



New member benefit for county employees

NACo has launched a new member benefit – the Government Employee Marketplace. The Web site, available to public employees and retirees, offers various government employee discount programs, and other discounts and limited offers. Employees select the products and services they wish to use, and may also sign-up to be notified about deals on specific products. NACo partners with Govmarket.org to provide this service as a member benefit.

Key features of the program include:

- Free – no cost to join, no membership fee, no activation fee, no access fee
- Significant savings – exclusive volume discounts, collective markdowns and promotions, seasonal sales, free shipping
- Convenience – one online portal, thousands of brand-name merchants, Internet-based and also retail-based
- Simple – user friendly, easy to navigate, search and categorization functionality, minimal registration and login requirements, and
- Local Access – get information on local gas prices, travel search, sitter finder, dining and grocery deals.

The local access feature also allows users to refer local providers and manufacturers to the site for featured discounts they offer locally to government employees or the public at large. To sign up for the program go to www.govmarket.org and follow the instructions to join.

For more information on the Marketplace, contact Nancy Parrish at nparrish@naco.org or 202-661-8824

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Message from the President

by Ruth Anne Tobias, ICA President, DeKalb County Chairman



Happy New Year to all! This is not an easy time to be in local government, and we will need to be alert to every opportunity to save money and manage our budgets, both personal and professional. At the NACo Fall Board of Directors meeting in Sonoma County in early December, many counties reported budget woes. But we talked about the advantages of NACo membership for counties, even in hard times. It seems counterintuitive, but there are tangible benefits to being a member, which will get reported to you each quarter with the new system in place. These reports will detail just how much benefit your county has received (dollars saved) with your participation. Among the benefits included: US Communities cooperative purchasing program for equipment, furniture, and supplies at reduced prices – also open to school districts and non-profits in member counties; financial services center programs in cost recovery and cost containment; and technical assistance and training programs, many as free online webinars which provide useful information at no cost in dollars or travel time.

In addition to savings for your government body, there are savings programs for your employees and citizens if you are a NACo member. About one-third of US counties who are also NACo members are enrolled in the NACo-Caremark Prescription Drug Discount program. These cards are free to your county, except for your efforts in publicizing their availability and getting them out to pharmacies, schools, libraries. They offer your citizens, including county employees if they need it, an average of 23% discount on almost all drugs (including those for pets) and medical supplies, with no sign-up or membership fee. Just show the card. In DeKalb County, our residents have saved more than \$250,000 since 2006. A new dental discount card will be piloted this year, although this will be a little different from the Prescription card. It will require a small annual fee, but hopefully will be very helpful to all our families when it becomes generally available.

Another new discount program for county employees, non-profit employees and other governmental agency employees in NACo member counties is also being piloted with a small number of counties. It will be called the Government Employee Marketplace, and will offer access to thousands of discounts on one Internet site. Look for news about this in future NACo newsletters.

It's not only dollars that NACo members save. NACo is the voice of county government in the US – they give us a seat at the table with Congress, fighting for legislation that helps to remove the burden of unfunded mandates, or working to restore the federal-state-local partnership, or supporting stimulus recovery funding so important to county efforts. As a member of the NACo board of directors, I represent Illinois counties in voting for these priorities. We depend on NACo to make our voices heard, and I encourage your county to consider joining NACo.

Point-in-Time Count

Lake County teams up with service providers to conduct count of homeless

As the country experiences an economic downturn, more and more people find themselves facing homelessness in Lake County. In order to get an accurate count of just how many people are living without homes in communities, the County and local homeless service providers went out to try to find and count the homeless population in the county.

This "Point-in-Time Count" took place in the late evening hours of January 28. Volunteers and homeless service providers went out in groups to find homeless individuals staying in the street and bring them to shelter.

The group tracked the number of homeless individuals in order to accurately evaluate the county's homeless population. This is critical so appropriate resources can be secured and distributed, and service options are readily available to those in need. The final numbers are used as a component for determining the distribution of federal funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Of greater importance is the use of data to effectively determine the needs of the homeless.

