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96th ANNUAL CONFERENCE BILLINGS, MT

PRESIDENT DOUG KAERCHER

I sincerely thank all of those who attended MACo's 96th Annual Convention in Billings. Its great success was due to the overwhelming participation of our members and to the organization by our staff. Special thanks go to Bill Kennedy for his dedication as President this past year.

I am very excited about the New Year that MACo is about to start. We have the opportunity to further mold our association. To start this process I have asked for a facilitated session for the Board of Directors in mid-January. I also have the commitment of the Executive Board to have at least one member travel with Harold to each county to listen to your concerns, issues and ideas. This will be your opportunity to express your visions for MACo's future.

As we start the interview process for the associate director, we must keep in mind our expectations for the Association. Diversity will be a main objective so that every county, whether urban or rural, east or west, north or south, is represented. We must continue to be heard at the state and federal levels by speaking with one voice and this will only happen if our association remains united.

I ask that you keep me or any of the board members informed of your concerns or needs and express your ideas that may help us achieve our goals. I thank you for the confidence you have placed in me and it will be my pleasure to serve you as your president.

UNPRECEDENTED PARTICIPATION

An unprecedented number of State officials attended the MACo Conference, carrying out Governor Brian Schweitzer's policy of personal contact with county officials. Traditionally MACo invites all State elected officials and Department Directors and this year, thirteen of the eighteen leaders attended:

Governor Brian Schweitzer

Administration
Director Janet Kelly

Agriculture
Director Nancy Peterson

Auditor / Insurance Commissioner
John Morrison

Commerce
Director Anthony Preite

Environmental Quality
Division Admin. Steve Welch

Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Division Admin. Ron Aasheim

Labor and Industry
Commissioner Keith Kelly

Legislature--Senate President
Jon Tester

Natural Resources & Conservation
Director Mary Sexton

Revenue
Director Dan Bucks

Secretary of State
Brad Johnson

Transportation
Director Jim Lynch

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TO
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Allegiance Benefit Plan Management, Missoula
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 Nationwide Retirement Solutions, Boise, ID
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 Roscoe Steel & Culvert Co., Billings & Missoula
 Tractor and Equipment Company--
 Billings, Great Falls, Williston, ND

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 Browning Ferris Industries, Missoula & Billings
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 Capital I Industries, Tisdale, Saskatchewan
 ESRI, Redlands, CA
 Lombard-Conrad Architects, Boise, ID
 MACo Healthcare Trust, Helena
 MT Dept. of Administration:
 Information Technology Services and GIS
 MT Dept. of Commerce:
 Board of Housing
 Board of Investments
 MT Department of Revenue, Helena
 Montana Joint Powers Trust, Billings
 Montana Mental Health Association, Great Falls
 Morrison-Maierle, Inc., Helena
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 UULC, Helena
 Yellowstone County Extension Service, Billings

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 National Association of Counties, Washington DC
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CONFERENCE PHOTOS



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Big Horn County

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Madison County

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Daniels County

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Jack Holstrom
Attorney at Law

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macops@maco.cog.mt.us

G.I.S. TECHNICAL SESSION OCTOBER 31 - NOVEMBER 2

The Montana Association of Geographic Information Professionals annual technical working session is designed to provide workshops, informational sessions, special interest group meetings and interaction between Montana's GIS professionals. Two all-day workshops will feature first on using VBA and ARC Objects and second on using Model Builder. Half-day workshops will be on geodatabases, ArcGIS tips and tricks, and the Montana Framework data models for transportation, addressing and critical structures. Shorter informational sessions on metadata, Geospatial One-Stop and imagery will also be presented.

See <http://mtgeo.org> for more details.

Registration information is found on <http://maps2.nris.state.mt.us/magip/>

NACo COUNTY CONSERVATION AWARD

The County Leadership in Conservation Awards recognizes leadership, innovation, and excellence in local land conservation and park creation by county leaders across America

Three or more awards will be presented to county officials representing NACo member counties with small, medium and large populations. Montana's **Gallatin County** was a 2005 winner!

