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REAL ID law to impact county, state

By Harold Blattie, MACo Executive Director

Effective May 11, 2008, Montana residents will be required to furnish a passport or other acceptable form of identification to board a commercial airline flight or enter most federal buildings under new rules issues issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. A Montana-issued driver's license will not be sufficient.

In 2005, Congress passed the REAL ID law to address security flaws following the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. The REAL ID law imposes stricter requirements upon states to verify a person's identity when applying for a driver's license.

The law also imposes much stricter requirements in the future including one that requires states to check the legal status of a driver's license applicant with Homeland Security by the end of 2009. It also requires all states driver's license data to be shared with other states and DHS.

By 2011, states must verify with the issuing source that all identification documents used to obtain a drivers license are valid. This will mean a significant increase in workload for counties and state agencies to verify birth certificates.

By 2014, all license holders born after Dec. 1, 1964, and, by 2017, all license holders, regardless of age, will be required to carry a REAL ID license. The full implications of this are unknown at this time.

Montana, along with 16 other states, has resisted this federal mandate for a number of reasons including concerns

about individual privacy, conflict with the Montana Constitution and the costs to states to implement the federal law. The 2007 Montana Legislature passed HB 287 – "An Act Opposing the Implementation of the Federal REAL ID Act and Directing the Montana Department of Justice Not to Implement the Provisions of the Federal Act." The text of that bill is at <http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/2007/billhtml/HB0287.htm>.

States moving toward implementation are being given a five-year extension to fully implement the REAL ID law but states opposing implementation are being penalized by the new rules.

Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer has called on other governors to support congressional efforts to repeal the REAL ID Act. Senator Baucus, Senator Tester and Congressman Rehberg all support pending legislation to repeal the act, however, until Congress acts, we must proceed according to the rules in place today. Given what we know, we must recommend if you plan to fly on a commercial airplane or enter most federal buildings after May 11, 2008, you should acquire a passport.

Additional information can be found at the Department of Homeland Security's Web site at www.dhs.gov. To see a Q-and-A on REAL ID, visit www.dhs.gov/xprevprot/programs/gc_1172767635686.shtm. For the final rule on REAL ID, visit www.dhs.gov/xprevprot/laws/gc_1172765386179.shtm.

Midwinter Conference offers education on wealth of topics

MACo's 2008 Midwinter Conference, set for Feb. 11-14 at the Billings Holiday Inn, again will be a great chance for county elected officials to learn more about state and local government issues.

The event is packed with seminars focusing on a variety of timely and critical subjects relevant to every participant.

If your spouse/guest is planning to par-

ticipate in the Wednesday activities, please encourage them to pre-register. The spouse activities agenda is available on the MACo site at <http://maco.cog.mt.us>.

For more information, see pages 6-7 of this edition of *MACo News* for the agenda and registration form, or call MACo at (406) 444-4360. You also may visit the MACo site for details on the conference.



MACo News

Safety champions needed to lead county cultural change

By Emelia McEwen, MACo Senior Loss Control Specialist

Developing an effective safety program is a team undertaking. Even though the process needs input and support from all areas of the county, it will be difficult to make significant strides in eliminating injuries without a true designated leader.

Employee involvement must match with management leadership to have an effective safety process. Someone in the county needs to step up and identify that there is opportunity for improvement.

I believe employers need to find a champion for safety to lead the way for change. In larger counties, it might be someone at the department head level. It also could be an employee at the operations level, in risk management, or even in human resources. The point is all about getting someone to lead the effort. We've included some helpful strategies here to help you find a safety leader.

Determine who is looking to improve safety in the workplace. These individuals don't need a background in safety. They simply need to be passionate about improving the workplace, becoming more efficient, and improving employee satisfaction.



Roads expert Knorr joins MACo

By Fred Hansen, MACo Loss Control Specialist

We welcome Jack Knorr as a part-time employee of MACo. Jack will teach road liability in most of the eastern counties under a new agreement between MACo and the Local Technical Assistance Program. This agreement is for one year and will supply a much-needed training opportunity. Jack is a retired road superintendent and brings many years of experience to this position. He'll be contacting counties to set up training in the near future.

I want to also announce a new tool in the area of our building inspections. MACo has just recently purchased a thermal imaging camera, which will allow users to look at electrical boxes for potential weak areas and take preventive action. There is a training process under way to use the camera and software, but the tool will be available to use for inspections in the near future.

Safer counties earn 2007 MACo awards

Congratulations to the employees of Ravalli, Glacier, Lincoln, Granite, and Treasure counties on earning safety awards at MACo's Risk Management Loss Control Conference last month.

The awards are given to five counties yearly, classified by employee count, for the largest decrease in claims frequency from the previous year.

It's critical to know your budgets. Before identifying your safety champion, make sure you are well equipped with the information needed to take the issue to upper management. Know your cost drivers, such as insurance, injuries and risks that will support the business case for making change.

Ask for a meeting to solicit your champion. Set up a meeting with your potential champion. Put together a presentation that will provide them with the support for management to consider such a proposal.

Once you've secured your champion, it is important to identify the key players that can help make your safety campaign a reality.

Identify your key player in management and the employee workforce. Everyone must understand their roles and responsibilities in the plan.

There are some counties that have been doing things the same way for years. In these cases, the champion may come across operational cultural resistance. When that happens, step back and see where the resistance is coming from and refocus your campaign.

