

NACO National Association of Counties

# CountyNews

The Voice of America's Counties

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES ■ WASHINGTON, D.C.

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## 'Green' is theme for 2009 National County Government Week

BY JIM PHILIPPS  
MEDIA RELATIONS MANAGER

National County Government Week (NCGW), May 3–9, is right around the corner and already counties are taking advantage of the opportunity to promote effective and essential county government services and programs available to residents.

Readers of *County News* know that counties play an important role in protecting and enhancing

the health, welfare and safety of their residents. With so many families struggling to make ends meet, there is growing demand for public services. It's up to leaders in local government to communicate to the public the county services available.

But beyond the traditional services, many counties are going above and beyond. That's why this year's NCGW theme, "Greening Our

See **GREEN COUNTIES** page 3

## Workforce Transition Center a boon for job seekers, offerers

BY CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Henrico County is virtually ground zero when it comes to job losses in central Virginia from the current economic downturn.

The list of casualties reads like

a who's who of fallen corporate giants: Circuit City, headquartered in Henrico — gone. Qimonda, a computer chip maker — decimated. Wachovia Securities — 500 employees recently laid off as it merges with A.G. Edwards.

But this urban county — surrounding the state capital, Richmond — is fighting back. It has joined with six neighboring counties and the city of Richmond in creating the Capital Region Workforce Transition Center to provide "triage services."

Since January 2008, the Richmond metropolitan area, of which

See **WORKFORCE** page 4

**QuickTakes**

**Top 5 Counties with the Cleanest Air**

1. Converse County, Wyo.
2. Elbert County, Colo.
3. Lake County, Calif.
4. Billings County, N.D.
5. Laramie County, Wyo.

Source: American Lung Association 2007



Photo by Jennifer Lemos

Members of NACO's Health System Reform Working Group, President-elect Valerie Brown; Paul Beddoe, staff; Supervisor Linda Langston, Linn County, Iowa; and Commissioner Gregg Goslin, Cook County, Ill. follow testimony at NACO's third and final health care hearing. The hearing was held last week in Sacramento County, Calif. in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Large Urban County Caucus. Those testifying at the hearings provided feedback on a proposed list of recommended health care changes, including universal health insurance, a greater emphasis on prevention and the integration of data systems.

In the next few weeks, NACO will complete its recommendations and begin holding congressional briefings.

## Counties favor higher-speed Internet in broadband tech opportunities program

BY JEFF ARNOLD  
DEPUTY LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Local governments commented on the new Broadband Opportunities Program created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The program is jointly administered by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

These comments are intended to assist NTIA and RUS in crafting the program that will provide \$7.2 billion in funding to help deploy broadband to unserved and underserved populations. Below is a 10-point summary of NACO's comments.

1. Local governments are explicitly permitted to apply for and receive NTIA broadband grant funding. Grant funding should

be made widely available, to all expressly eligible applicants and coordinated with similar programs across various federal agencies to enable collaborations of rural, urban and suburban areas.

2. Grant funding should be awarded to a wide variety of projects serving any of the five stated purposes of Section 6001 of the Recovery Act — without prioritizing any one of the purposes over the

others — and should fund networks that stand to do the most good for as many Americans as possible.

3. NTIA and RUS, as established by the Recovery Act, are the sole agencies charged with determining which projects will be funded using broadband grant funding. NTIA should not surrender its authority to the states to prioritize broadband projects.

See **BROADBAND** page 2

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A new easy-to-use tool from NOAA can help county planners visualize coastal changes » **Page 7**



Municipal golf courses in the rough as recession takes its toll » **Page 5**

Several "Tips for Tough Times" are featured in this issue » **Page 3**

County programs are in the top 50 list for government innovations » **Page 6**

# Applications now available for 2009-2010 presidential leadership, committee appointments

NACo President-elect Valerie Brown is seeking nominations for her presidential year appointments. These appointments are for one to three-year terms and membership on some committees has specific requirements. Following are the appointments along with the qualifications required for each.

## Steering Committee Leadership

The 11 steering committees will each have a leadership team consisting of a chair, an appropriate number of vice-chairs, and subcommittee chairs and vice-chairs. Those applicants who have been active members of the steering committee will be given preference in consideration for these appointments. The applicant should be willing to help coordinate leadership conference calls, develop the meeting agendas and testify before Congress if necessary. These appointments are for one year.

**IMPORTANT:** [Steering com-](#)



NACo President-elect  
Valerie Brown

mittee membership is not a part of this application process. The NACo president appoints **only the steering committee leadership. The State Associations of Counties are responsible for nominating the general steering committee members.** If you are interested in becoming a member of a steering committee you must contact your state association directly.

## Pelosi staff briefs NACo on future House action

BY JEFF ARNOLD  
DEPUTY LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Given that Congress has spent an unprecedented amount of tax dollars on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, helped bail out financial institutions, the auto industry and provide help to mortgage holders that are “under water,” what’s left?

Staff from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s office provided a glimpse into the post-Easter recess to a group of Washington, D.C.-based representatives at NACo’s offices.

The list of issues under consideration for House action begins with the conference between the House and Senate on the 2010 Budget Resolution, and whether to include “reconciliation” instructions in the report.

Reconciliation is a Congressional budgeting tool that allows controversial provisions to be considered without a chance of filibuster in the Senate—a very “inside the Beltway” procedure.

The resolution also contains special reserve funds for certain tax fixes that must occur before the end of the fiscal year.

Congress will receive the actual

details of President Obama’s FY10 budget in late April or early May and will begin the regular appropriations process, which will take several months. Pelosi would like to move a tobacco bill, a bill on stem cell research and possibly a bill regulating the financial services sector. An emergency war supplemental appropriations bill will be needed very soon, and has already been submitted.

The really “big dogs” on the legislative agenda are health care reform and energy. While high priorities for the president and many members of Congress, these are huge undertakings and may slip into the fall or next year.

The president has also called on Congress to begin consideration of comprehensive immigration reform, but Pelosi’s staff suggested that while Pelosi also supports comprehensive reform, the Executive Branch must take the lead in proposing reforms.

The Senate has not yet made its long-term agenda available.

NACo’s legislative staff will be following all these issues closely, and will keep members informed through *County News*, e-news and Legislative Bulletin.

## Caucus Leadership

The Rural Action Caucus Steering Committee and the Large Urban County Caucus Steering Committee will each have a chair and an appropriate number of vice-chairs. Applicants who have been active members of these caucuses will be given preference in consideration for these appointments. These appointments are for one year.

## At-Large Appointments to the NACo Board of Directors

Each president appoints 10 at-large directors to the NACo Board of Directors for a one-year term. These appointments are to add balance to the board with respect to any inequities between urban and rural, gender, geography and minority representation. As with our communities, our strength is in our diversity. These appointments are for one year.

## Standing Committees

The Standing committees are as follows:

**Finance Committee.** Advises the Executive Committee on the annual budget of the association before it is presented to the Board of Directors and provides oversight on other financial issues as directed by the Executive Committee. (Appoints three members for a three-year term with a background in finance and/or investment.)

**Information Technology Committee.** Advises the Executive Committee on information technology issues and provides oversight on NACo information technology projects. (Appoints the chair, two vice chairs and 22 members for a one-year term.)

**Member Programs and Services Committee.** Advises the Executive Committee regarding the development and evaluation of programs and services for NACo members. (Appoints the chair for a one-year term and eight members for three-year terms. Selects one or two vice-chairs from the membership of the committee.)

**Membership Committee.** Actively recruits and retains member counties, parishes and boroughs in order to increase NACo’s total membership. (Appoints the chair, vice-chairs (six regions) and one member from each state for a one-year term.)

## Ad Hoc Committees

The Ad Hoc committees are as follows:

• **Deferred Compensation Advisory Committee.** (Appoints the chair for a one-year term and five members from participating entities for a three-year term. In 2009, the open slots are for three elected county officials, one appointed county official, one executive director of an endorsing state association and one member of the executive committee for a one-year term.)

• **Arts and Culture Commission.** (Appoints the chair, vice-chair and 25 members for a one-year term.)

• **Sustainability Leadership Team.** (Appoints the chair, four vice-chairs, and six members for a one-year term.)

• **Geospatial Information Systems Committee.** (Appoints the chair and vice-chair for a one-year term.)

The Presidential Appointments Application Form is to be completed by everyone who wants to be considered for a leadership or committee appointment for the 2009-2010 presidential year. The application form is available online at NACo’s Web site, [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org). You will find it under: About NACo ► Committees and Caucuses ► Presidential Appointment.

The deadline for submitting an application is May 22. Please direct any questions to Karen McRunnel at 202/942-4238 or by e-mail at [kmcrunnel@naco.org](mailto:kmcrunnel@naco.org).

## Consider broadband pricing in defining ‘underserved’

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4. Broadband mapping grant awards should go to efforts that provide critical consumer information, such as price and speed, and require that data be disclosed in an independently verifiable manner. Any recipient of grant funds to build a network should be required to disclose all broadband mapping information.

