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Murphy resigns from Park County board

By Mike Harbour, MACo Communications Officer

While Park County Commissioner Dick Murphy won't reveal his reason for leaving office, he readily admits he'll miss the people he served.

"There were things that I loved to work on," said Murphy, who resigned in late April. "I loved going to communities and trying to help them out as much as I could. When I went into office, I promised that I'd make these monthly visits to the four outlying communities, which had never been done before, and I stuck to that all the way through. There was really some good relations made there."

Murphy, who recently turned 58, left just a few months before the end of his first term, which is up for election in November. Commissioners Larry Lahren and Jim Durgan will appoint a replacement for remainder of the term.

The Park County native said he truly enjoyed working with constituents.

"There are some real needs out there that need to be addressed, and helping those people was one of the most satisfying things that I did," Murphy said. "(I'll most miss) the good relationships with the great people that I met throughout the county. I'll miss those people."

Murphy, who is considering returning to the private sector, also said he was proud of his work on mental health issues, especially getting critical incident training for the county's law enforcement officers.

The former woodshop manager also isn't shy about singling out one of his biggest frustrations: apathy.

"When I went in, I won by a landslide, and one of the things was that constituents who helped me get into office weren't necessarily there when I wanted them to be there," he said. "I thought there'd be more well-rounded participation in big meetings that have a lot of importance, but a lot of times, there wasn't."

As for advice, Murphy offered some for departing commissioners.

"When I came in, I was caught flat-footed. There wasn't anything offered to me as far as what other commissioners were working on and in what stage of the process it was in," Murphy said, noting he detailed his works-in-progress in a report for his replacement. "Commissioners should pass those things on."

He also said more commissioners should participate in interim committees and work with state legislators.

MACo spring district meetings set to start first week of May

Like flowers and snow, spring in Montana also means it's time for MACo's district meetings. This year's schedule is:

- May 6: Districts 4 & 5, Stage Stop Inn, 1005 N. Main, Choteau (Arnie Gettel, 466-2151)
- May 7: Districts 1, 2, & 3, Tin Cup, 1652 U.S. Hwy. 191 South, Malta (Richard Dunbar, 654-2429)
- May 8: Districts 6 & 7, Rural Fire Hall, 944 E. Pike, Columbus (Maureen Davey, 322-8010)
- May 14: Districts 10 & 11, Public Health Conf. Room, 802 Main, Polson (Paddy Trusler, 833-7204)

- May 15: Districts 8,9, & 12, Town Hall, 2 N. Whitehall, Whitehall (Tom Lythgoe, 225-4025)

District chairs are responsible for agenda setting and distribution to the district membership. Additionally, the district chair is responsible for the minutes and for lunch arrangements. If the lunch is no-host, please let the members know the cost so they can plan accordingly.

If any agencies, organizations, or individuals would like to make a presentation at any or all of the district meetings, please contact the district chairs noted above to make your request.



MACo News

Knowledge should take the fear from renewal season

By Owen Voigt, MACo Health Care Trust Administrator

As a kid growing up on a ranch in North Dakota, one of my jobs was to feed our pigs. Dad would buy these feeder pigs, which I would feed to butcher size. I have made a point in life to get along with pretty much everything and everyone, but I do not like pigs, nor did I like the season of killing, butchering, and just dealing with the pigs.

Last week, while traveling around the state meeting with counties and special districts about MACo's Health Care Trust, I could see in the eyes some of those folks looking at me the same look I gave those pigs during the harvest season.

One thing I learned, though, is we really are trained during our childhood to prepare us for being adults and dealing with adult situations. It's like health insurance and pigs. Who would have thought the two were so much alike? I recall going to feed pigs with the same loathing that clerk and recorders, HR staff, and commissioners deal with renewal rates, plan changes and loss ratios.