Commitment costs focus of survey

The Montana Legislature wants to know how hard county budgets are hit when counties, pursuant to section 53-21-132(2)(a), MCA, must pay for the detention, evaluation, treatment, and transportation of individuals who, as a civil matter, need to be involuntarily committed to the Montana State Hospital for mental illness.

To that end, MACo is assisting the legislature's Law and Justice Interim Committee by conducting a survey to identify, among other things, how many civil involuntary commitment petitions are filed, what the itemized costs are in these proceedings, and transportation costs.

The survey, developed as part of the HJR 50 study requested by the 2007 Legislature, also asks counties to comment on whether and how the statutes governing civil involuntary commitment process and costs could be improved. The survey will be sent electronically to each county attorney within the next week. County attorneys are being asked to ensure this survey is completed promptly and accurately and returned to MACo Associate Director Sheryl Wood no later than March 3. The data collected will be compiled, analyzed, and reported to the Law and Justice Interim Committee in time for its April 10-11 meeting in Helena and will be instrumental in formulating legislative policy in this area.

For more information, contact Sheryl Wood at MACo. For information on the Law and Justice Interim Committee's HJR 50 study activities, contact Sheri Heffelfinger at (406) 444-3596, sheffelfinger@mt.gov, or visit <http://leg.mt.gov>.



MACo News

From fences to health care, preventative maintenance is important

By Owen Voigt, Health Care Trust Administrator

Fixing a fence to keep your cattle in prevents them from getting out. Without prevention, bad things can happen. If your cattle get out and your bull breeds the neighbors cows, not so good; even worse, his bulls breed your cows. You may not have planned on mixing your Angus herd with his fledgling bucking bull business.

We all change the oil in our rigs to keep our vehicles from incurring major mechanical repairs. I recently read a study that said a glass of red wine is good for your heart. Back when I was rodeoing, my organs should have been in great shape; if a glass of wine was good for my heart, just think what a 12-pack of Budweiser did for me!

Many of the activities we do are for prevention. We are constantly trying to avoid the bad things that can happen without it. Prevention in health care is probably the single best thing we can do to keep ourselves healthy and premiums under control. Preventive health care may not sound like fun, but ask diabetics why they continuously monitor their blood sugar. It is not because a finger prick on a regular basis makes them feel good. The same is true for those of us who think we are "healthy." Find out.

The HCT provides significant preventive benefits under all plans. You should know what your plan provides for preventive benefits and be sure to use them. Really we do not mind. A couple of the preventive benefits the HCT provides payment for are mammograms and colono-

Buffalo vs. autos equals 2 claims

By Dennis Jupka, MACo Senior Claims Adjuster

The MACo Claims staff recently received a claim with two accidents that happened in a short period of time. A county pick-up truck struck some buffalo on a U.S. highway and, because of the damage involved to the front end of the vehicle, the truck became disabled on the roadway.

Within a half-hour, a car was driving by the accident and was unable to stop, striking the county vehicle on the left side and causing additional damage.

The county vehicle could not be moved before the second accident, so the claim is being handled as two separate losses as there was a period of time between the two occurrences. As two claims, two deductibles will be taken.

MACo will subrogate against the driver who struck the county vehicle after it became disabled as he would be liable for the damage caused by running into the left side. We will recover the left-side damages as well as the second deductible.

MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

scopies. To date we do not have one single documented case of abuse where someone tried to get two because we paid for all or a portion of the bill!

I have actually heard of people who change the oil, rotate the tires and perform other types of maintenance on their pickups but do not get an annual physical for themselves. Let's see; new truck costs \$45,000, new Grandpa or Grandma costs? This does not fit the MasterCard ad of priceless; in fact, it is the opposite.

Recently, two of our members went in for routine, annual preventive exams and were diagnosed with cancer. Both cases were detected and treated early. These two members not only saved the trust nearly \$200,000 in medical costs but after they were treated and had recovered, they returned to their pre-cancer life style. Had either case gone until they became symptomatic, the medical results and costs would have been significantly different. By being proactive and taking care of themselves these two members saved the HCT money that comes right out of member premiums.

The best thing you can do to keep your premium costs down and benefits up is to get a complete annual physical. The HCT pays for an annual exam, mammogram, Pap test, immunizations and based on age pays all or a portion of additional colon cancer tests. If you need medical care, find out what you need, take care of it and enjoy those grandkids or, better yet, let them enjoy you.

Health Care Trust Calendar of Events	
Feb. 8	March renewal rates deadline
Apr. 11	July renewal rates mailed
Apr. 18	July open enrollment notice mailed to counties and groups
May 1-June 15	July open enrollment period
May 13	July renewal rates deadline
Oct. 10	January renewal rates mailed
Oct. 17	January open enrollment notice mailed
Nov. 1-Dec. 15	January open enrollment period
Nov. 10	Annual MDCR Part D notice mailed
Nov. 14	January renewal rates deadline
Dec. 21-27	2009 Rx formulary mailed



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MACo News

JPIA/JPA membership meetings set

The annual membership meetings of the Joint Powers Insurance Authority (JPIA) property and liability pool and the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) workers compensation pools are scheduled to take place during the MACo Mid-Winter Conference in Billings next month.

Both meetings will be held Wednesday, Feb. 13; the JPIA meeting is set for 1-2 p.m., and the JPA meeting follows at 2-3 p.m. There is a joint JPIA/JPA meeting at 3:30-4:30 p.m. following a short break.

There will be more information to come regarding specific agendas for each membership meeting.

