



MACnews

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2010 census efforts gearing up in Montana

By the Denver Regional Census Bureau of the U.S. Census

Now that the 2010 Census is on the horizon, the Denver Regional Partnership Program has begun to reach out to partners across all populations in tribal governments, state and local governments, grassroots organizations, faith-based groups, schools, business and media.

In October, the bureau will open an Early Local Census Office in Billings to better serve the state. Billings is one of 12 offices to be opened in the Denver Region and will be staffed by a manager, several assistant managers, and an administrative assistant.

The bureau also is reaching out to mayors and other elected officials throughout the region. The more residents of any community can relate the census data collection process to their own lives, the more likely they are to participate in the census.

Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper and other elected officials are communicating the importance and safety of completing the census questionnaire to constituents,

including those isolated by language or geography. They've formed Community Complete Count Committees, hold town hall meetings, include census information in newsletters and websites, and provide space for the Census to test and train. By joining forces with local communities, the Census Bureau has a far greater chance to reach every resident for a complete and accurate count.

For more information about outreach efforts and how your community can participate contact Pamela Lucero at pamela.m.lucero@census.gov.

2010 Census promotional materials are now available online at www.census.gov/2010census/promotional_materials. Click on 2010 Census Materials for fact sheets and partnership information related to elected officials and other groups.

You also will find drop-in articles for newspapers, organization news letters, and websites covering awareness, recruiting and Complete Count Committees.

Board of County Printing raises legal advertising rates

The Board of County Printing is required by state law to establish the maximum rates that may be charged for county legal advertising (Section 7-5-2401, MCA). The board met May 9 in Helena and held a public hearing regarding the request of the Montana Newspaper Association (MNA) to raise the current maximum rates charged for county legal advertising.

MNA provided a wealth of information to justify the request for the increase. This included statistics showing the rates weren't increased for eight years, while the costs of paper and ink have increased considerably (over 70 percent for ink alone).

Additionally, the association conducted a statewide survey where 82.8 percent of the respondents stated they believe state and local government should be required to publish legal and public notices in the

newspaper on a regular basis.

MACo proposed the board meet on either an annual, or at least biennial, basis to review and incorporate legislative changes and cost proposals to avoid large increases.

After considering testimony, the board voted to raise the maximum allowable rates for county legal advertising to \$11 per folio (100 words or a fraction thereof) for the first insertion and \$9 for subsequent insertions of the same advertisement.

The new rates will become effective July 1.

For more information about the Board of County Printing, visit <http://doa.mt.gov/aboutdoa/boardscouncils.asp> or contact Sheryl Olson, deputy director, Department of Administration, at (406) 444-3307 or sherylolson@mt.gov.



MACo News

2008 Directory of Montana County Officials corrections

In today's world, information that was correct yesterday can easily be incorrect today. We try our best to ensure all the data in our annual Directory of County Officials is as accurate as possible at time of printing. That's why we start the process of publishing the directory several months before it's distributed. Still, the information it contains remains accurate for only so long. As a service to our members, we keep track of changes submitted to us and are presented below.

Anaconda-Deer Lodge County

Clerk & Recorder
Clerk-recorder@anacondadeerlodge.mt.gov

Carbon County

County Commissioner
Doug Tucker 692-4818
233 Bridger Fromberg Road, Bridger, 59014

Cascade County

Joe Briggs jbriggs@co.cascade.mt.us
Peggy Beltrone pbeltrone@co.cascade.mt.us

Daniels County

County Commissioner
Dr. Monica Haaland 893-4456
211 Prairie Dell Road SW, Peerless, 59253
Clerk & Recorder e-mail: clerkrec@danielsco.mt.gov
Treasurer e-mail: treasurer@danielsco.mt.gov

Fallon County

County Commissioners
Deb Ranum 778-8151
Dennis A Frank 778-8152
Donald Rieger 772-8153
Clerk & Recorder/School Sup't. 778-8182
Clerk of District Court 778-8114
Justice of the Peace 778-8128
Sheriff/Coroner 778-8133
Treasurer/Assessor 778-8109
Commissioners days in office: First full work week
Every Monday

