single-family homes on each of the nine lots. For every 100 extremely low-income renter households in Polk County, only 23 homes are affordable and available, per the Polk County Housing Trust Fund.

## MARYLAND

- The **MONTGOMERY COUNTY** Department of Transportation and Department of General Services have

## ARKANSAS

After at least a year of planning and land prep, officials in Central Arkansas ceremoniously broke ground Tuesday on Providence Park, a 50-acre village expected to provide 400 **affordable tiny homes** in southern **PULASKI COUNTY** when complete, the Arkansas Advocate reported.

“The village will provide our most vulnerable residents with a dignified place to call home, will empower them to create a space they can be proud of, where they can feel safe and cultivate the community themselves,” said Pulaski County Judge Barry Hyde, who spearheaded the project. The first residents were initially expected to move into the community this summer, but construction delays pushed the timeline back and the first tenants are now expected in 2025.

## CALIFORNIA

The **SAN DIEGO COUNTY** Board of Supervisors has plans to build 49 new recuperative care beds as part of a **behavioral health** project first introduced in January. That’s when the board allocated \$8 million in capital funding using money from the American Rescue Plan Act to address the issue of hospitals being overcrowded with individuals experiencing homelessness. According to the board, recuperative care is meant to be a safe place for adults with behavioral health conditions to recover while living unhoused. The goal is to serve an estimated 1,000 people a year and allow them a space to recover while receiving mental health or addiction treatment.

## COLORADO

- In 1905, people came by covered wagon, Conestoga wagon, surreys (with and without fringe), and horseback to gather in **EL PASO COUNTY** at the first fair. The county is gear-

ing up to celebrate the **120th anniversary of the El Paso County Fair** coming up next summer. They’re engaging the local community and media to gather memories and find out how residents would like to celebrate the big event.

- The **SUMMIT COUNTY** Rescue Group had a busy weekend recently **assisting a hiker** in a 16-hour mission at Quandary Peak and shortly after helping a paraglider who crashed, Summit Daily reported.

Summit County Rescue Group president Ben Butler said that the rescues demonstrated strong interagency collaboration between the all-volunteer rescue group and other first responders. Helicopters assisted with both rescues, and the Summit County Sheriff Office’s System-wide Mental Assessment Response Team, or SMART, offered its expertise to the hiker who had found himself stuck in a precarious position on the mountainside, Butler said.

## FLORIDA

- Hurricane Milton has **claimed at least 17 lives** across Florida including in **ST. LUCIE, VOLUSIA, PINELLAS** and **CITRUS** counties, the *Tallahassee Democrat* reported. Hurricane Milton made landfall as a Category 3 hurricane Oct. 9 near Siesta Key in **SARASOTA COUNTY**.



See NEWS FROM page 11





**MARYLAND**

• **HOWARD COUNTY** Executive Calvin Ball recently helped kick-off the launch of a new innovative program aimed at preserving Howard County's **tree canopy** at Meadowbrook Park in Ellicott City. The County's Tree Savers Program, overseen by the Department of Recreation & Parks, trains volunteers to identify and remove invasive vine species that can smother, pull down and strangle native trees on Howard County parklands. At a recent inaugural event, Ball and volunteers freed more than 100 trees from vines.

From NEWS FROM page 10

been awarded the 2024 Innovation Award by the Public Transportation Association (APTA) for the **Brookville Smart Energy Solar Charging Depot** in Silver Spring.



"Montgomery County continues to receive national recognition and accolades for our innovative Brookville Smart Energy Solar Charging Depot," said Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich. "This project is a clear example of how we're taking meaningful steps toward building a cleaner, more sustainable future. By investing in zero-emission infrastructure like this, we're not just reducing our carbon footprint — we're leading by example. This depot is a model for how we can power our bus fleet with clean energy, and it moves us closer to achieving our goal of a fully zero-emission bus fleet by 2035."

**MICHIGAN**

**KALAMAZOO COUNTY** approved a \$5.2 million proj-

ect to convert a Holiday Inn Express & Suites into a more than **60-unit homeless shelter**, WZZM-TV reported. The county will take ownership of the hotel, located at 3630 East Cork Street along I-94, by the end of the year and begin extensive renovations. They hope to have it open by mid-2025.

**NEW YORK**

The **MONROE COUNTY** Board of Elections is relaying important information for the **upcoming election**, Spectrum News 1 reported.

"This cycle will be the very first time that the Board of Elections will be testing, if you will, a robocall," said Jackie Ortiz, Democratic commissioner of the Monroe County BOE. "We wanted to make sure that we told all of you that because there has been a lot of information out there regarding false information or robocalls [and] robo-text messages. And because we are trying this for the very first time, we want to make sure that people understand that it is us, it is the Board of Elections."

**NORTH CAROLINA**

The rate of recovery and flow

of information across Western North Carolina remains uneven nearly a week after **Tropical Storm Helene** veered to the east of its predicted track and dropped massive amounts of rain across North Carolina mountains and valleys that were already experiencing flooding from earlier rainfall, Carolina Public Press reported.

In many places the path to stability and normal life now looks very long.

Much of the region lost power, cell towers, internet service, road access and running water. Those have been slow to return in many places and water in particular may take a long time, especially in **BUNCOMBE COUNTY**'s county seat of Asheville. The state has confirmed at least 95 deaths from the storm, the state reported.