For more information, contact Greg Jackson, JPIA/JPA trust administrator, at 406/444-4370 or gjackson@maco.cog.mt.us.

Nationwide adds Montana staffer

Nationwide recently hired David Miller as a retirement specialist to cover Montana counties west of the Continental Divide. Miller, a Pacific Northwest native, has experience in the financial services industry and recently joined Nationwide.

Miller will work alongside Ryan Gillette, who is responsible for servicing counties east of the divide.

For more information, contact John Lamm, Nationwide Retirement Solutions program director, at lammj@nationwide.com or (800) 627-1583, ext. 3.

Vital records fee changes focus of meeting

A meeting was held late last month to discuss the state's goal and county comments on restructuring the fees charged for vital records. Representatives from the Montana Clerk and Recorders Association, county registrars, MACo, the Legislative Fiscal Division, and the Office of Vital Statistics (OVS) of the Department of Public Health and Human Services were present at the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to share information about the use of vital records services in county offices, responsibilities of the OVS for maintaining and providing access to vital records, costs and revenue related to the services, potential impact on users of the services, potential conflicts in statute governing county and state functions, and related issues.

The goal of the department is to equalize the fees paid by a user, whether the service is provided in a county or the OVS, with minimal impact to the constituency. OVS provides county clerk and recorders with access to vital records at no charge to the counties. About \$375,000 per year in the 2009 biennium is made up by fees paid to OVS by members of the public who purchase certificates at a higher cost than the cost charged by counties. OVS is attempting to remedy this situation by equalizing the fees paid for a certificate without respect to whether the certificate is provided by a county or the state office, and determine a method to recover the revenue that would be lost by the reduction of fees by OVS.

-by Sheryl Wood, MACo Associate Director

CREBS workshop offers bonds help

County commissioners, city council members, and community planners are invited to attend a workshop on Clean Renewable Energy Bonds (CREBS) on Feb. 28 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Bozeman Comfort Inn.

Since 2006, the Internal Revenue Service has awarded more than 47 bonding authorities for Clean Renewable Energy Bonds to municipalities and school districts in Montana. The bonding process, as well as the accompanying wind generation project, is complex.

This workshop will provide decision makers the tools they need to understand the bonding authority, assess the project proposals for their area, and make decisions as to how to proceed with CREBS.

Hosted by MSU Extension and the Northern Rocky Mountain RC&D, the workshop will include information on wind project development due diligence, bond counsel considerations, and bond underwriting fundamentals.

"The CREBS bonds are very complicated. The workshop that I attended helped me to evaluate the risks and rewards for Carbon County," said Carbon County Commissioner John Prinkki, who attended a CREBS workshop last year. "I believed we avoided some costly missteps because we, as commissioners, were able to understand the project we were evaluating."

For more information, or to register for the workshop, contact MSU Extension Area Economic Development Coordinator Sarah Hamlen at (406) 209-7679 or shamlen@montana.edu, or call Commissioner Prinkki at (406) 446-1516.

Servicemember leave law in effect

The families of wounded military personnel now may take up to six months of unpaid leave to care for their loved ones thanks to the signing of the Support for Injured Servicemembers Act into law in late January.

The legislation, which extends benefits of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), created two new types of FMLA leave:

Active Duty Family Leave grants up to 12 weeks of FMLA leave to employees with a spouse, parent, or child on, or has been called to, active duty when experiencing a "qualifying exigency."

Injured Servicemember Leave allows up to 26 weeks of leave in a 12-month period for employees who are the spouse, parent, child, or next of kin of a servicemember who incurred a serious injury or illness on active duty.

Employees may take injured servicemember leave intermittently, but must use it up within 12 months. There is no 12-month limit on active duty family leave, which is similar to traditional FMLA leave.

For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Labor Web site at <http://www.dol.gov/esa/whd/fmla>. MACo News also will have more on this developing story.



MACo News



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Public Entity & Scholastic Division

Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services, Inc.

What Must We Do After a Loss?

Fourth in a series

Most contracts contain provisions that describe what a policyholder must do after a loss; failure to comply can negate otherwise legitimate claims.

The majority of information on after-the-loss provisions can be found in the conditions section of the insurance policy.

Typical provisions include notification requirements after a loss, cooperation (with the insurer) requirements, requirements that reasonable steps must be taken to minimize the losses, and disclosure or proof-of-loss requirements.

To be continued...

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MACo News

MACo's 2008 MIDWINTER CONFERENCE * FEB. 11-14, 2008, BILLINGS HOLIDAY INN * PRELIM. AGENDA

MONDAY, FEB. 11

10 a.m.-12 noon Board of Directors' and Resolutions Committee meeting
11 a.m.-5 p.m. Registration open
1 p.m. Exhibitors set up
1-5 p.m. All MACo committees meet
5 p.m. Hard Rock Mining Counties meeting
5 p.m. Oil, Gas, and Coal Counties meeting
5 p.m. Urban Counties meeting
6 p.m. HCT Trustees dinner meeting