5. Funding awards should consider the nature of an applicant, and award amounts based on the actual needs of a proposed project — whether that project requires less than 80 percent federal funding or seeks a waiver of the 20 percent matching funds requirement. NTIA must also rigorously define the “public interest” test a private enterprise must pass in order to be eligible for stimulus funds.

6. NTIA and RUS should work to ensure that the explicit intent of the Recovery Act is not thwarted by anti-competitive barriers to local government participation.

7. Waste, fraudulent spending and unjust enrichment cannot be tolerated and should be met with swift de-obligation of funds.

8. The definition of “underserved” should reflect the current capabilities of America’s global competitors. Defining underserved to include service at low speeds or capacity has significant adverse consequences for the development of advanced communications in the U.S. and for the need to create jobs as soon as possible. The pricing of broadband services must be considered in defining an underserved area. Unaffordable broadband services are unavailable.

9. The definition of “broadband” should be aspirational and should recognize the need for scalability and for Americans to be able to compete globally with competitors who have access to far greater speeds than the long-standing FCC definition of broadband.

10. The FCC’s broadband principles should be a definitional floor for the non-discrimination and network interconnection requirements and should favor open access.

At this point in the process, it is unknown whether NTIA and RUS will accept any of these recommendations. Funding under the program cannot begin until the rules have been adopted, which is anticipated within the next 90 days.

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# NACo's 'Tough Times' webinars address fiscal challenges

BY RUTH NYBRO  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

"Spend as if your mother was watching" was the advice from David Quam of the National Governors Association in his presentation to more than 500 county officials and staff who signed on to NACo's webinar, "Leading in Tough Times: Implementation of the Stimulus Package: What Counties Need to Know" April 2.

When polled by NACo moderator Stephanie Osborn, more than three-quarters of the responding attendees reported their major challenge was inadequate information about available funds for their counties.

The webinar proceeded to meet that challenge: first with a presentation by Jeff Arnold, NACo's deputy legislative director, who outlined the allocations, timelines and terms (competitive or grant-funded) of specific areas of the stimulus package.

He urged county officials to establish and maintain frequent contact with state officials, senators and representatives on the status of available funds, and to keep informed and alert to announcements of funding notices that come out

almost daily from Washington. Providing a state perspective, Quam cautioned county officials not only to "count every dollar," but also to plan for the "long haul." Reviewing the lessons of two recessionary periods in the past 15-18 years, Quam pointed out that "state shortfalls are greatest the year after the nation begins to recover, and that counties are wise to plan for

state cuts after the enactment of the stimulus bill.

Danny Werfel, deputy controller of the White House Office of Management and Budget, made the third presentation on standards and procedures for reporting stimulus funds.

Urging attendees to respond with "speed, prudence and transparency," Werfel affirmed that ac-

countability for the application of stimulus funds will be "played out on the Web as never before."

The introductory remarks of Larry Naake, NACo executive director, echoed at the conclusion of the webinar. "This is an historic opportunity for all of us to demonstrate that all levels of government can and do work together," he said. Naake committed NACo

to continue to provide the latest information to local officials as soon as it's released.

The next webinar in the "Leading in Tough Times" series will be presented May 7 at 2 p.m. EDT. A recording of the April 2 webinar and registration for future webinars are available through a link on NACo's Web site at [www.naco.org/toughtimes](http://www.naco.org/toughtimes).

## Counties nationwide celebrate 'Greening Our Future'

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Future," is such a great opportunity to share your county's innovative efforts to protect the environment, conserve energy, restore wetlands and save taxpayers' money.

First celebrated in 1991, NCGW was created by NACo to raise public awareness and understanding about the roles and responsibilities of the nation's 3,068 counties. The community outreach events held during the week will help residents and businesses to better understand how counties serve the community.

In Chatham County, Ga., Vice Chair/Commissioner Priscilla Thomas, a member of NACo's Human Services and Health Steering Committee, reports that the county plans to hold a "Chatham Environmental Forum" at the public library featuring a puppet show stressing the importance of recycling. Various environmentally friendly products will be on display as well.

County leaders will hold an openhouse at the Chatham County Courthouse including food, workshops and giveaways. Also planned is a "County Fair Day" at the mall with face painting, an encore presentation of the recycling puppets and more. Local schools are sponsoring essay contests for students and will welcome county employees as guest speakers.

In Cuyahoga County, Ohio, County Recorder Lillian Greene is sponsoring an essay contest for ninth-grade students. The question: What can you and your peers do to help ensure a green future for our county, state and nation? First prize is \$150 and second prize is \$50.

In Texas, the Texas Association of Counties (TAC) has partnered with the V.G. Young Institute of County Government at Texas A&M University to encourage all of the state's 254 counties to



celebrate NCGW. In classic Texas style, TAC President J.D. Johnson, commissioner, Tarrant County, has invited all TAC members to attend a barbeque lunch May 6 on the Capitol grounds in Austin. Members are being encouraged to invite their state legislators and legislative staffers to enjoy some good food and talk about county government.

In Oceana County, Mich., the Board of Commissioners passed a resolution proclaiming May 3-9, 2009 as NCGW in the county, and pledged to continue to work with NACo "to Restore the Partnership between all levels of government to better serve American communities."

The above examples represent just a few of the many ways counties are celebrating NCGW. A booklet of ideas and suggestions on how to celebrate NCGW is available by contacting NACo's Public Affairs Department at 202/393-6226 or visiting the NACo Web site under County Resource Center ► Public Awareness Campaigns. The booklet also provides helpful information about media outreach strategies and NACo's new online NCGW Media Resources Kit.

NACo wants to know what activities and programs you have planned for NCGW. NACo will share this information with other counties to help them have a successful celebration. Send your activities to Tom Goodman via fax at 202/393-2630 or e-mail at [tgoodman@naco.org](mailto:tgoodman@naco.org).

## Tough times? Check out these resources ...

### TIPS for TOUGH TIMES

#### Grant Deadlines Approaching

Applications are due soon for several county-eligible law enforcement and public safety grants: Edward Byrne Memorial Competitive Grant Program (April 27); Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (May 14); and Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Local Program (May 18).

Deadlines are also approaching for several environmental and energy grants: SmartWay Clean Diesel Finance Program (April 28); National Clean Diesel Funding Assistance Program (April 28); Clean Diesel Emerging Technologies Program (May 5); and Transportation Electrification (for electric vehicles, May 13).

States are required to submit applications for Weatherization Assistance Program and State Energy Program funding, which may include county projects, by May 12.

To access information about these and other current Recovery Act notices of funding

availability, go on NACo's Web site: [www.naco.org/toughtimes](http://www.naco.org/toughtimes)

#### HHS Announces CCDF and CSBG Funds

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced April 9 that the Child Care and Development Fund will receive \$2 billion and the Immunization Grant Program would receive \$300 million in supplementary Recovery Act funds.

You can find program announcements and guidance on NACo's Web site: [www.naco.org/toughtimes](http://www.naco.org/toughtimes) in the "Resources" section.

#### New Guidance Issued

The White House Office of Management and Budget updated the Implementing Guidance for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act on April 3. You can access the latest version from NACo's Web site. Go to [www.naco.org/toughtimes](http://www.naco.org/toughtimes) ► Resources ► Updated Implementing Guidance for the Recovery Act.

The 175-page memo provides additional information about reporting requirements, including reporting about jobs created or retained (see pp. 20-28), and application of the Buy American requirement and Davis-Bacon prevailing wage rate requirement (see pp. 121-172).

## In Case You Missed It ... News to Use from Past County News

### ► Apply for NACo's County Courthouse Awards by May 9

NACo is now accepting applications for the 2009 County Courthouse Awards. Established in 2001, the awards are sponsored by Siemens and recognize elected county officials from NACo-member counties who demonstrate innovative and effective leadership to improve residents' quality of life. One award is presented in three categories each year: rural, suburban and urban.

Applications and information is available at [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org) under "Awards." Applications must be received by May 9. Contact Dalen Harris or Erik Johnston, NACo associate legislative directors, at 202/393-6226 or by e-mail at [dharris@naco.org](mailto:dharris@naco.org) or [ejohnston@naco.org](mailto:ejohnston@naco.org).

## CountyNews

The Voice of America's Counties

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## Profiles in Service



### » George B. Cole

Vice President, County Council  
Sussex County, Del.  
NACo Board of Directors

**Number of years active in NACo:** 23

**Education:** B.A. history, University of Delaware

**Occupation:** Realtor and antique dealer

**The hardest thing I've ever done:** raise a family

**Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner:** Jonathan Winters, Don Knotts and Winston Churchill

**A dream I have is to:** take a world cruise.

**My favorite way to relax is:** go sit on the beach.

**I'm most proud of:** having six beautiful children.

**Every morning I read:** *The Washington Times*.

**My favorite meal is:** fried oysters and chicken salad.

**The last book I read was:** *Innocents Abroad* by Mark Twain

**My favorite movie is:** *The Godfather*.

**My favorite music is:** Louie Prima.

**My favorite president is:** Ronald Reagan.

# N.M. county commissioner named to Interior post

By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Deanna Archuleta, Bernalillo County, N.M. commission chair and a NACo Public Lands Steering Committee member, has been named deputy assistant secretary for water and science at the U.S. Department of the Interior.

