



HEALTH INSURANCE PRIVACY RULES

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) must be implemented in the next two years. All medical records and other individually identifiable health information used or disclosed by a covered entity, whether electronically, on paper, or orally, are covered by HIPAA. Counties and their programs will be impacted to varying degrees, depending on the types of services and the current administrative processes. County programs which could be affected include indigent health care, public health, jail health, mental health, social services, public assistance, employee health benefits programs, workers' compensation, public guardianships, etc.

Most people know about the provisions aimed at protecting health insurance coverage for workers and families when they change or lose jobs. However, HIPAA also:

- ▶ Protects patient privacy
- ▶ Requires security of medical information
- ▶ Sets standards for electronic transmission of certain health data.

In a nutshell, any entity that handles medical records is potentially liable for compliance. Not only will counties have to coordinate activities across departments and programs, but also there will be a need for consistency between state and county implementation. Counties will have different obligations under HIPAA in their dual roles as both purchasers and providers of health care services. Finally, if counties are self-insured, they will have additional HIPAA liability, which must be estimated and funded.

Covered entities may be required to provide the following protections on information:

1. Information to patients about their privacy rights and how their information can be used;
2. Consents whenever information is shared between departments;
3. Clear privacy procedures;
4. Training on the privacy procedures;
5. A individual to be responsible for seeing that the privacy procedures are adopted and followed;
6. Security for patient records containing individually identifiable health information so nothing is readily available

HIGHLIGHTS—INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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to those who do not need the information.

Counties should be determining which elements of HIPAA are to apply to county programs, analyzing current processes and procedures compared to HIPAA rules and implement a plan to reach compliance. In addition to documenting the procedures for assuring the privacy of patient's medical records, security procedures will also have to be documented. You may want to have staff track the time spent on HIPAA activities as a way of demonstrating due diligence in trying to implement the regulations. Your county counsel should be involved because in any future enforcement proceeding, you would likely be compared to other counties' compliance policies.

In addition, regulations to standardize formats and streamline the processing of health care claims are required for all public entities which have health care plans. One of the most significant impacts of this standardization will be the loss of "local codes", which must be converted to the new standardized billing codes. The mental health community will be particularly hard hit by the loss of local codes.

At this time, no state or federal resources have been allocated for HIPAA implementation at the county level.

MACo office now has The Compliance Guide to HIPAA and can provide sample policies on disk. Give Marie a call at 457-7207.

Information for this article came from "HIPAA is coming to your county—Here's how to get ready" by Judith Reigel, in California County, a journal

WELCOME ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HAROLD BLATTIE



You have been in public service for many years in Stillwater County. Why are you interested in leaving?

I do not see this so much as “leaving”, but rather a natural progression of “moving to” another position. Serving as a county commissioner has, without question, been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I’ve been a part of what one Stillwater County staff member has termed “a superbowl team” of elected officials and staff.

I was not looking to leave my commissioner position or searching for a change. However opportunity does not always present itself at the expected times. I could have been quite content continuing as a commissioner, but the chance to continue and expand upon the work that I did as a MACo officer is very appealing to me. I am very excited to be working with some of the finest and most dedicated people in Montana.

On the personal side, the decision to apply for the Assistant Director position was made with the full support of my family. Betty and I discussed it with our children and received their full support, which was major factor. With three of our sons

and their families in Billings and the fourth at home, the idea of moving so far from our family did take considerable discussion.

We have some of our farm enrolled in the CRP program, some leased and our son, Michael, will operate the balance. We have lived in our home for 26 years so the thought of sorting through that many years of “gathering” is intimidating, especially considering that I am a “packrat”! Betty works for Bankcorp, which operates banks under the Glacier, Western Security and Valley names and is hopeful that she will be able to transfer to a branch in Helena.

When you consider the Association as a whole, in what areas would you like to implement some changes and why do you see the need for these changes?

I am not coming to MACo with any agenda other than to serve the needs of our members. I do not anticipate any major changes but rather adjustments as situations warrant. I hope to continue to expand the outreach efforts with both our affiliated associations and other outside associations to educate them about the role that county government plays as it relates to their goals and objectives. I anticipate greater involvement in natural resource issues as well as in the MACo insurance pools and the continuing group health coverage issue.

The role of the Assistant Director is being re-defined and I will be visible and active in all areas of the Association. I will have areas of specific responsibility but will also be familiar with virtually every aspect of the Association.

What are the strongest attributes you bring to the Association?

My knowledge and experience lead me to understand how issues affect our abilities to serve the needs of constituents. I believe that I have the ability to address issues both from the “big picture” perspective and from the detail level. My broad understanding allows me to identify issues as they emerge. Early in development is a crucial time when it is much easier to affect the outcome, rather than after an issue has grown into a much more difficult situation to address.