"As the US Census helps to determine where to allocate federal resources, this count helps to determine where to allocate resources for the homeless," said Lety Castellanos, President of the Lake County Coalition for the Homeless. "It is the same basic concept."

The Lake County Community Development Division has been working with the Lake County Coalition for the Homeless to ensure an accurate and complete count. This year, a number of individuals and families have benefitted from the federal Homelessness Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). Lake County received more than \$2 million to use to combat homelessness before it begins, or get people out of homelessness quickly. Count coordinators will use the number of people served in that program in conjunction with the data collected from the count in their planning.

If you are interested in learning more about the Lake County Continuum of Care or the Point-in-Time Count, please contact Joel Williams at 847-377-2139.



Cook County resolution calls for immigration reform

Cook County Board President Todd H. Stroger won passage of a resolution calling for sweeping immigration reform that would put the undocumented on the path to full rights as citizens, and help ease unfairness in the nation's current immigration law. Stroger sponsored the bill, which was co-sponsored by County commissioners Mario Joseph Moreno and Bridget Gainer.

The resolution points out that one out of every eight people living in the United States – and one out of every five residents of Cook County – are immigrants. More than 12 million immigrants nationally, including 300,000 Cook County residents, are undocumented, even though most work and pay taxes on the state, federal, county and local level.

"The United States is a nation of immigrants," said President Stroger. "These immigrants could contribute even more to our communities if they were given the opportunity to gain legal status, which would enable them to gain more productive jobs, earn more, and pay more in taxes, and would in particular enable immigrant youths to pursue education and serve our nation in the armed forces. In addition, this legislation helps preserve families and by extension communities, and that's a vitally important goal for us all."

Despite their contributions to the tax rolls and their communities, undocumented immigrants are at risk of detention and deportation, creating havoc in families and neighborhoods when workers are separated from their spouses, children, and communities. Policymakers nationally have increasingly argued that the nation's current immigration system is broken, leading to long backlogs for legal immigration, family separation, and workplace abuses that drive down wages and working conditions for all workers. The federal House bill that the Stroger resolution supports – H.R. 4321, titled 'Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America's Security and Prosperity,' or the CIR ASAP Act of 2009 – would create a path to citizenship for hardworking, law-abiding immigrants as well as include provisions to reunite families and meet the nation's labor needs while upholding labor rights.

"Comprehensive immigration reform legislation like CIR ASAP would uphold our nation's basic values of fairness, equal opportunity, and respect for the law," said Stroger, who included this language in the resolution.



Miles appointed Madison County Treasurer



"I will operate a treasurer's office that is open to public scrutiny and I will be accountable."

The Madison County Board approved Chairman Alan J. Dunstan's appointment of Frank Miles as county treasurer. Miles will fill the vacancy created when Treasurer Fred Bathon submitted a letter resigning from the position. Miles' appointment runs until December, 2010 when the winner of the general election is sworn into office.

Currently the director of the Madison County Planning and Development Department, Miles is the former District Chief of Staff for Congressman Jerry Costello. He has served as planning director for the City of Edwardsville, comptroller and finance officer for the Madison County Circuit Clerk's office and as city administrator and economic developer for the City of O'Fallon, Illinois.

"Frank has been responsible for the management of millions of dollars in budgets and has made significant, positive contributions in every position he has held, said Dunstan. "I'm confident in his abilities to effectively and trustfully manage the money of the people of Madison County."

Miles said his primary responsibility will be to provide the people of Madison County the best service possible. "I will work to effectively and diligently manage the public's money. I will operate a treasurer's office that is open to public scrutiny and I will be accountable. I have been entrusted with a great responsibility and I accept that responsibility."

DuPage awarded grant for energy programs

DuPage County has been awarded \$4.6 million under the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant, issued by the U.S. Department of Energy. The money will go toward the implementation of a series of twelve new programs, each designed to conserve energy and thereby save DuPage County residents' valuable tax dollars.