Flathead County

All county e-mail addresses end with @flathead.mt.gov

Golden Valley County

Clerk & Recorder/Clerk of District Court
Mary Lu Berry berryml@midrivers.com

Lake County

Main county commissioner e-mail address is lakecommissioners@lakemt.gov

Phillips County

Clerk & Recorder/Auditor/Surveyor
Laurel Hines
Treasurer/Assessor
Jean Mavencamp

Prairie County

Attorney 635-4529
Scott Pederson pedersonpcatty@yahoo.com

Ravalli County

Sheriff 375-4060

Rosebud County

Atty./Public Admin. mhayworth@rosebudcountymt.com
Superintendent of Schools
Joby Parker jparker@rosebudcountymt.com

Sanders County

Clerk & Recorder jrobbins@sanderscounty.mt.gov
clerk&recorder@sanderscounty.mt.gov

Congressional Offices

Senator Jon Tester
Billings Office 222 N 32nd, Suite 102

County Safety Coordinators

Stillwater
Joe Morse 332-8014 jmorse@stillwater.mt.gov

If your county has any additional corrections or changes, send them to MACo Communications Officer Mike Harbour at macopb@maco.cog.mt.us and we'll be sure to include them in next year's edition of the directory.

Registration open for housing conference

County elected officials are invited to attend a free conference on housing. Montana's Housing Conference, set for June 10-12, in Great Falls, offers a chance for officials to meet with Realtors, builders, developers, managers, and agencies to determine the state's housing future. County staffers will receive a 50-percent discounted registration fee. For more info, visit www.housing.mt.gov.

MACo Telephone Numbers

Main office	Health Care Trust
406/444-4360	406/443-8102
Claims	JPIA/JPA Trusts
406/442-1178	406/444-4370



MACo News

Charles Brooks, 1927-2008

Charles Brooks, 80, passed away in Billings on May 11. He was as a lobbyist for Yellowstone County.

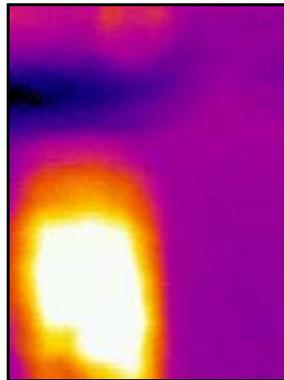
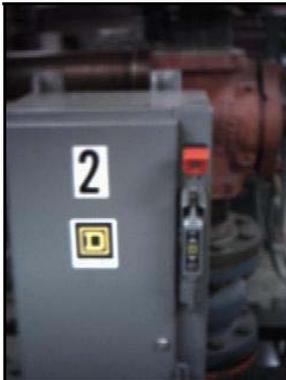
Brooks, a Texas native, came to Montana via an expansion of the Gibson Discount Center franchise in the late 1960s. In 1984, he became the director of development at Rocky Mountain College, then served as the executive director of the Montana Retailers Association.

In 1993, Brooks started a firm with wife Bettye that provided consulting services and advocacy for small businesses and local government entities.

Park County seeks deputy county attorney

The Park County Attorney's Office is seeking a full-time deputy attorney. Must have JD from accredited law school and admitted to Montana Bar. Civil law experience preferred. Salary DOE. Request application from the Livingston Job Service by calling 222-0520, or request an application via first class mail to Park County Attorney, 220 East Park Street, Livingston, MT 59047.

Infrared camera goes straight to the source



Proof that MACo's new thermal imaging camera, a HotShot LT from Electrophysics, can inspect areas more effectively than the human eye is shown in the above images recently made by MACo Loss Control Specialist Fred Hansen. The picture on the left shows a normal view of a building's electrical box, while the picture on the right is an infrared view of the same box displaying a thermal hotspot (in white). The temperature variation was caused by a minor mechanical issue that was repaired.

The camera accurately records temperatures ranging from -20 degrees Celsius to 350 degrees Celsius. It also has a built-in computer that makes it simple to record inspection information, then download that data into a laptop or desktop computer for use in reports.

MACo Loss Control will use the camera during building inspections. If you'd like a thermal inspection of your county buildings, contact Hansen at (406) 444-4360 or fhansen@maco.cog.mt.us.

Floodplain training programs available

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) is inviting elected officials to attend its free floodplain training sessions June 3 in Miles City and June 5 in Glendive. Floodplain 101 is designed to teach attendees how to understand rules, read floodplain maps, and process permits. Lunch is provided.

DNRC also is offering a day-long session on how to apply to the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS), a voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP requirements. As a result, flood insurance premium rates are discounted to reflect the reduced flood risk resulting from the community actions meeting the three goals of the CRS: reduce flood losses; facilitate accurate insurance rating; and promote the awareness of flood insurance. That class will be held in July in Helena.

