



LOSS CONTROL CONFERENCE WELL ATTENDED



Dan Dunlap, Special Agent, US Drug Enforcement Administration
"Methamphetamine Lab Risk Management"

The Risk Management-Loss Control Conference launched out on its own, January 14-16, a month before the upcoming February MACo/DES Midwinter conference. This new approach follows advice from county officials that the former Midwinter Conferences were too long and that safety directors could not attend both the risk management session and the DES session.

A variety of different workshops attracted a broad representation of county officials. Forty-one counties were represented by over 100 county commissioners, law enforcement personnel, road and bridge departments and safety committees.

All sessions were held in the MACo Conference Room.

"Jail Inspections" repeated a well-received series which had been presented around the state last October. This make-up class was held on Tuesday afternoon before the heart of the conference began Wednesday morning. The response to the session was again complimentary for the useable information and techniques presented.

Wednesday and Thursday morning featured sessions geared for law enforcement personnel, road / bridge staffs and a final session spotlighting workplace safety and requirements for

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the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OSHA). The law enforcement section covered "Duties and Responsibilities While Holding Arrested Juveniles" and Methamphetamine Lab Risk Management". The road department sections covered "Bridge/Cattle Guard Liability" and "Road Liability Issues".

Guest presenters included:

- Alan Horsfall, Compliance Contractor
Montana Board of Crime Control
- Dan Dunlap, Special Agent
US Drug Enforcement Administration
- Steve Jenkins, Director
MSU Local Technical Assistance Program
- Eric Griffin, Public Works Supervisor
Lewis & Clark County
- Greg Roset, Manager
Stillwater Mine
Columbus, MT
- and Carl Crouse, Safety Specialist
Safety Bureau
Montana Department of Labor & Industry.

Alan Horsfall
Compliance Contractor
MT Board of Crime Control

"Duties and Responsibilities
While Holding Arrested
Juveniles"



**A message from
MACo Second Vice President
Doug Kaercher, Hill County**



I was flattered to even be considered, but I am very honored to be appointed as your MACo 2nd Vice President. I'm excited to be able to learn from a very knowledgeable team that currently serves as your MACo Executive Board.

I have a couple of immediate concerns that will affect counties long into the future. First is the legislative session and how local governments will fare. I hope my knowledge and experience with city and county government will help to soften those blows and strengthen the unity of both associations. Second is current and future funding for health and human services. The current cuts have the potential to cost counties in any number of our budgets, particularly law enforcement, as well as others.

As we move forward in MACo, please feel free to express your ideas and concerns and I will work to serve you to the best of my abilities.

BASICS OF BUDGETING

a pre-conference workshop

This nuts and bolts workshop on preparing budgets is for new officials and anyone interested. It is offered Tuesday, February 18, from 10:00 to 3:00 at the Westcoast Colonial Hotel. There is no registration fee and lunch will be available for \$12. Please note that this is offered the day before the Midwinter Conference is to begin.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

February 5-7	County Superintendents of Schools; Helena
February 17	Presidents Day Holiday
February 18	State Drought Council; Metcalf Building; 1:00
February 18	Budgeting Workshop; Colonial Hotel; 10:00 am
February 19	MACo Board of Directors
February 19-21	Midwinter/ DES Conference; Colonial Hotel
February 19	Treasurers Association Meeting; Colonial
February 20	JPIA Membership; Colonial Hotel; 7:00 pm

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 28-Mar. 4	NACo Legislative Conference; Washington DC
March 28-30	National Forest Counties & Schools Coalition
April	GASB Training—Management & Analysis
April 7-10	County Road Supervisors; Fairmont
April 28-May 2	Magistrates Association; Lewistown
May 2	JPIA Trustee Renewal Meeting
May 5-23	MACo District Meetings
May 14-15	BOS Joint Workforce Council; Great Falls
May 28-31	Western Interstate Region (WIR); Reno
June	GASB Training--Reports; Supplementary Info.
July 10-16	NACo Annual Conference; Milwaukee
July 16-18	County Attorneys Association; Fairmont
August 10-14	Clerks of District Courts Association; Forsyth
September 14-19	Clerks and Records Association; Forsyth
September 21-24	MACo Annual Conference; Lewistown
September 22-26	Treasurers Association; Dillon
September 29-Oct. 3	Magistrates Association, Helena

**MACo EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
and
LEAGUE OF CITIES & TOWNS
EXECUTIVE BOARD**

On Wednesday, January 22, a joint meeting of Executive Boards for MACo and the League continued coordination and discussion efforts for local governments.