The first program put in place by the County will be the Commercial Recycling Program, which will engage the private sector in recycling projects. Specifically, it will provide companies, municipalities and multi-unit dwellings throughout DuPage with recycling bins; coordinate with waste/recycling service providers to support their recycling initiatives; and increase the awareness for source reduction, resource conservation and recycling in the private sector through educational programs and presentations.

"These programs will go a long way in reducing our dependence on finite resources," said County Board Member and Chairman of the Environmental Committee, Jeff Redick. "I am also really excited about using these resources to implement a traffic signal synchronization program. The program, once completed, will provide valuable traffic congestion relief and decrease travel times. The benefits produced will improve our transportation system and environment."

Other programs which will be funded by the EEBCG include installation of energy efficient lighting in county parking garages, installation of occupancy sensors for lighting on the campus, and development and implementation of trail mapping software. Entities interested in participating in this program can contact the County's Office of Green Initiatives at 630-407-6700.

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2010census.gov

It's in our hands

WE CAN'T MOVE FORWARD UNTIL YOU MAIL IT BACK.



Metropolitan Chicago's new regional water plan calls for increased conservation, coordinated management

To avoid future shortages, 11-county Regional Water Supply Planning Group sets the course for providers and consumers

On January 26, the Regional Water Supply Planning Group for 11 counties of northeastern Illinois voted unanimously to approve a landmark plan meant to ensure the availability of clean water for household and commercial use in decades to come. The plan was commissioned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to address rapid population growth that, without improved conservation and resource management, could lead to shortages in coming years.

Looking to the year 2050, the plan is based on the latest research of water demand and supply in the counties of Boone, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will. It has guidance for businesses and residents to reduce consumption and waste, along with hundreds of recommendations to improve how public and private water suppliers manage one of the region's most important natural resources. See www.cmap.illinois.gov/waterplan.

"This is a highly specific plan directed at state, regional, county, municipal, and other public agencies responsible for ensuring adequate supplies of clean water," said Regional Water Supply Planning Group (RWSPG) chair Bonnie Thomson Carter, who is also a Lake County Board member and president of the Lake County Forest Preserves. "Based on the data, it is clear that continued rapid population growth and economic activity will put a strain on the region's current supply, and significant shortages could result without coordinated action to implement this new water plan."

The RWSPG began meeting monthly in January 2007, with 35 representatives from counties, municipalities, and other stakeholder categories such as water suppliers, agriculture, industry, power, wastewater treatment, conservation, environment, academia, and real estate. Coordinated by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), the plan was developed with funding from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR).

A report on projected demand through 2050, commissioned in 2008 by CMAP with IDNR funding, indicated that – without effective planning – water demand could increase as much as 64 percent by mid-century, creating potentially serious shortages. Illinois access to Lake Michigan water is constrained by a U.S. Supreme Court Consent Decree.

"As business leaders consider the importance of our region's natural resources, water supply must be at or very near the top of that list," said Jerry Roper, CEO of the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce. "Not only is it a strategic asset that helps us compete with other global economic centers, but ensuring a reliable supply of clean water through mid-century will significantly enhance quality of life for the people who live and work here. And that, in turn, is very good for business."

The plan's strategy is to improve how water demand is managed, by emphasizing conservation, pricing, and the reuse of graywater and wastewater. (Graywater results from residential activities such as dish washing, laundry, and bathing.) It advocates a number of local conservation measures for municipalities, businesses, and households, including:

- Replacing old toilets and washers with new, high-efficiency ones
- Prohibiting practices that waste water
- Metering water use
- Auditing water systems to detect leaks and other inefficiencies
- Retrofitting residential plumbing

Also, wintertime road salts and other contaminants are harming the region's shallow-aquifer system, according to the water plan, which recommends the use of alternate methods to de-ice roads. Among other key recommendations is for the region to conduct a public campaign to inform adults and school children of the need for water conservation.

"Full-cost pricing" is also an option that the water plan presents for consideration. This method of managing demand would remove public subsidies to reflect the real expense of water, so business and residential consumers would pay for its delivery (not just for the water itself, as is current practice), which is an incentive to use water efficiently.