Nominations for the 2006 award must be postmarked or submitted electronically no later than November 18, 2005.

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ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

Full texts are available at
<http://www.doj.state.mt.us/resources/opinionsindex2005.asp>

Volume 51 No. 6

QUESTION: May school district trustees transfer a portion or all of the cash balance from the district's bus depreciation reserve fund to another budgeted fund of the district or close the fund to any other fund of the district regardless of whether the district has sold all its buses and submitted the proposition to voters?

HELD: Before school district trustees may transfer any portion or all of the district's bus depreciation reserve fund to any other fund maintained by the district, the trustees must have sold all of the district's buses and submitted the proposed transfer to the electors of the district.

REQUESTED BY: Linda McCulloch
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Volume 51 No. 7

QUESTION: May a school district claim a refund of taxes paid on special fuels, even if the school district contracts with a bus company to transport its students?

HELD: A school district may not claim a refund of taxes paid on special fuels by a company which contracts with the district to provide bus service for the district's students.

REQUESTED BY: Robert Zimmerman
Sanders County Attorney

Volume 51 No. 8

QUESTION: Is an insurance carrier of an individual involved in a traffic accident entitled to receive copies of the accident report and supplemental information, including witness statements, whether or not the insurance carrier is referred to or named in the accident report?

HELD: The insurance carrier of an individual involved in a traffic accident is entitled to receive copies of the accident report and supplemental information, including witness statement, whether or not the insurance carrier is referred to or named in the accident report.

REQUESTED BY: Gary Matthews, Speaker
Montana House of Representatives

SMOKING BAN IN PUBLIC PLACES

Part one of two parts

by Harold Blattie, MACo Executive Director

The 2005 Legislature passed HB 643 banning smoking in public places. On the surface the bill appears to be fairly straightforward in its intent. Like many bills however, interpretation and implementation are anything but simple, especially as the bill relates to counties.

In order to understand the implications of the bill, it must be very closely read. Some parts are plain; others require being read in conjunction with other parts. The bill imposes some very specific requirements, and in particular a requirement that all places that are to be smoke free MUST be signed accordingly.

"The proprietor or manager of an establishment containing enclosed public places shall post a sign in a conspicuous place at all public entrances to the establishment stating, in a manner that can be easily read and understood, that smoking in the enclosed public place is prohibited."

A county MUST post a sign at ALL public entrances to locations where smoking is prohibited indicating that smoking is prohibited.

The more difficult question is "Where is smoking prohibited"? Section 2 of the bill, the statement of intent and purpose of the statute, amended 50-40-102 by inserting:

"The legislature finds and declares that the purposes of this part are as follows: (1) to protect the public health and welfare by prohibiting smoking in public places and places of employment"

We must next determine what are "public places" and "places of employment" in order to determine where smoking is prohibited and, therefore, must be signed. Section 3, amending 50-40-103 MCA does not define public places. It does however define "Enclosed Public Place". The conservative approach is to presume that the definition of "Enclosed Public Place" applies:

"Enclosed public place" means an indoor area, room, or vehicle that the general public is allowed to enter or that serves as a place of work, including but not limited to the following:

"public and private office buildings and offices, including all office buildings and offices of political subdivisions, as provided for in 50-40-201, and state government;"

It is clear that ALL offices of political subdivisions, whether owned or leased, MUST be smoke-free and signed accordingly, regardless of whether or not the public is allowed to enter because of the language that captures "places of work". An argument that a county shop is not open to the public, therefore does not come under the smoking ban, is not valid because a county shop is a "place of work", as defined in Section 3:

"Place of work" means an enclosed room where one or more individuals work"

We must conclude that even if only one employee is working in the county shop, smoking is prohibited regardless of whether or not the public is allowed to be in the shop area. We would also believe that having the large shop door open would not make that room exempt during a time when the door is open, using the argument that because the door is open the room is not "enclosed"