TUESDAY, FEB. 12 – EMPLOYMENT LAW DAY

7 a.m. Reservation Counties meeting
7:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Registration open
8 a.m.-5 p.m. Exhibitors open
8:30-10 a.m. Taxable Fringe Benefits-Presenter: Dwayne Jacobs, FSLG specialist
10:30-11:15 a.m. Independent Contractor Laws and How They Affect Employment Matters-Presenter: Jack Holstrom, MACo
JPIA Personnel Services Administrator
11:15 a.m.-12 noon Wage and Hour Law Update-Presenters: John Andrew, MT Dept. of Labor and Industry, and Norella Kennedy, U.S. Dept. of Labor
12 noon-1 p.m. Lunch-Commissioner certification award ceremony
1-1:45 p.m. Employment Discrimination-Presenter: Tami Bishop Rhodes, MT Dept. of Labor and Industry
1:45-2:30 p.m. Avoiding Mistakes in Terminating Employees-Presenter: Steve Lehman, Crowley, Haughey, Hanson, Toole & Dietrich, PLLP
3-4 p.m. Internal Controls Fraud Detection Training-Presenter: Rick Reisig, Misfeldt & Company, PC
4 p.m. Coalition of Forest Counties meeting
4 p.m. Six County Fort Peck Lake Group meeting
6 p.m. JPIA Trustees dinner meeting

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 13

7:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Registration open
8 a.m.-5 p.m. Exhibitors open
8-9 a.m. Subdivision Fire Regulations-Presenters: Myra Shults, MACo; Suzanne Browning, Granite County; Ken Weber, Jefferson County; Paul Stahl, Lewis & Clark County
8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. MT Clerk and Recorders Association meeting
8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. MT Treasurers Association meeting
9:30-10:30 a.m. Impact Fees-Presenters: John Prinkki, Carbon County; Steve White, Gallatin County
11 a.m.-12 noon River & Stream Setback Regulations-Presenters: Harold Blattie, MACo, Mike McGinley, Beaverhead County; Dave Schulz, Madison County
12 noon-1 p.m. Lunch
1-2 p.m. JPIA Trustees membership meeting
2-3 p.m. JPA Trustees membership meeting
3:30-4:30 p.m. JPIA/JPA joint membership meeting
4:30-5 p.m. NACo Delegates meeting
6 p.m. JPA Trustees dinner meeting

THURSDAY, FEB. 14

7:30 a.m.-12 noon Registration open
8 a.m.-12 noon Exhibitors open
8-8:30 a.m. Disaster and Emergency Services-Presenter: Dan McGowan, MT Dept. of Military Affairs
8:30 a.m.-9 a.m. eGovernment Services-Presenters: Sandi Miller and Becki Kolenberg, Montana Interactive
10-10:15 a.m. Weeds-Presenters: Dave Schulz, Madison County; and Garth Haugland, Beaverhead County
10:15-10:30 a.m. Local Boards of Health Training-Presenter: Ginger Roll, Rosebud County
10:30-11 a.m. Digital TV-Presenter: Greg Macdonald, Montana Broadcasters Association
11-11:30 a.m. Records Retention-Presenter: Bonnie Ramey, Lewis and Clark County
11:30-12 noon Electronic Records Management-Presenter: Sandra Broesder, Pondera County
12 noon-1 p.m. Lunch
1-1:30 p.m. HCTV Accomplishments-Presenter: Mike Murray, Lewis and Clark County
1:30-2 p.m. 9-1-1-Presenters: Gary MacDonald, Roosevelt County; and Becky Berger and Chris Christensen, MT Dept. of Admin.
2-2:30 p.m. GIS-Presenter: Robin Trenbreath, MT Dept. of Administration
2:30-3 p.m. Legislative Issue (CI99)-Presenters: Harold Blattie and Sheryl Wood, MACo
3 p.m. Conference ends



MACo News

MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES 2008 MIDWINTER CONFERENCE HOLIDAY INN GRAND MONTANA - BILLINGS MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11 – THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2008

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____

Title _____

County (or other agency) _____

Spouse's Name if attending _____

	<u>Pre-Registration</u>	<u>On Arrival</u>
_____ MACo Midwinter Meeting (Monday Afternoon, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) Registration fee covers three lunches, coffee breaks & registration materials.	\$150.00 _____	\$165.00
_____ Spouse Activities – Wednesday Registration fee covers one lunch, workshop & tour.	\$50.00 _____	\$55.00

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Please make checks payable to MACo and send with this entire form to MACo, 2715 Skyway Drive, Helena, MT 59602. If you have questions regarding the Midwinter Conference, contact Karen Houston at (406) 444-4375 or macomtg@maco.cog.mt.us.

REGISTRATION FEES WILL BE REFUNDED ONLY IF CANCELLATION
IS REQUESTED BY FEBRUARY 6, 2008



County News

Grant applications, video available

Completed grant applications for FY 2009 are being accepted by the state Department of Administration from counties and other entities to help fund land information efforts on the local government level until Feb. 15.

To help applicants complete the necessary forms to be considered for the grants, the department's Information Technology Services Division (ITSD) has created an instructional 30-minute video that may be viewed from the state's Geographic Information Services (GIS) Web site at <http://giscoordination.mt.gov/grant.asp>. The video may be viewed continuously or frame by frame.

The grants are a result of the Montana Land Information Act (MLIA), which was created to develop a standardized, sustainable method to collect, maintain, and disseminate information in digital formats about the natural and artificial land characteristics of Montana.

MLIA will ensure that digital land information is collected consistently, maintained accurately in accordance with standards, and made available in common ways for all potential uses and users, both private and public. MLIA prioritizes consistent collection, accurate maintenance, and common availability of land information to provide needed, standardized, and uniform land information in digital formats.

For more information, contact Stewart Kirkpatrick, Montana state GIS coordinator, at (406) 444-9013 or skirkpatrick@mt.gov.