The focus of this meeting was to discuss legislation of mutual interest, with concentration on three subjects: protecting local government entitlements, the local option tax proposal and construction and equipment bidding processes.

The group also identified health insurance coverage and costs for local government to be of mutual concern.

The MACo and League Executive Board members who attended thought that the meeting was worthwhile and agreed that they should meet on a regular basis.

REMINDER!

Please submit the name of your 2003 County Commission Chair to the MACo office!

Phone: 442-5209 FAX: 442-5238

Email: maco@maco.cog.mt.us

**MACo / DES
MIDWINTER MEETING
WESTCOAST COLONIAL HOTEL
FEBRUARY 19 - 21, 2003**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18

10:00 - 3:00	The Basics of Budgeting	Clark Room
1:00	Coalition of Forest Counties	Lewis Room
1:30	State Drought Advisory Committee	Director's Conference Room
	Lee Metcalf Building (DEQ), 1520 East Sixth	
	Counties are invited to report the current impacts of drought and local conditions.	
3:30	Economic Development Committee	MACo Conference Room
3:00 - 5:00	Registration—Midwinter and DES	Lobby

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19

7:30 - 6:00	Registration	Lobby
7:30	MACo Tax & Finance Committee	Helena Room
8:30 - 5:00	DES Conference	State and Capitol Rooms
8:30 - 3:30	Treasurers Association	Clark Room
5:00 - 6:30	No-Host Social	Natatorium
7:00	MACo Board of Directors - Dinner	Legislative Room

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20

7:30 - 8:30	Reservation Counties	Natatorium
7:30 - 5:00	Registration	Lobby
8:30 - 9:30	General Session	Executive and Legislative Rooms
10:00	Buses to the Capitol	
10:15 - 11:30	Visits with Legislators	Capitol
11:30 - 1:00	Lunch with Legislators	Capitol
1:15	Buses to Colonial Hotel	
1:30 - 4:30	Legislative Follow-up	Executive and Legislative Rooms
4:30	Urban Counties	Judicial Room
	Hard Rock Mining Counties	Bitterroot Room
	Oil, Gas and Coal Counties	Executive Room
	Forest Counties	Legislative Room
	Fort Peck Lake Counties	Montana Room
7:30	JPIA Membership Meeting	Executive Room

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21 All sessions are in the Executive and Legislative Rooms

8:30 - 9:30	Federal Law Enforcement Issues—Bill Mercer, Montana's US Attorney
10:00	GIS / GPS Project and Data—Skip Nyberg, Department of Transportation
11:00 - noon	Closing General Session

MACo BOARD MEETING December 9, 2002 Synopsis of Minutes

Twenty-one of the twenty-six members were present. Board Minutes of September 22, 2002 and September 25, 2002 were approved.

Fiscal Officer Dan Watson reported that for the period ending October 31st, 2002, revenue collections are on track for the year. In the expenditure categories office supplies are up, primarily due to the legislative session, with two unanticipated costs for elevator repairs and purchase of a new FAX machine. The report was approved as presented.

Alan Thompson, District 11, and Howard Gipe, Urban Representative, reported on the Growth Meeting that was held on October 24th, 2002. The key factors identified during the conference were: 1) attaining funding for growth impacts, 2) opposing legislated mandates, 3) protecting existing revenues from legislative actions and 4) preserving the Treasure State Endowment Program funding level. Board member Gipe requested regular communications with counties via e-mail during the session, with the web site being maintained on as close to real time basis as possible. He noted a need for close coordination and emphasized that growth is an issue for all counties.