Section 6 of the bill goes on to further specify that smoking is prohibited in all parts of buildings owned and maintained by a political subdivision after **January 1, 2006**. If a building is leased and maintained, smoking is prohibited as soon as practical after **January 1, 2006 but in no case later than July 1, 2006** (I have no idea why the difference). If a building is leased and occupied by a political subdivision AND another entity, the portion occupied by the political subdivision must be smoke free as soon as practical after **January 1, 2006, but no later than July 1, 2006**. The bill does not address the situation where a political subdivision owns a building and leases it to another entity. I am aware that in at least one case, the political subdivision has declared a building that they lease to another entity to be smoke free. We would conclude that as the owner (landlord) the county would have the authority to impose this restriction.

**GALLATIN COUNTY
seeks
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

Requirements include degree in Public or Business Administration (Master's degree in Public Administration preferred) + 5 years experience as administrator/manager in public employment involving responsibility for budget, finance, organizational planning and implementation.

This is a full-time position with \$5,416.67-\$7,500 per month depending on qualifications and experience.

To apply, contact a local job service or fax resume to 406-582-9210. Application deadline is Tuesday, October 25 at 5:00 pm.

**ANACONDA-DEER LODGE
COUNTY
seeks
INTERIM
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

The Interim Chief Executive Officer is responsible for all administrative functions of the consolidated city-county government. The duration of this position will be determined by general election. Desired requirements include a college degree, MPA preferred, and at least three years municipal management experience. Residency within 90 days of appointment is required. Pay depends on experience and qualifications.

A complete job description is available at the Courthouse (563-4000) or the Job Service (563-3444). Applications are due by 5:00 pm Friday, October 28, 2005.

**TREASURE STATE
ENDOWMENT (TSEP)
Richard Knatterud, Dept. of Commerce**

On May 5, 2006, applications for Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP) construction grants will be due. They won't be accepted again for two more years after that, since TSEP funding must be approved by the Legislature.

TSEP is a state-funded program that provides grants to help finance bridges, drinking water and wastewater systems, storm sewers and solid waste systems.

Last time around, the '05 Montana Legislature funded 40 TSEP construction projects. Thirteen of those 40 projects were awarded to counties to work on bridge systems. 34 bridges will be replaced for the 13 counties that received TSEP grant funding!

The '05 Legislature also funded a wastewater project for a county because the area to be served was adjacent to, and would hook up to, a municipal system.

So, start now! Get that consulting engineer on board now to prepare a preliminary engineering report. That and a TSEP application will give you a chance to be awarded up to \$750,000, based on a dollar-for-dollar match requirement.

TSEP is a competitive program; applications are evaluated and ranked based on seven statutory priorities. Approximately \$17 to \$18 million will be available for TSEP construction grants to be awarded by the 2007 Legislature.

There will be four workshops in October to provide some guidance for this and other funding programs.

- Missoula – Tuesday, October 4
- Glasgow – Tuesday, October 18
- Billings – Thursday, October 20
- Helena – Tuesday, October 25

For more information about the TSEP or the workshops call (406) 841-2770.

Other funding programs which will be included in the training are:

- Board of Investments: INTERCAP
- Dept. of Commerce: Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- DEQ: State Revolving Fund Loan for Water and Wastewater
- DNRC: Renewable Resource Grant and Loan
- USDA: Rural Development

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COUNTY NEWS

NEWS FROM DISTRICT 7--from Maureen Davey, Chair, Stillwater County

BIG HORN COUNTY:

Junk Vehicle Program

Big Horn County is paying county residents \$15.00 per junk vehicle released. The County purchased a new junk vehicle retrieval truck and hired two additional staff. The program has been a great success, with a very noticeable "clean-up" difference throughout the county.