"Deanna has extensive experience and expertise in developing water policy and public-private partnerships," Interior Secretary Ken Salazar said of Archuleta. "She understands Western water issues, is a dedicated and energetic professional with strong team-building skills and will be a valuable member of our water and science leadership here at Interior."

As deputy assistant secretary, Archuleta, whose first name is pronounced "Deena," will advise



Deanna Archuleta  
Bernalillo County, N.M.

the assistant secretary for water and science who oversees the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the Central Utah Project Completion Act Office. Anne Castle, a Denver lawyer, has been nominated to be assistant secretary for water and science but has not yet been confirmed by the

Senate. Archuleta's position does not require confirmation. She is scheduled to begin the new job May 1.

The assistant secretary's office is responsible for managing and directing programs supporting development and implementation of Western water policy and earth observation science focused on the nation.

Archuleta was elected to the Bernalillo County Board of Commissioners in 2004 and reelected last November. She also served on then-President-elect Obama's transition team.

"It really came completely out of the blue for me," Archuleta said — "both working on the transition team and having the opportunity to take this job."

See ARCHULETA page 12

## Workforce Center provides 'triage services' to newly unemployed

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Henrico is a significant part, has lost more than 10,300 jobs. The region's jobless rate currently hovers near 8 percent. That's below the national average, but high when you consider that two years ago, Henrico's jobless rate was closer to 2 percent.

"Some of these people had six-figure incomes, but they didn't have six months' worth of resources," said George Drumwright Jr., Henrico's deputy county manager for human services.

Located in a vacant Henrico County public library, the center provides one-stop, wraparound services to the region's legion of the newly unemployed. It was funded by a \$500,000 grant from the state of Virginia and operates under the Capital Area Workforce Investment Board.

Drumwright says the center's defining feature is that it provides employment services and human services in a single location. The library, which the county donated to the effort, rent-free, is located within 2 miles of several of the county's shuttered or downsized businesses.

The Transition Center provides dislocated workers with a variety of resources or tools to help them pursue new careers and employment. These include filing for unemployment compensation, career-readiness testing, resume writing and opportunities to become their own employer (through

the Small Business Administration). There are also a number of social service agencies present that can assist individuals who may need help financially, or with emergency food assistance. ClearPoint Financial Solutions provides free debt counseling.

Staff from five of the partner jurisdictions take turns providing social services each day the center is open, and the nonprofit and business communities have filled in where needed. A local furniture company donated 80 percent of the furniture being used at the center.

Center Manager Leontine Jameson knows her clients' needs all too well. Two years ago, she moved back to the Richmond area from Washington state to care for an aging parent. It took her 10 months to find a job.

Like those her center sees, she found herself "in a situation of trying to decide; do I pay the mortgage; do I pay the electric bill; do I pay the water bill; do I make the car payment?"

"We're dealing with a massive amount of experienced workers," Jameson said, many of whom "have not previously — maybe ever in their life — applied for, or felt like they needed to go to an outside agency to get services." She believes their ranks will continue to grow until the economy turns around, or as people's savings or unemployment benefits run out.

It's people like these who are re-defining the mission of employment



Photo courtesy of Henrico County, Va.

Erica Blount, an employment specialist, tells job seekers at the Capital Region Workforce Transition Center how the Workforce Investment Act can help them upgrade their skills to become more marketable.

centers, which traditionally have been the province of the hard-core unemployed, entry-level job seekers or those with barriers to employment. "This is a different population and need that we're seeing in larger numbers now," Jameson said.

On a recent April day, a former corporate human resources director worked with clients on their "elevator speeches" — focusing on "who am I, what my objectives are, and what I need."

That same day, the center offered a session on deep relaxation, offered by mental health professionals, to help clients learn to deal with the stresses of unemployment, job-hunting and financial uncertainty.

The center also serves the coun-

ties of Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, New Kent and Powhatan. From its opening March 9 through April 10, it had served 1,540 unduplicated clients.

Henrico's estimated 2007 population is about 290,000. Some of its smaller neighbors have been less affected by the recession but not unscathed.

"There have been a number of layoffs in some Henrico companies that Goochland residents worked for," said Greg Reid, the county's director of economic development. The county's population is about 20,600. In nearby Powhatan (pop. 27,800), "upwards of about 70 percent" of its residents commute to jobs outside the county, said Sherry

Swinson, economic development director for that county.

Reid and Swinson agree that the regional center provides benefits to employers as well as job seekers. "In economic development, we try to match the needs of companies in our area to the labor force in the area," Reid said.

Jameson says the center can help ease the burden for companies that are hiring.

"If an employer announces that they have five jobs and 1,000 people show up, that's overwhelming to an employer. Our employment technicians and employment specialists are able to really screen applicants and provide the most qualified candidates for an employer to interview," she said.

A financial services company, which Drumwright declined to identify, offered to hire 32 people the center recommended to National Associates, Inc., a job-recruitment firm based in Washington, D.C.

Jameson said, "This is an important service, because we really can (be a) bridge between the employer who has jobs and the thousands and thousands of people right now who are looking for jobs."

(For more information about the Capital Region Workforce Transition Center, visit the Capital Area Workforce Investment Board's Web site at [www.cawib.org/crec.cfm](http://www.cawib.org/crec.cfm) or contact George Drumwright at [dru@co.henrico.va.us](mailto:dru@co.henrico.va.us).)

# Coroner's gift shop helps youth program thrive

BY CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON  
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Those who watch the TV show *CSI* know that the coroner's job is to provide closure for families and justice to the murdered. However, has anyone ever thought of a gift shop combining both worlds?

For 15 years, Los Angeles County, Calif. has been home to the first coroner's office gift shop aptly named "Skeletons in the Closet." Here, shoppers can buy anything from a skull business card holder to the best-selling body outline beach towel. These unique items help the county raise

much-needed funds for its youth drunk driving program.

"This all started as a joke," said Edna Pereyda, store keeper since 2005. "A secretary made a shirt for a doctor that had something to do with the coroner's office and it took off from there."

With declining tax revenues, other concepts had to be considered to help off-set monetary losses. The intent was to use monies raised to defray the costs associated with the Youthful Drunk Driving Visitation Program (YDDVP), which receives no tax support. The YDDVP program is a sentence from the court system that is known as a "scared straight" program where first-time offenders and some second-time offenders come and see what can happen to someone when they drink and drive.

"Skeletons in the Closet" features a complete line of souvenir items, such as beach towels, T-shirts, tote bags, baseball caps, coroner's toe tag key chains, boxer shorts called "undertakers," and more. Each item displays a Los Angeles County Coroner design such as a skeleton in Sherlock Holmes attire, a chalked-out body outline or the L.A. County Coroner seal. The store earns about \$3,000 per week and \$156,000 per year to run the YDDVP program, and to restock the store with items and create new ones.



Photo Courtesy of L.A. County Coroner's Office

"Skeletons in the Closet" brings in over \$150,000 per year to help L.A. County's youth drunk driving program.

The response of the store has been overwhelmingly positive and has received worldwide interest, particularly throughout the United States and Canada. Customer awareness has been generated through much publicized newspaper and magazine articles, as

See **SKELETONS** page 8

# County golf courses feel effects of economic recession

BY ELIZABETH PERRY  
STAFF WRITER

Many public golf course managers are feeling under par these days.

According to the National Golf Foundation (NGF), approximately one-fifth of municipal golf courses are in financial or operational trouble — county-owned facilities among them.

Maricopa County, Ariz. Regional Park system is home to three golf courses, the 500 Club, 27 holes, and Estrella Mountain and Paradise Valley Golf Courses, 18 holes each. Like many public courses, the county owns the land, but the courses are operated by corporations under contract with the Parks and Recreation Department.

Tom Timmons, contract administrator, said total play on all three courses was down from 206,183 rounds in 2007 to 202,496 rounds in 2008. He attributes the decline in part to the economic recession.

"The demographics have not changed considerably as far as who is here, but what you're seeing is a lot tighter economy," he said. "Certain areas have been hit harder than others in terms of foreclosure issues

going on here in Arizona. The quality of the courses has not decreased at all, and the cost per round hasn't changed. It's about whether or not people have the same amount of disposable income."

Timmons said there has been discussion about a new Request for Proposal (RFP) process for the 500 Club, but there are no plans for it to continue to be anything but a golf course. The county is looking into ways to market its Estrella Mountain course and increase its playability. The popular Paradise Valley course has seen 91,000 rounds of golf over its 2,000 acres in the past year, and Timmons said the county has had offers to purchase the land from developers and a local college.