I recall one specific instance when I was going to feed the pigs in the dark. The corncrib I used was down a small hill and through a bunch of trees. It had just snowed about six inches and I was walking along knocking the snow off the tops of posts. When I hit the snow on top of one post, it was not snow, but an owl! I brushed him off the post; he fell, began flying and brushed against me with his wings. I was either nine or 10 at the time. You cannot scare a kid my age more than I was at that moment; it must've been the first time on record anyone had ever been able to run so fast! The wind behind me created snowdrifts several feet deep. My fear of the unknown

and need to get away was much like I see in the eyes of county folks at this time of the year.

Spring is the time of renewals, new rates, new benefits, and new group opportunities; just like the season of feeding and butchering pigs. While I learned the need to participate and contribute to the family through my chores, county staff and all plan members need to take the time to understand their rate changes, plan benefits and what goes into the rates. Health benefits are a significant part of a county or special district budget. They are also a significant part of why people work. Knowing what you have for benefits and understanding the costs associated with those benefits is very important.

As Pam Walling, our new marketing/member services rep, and I travel the state meeting with groups and working with you on your benefit packages, please take the time to learn the basics of the plans and what all is in your rates. Whether you receive a rate increase or not, there is a reason for it, and our goal is to make sure you understand why.

When you sign that renewal, it is somewhat akin to the end of the pig-feeding season. My dad was an understanding man and knew how much I disliked those pigs. Every year when we butchered, it signaled the end of the feeding season and someone had to pull the trigger. I can handle a .22-caliber rifle pretty well from the practice I got on those pigs. Whether you sign your renewal, accept a new bid from a health benefits plan, or simply attend a benefit meeting with one of us, you should better understand what it is you are doing, and, better yet, are good to go for another year.

Health Care Trust Calendar of Events

May 1-June 15	July open enrollment period
May 13	July renewal rates deadline
Oct. 10	January renewal rates mailed
Nov. 1-Dec. 15	January open enrollment period
Nov. 10	Annual MDCR Part D notice mailed to members
Nov. 14	January renewal rates deadline
Dec. 21-27	2009 Rx formulary mailed to members



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MACo/County News

Richland County conference brings people, efforts together

By Stacey Schmitt, AmericCorps*VISTA, Richland Co. Planner Office

Collaboration and cooperation were the key ideas behind Richland County's first-ever State of the Community County-Wide Conference held in Sidney last month.

A joint effort between the county's planner office, city/county planning board, and the county health department, the conference was created to help the county meet state requirements for its growth policy and community strategic plan. More than 100 people attended.

A board ethics and enhancement workshop, held the first day of the event, offered information on Montana legal requirements for boards, and practical lessons for effective board communications. The workshop was led by Jep Enck, a professional trainer from Colorado. Attendance far exceeded expectations, so similar training sessions may be offered in the future. By having a trainer come to Sidney, attendee costs were greatly reduced compared to sending individuals to training out of town.

Participants included representatives from the local departments and agencies, non-profit organizations, and businesses, as well as state dignitaries and community members.

There were 13 sessions offered, including a large group session held at lunch. Each session topic came from the goals and objectives identified in the growth policy and the strategic plan. Three sessions were offered at a time to allow participants to choose and attend the sessions they wanted to participate in. Most of the main session topics were offered at least twice throughout the day.

The large group discussion session focused on housing issues and needs for the county. The table groups were asked to brainstorm projects aimed at addressing the housing shortage and add ideas for future needs, then share their comments and ideas with the group.

A trained facilitator led all sessions, allowing participants a chance to discuss their projects, and brainstorm on any future needs or projects.

The conference's goal was to determine what areas in the growth policy could be updated and identify what goals and objectives are being implemented. This aided the planner office in meeting state statutes for an updated policy. The health department reached its goal by gathering contact information for those responsible in helping put the strategic plan into action. Both departments plan to release a final conference report in June; it will be available for viewing on the Richland County Web site at www.richland.org/planning.

For more information about the conference, contact the Richland County Planner Office at (406) 433-6886, mhamburg@richland.org, or visit the Planner Office site at www.richland.org/planning.