Fewer junk vehicles improve safety issues and eliminate mosquito breeding grounds (West Nile virus). *Commissioner John Doyle can give you more details.*

Coal Bed Methane Development

Development of coal bed methane fields continue. They are a great revenue source for the county. *Commissioner Chad Fenner can give you more details.*

Memorial Rose Garden at the County Courthouse

Last Spring, an after-school program with the Hardin Primary School planted fifteen rose plants in memory of deceased loved ones. The County provided the location and the children and teachers prepared the plant bed and planted the rose bushes. The roses bloomed beautifully this summer.

STILLWATER COUNTY

1) Stillwater Community Hospital is proposing a 6,990 square foot addition and renovation to the current building. Of this, 2,062 square feet are attributable to hospital functions and the remaining to the Billings Deaconess Clinic. The estimated

cost is \$1,253,842. Funding for the addition will come from grants, foundation pledges, and the Billings Deaconess Clinic.

2) Stillwater Chamber of Commerce, a county wide chamber, is currently working on a visitor center featuring five "larger than life" bronzes depicting the distinct periods in south central Montana history. Sculpture Jonathan Johnson and family are donating bronzes of Sacagawea, a hunter, a miner, a rancher and a trapper.

3) The Stillwater County Solid Waste District chose to improve the facilities from some temporary housing to a new complex containing a shop, meeting room and offices. The facility serves as a center for activity for administrative, light mechanical needs, housing equipment and storage for needed supplies. A loan provided the funding with payment out of enterprise funds collected from the \$122 per year per household assessment. The solid waste from seven collection sites is moved to the Billings Landfill for disposal.

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY

Top concerns are:

1. Jail over-crowding and what to do about it, i.e. build more cell space, alternative sentencing by judges, drug court, counseling, etc.
2. Employee payroll costs taking an ever larger percent of budget.
3. City/county conflicts over jointly funded programs, i.e. jail, library, planning departments,

dispatch centers, etc.

4. City annexation of county fringe areas (loss of county road tax) and cities wanting building standards for county approved subdivisions in areas to be annexed

5. How to fund civic centers

from Commissioner Jim Reno

SWEET GRASS COUNTY

The planning board has finalized the revision of the subdivision regulations and passed them to the commissioners.

Road supervisor Larry Juell resigned August 1, 2005. Commissioner Philip Hathaway has temporarily taken over those duties.

The commissioners have hired Great West Engineering of Helena to provide engineering services to the county on an on-call basis.

Sweet Grass county adopted a resolution to re-affirm wolves as a predator in need of control.

Efforts to implement E-911 are progressing.

