



ATTORNEY GENERAL MIKE McGRATH NOTES 70 YEARS OF EXPLANATIONS ON TAKING PROPERTY

As a former county attorney, I was concerned when I read the article in the May, 2002, newsletter in which the Mountain States Legal Foundation trumpeted its latest “stunning first stage victory” in a lawsuit in New Mexico. A landowner was held entitled to damages for an uncompensated taking of his property by the Environmental Protection Agency. The article, which read more like an advertising solicitation for the Foundation than a news piece, claimed that it had broken new ground in litigating “takings” claims. Viewed in context of the emerging law in this area, nothing could be further from the truth.

Over the last seventy years, the United States Supreme Court has been explaining, case by case, the constitutional rules that govern the determination of whether a government’s regulation of a use of property has gone so far as to constitute a taking of the property for which compensation must be paid under the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. **Contrary to the article’s suggestion, the idea that a regulation that deprives an owner of all economically viable use of land is a “taking” is nothing new. The Supreme Court announced that general rule ten years ago in Lucas v. South Carolina Coastal Authority, 505 U.S. 1003 (1992). The Court reiterated its analysis on April 23 in Tahoe-Sierra Preservation Council v. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, 122 S.Ct. 1465 (2002). By the way, the landowner in the Tahoe case was not awarded compensation.**

It does no good to exaggerate the importance of individual factual rulings in this area of the law, as the Foundation’s May article does. The Supreme Court has made it clear that the determination of whether a regulation is a “taking” of property depends on the facts of each case, and particularly on the extent to which the regulation

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affects the property owner and interferes with his investment backed expectations, and the extent to which the regulation furthers the government’s justifying interest. The New Mexico case cited in the article is not even final, as the Foundation acknowledges when it refers to the decision as a “first stage victory.” The amount of damages to be awarded remains to be determined, and appeals are available to the United States Court of Appeals, and to the United States Supreme Court.

When I was a county attorney, I tried to make sure that my advice to my clients - the county commissioners - was fair and contained a balanced exercise of my legal judgment. The Foundation’s article is all heat and no light. I hope that MACo’s members are not misled by the article into believing that they dare not exercise their regulatory authority for fear of being successfully sued in a “takings” lawsuit. As the Supreme Court reiterated in April in the Tahoe decision, “takings” claims are “an uphill battle” for the property owner, and nothing in the New Mexico case discussed in the Foundation’s article has changed the legal landscape for such claims.

Submitted by Montana Attorney General Mike McGrath
May 20, 2002

FROM MACo PRESIDENT

DEAN HARMON



On April 30, commissioners from around the state gathered in Helena to learn about health insurance for our county employees. EBMS management was in attendance and gave a presentation along with answering questions. Essentially this meeting was an effort to expand the existing MACo pool.

Although this may be the direction the MACo membership chooses to go at our September annual meeting, I have, after two meetings with the Department of Administration, written Governor Martz and made a formal request for the State to accept local governmental entities into their insurance pool.

If the Governor's answer is yes, details can then be worked on to allow any or all counties to join. If the Governor's answer is no, we will have two reasonable options. One would be to have legislation introduced which would allow local governmental entities to join the state pool. The other option would be to significantly expand and adjust the current MACo pool.

After the Governor answers, I will be in touch with you to determine our next step.

MACo News

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

June

- 4 Primary Election Day
- 5 **MACo Resolutions Committee at MACo; 11:00 am**
- 6 **MACo Board of Directors at MACo; 10:00 am**
- 7 **JPA / JPIA Defense Counsel Meeting; MACo; 9:00 am**
- 11 Commissioner of Political Practices; MACo; 9:00 am
- 11-13 GIS Training; Department of Transportation
- 11-14 Sheriff and Peace Officer Convention; Billings
- 11 Accounting Training Seminar, Glasgow
- 12 Accounting Training Seminar, Miles City
- 13 Accounting Training Seminar, Billings
- 13 State Drought Advisory Committee; Capitol 307; 9:30 am
- 13-14 Interim Revenue and Transportation Committee; Capitol
- 16-20 Clerks of District Court Convention; Havre
- 18 Accounting Training Seminar, Great Falls
- 19 Accounting Training Seminar, Missoula
- 19 **Oil, Gas and Coal Counties; Lewistown**
- 20 Accounting Training Seminar, Butte
- 20 **MACo Public Lands Payment Workshop; Lewistown**
- 20 **MACo Public Lands Committee; Lewistown; 1:00 pm**
- 20 **MACo Forest Counties Coalition; Lewistown; 1:00pm**