Jeffrey Schott, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington, D.C. and an avid golfer, said he was not surprised to hear that so many municipal courses are struggling, especially at a time when revenue sources are tight. He said local governments get their revenue from property taxes, and when housing values decline and the tax bases shrink, budgets get cut.

See **GOLF** page 12



According to the National Golf Foundation, approximately one-fifth of municipal golf courses are in financial or operational trouble.

## NACo Prescription Discount Card FREE to your County & your residents

Locate your CVS Caremark representative at RAC, April 28-30, 2009, and ask how you can win a GPS Navigation System.

**Make a difference!** Implement the program today for your residents and be a part of the solution in managing the high costs of prescriptions.



For information on the NACo Prescription Discount Card contact Andrew Goldschmidt at (202) 393-6226 or visit [naco.org/drugcard](http://naco.org/drugcard)



# County programs among Top 50 government innovators

By CHARLES TAYLOR  
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Seven counties from across the United States have made the first cut in the Harvard Kennedy School of Government's Innovations in Government Awards program—the so-called “Oscars” of government programs.

The Kennedy School's Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation recently announced the 2009 Top 50 Government Innovations. Winnowed from a pool of 600 applicants, the top 50 include the following counties:

Santa Clara County, Calif., Orange and Hillsborough counties, Fla., Hennepin County, Minn. — recognized for two programs — Cuyahoga County, Ohio, Milwaukee County, Wis. and King County, Wash. Two of

the programs are former NACo Achievement Award winners (see box below).

“In this climate of economic uncertainty, these Top 50 innovative government programs demonstrate that creativity and innovation can still survive and flourish,” Stephen Goldsmith, director of the Innovations in American Government Program, said in a news release. “Despite strained budgets and diminishing resources, these programs prove that government continues to find solutions to pressing societal challenges.”

The county programs recognized range from health care and criminal justice, to credit crisis relief and green buildings. The Top 50 programs also include 21 cities and towns, one school district, 11 states, eight federal agencies, one tribal government and one regional authority.

Since the awards' inception in 1985, more than 400 government programs have been recognized and have collectively received more than \$20 million in grants to support sharing their best practices.

In addition to encouraging adaptation of these innovations worldwide, award winners provide case studies that are taught in government schools internationally. To date, more than 450 Harvard courses and more 2,250 courses worldwide have incorporated Innovations in American Government case studies.

Finalists of the 2009 Innovations Awards will be announced on May 18, and on May 27 they will make presentations before the national selection committee in Cambridge, Mass., chaired by David Gergen, Kennedy School professor of public service. This

event is free and open to the public and will be streamed on the Web.

The 2009 Innovations winners will be announced in September.

Applicants for the 2010 Innovations in American Government Awards are encouraged to apply at [www.innovationsaward@harvard.edu](http://www.innovationsaward@harvard.edu).

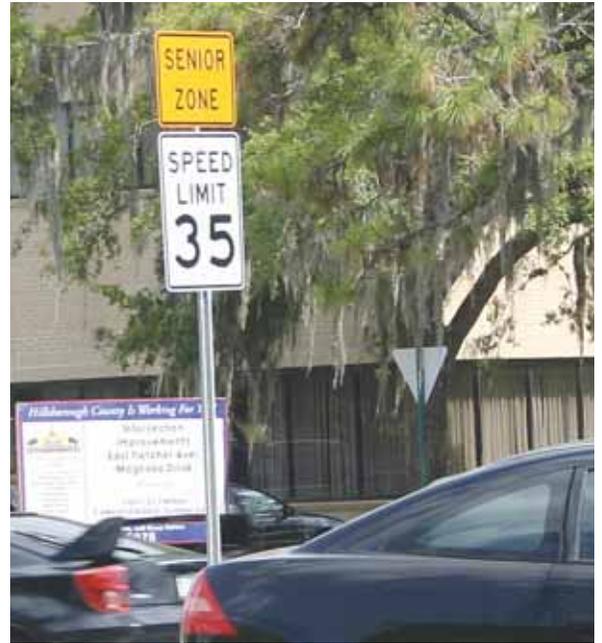


Photo courtesy of Hillsborough County, Fla.

Hillsborough County, Fla.'s Senior Zone traffic-calming program encourages drivers to ease up on the gas near retirement and assisted-living communities.

## County Programs Vying for Innovation Awards

### Online Inmate Information and Jail Visit Reservation

Santa Clara County, Calif.

The Online Inmate Information and Jail Visit Reservation System is an application that allows approved users to look up inmate information and schedule inmate visits via Santa Clara County's Web site.

### Primary Care Access Network

Orange County, Fla.

Primary Care Access Network is a creative governance and implementation model composed of community health care provider agencies that have joined to expand and enhance health care services to uninsured residents throughout Orange County. The program was a 2003 NACo Achievement Award winner.

### Senior Zones

Hillsborough County, Fla.

Hillsborough County's Senior Zone Program works to slow traffic and increase safety for older adult drivers and pedestrians around retirement and assisted-living communities through the use of traffic-calming devices. *County News* featured the program in a May 17, 2007 story, “Senior Zones calm traffic near retirement communities.”

### Early Neutral Evaluation

Hennepin County, Minn.

Early Neutral Evaluation is a collaborative process in Hennepin County that promotes children's well-being by helping parents reach an early and cooperative settlement in custody and parenting-time disputes. In 2004, the program was recognized with a NACo Achievement Award.

### Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program

Hennepin County, Minn.

Hennepin County's Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program is a network of public and private service providers who have developed highly successful, outcome-focused methods for preventing homelessness for at-risk families and rapidly re-housing homeless families.

### Credit Crisis Relief

Cuyahoga County, Ohio

Cuyahoga County's Credit Crisis Relief program combats the devastating impacts of the global credit crisis by providing real, replicable solutions that protect communities, neighborhoods and families. The program offers comprehensive foreclosure prevention services, prevents neighborhood blight and creates a land bank to revitalize neighborhoods. *County News* featured the land bank program in an article March 6, “Ohio county fights foreclosures with land bank.”

### GreenTools Green Building Program

King County, Wash.

GreenTools Green Building Program promotes sustainable built environments by leveraging partnerships with other agencies and organizations and offering voluntary incentives that increase the amount of green building in the county.

### Wraparound Milwaukee

Milwaukee County, Wis.

Wraparound Milwaukee is a Milwaukee County community-based system of care which provides comprehensive, highly individualized, family-directed services to youth with serious emotional and mental health needs, and their families.

(Source: Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.)

## Word Search

### Counties with the Cleanest Air

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

ANCHORAGE (Alaska)  
BERNALILLO (New Mexico)  
BURKE (North Dakota)  
CAMPBELL (Wyoming)  
CASCADE (Montana)  
COLUMBIA (Oregon)  
ELBERT (Colorado)  
ESSEX (New York)  
GRANT (New Mexico)  
HANCOCK (Maine)

HONOLULU (Hawaii)  
JUNEAU (Alaska)  
LA PLATA (Colorado)  
LARAMIE (Wyoming)  
MAUI (Hawaii)  
MERCER (North Dakota)  
SANDOVAL (New Mexico)  
SANTA FE (New Mexico)  
SCOTTS BLUFF (NE)  
VILAS (Wisconsin)

Created by Christopher Johnson

# NOAA illustrates coastal changes on a 'CanVis'

Simulated visual images — also termed visualizations — can be much more effective than charts and graphs in drawing attention to the potential impacts of coastal development and policy changes. But until recently, local officials and coastal professionals were reluctant to use the visualization software on the market because of its expense and steep learning curve.

In response to requests for easy-to-use and inexpensive visualization tools, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Services Center has partnered with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Agroforestry Center to provide CanVis — a free software visualization tool — in a form suited to the needs of officials and managers on the coast.

CanVis, which is part of the Digital Coast suite of tools, enables users with minimal computer skills to create realistic simulations using their own photographs and a digital library that features coast-appropriate visual objects.

"The response to CanVis has been excellent," said Hansje Gold-Krueck, a specialist with the center's



Photo courtesy of NOAA

This is the actual beach scene from the Outer Banks in North Carolina.



Image courtesy of NOAA

This is a visualization of the same view — using CanVis — to show the visual impact of proposed wind turbines.

Human Dimensions program. "We've handled more than 350 CanVis software requests from 36 states, Guam and Puerto Rico, as well as from Australia, South Africa, Indonesia, Canada and seven European nations."

The center has also reached out to local, state and national agencies and organizations by conducting virtual CanVis workshops via WebEx. "We

really want to hear about the specific visualization needs of county officials, so that we can continue to provide useful, coast-specific objects and technical assistance," said Lori Cary-Kothera, a physical scientist with the center.