I believe that I have established credibility and respect with a number of legislators from both political parties. This relationship will position me to be an effective lobbyist on issues of importance to counties. I have a good understanding of the legislative process and the crooks and turns that a bill takes on its way to becoming law. Testifying on a bill during its hearing is only the beginning. Working with legislators and interacting with legislative and state staff, including the Governors office, is often crucial to the outcome.

How will you continue your efforts to network with state officials and departments?

I see this as a continuation of what I have done in the past. I will maintain contact with the individuals I know and develop contacts with others. As the MACo position description develops and I begin serving as staff for several MACo committees, I will be bringing those committees’ issues to the attention of state officials and staff. This would also apply to our congressional delegation and their staffs. I will also follow legislative committees that are working on issues which affect MACo.

Current MACo President Dean Harmon hopes to work “for greater involvement of counties and their elected officials”. What will you do to assist him with this?

With a high turnover of elected officials every two years, we have a responsibility to educate the membership of the benefits that MACo provides. With demonstrated benefits, members will more inclined to willingly participate. MACo should continue to be responsive to the needs and requests of the members and with the restructured position description, I see the Assistant Director being able to devote more time working with individuals to respond to their concerns.

Whatever activities President Harmon may wish for me to do to provide assistance in developing initiatives will certainly be a high priority. As I have stated before, it is my desire to be a tool for both the leadership and the membership, so they can become the best they can be, in order to serve the needs of their constituency.

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WE GIVE THANKS

For our fellow county officials and employees
 For our State of Montana
 For our United States of America

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

**COUNTY DROUGHT COMMITTEES
 TO MEET WITH
 MONTANA DROUGHT ADVISORY
 COMMITTEE**

Does your county have a drought committee?

The November 9 meeting of the Montana Drought Advisory Committee is dedicated to hearing from and working with representatives of county drought committees. The meeting will be held in **Room 152 of the Capitol** and begin at 9:30 am. Local drought coordinators are invited to share their actions, concern, and suggestions to improve preparations and response to drought.

9:30 Welcome by Lt. Governor Karl Ohs, Chair Montana Drought Advisory Committee

National Weather Service precipitation summary, climatological forecasts
 Kenneth Mielke
 Meteorologist-in-Charge, Great Falls

10:00 Local Drought Coordinators

LUNCH ON OWN

1:00 Montana Drought Response Plan
 Suggestions, Changes, Planning
 Kathleen Williams

2:00 Relationship of federal, state, local governments and private sector

2:45 State Agency 2001 Drought Summaries by DEQ, FWP, DNRC, Ag, Livestock, Commerce, DES

3:15 Congressional Summaries
 Betsy Allen (Sen. Burns)
 Stacia Dahl (Sen. Baucus)
 Jeff Garrard (Rep. Rehberg)

The next meetings of the Montana Drought Advisory Committee will be January 17 and February 21, 2002 at the Lee Metcalf Building (DEQ).

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

November

- 9 Montana Drought Advisory Committee; Capitol; 9:30 am
- 12 **Veterans Day Holiday**
- 13 **MACo Executive Committee** Conference Call; 1:30 pm
- 14 **MACo Health/Human Services** Committee; Billings; 8:00
- 14 National GIS Day Open House; State Library
- 14-16 Association of Conservation Districts; Missoula
- 14-17 **NACo Workforce/Human Services; Ft. Lauderdale**
- 15 **MACo IT Committee**; MACo Conference Room; 1:30pm
- 16 **Health Insurance Stakeholders**; MACo Conf. ; 10:00 am
- 16 Interim Children, Families, Human Services Committee
- 22 **Thanksgiving Day Holiday**
- 27-29 **JPIA / JPA Joint Trustees meeting**
- 30 Interim Economic Affairs Committee

December

- 12-14 **MACo Board of Directors Retreat**
- 13 Council on Quality Workforce; Belgrade
- 19 Growth Policy Forum; MACo Conference Room; 9:30 am
- 25 Christmas Holiday

INTERIM SUBCOMMITTEE BEGINS WORK ON HEALTH CARE AND INSURANCE

As a result of SJR 22 from the 2001 Legislative Session, the Subcommittee on Health Care and Health Insurance began work August 30. In addition to the broad mandate for a system review, the Subcommittee must also focus on:

- purchasing pools for individual and small group health insurance
- provider reimbursement rates and cost shifting of health care costs
- access to affordable prescription drugs
- strategies to decrease the number of uninsured Montanans
- factors causing health insurance rates to increase above the rate of inflation
- feasibility of re-creating the Health Care Advisory Council.