For more information or to register, contact DNRC's Bri Shipman at (406) 444-0862 or bshipman@mt.gov.



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MACo News

Taking your licks is good advice when it comes to insurance

By Owen Voigt, MACo Health Care Trust Administrator

Growing up on a ranch teaches a person life lessons that are very helpful as we grow older. The issues may get bigger and the outcomes carry more weight, but the lesson was still the same. Sometimes it is just worth it to take your licks.

When I was five years old, I recall we didn't then have a flush toilet in our house yet. We did have an outdoor privy and, for us younger kids, there was a bucket in the basement we could use, too. I once had a tough decision to make and I had to make it quick. The bathroom bucket was in a nook by the chimney with minimal privacy. I was in the basement coming upstairs. When I got near the bucket area, I could see my sisters feet sticking out from around the corner. I knew she was on the bucket and she did not know I was there. My tough decision became an easy one. I snuck right next to her and then I grabbed her feet and lifted. She slid down into the bucket.

The next few moments were a little fuzzy. I was laughing so hard I could hardly get away and my sister was screaming so loud I knew Mom would come running. I figured the licking I was going to take was well worth the fun I had dunking her into the bucket. I was right; when Mom finished cleaning up my sister, then cleaning up the mess from her tipping over the bucket, I did get a pretty good licking. To this day, I still believe it was worth it.

Taking your licking may or may not be in your best interest when getting your new health benefits rates. Make your carrier be accountable to you. Do not just go for the standard statement, "oh, you had a bad year." Yes, there are rules and certain disclosure laws all carriers must comply with regarding the release of information.

There are basically two pieces of data used to underwrite health benefits in Montana; age, and claims experience. If your carrier doesn't provide you with the information about the average age of your group this year versus last, and what your claims were during the underwriting period, then how do you know you're being treated fairly? If you did it, whether from bad claims or an older group, then you should take your licking like I did after tipping my sis into the bucket; if you didn't do it or your carrier does not prove you have the new rate coming, ask the following: Why are we getting this rate? Did we have a change? Did our average age go up? Did our losses as a group go up? How do you underwrite us? Did you as a group/carrier/trust have a bad year? How does that affect us?

When we meet with prospective counties and groups who get increases without documentation, then just accept the new rates because they're less than the increases they used to get, I'm amazed. Some insurance committees say if they get a rate increase of 10 percent or more, they will shop. What if you actually should have gotten a decrease but your carrier gives you a 9.5-percent increase and you take it? Ask for your loss ratio, the carrier's performance information and your age data. If you tipped the bucket and your carrier has to clean it up, OK then, you take what's coming.

My five brothers and I got along pretty well and stuck up for each other, but you can bet with my sister looking like she just got dragged through the corral after spring thaw and my Mom madder than a bandy leg chicken hen, none of them stepped in for me when it was time to be held accountable.

Trusts share their losses in good times and bad. The good thing about trusts is you are not on your own. On the other hand, all carriers/trusts should provide you, the insured/member group, an explanation as to why your rates may be changing. Health insurance is a significant part of the county or districts budget and the number two reason people work. Be a good consumer and know why the rates are changing. If you have it coming, then take your licking, but just make sure you know why.

Health Care Trust Calendar of Events

May 1-June 15	July open enrollment period
Oct. 10	January renewal rates mailed
Nov. 1-Dec. 15	January open enrollment period
Nov. 10	Annual MDCR Part D notice mailed out
Nov. 14	January renewal rates deadline
Dec. 21-27	2009 Rx formulary mailed out



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County News

End of ag lands reappraisal nears, five classes will continue in use

By Sam Kitzenberg, Montana Department of Revenue

The Montana Department of Revenue is entering the last implementation stages of the agricultural land reappraisal to go into effect on Jan. 1, 2009. There are about 50 million acres of privately owned ag land in the state.

Unlike residences and commercial businesses, the value of ag lands is not based on market value, but on productivity (yields) within various land classifications. Montana laws specify the information to be used when determining the productive value of these lands.

For the 2009 reappraisal, the department will continue to use the following five classification guidelines:

Grazing Land: Grazing land includes both tame pastures and native rangeland and comprises about 70 percent of all privately owned and classified acres.

Summer Fallow Farmland: This is typical dryland farmland, which is usually strip farmed, and accounts for about 25 percent of the total acres. Acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program also are included here.