The center's CanVis Web site ([www.csc.noaa.gov/canvis](http://www.csc.noaa.gov/canvis)) features a library of objects specially designed to be downloaded and used for

coastal applications. These include docks, region-specific houses, boats, buoys and aquatic vegetation. In addition, the CanVis' object library continues to grow, and a number of new objects will address emerging concerns related to climate change and to the siting of alternative energy facilities.

The following elements are under development:

- Wind turbines
- Visualizations of post-storm recovery
- Mixed-use development — for instance, storefronts with apartments on the second floor
- Paved and unpaved parking lots
- Boardwalks

See CANVIS page 8

## Some partnerships are just meant to be.

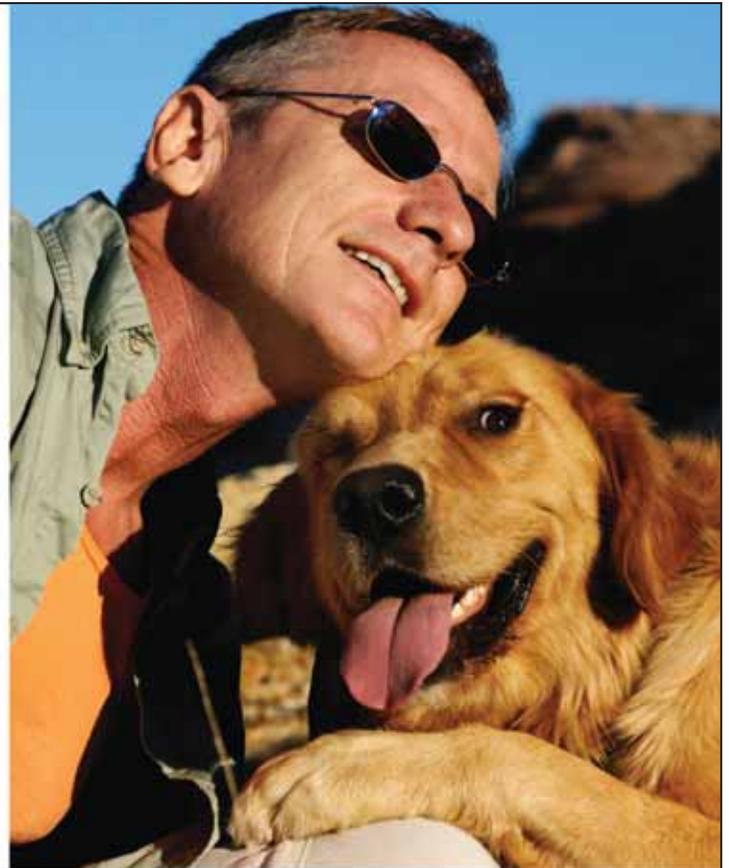
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## CanVis helps coastal managers envision the future of their landscape

CANVIS from page 7

- Natural buffers versus artificial buffers, and
- Objects addressing water level decreases and the potential growth of invasive species.

The projects described below illustrate how coastal professionals, local officials and stakeholders can use CanVis to demonstrate the aesthetic effects of proposed changes in their communities.

### Revealing the Effects of High-Rise Condominiums on Water Views

The historic port area of Philadelphia, offers picturesque views of the Delaware River, so when a developer proposed the construction of 30- to 60-floor condominiums on the port's finger piers, concerns were raised about the effects on scenic vistas. "We can't sell coastal management to people who can't see the water," said Shamus Malone, the assistant program manager for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Coastal Zone Management Program.

Center staff members helped

Malone and his colleagues illustrate the aesthetic impacts of the additional proposed condos. First, CanVis object files were developed from photographs of existing condos in the area. Next, these objects were added to an image of the waterfront, illustrating how prized scenic vistas would be negatively affected by additional construction.

### Wind Farms and Beach Recreation

On the Outer Banks of North Carolina, a questionnaire and economic model using CanVis visualizations will evaluate how the aesthetic impact of offshore wind farms would affect the willingness of respondents to spend money visiting the beach.

To isolate the visual impacts of wind turbines in decision-making, the survey includes other factors such as travel distance to the beach, gas cost and beach congestion.

"CanVis provides an excellent package for development of our visualizations," said Tom Allen, a geography professor at East Carolina University (ECU). Allen and graduate student Laurynas Gedminas created a suite of visualizations

for this survey, which was developed by ECU's Renaissance Computing Institute and backed by faculty from several college departments.

"The software has a large object library and the flexibility to incorporate user-provided imagery and objects. We obtained field photographs and were able to embed turbine models in various configurations for our survey," Allen added.

In addition, three-dimensional models of wind farms illustrated in Google Earth have been edited in CanVis for future survey use.

### Invasive Species' Threat to the Great Lakes

According to Roger L. Gauthier, the program director of the Great Lakes Commission, shoreline property owners and environmental advocates in the Great Lakes region share a common concern: if global warming leads to a permanent lowering of water levels in the Great Lakes, will the newly exposed bottomlands become fertile ground for invasive plants such as phragmites?

*Phragmites australis* is a perennial grass, 8 to 10 feet tall, that can invade wetlands. The growth of this invasive species does not just prevent

human access — it decimates the ability of amphibians, fish and other species to exist in the coastal wetlands, thereby threatening the Great Lakes' ecosystem.

"The use of the CanVis tool across the Great Lakes could help coastal managers and stakeholders to better anticipate the ultimate consequences of two separate forces

that could threaten the health and use of Great Lakes resources," Gauthier said. Steps could then be taken to mitigate or manage the threat.

To view the CanVis workshop schedule, visit [www.csc.noaa.gov/canvis/workshops.html](http://www.csc.noaa.gov/canvis/workshops.html). For additional questions about CanVis, contact [Hansje.Gold-Krueck@noaa.gov](mailto:Hansje.Gold-Krueck@noaa.gov).

## Not the corner store ... it's the coroner's store

SKLETONS from page 5

well as having an online store and mail-order catalog, which has more than 30,000 subscribers.

"Most people get excited when they see our gift shop," added Pereyda. "Most people know what they are getting into when they walk in but don't expect so many items."

Pereyda also said many other counties are exploring ideas like this to raise money for much needed programs. But with a lot of red tape to open such a store, most counties cannot afford to do so in these harsh

economic times.

Since its debut 15 years ago, "Skeletons" has inspired other coroner's offices to follow suit. In 2005, Clark County (Las Vegas), Nev. opened a coroner gift shop modeled after L.A. County's. Their biggest seller is the skull business card holder.

With the popularity of *CSI*, these gift shops will continue to be a popular destination when it comes to deadly gifts.

For more information on the store and its items for sale, visit <http://lacstores.co.la.ca.us>.



# Greening Our Future

May 3–9, 2009

The theme for the 2009 celebration of National County Government Week is "Greening Our Future." All counties are encouraged to participate, especially those that are pursuing green government initiatives. They should tell their residents about what they are doing to conserve energy, protect the environment and save taxpayers' dollars. A comprehensive booklet of ideas on ways to celebrate NCGW, including draft proclamations and news releases, is available. Promotional kits are also available for download at [www.naco.org/ncgw](http://www.naco.org/ncgw).

Visit NACO's Web site at [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org) for more information or contact Tom Goodman at 202/942-4222 or [tgoodman@naco.org](mailto:tgoodman@naco.org).

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

NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT WEEK

• MAY 3–9, 2009 •

## News From the Nation's Counties

### ► CALIFORNIA

• **SAN MATEO COUNTY** Supervisors Rose Jacobs Gibson and Carole Groom approved a request for proposals from private companies interested in operating the county's **methadone clinic**. The *Mercury News* reported the clinic has been costing the county some \$450,000 each year due to low patient enrollment. So far, seven methadone clinics have expressed interest in running the clinic, which could happen as early as next summer.

• **SANTA CRUZ COUNTY** is looking into setting up a **24-hour 211 call center**, which would be ready by February 2010 the *Mercury News* reported. If approved, the call center would operate like emergency number 911 and directory assistance number 411, however it would provide health and human services assistance such as food and shelter, counseling referrals and low-cost medical care.

### ► COLORADO

The **MESA COUNTY** jail recently stopped housing **federal immigration detainees** after it reached capacity earlier this month. Sheriff Stan Hilkey told the Associated Press the 366-bed jail is currently housing between 355 and 360 inmates.

Additional bunk beds were added and some inmates are being housed in the gym. A spokesperson for the sheriff said no prisoners are being released early and that no county inmates are being turned away.

### ► FLORIDA

**LEE COUNTY** commissioners approved a **new spring training stadium** for the Boston Red Sox

baseball team, despite declining home values in the area, *The Wall Street Journal* reported. According to county officials the project will require an initial investment of \$100 million but will pay for itself by creating jobs, bolstering the construction industry and attracting tourists, and it will be financed through a hotel tax aimed at tourists.

### ► IDAHO

**CANYON COUNTY's** 750 employees are taking a **2.5 percent pay cut** for six months to make up for budget shortfalls totaling some \$6 million.