**OREGON**

By this time next year, a \$5 million **LINCOLN COUNTY animal shelter** with plenty of room for dogs and cats (and where employees can better care for them) should be up and operating at the edge of an industrial park in Waldport, Yachatsnews reported. Public officials, volunteers and the president of the Oregon Humane Society recently staged a ceremonial groundbreaking for the new facility which has been sought after for five years. The money comes from a state-backed 15-year loan to the county with a 1 percent interest rate. The previous shelter was forced to close because of toxic levels of mold.

**SOUTH CAROLINA**

**CHARLESTON COUNTY** officials say it is now easier than ever to leave **public comment** on things going on with county council and in the zoning and planning departments, WCSC-TV reported. People are always invited to come to council meetings and give comments during meetings at county headquarters, but now anyone can offer comments in a voicemail or even a quick text and county staff will make sure it gets to committees and elected officials.

"With technology today, there are so many different av-

enues that the government can tie into to allow people more access to provide their comments," Zoning and Planning Project Officer Niki Grimball said. "We've seen a lot of folks that utilize our voicemail commenting system, which is really cool that if someone's not, you know, as familiar or computer savvy or they would prefer just to say what they want to say on a voicemail."

**TEXAS**

• **HARRIS COUNTY** commissioners recently voted to expand a county **childcare** program aimed at helping low-income families, KIAH-TV reported. Commissioners approved an extra \$30 million for the program to open an additional 800 spots for kids under 4 years old across the county. It will also pay care providers \$15 an hour. Funds for the program

come from the American Rescue Plan; it is funded through 2026.

• Some counties in East Texas are banding together to create a regional foreign trade zone, KTRE-TV reported. "An area that becomes a foreign trade zone is what I would call a safe haven," said Nancy Windham, president and CEO of Texas Forest Country Partnership. "The ultimate goal is to search out for tools that we can put in our toolbox that we can offer to other companies and bring them in here to our area and create jobs," Windham said. The 10 counties involved are **HOUSTON, JASPER, NACOGDOCHES, NEWTON, POLK, TRINITY, TYLER, SAN JACINTO, SABINE** and **SHELBY**.

Share your news with Mary Ann Barton: [mbarton@naco.org](mailto:mbarton@naco.org).



Photo courtesy of MPR News

**WISCONSIN**

Mike and Sally Kindell bought a home six years ago on Warner Lake in Burnett County, lured largely by the lake's clean, clear water. It doesn't suffer the late-summer algae blooms that turn the water green and slimy on lakes across Wisconsin and Minnesota. One big reason why: It still boasts plenty of undeveloped, wooded lakeshore that **helps filter runoff and nutrient pollution**, MPR News reported.

"The lake is really what was appealing to us," Sally Kindell said. "We certainly did research the quality of the water, and that was really important to us."

While protecting the lake aligns with their values, the Kindells have another reason for keeping their property deliberately natural. They're part of a program in **BURNETT COUNTY** that pays homeowners to protect their lakeshore, the only one of its kind in Wisconsin.

Landowners who enroll in the shoreline incentive program agree to follow the county's lakeshore zoning rules. If their property doesn't meet the rules, they're required to restore it.

In exchange for enrolling, landowners get an initial payment of \$250, plus a \$50 check every year. The county also will pay up to 70 percent of the cost of restoring a shoreline with native plants.



# SAVE THE DATES

.....: *Upcoming NACo Conferences*

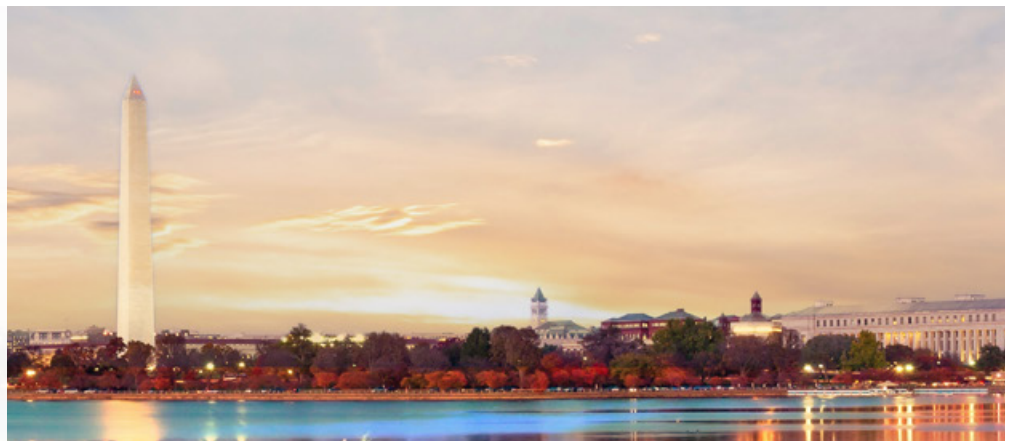
## 2024 Joint Board of Directors, Large Urban County Caucus and Rural Action Caucus Symposium

December 4-7  
Sonoma County, Calif.



## 2025 NACo Legislative Conference

March 1-4  
Washington, D.C.



## 2025 Western Interstate Region (WIR) Conference

May 20-23  
Pennington County, S.D.



## 2025 NACo Annual Conference & Exposition

July 11-14  
City and County of Philadelphia, Pa.