Irrigated Land: Irrigated land makes up roughly 3.3 percent of the total acres. We further define this land based on the type of irrigation in use. The irrigation types identified in department guidelines are flood, sprinkler and pivot irrigation systems.

Non-Irrigated Hay Land: These lands are not irrigated but are harvested for hay the majority of the years. Also called wild hay land, these lands total about two percent of the private acres in the state. The land may also be grazed in the fall; the main use is dryland hay production.

Non-Irrigated Continuously Cropped Farmland: Non-irrigated continuously cropped farmland, primarily found in Northwest Montana, comprise less than one percent of the total acres. Due to environment, moisture and soil composition, this land can be farmed yearly with little or no adverse impacts to production or to the land.

As part of the reappraisal process, the department will be providing ag producers with copies of aerial photos (maps) that will display the ownership boundaries, agricultural uses and productivity for each parcel within their ownership. Producers will have the opportunity to review this information and to work with our local appraisal staff to make any necessary modifications. Producers will find instructions included in these materials for contacting us to discuss any questions or concerns they may have.

In addition, we will be sending requests to landowners who irrigate for their 2007 water cost information. Please complete and return request forms to your local Department of Revenue office, along with any other corrections.

The impacts of this reappraisal are unknown at this time, but Gov. Schweitzer has given his assurance he will introduce legislation next year to ensure the statewide impacts of the 2009 reappraisal will be tax neutral.

Applications being taken for safety award

The Governor's Award for Health and Safety recognizes commitment to excellence in the workplace safety and health arena. It promotes greater awareness of workplace health and safety across the state and offers the opportunity for leaders to share model programs.

The awards are the highest honor given by the State of Montana in recognition of health and safety excellence. If you believe your county models safety and health systems, you're encouraged to seek this recognition.

Winners will be recognized at a formal awards ceremony, to be held this year during the Annual Governor's Conference on Workers Compensation and Occupational Safety & Health at West Yellowstone Oct. 1-3, and will be presented with a banner and plaque suitable for display.

Applicable award categories for counties are Large Public Employer of the Year (75 or more employees) and Small Public Employer of the Year (less than 75 employees).

Applications must be submitted online by July 30; applications are evaluated and winners selected by committee based on accepted safety and health principles established through the Montana Safety Culture Act, the Mine Safety and Health Administration, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

For more information, contact (406) 444-1605 visit <http://erd.dli.mt.gov/safetyhealth/sbhome.asp>.

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Public Entity & Scholastic Division

Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services, Inc.

Cybersecurity: An Overview of Key Issues

Third in a series

Physical Access

Maybe you've given some consideration to the sensitivity of GIS data and its potential to expose critical infrastructure such as facilities. But the real danger to physical infrastructure lies, not in blueprints and aerial photos, but in physical access.

Server Locations — Many organizations built their networks piece by piece. In the day-to-day operations of a progressive, lean, over-extended IT department, equipment can have a tendency to end up in locations where it shouldn't be.

What used to be a PC sitting on a desktop in an IT employee's cubicle is now a major enterprise data server sitting on a desktop in an IT employee's cubicle.

You can also find servers, routers, hubs and other crucial equipment sitting in closets, snack rooms, warehouses, consultant's garages.

Public Terminals — There's something very tempting about a public terminal or kiosk. It calls out to even ordinarily conservative, law-abiding people, "Hack me...hack me..."

The next time you're in the local computer superstore,

and see a personal computer with a user name/password dialog box on the screen, take notice how many people can't resist trying a couple of combinations. How strong is the temptation to those who pride themselves in their ability to crack systems?

Satellite dishes and other equipment locations — External components to a network infrastructure are particularly open to vandalism or destruction. Are you, perhaps inadvertently, painting big red targets on your network?

It's one thing to share information about your technologies with peers, quite another to share it with the world. The next time you read an article from a state or local government agency about some new wireless or satellite technology it has implemented, see if you can envision receivers and dishes sitting on rooftops or in little fenced compounds in parking lots. It makes one wonder if terrorists get those same visions.

Policy and Process Issues — This is where cybersecurity issues transcend the wonders of hardware and software -- where we deal with the most uncontrollable aspect -- the human factor.

by Randy Land and John Krusemark, City of Scottsdale, Ariz., via PERI

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County News

Learn to battle bark beetles at free symposium

The Red Tree Symposium, to be held June 5 at the University of Montana, is a one-day public forum for anyone who wants to learn more about the causes and potential impacts of the bark beetle outbreak on our forests. Entomologists, wildlife biologists, timber industry representatives and others will speak at the event. To register, call (406) 542-4300 or visit www.dhrc.mt.gov/redtree.