Idaho's second largest county originally considered eliminating three out of 10 paid holidays, which would have saved the county approximately \$390,000. County commissioners decided to go with the pay cut because it would be easier for employees to budget.

### ► KENTUCKY

The Green River Area Development District (GRADD), a governmental agency which serves **DAVIESS, HANCOCK, HENDERSON, MCLEAN, OHIO, UNION and WEBSTER counties**, was recently recognized as one of the **Best Places to Work in Kentucky** for 2009 by the Kentucky Society for Human Resource Management and the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. GRADD was the only governmental agency in the state to be selected.

### ► MICHIGAN

For over 30 years, **MACOMB COUNTY** has hosted an annual public auction that raises much-needed funding for the general fund and police budget. Last year, more than \$250,000 was raised.

The sale starts at 9 a.m. May 2 at the county warehouse located at 44900 Vic Wertz Drive in Clinton Township and features a healthy assortment of vehicles, motorcycles, electronics and more. All sales are final and must be paid in full the day of the sale. Those purchasing a vehicle may make a 20 percent deposit (or \$200, whichever is greater), with the full amount to be paid by 2 p.m. May 4.

Everything is sold as-is without warranty. Buyers are responsible for removing their items from the site. Only cash or checks are accepted. For more information, call the auction hotline at 586/783-8164 or visit [www.crydermanauctions.com](http://www.crydermanauctions.com).

### ► MINNESOTA

The **ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA COUNTIES** is voicing its opposition to a proposal by Gov. Tim Pawlenty (R) to **consolidate delivery of social services** across the state, the *Hutchinson Leader*

reported. Under the governor's plan, county social service departments would be replaced by 15 regional service consortiums. Counties that opt in would have their state aid reduced in FY09-10. Bills detailing the proposal were introduced in the state House and Senate in March under the Human Services Authority Act.

### ► NEVADA

• **CLARK COUNTY** commissioners are a step closer to being **full-time employees**. A state Senate committee has approved a bill stating that a Clark County commissioner "shall devote his entire time and attention to the business of his office and shall not pursue any other business or occupation or hold any other office of profit," the *Las Vegas Sun* reported.

Terry Clark, a state senator from Las Vegas, sponsored the bill—noting that the county's \$5.9 billion budget is larger than the state's and

that the County Commission has authority over Las Vegas' airport. For those reasons, he argues that overseeing Clark County requires a full-time commitment.

• The **LYON COUNTY** Board of Commissioners has endorsed a state resolution that would require **local approval of federal wilderness designations**. One of the resolution's four provisions urges that Congress not enact legislation affecting counties' public lands without the support of those counties, the Associated Press reported.

In addition, the resolution asks Nevada's congressional delegation and Congress to support a schedule for releasing wilderness study areas deemed unsuitable for wilderness designations in a timely manner.

### ► NEW MEXICO

**DONA ANA County Treasurer David Gutierrez** has sent letters to

See NEWS FROM page 10

## The H.R. Doctor Is In

# A Future of Optimism

The current state of the global economy does not mix well with the resulting sense of individual uncertainty in the lives of everyone on the planet. The annoyance of reading about anomalies like million-dollar bonuses or taxpayer bail-outs and threats of the loss of control of mortgage and credit card payments is helping induce a widespread sense of pessimism.

Sadly, pessimism is apparently one of the food staples of the mass media. Even though the size of newspapers seems to be shrinking significantly as part of the economic turbulence we face, there seems to be more and more space taken up by stories of the death and dismemberment of individuals' retirement plans, store bankruptcies, the latest lay-off announcements, and "exposés" of waste and excess. If left untreated, the blight of pessimism spreads and does great harm to our hopes and dreams.

An array of statistics which AARP published should help us focus on the fact that the future is a bright place to be anticipated with optimism, challenge and opportunities for innovation.

For example, 100 years ago infant mortality in the U.S. stood at a rate of about 10 percent. In other words, one in 10 babies died during or

soon after child birth. A hundred years later that figure is at about two-thirds of 1 percent. Life expectancy was about 40 years of age for men and 49 for women whereas it is about 76 and over 80 years, respectively, today. Advancements in medicine lead to the prospect that, if people pay attention and accept personal responsibility for their own futures, life expectancy could increase by half again. Who among us would not want to be able to attend the college graduation of a great-great grandchild? That unimagined prospect is now within our grasp.

The number one cause of death in this country 100 years ago was pneumonia and influenza. Today influenza is number eight on the list but is often particularly problematic for people with other health conditions.

What is different today is the presence of conditions such as diabetes on the top killer list which never made it to the list 100 years ago. Diabetes is sometimes a disease of lifestyle. It can relate to obesity and the difficulty of accepting personal responsibility for how much time we should spend exercising, eating better, not smoking and generally being more engaged with each other. Rather, we watch TV

and net surf from the comfort of our La-Z-Boys.

Another sign of the amazing changes in our lives is that 100 years ago, 95 percent of all births occurred at home, whereas even 50 years later about that same percentage of births occurred in far better equipped hospitals.

If amazing changes in our past history are indicators of the future, we have a great many reasons to look ahead with optimism to a world of opportunities which we cannot even dream of today.

The keys to realizing the amazing possibilities ahead rest in not being afraid to dream about what the future could be like, acting now to reduce risk and taking steps to realize the possibilities and being personally accountable for our own lives and the lives of people we care about.

If we do these things, our attitudes and our actions will emerge out of pessimism, and our communities will be more engaged to be more productive. We will not only escape the current difficulties sooner, but we will lessen the chances of even greater trouble ahead.

  
Phil Rosenberg  
The HR Doctor • [www.hrdtr.net](http://www.hrdtr.net)

## NACo on the Move

### » In the News

• **Roy Brooks**, Tarrant County, Texas commissioner and NACo board member, was quoted in a *Sacramento Bee* story April 17 about the NACo's U.S. Health Reform hearing in Sacramento. "Health care cannot be separated from the county context, ... we are the provider of last resort," he said.

• **NACo's Prescription Drug Discount Card Program** was mentioned in the "Thumbs Up" portion of the "Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down" column in *The Hickory Daily Record* in Catawba County (Hickory), N.C. on March 28.

### » NACo Officers and Elected Officials

NACo Second Vice President **Glen Whitley** spoke at the Utah Association of Counties Spring Conference April 15-17 on the value of NACo in tough economic conditions.

*On the Move* is compiled by Christopher Johnson.

# Model Programs FROM THE NATION'S COUNTIES

## Kansas County Revenue Recovery System Streamlines Collection Process

BY ELIZABETH PERRY  
STAFF WRITER

Four years ago the Johnson County, Kan. Treasury Department discovered a \$2 million revenue shortfall spread across a number of agencies dealing with outside accounts.

Approximately \$1 million of the shortfall was due to utility user charges in outstanding accounts. The rest of the missing money was in uncollected delinquent personal property taxes, insufficient funds checks and expired motor vehicle tags.

The problem was solved through a collaboration on a new Revenue Recovery Unit involving the treasury, utility billing, budget and financial planning and legal services departments, and the Sheriff's Office. The automated Web-based program works to reduce



Amy Meeker Berg  
Johnson County, Kan.

outstanding account balances and streamline the collection process for all county departments.

"It's been very successful," said Amy Meeker Berg, county treasurer. "We collected more than \$3 million since November 2005. The cost of

the program was less than we were collecting. The excess goes back to the county general fund."

Berg said costs for the Revenue Recovery Program in 2006 were \$71,161, which included hiring a programmer-analyst to design and create the system, as well as additional costs and supplies. The system proved to be so efficient, the treasury decided to keep the programmer-analyst and handle the administrative functions, customer service, payment processing, balancing and financial entry in-house. The Legal Department absorbed paralegal and attorney tasks, leaving only the cost of additional supplies.

"Roughly, we have only one personnel cost and miscellaneous

fees, such as mailing fees," said Berg. "That put our costs at under \$100,000."

Berg said the program is similar to an outside collections agency, complete with an agreement outlining services, policies, procedures and business requirements.

However, the process is done completely via computer database, which is hosted by the Information Technology Department and maintained by the Treasury Department. The system is updated nightly and when it detects differences in reconciliation reports and individual accounts, the collections process begins.

Depending on the type and status of a delinquent account and the agency, the system can process

payments, balance accounts, generate receipts, and even issue requests for court appearances. Since the system design was based on input from all county departments, it is able to accommodate various types of collections activities.

When an account is 90 days overdue, the unit begins the collections process through mail and phone calls, and proceeds to issuing summonses by certified mail and in court. Once a judgment is obtained, the Legal Services Department follows up. A Payments by Status report categorizes collections by type and measures the results of each step.

See REVENUE page 11

## Washington counties set goal to reduce homeless families by 50 percent

NEWS FROM from page 9

the state's congressional delegation seeking help for jurisdictions that lost money when the investment bank Lehman Brothers collapsed last fall.