Gordon Morris, Executive Director, asked the Board for reconsideration of the UNUM Group Life Proposal. He still considered it as a program to recommend to counties in the same manner as the Touch America phone program and the Nationwide Retirement System program. The Board discussed the fact that it had been considered and rejected and it should not be reconsidered, even though there was no downside to the proposal. The motion to reject the proposal was passed without objection.

Executive Director Morris presented the current MACo mission statement ("to promote the voluntary cooperation and coordination of the sovereign counties of the state of Montana") and presented four alternatives

1) to promote the development of county government and enhance the public's understanding of county governments roles and responsibilities in service to the public.

2) To promote the public's understanding of county government while enhancing the ability of county governments to serve the public.

3) To provide services and leadership to county officials to enable them to better serve the public in their administration of county government.

4) To provide a creative environment for its county officials membership designed to enable them to better serve the needs of their citizens and face the challenges of the 21st Century.

The motion to adopt Statement 3 as the official mission statement for the Association was adopted without objection.

2nd Vice President Kennedy noted coming DPHHS changes which will impact counties and encouraged county input in Community Action Plans. He noted that the appeal process in the agreement should be the basis of making decisions and hence should be used.

President Miller announced his intention to resign as MACo President effective December 31st, 2002, 11:59 p.m. He thanked everyone for his/her support and indicated that he would be at the midwinter meeting and that he was not going to drop out of sight. The motion to accept his resignation pursuant to the effective date was adopted without objection.

The next meeting will be February 19th, 2003, at the Midwinter meeting.

2003 MACRS Conference

Montana Association of County Road Supervisors

- Please mark your calendar -

Date: April 7-10, 2003

Place: Fairmont Hot Springs

Agenda Items:

- Dealing with the Public
- Personnel Issues
- Road Law
- Speed Limits
- Beaver Dams
- Wildfires
- Shoulder Maintenance/Weeds
- Cattleguards
- Road Law

For information, call Donnetta 1-800-541-6671.

Montana Taxes – A Balancing Act

Mary Sexton, Teton County Commissioner
Dan Watson, Rosebud County Commissioner
Allan Underdal, Toole County Commissioner

Even during the holidays, people have taxes on their minds. At the local Christmas stroll, a small-town Montana businessman lamented to his county commissioner that property taxes keep going up as taxes are shifted to the local level. After all, the businessman explained, he paid his first-half property taxes in late November, and the 15% increase ate into his projected Christmas profit! Furthermore, he commented that while business equipment tax reductions implemented in recent years may have benefited large corporations, the gain to him was negligible. Finally, the small business owner mused, “Montana needs to adopt a sales tax.”

This scene is probably familiar to many local elected officials recently. In fact, the Montana Association of Counties (MACo) has identified comprehensive tax reform with consideration of a sales tax as one of its goals. This stance is not new for MACo. Starting in 1948 with a resolution supporting sales tax at its annual convention, MACo has been a steady supporter of tax reform. Again in the 1980's, MACo members and staff began working with legislators to seek balanced taxation. The decrease in natural resource taxes – a boom of the 1970's – caused many elected officials and citizens to begin exploration of alternative ways to provide for funding of government services. In the 1990's, MACo supported bills to implement a sales tax as a means of lessening the burden on property tax. The last bill, a 4% general sales/use tax introduced in the 1999 session, received broad-based interest but was not enacted into law. Since that time, government budgets along with household budgets have been seriously strained given national and regional changes in the economy.

Why does MACo promote comprehensive tax reform so strongly? As a state, we have become excessively dependent on property tax. According to the Tax Foundation, Montana ranks in the top five in property tax collections while only in the top 20 for income tax collections. Since we have no sales tax, income and property taxes remain our taxes of choice with property tax going to support schools and local government. Additionally, as local and school officials can attest, remarks regarding property tax increases – from 10% to 20% in many jurisdictions – have become a regular topic of conversation along with drought and the economy.