Erickson named LGS Bureau super

By Kay Gray, Local Gov't. Svcs. Bureau chief, Dept. of Admin.

As many are already aware, Norm Klein retired from his position as the Accounting and Management Systems Section supervisor for the Local Government Services Bureau in December. The bureau has promoted Darla Erickson, (406) 841-2909, from an accounting systems officer to the section supervisor. We feel Darla is an excellent choice for the supervisor position. She brings many years of local government accounting experience to her new job, including several years working under Norm's supervision in the section's Glendive office.

While we here at the bureau certainly feel the loss of Norm's considerable local government knowledge, we still retain a great staff. Kim Smith, (406) 841-2905, and Tom Hayes, (406) 841-2906, audit quality control reviewers in the Helena office, both CPAs, have a combined 43 years of experience working with local governments and possess a thorough understanding of Montana local government auditing, accounting and legal compliance issues.

We also have immense confidence in our newer accounting systems officers. Although they are not seasoned veterans in the local government arena, they bring many talents to the Bureau and are dedicated to excellent customer service.

Accounting systems officers include:

Billings — Linda Willett, (406) 245-2747

Glendive — Rachelle Fenger, (406) 365-6582

Kalispell — Magda Nelson, (406) 257-5245

Helena — Open (accepting applications)

Call on them as the need arises. They are eager to help and will serve you well.

Timely processing requires correct address

If you've sent any MACo-related workers' compensation or property and liability information to our mailing address at P.O. Box 7059, Helena, MT 59604, thanks for helping out our staff by following proper procedure.

Any other MACo-related mail, including items bound for the Health Care Trust, should be sent to our physical address at 2715 Skyway Dr., Helena, MT 59602. HCT enrollment information, however, should be sent to P.O. Box 6668, Helena, MT 59604.

If you have any questions about where your MACo mail should be sent, please call us at (406) 444-4360 so we can ensure you're using the appropriate address.

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County News

Supervisors, not doctors, best guide for recovering employees

By Frank Pennachio, Injury Management Partners, for Workers' Compensation Educational Conference

Who is the most important person to an employee when they are injured on the job? Is it the doctor who provides the medical treatment? Or is it the human resources director who explains the benefits and handles the paperwork? Could it be the president of the company? Might it be the insurance company's claims adjuster?

Multiple studies suggest the front-line supervisor matters most. Employees list "response of the supervisor" as a major factor in their decisions to return to work.

In "It Pays to Be Nice: Employer-Worker Relationships and the Management of Back Pain Claims," an article in the *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine*, Richard Butler, Ph.D., William Johnson, Ph.D. and Pierre Cote, D.C., Ph.D., conclude that workers' satisfaction with their employers' behavior has a much larger impact on employment stability than does their satisfaction with health-care providers. The implications of these findings are significant.

Optimizing the response and performance of the front-line supervisor is critical to improving outcomes after an employee injury. Yet, most supervisors have not been trained in how to communicate with injured employees and aid them in obtaining the care and support they need.

Supervisors are usually overwhelmed with a vast array of duties and responsibilities, especially in a downsized world. Adding the management of injured employees to their already demanding jobs is often met with resistance. "That's the job of the human resources department," is a common response.

In addition, supervisors often feel that they are not capable or have the skills to intervene with an employee's disability. They may not be aware or understand that it is not disability management skills, but their people management skills that drive improvements. The injured employee wants his supervisor, his perceived boss, to listen, be responsive, show concern and empathy, validate the pain, and demonstrate respect and fairness.

Studies from the *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation* suggest a leadership style more people-oriented and focused on human-relation aspects of supervision may be better suited for managing workplace disability. Specialized training designed to improve communication and accommodation efforts seem to be most effective.

Supervisors trained to properly answer and communicate with employees about their work-related health and safety were responsible for a 47-percent drop in new disability claims and an 18-percent decline in active lost-time claims, according to Liberty Mutual Insurance's Research Institute for Safety. According to William Shaw, lead investigative researcher, past and current studies make a strong case for investment in supervisor training.

The first step for management is to recognize and raise awareness among supervisors of the critical role they play. Supervisors need to know they are best suited to take on certain responsibilities and no one else in the system can have a more positive and effective impact — not even the doctor.