July

- 12-16 NACo Annual Conference; New Orleans
- 15 State Highway Map meeting; Dept. of Transportation
- 19 District Court Council

September 22-25 MACo Annual Conference; Big Sky

November 5 Election Day

November 19-21 MACo Board Retreat

December 3-5 Joint JPA/JPIA Trustees Retreat

December 9-11 Newly Elected Officials Orientation

MACo OFFICERS APPOINTED

MACo President Dean Harmon, Roosevelt County, was appointed to the Tourist Tax Advisory Council and MACo Vice President Carol Brooker, Sanders County, was appointed to the Local Option Tax Advisory Council by Governor Judy Martz.

Governor Martz appointed three councils to advise her with her plans to cut Montanans' individual income taxes by 10%. To make up for the lost money, the Governor tentatively proposes a sales tax on tourist items such as restaurant meals, drinks, sporting goods and lodging.

The Tourist Tax Advisory Council and the Local Option Tax Advisory Council, along with the Income Tax Advisory Council, are expected to start meeting in June and complete recommendations for the tax proposals by Labor Day.

Some Good News
 from
Jack Holstrom
 MACo/JPIA
 Personnel Services
 Administrator



Normally, when I write an article, it is to warn you of some new court ruling or administrative regulation which will impact your operations. However, this time, I am writing you to tell you that at long last, MACo and the Montana Department of Administration, with the assistance of the Montana Department of Revenue, have hammered out a standard lease agreement which will be used in situations where the State of Montana leases county property. The new agreement is a big-time improvement over the previous contracts the State of Montana used to lease county property.

It is my understanding the new contracts will be used in all situations where the Department of Administration is involved in leasing county property. The first new contracts you should receive will be contracts for lease of space by the Montana Department of Revenue. These contracts are scheduled for distribution in June.

You will be able to identify the new standard lease agreement by reviewing the signature page. This page will contain language indicating the document is a standard lease which has been approved for legal content by legal counsel for the Montana Association of Counties.

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY
 HOSTED
 NACo WESTERN INTERSTATE REGION
 MAY 22-24, 2002

GENERAL SESSIONS



WORKSHOPS



MONTANA COUNTY POPULATION ESTIMATES (July 2001)

COUNTY	POPULATION (closest 100)	% CHANGE	COUNTY	POPULATION (closest 100)	% CHANGE
Anaconda-Deer Lodge ...	9,200	-2.6	Madison	6,900	1.3
Beaverhead.....	9,100	-1.2	McCone	1,900	-3.9
Big Horn.....	12,800	0.7	Meagher	1,900	0.3
Blaine.....	6,900	-2.0	Mineral.....	3,800	-1.1
Broadwater.....	4,500	1.6	Missoula	96,300	0.5
Butte-Silver Bow.....	33,600	-2.9	Musselshell	4,500	-1.0
Carbon.....	9,700	1.5	Park	15,700	-0.1
Carter.....	1,400	1.1	Petroleum	500	-1.0
Cascade.....	79,300	-1.3	Phillips	4,400	-3.9
Chouteau	5,700	-3.9	Pondera	6,300	-1.2
Custer	11,400	-2.8	Powder River	1,800	-1.8
Daniels.....	2,000	-0.9	Powell	7,100	-1.4
Dawson.....	8,900	-2.0	Prairie	1,200	1.4
Fallon.....	2,800	-2.7	Ravalli.....	37,300	3.4
Fergus.....	11,700	-1.7	Richland.....	9,300	-3.4
Flathead.....	76,300	2.4	Roosevelt.....	10,600	-0.6
Gallatin.....	69,400	2.3	Rosebud	9,300	-1.1
Garfield	1,200	-2.8	Sanders	10,400	2.1
Glacier	13,100	-0.9	Sheridan	3,900	-4.0
Golden Valley.....	1,000	-2.2	Stillwater	8,400	2.9
Granite	2,900	2.4	Sweet Grass	3,600	-0.7
Hill.....	16,500	-1.2	Teton	6,400	-0.9
Jefferson	10,400	3.5	Toole.....	5,200	-2.2
Judith Basin	2,300	-2.1	Treasure	800	-6.9
Lake.....	26,900	1.5	Valley.....	7,500	-2.0
Lewis and Clark.....	56,100	0.7	Wheatland.....	2,200	-4.7
Liberty.....	2,100	-2.9	Wibaux.....	1,000	-1.7
Lincoln	18,700	-0.9	Yellowstone	130,400	0.8