As part of a regional framework for water planning and management, the plan also recommends new "Conservation Coordinators" be designated at the municipal and regional levels, to be responsible for managing, implementing, and maintaining a comprehensive water-conservation program. These coordinators would work with public-water suppliers' staff to analyze the benefits, costs, and water savings potential of numerous conservation measures.

"It is clear that continued rapid population growth and economic activity will put a strain on the region's current supply, and significant shortages could result without coordinated action to implement this new water plan." – Bonnie Thomson Carter



As recommended in the plan, CMAP intends to coordinate data from various water suppliers, making the information available to stakeholder groups and the general public. By complementing the Illinois State Water Survey's "water inventory" program, this would help communities and water suppliers make informed choices about how to manage water demand. Groundwater modeling suggests that portions of the regional deep-bedrock aquifer are being dewatered. If that does not change, according to the water plan, this important water source will be compromised by 2050. The plan also cites climate change as a factor that could lead to increased water demand and reduced supplies.

"I would like to thank the RWSPG members for their considerable efforts in helping to craft this plan," said CMAP executive director Randy Blankenhorn. "And I want to challenge the region's many stakeholders to begin taking immediate steps as called for in the regional water plan. CMAP is prepared to lead by coordinating these activities and providing technical assistance to water suppliers and consumers."

The first Metropolitan Chicago Water-supply Summit will be convened by CMAP and its partners in March 2010. The event will bring stakeholders together to start implementation activities and discuss how the water plan fits into a broader context CMAP's other water-resource activities and the comprehensive regional plan that is nearing completion.

CMAP is in the final months of developing the GO TO 2040 comprehensive regional plan, whose implementation will begin in October 2010. Water supply will be an important consideration among CMAP's recommendations to guide growth and infrastructure investments through mid-century and beyond.

"The IDNR is proud to have commissioned and funded this project as one of two key water supply planning projects in Illinois. This partnership has successfully produced important tools for communities to use in planning for future population and economic growth in Northeast Illinois," said IDNR director Marc Miller.

For more information or to download a copy of the Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Supply/Demand Plan visit www.cmap.illinois.gov.

Integrated Care Delivery System brings providers together, improves care for patients



The pilot program will affect about 40,000 individuals in suburban Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kankakee, Lake, and Will Counties.

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) has taken the first step in significantly reforming the delivery of care to the most vulnerable populations covered by the Medicaid Program. HFS has issued a request for proposals (RFP) seeking two managed care organizations (MCOs) to provide adults with disabilities and older adults in the Medicaid program the full spectrum of Medicaid covered services through an integrated care delivery system. The first phase of the program will focus on traditional medical services with later phases coordinating long term care.

An integrated care delivery system brings physicians, hospitals, nursing homes and other service providers into a network connected with electronic medical records and other coordination processes. Care is organized around an individual's needs in order to improve health and quality of life outcomes for the state's most disabled and frail citizens, while assuring the efficiency and effectiveness of state resources. Another feature of the program, to be phased in next year, is to provide individuals with disabilities the support they need to live more independently in the community. The goal of the program is to give individuals with disabilities a greater voice in designing the care plan they need.

HFS will tie some of the compensation to the MCOs to their performance on nationally recognized pay-for-performance measures. In turn, the MCOs will be expected to reward hospitals, physician practices and other providers with incentives based on performance and positive health outcomes. Enrollment with a managed care organization will be mandatory for beneficiaries in the selected counties, while promoting active consumer choice.

The pilot project is expected to save taxpayers close to \$200 million in its initial five-year period. If successful, HFS will identify other areas of the state where this model can work.



McHenry County Board passes ordinance to create Housing Commission

On January 5, the McHenry County Board adopted by ordinance the McHenry County Housing Commission. This is the culmination of a housing study in McHenry County entitled "A Place to Call Home" and the development of an ad-hoc committee to work towards the formation of a Housing Commission. Charged with addressing the economic downturn as related to housing, the task force determined it was in the best interests of the County to create a Commission purposed with developing educational, planning, and program initiatives that will meet the housing needs of all demographics and geographies of McHenry County.