Gutierrez supports a resolution in Congress that would require the treasury secretary to purchase — at face value — any Lehman Brothers debt instruments that were held by state or local governments last September when the firm went bankrupt, the *Albuquerque Journal* reported.

Dona Ana County lost about \$2.5 million when New Mexico's local government investment pool was affected by Lehman Brothers' bankruptcy and the stock market decline that followed.

### ► NEW YORK

Underage drinkers in **ERIE COUNTY** beware. The county has followed several of its neighbors by setting up an **underage drinking tip line**. Anyone aware of planned or occurring incidents of teen drinking can call a toll-free number to report it, according to the Associated Press.

Erie County Sheriff Timothy Howard said, "By providing basic information such as the location of a party or estimated number of young people attending, a difference can be made. Tragedy may be potentially diverted and lives saved."

**GENESEE COUNTY** established a tip line two years ago. Other counties with tip lines include **WYOMING, ALLEGANY** and **MONROE**. Plans are underway for **NIAGARA, CATTARAUGUS** and **CHAUTAUQUA counties** to establish them.

### ► TEXAS

**HARRIS COUNTY** officials are looking into a case in which the **wrong person was cremated** by a contractor who handles indigent burials.

The *Houston Chronicle* reported that Cames Funeral Home cremated the body of a 91-year-old man who was to have been prepared for a viewing and funeral service. A deceased woman was to have been cremated. "It's beyond me how you could mix up a male and a female," said David Turkel, executive director of the county's Community Services Department, which oversees indigent burials.

The funeral home apologized to the cremated man's family.

### ► UTAH

The Salt Lake Valley Health Department, along with **SALT LAKE COUNTY**, are urging residents to make "**One Small Change — For the Health of It**." Launched during National Public Health Week, the effort urges people to eat better,

become more active and take other health-related measures, such as using seat belts and infant car seats.

"Small change can lead to big change," county Mayor Peter Corroon told the *Salt Lake Tribune*. He added that he's lost 15 pounds in recent months by watching what he eats and walking more.

### ► WASHINGTON

**KING, PIERCE** and **SNOHOMISH counties** have joined the cities of Seattle and Tacoma in pursuit of **reducing homeless families** by 50 percent in the next decade. The state of Washington and several corporate partners and charities have signed a new memorandum of understanding.

The signers agreed to step up their efforts to minimize shelter stays and to continue to support services for homeless families and those on the brink of homelessness, the *Tacoma Daily Index* reported.

Parties to the agreement also pledged to align funding streams to address family homelessness so that better use can be made of current resources.

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



## What's in a Seal?

» Bergen County, N.J.  
[www.co.bergen.nj.us](http://www.co.bergen.nj.us)

Bergen County is the most populous county in New Jersey. The area comprising today's Bergen and Hudson counties was part of New Netherland, the 17th century North American colonial province of the Dutch Republic. It had been claimed after Henry Hudson (sailing for the Dutch East India Company) explored Newark Bay and anchored his ship at Weehawken Cove in 1609.

In 1983, in celebration of the county's tricentennial, a new seal of Bergen County was created. George Woodbridge, an artist from Brooklyn, N.Y. and a Revolutionary War buff who has illustrated books on uniforms and weaponry, drew the new seal. This seal accentuates the county's founding year, 1683, in scrollwork between a Dutch settler-trader and a Native American shaking hands on the banks of the Hudson River beneath the Palisades. The Dutchman's ship is anchored offshore. Perched above them is an eagle. These same elements were also in the old seal, which had been in use since 1910.

In the new seal, the Dutchman's musket has been removed and he is now portrayed as a settler, explorer and trader. The Native American has been given a peace pipe and portrayed more historically accurate as an Eastern Woodlands Indian. The original seal had him in western Indian headdress.

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

## Research News

# Census 2010 – One Year Out

On March 31, 250 National Partners of the 2010 Census, including a representative from NACo, met in Washington, D.C. for a National Partnership Briefing. Newly confirmed Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke reiterated his belief that the Census is the nation's largest act of civic engagement. The briefing provided information about this major civic exercise, which is just one year away.

On April 1, 2010, every person residing in the United States will have an opportunity to be counted by completing and returning a short questionnaire that will be mailed in late March. The slogan for the 2010 Census is "It's in Your Hands." Translated simply: responding to the Census will provide the government with the information it needs to meet the needs of its residents and to allocate \$376 billion (in 2007 dollars) of federal funding. This equates to \$1,249 per capita.

The "one year out" activities include reaching out to stakeholders, which include regional and local governments, states, businesses and nonprofit organizations, to have them help raise awareness of the census and help encourage participation by dispelling any issues of mistrust that have arisen in some of the most hard-to-count communities.

To help raise awareness about the importance and confidentiality of the census, the Census Bureau has commissioned Draft FCB, a major media organization, to develop print ads, radio and television spots and other activities that are targeted to various segments of the population in order to help them feel comfortable about responding to the Census.

In addition, it is hiring so-called "partnership specialists" with supplemental funding that the Census Bureau received under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. These partnership specialists will be hired at the regional level and will have expertise in reaching out to the gatekeepers of various enclaves of residents who may otherwise not be reached or involved in the census.

### Census in Schools

The Census in the Schools is a major program that is being replicated from the 2000 Census. By providing grade-level curriculum guides to principals and teachers across the nation, the Census Bureau hopes to get the message about responding into homes that might otherwise be missed. There is also a new Web site — [www.2010Census.gov](http://www.2010Census.gov) — that will provide information to local governments and others who want to reach out to their residents. This information will include

downloadable articles, print ads and public service announcements designed to allow local governments, nonprofits and others to add their own taglines.

Much like the 2000 Census, local governments are creating Complete Count Committees at the local level that will work with residents to dispel any concerns about responding to the census and to point out the benefits that an accurate count can bring to their neighborhoods. The bureau has created a program guide for governments who want to create a Complete Count Committee. It's available in a downloadable format on the 2010 Census homepage. Among the counties that have already launched their committees are as follows:

- The City and County of Denver, Colo. has established its Complete Count Committee which includes a group of community leaders to help develop and implement a 2010 Census awareness campaign. The first meeting was April 6.

- Cape May County, N.J. has appointed Rita Marie Fulginitti,

county clerk, to head its Complete Count Committee. She will work with other local officials, businesses and organizations to encourage participation and cooperation.

- Broward County, Fla. has selected Commissioner Ilene Lieberman to chair its 2010 Census Complete Count Committee. The mission for the Committee "is to guarantee a fair allocation of federal funding for important local community efforts and maintain accurate legislative representation." The county has developed its own census Web page at [www.broward.org/census2010](http://www.broward.org/census2010).

- Jones County, Miss. has signed an agreement to work with the Census Partnership specialists because only 63 percent of the residents of Mississippi participated in the 2000 Census. This cost the state valuable federal funding and could cost them congressional representation after the 2010 Census if the response rate is not improved. Andy Dial, president of the Jones County Board of Supervisors, was quoted in the local newspaper

about the importance of getting the maximum participation and is working with his fellow supervisors to develop a local Complete Count Committee.

- Multnomah County, Ore.'s Complete Count Committee will be chaired by Commissioner Deborah Kafoury. The program will be developed through community-based efforts to increase awareness and involvement in the census. They hope to build on the success and learn from the committee formed for the 2000 Census.

- Santa Fe County, N.M. Board of Commissioners has established its Complete Count Committee and selected seven community representatives to advise them. Their emphasis is to make residents aware that "Census data affects the amount of federal funds municipalities and counties receive for schools, senior centers, libraries, roads and other public services."

(Research News was written by Jacqueline Byers, director of research.)

## Revenue recovery system more than pays for itself

REVENUE from page 10

The collections unit was able to recover more than \$100,000 during its first year, more than \$585,000 in 2006 and more than \$991,000 in 2007. The amounts recovered represent balances collected on behalf of county departments that were outstanding for significant amounts of time. Berg said that before Legal Services department filings were automated, only 25 cases a month were filed. That figure jumped to 3,820 cases in 2007. The system recovered approximately \$300,000 in outstanding wastewater utility accounts.

Berg told *CountyNews* she gauges the success of the program on county revenue recovery results and the ability to keep administrative costs down. She said having the ability to create a software application to streamline the collections process enabled the county to increase its volume of collections without sig-

nificantly increasing the workload. She advises counties interested in developing their own programs to "lay the groundwork."

"Look at where [the program] would fit best," she said. "It may be the treasurer's department or some other area. Each organization is unique in its capabilities. Take advantage of things that are already built, so you don't have to start over. Leverage what you have in your own agency."

For more information on the Revenue Recovery Program, contact Berg at 913/715-2601 or e-mail her at [amy.meeker@jocogov.org](mailto:amy.meeker@jocogov.org)

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

## Financial Services News

Cobb County, Ga. is facing the same challenges that all local governments are struggling with right now. How do they continue to provide the same—or greater—levels of service with fewer dollars? In planning their 2009 budgets, county leaders asked each department to reduce expenditures by a minimum of 10 percent.