MORE COUNTY STATISTICS

The State of Montana has 29% of its land owned by federal agencies (Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, Fish & Wildlife Service, National Park Service). These Montana counties have over 50% of the land federally owned.

Mineral	82%	Beaverhead	57.6%
Flathead	74%	Park	56%
Lincoln	73.5%	Jefferson	52.5%
Ravalli	72.8%	Sanders	51%
Granite	63%	Butte-Silver Bow	51%

**POPULATION TRENDS
EAST TO WEST and NORTH TO SOUTH**

Based on July, 2001, population estimates of all 3,141 counties in the United States, the US Census Bureau reported that Jefferson and Ravalli Counties had the highest percentage growth in Montana. Flathead and Gallatin Counties had the largest increase in numbers.

The greatest declines were concentrated in eastern Montana, except for Butte-Silver Bow, which lost 1,002 residents for a 2.9% decrease. The largest percentage drop was in Treasure County, with Cascade County losing the most people.

The decrease in Cascade County brings it closer to losing its spot as Montana's third most-populous county to Flathead, which has about 3,000 fewer people.

Petroleum County, with just 488 people, is the sixth most sparsely populated county in the United States. Loving County in Texas has 70 people and Kalawao County, Hawaii, has 135.

64% of Montana's counties have fewer than 10,000 residents. North Dakota has the distinction of having the highest number of low-population counties with 75%. Most of the low population counties are in Georgia, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Texas.

Nationally, 55% of all counties had population growth last year. Nine of the ten fastest-growing counties were in the South—Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Texas and Virginia. However, the fastest growing county in the country is Douglas County, Colorado, with 13.6% increase.

The US population grew by an estimated 1.2%, but overall, Montana's total population changed little. It increased by 2,238 people (0.2%) to 904,433. Only 18 of the 56 counties (32%) saw growth in 2001.

**Board of Directors Member
DISTRICT 7 REPRESENTATIVE**



John Prinkki
Commissioner
Carbon County
1988 to present

Prior Occupation	Dairyman; Farmer; Rancher
Favorite Part of the Job	Working with my constituents and fellow commissioners
Least Favorite Part	Settling disputes between extremists
Goals for the Position	To make my community and state a better place to live
Personal	Married to Carla for 23 years; three children ages 20-23; enjoys fishing, hunting, hiking, cross-country skiing
Motto	Every day is a holiday.

COUNTY NEWS

GPS / GIS MOU SIGNING



(L-R) Janice Brown
Division Administrator, Federal Highways
Dave Galt
Director, Department of Transportation
Gordon Morris, Executive Director, MACo

TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

BEAVERHEAD COUNTY appointed Undersheriff Jay Hansen to replace Sheriff Keith Reeder, who resigned in February. Hansen is also a candidate for Sheriff.

TETON COUNTY appointed Diane Ameline, current County Treasurer, to assume duties from the Clerk and Recorder's Office, following the resignation of Stella Plachetka. The temporary appointment will last until a new Clerk and Recorder is elected in November.

ADDRESS CHANGES

RAVALLI COUNTY finished moving some offices to their new location in the former Marcus Daly Hospital on April 20. Offices which are now at 215 S. Fourth include the Treasurer, Clerk and Recorder, Commissioners, Department of Revenue and Sanitarian. Remaining at the Bedford Street address are the District Court and Clerk of Court, Justice Court, Sheriff, County Attorney, DES and the jail.