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High price at pumps leave counties struggling for financial stability

This spring's spike in gas prices is wreaking havoc on many county budgets at a time when revenues continue to shrink as a result of the housing and foreclosure crisis and investment earnings, according to NACo.

The Associated Press, citing AAA figures, reports gas prices are at a national average of \$3.61 a gallon, well above the year-ago average of \$3.04 a gallon. Diesel prices are at a national average of \$4.24 a gallon, up from \$2.88 per gallon in 2007.

The record high gas prices are affecting both rural and urban counties. Some counties are reportedly hundreds of thousands of dollars over budget this fiscal year and are seeking ways to lessen the impact of fuel costs.

"The sudden spike in gas prices is causing great concern for the nation's counties," said NACo Executive Director Larry E. Naake. "Counties are in the early stages of a serious financial crisis as a direct result of the mortgage and foreclosure crisis and are getting hit again with record high gas prices."

In Oakland County, Mich., the sheriff's department is considering switching patrol cars from eight-cylinder vehicles to six-cylinder vehicles to reduce fuel consumption. In Smith County, Texas, fuel costs are up 184 percent in five years and the county is facing a half-million shortfall in its fuel budget this year. Lee County, Fla., says it may have to cut programs to offset higher fuel costs. Pasco County, Fla., says it may end the practice of county workers driving county vehicles home after work hours. Belmont County, Ohio, is considering purchasing its own gas tanks to avoid the federal gas tax.

Counties have been wrestling with budget shortfalls across the county in recent weeks. A NACo snapshot released March 24 found reasons for the budget gaps cited by the local county officials include significant declines in property tax revenues, declines in sales tax revenues and rising gas prices. As a result, many of these counties are considering cuts in services to the public, hiring and salary freezes, budget expenditure reductions including layoffs, and raising taxes and fees.

Counties urged to drive \$marter

The nation's counties are being asked by NACo to help their residents and employees drive smarter as part of the Alliance to Save Energy's Drive \$marter Challenge.

The Challenge is a fuel-efficiency campaign launched May 20 by The Wal-Mart Foundation, NACo and 16 additional diverse public- and private-sector partners to help U.S. consumers lower their gasoline costs. The campaign offers effective money- and gas-saving tips and extensive additional resources aimed at keeping more money in drivers' pockets and reducing costly trips to the pump.

NACo is challenging its members to see which county in each of three population size categories can get the highest percentage of residents to take the Drive \$marter Challenge. Auto Zone will be giving each of the three winning counties 1,000 bottles of Fuel Additive/Cleaner – products applied to the fuel system to help vehicles be more fuel-efficient.

"NACo is excited about helping counties educate their residents on fuel-saving tips and encouraging their participation," said NACo President Eric Coleman, commissioner, Oakland County, Mich. "From July through November, we will see which of the nation's 3,066 counties can most effectively spread the Drive \$marter message and get the most residents and employees to access www.drivesmarterchallenge.org and learn how they can save money by being more fuel efficient."

The campaign website also features links to extensive resources ranging from where to find the cheapest local gas to information on public transportation, biking, car sharing, and carpooling.

"The Alliance to Save Energy commends our 17 campaign partners for joining us in helping American families cut their vehicle fuel costs," said Alliance President Kateri Callahan. "On a broader scale, our campaign will enhance U.S. energy security by reducing our dependence on imported oil, and it will improve the global environment by reducing CO2 emissions."

For more information about the NACo's role in the Drive \$marter Challenge, contact Kelly Zonderwyk at (202) 942-4224 or www.greencounties.org/competitions.



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Despite missing section, presidential veto, Farm Bill becomes law

By Erik Johnston and Marilina Sanz, NACo associate legislative directors

Late last month, President Bush vetoed the 2008 Farm Bill as expected. The House voted to override the veto by a vote of 316 to 108, only to discover, due to an error by the enrolling clerk's office, the bill sent to the president was missing the trade title.

As a result, House leadership chose a second vote on passage of the Farm Bill conference report. The House voted May 22 306-110 to approve the same bill approved the week before. The Senate voted to override the president's veto the same day by a vote of 82-13. Therefore, 14 of the 15 farm bill titles are now the law of the land and the U.S. Department of Agriculture is turning its attention to implementation of the massive bill. The Senate will take up the complete conference report after the Memorial Day recess to ensure inclusion of the trade title, with a presidential veto and congressional override to follow.