To meet this goal, the Purchasing Department, which includes both purchasing and fleet management divisions, looked to U.S. Communities and its auto parts and accessories contract with AutoZone.

AutoZone recently launched a Strategic Partners program as part of its government offering through U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance.

The goal of the program is to partner with local governments to analyze common automotive parts purchased by governments nationwide and leverage that total volume to obtain better pricing. Additionally, local governments can save money by streamlining their purchasing operations and reducing the number of vendors they use to support their daily fleet maintenance activities.

As a result of implementing the Strategic Partners program, Cobb

County expects to save more than 30 percent on its automotive parts budget this year.

"AutoZone came onsite and provided the county with a very detailed review of all our automotive parts and purchasing processes," said Rick Brun, purchasing director for Cobb County. "Not only is the county saving money by switching to AutoZone brands and products, we are realizing administrative savings by reducing the number of vendors we use to manage our fleet operations."

"At the same time, our fleet department has been very impressed with the excellent service provided daily by AutoZone," he said.

Because the AutoZone contract was competitively solicited and awarded by Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Purchasing Services in North Carolina through the U.S. Communities program, any state and local government agency in the country can order what it needs from the contract and never have to go out to bid. This speeds up the process to complete a cost-savings review and cuts down on the administrative costs normally associated with the bid process.

U.S. Communities is a nonprofit instrumentality of government founded in 1999 and comprises

nearly 36,000 participating agencies nationwide. It grows by more than 400 agencies each month. In 2008, participating agencies purchased over \$1.4 billion of products and services through contracts offered by U.S. Communities.

As part of a nationwide awareness campaign, AutoZone is launching the "AutoZone; Great Brands, Great Products" initiative as a complement to its Strategic Partners program and the U.S. Communities contract in 2009. The goal of the initiative is to share many of the cost-saving experiences being realized by local governments like Cobb County with all of the local government agencies across the country.

The AutoZone contract is offered through the U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance ("U.S. Communities"). To register, go to [www.uscommunities.org](http://www.uscommunities.org) and click on "register with US." The U.S. Communities program is provided without charge to public agencies and nonprofit organizations. For more information, contact Nancy Parrish at [nparrish@naco.org](mailto:nparrish@naco.org).

(Financial Services News was written by Nancy Parrish, director, NACo Financial Services Corp.)

## Archuleta knows public lands issues

ARCHULETA from page 4

She gained experience in water issues as chair of the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority, overseeing the completion of the San Juan Chama Drinking Water Project, one of the largest water treatment facilities in the United States—providing drinking water to more than 600,000 residents of the Albuquerque area. Archuleta has also served as the southwest regional manager for the Wilderness Society, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and protecting the nation's wilderness areas.

Among the skills she will bring to her new position is an "understand-

ing of the on-the-ground issues" pertaining to water and the work counties do regarding land use and wind energy — particularly in the West and Southwest — where alternative forms of energy are being developed.

"I think being a county commissioner and having dealt with those issues on a smaller scale really gives me a different perspective," Archuleta said. Her time on the Public Lands Steering Committee has also brought value to her professional portfolio. The knowledge and "diverse perspectives" gained from her committee service will be a plus.

"Not every situation is easily solved, but there's always a result you can get to at the end," she

said. "And I think having had the experience of sitting through those meetings and watching us sort of go through many iterations of decision-making will be really beneficial."

A divorced mother of two, Archuleta will be relocating to Washington with her sons, ages 12 and 17. She was born in Santa Fe and holds a master's degree in sociology from the University of New Mexico and has completed all-but-dissertation requirements for a doctorate in that field.

Balancing a career with raising kids has been a challenge, she said. But she's looking forward to her new job as "a bit of an adventure" — one that she is "incredibly humbled" to take on.

## Golf courses face declining rounds in tight economy

GOLF from page 5

"If it's between cutting some teachers and cutting some maintenance expenses on a golf course, you're going to cut the maintenance on the golf course," he said. "It's expensive to run a golf course. You could raise fees, but if you raise them at a time when people are tightening their belts, you're going to have declining numbers of rounds."

A recent *Wall Street Journal* article reported on municipal courses, including ones that are county-owned. Some 1,000 small municipal "legacy" courses built before 1960 are less expensive to maintain, charge lower fees and cater primarily

to local residents without being too costly to local governments. The courses with the largest financial problems, according to the *Journal*, are the ones who built large to compete with resorts and private clubs in the past two decades.

Golf entrepreneurs in the mid-1980s were convinced there would not be enough courses to accommodate the large numbers of baby boomers who would want to play in their golden years. Municipalities began to build their own big courses as a way to attract new businesses and residents, as well as boost economic development. Some courses have been successful with this strategy, notably Chambers Bay in Pierce County, Wash., which will host the U.S. Open in 2015. But, as the *Journal* reported, supply exceeded demand.

"Twenty years ago, 18-hole golf courses in the U.S. were averaging 40,000 rounds per year and doing quite nicely at that level," Joe Beditz, CEO of NGF told the *Journal*. "Now they're averaging 33,000 rounds per year, and many are just hanging on."

Schott said he saw the trouble first-hand during a recent trip to Florida, where he said a number of clubs had difficulty when demand leveled off and boomers didn't relocate. He said people are also not willing to pay expensive greens fees, which can range from \$100 for an upscale public course, to \$10,000 for a private course membership, and \$50 to \$100 for initiation fees.

"A lot of places couldn't support the expansion," he said. "They were highly leveraged in their financing and got caught in the credit squeeze. You have that particularly in resort areas in the South."

Los Angeles, Calif. County Parks and Recreation operates the largest publicly owned golf course system in the country. Lee Harlow, assistant golf director, said there are 19 courses located at 17 facilities — with a total of 306 holes. The number of rounds played in 2007 and 2008 remained the same at 1.4 million. He said the county is "committed to maintaining our current portfolio of courses," and trying some new strategies to keep costs manageable during the recession.

"We are trying to get better water managers," he said. "It's an increasing cost. We're working with operators to develop a long-term comprehensive water strategy. You can save 10 percent of water usage. We're working within the county to provide reclaimed water to our golf courses."

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### ► COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR/CFO – MONROE COUNTY, MICH.

Salary: DOQ.

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

Salary: DOQ.

Genesee County, Mich. is recruiting for a Health Officer or an Administrative Health Officer. Health Officer minimum qualifications include: Michigan licensed M.D. or D.O. and one of the following: Board certified in preventive medicine or public health; or Master's in Public Health or Master's of Science

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

### FIRE-EMS CHIEF – CAROLINE COUNTY, VA



Caroline County, Virginia is seeking a **Fire-EMS Chief**. This is a professional, department head position responsible for leading a combined volunteer-career emergency services system in a growing county of 27,000, located between Richmond, VA and Washington, D.C.

Exercises authority and responsibility for all administrative, financial and operational functions of the County's fire, emergency medical services and emergency services system, including volunteers. The successful candidate must possess excellent leadership ability, management skills, communication skills and the ability to foster success in a combined system.

Candidates with any combination of education and experience equivalent to a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university with major course work in fire science, business management, public administration or a related field will be considered. Requires extensive experience in fire, emergency medical services and emergency services, extensive management and leadership experience and extensive experience working with volunteers and career staff.

Must hold and maintain various emergency services related certifications. For further information visit [www.visitcaroline.com/employment.html](http://www.visitcaroline.com/employment.html).

Salary negotiable, based on qualifications and experience. Excellent benefit package includes participation in the Virginia Retirement System (LEOS), vacation and sick leave, group life insurance, medical insurance, professional dues and conference expenses.

Submit completed county application, detailed resume, copies of relevant fire and EMS certifications, copy of driving record, salary history and work related references to County Administrator Percy Ashcraft, P.O. Box 447, Bowling Green, Virginia 22427, (804) 633-5380 or email at [pashcraft@co.caroline.va.us](mailto:pashcraft@co.caroline.va.us). Position open until filled with interviews expected in June. Official Caroline County applications can be downloaded and printed from the County's web site at [www.visitcaroline.com/employment.html](http://www.visitcaroline.com/employment.html).

Caroline County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



### WAKULLA COUNTY, FLA. BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Debbie DuBose  
Phone: 850.926.9500 • FAX: 850.926.9006  
e-mail: [ddubose@mywakulla.com](mailto:ddubose@mywakulla.com)

RFP bid documents will be available at [www.mywakulla.com](http://www.mywakulla.com) or can be picked up at both locations listed above.

Any person with a qualified disability requiring special accommodations at the bid opening shall contact purchasing at the phone number listed above at least 5 business days prior to the event. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact this office by using the Florida Relay Services which can be reached at 1.800.955.8771 (TDD).

The Board of County Commissioners reserves the right to reject any and all bids or accept minor irregularities in the best interest of Wakulla County.