JAILS

CARBON COUNTY is considering a 20-year lease for a modular 15 steel-cell detention facility for \$87,600 per year.

ANACONDA-DEER LODGE COUNTY broke ground May 8 for its new \$2.2 million jail. Negotiations continue for dropping some jail features to save money.

GALLATIN COUNTY voters will consider a levy for a \$17.8 million detention center using mail ballots during the week of June 21-25, with counting to be done July 16.

ACLU LAWSUITS

FLATHEAD, GLACIER, LAKE, RAVALLI, MISSOULA, TETON AND BUTTE-SILVER BOW COUNTIES were named as defendants in a civil class action lawsuit that targets the public defender system by contending that funding of indigent criminal defense in Montana is inadequate.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FERGUS COUNTY placed \$350,000 in a revolving loan fund with Snowy Mountain Development Corporation to be used for grant matching and for economic development loans in Fergus County. The Corporation has also received a grant for a loan fund for the other five counties in MACo District 6.

FIRE FIGHTING REIMBURSEMENT

FLATHEAD COUNTY is proceeding with litigation against the US Forest Service for full payment of costs associated with fighting a fire last summer which started on federal land. The Forest Service has agreed to reimburse 10%.

LAND USE PLANNING

BEAVERHEAD COUNTY rewrote the land use portion of its proposed Growth Policy to reflect low attendance and the viewpoint **that planning is unnecessary. "Local government is not interested in telling private property owners what they can or cannot do with their own property....The type of use, location and density will continue to be entirely up to what the individual property owner wants or what the market dictates.....The county will allow future commercial growth and high-density residential development anywhere in the county."** Meetings are continuing.

MADISON COUNTY appointed 17 new landowners to Ruby River Task Force to explore ways to protect the Ruby River corridor from encroachment by inappropriate development. The original Ruby River Task Force addressed drought management and public access.

BEAVERHEAD COUNTY approved a Road Standard Manual to guide developers and the County Planning Board.

SCHOOLS

ROOSEVELT COUNTY was approached to locate an extension of Fort Peck Community College campus on a piece of property near the courthouse. Commissioners cited additional needs to alleviate a crowded courthouse and chose to retain the property for further county expansion.

GALLATIN COUNTY approved a plan to re-open two rural county schools which were closed in 2000. The schools must pass mill levies within two years of being inoperative in order to re-open.

FLATHEAD COUNTY supported a local effort to develop a hike/bike trail where there is no bus system to the Swan River School. The County approved use of CTEP funds for the first phase of trails.

PLANNING BOARD APPOINTMENT

GALLATIN COUNTY's appointment to the Bozeman City Planning Board was rejected by the mayor. The proposed appointment is the executive director of Southwest Montana Building Industry Association and the city sees this as a conflict of interest. The County disagreed, wanting to bring business interests to the Planning Board. The County and the City agreed to ask a judge to interpret the law.

FORMER POWDER RIVER COUNTY CLERK AND RECORDER PASSES

Charlotte Jensen Edwards, long-time Powder River County Clerk and Recorder, passed away in Helena March 7. Charlotte retired in 1977, after serving as a public employee, elected official and member of several statewide boards for over 40 years. She never missed an election, she always voted for schools, and she continued to enjoy watching C-SPAN congressional hearings while smoking her pipe.

Do you know of former county commissioners who have passed away this year? Please send us obituaries or articles in their honor, so that we can share the information with our readers.

Attorney General OPINION

Volume 49 No. 18

Question: Can the Montana Constitution and Montana law authorize a municipal court judge to release a defendant on a time-pay bail bond, defined as a bond in an amount set by the judge to be paid in installments?

Held: The Montana Constitution and Montana law authorize a municipal court judge to release a defendant on a time-pay bail bond, defined as a bond in an amount set by the judge to be paid in installments.