"As the County's population grows, it becomes more apparent – and important – to have a diversified housing market and supply. The Housing Commission will be vital in assisting the County to achieve that goal," stated Tina Hill, Chair of the McHenry County Planning and Development Committee on the need of a housing commission.

Early establishment of the Commission includes a two-year initial term focused on the actual development of powers, procedures, and methodology of the Commission. Educating the County regarding housing needs and solutions is at the core of the Commission. Newly appointed members will determine the capacities of the Commission including relationships with the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Commission and other housing-focused agencies, the development of a countywide housing action plan, and the potential for creating or partnering with a nonprofit organization to carry out housing activities on behalf of the Commission.

"I am encouraged by the overwhelming support of the community and the County Board for the creation and implementation of the McHenry County Housing Commission," stated County Board member Barb Wheeler, who supported the formation of the Housing Commission. "The work of this Commission will be collaboration of county, municipalities and local entities to provide the model housing policies, procedures, and planning initiatives for McHenry County housing."

The McHenry County Housing Commission will make planning and policy decisions as related to housing that is feasible and in line with overall County planning focuses and identified needs. The Commission will advise in the granting of federal funds for housing projects, taking into consideration specific County goals for housing. Assistance in the form of education to municipalities to encourage collaboration in planning is essential in acquiring community support for housing development and achieving a balanced mix of options throughout the County. The Commission will serve to increase capacity in forms of funding, number of organizations, and actual attainable housing units.

For more information on the McHenry County Housing Commission, please contact Sarah Ciampi at 815-334-4560.

NACo Prescription Drug Card FREE to your County and your residents



Counties across the country are providing valuable savings for their residents through NACo's Prescription Discount Card Program.

Is your county?

The prescription drug cards are free to NACo member counties and their residents. More than \$179 million has been saved by consumers in the past five years.

If your county is not one of the 1,140 counties participating in the program, get started today.



For more information contact Andrew Goldschmidt at 202/942-4221.

Keep up with ICA online at www.illinoiscountiesassociation.org

Women's History Month

The road to financial literacy for woman and minorities

by Linda Baker, Frontline Public Strategies, Inc.



Many of you know that providing deferred compensation programs as part of an employee benefit package does not impact the employer's bottom line budget at all. That's an important distinction in today's tough economic times, but it's only part of the equation county governments should consider when deciding whether to make deferred compensation programs like the NACo/Nationwide Retirement Solutions program available to their workers. The proclamation of February as African American History Month and March as Women's History Month provides the backdrop for another look, and a critical perspective, on why these programs matter.

It has been written that all income from 1) pensions; 2) social security benefits; and, 3) personal savings and investments are, from a practical point of view, the equivalent of future paychecks. All legs of this version of the three-legged stool are necessary for financial security during the retirement years for most of us. Yet, for 59 percent of unmarried Black women and 58 percent of unmarried Hispanic women, Social Security is their only source of retirement income.

It is easy to forget that when enacted, Social Security by design was intended to provide a minimum of protection for the elderly. That is, it's easy to forget until you or someone you know is trying to live on Social Security income alone. Consider, in a 2007 update to the Census, the poverty rate of Black women 65 and older was an alarming 38.5 percent; for Hispanic women in the same age cohort, the poverty rate was 41 percent. Part of the incidence of poverty among women results from widowhood and divorce. Too often those who counted on their husbands to care for them as they retire find out how costly that miscalculation is when they find themselves unable to pay day-to-day living expenses. There is little debate that these grim trends must be reversed. To do so, there must be a greater understanding of why this is happening and a commitment to addressing the reasons (National Education & Resource Center on Women and Retirement Planning; WISER Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement, 2009).