MACo hosts jail inspector training

By Fred Hansen, MACo Loss Control Specialist

The first-ever jail inspector training, sponsored by Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association and MACo, was held at MACo in mid-April. The National Institute of Corrections provided a grant and sent two instructors to train our jail peer review team.

It was an intense, two-day training and had great results. Our team now has defensible and creditable tools to conduct the jail peer review audits in an efficient and effective way.

The work product is being compiled with a cover letter to explain the process and a self-assessment list for each of our test counties. The consistency of this process will be the base for future jail peer reviews and is a major step toward a statewide jail standard for all county jails. This will greatly help reduce our exposure in this vital area.

For more information, contact MACo's Fred Hansen at (406) 444-4360 or fhansen@maco.cog.mt.us. Watch MACo News for future updates.



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Cybersecurity: An Overview of Key Issues

Second in a series

Network Infrastructure

Securing the systems and equipment that support your network is the most visible and, possibly, the most costly aspect of your security efforts. Network engineers and software vendors are continuously scrambling to stay ahead of the culprits.

Hackers and Malicious programmers have one or more common goals: exploit server or network vulnerabilities; get access to data; and cause hardware and software damage. The lightweights get a kick out of simply accessing something they shouldn't. The bad boys want to take you out - your server is toast and, if possible, your network, too. Understanding their toolset is crucial. You need to know as much about it as they do.

Viruses are particularly insidious because they are easy to produce, hard to trace, and can cause a lot of damage. The e-mail traffic generated from a single worm virus can bring a large network to its knees.

It seems like such a simple rule: if you don't know who the e-mail came from, or aren't sure of the nature of the attachment, delete it. But who can resist an e-mail message that begins with "Hey, check this out..." addressed from someone you know?

Operating System vulnerabilities are the back doors into your network that many hackers are looking for. Vulnerabilities are often exploited to create back doors that can be used later.

Microsoft seems to be a prime target of criticism in this area for the endless stream of patches and service packs needed to keep up with discovered weaknesses in the Windows operating systems. The truth is, every operating system has its soft underbelly.

Web servers are favorite targets for denial of service attacks. In a denial of service attack, a flood of invalid requests is directed at a web server, usually in the form of a URL. As the web server tries to respond to the enormous volume of invalid requests, it grinds to a halt. Do this enough times and you essentially take your victim off-line.

Network devices, routers, modems, Ethernet switches, network hubs, and wireless data transfer equipment often have built-in software and operating systems of their own. The list of exploitable weaknesses is growing daily in this area, too.

It is not uncommon for a large organization to have several IT employees dedicated entirely to tracking viruses and patching software.

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

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County News

County Gov't. Week a hit in Gallatin

By Mike Harbour, MACo Communications Officer

One Montana county celebrated NACo's National County Government Week (NCGW), held April 6-12, with style. From displays that explained departmental functions and contests to courthouse tours and media coverage, officials and staff in Gallatin County showcased how local government operates while providing events that featured NCGW's Protecting Our Children theme.

In Gallatin County, commissioners went back to school, holding six public meetings throughout the county last month so students would have a chance to see government in action. Department employees also created display boards showing their respective department functions; the displays were set up in schools during the six public meetings, and in the courthouse during NCGW.

The county also maintained an "open house" atmosphere during the week, and provided treats and a brochure filled with county information for visitors. In addition, an elected official speaker list was created so teachers could obtain willing orators on local government matters. A subcommittee of the county's NCGW planning committee also created an election trunk, which includes all items needed for classes to hold an "election," including voter registration cards, ballots, tally sheets, "I Voted!" stickers, a voting booth, and curriculum guide.

The committee also arranged to contribute articles, games and puzzles, and pictures about county government to a locally published children's newspaper called *Kidsville*, which is distributed to Gallatin elementary students, grocery stores, and other locations. *Kidsville's* April 1 issue devoted four pages to NCGW.

The committee 11 members also created an Internet scavenger hunt that was published in *Kidsville* as well as sent to all schools. Boxes were placed on each campus so each student who turned in a completed form would receive a Gallatin County hyper-color pencil. The county also conducted a random drawing among the submissions for county fair and carnival passes. Members developed a pair of coloring contests, too.