Requested by: Paul J. Luwe
Bozeman City Attorney

1997 TAXATION

REVENUES

	<u>Montana</u>	<u>All States</u>
Property Tax	18.0%	17.0%
Federal Funds	24.0	19.0
Fees	13.6	14.8
Sales Tax	0	13.9
Selective Taxes	14.1	10.7
Income Tax		
Individual	9.4	12.3
Corporate	1.9	2.6
Miscellaneous	11.6	5.0
Interest	7.4	4.8

EXPENDITURES

	<u>Montana</u>	<u>All States</u>
Social Services	20.0%	25.2%
K-12 Education	26.5	24.9
Environment	9.3	8.8
Higher Educ.	10.8	8.6
Public Safety	6.1	8.6
Transportation	11.1	7.7
Admin./Legal	6.0	5.3
Debt Interest	4.9	5.0
Misc.	5.1	5.9

Montana Taxpayer
Vol. 35 No. 6; August 2001

SENIORITY TRUMPS ADA

Seniority policies almost always trump the demands of disabled employees, ruled the US Supreme Court. Employers do not have to upend a policy for those with the most seniority in order to accommodate a disabled worker. The assumption is that seniority systems take precedence, the Court said. Anything else could compromise the expectations or job security of all employees covered by a seniority system. "We can find nothing in the statute that suggests Congress intended to undermine seniority systems," the Court wrote.

The Court left a small opening that disabled employees covered by seniority systems remain free to try to show that their case is special. The Court said it is entirely up to the employee to prove they deserve a break, and the employer gets the edge. The Court gave an example of a situation in which a disabled employee might be chosen over a senior employee if the employer has previous history of bending the seniority policy.

MACo JOINS MENTAL HEALTH FUND- ING COALITION

MACo joined the Council of Community Mental Health Centers, the County Attorneys Association and the Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association to approach the legislature for more funding for mental health. One issue is transportation costs to the State Hospital.

CABLE FRANCHISE FEES

In March, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued a declaratory order finding that cable modem service offered over a cable system constitutes an "interstate information service" and is therefore not subject to state or federal telecommunications regulations, nor is it subject to a cable franchise fee. Currently, cable companies pay the cable franchise fee to localities hosting their franchises. The fee combines regular cable television service with cable modem/internet when the cable franchise fee is based on gross receipts. The six largest cable companies in the nation have already sent letters to local franchise authorities advising that they are immediately halting payment of cable franchise fees on cable modem revenues. This represents a huge revenue loss to the nation's local governments.

NACo is joining with three other groups to form an alliance to fight the new order through a coordinated legal response in the appeal to the 9th Circuit Federal Court and by making comments to the Notice of Proposed Rules Making for the FCC.

At the end of April, counties should have received a survey on cable modem revenues, which will be used for presentation to the court and the FCC.

"For the Louisiana Purchase lands, the USA paid France less than three cents an acre; for Alaska, USA paid Russia two cents an acre."

Reader's Digest

CLERKS OF DISTRICT COURT ANNUAL CONVENTION

The 37th annual convention of the Montana Association of Clerks of District Court takes place June 16-20, 2002, in Havre, Montana, at the Great Northern Inn. Registration starts Sunday evening and the actual convention convenes Monday morning.

Presenters include personnel from:

Office of Court Administration,
Department of Revenue,
Child Support Enforcement Division,
Montana Legal Services, and
MACo.

Topics to be addressed include:

1. The implementation of SB 176 and HB 124 and how those bills are impacting our offices;
2. The Equal Justice Task Force, orientation and information about this new group;
3. A district judges' panel to take questions and answers concerning state assumption of district courts; and
4. The annual business meeting .

The clerks are also scheduled to participate in the Havre Beneath the Streets and the Wahkpa Chu'gn Buffalo Jump tours on Wednesday afternoon and a banquet on Wednesday evening. The convention will conclude after lunch on Thursday afternoon. Further information is available from:

Dena Tippetts
Clerk of District Court
Hill County
265-5481, ext. 224.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT TROUBLESHOOTING

What can county government do to stay out of trouble? Almost every situation can be given a generic reference to directly or indirectly failing to follow prescribed rules, either state, federal or county. Trouble spots most often occur by:

- Incorrectly reporting or failing to report revenues to other entities - state, federal or local
- Failing to report, as required, in a timely fashion
- Failing to meet various compliance standards or regulatory requirements
- Failing to abide by the "open meeting" law
- Failure to follow prescribed budget procedures for transfers, amendments, etc.
- Failure to consult with other appropriate elected officials
- Failure to have in place adopted policies, personnel or procedures
- Establishing a 'precedent' contrary to an existing policy
- Failing to utilize appropriate procedures or policies in hiring, particularly nepotism
- Violating standard practice in dismissal procedures
- Using county equipment for personal purposes
- Using political position for personal gain
- Being 'heavy handed' in dealings with the general public or public employees
- Making political promises which exceed the scope of authority

US Senator Conrad Burns' 2002 Women's Conference

Senator Burns' 19th women's conference, "Montana Women 2002," will be Friday, June 21, 2002, at the Copper King Hotel and Conference Center in Butte, Montana.