And why should a general sales tax be considered? We urgently need to balance taxation in Montana while capturing new revenue sources such as tourism. A well-crafted general sales tax can exempt food and medicine while providing tax credits for low income families resulting in a progressive tax for Montana's needs. Since Governor Martz's administration has initiated discussion on sales tax, we need to broaden the scope and consider property tax reductions. A 4% sales tax generating up to \$575 Million can replace half of our reliance on property tax, giving Montana property owners a deserved break. Finally, a 4% sales tax will capture about \$60 Million from out-of-state visitors, a new source of revenue.

Montana is, indeed, at a crossroads. Local officials, legislators, and citizens recognize the need to tackle our budget shortfalls and deteriorating ability to provide services. Comprehensive tax reform must be the cornerstone in addressing our financial challenges. Along with tax reform, clear guidelines must be developed to assure that changes in tax structure do not result in additional tax burden on Montana citizens and businesses. A balance of sales tax, property tax, and income tax can ease unfair tax burdens and help insure needed services for Montanans.

The Montana Association of Counties stands ready to work with the legislature, governor, interest groups, and citizens to explore and implement tax reform in Montana. Let's hope that embracing tax reform is a New Year's resolution for all Montanans!



**SUPREME COURT HOLDS
DISCHARGED PUBLIC EMPLOYEE
TO GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE TIMELINES**

**By Jack Holstrom
JPIA Personnel Services Administrator**

Russell Offerdahl was a Montana Department of Natural Resources employee who had acted inappropriately toward a subordinate. The Department provided Mr. Offerdahl with his due process rights regarding his opportunity to tell his side of the story and terminated his employment by letter dated September 15, 1997. The letter advised him that he had a right to pursue a grievance in accordance with the State's grievance policy. The Department attached a copy of the policy which stated that a grievance had to be filed within fifteen working days of the event being grieved.

Mr. Offerdahl didn't send his grievance to the Department until October 7, and it was filed with the Department October 8. The Department denied his grievance because it was not filed within the fifteen working-day deadline.

Offerdahl sued the department under the Montana Wrongful Discharge from Employment Act (WDA). The district court agreed with the Department and held that Offerdahl didn't have a case because he hadn't exhausted his administrative remedies. On appeal to the State Supreme Court, the Court affirmed the district court dismissal even though Mr. Offerdahl had missed the deadline by only a day or two.

This case reaffirms the importance of giving a terminated employee a copy of the county grievance procedure when he/she is terminated. If you provide the employee with a copy of the grievance procedure with the termination letter, and the employee doesn't follow it, the employee can't file a claim for wrongful discharge in district court.

**ROOSEVELT
COUNTY
RECOGNIZED**

Roosevelt County is one of 100 semi-finalists across the United States recognized for innovations in American government during 2002. These government entities were selected from a pool of nearly 1,000 school, county and state nominations in six areas of innovative programs:

- Economic Development
- Education
- Health Care and Social Services
- Management and Governance
- Protective Services
- Transportation and Public Works.

Roosevelt County's recognition is in Protective Services for an inter-governmental law enforcement program.

Commissioner Gary Macdonald reports that the unexpected recognition is the result of a meeting with people from the Kellogg Foundation and the thorough efforts of county staff people who filled out many, many forms. The process was very detailed, much like filling out a grant application.

Finalists will receive \$20,000 awards. Five of the finalists will be named winners of the Innovations Award in May 2003 and will receive \$100,000 grants. "Innovations in American Government" is a program of the Institute for Government Innovation, endowed by the Ford Foundation at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and is administered in partnership with the Council for Excellence in Government.

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1010 Main Street
Miles City, MT 59301
406-874-3343



COUNTY NEWS

GROWTH POLICY

RAVALLI COUNTY adopted its growth policy on December 31, after three years of public meetings. The Commission is now considering a repeal.

GALLATIN COUNTY adoption of its growth policy may be driven by public impetus for a district to prevent coalbed methane drilling.

JEFFERSON COUNTY adoption was delayed because of interpretation of the policy as **“a regulatory document with the force of law” or “an advisory document”**.

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY discussed **wording concerning “existing partnerships”**, saying that sometime those partnerships **don't exist and the county has been left out** of the discussions.

9-1-1

FLATHEAD COUNTY switched over to its new 9-1-1 System in December. BROADWATER AND LINCOLN COUNTIES are progressing with their planning efforts.