from Commissioner Lloyd Berg

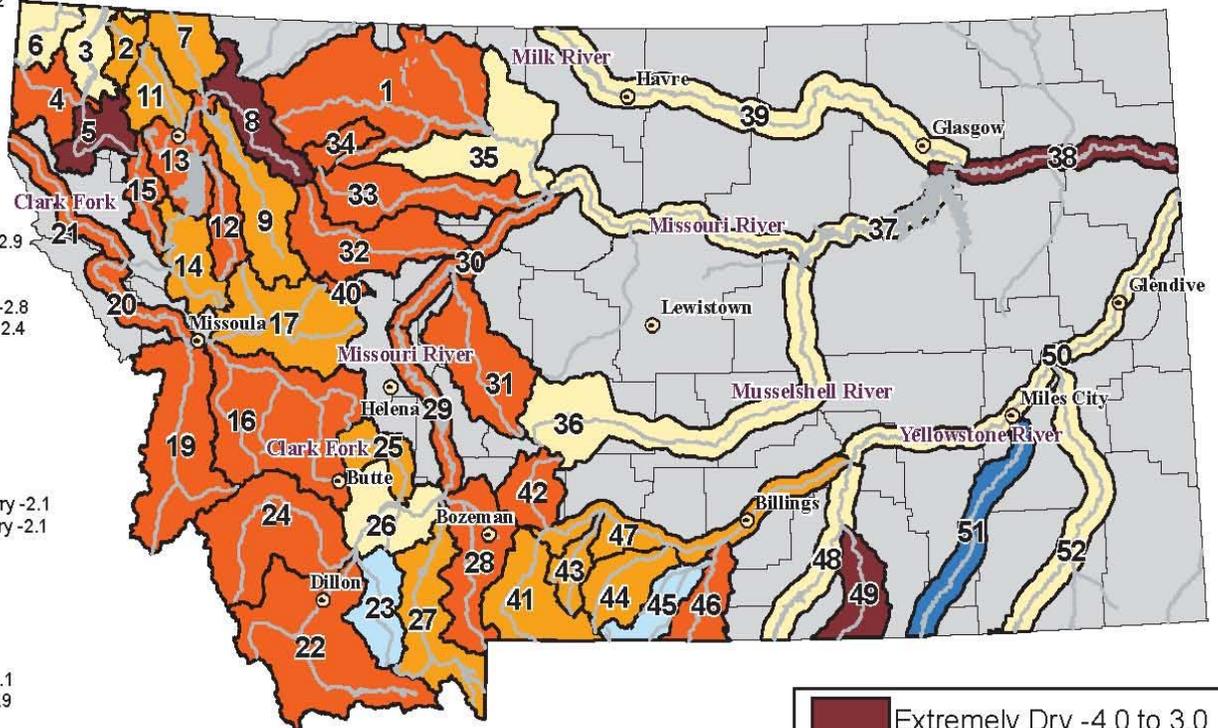


RIVER INDEX & SWSI VALUES

- 1 Marias above Tiber Reservoir -2.7
- 2 Tobacco -1.8
- 3 Kootenai Ft. Steele to Libby Dam 0.2
- 4 Kootenai below Libby Dam -2
- 5 Fisher -3.5
- 6 Yaak -0.7
- 7 North FK. Flathead -1.9
- 8 Middle FK. Flathead -3.2
- 9 South FK. Flathead -1.6
- 11 Stillwater/Whitefish -1.3
- 12 Swan -2.2
- 13 Flathead at Polson -2.2
- 14 Mission Valley -1.3
- 15 Little Bitterroot -2.3
- 16 Clark Fork above Milltown -2.9
- 17 Blackfoot -1.9
- 19 Bitterroot -2.7
- 20 Clark Fork below Bitterroot -2.8
- 21 Clark Fork below Flathead -2.4
- 22 Beaverhead -2.2
- 23 Ruby 1.5
- 24 Big Hole -2.4
- 25 Boulder (Jefferson) -1.1
- 26 Jefferson -0.8
- 27 Madison -1.7
- 28 Gallatin -2.2
- 29 Missouri above Canyon Ferry -2.1
- 30 Missouri below Canyon Ferry -2.1
- 31 Smith -2.1
- 32 Sun -2.2
- 33 Teton -2.3
- 34 Birch/Dupuyer Creeks -2.2
- 35 Marias 0.1
- 36 Musselshell 0.6
- 37 Missouri above Fort Peck -0.1
- 38 Missouri below Fort Peck -3.9
- 39 Milk 0.1
- 40 Dearborn near Craig -2.9
- 41 Yellowstone above Livingston -1.9
- 42 Shields -2.2
- 43 Boulder (Yellowstone) -1.2
- 44 Stillwater -1
- 45 Rock/Red Lodge Creeks 1.9
- 46 Clarks Fork -2.6
- 47 Yellowstone above Bighorn -1.8
- 48 Bighorn below Bighorn Lake 0.3
- 49 Little Bighorn -3.9
- 50 Yellowstone below Bighorn -0.1
- 51 Tongue 4
- 52 Powder 0.9

Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) Values

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE



Current as of
September 1, 2005



NOTE: Data used to generate this map are PROVISIONAL and SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service
<http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov>

WEATHER MODIFICATION: Finding Common Ground

Comments from a panel representing the NRCS and the Weather Modification Association

Substantial advances in understanding, observing technology, data acquisition and processing, and numerical modeling in weather modification have occurred during the last three decades. During this same period, however, a progressive decline occurred in federal support for weather modification research.