Annamaria Lusardi (2009) writes, "One reason individuals do not engage in retirement planning is because they lack financial literacy. Blenheim (1995, 1998) was one of the first researchers to emphasize that most individuals lack basic financial knowledge and numeracy." Long term financial security, if it is considered at all, is regularly compromised by short term needs and wants. WISER reported that 62 percent of Black and Hispanic women say lower earnings often leave them with few resources to invest. Lusardi's research findings showed evidence that "programs that offer multiple financial education sessions have been effective in stimulating savings among low income workers,

normally least likely to save", and that women were particularly receptive (*Planning for retirement: The importance of financial literacy accessed at info@wisermwoman.org*).


The Illinois Counties Association, in partnership with NACo and Nationwide Retirement Solutions, have taken these research findings to heart and created targeted marketing campaigns for their deferred compensation program. The effort is specifically designed to reach out to at-risk populations and provide support for informed financial decision-making.

"The likelihood of being poor in retirement increases with age. For financial security, Social Security and pensions must be supplemented with personal savings and investments."

A key fact reported in *Blueprint: Securing Women's Retirement Future* (WISER, 2008) is that "retirement security today...often depends on individuals participating by saving their own money." The Blueprint continues, "People are much more likely to save when they have access to employer-sponsored plans than when they have to do it on their own" (info@wisermwoman.org). By making deferred compensation programs like the NACo/NRS program available to employees, counties can provide a tool to make savings automatic, a strategy recommended by the Retirement Security Project of Brookings Institute. Automatic savings programs are easier to continue, convenient to the saver, and, as a result, more likely to be used.

Too many women, particularly women of color, are poor in the United States today. The likelihood of being poor in retirement increases with age. For financial security, Social Security and pensions must be supplemented with personal savings and investments. Counties can facilitate access to information, and encourage participation in, automatic savings programs like deferred compensation programs to ensure that the retirement incomes of their employees not only allow them to survive but to continue to thrive.

For information on how your county can participate in the NACo/NRS deferred compensation program contact Linda Baker at lindabakerrain@aol.com.



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Regional Office of Education Awarded Grant

Peoria County's Regional Office of Education was awarded a grant in the amount of \$812 from the Community Foundation of Central Illinois in collaboration with the Illinois Arts Council Community Arts Access program. The Community Arts Access program provides funding for various art programs in Peoria and Tazewell Counties. The Regional Office of Education will use these funds to partially support its 25th Annual Arts in Education Spring Celebration at the Peoria County Courthouse Plaza this April 12-May 21. Over 120 public and private schools are expected to participate in this year's Spring Celebration. These schools represent seven counties in Central Illinois: Peoria, Tazewell, Woodford, Fulton, Marshall, Henry, and – for the first time – McLean County.

The Community Foundation of Central Illinois is proud to partners with the Illinois Arts Council – a state agency – to administer a re-granting program for Peoria and Tazewell Counties. In addition to providing quality, accessible arts programming, the funding is also used for support and development of Illinois artists, arts organizations, educational institutions, and communities.

The mission of the Regional Office of Education is to serve as a resource to the school districts and public and private (PreK-12) schools in Peoria County. It provides educational services and financial oversight, develops and implements innovative programs, and offers opportunities to schools that are not available through other sources.



Social Web sites catching on in counties

Communicating directly with individuals is easier than ever with the proliferation of social media Web sites, but a NACo survey shows 55 percent of counties don't make use of these tools.

Facebook and Twitter, among other Web sites, allow users to release information directly to the public into a community of people who have demonstrated interest by becoming a fan of or following a county on those sites, respectively. Rather than relying on a resident to visit a county's Web site to read news releases, updates forward directly to user's accounts. Of 121 respondents, more counties use Twitter (50 users) than Facebook (43 users), but many use both.

The majority of counties that have a social media presence delegate the responsibility for administering them to their public information officers or whichever department maintains the account.

Teresa Hamilton Hall, Roanoke County, Va.'s public information officer, said careful monitoring and updating content is the commitment that comes with using social media tools. "The last thing you want to do is develop a page and let it lapse," she said. "If you're going to do that, it's almost better not to try, because your 'fans' are going to be on the lookout for new information. That's why they express their interest in your county."