The Committee plans to include assessments of what solutions other states have applied and any opportunities available under federally-administered programs. SJR 22 specifically lists several public and private entities that should be included in the study effort. Those entities include Office of Insurance Commissioner, DPHHS, local government representatives, health care and health insurance consumers, providers, insurers, public and private sector health benefit plans and hospitals.

The primary focus for the October meeting was to identify possible solutions for specific problems and review the activities of other states.

In a Pennsylvania cemetery: Persons are prohibited from picking flowers from any but their own graves.
On a Tennessee highway: Take notice: when this sign is under water, this road is impassable.

FIRMS QUALIFIED TO PERFORM SPEED ZONE INVESTIGATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of MCA 61-8-309 the counties, at their own expense, may use any or all of the following qualified engineering firms to conduct engineering and traffic investigations related to the establishment of special speed zones. These firms will be available for the next two years beginning October 1, 2001.

1. Robert Peccia & Associates
825 Custer Avenue
PO Box 5653
Helena, MT 59604
447-5000
2. Marvin & Associates
1001 South 24th Street West, Suite 211
Billings, MT 59108-0785
655-4550
3. Interstate Engineering, Inc.
PO Box 30215
Billings, MT 59107
256-1920

Notice provided by
Gary A. Gilmore
Highways and Engineering Division
Montana Department of Transportation

MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF CLERKS AND RECORDERS **42nd ANNUAL CONVENTION**

The Association of Clerks and Recorders held its 42nd annual convention in September in Polson. Officers elected for the coming year are:

President Cheryl Hansen, Roosevelt County
1st Vice President Janice Hoppes, Pondera County
2nd Vice President Beth Ann Milligan, Custer County
3rd Vice President Paulette DeHart, Lewis/Clark Cnty.
Secretary Peggy Stemler, Madison County
Treasurer Amanda Kelly, Judith Basin County
Chaplain Leanne Switzer, McCone County

An election certification workshop was held on the first day, covering review of new legislation, redistricting, canvass and recount procedures. Other workshops dealt with on-line rules and records, threats and self-defense, budgets and communication techniques

Browning-Ferris Industries in Missoula, a last-minute exhibitor at the recent MACo Conference, was not listed in the October Newsletter. We appreciate that Browning Ferris Industries called our attention to this and we are grateful to them for their support and exhibit in Glendive.

MACo and COUNTY WEED DISTRICTS MOVE FORWARD (Weed Districts Meet the Parents)

Submitted by Scott Bockness, Superintendent
Yellowstone County Weed District

During the September MACo Conference, an important step was taken to create a stronger alliance between the County Commissioners and the County Weed District Programs. The MACo Board of Directors have graciously approved the appointment of Weed District Coordinators as members of the MACo committees. Those committees and their Weed District representatives are as follows:

Agriculture Jim Sparks
Transportation Jim Ghekiere
Land Use / Planning and Development
Jed Fisher
Public Lands Scott Bockness.

This action will allow the Commissioners to utilize the Weed Coordinators as another resource in the development of their decision making for land management issues. This process will also allow the Weed Coordinators the opportunity to be involved in the planning stage of efforts that ultimately will affect the weed programs across Montana.

Noxious weed management is one of the biggest issues that threaten the economic future of Montana and it's residents. So, improving the Commissioners knowledge in this field is very important to the support that is needed to recover the economic viability of our lands. Montana is looked at as one of the leaders in regards to land management, and implementation of the Montana Weed Management Plan is critical to our chance to succeed.

In the past legislative session some positive strides were made to create increased funding for the weed management, but more needs to be done. In the next legislative session, with the interaction of MACo and the Weed Districts, we will be able to initiate even greater opportunities for the future.

On a personal note as a Weed Coordinator, I would like to extend my thanks to MACo for the opportunity to work with you. We owe additional thanks to Vic Miller for his commitment to making this happen, to Ted Coffman for his participation in the MWCA and the Montana Weed Summit, and to Dave Schulz who has been and is one of the leaders of the

WEATHER FORECAST: Sunny with a few cloudy periods today and Thursday, which will be followed by Friday.