NACo, while disappointed in a missed opportunity to robustly fund the Rural Development title, nonetheless sent a letter to Congress in support of final passage.

NACo Executive Director Larry Naake said the bill is imperfect, but represents a careful balance of policy priorities. "It provides a desperately needed boost to nutrition programs, encourages environmentally friendly conservation programs, provides added support to young farmers and supports the development of agriculturally based renewable energy, which will help to reduce our

dependence on foreign oil," he said.

The nutrition title was one of the biggest winners, with \$10.36 billion in new funding over 10 years. The Food Stamp program, which will now be called the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), had numerous benefit improvements. Some of these include raising and indexing the minimum standard deduction, increasing the minimum benefit and indexing asset limits.

Other nutrition title changes address the needs of food banks and greater access to fresh fruits and vegetables for senior citizens and school children. The legislation includes \$50 million for the current fiscal year to address shortages at food pantries and increases overall funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) by \$1.26 billion over 10 years.

The bill expands fresh fruits and vegetables for schools by \$1 billion over 10 years, which would serve an estimated 3 million children. Also, the bill provides an extra \$50 million over 10 years to expand the senior farmers' market nutrition program; it also would allow senior citizens to use Electronic Benefit Cards at these markets.

The conference report misses an opportunity to robustly fund the Rural Development title, but still authorizes many programs critical to rural counties and provides

Please see "White House..." on next page

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NACo News



Ballots mailed for NACo conference elections

Credentials and voting information for NACo's 2008 election — to take place at the 2008 Annual Conference — were mailed May 7 to the chief elected official of each NACo county.

To vote, a county must have paid its 2008 dues and have at least one paid registration to the conference. The 2008 credentials procedures have been changed, and each member county must return a form, signed by the chief elected official, to vote. In addition to being mailed, the credentials form is also available in the Members Only Section of the NACo Web site.

The deadline to return the form is Friday, June 27.

The credentials form attests to a county's eligibility to vote. The form contains information on the number of votes a county is eligible to cast, as well as the identity of the delegate authorized to cast the county's vote.

This year's election at the confer-

ence will be held on Tuesday, July 15, at 10 a.m. Counties will vote on resolutions that set NACo legislative and association policy for the coming year. Delegates also will elect NACo officers for the coming year. The position of second vice president is usually the one position contested.

The number of votes a county is determined by the amount of dues it pays. Dues are based on population. NACo's bylaws allot one vote per \$500 in dues.

Counties with dues of \$400 to \$499 receive one vote. Counties with dues of \$500 to \$999 receive two votes. Counties with dues of \$1000 to \$1,499 receive three votes, and so on. The maximum number of votes a county can receive is 111.

For more information, contact Emily Landsman, NACo membership coordinator, at elandsman@naco.org or (202) 942-4242.

Online registration open for NACo conference

Attendees of NACo's 2008 Annual Conference & Exposition, to be held July 11-15 in Jackson County (Kansas City), Missouri, can register online and receive a \$25 discount on registration fees.

The registration fee includes entry to all workshops, symposia, and mobile workshops, as well as general sessions. The deadline to register online is July 3.

To register, visit https://www.exposoftevents.com/secure/shows/naco_an08/public/RegFull.asp.

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White House veto isn't enough to stop Farm Bill passage

Continued from page 8

\$150 million in mandatory funding. NACo and its partners in the Campaign for a Renewed Rural Development led the effort to call on conferees to restore mandatory funding for rural development, reduced to zero during conference negotiations.

Mandatory funding is especially important for rural development programs because authorized programs are competing for an increasingly limited amount of discretionary dollars.

The bulk of the mandatory funding

will go toward the \$2-billion backlog in pending water and wastewater loan/grant applications from rural communities. The bill provides \$120 million in mandatory funding for these applications. It also reauthorizes water, waste disposal and wastewater facility grants at \$30 million a year through 2012.

A new Rural Microenterprise Assistance Initiative with \$15 million in mandatory funding was created. The initiative will provide low- and moderate-income individuals small loans.

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Around Our Counties

Personnel

LINCOLN COUNTY approved an environmental officer position in April. Funded by grants, the position is required as part of an environmental assessment to be conducted in conjunction the renovation of a former mill site.

POWELL COUNTY's former deputy treasurer, charged with felony theft embezzlement of more than a \$250,000, was sentenced to 25 years in state prison (10 years suspended). The woman also will be required to pay \$266,629.33 in restitution.