Despite this decline in support, operational weather modification programs in the United States and the rest of the world have grown in number. Evidence of intentional and unintentional effects induced by human intervention has simultaneously accumulated.

There is now considerable evidence

that treatment can cause changes in clouds and cloud fields, and that the chain of physical processes leading to the formation of rain, hail, and snow can be changed. Many of these processes, such as the role of aerosols in cloud and precipitation formation, are common to both intentional and unintentional weather modification.

Increasing demands for water and the increasing cost to society inflicted by severe weather require that the scientific, operational, and administrative communities combine in a sustained effort to determine whether and to what degree humans can influence the weather.



VOLUNTARY EXERCISE PROGRAMS CAN REAP BIG REWARDS

By Emelia McEwen, MACo Assistant Risk Manager

Counties with elevated injury rates might look to voluntary exercise programs to reduce absenteeism and improve employee productivity. While exercise programs should be optional for workers, they can pay out substantial dividends by improving employee morale and reducing workplace injuries.

Voluntary exercise programs give employees a sense of control over their general health and a sense of well-being within the work environment. In addition, the program can lend some structure to a recommended activity that positively impacts employee health.

Before implementing a plan, counties should take a survey and find out what will best motivate the employees. Some of those can be offered as rewards for compliant behavior.

While companies can't force employees to participate in an exercise program, there are certain things they can do to ensure maximum employee participation, such as tangible rewards. Extra vacation hours incrementally accrued may be an incentive, or points-earning system where the points can be used for extra perks like a nice lunch or movie tickets.

Even offering an extra rest break beyond the regular ten-minute pause may be attractive, as long as it is an exercise or a stretch break. However, if employees end up feeling these are forced or imposed on them by their supervisors, they become just one more bit of drudgery, and they probably won't motivate.

MAXIMIZING EMPLOYEE BUY-IN

Motivating employees to participate is essential. Beginning a voluntary program with outside trainers could be an costly mistake.

Employee buy-in is the ultimate key to a successful program, so the rewards that will motivate a particular group of employees need to be determined first. Employees can take an active role in setting up the program for their coworkers by recommending the types of exercises to be done.

Achieving employee buy-in seems to come easier when employees have a role in the safety and exercise process. An exercise leader can be elected, but suggestions from the whole group is the best way. To further increase buy-in, alternating the leadership role every few weeks and adding or removing activities based on employee preference will help.

INCLUDE EXERCISE EDUCATION

New employees should be informed about the voluntary exercise program during their job orientation.

Along with other health and safety information, employees should be told about proper stretching and recommended exercises to reduce injuries. Counties can provide online resources for employees and hand out laminated cards with pictures of recommended stretches, to be used as reminders.

While a voluntary exercise program in the workplace can improve morale and productivity, employees might also be motivated to organize exercise groups on their own, such as lunchtime yoga or tai chi or a group walk.

Employees who are motivated to organize group fitness can make a positive impact on their peers. Group fitness is motivating because it is not that much fun to stretch or exercise alone.

MACo RISK MANAGEMENT TRAINING COURSES

- Back Safety
- Bloodborne Pathogen Program
- Confined Space Entry
- Defensive Driving
- Ergonomics / Assessments
- Lockout/Tagout Program
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Slips, Trips and Falls
- CPR and First Aid
- Defibrillators
- Hepatitis C Training
- Hearing Conservation Program
- Monitoring Air / Noise Sampling
- Post Incident Review and Investigation
- Respiratory Protection Program
- Shop Safety



NACo INFORMATION

PUBLIC LANDS STEERING COMMITTEE 2005 NACo Annual Conference Sections of a report submitted by Alan Thompson, Ravalli County Forest Counties Representative

USDA Forest Service Planning Regulations

Forest Service is responsible for 192 million acres. Four issues they are addressing are:

Endangered Species Act. The FS hopes the Act can be simplified.