The culmination of Gallatin's efforts was the Art Show/Safety Day in late April at its Law and Justice Center. Coloring contest entries were displayed inside, while outside, the public could examine the county's fire trucks, watch K-9 demonstrations, and visit Scotty the Smoke Trailer, a portable "house" where kids are able to experience a house on fire and learn the proper way to keep safe and exit. The county also provided car seat and bike safety checks, and offered search and rescue equipment displays and demonstrations, as well as tours of our detention center.

NACo created NCGW in 1991, to raise public awareness and understanding about the roles and responsibilities of the nation's counties. To learn more, or to see what other counties did, visit www.naco.org.

County attorney, civil counsel quit

Marv McCann, Beaverhead county attorney, and Tara DePuy, Park County's civil attorney, turned in their resignations last month. DePuy served Park County for three years as its civil counsel, while McCann had been in the Beaverhead County position since 2003.

DePuy didn't reveal her plans in an interview with the *Livingston Enterprise*, saying only she planned to pursue other legal endeavors. DePuy was county attorney over both civil and criminal matters for 17 years until 2005, when she began handling only civil issues.

McCann was more forthcoming with the *Dillon Tribune*; he and wife Kary are returning to Billings, where the couple's families reside.

DePuy's last day was April 25, while McCann resignation is to be May 4. Commissioners in both counties planned to look for replacements immediately.

MACo Telephone Numbers

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County News

County site saves residents time, money

By Anthony Quirini, *Ravalli Republic*

To find out what's going on in the commissioners office, check out the correspondence files, the public documents and comments submitted to county commissioners. All residents need do is click a button to access the files at <http://ravallicounty.mt.gov/commissioners/Correspondence.cfm>.

Before the files were posted online, a trip to the county's administrative office was necessary to peruse the correspondence.

"It makes it a lot easier for us and for the people so they don't have to come down here. They can do it right from their home," said Glenda Wiles, the commissioners' assistant. "Our office handles a lot of paper work because we deal with every aspect of county government and space is a valuable resource, as is labor."

Instead of keeping an inventory of old files and paper work, all of it is scanned and saved electronically. Not only does the system alleviate piles of paperwork, but it also makes it easier for staffers or the public to find what they are looking for.

The county started scanning the documents in 2007. Before that, citizens or staff had to wade through a folder of paper documents.

To access the files, simply click on the link, choose the year and month you want, then look through the entries. Each correspondence has a brief description detailing what it's about; new files are added routinely.

Additionally, on the commissioners' Web page (<http://ravallicounty.mt.gov/commissioners/default.htm>), a host of other information is available, such as the county's budget, citizen board openings, and individual commissioner's e-mail addresses.

If you don't have access to a computer and want to read the correspondence, it is still available with a request at the Ravalli County Administrative Office, 215 S. Fourth St., in Hamilton.

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Siebel presents Montana Meth Projects results to national audience at NACo conference

By Elizabeth Perry, NACo staff writer

Tom Siebel, founder of the Montana Meth Project, updated NACo members at its 2008 Legislative Conference in March on the results of the 2007 National Meth Use and Attitudes Survey and gave suggestions on what counties can do to combat meth use in their communities.

Montana Meth began as a pilot for other state programs in 2005, at a time when Siebel said methamphetamine use was not thought of as a problem on the national level. The project's goal was to prevent non-users in the state from trying the drug and to reduce demand for it.

At the time, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ranked Montana fifth in the nation for meth abuse, and 67 percent of teens in the state said it was easy to get. Some 44 percent saw a significant benefit in using meth, 33 percent had been offered it and 25 percent tried it.

The project saturated media outlets throughout the state, with graphic, edgy television, radio, print and billboard advertising aimed at teens, ages 12–17. All 56 counties in the state held "Paint the State" art contests as part of the campaign, in which families and community groups painted walls, barns, business windows, schools and other outdoor surfaces with messages about the dangers of meth use.