2007 cost-of-living adjustment set at 2.8%

Pursuant to Montana Code Annotated §7-4-2503 and §7-4-2504 (1991), the cost-of-living adjustment is derived using the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U) from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (1982-84=100):

- (A) Annual CIP-U index (annual avg.) for CY 2007: 207.3
- (B) Annual CPI-U index (annual avg.) for CY 2006: 201.6
- (C) Index point change from 2006 to 2007 [A-B]:
207.3—201.6=5.7
- (D) Percent change in annual indexes from 2006 to 2007 [C/B]:
5.7/201.6=0.028 or 2.8%
- (E) Cost-of-living adjustment factor—100% of the percent change in the annual index from 2006 to 2007 (effective 7/1/08): **2.8%**

**To Advertise in *MACo News*, Contact:
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*We appreciate your support!***

Robert "Bob" Peterson, 1944-2008

Robert Duane Peterson, 63, of Hamilton, died peacefully in his home in Hamilton on Friday, Jan. 25, after a short, but intense, bout with cancer. Peterson served as a Beaverhead County commissioner from 1989-1994.

Bob was born May 7, 1944, in Dillon, to Robert and Marie Peterson and was raised on their ranch in Wisdom in the Big Hole Valley. He graduated from Beaverhead County High School in Dillon in 1962. He served in the National Guard after graduating from high school and received an honorable discharge. Bob then worked on the family ranch.



Bob Peterson

He married Arlene Winn of Dillon in 1968 and in their 32 years of marriage, they bought and managed five ranches; the Miller, the Pons, the Stephens, the Jhanke, and the Rutledge, totaling about 7,000 acres and tending 1,100 cows.

Bob served on the Wisdom School Board. He retired from ranching and moved to Hamilton in 2004.

A funeral service was scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 30 with burial following in the family plot at Mountain View Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to Marcus Daly Hospice in Hamilton, 1200 Westwood Drive, Hamilton, MT 59840 or a charity of the donor's choice.



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County News

Clark Fork water conference to address supply, growth in critical river basin

Balancing the Clark Fork's water supply with unprecedented growth is the main goal of the Water Supply and Growth in the Clark Fork River Basin conference next month at the University of Montana.

The two-day conference, set for March 10-11, will explore the basic facts and issues about supply and growth in the basin and discuss tools for managing them.

Speakers and panel participants include a variety of professionals from state government, politicians, the private sector, and legal experts.

The event is sponsored by the Clark Fork River Basin Task Force, MACo, UM's Department of Geography, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. The registration deadline is March 3.

For more information, visit the task force Web site at http://dnrc.mt.gov/wrd/water_mgmt/clarkforkbasin_taskforce/default.asp.

State, federal agencies to host workshops on infrastructure planning, financing

If your community is going to build a public infrastructure project in the next few years that will need a grant or a low-interest loan to make it affordable, then you'll want to attend the Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team (W²ASACT) spring workshops.

The one-day events are designed to inform potential applicants about the various public infrastructure funding programs available, their specific requirements, and how to put together a successful application.

Offered by the state's Department of Commerce, Department of Environmental Quality, the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the workshops are free.

The first event will be held Feb. 20 in Great Falls, followed by the Missoula workshop on March 5. The final workshop in the series will be in Billings on March 11.

To learn more, call (406) 841-2770 or visit <http://dnrc.mt.gov/cardd/ResDevBureau/wasact>.

Summit to address emergency issues

By Dan McGowan, Disaster & Emergency Services

The business of emergency management has changed since 9/11 and county commissioners play a critical role regarding public safety and protection of the citizenry before, during, and after an event, so don't miss the 2008 Governor's Emergency Preparedness Summit at the Holiday Inn Grand Montana in Billings in April 22-24.

The summit, held only during even-numbered years, will bring together all the disciplines involved in incidents, emergencies, or disasters (federal, state, local, tribal, private, first responders and voluntary agencies) to facilitate an understanding of the issues and the interface necessary between all the potential participants. The intent is to build the partnerships and networks now that will promote the most effective mechanisms possible to deal with any future event.

The agenda is packed with workshops on prevention, preparedness, response and recovery issues that affect each and every one of our disciplines. Thursday will highlight a "Senior Officials Workshop" and Incident Command Position Awareness.

The 2006 summit provided an opportunity for over 500 participants to begin networking. At this year's summit, plans call for more than 50 vendors to help you stay abreast of all the new technologies that can assist with your emergency management efforts.

For more information, contact Dan McGowan, Disaster and Emergency Services administrator, at (406) 841-3911 or dmcgowan@mt.gov.

MACo News Invites Letters to the Editor

If you have a compliment, complaint, or suggestion,

please let us know!

Please include your name and county with your letter, then send it to:



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County News

Jelinski retires after 24 years of local government service

By Jane Jelinski, MSU Local Government Center director

As many of you know, I will retire from my position as director of the Local Government Center on Feb. 29. A search for a new director is moving along and I am confident a qualified person will be hired soon.

I have enjoyed my tenure in this job since July 2001 and am confident the relationship between MACo and the Local Government Center has grown in a variety of productive ways. The center now provides formal certification programs for county commissioners, county treasurers, clerks of District Court, and Montana municipal clerks, treasurers and finance officers. In addition, we provide the Montana Mayors Academy, workshops for city council members, and training for appointed boards. The center publishes the Montana Policy Review twice each year and Local Government Profiles wall charts annually.