Fires and Fuels. Fires are on a scale never seen before. They are trying to address the problem through the President's healthy forest act.

Recreation. This is becoming one of their larger issues as more people want access to the public lands for many different forms of recreation.

Loss of land. Frankly I was a little confused because I see the Forest Service getting more lands in Montana.

Less than 5% of our timber supply now comes from the National Forests.

Subcommittee Report: Gateway Communities

Gary Gilbert, Supervisor, Madera County, California
The America the Beautiful pass will expand the National Parks Pass to include all participating agencies for entrance to all National parks and for certain fees for NPS, BLM, FWS, BOR and the Forest Service for twelve months. The new Recreational Resource Advisory Committees (RRAC) will be multi-state or regional for public participation in the creation of the new fees.

Committee Action: Resolutions

Two resolutions were presented in relation to disposal of Federal Lands that are not being maintained. First, NACo calls on Congress to enact legislation to encourage and permit the USDA, Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to sell lands that cannot be properly managed by federal agencies. Further, NACo calls on Congress to utilize proceeds of these sales as investments in restoration and management of remaining federal holdings. There was a concern that counties were excluded in any ne-

gotiation. If it could be rewritten to include counties, we could support.

Second, an alternative resolution called on Congress to provide adequate funding to support staff and maintenance needs of federal lands. It would require federal agencies to work with counties when developing asset management plans that may indicate a closure, sale or transfer of resources so that local impacts may be addressed. Further, it calls on Congress to utilize proceeds of these transactions as investments in restoration and replacement of facilities. Funds would not be used for ongoing operations and maintenance and would remain in the jurisdiction from which the property is sold.

A very long discussion ensued with questions raised whether either one would achieve the desired results. My concern is that the federal government is lax in many areas, but selling the property isn't necessarily going to fix the problem. Speculators are buying large chunks of western Montana for subdividing and they would certainly be ready to snap up forested lands. We would then have to provide services to these areas at an expense greater than the taxes derived. Finally, the first resolution was approved. Commissioner Murray and I voted against and Commissioner Eissinger voted in favor.

The Committee then voted to reaffirm:
Wildland Urban Interface Fire
Urging Development and Utilization of Resource
Advisory Committees
Streamlining PILT Program
Distribution of Funds from Federal Mineral Leasing Act
Outsourcing Federal Jobs on Rural Communities
Off-Highway Vehicle Management on Public Lands
Federal Land Acquisition
Funding the Healthy Forest Restoration Act
Maintenance of Dams in Wilderness Areas
Reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and
Community Self Determination Act
Revision of the New Policy on Rights of Way.



NACo INFORMATION

AGRICULTURE STEERING COMMITTEE 2005 NACo Annual Conference Submitted by Kathy Bessette, Hill County

At a joint meeting on Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) and Air Quality, speakers included Kerry Drake, EPA, Professor Halina Zaleski, and Dave Burris, a Delaware commissioner. For information regarding CAFO's, go to the EPA website at: www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/agreements/caa/cafo-agr-0501.html.

I attended the Agriculture Subcommittees on Agriculture, Food Safety and Rural Development. University of Hawaii faculty members Dr. Linda Cox, Community Economic Development specialist and graduate of Montana State University, and Dr. Andrew Hashimoto, Dean of Agriculture both spoke about the importance of agriculture in Hawaii. Agriculture is in transition there with only 2 sugar cane farms remaining on 47,800 acres in 2003 compared to 216,000 acres in 1981. Pineapple farms numbered 25 in 1981 compared to 18. In addition to pineapple and sugar cane farms are macadamia trees, coffee, forestry, potted foliage plants, tropical flowers, vanilla, tropical fruits, vegetables and tea. Paul Koehler, Board President of the Hawaii Crop Improvement Association talked about the seed crop business in Hawaii (8000 acres of seed corn) and Dr. Tim Richards, a veterinarian and family partner at Kahua Ranch, explained diversifying their operation - ag tourism consisting of dude ranching and movie production on the ranch property. Theft, of not only produce but machinery as well, and transportation are big cost items.