Siebel said the campaign reached 90 percent of its target audience, changing attitudes and reducing the numbers of people who tried meth. As of September 2007, Montana was ranked 39th in the nation for meth abuse. Teen use declined by 45 percent, and adult use declined by 70 percent.

The program quickly spread to other states, becoming "franchised," as Siebel said Illinois, Idaho and Arizona signed onto the now-named National Meth Project.

Arizona began its campaign in April 2007 following the release of state survey showing more than 4 percent of youths had tried meth at least once, a figure that was

twice the national average. The program was funded with the help of \$5.3 million in contributions from 10 counties, the attorney general's office and private donations. New ads are scheduled to run this spring.

"With these types of numbers, it is no surprise that in Arizona 65 percent of child-abuse cases and 75 percent of property and violent crime cases are linked to meth," according to an op-ed by Arizona Meth Project co-chairs published in the Arizona Republic.

The nonprofit Illinois Sheriff's Association received a \$177,000 one-time grant to fund its Illinois Meth Project in 2006. A new campaign was launched Feb. 11 to target youth in the cities of Springfield, Decatur and Champaign, with ads running 3–5 times a week.

Illinois ranks fourth in the country for meth arrests; meth abuse costs the state some \$2 billion a year, and rural rehab admissions for meth addiction are more than five times the state average.

Idaho Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter announced the start of the state's meth prevention campaign in January during his State of the State address. In a study released the same month, 45 percent of youth said the drug is readily available and 30 percent were offered it. Some 20 percent of teens said there is no risk involved in taking meth, and 22 percent said their friends would not dissuade them from taking it.

"Our youth are at grave risk," said Brent Reinke, director, Idaho Department of Corrections and chairman, Idaho Criminal Justice Commission. "This survey, for the first time, proves what many of us in the criminal justice community have long known — many Idaho teens do not understand the dangers of meth and see great benefits in doing this dangerous drug."

To learn more, contact the Meth Project Foundation at P.O. Box 240, Palo Alto, CA 94302, 877/386-0386 or www.methproject.org.




The Voice of America's Counties

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.

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Congress ponders mortgage reform

By Cassandra Duhaney, NACo associate legislative director

In early April, U.S. Senate Democratic and Republican leaders reached an agreement on a legislative package aimed at addressing concerns from the slumping housing industry. The substitute bill negotiated in place of S. 2636 will mainly benefit the homebuilding industry by providing \$6 billion in tax rebates for developers.

The bill reportedly also includes \$4 billion to the Community Development Block Grant Program to assist communities in buying foreclosed properties and \$10 billion in new authority under the federal Mortgage Revenue Bond program to assist local housing authorities in refinancing mortgages for qualified homebuyers.

The legislation also includes some language to revamp the Federal Housing Administration, the federal agency that insures mortgages for qualified homeowners. Further, the bill includes an additional \$100 million for housing counseling.

The bill falls short of providing a legislative vehicle to provide relief to families who are no longer able to pay mortgages that will reset into higher payments, disappointing housing advocates. U.S. Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.) and U.S. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) continue work on a legislative proposal that will more broadly address issues arising out of the nation's troubled mortgage finance system.

For more information, visit www.naco.org.

NACo seeks county childhood obesity info

Does your county have a policy, program or initiative that aims to prevent childhood obesity and promote healthy living? NACo is collecting best practices for its upcoming Healthy Counties Database and wants to highlight the good work your county is doing.

The database will be searchable on NACo's Web site this summer and is intended to serve as a resource for county leaders interested in taking steps to help children and families live healthy lifestyles.

Please send any relevant information via e-mail to Casey Dillon, NACo's Community Services program assistant, at cdillon@naco.org or call her at (202) 942-4243.

WIR 2008 conference registration open

County officials wishing to attend NACo's Western Interstate Region (WIR) 2008 Conference may now register for the May 21-23 event to be held at Washington County (St. George), Utah.