This all-day event is for Montana women of all ages who are interested in sharpening their business and personal skills in the 21st Century. A variety of workshops will be offered on topics such as communication, stress management, assertiveness, self-awareness and small business issues.

The luncheon keynote speaker, Ms. Catherine Bertini, has just finished two terms as the Director of the World Food Program of the United Nations, the world's largest global food aid agency.

The conference will begin at 8:00 a.m. and conclude by 4:00 p.m. The cost of the conference is \$20.00 and includes a continental breakfast, all workshop sessions and the keynote luncheon. To register, please contact Senator Burns' Butte office at 723-3277, 1-800-344-1513, or use the online form at : www.burns.senate.gov .

George Burns won his first Oscar at age 80.
Golda Meir became Israel Prime Minister at age 71.

At 96, George Bernard Shaw broke his leg when he fell out of a tree he was trimming.
Michelangelo was 71 when he painted the Sistine Chapel.

S.I.Hayakawa retired as president of San Francisco State University at 70, then was elected to the US Senate.

Casey Stengel retired from managing the New York Mets when he was 75.

VIDEO CONFERENCE: EMERGENCIES IN COMMUNITIES WITH CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES July 31, 2002

The National Institute of Corrections (NIC), the Corrections Learning Network and the NIC Western Regional Field Coordinators will lead systemic approaches to prepare for, respond to, and cope with emergencies affecting correctional environments. Viewers are encouraged to call in questions through a toll-free telephone number shown on the screen during the broadcast.

This videoconference is available without charge to any agency or facility nationwide with access to the Internet or a satellite dish or downlink. If your agency does not have its own dish, check to see if an agency or hotel in your area has a downlinked meeting room. If you cannot find a local site or need information on Internet access, call Ed Wolohan at the NIC Academy, 800-995-6429, ext. 131, for assistance.

Local site coordinators will download and make copies of information, agenda, rosters, etc. Coordinators are strongly encouraged to convene their groups at least one hour before broadcast time and to continue discussions after the videoconference.

Register by July 29, 2002

Call Mary Ann Karre at 800-995-6429, ext. 149, or e-mail at mkarre@bop.gov, or at the NIC Web site at www.nicic.org.

Who should participate?
wardens and sheriffs
police and fire administrators
community corrections personnel
probation and parole officers
counseling agency staff
community leaders
county commissioners
state and national FEMA & DES
technical responders
others, depending on locality

DNRC FIRE MANAGEMENT

More than 160 recommendations from Fire Odyssey 2001, held in Missoula last December, are now in goals, objectives and workable solutions proposed for the Department of Natural Resources (DNRC) Fire and Aviation Management Program.

The Strategic Action Committee met on February 21st and transformed input into realistic goals (which include answers to who, what, when, where, how and why). The Committee wants to receive comments and opinions about this plan. It is available at www.dnrc.state.mt.us/forestry/dnrcfiresite. In turn, the Committee will be presenting periodic progress reports, posting meeting notes on the Internet and periodic updates in various newsletters. Please contact the Committee Chair with questions, comments or feedback:

Dwayne Andrews
Incident Commander
P.O. Box 1794
Miles City, MT 59301
(406) 232-2034
dandrews@state.mt.us

MONTANA FIRE ALLIANCE

The Montana Fire Alliance statewide conference will be in Helena June 13-16th. The Montana Fire Alliance consists of dedicated emergency response professionals from a variety of organizations such as the State Volunteer Firefighter Association, Association of Fire Service Instructors and the County Fire Wardens Association. The four-day conference will bring together a combination of fire, rescue, EMS personnel and emergency service administrators. It will feature a hands-on extrication workshop, as well as team competitions for hydrant and hose hookup, bucket brigade and water tug of war. Of particular interest will be a memorial on the steps of the State Capitol for **Montana's fallen firefighters.**

Keynote speakers include nationally recognized professionals in the emergency response field, including the Incident Commander at the September 11th plane crash at the Pentagon, James Schwartz.