The Agriculture and Rural Affairs Steering Committee supported legislation to combat the effects of migration out of the nation's heartland, the increased use and promotion of wind energy, and the establishment of a national animal identification system that provides financial assistance to producers to comply with the system. Also, those countries that wish to import livestock to the U.S. must meet or exceed U.S. standards of

care regarding Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE).

The steering committee passed one new resolution which urges Congress to continue funding Agriculture and Home Economics Research and Cooperative Extension Service through the historical appropriation process rather than through competitive grants.

"Methamphetamine and Your County" had speakers from the U.S. Department of Justice, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, film producers, police, director of a treatment center and the Guardian Ad Litem program. The results of two surveys of U.S. counties on "The Criminal Effect of Meth on Communities" and "The Impact of Meth on Children" were handed out. Two initiatives set by NACo President Hansell deal with the meth problem and support for the Guardian ad Lidem program. Two speakers work directly in that area. Judge Glenda Hatchett spoke about her new book plus several court cases she has worked on pertaining to drug use and its effect on children. Film maker Matt Farnsworth talked about his film, "Iowa" which is a documentary following a person's downward spiral into Meth addiction.

MAHALO!

 <p>Nationwide Retirement Solutions a Nationwide Financial company</p>	 <p>NACo National Association of Counties Counties Care for America 440 First St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001-2080</p>
<p>The National Association of Counties (NACo), in partnership with Nationwide Retirement Solutions (NRS) and state associations of counties, provides county employees with a Section 457 Deferred Compensation Program.</p>	
<p>Since its inception in 1980, NACo's 457 Deferred Compensation Program has grown to become the largest supplemental retirement income program available to county employees. NACo's Program assets exceed \$6.0 billion.</p>	

IRS Increases 2005 Mileage Rate

In September, the Internal Revenue Service announced that it is increasing the optional standard mileage rates for the final four months of the calendar year. The rate will increase from 40.5 cents to 48.5 cents for all business miles driven beginning Sept. 1 until Dec. 31.

In recognition of recent gasoline price increases, the IRS made this special adjustment for the final months of 2005. The IRS normally updates the mileage rates once a year in the fall for the next calendar year. While gasoline is a major factor in the mileage figure, other items enter into the calculation of mileage rates, such as the price of new vehicles and insurance. The Montana Department of Administration issued its rule change to match the federal levels. Montana statute reads:

"2-18-503. Mileage -- allowance. (1) *Members of the legislature, state officers and employees, jurors, witnesses, county agents, and all other persons who may be entitled to mileage paid from public funds when using their own motor vehicles in the performance of official*

duties are entitled to collect mileage for the distance actually traveled by motor vehicle and no more unless otherwise specifically provided by law.

(2) (a) *When a state officer or employee, including a legislator on legislative business, is authorized to travel by motor vehicle, and chooses to use a privately owned motor vehicle even though a government-owned or government-leased motor vehicle is available, the officer or employee may be reimbursed only at the rate of 48.15% of the mileage rate allowed by the United States internal revenue service for the current year.*

(b) *When a privately owned motor vehicle is used because a government-owned or government-leased motor vehicle is not available or because the use is in the best interest of the governmental entity and a notice of unavailability of a government-owned or government-leased motor vehicle or a specific exemption is attached to the travel claim, then a rate equal to the mileage allotment allowed by the United States internal revenue service for the current year must be paid for the first 1,000 miles and 3 cents less per mile for all additional miles traveled within a given calendar month."*

MACo NEWS

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