Several respondents report using Twitter to disseminate information in emergency situations. Roanoke maintains Facebook accounts for its public library; parks, recreation and tourism, and planning departments, and the county school system.

Hall says she has only had to delete a few user postings, and did so in conjunction with the county's decorum at public meetings policy. "If you act a certain way at a meeting, you will be asked to leave," she said. "We treat our social media community the same way."

Wake County, N.C. IT Manager Bill Scanlon said his county's investment in social media resources was carefully leveraged against other communications tools. "We use social media tools because they have proven to be effective communication methods," he said. "If other methods were as effective, we would use them, too."

Some survey respondents voiced concern for the security of their county's computer system when exposed to social networking. Scanlon said the Web sites, like many, pose risks, but no more than a non-social networking site. "Viruses can attack us from multiple perspectives, so it's important to have a strong education effort to guard against them and most importantly, guard the computers themselves with anti-virus measures," he said.

Scanlon said choosing not to use social media to support a county's communication plan because of Internet security worries was moot, because employees could likely still access their personal account from their computer. Wake County is currently reviewing its acceptable-use policy for computers at work.

According to the NACo survey, most counties do not have any policy regarding personal use of these social media tools, though of the 17 that do, 16 restrict use while on county time. Of the 121 respondents, all counties with more than 600,000 residents use social media, and 36 of 49 counties with more than 142,000 residents use it. Smaller counties aren't necessarily out of the picture, though. The City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, with just over 2,000 residents, maintains a social media presence.

Kathy Smith, public information officer for Spotsylvania County, Va., with fewer than 91,000 residents, hopes to get involved, soon. "I personally have Facebook and Twitter, but as a one-person PIO office, I would not have the time to monitor and respond to Facebook at this time," she said. "I plan on starting Twitter for the county soon."



Give your employees a RETIREMENT STIMULUS

Retirement Expos can get employees thinking, enthused about readying for retirement

by Bob Beasley, CRC, CIC, Communications Consultant
Nationwide Retirement Solutions

Given the financial turmoil America's workers have been through over the past two years, you might think it's highly unlikely you can get them excited about planning for retirement income that's financially secure. You might even point to the 19th annual Retirement Confidence Survey, sponsored by the nonpartisan Employee Benefit Research Institute and Mathew Greenwald & Associates, as proof. After all, the Survey revealed Americans' confidence in being able to adequately prepare for financial security in retirement is the lowest it's ever been.

If what Nationwide is seeing at recent workshops and onsite visits is any indication, the truth is that workers may be more ready than ever to accept employer help with retirement planning. Your employees might need only a little nudge to get started. Call it your own retirement stimulus.

Not a bailout, your retirement stimulus may start with staging an educational campaign or event – such as a Retirement Expo or National Save for Retirement Week program – that demonstrates your commitment to helping them understand:

- Why they need to prepare financially for retirement,
- How they can prepare financially through your deferred compensation plan, and
- How – as they approach the end of their career - your plan can help them transition into retirement and manage their assets for lifetime income.

Why promote a DC plan if you sponsor DB plan?

Many, if not most, state and local governmental employers sponsor a traditional defined-benefit pension plan. In most cases, pension plans have not been designed to serve as a worker's sole source for retirement income. Even a generous payout from a DB plan combined with a Social Security benefit may leave today's workers short of what they'll need to sustain their pre-retirement lifestyle. Meanwhile, Americans are living longer than ever¹ but, according to the Retirement Confidence Survey, they're not retiring later in life². Taken together, these facts suggest workers must prepare to stretch their retirement dollars over a great period of time.

Today's future retirees are likely to need the additional financial security participating in a DC plan can provide. Through consistent funding over many years and the power of compounding, participating in a deferred compensation or other defined contribution plan can be the basis for a comfortable retirement, especially with the uncertainty surrounding Social Security and employer pension plans.

Of course, investing – even through a deferred compensation plan – involves market risk, including possible loss of principal. Education from Nationwide Retirement Specialists can help employees understand what market risk is and help them find where their comfort with that risk is. Information from retirement specialists is for educational purposes only and not intended as investment advice.