The annual conference focuses on public lands and other issues critical to counties in the western region of the U.S. It provides county officials with the opportunity to hear speakers, discuss legislation, and network with other officials to exchange information on those issues.

To register or learn more about the conference, visit www.naco.org, then select "WIR" under the "Conferences & Events" tab at the top of the home page.

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Revised Clean Water Act may hurt counties

Stressing that the nation's counties fully support the Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1972, NACo told the U.S. House Transportation Committee in mid-April proposed legislation to "restore" the CWA to its "original intent" would in fact result in significant unintended consequences for communities, increased costs, and would do little to improve the protection the country's precious water resources.

Lemhi County, Idaho, Commissioner Robert Cope testified on behalf of NACo against The Clean Water Restoration Act (CWRA). The bill, H.R. 2421, would expand the reach of the CWA by removing the word "navigable" from the definition of U.S. waters under the law's jurisdiction. It is sponsored by the committee's chairman, Rep. James Oberstar (D-Minn.).

"Let me stress our nation's counties believe in the Clean Water Act and its accomplishments," Cope said in his testimony. "The CWA was instrumental in cleaning our waterways. State and local governments play an important role in implementing the CWA and we do our part proudly. Unfortunately, as written, NACo cannot support the bill. Removing the word 'navigable' from the definition of the CWA act will have expensive, far-reaching and unintended consequences for local as well as state governments."

Cope, who chairs NACo's Energy and Environment Steering Committee, emphasized that counties are not opposed to the CWA.

"We support (the CWA)," he said.

"However, we are opposed to what we see as an alarming expansion of the federal reach of the Act under the proposed bill. Any reasonable person would understand that, from a definitional standpoint, there is a difference between 'waters of the U.S.' and 'navigable waters of the U.S.'"

Since 1972, Cope said, "navigable" has had meaning and has been fought over and clarified through the courts.

"The word 'navigable' sets boundaries between federal and state waters, it states where federal waters end and state waters begin," Cope said. "Taking out the word 'navigable' removes those boundaries. Furthermore, the bill makes no attempt to clarify through statute what congressional intent is or is not."

Cope suggested that if the sponsors do not intend to regulate specific activities or wet areas, they need to clearly state that.

"Otherwise, this bill could and probably will be interpreted very broadly, going far beyond where the current Act goes," he said. "This will lead to even more confusion and costly lawsuits about what is and is not jurisdictional. That is why we believe that CWRA is an expansion."

Cope said a broad interpretation would affect counties on many different levels, no more so than in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit program. Also, he said the cost associated with getting these permits can be costly, especially for a rural county.

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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Second Chance Act offers funding for county reintegration programs

Legislation aimed at helping ex-offenders successfully reintegrate back into civilian life through community-based programs, and as a result, reduce the staggering number of individuals who cycle in and out of county jails, became law in April, thanks in part to NACo efforts.

President Bush signed the Second Chance Act (H.R. 1593) during a special bill signing ceremony April 9 at the White House. Enactment of the law, also referred to as "re-entry," has been a top priority for NACo for several years. It authorizes \$165 million per year in federal grants to local governments and states to provide ex-offenders with education, job training, substance abuse and after-care treatment, and assist ex-offenders with finding housing and employment upon release from jail and prison. The new law is designed to help reduce recidivism, increase public safety and save local taxpayers money.

NACo was represented at the bill signing ceremony by Multnomah County Commissioner Lisa Naito, who chairs NACo's Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee, and has been a strong advocate for the bill. NACo, in partnership with the National Sheriffs Association, were responsible for the inclusion of language in the bill to include county jails.

"More than nine million people are released from county jails each year," said NACo President Eric Coleman, commissioner, Oakland County, Mich. "If we can direct these individuals to effective programs and services, they would be in a much better position to turn their lives around and dramatically decrease recidivism and enhance public safety."

Naito said that a large percentage of individuals who cycle in and out of county jails are non-violent offenders suffering from mental illness. This is one of the main reasons many local jails are overcrowded and counties are struggling with keeping up with the costs.