Jane Jelinski

Our colleague, Dr. Paul Lachapelle, Community Development Extension specialist, has published *Public Lands in Montana: A Guide for Counties and Communities*, and a Board Handbook, which is in high demand. We expect next year Paul and Associate Director Edward Sypinski will work on an updated *County Commissioners Handbook* and *Counties on the Move*.

Administrative Associate Molly Arrandale's responsibilities are being expanded to take advantage of her con-

siderable research capabilities as well. Our partnership with MSU Extension has increased to the extent that Extension will be funding the new director's salary.

I've been around local government for twenty-four years – fourteen as a Gallatin County commissioner, three as assistant director of MACo and seven as director of the Local Government Center. I have loved (nearly) every minute of it, and have learned many lessons and enjoyed many friendships. We are witnessing an increasing number of old-timers leaving for retirement, and many of you have expressed anxiety about the loss of so much experience in a short time. This trend is going to continue due to our aging population. Let me be perfectly clear – no one is indispensable. I ask you to be generous to the young professionals who are replacing us. They have many talents, they are dedicated to mastering their responsibilities, and, frankly, they probably have more and better preparation for their new positions than a lot of us had when we were first elected or appointed. Give them a chance to make mistakes, to acquire experience, and do share your expertise and experience with them. They will serve you well.

I am looking forward to spending more time with my family, traveling, writing, reading, gardening, playing the piano, exercising, and just doing what I please. Thank you for your support and for your friendship. I hope you will keep in touch.

Watersheds, property rights the subject of No Adverse Impact conference

The safe and proper development of land subject to a hazard, such as riverfront property in Montana, is always a challenge, but it's the objective the No Adverse Impact (NAI) approach to be featured at a conference given by the Big Hole Watershed Committee (BHWC) Feb. 21-22.

The two-day event, sponsored by several counties, state agencies, and environmental groups, will detail the NAI methodology of floodplain and stormwater manage-

ment as developed by Edward A. Thomas, a former floodplain manager, disaster specialist, and attorney.

The conference will address a variety of topics, including the legal roots of a do no harm in developing land, and how efforts to safely regulate can be challenged.

The event will be held at Fairmont Hot Springs Resort. Early registration ends Feb. 8. For more information, call BHWC's Jill Luebeck at (406) 494-6216.

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NACo News



National County Gov't Week nears

In 2008, the National County Government Week's theme is "Protecting Our Children." During the week of April 6-12, counties can show their residents the many ways they work to protect and enhance the health, welfare and safety of children in sensible and cost-effective ways.

National County Government Week (NCGW) is an annual celebration of county government. First held in 1991, the goal of county government week is to raise public awareness and understanding about the roles and responsibilities of the nation's counties.

There are activities at the national, state and local levels during county government week. More than 1,000 counties annually participate in NCGW by holding a variety of programs and events. These include tours of county facilities, presentations in schools, meetings with business and community leaders, recognition programs for volunteers, briefings on environmental projects, and adoption of proclamations.

NACo has even prepared a handy 15-page booklet, downloadable as an Adobe PDF, for helpful NCGW tips.

For more information, visit www.naco.org.

Register online for legislative conference

Online registration for NACo's 2008 Legislative Conference, March 1-5, 2008, in Washington D.C., is now open. When you register online, you'll receive a \$25 discount. After February 20, online registration and the discount will not be available.

To access the registration form, go to <https://www.exposoftevents.com/secure/shows/NACOLEG08/public/regfull.asp>. To learn more about the conference, visit www.naco.org/legislativeconference.



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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.

Since its inception in 1980, NACo's 457 Deferred Compensation Program has grown to become the largest supplemental retirement program available to county employees.

NACo Blog covers 2008 election, county officials endorsements

Check out the latest on the 2008 Presidential Election on the NACo Blog at nacoblog.blogspot.com. You can get involved in NACo's Restore the Partnership Campaign, find out where the candidates stand on the issues, and of course, see who county officials across the country have endorsed in the race for the presidency.

NACo, in partnership with the state associations of counties, has launched the 2008 Presidential Election Project to reach candidates seeking to become President in 2008 and get them to focus on county issues. The goal of the project, which is a non-partisan effort, is to restore the federal-county government partnership and to educate all of the candidates on county issues.

If you have problems connecting to the NACo Blog, it could be because your IT department has blocked access to it. Ask your help desk to allow you to connect. It's a safe site and exceptions for classes of content can be made for your computer. If you have any problems, contact NACo at webmaster@naco.org.

Achievement Award Program applications due by Feb. 15

NACo's Achievement Awards Program gives national recognition to innovative county government programs which modernize and streamline county government and increase services to its citizens, and applications for the 2008 awards are due Feb. 15.

The Achievement Awards Program gives national recognition to county accomplishments, and has enabled NACo to build a storehouse of county success stories that can be passed on to other counties.

If you have any questions about the application process or would like additional application forms, contact Deseree Gardner at (202) 942-4228 or dgardner@naco.org. You may fax your inquiry to the NACo Research Division at (202) 737-0480. Additional copies of the application also may be obtained from www.naco.org.

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NACo News



NACo develops FAQ on climate change clarifies green initiatives for counties

NACo has developed a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document on climate change and counties, which focuses on NACo's new County Climate Protection Program and other national initiatives. Here's a sample of questions from the FAQ (for the full version, visit www.naco.org):

What is NACo's policy on climate change?