ROOSEVELT COUNTY Sheriff Freedom Crawford completed participation in and was elected president of the 94th session of the National Sheriffs' Institute (NSI) held in Colorado in April. NSI is the only national executive development program for sheriffs.

BEAVERHEAD COUNTY commissioners chose in May the county's new attorney: Jed Fitch. A former Custer County deputy attorney, Fitch replaces Marv McCann, who retired. Fitch, an Idaho native, is a University of Missouri law school graduate.

Zoning

FLATHEAD COUNTY commissioners denied in late April the North Shore Ranch subdivision in a 2-1 vote. The 286-lot, 364-acre subdivision east of Somers was denied in part because a utility hold flood easements on the property that protect it from legal action should the level of Flathead Lake ever be raised.

LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY commissioners in May approved a year-long extension of the county's interim zoning regulations. The board based its decision partly on the eight-fold increase of nitrate levels found in Helena Valley wells. In related news, the county in late April settled a lawsuit that stemmed from the first passage of interim zoning regulations. A district judge said officials violated public participation laws before the interim rules were approved.

FERGUS COUNTY commissioners last month approved the Whispering Ridge Subdivision north of Lewistown. Final approval rests with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), which must research a variety of water-related issues before the

project proceeds.

GALLATIN COUNTY commissioners adopted in May interim zoning on gravel pits. The decision was made the same day as two county residents filed suit against a pair of gravel pit operators and DEQ in light of another court ruling ordering DEQ to issue permits to the operators.

Law Enforcement

ROSEBUD COUNTY Sheriff's Office, along with the Colstrip Police Department and the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, will share \$17,500 in state grant funds to help them pay overtime while officers enforce underage drinking laws. The funds are being provided by the Board of Crime Control.

BIG HORN COUNTY has a new undersheriff: Rondell Davis. A graduate of both East Carolina University and North Carolina University, Davis spent 10 years in U.S. Air Force law enforcement. He served in South Korea, the United Arab Emirates, and Iraq. Davis was sworn in last month.

CARBON COUNTY Sheriff John Croft and Reserve Officer Ralph Dawson at-

tended a two-day equine cruelty investigation course. The Montana Animal Care Association's course featured a scoring system, widely used by law enforcement and criminal courts, that helps officers assess a horse's condition.

Miscellany

CASCADE COUNTY's new \$6.4-million shop complex will be mostly powered with electricity from a wind turbine erected on the site in May. The \$190,000 generator is the first government-owned turbine in the county and will meet 85 percent of the 40,000-square-foot shop's electrical needs.

RAVALLI COUNTY commissioners in late April agreed to allow their road department to take 1,000 cubic yards of rock from the Lost Horse Quarry for a bridge project. County residents were opposed based on truck traffic, safety, and recreation concerns.

ANACONDA-DEER LODGE COUNTY received funding in May to open a park and trailhead in Opportunity. A \$100,000 grant, part of the Milltown Dam settlement, is being shared with Missoula.

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Announcements & Reminders

Mark Your Calendars

June

- 5-6 Legislative Finance Committee*
- 11 Children, Families, Health & Human Services Interim Committee*
- 12-13 Education & Local Gov't. Interim Committee*
- 17-19 MT Assoc. of Clerks of Dist. Court Convention, Big Timber
- 19 Fire Suppression Interim Committee, Seeley Lake and Thompson Falls
- 20 Fire Suppression Interim Committee, Libby
- 21 Revenue & Transportation Interim Committee*
- 23-24 State-Tribal Relations Interim Committee, Pablo
- 25 MACo HCT Budget Meeting*
- 26 MACo Board & JPIA/JPA/HCT Budget Meeting*
- 26-27 Law & Justice Interim Committee*
- 30 State Admin. & Veterans' Affair Int. Committee*

July

- 1 State Admin. & Veterans' Affair Int. Committee*
- 4 Independence Day (state holiday)
- 10-11 Revenue & Transportation Interim Committee*
- 11-15 NACo Annual Conference, Jackson Co., Missouri
- 14-15 Environmental Quality Council*
- 17 Energy & Telecom Interim Committee*
- 17-18 Economic Affairs Committee, Bozeman

Upcoming Events

- Sept. 21-25 MACo Annual Conference, Hamilton
- Nov. 18-20 MACo Joint Ins. Pools Trustees Retreat (location TBA)

*All meetings are held in Helena unless noted.

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