NATURAL RESOURCES

SWEET GRASS COUNTY notes that 30% of its tax revenue comes from mining, with agriculture tax revenue dropping to 20%.

VALLEY COUNTY leased 3,000 acres for oil and gas exploration in the north part of the county. The land is not county-owned, but the county retains mineral rights.

TETON COUNTY is fighting weed control on lands under the Conservation Reserve Program. Fines levied for lack of weed control are realized through reduction in annual rental payments and not direct income. Consequently the county has no funds to control the 16 year-old weed problem.

BUTTE-SILVER BOW COUNTY continues its frustration with mining cleanup, after realizing that none of the local concerns were addressed by the Environmental Protection Agency.

FLATHEAD COUNTY has been accused of violating state water quality standards for its part in a flood control project on the banks of Flathead River. Federal and State agencies have asked that the berm and flood

control improvements be removed.

LAND USE PLANNING

FERGUS COUNTY adopted an ordinance for development permits which will help identify floodplain limitations prior to start of construction and will assign a physical address for emergency purposes for all structures.

RAVALLI COUNTY adopted new rules for granting subdivision variances which have **five criteria and “overall positive effect”** as final requirements.

LINCOLN COUNTY approved a draft airport influence area (AIA) to control the height of structures around airports.

MADISON COUNTY proposed an ordinance for developing cell towers and wind farm facilities, which addresses public safety compatibility with adjoining land uses, scenic resources, migratory birds, facility abandonment, etc.

BUTTE-SILVER BOW COUNTY proposes to acquire 228 acres surrounding its landfill as a buffer between solid waste and development.

LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY is being sued for failing to enforce a subdivision covenant barring large-animals. Apparently the covenant was never recorded and property owners were never informed.

RECREATION

FALLON COUNTY continued to explore development of a motor raceway in conjunction with the gun range.

CASCADE COUNTY is re-opening horse racing with new management, after the 2002 season was cancelled.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY Clerk of District Court Jean Thompson retired January 31 after seventeen years of service.

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY Deputy Public Defender Roberta Drew filed discrimination charges against the County for appointment of a less-qualified person to Chief Public Defender. In addition she was fired from her position shortly thereafter.

FINANCE

BEAVERHEAD COUNTY sheriff deputy, who was on contract to serve a small rural community, received a \$6,000 bonus from the community. Commissioners hope this will help encourage deputies to continue to serve in rural areas.

PARK COUNTY paid off the bond for its incinerator three years early. However, the incinerator no longer meets federal air quality emissions standards and must be updated or shut down by 2005. Estimated costs for updating are between \$500,000 and \$1 million.

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY received more **than \$122,000 from Uta Mae Satre's estate**. Ms. Satre, who died in 1994 at age 92, had served as the county switchboard operator and had retired about 20 years ago.

SANDERS COUNTY school and county budgets have been jeopardized by a tax protest by Pacific Power and Light. Tax payments were put in escrow late in the budget year. The county hopes to be able to release most of the funds and hold only the amount in excess of the previous **year's tax bill. However the county would be liable for the full amount if the protest was ultimately successful.**

PUBLIC HEALTH

CARBON COUNTY Health Association cited the nationwide shortage of nurses when it ceased providing public health nursing services to the County. A contract was then signed with the local hospital.

SPECIAL ELECTION

FLATHEAD COUNTY approved the controversial bond election-by-mail for Flathead Valley Community College. The county election office had erroneously removed 15,000 names from the list of **active voters. The Secretary of State's office advised mailing the ballots to the 15,000 names and postponing the vote response deadline. Most of the controversy dealt with the change in election**