Fourth Quarter VIDEO GAMBLING RECEIPTS

Attorney General OPINION

Volume 49 No. 9

COUNTY	AMOUNT	# MACHINES
ANACONDA DEER LODGE	96,123	350
BEAVERHEAD	6,704	66
BIG HORN	3,362	16
BLAINE	1,891	14
BROADWATER	16,731	43
BUTTE SILVER BOW	428,528	1,164
CARBON	22,420	67
CARTER	14	3
CASCADE	54,138	323
CHOUTEAU	2,505	16
CUSTER	3,600	39
DANIELS	245	11
DAWSON	19,464	36
FALLON	257	2
FERGUS	3,691	33
FLATHEAD	186,521	580
GALLATIN	46,437	156
GARFIELD	218	2
GLACIER	0	0
GOLDEN VALLEY	504	5
GRANITE	2,293	30
HILL	14,710	86
JEFFERSON	12,965	86
JUDITH BASIN	4,294	20
LAKE	28,033	122
LEWIS AND CLARK	51,900	261
LIBERTY	283	3
LINCOLN	49,105	193
MADISON	5,502	55
McCONE	313	5
MEAGHER	2,469	17
MINERAL	44,319	160
MISSOULA	165,357	449
MUSSELSHELL	1,445	11
PARK	34,042	121
PETROLEUM	0	0
PHILLIPS	1,428	15

Requested by:
Dennis Paxinos, Yellowstone County Attorney

Question:

1. Who should vote in the elections authorized by Senate Bill 242?
2. Does a municipality that acquired authority to enforce its building code within a municipal jurisdictional area beyond the city limits prior to the effective date of SB 242 retain that jurisdiction until the election required by Section 8 of the Bill?

Held:

1. The owners of real property who may vote in the elections contemplated by SB 242 are those owners specifically listed within the definition of MCA 50-60-101 (14) whose interests appear in the real property records in the office of the county clerk and recorder 30 days before the election.
2. Municipal jurisdictional areas existing under MCA 50-60-101 (11) prior to the effective date of SB 242 retain jurisdiction to enforce municipal building code provisions, but such jurisdiction ceases if it is not approved by the voters in the election required by Section 8 of SB 242 prior to December 31, 2001.

COUNTY	AMOUNT	# MACHINES
PONDERA	4,528	27
POWDER RIVER	7	0
POWELL	5,891	37
PRAIRIE	98	1
RAVALLI	36,808	191
RICHLAND	3,517	23
ROOSEVELT	25,972	31
ROSEBUD	10,611	86
SANDERS	15,734	81
SHERIDAN	828	32
STILLWATER	18,456	71
SWEET GRASS	2,863	14
TETON	2,885	20
TOOLE	4,650	22
TREASURE	250	0
VALLEY	20,709	73
WHEATLAND	7,120	33
WIBAUX	0	0
YELLOWSTONE	107,773	280

COUNTY NEWS

BEARPROOF CONTAINERS

GALLATIN COUNTY is sued for failure to provide bearproof garbage containers in West Yellowstone/Hebgen area.

OZONE LAYER DAMAGE

LAKE COUNTY's fine for releasing refrigerants resulting in potential damage to the ozone layer was lowered to \$6,000 from \$36,000 by an EPA administrative judge.

BUSINESS TOURS

JEFFERSON COUNTY's Tourism Task Force has sponsored a series of tours through businesses throughout the County.

PLANNING

BROADWATER COUNTY is the first Montana county to combine its new growth policy and its economic development plan. 27% response rate occurred for their mail opinion survey for these documents.

REMOVING A DAM

SANDERS AND MISSOULA COUNTIES were told that the removal of Milltown Dam on the Clark Fork River would have adequate mitigation for arsenic and heavy metal concentrations found in sediments.

SEWAGE SLUDGE

CARBON COUNTY received complaints following a wastewater improvement project in which sewage sludge, dug from sewer lagoon cells, was spread on the project site. Neighboring landowners are also concerned about upcoming effluent spray applications.

RODEO AND FAIR

DAWSON COUNTY received a petition asking for an increase in Fair Board members. A current member has also questioned the budget for a professional rodeo in contrast to an amateur rodeo.

LICENSE PLATES

GALLATIN COUNTY public is voting for the best of 8 proposed designs for a license plate to be available to raise money for running the County's open space program.

HOSPITAL

GLACIER COUNTY has transferred management of Glacier County Medical Center to Northern Rockies Medical Center. The collection of past-due accounts is under controversy—whether the funds, when collected can go to the new administration or can be used to pay off the registered warrants issued by the county.

COURT CONSOLIDATION

SWEET GRASS and CHOUTEAU COUNTIES are pursuing consolidations of city courts and justices of peace through interlocal agreements.

MOVING OFFICES

RAVALLI COUNTY plans to lease and eventually purchase a former hospital to use for county offices. Offices that will relocate to the old hospital include the Clerk and Recorder, Treasurer, Planning, Sanitation, Accountancy, Personnel, Superintendent of Schools, Grants Administrator, and the County Commissioners. The additional space reflects expansion of District Courts.

JAIL

PARK COUNTY is considering the use of an empty school building for jail administration offices, sharing the building with non-profit organizations working with youth and low-income families.