"It is not appropriate to punish people for being mentally ill," Naito said. "The societal and dollar cost of jailing the mentally ill is staggering when what is really called for are treatment programs."

NACo praises benefits legislation

NACo last month applauded legislation introduced in the U.S. House which would save counties hundreds of millions of dollars in medical expenses for individuals who immediately lose their federal health insurance benefits while being detained in county jails.

The bill would ensure individuals receiving federal health benefits through Medicaid, Medicare, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) would continue to be eligible for benefits until they are convicted. As a result, this would ensure local governments, mostly counties, would not be required to cover medical expenses of jailed individuals who have not yet been convicted of wrongdoing.

"The Restoring the Partnership for County Health Care Costs Act of 2008" was introduced April 3 by Rep. Alcee L. Hastings (D-Fla.), Rep. Rush D. Holt (D-N.J.) and Rep. Michael C. Burgess (R-Texas). The bipartisan bill would prohibit the federal government from stripping individuals of their Medicare, Medicaid, and SSI benefits prior to actually being convicted.

"We see this legislation as a welcome effort to restore the partnership between the federal government and the nation's counties," said Larry E. Naake, NACo executive director. "This is a costly problem for counties because county governments are responsible for all inmate health care costs. Counties accept that responsibility. But it is unreasonable that federal eligibility should be cut off arbitrarily – even before a person has been tried and convicted or acquitted – shifting all their healthcare costs to local taxpayers. We strongly urge Congress to promptly pass this bill and send it to the president's desk."

This issue has been a legislative priority for NACo for many years. NACo's Large Urban County Caucus (LUCC), representing the interest of 100 of the nation's largest counties, has been soliciting resolutions from counties and state county associations to pass resolutions urging Congress to amend necessary regulation to allow federal financial participation for medical benefits to incarcerated individuals until convicted and sentenced to secure detention. To date, 157 counties and state associations have passed resolutions.



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Around Our Counties

Law Enforcement

GARFIELD COUNTY has a new acting interim sheriff: John O'Connor. A volunteer fireman since he was 18 and Garfield County native, O'Connor stepped into the position in February following the departure of Tracy Awbery.

ANACONDA-DEER LODGE COUNTY commissioners approved in March an agreement with Anaconda school district to hire a school resource officer (SRO). The position, open to county police officers, was dropped three years ago.

CARBON COUNTY received \$10,000 in early April from a local real estate agency to start a K-9 program in the sheriff's department. The funds will cover the cost of the dog, its training, and the handler's training. The dog will be used for search and rescue, as well as drug enforcement missions.

SANDERS COUNTY has a new detention officer. Kelly Whiting, a former Nevada resident, also is training to become a reserve deputy and will graduate from the program in June.

ROSEBUD COUNTY sheriff's deputies will soon have new radar units, thanks to a \$25,000 grant from the Mon-

tana Coal Board. The grant, awarded in March, will allow the sheriff to purchase a dozen units to replace older models. A separate federal grant was awarded to the sheriff for a thermal imager.

MISSOULA COUNTY is being sued by a former sheriff's deputy who was accused, then cleared of two felony sex crimes in 2005. The \$75-million suit claims an outside agency should have conducted the investigation into the ex-deputy's alleged offenses.

MINERAL COUNTY is installing Enhanced 9-1-1; the new system will replace the original 9-1-1 system put into place in 1995. The switch-over is due to take several months.

ROOSEVELT COUNTY residents who want to know more about the sheriff's office and its activities may now visit www.rcso17.org, the sheriff's official Web site. Visitors can view a list of violent and sexual offenders on the site, as well as personnel info and news releases.

Personnel

MISSOULA COUNTY's Chief Administrative Officer Ann Mary Dussault announced in March she'll retire in June. Dussault, a former state legislator, commis-

sioner, and consultant, has spent 30 years in government service. Dale Bickell, former county chief financial officer, will replace her.