At the NACo Legislative Conference in March 2007, the NACo Board of Directors approved a resolution that in July 2007 became part of NACo's Environment, Energy and Land Use Platform. The resolution calls upon Congress to aggressively pursue national and international programs to develop carbon-neutral energy sources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Federal funding of sensible and cost-effective technologies to reduce greenhouse gases should be continued. NACo urges Congress to address global warming, regardless of its source. NACo supports immediate and long-range efforts by the federal government to involve all levels of stakeholders to mitigate possible sources of climate change now through a series of practical incentives and through more federal funding for all means of emissions reduction.

How does a county become involved in NACo's County Climate Protection Program?

The first step for a county to participate in NACo's program is to adopt a pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a numerical target. The draft resolution template is available at www.naco.org/climateprotection.

Restoration grant deadline Feb. 15

NACo and the Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program project partners are accepting applications until Feb. 15 for the 2008 Five Star Restoration Challenge Grants. The Five Star Program provides financial assistance on a competitive basis to support community-based wetland, riparian and coastal habitat restoration projects that build diverse partnerships and foster local natural resource stewardship through education, outreach and training activities. Project sites can be public land, such as parks, streams and school campuses, or private land, such as corporate facilities.

Begun in 1997, the Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program is a partnership between NACo, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Wildlife Habitat Council, and is made possible with support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Southern Co., and the newest program sponsor, Pacific Gas and Electric.

Five Star project elements are restoration of wetland, riparian, in stream, and/or coastal habitat, environmental education through community participation and/or K-12 environmental curriculum, partnerships in the community, and measurable results that translate to ecological and educational/social benefits.

For more information on the Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program, how to apply, and examples of past Five Star projects, visit www.naco.org/fivestar or contact Erik Johnston at (202) 942-4246 or ejohnston@naco.org.

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www.rpa-hln.com



Just one year left for conventional television signals

By Jeff Arnold, NACo deputy legislative director

In just 13 months, television as you know it will be going away. The programming will be available, just not in the format that has been providing viewers with their signal for more than 60 years. Why should a county official care?

Broadcasters must switch from analog broadcasting to digital broadcasting no later than Feb. 17, 2009. This means that any TV that receives exclusively "over-the-air" programming that does not have a digital tuner (virtually all sets manufactured more than a few years ago) will go dark at midnight of that date.

Homes that have cable or satellite service should not be affected by the switch. County officials are likely to be in the crosshairs of public anger unless the switch is widely publicized to their citizens.

TV sets that are not connected to cable or satellite, or do not have a built-in digital tuner (sets built after 2006 generally have such a tuner), will need a converter box to continue receiving broadcast television signals after the transition occurs. The DTV transition is necessary to provide more public safety radio frequencies for America's first responders.

Preparing for the transition is easy and requires one of the following steps by next February:

- Purchase a DTV converter box. Beginning early this year, consumers can purchase a DTV converter box that plugs into an existing analog set and allows continued free television reception. The federal government will provide up to two

\$40 coupons per household that can be used toward the purchase of these boxes.

- Purchase a new television set with a built-in digital television tuner (not to be confused with HDTV).
- Subscribe to cable, satellite or telephone company video service providers to continue using analog sets. Consumers should check with their provider to see if all desired local broadcast stations are carried by that service.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) told a 2008 International Consumer Electronics Show audience in Las Vegas last month that it has certified 250 retailers and 19 digital-TV-to-analog converter boxes.

The NTIA began handing out government-subsidized \$40 coupons at the beginning of the year toward the purchase of the boxes and says it has already received more than 1 million requests for more than 2 million boxes.

Certified retailers include Best Buy, Circuit City, Kmart, RadioShack, Sam's Club, Sears, and Wal-Mart.

The NTIA will begin mailing the coupons Feb. 17, but some viewers may want to wait depending on whether the anticipated \$60 price point for the boxes comes down in the wake of an EchoStar Communications' announcement that it will be offering a \$39.99 box in June.

To see an instructive video on the transition, visit the Consumer Electronics Association's Web site at www.ces.org.

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Nationwide/NACo scholarship apps available

Nationwide will award two Nationwide/NACo college scholarships, each worth \$2,500, to two high school seniors whose parent or grandparent participates in NACo's 457 Deferred Compensation Plan. Deadline for applications is March 31.

For more information about eligibility and application procedures, visit www.naco.org.



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Growers board wants county projects

By the National Association of Counties

The United Soybean Board (USB) wants to work with counties to initiate pilot projects using bio-based products. These projects are excellent opportunities for government agencies to test the performance of bio-based products. Pilot use of bio-based products will give counties real world, practical experience on how these products perform, their availability and how they can help meet their green purchasing and sustainability goals.

Bio-based products are commercial or industrial products that are made from agricultural, biological or forestry materials. A wide array of bio-based products, ranging from cleaners to lubricating oils to roof coatings, foam insulation and carpet backing, are currently available as replacements for petroleum-based products. Using bio-based products can help decrease U.S. reliance on foreign oil, result in safer and healthier workplaces, reduce air and water pollution and hazardous waste generation, and increase economic development in the rural U.S.

Examples of bio-based products that counties might want to incorporate into their green purchasing:

Janitorial cleaning products such as floor cleaners, glass cleaners, tile cleaners, bathroom cleaners, general purpose cleaners;

Facility maintenance items such as paint strippers, mastic removers, graffiti removers, and;

Equipment maintenance items such

as hydraulic fluids, greases, lubricating oil, two-cycle engine oil, parts cleaners and degreasers.

USB can help counties get started using these biobased products and/or expand their use of such products by participating in projects such as the ones USB did with federal agencies.