COUNTY ROAD

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY dispute on a county road supposedly established in 1908 involves a Supreme Court appeal and passive protest. One citizen purposely parked his tractor to block the road, hoping to receive a citation, which would demonstrate that it, indeed, is a county road. The adjoining land owner hopes to clarify the road designation and the road policies applicable for its upkeep.

FERRY

CHOUTEAU and BLAINE COUNTIES will be considering their shares for ferry improvements at Carter, Virgelle and McClelland. Up to \$1,600,000 is available, which includes \$105,000 from the counties.

REVIEW OF UNDERGROUND

BUTTE SILVER BOW is using a ground-penetrating radar device which records underground data from a seismograph in an effort to identify problems, such as gas tanks, mine shafts, etc., before drilling or digging begins for development.

LONG-TERM SERVICE

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY's Mary Bond has served 41 years in the County Attorney's Office and 4 as a bailiff for the Clerk of Court's Office. "I'm not going to set a particular time to retire because I've set years before and then went past them. As long as I'm healthy and as long as I'm not so forgetful, I'll work," she said.

SUBDIVISION

STILLWATER COUNTY homeowners met the day before an adjoining subdivision was up for approval and changed covenants to restrict re-division of lots.

CASCADE COUNTY has been working on two of the largest subdivisions ever, which would bring 220 homes along a bend in the Missouri River.

RELOCATION

PRAIRIE COUNTY Commissioner Todd Devlin wrote:

"After reading the recent article regarding federal payments to counties, I felt very guilty and troubled that Gallatin County has been at the bottom of the Montana Pork Barrel, only getting back a mere 68 cents on every dollar they pay in federal taxes, while the true glutton of the east was my county, Prairie, getting \$3.36 for every dollar we pay in federal taxes.

To solve this inequity, I invite Gallatin County citizens to come on down and reside in Prairie County. This would lower the population of Gallatin County and raise it in Prairie County, making federal spending return more equitable. Prairie County wants to share its federal wealth.

What is that you say? You can't make a living down here unless maybe you're a farmer or rancher? Nonsense. We have fiber-optic, Internet, e-mail, and interstate (with a brand new top that is a whole lot better condition than what runs past Bozeman), the Yellowstone River, the BNSF Railroad, a pristine view, wilderness, ranches for sale, farms for sale, houses for sale, lots for sale, and subdivision potential..."build it and they will come." And our infrastructure is in good shape.

Young parents: Prairie County's Public School System is noted as one of the best public schools in the nation, according to student aptitude and comprehension tests.

Businesses considering start-up in Prairie County would like you to know that Prairie County commissioners have had a history of giving maximum tax breaks allowable by law.

This is the 21st century! You can relocate anywhere. So, this is your personal invite to come and make your home in Prairie County."

IN MEMORIAM

Burt Hurwitz, Meagher County, died October 3 in White Sulphur Springs.

Community service was an important part of his life. He served on the local high school board and then was urged to run for county commissioner, a post he held for the next 23 years, threatening to resign once a year for all those many years. He came to feel strongly that county commissions need to unite to bring the voice of county government concerns to the legislature. He served as MACo President. He served six years in the Montana House of Representatives and then seven years on the Board of Regents for the

MONTANA'S NATURAL RESOURCE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Do you need information or maps about Montana's land, water, plant and/or animal resources? Montana's **Natural Resource Information System (NRIS)** can help.

A program of Montana's State Library, NRIS was created in 1985 to serve as the State's clearinghouse for natural resource information. NRIS has collected and organized hundreds of different types of natural resource information for the citizens of Montana.

NRIS has something for everyone, whether you need a hiking map, or information to conduct and environmental assessment, or land use information for government use. NRIS information is prepared for Geographic Information Systems (GIS), a computerized system to allow users to map, layer and/or analyze different spatial data layers to make land-based decisions.

These individual map layers not only contain the physical representation about a feature (a town, for example) but also information *about* the particular feature (its name, population, elevation, etc.). By combining these data into a commonly referenced geographic system, GIS can be used to do powerful spatial analysis and display (maps). For example, you might need to know who owns land along a section of road that is to be widened. Using GIS, you can intersect the road layer with the ownership layer.

In addition to GIS data, NRIS also provides easy access to large volumes of water information, such as fisheries, water quality and quantity (flow) and groundwater resources (wells, aquifers, etc.). Finally, NRIS houses the Montana Natural Heritage Program (NHP) in which scientist collect, manage and disseminate biodiversity information on plants, animals and natural communities, emphasizing those that are rare, declining or of outstanding quality.

New technologies and software allow us to make more and more of our data available through the Internet. This advance works in favor of the less-technically advanced user who may have a critical need for this information. These web-based applications are written to require nothing more than a common web-browser and access to the Internet. We pay particular attention to ensuring our programs work well with older computers and slower Internet connections.