Finally, the worst that is likely to happen if employees respond to your efforts in promoting your DC plan is that they may find themselves with more income-producing assets at retirement than they had planned for. A happy situation for most new retirees.

When you're ready to give your employees a retirement stimulus, contact a Nationwide representative at 877-677-3678.



2010 Legislative Conference

March 6, 2010 • Marriott Wardman Park Hotel • Washington, D.C.

On-Line Registration available at www.naco.org

¹To review the findings of EBRI's research, go to <http://ebri.org/surveys/res/>.

²"Deaths: Preliminary Data for 2007", August 19, 2009, Page 4, Jiaquan Xu, M.D.; Kenneth D. Kochanek, M.A.; and Betzaida Tejada-Vera, B.S., Centers for Disease Prevention. Division of Vital Statistics, http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr58/nvsr58_01.pdf.

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HEALTHY COUNTIES



Dear Fellow County Official,

County governments play an essential role in America's healthcare system. They are unique in their responsibility to both finance and deliver health services through public hospitals and clinics, local health departments, and long-term care facilities. In addition, counties provide mental health and substance abuse treatment and offer coverage programs for the uninsured.

As employers, counties provide health insurance benefits to nearly three million county employees and their retirees nationwide.

That's why this year's theme for **National County Government Month** (NCGM) is "Healthy Counties." Throughout the month of April, counties across the country will be celebrating NCGM by promoting their essential health care services and healthy living and recreation programs.

Since 1991, the National Association of Counties has encouraged counties to actively promote county government services and programs. Formerly National County Government Week, the designation was expanded to a full month to offer counties more opportunities to participate. Counties aren't expected to hold public awareness activities throughout the month, but can schedule activities any time during the month.

For example, you can hold an open house or offer public tours of county facilities; visit schools, parks, community organizations and business groups to discuss county services; announce new programs or highlight accomplishments of existing ones, and/or issue a NCGM proclamation.

This year's theme, "Healthy Counties," is important to me. I have made advocacy for national health reform that works for counties and their residents a hallmark of my year as NACo president. Additionally, NACo will establish the "Healthy Counties Initiative" in 2010 to highlight the essential role counties play in the health care system and assist in national health reform efforts.

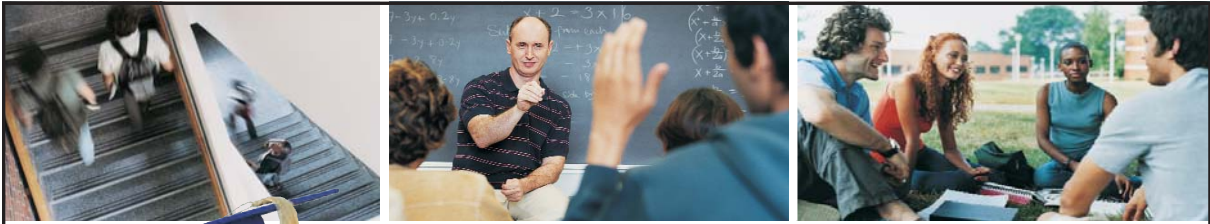
I know you are proud of all the essential services your county provides each day. I encourage your county to start planning today to highlight those services and celebrate NCGM.

Valerie Brown
NACo President
Supervisor, Sonoma County, California



The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation's 3,066 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public's understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money.

For more information contact Tom Goodman at 202-942-4222 or tgoodman@naco.org. To download the NCGM 2010 Media Kit or Handbook visit www.naco.org.



As a non-profit association that provides services to county government, the Illinois Counties Association (ICA) is committed to promoting and advancing education and the future of Illinois' youth.

ICA will be awarding academic scholarships throughout the State of Illinois to students wishing to pursue higher education during the 2010-2011 academic year.



SCHOLARSHIP
 Submission deadline: April 15, 2010
 For more information or online application go to
www.illinoiscountiesassociation.org

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