Information about biobased products is available at www.soybiobased.org. The site also contains a *Best Practices Guide for Biobased Products* and profiles on USB demonstration projects with federal government agencies.

Provisions in the 2002 Farm Bill require federal agencies to increase their purchasing of biobased products, and USB has worked successfully with a number of national parks, Department of Energy national laboratories and the Department of Veterans Affairs on pilot projects. USB worked with the agencies to determine what type and quantity of biobased products they were interested in using and helped identify manufacturers of those products.

The agencies selected products that met their needs and specifications and USB then acquired and provided those products to the agencies for their use. The agencies agreed to provide feedback on the results.

USB would like to expand this pilot project effort to work with counties as well. If your county is interested in exploring a pilot project, please contact NACo's Kelly Zonderwyk at kzonderwyk@naco.org or (202) 942-4224.

Green effort adds sponsors

IBM, the International Code Council, GM, and Waste Management recently became the latest sponsors of NACo's Green Government Initiative.

The effort serves as a comprehensive resource for local governments on all things "green," including energy, green building, climate protection, air quality, transportation, land use, water quality, purchasing, and recycling.

For more information, visit www.greencounties.org or call Kelly Zonderwyk at (202) 942-4224.

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Around Our Counties

Zoning

LAKE COUNTY commissioners won't be able to grant final approval to a condo project on Swan Lake until a related lawsuit is settled, according to a state Supreme Court ruling in December. The court, nullifying a Missoula district court decision, ruled the Swan Laker homeowners group could sue Lake County for approving an allegedly incomplete application for the 42-unit Kootenai Lodge Estates development before the county adopted a density plan.

LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY commissioners denied a 165-acre subdivision east of Helena. The Red Fox Meadows project, to consist of 110 homes and 165 condominiums, was rejected due to concerns over traffic impacts on nearby roads and how upgrades would be funded.

BEAVERHEAD COUNTY will undertake a formal planning process with the city of Dillon following a recommendation from the planning board approved by commissioners in January. The process was established by Senate Bill 201, passed by the Montana Legislature last year, to allow counties and cities may work more easily in planning for growth.

Law Enforcement

PARK COUNTY deputies and a sheriff's department dog survived a freak accident in early January when high winds blew a tractor-trailer on top of their two sheriff's SUVs. The deputies were pulled over on Interstate 90 at the scene where two other tractor-trailers had been toppled by wind when the accident occurred. The deputies and Rollie, the K-9 in question, were unharmed. Gusts in the area near Livingston measured as high as 150 mph at the time.

FLATHEAD COUNTY will hire a forensic child interviewer to handle its many requests for the function. Funded by a federal grant, the position will relieve the workload of the four sheriff's office detectives now doing child interviews. Detectives get such requests four or five times a week; most of the children are victims of abuse or sex crimes.

VALLEY COUNTY Sheriff Glen Meier's decision to fire former deputy Kevin James was upheld by a Seattle arbitrator who determined the firing did not violate the collective bargaining agreement of James' union. The firing took place in December 2006 following a child custody dispute.

DAWSON COUNTY Correc-

tions Officer Kaye Nichols graduated at the top of her corrections and detention officers class at the Montana Law Enforcement Academy in December. The three-week course included education and training in the essential functions of ensuring the safety and security of inmates in county detention facilities.

Miscellany

RAVALLI COUNTY commissioners in mid-January ta-

bled a proposal to re-open Lost Horse Quarry for county rock and gravel use after public opposition to the move. The proposal, submitted by the county road and bridge department last year, called for using materials from the quarry for 10 years.

GRANITE COUNTY's request to change its long-standing water rights at Georgetown Lake were denied by the Montana DNRC in a late-December decision.



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Announcements & Reminders

Holstrom reappointed to state board

MACo Personnel Services Administrator Jack Holstrom recently has been reappointed by Gov. Brian Schweitzer as presiding officer of the Montana Board of Personnel Appeals.

"I am honored to be reappointed to this board," Holstrom said, "because I believe the board's work is crucial to successful labor-management relations for public employees and public entities."



Jack Holstrom

The board is a five-member quasi-judicial body charged with providing appellate level review for matters involving the Collective Bargaining Act for Public Employees. All members are selected by the governor.

Holstrom, a long-time attorney who has worked in both state and local government, was recommended for reappointment by both labor representatives and employers. Gov. Schweitzer's appointment marks the third time Holstrom has chosen to be on the board. His new term expires in 2012.

Mark Your Calendars

February

- Feb. 6 HJR 48 Subcommittee*
- Feb. 7 Economic Affairs Interim Committee, Great Falls
- Feb. 7-8 Revenue and Transportation Interim Committee*
- Feb. 11 SJR 15 Subcommittee*
- Feb. 11-15 MACo Midwinter Conference, Billings
- Feb. 13 JPIA/JPA/HCT Memberships Meet at Midwinter Conf.
- Feb. 15 Fire Suppression Subcommittee*
- Feb. 22 State Admin. and Veterans' Affairs Interim Committee*

March

- March 1-5 NACo Legislative Conference, Washington, D.C.
- March 10-11 Environmental Quality Council*
- March 12-13 Water Policy Committee*
- March 17-18 Children, Families, Health, & Human Svcs. Int. Comm.*
- March 13-14 Education and Local Government*

*All meetings are held in Helena unless noted.

To view additional important dates, please see the MACo Health Care Trust calendar on page 3.

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