One of these web-based interactive applications, **TopoFinder**, enables users to access and print portions of USGS topographic maps, which traditionally have been only in paper form. Users can quickly find and display topographic maps for anywhere in the state. Users can search for maps using township, range and section; latitude and longitude; 24k or 100k quadrangle name; or using the 'named search' feature. This feature allows users to find and map common features in Montana from a list of over 70,000 features such as streams, town, mountains, trails, churches, etc..

For example, if you were interested in a topographic

map of a mountain near you, you could simply enter the name in the search criteria and all features containing that name would be shown. If you click the one you want, the map is retrieved and displayed on your screen. You can re-size the map, zoom in or out, download it into a document, print it or find latitude/longitude locations. There are hundreds of potential uses of this application.

To access this wealth of information, visit our website at <http://nris.state.mt.us>

Interactive applications like **Topofinder** can be found at <http://nris.state.mt.us/interactive.html>

If you don't know where to start or if you need help customizing your data needs, call the NRIS information line at 406-444-5354 or e-mail us at nris@state.mt.us or stop by our offices at 1515 East Sixth Avenue in Helena.

Take a look at our "Quick Index
to Interactive Applications"
<http://nris.state.mt.us/interactive.html>

	Build custom maps for your area of interest
Montana Mapper	
Search for a topographic map by quad name, lat/ long, or a site name	
TopoFinder	
	Find stream and fisheries information
Montana Rivers Information System	
View detailed information on DEQ's 2000 TMDL streams	
2000 TMDL Streams	

Many more available on-line!

RISK ALERTS

By Emelia McEwen
MACo Assistant Risk Manager

WELDING SAFETY

Welding, cutting, brazing and soldering have many hazards which should not be taken lightly. They produce hazards such as metal fumes, gases, dusts, ultraviolet radiation, noise, and heat stress.

Recently, one of Montana's counties was involved in an incident that could have been fatal. A county employee was working on a project that required cutting on galvanized materials. During an Oxy Fuel Gas cutting process, he was over-exposed to metal fumes, became ill and had difficulty breathing. He was taken to the hospital for medical treatment. Luckily, he did not have lasting serious effects from this incident.

Toxicity of the airborne contaminants depends on the material involved. The county employee was cutting on galvanized material and exposed himself to zinc and cadmium. Zinc exposure will cause metal fume fever, an acute condition of short duration from brief high exposure to the freshly generated fumes of metal such as zinc. Symptoms appear 4 to 12 hours after exposure and include fever and shaking chills. Recovery is usually within one day. On the other hand, cadmium oxide fumes inhaled in high concentrations may produce immediate pulmonary edema that can be fatal. This employee should have been using appropriate respiratory protection.

All welders should receive training on the safe use of equipment, safe work practices and emergency procedures. If you do not know the requirements for assuring the safety of welding and cutting, you need to call me at (406) 457-7210. I will get this information to you.

TRAINING

MACo RISK MANAGEMENT TRAINING COURSES

- Back Safety
- Safety Committee Assistance
- Bloodborne Pathogen Program
- Confined Space Entry
- Defensive Driving
- Department Inspections
- Ergonomics / Assessments
- Hazard Communication Program
- Hearing Conservation Program
- Lockout/Tagout Program
- Monitoring Air / Noise Sampling
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Post Incident Review and Investigation
- Respiratory Protection Program
- Slips, Trips and Falls
- Shop Safety
- Tools—Hand and Power
- Welding, Cutting and Heating
- CPR and First Aid
- Defibrillators
- Hepatitis C Training

CONTACT Emelia McEwen at MACo 457-7213

ANTHRAX

WHAT IS ANTHRAX?

Anthrax is a bacterial, zoonotic disease caused by *Bacillus Anthracis*. Anthrax occurs in domesticated and wild animals, including goats, sheep, cattle, horses and deer. Infection is introduced through scratches or abrasions of the skin, wounds, inhalation of spores, eating insufficiently cooked infected meat or from flies. *The spores are very stable and may remain viable for many years in soil and water.* They will resist sunlight for varying periods.

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON FORMS OF ANTHRAX?

Anthrax is an acute bacterial infection of the skin, lungs or gastrointestinal tract. Infection occurs most commonly via the skin.

The skin form of the disease may be contracted by handling contaminated hair, wool, hides, flesh, blood or excreta of infected animals and from manufactured products such as bone meal. With treatment, the human fatality rate is less than 1%.

The inhaled form of anthrax is contracted from breathing in the spores and occurs mainly among workers handling infected animal hides, wool and furs. Under natural conditions, inhaled anthrax is exceedingly rare, with only 18 cases reported in the US in the 20th Century. The fatality rate for untreated inhaled or intestinal anthrax is over 90%.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS AND EFFECTS OF ANTHRAX?