Anyone interested in attending this fun and valuable conference may contact John Semple at 443-7487.



NACo INFORMATION

RURAL ACTION CAUCUS GRANTS and LOANS

Rural Community Development Initiative

The purpose of the program is to provide technical and financial assistance to develop the capacity to undertake projects related to housing, community facilities, or community and economic development. Non-profit organizations, low-income rural communities, and federally recognized tribes are eligible to apply. Qualified private and public intermediary organizations are also eligible for funding. The minimum grant request will be \$50,000 and the maximum will be \$1 million. Matching funds must be in the form of cash or confirmed funding commitments and be at least equal to the grant amount. In-kind contributions cannot be used as matching funds. Deadline for applications is July 2, 2002.

Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program

This program seeks to meet the educational and health care needs of rural America through loans or a combination of loans and grants. It also funds advanced telecommunications technologies that provide learning and health care opportunities for rural residents. The maximum amount for a loan is \$10 million and for a grant, \$500,000. The application deadline for loans or a combination of loans and grants is August 31, and will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis.

More information on these initiatives is available by emailing rural@naco.org or visiting the online site at <http://www.ruralcounties.org>.

FARM BILL RURAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

Rural Development Backlogs Program

Funds for backlogged applications for water and wastewater programs \$360 million

Value-Added Agricultural Market Development

Provides grants to assist producer-owned value-added businesses \$240 million

Rural Business Investment Program

Provides guarantees for rural business investment companies to provide equity investments for businesses \$100 million

Rural Strategic Investment Program

Creates regional investment boards that may receive up to \$3 million for economic development \$100 million

Broadband Service in Rural Areas

Provides funds that allow rural consumers to receive high-speed, high-quality broadband services \$100 million

Television Broadcast Signal Loan Guarantees

Provides funds to allow rural residents in unserved or underserved areas to access their local television stations \$80 million

Firefighters and Emergency Personnel Grants

Provides funding to train rural firefighters and emergency personnel \$50 million

Want Endless Love? How About Endless Learning!

While we can't promise love, county officials, employees, and even community members can now learn any day, any time, by joining NACo's e-learning venture, NACo Internet University (NIU). The website offers two libraries, each with hundreds of courses for all skill levels. NIU is Internet-accessible, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The NIU Information Technology library provides everything from how to use Microsoft Office to advanced skills such as Microsoft Enterprise Services, A+ and C++. The Professional Skill Development Library offers training in management areas, communications, leadership, finances, compliance issues, and dozens of other subjects. All employees in your counties' many departments can take courses separately, on their own schedule, or learn together by forming discussion groups on what they've cov-

ered in the online courses. This online learning could boost departmental performance and worker satisfaction in areas ranging from how to give great customer service, how to get along as a team or how to avoid sexual harassment.

In NACo-member counties, the fee is \$195 per person, per library, per year. For access to both libraries, the year's access fee is \$349 per person. NACo provides discounts for large group purchases to encourage entire county workforces to improve their skill levels.

NIU offers CEUs and credits, as well as reports to managers. IT courses have 24-hour mentoring. A technical helpdesk provides support. Take a look at the NIU homepage at www.nacoiu.org. Once you're on the NIU homepage, click on the top red buttons for a list of library courses, four free sample courses, ordering information, answers to frequently asked questions, and order forms for checks, purchase orders, or credit cards. For more information contact Lois Kampinsky at 202/942-4267.

PLEASE SUPPORT MACo SUPPORTERS

ROSCOE STEEL & CULVERT
 The **Most Reliable** Source of Products
 Required for County Road Projects
 406 / 656-2253
 2847 Hesper Road
 Billings, MT 59102

406 / 542-0345
 5405 Momont Rd.
 Missoula, MT 59802



Gordon E. Hoven
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