GRANITE COUNTY District Court Clerk Beverly Kulaski will retire from her post at the end of the year. Kulaski, who joined the office as a deputy clerk in 1979, was appointed to clerk in 1988. She will be succeeded by Deputy Clerk Carol Borhnsen, who is running unopposed for the position.

Miscellany

BUTTE-SILVER BOW COUNTY has been awarded \$11,239 from the National Emergency Food and Shelter Program to supplement emergency food and shelter assistance. A local board will determine how the money is to be distributed, but food, shelter, and utility assistance are priorities.

CASCADE COUNTY will receive \$5 million from the settlement of a tax dispute between the state and PPL Montana. The county will use the money to fund capital improvements; more than \$700,000 will go to roads, and \$630,000 will be used for public safety purposes.

FLATHEAD COUNTY's planning board in April voted 5-1 to recommend approval

of the North Shore Ranch subdivision. If approved by commissioners, construction of the 286-lot, 364-acre subdivision located on Flathead Lake may begin as early as 2009.

GALLATIN COUNTY will ask its voters to approve more property taxes to fund a bond sale for a new detention center. The August election vote, if successful, will allow the county to immediately begin construction of the \$33-million facility. Voters shot down two previous bond efforts for the center.

LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY commissioners, along with their Helena city counterparts, agreed in April to shut down the Custer Avenue bridge during construction of the new interchange. When work starts on the project, the bridge will be closed for three to five months, but the project itself would be completed in two years instead of three.

RAVALLI COUNTY was awarded in April a \$110,000 grant to assist with its \$800,000 countywide zoning project. The county planning department is reviewing a second draft of zoning regulations developed by a Denver planning and zoning consulting firm; countywide zoning is scheduled to be in effect by November.

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Announcements & Reminders

Mark Your Calendars

May

- 1-2 Energy & Telecommunications Interim Committee*
- 6 Spring Meeting—Districts 4 & 5, Choteau
- 7 Spring Meeting—Districts 1, 2, & 3, Malta
- 8 Spring Meeting—Districts 6 & 7, Columbus
- 7-8 Economic Affairs Interim Committee, Missoula
- 8 District 6 & 7 Spring meeting, Columbus
- 12-13 Environmental Quality Council*
- 14 Spring Meeting—Districts 10 & 11, Polson
- 15 Spring Meeting—Districts 8, 9, & 12, Whitehall
- 16 Fire Suppression Interim Committee, Lewistown
- 12-21 JPIA/JPA Agent 2008-2009 Renewal meetings, various locations
- 26 Memorial Day (state/co. offices and MACo closed)
- 30 Fire Suppression Interim Committee, Miles City

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*
- 25 MACo HCT Budget Meeting*
- 26 MACO Board & JPIA/JPA/HCT Budget Meeting*
- 26-27 Law & Justice Interim Committee*
- 30 State Admin. & Veterans' Affair Interim Committee

*All meetings are held in Helena unless noted.

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- President** Cynthia Johnson, Pondera County
- 1st Vice President** Mike McGinley, Beaverhead County
- 2nd Vice President** Carl Seilstad, Fergus County
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- Urban Representative** Greg Chilcott, Ravalli County
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- Wendy Sesselman, WC Claims Supervisor
- Dennis Jupka, Senior Claims Adjuster
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- Liz Krzan, Asst. Claims Adjuster
- Kerissa Lyman, Claims Assistant

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- Pam Walling, Marketing/Member Services Representative
- Laurie Goltry, Admin./Enrollment Asst.

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1. Richard Dunbar, Phillips County
2. Mark Rehbein, Richland County
3. Donald Reiger, Fallon County
4. Harvey Worrall, Chouteau County
5. Arnold Gettel, Teton County
6. Jerome Kolar, Judith Basin County
7. Maureen Davey, Stillwater County
8. Tom Lythgoe, Jefferson County
9. Bernie Lucas, Meagher County
10. Gary Hall, Flathead County
11. Judy Stang, Mineral County
12. Tom Rice, Beaverhead County

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- Richard Brown, Fergus Co. County Coroner
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