The cutaneous or skin form occurs most frequently on the hands and forearms of persons working with infected livestock or contaminated animal products and represents 95% of cases of human anthrax. It is initially characterized by a small solid elevation of the skin, which progresses to a fluid filled blister with swelling at the site of infection. The scab that typically forms over the lesion can be black as coal, hence the name 'anthrax', Greek for coal.

After incubation period of 1-7 days, the onset of inhalation anthrax is gradual. Possible symptoms include fever, malaise, fatigue, cough, mild chest discomfort followed by severe respiratory distress. This mild illness can progress rapidly to respiratory distress and shock in 2-4 days followed by a range of more severe symptoms, including breathing difficulty and exhaustion. Death usually occurs within 24 hours of respiratory distress.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A SUSPICIOUS LETTER OR PARCEL?

- Have any powdery substance on the outside
- Are unexpected or from someone unfamiliar to you
- Have excessive postage, handwritten or poorly typed address, incorrect titles or titles with no name, or misspellings of common words
- Are addressed to someone no longer with your organization or are otherwise outdated
- Have no return address or have one that can't be verified as legitimate
- Are of unusual weight, given their size, or are lopsided or oddly shaped
- Have an unusual amount of tape on them
- Are marked with restrictive enforcement, such as "personal" or "confidential"
- Have strange odors or stains

WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH A SUSPICIOUS LETTER OR PARCEL?

Isolate the piece of mail; DO NOT TRY TO OPEN IT!

Notify the local police or postal inspector; provide a list of all people who may have handled the piece of mail.

All persons who touched the mail piece must wash their hands with soap and water.

Place all items worn when in contact with the suspected mail piece in plastic bags and make them available for law enforcement.

As soon as possible, shower with soap and water.

FALLON COUNTY JUSTICE COURT
CITY COURT, BAKER, MONTANA
ANNA K. STRAUB, JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

September 6, 2001

TO: MACo Board of Directors
MACo Members

FROM: Anna K. Straub, Justice of Peace
Fallon County Justice Court

For the past two years or so, it has been my privilege to represent the Justice Courts of Montana Magistrates Association as their representative on the Board of Directors for the Montana Association of Counties. This responsibility has been a wonderful experience, however it has become a priority in my life, at this time, that I must resign from this position. It seems that my first responsibility as a wife and a mother takes foremost priority. It is a time in my life as a mom that I do not wish to give up those times to be with my teenagers, or to miss being part of their lives through activities, to which all of my children are very much involved. I must say that I do love serving the people of Montana and I will miss the opportunities to be part of a very "awesome" group of people., the MACo Board of Directors, who love this great state and are working diligently for the people of Montana to make a better life for those people and their children.

To the next representative, I say, "Good Luck!" and "Congratulations". You are blessed with the opportunity to be part of changing the future for this great state. I would ask you to keep an open mind and be ready to listen with much intent and hope, always keeping in mind whom you represent and serve.

To the MACo Board of Directors, I say "Thank You" for being such a friendly group of people to work with. Thank you for always making me feel like part of the group in ways of discussion both formal and informal. Keep the faith as you strive to make Montana a state that is ready, willing and able to compete in this fast pace world. Thank you for allowing the Justice Courts of Montana to participate in making decisions that can change the future for these Courts as well as changing the future of this great state of Montana.

NOTE

Gary A. Olsen, Broadwater County Justice of the Peace, has been appointed to represent the Montana Magistrates Association on the MACo Board of Directors.

**Board of Directors Member
CLERK AND RECORDER REPRESENTATIVE**



**Vickie Zeier
Clerk and Recorder
Missoula County
Appointed 1993; Elected 1995**

Prior Occupation Recording Office Supervisor—Deputy 1984-1993

Favorite Part of the Job "I love working with the public and trying to solve their problems. I like to review and streamline procedures without jeopardizing customer service. For example, last year we combined the Motor Vehicle Office and the Tax Department, so that Tax personnel could do motor vehicle renewals. We needed the consent of Department of Justice to put the Motor Vehicle software on county computers. We also remodeled the offices and now have a sit-down lobby with TVs for the customers. A local merchant donated the televisions, including a small one for customers' children. In addition we also allow customers to schedule appointments to process their title work.

Least Favorite Part Disciplining employees

Personal Married 22 years to Scott; 2 daughters ages 19 & 15; walks and lifts weights for exercise; enjoys ceramics

Motto "Lord, help me remember that nothing is going to happen to me today that you and I can't handle together."

NACo INFORMATION AND REPORTS

NACo Western Interstate Region (WIR) October 3-5, 2001 submitted by Connie Eissinger McCone County Commissioner

GATEWAY COMMUNITIES

NACo Presidential Initiative, Regional Forum I

Rapid growth, urban sprawl, escalating property values and increased cost of providing services are among the challenges requiring collaboration and coordination between local communities and federal agencies. The hallmarks of successful gateway communities include:

- Local policies built around a broadly shared vision for the future of the community
- Capitalization on special assets of the community
- Team building with the creation of mutually beneficial partnerships with public land managers
- Involvement with an effective quality of life lobby in carrying out the vision of the community.

Additional forums will be held in North Carolina in March and at the WIR Conference in Billings in May.

WIR BOARD MEETING

Kit Kimball spoke on behalf of Department of Interior Secretary Norton. She stressed the belief in the 4 C's: consultation, cooperation, communication and conservation. She discussed the Endangered Species Act Reform, biodiversity and ANWAR. She is based in Denver and is an Idaho native.

Ann Aldrich, BLM Planning Chief, reported that there are 14 land use plans to be completed within the next two years because of the President's energy plan. The Board suggested including land acquisition and disposal in the plans, including local officials from the beginning, discussing and resolving the issue of third-party non-profit organizations who purchase land and then sell it to the federal government, resolving public lands access issues and revoking the Babbitt Policy and returning to the Hodel Policy.

Jesse Juen, BLM Group Manager of National Monuments and National Conservation Areas, noted that most national monuments remove land from energy development. He said that the Department of Interior could use input from local officials in regard to those resources.

Randy Phillips, Washington DC Forest Service, presented several issues:

1. Roadless Rule has had 850,000 comments and eight lawsuits in seven states.
2. Planning Rule is being reconsidered following concern over scientific definitions and two lawsuits. The planning regulations of 1982 are still in effect.
3. Fire Plan will have a shift to mechanical treatment from prescribed burning. Local Forest Services will make the determination whether larger diameter removal will occur (a reversal of Babbitt's plan). Intention is to be more flexible in the use of private equipment in fighting fires.
4. Montana's RAC will be approved. The RAC might take snapshots on the benefits and costs regarding having federal lands in communities—effects on schools, community health, economy, etc.
5. Water Users will be contacted instead having bypass flows forced.

The Board recommended that, since local officials are elected and are government, that cooperating agency status be established as government to government.

(Continued in the middle of next column)

NACo ELECTIONS PROGRAM

NACo is launching a national campaign to help improve the nation's election system by getting more Americans to work at the polls and by broadening voter education. The campaign, *Expand Democracy in America*, has two parts: "Work at the Polls" and "Voting is Easy."

"America's election system is a critical part of our democratic process," said NACo President Javier Gonzales. "Because counties have the primary role for conducting elections, NACo is committed to improving the system and expanding democracy in America by involving more people in the process and having better informed voters."

Work at the Polls

This is NACo's first focus. Approximately 1.4 Million people served as poll workers in the last election. The goal is to recruit an additional 100,000 poll workers by Election Day, 2002. NACo will seek support and commitment from a coalition of other organizations and has produced a 30-second TV PSA, which is available free to counties.

Counties have an important role and can participate by allowing their employees administrative leave to work at the polls, by showing the PSA on their local network channels, and by working with local groups to encourage more poll workers.

Voting is Easy

This portion is a nonpartisan effort to assist counties with voter education projects—information not only about candidates and issues, but also how to vote.

NACo will be distributing a guide showing successful voter education programs after the end of November and will seek foundation funding to provide grants to counties for voter education programs.

Submitted by Tom Goodman, NACo Staff

WIR Strategic Plan and NACo Steering Committee memberships were discussed. State Association Executives will discuss recommendations for better WIR representation on committees other than Land Use.

The Nevada Association of Counties has a BLM/Association fire coordinator housed in their offices, paid by the BLM to implement local coordination.

Invasive Species Advisory Committee will be considering contracts with counties to treat burned acres.

PILT discussion included a suggestion that since local governments are the first responders in homeland security, PILT might be the most streamlined means for Congress to get funds to local governments for this purpose. There was some reservation that counties do not wish to have strings put on PILT payments.

Plans for next year's legislation include new priorities added to the nine traditional issues:

Economic Development	Homeland Security/Emergencies
Water Supply / Infrastructure	Immigration
Western Power Grid Improvements	Environmental Law Reform
Broadband Telecommunication	County Payments--PILT/Craig/Wyden
Rural Health Care	Access—RS 2477 / Roadless
Transportation: Air Service: Shortline Rails	Forest and Rangeland Health
Affordable Housing	Noxious Weeds
Out-migration	Watershed / Stewardship
Sprawl	Energy Production ; Land Acquisition

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