Federal FY 2002-3 FOREST RESERVE RECEIPTS

COUNTY	TITLE I	TITLE III	INTEREST	TOTAL
BEAVERHEAD	\$165,582	\$ 1,396	\$ 456	\$ 207,433
BROADWATER (25%, not Title I)	13,339 (not Title I)		40	13,379
CARBON	51,055		112	51,167
CARTER	13,785		30	13,815
CASCADE	47,379		104	47,483
CHOUTEAU	8,169		18	8,187
A-DEER LODGE	44,010		97	44,107
FERGUS	25,221		56	25,277
FLATHEAD	1,285,764		3,074	1,288,838
GALLATIN	93,737	16,542	243	110,522
GLACIER	7,556		17	7,573
GOLDEN VALLEY	6,331		14	6,345
GRANITE	330,429	82,607	909	413,945
JEFFERSON	145,487	36,372	400	182,259
JUDITH BASIN	67,005	11,824	174	79,003
LAKE	102,590	18,104	266	120,960
LEWIS & CLARK	361,930	63,870	937	426,737
LINCOLN	4,848,391	248,124	11,872	5,108,387
MADISON	114,037	28,509	314	142,860
MEAGHER	114,481	20,203	297	134,981
MINERAL	577,670	108,319	1,549	687,568
MISSOULA	603,304	106,465	1,563	711,332
PARK	124,202	21,918	322	146,442
PONDERA	28,285		61	28,346
POWDER RIVER (25%-not Title I)	36,398 (not Title I)		91	36,489
POWELL	390,485	68,909	1,011	460,405
RAVALLI	309,333		681	310,014
ROSEBUD (25%-not Title I)	10,236 (not Title I)		26	10,262
SANDERS	1,394,777	49,227	3,390	1,447,394
B-SILVER BOW	63,513		140	63,653
STILLWATER	28,693		63	28,756
SWEET GRASS	49,626		109	49,735
TETON	52,944	9,343	137	62,424
WHEATLAND	16,848		37	16,885

QUARTERLY OIL AND GAS LEASES

The next quarterly oil and gas lease sale conducted by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) is scheduled for March 4th, 2003, in Helena.

DNRC is in the process of preparing environmental assessments, according to Monte Mason, DNRC Minerals Management Bureau chief. Mason said that this action is to issue leases for possible future exploration and production. "Before any activity occurs, DNRC will prepare a site-specific environmental review," he explained. The state Board of Oil and Gas must also review and issue a permit before any activity can occur.

The March sale includes tracts in the following counties: Blaine, Dawson, Hill, Liberty, Musselshell, Richland, Teton, and Valley

A map and a detailed list of tracts being considered by DNRC may be obtained by calling Mason in Helena at (406) 444-2074. The information is also available on the department's Internet site at: <http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us/trust/mmb.htm>

STATEWIDE WEED MAPS

The Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) offers state-wide information on five noxious weeds:

- leafy spurge
- spotted knapweed
- Russian knapweed
- Dalmatian toadflax
- sulfur cinquefoil.

The NRIS Thematic Mapper presents separate maps showing section-by-section presence of these weeds in Montana. The weed information can be viewed at:

<http://nr.is.state.mt.us/mapper>

Musculoskeletal Disorders

TREATMENT and PREVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS

Prevention should be the goal of every ergonomic program. Here are some treatment recommendations for musculoskeletal disorders:

1. **Deep massage for muscle spasms:** Employees with sore, inflexible muscles need to break the hidden muscle spasms with intensive, deep massage, preferably by a trained therapist. This can take as long as eight weeks to resolve and more time to rebuild healthy tissue. Vigorous, localized massage can eliminate trigger points that are entrapping nerves. In normal activity, it is hard to notice these spots, although when pressed, you will feel a small but intense irritation. Although a professional massage might be most effective, you may be able to treat them yourself by pinching the spot, and while holding it, performing the movement.
2. **Reduce short term workload:** For the short-term, reduce the workload as much as necessary to facilitate the healing process. If nerves are damaged, the healing process will take a lot longer.
3. **Improve seated posture:** For the long-term, adjust your workstation to maintain a posture in which your shoulders and head are not collapsing into your chest. The goal is relaxed balance.
4. **Use large muscle movements when working:** Adopt keyboarding techniques that emphasize the

use of large muscles, such as the shoulders and upper arms. In extreme cases, a person could resort to typing with three fingers. Use the same principles with the mouse, avoiding finger and wrist movements and pinching actions.

5. **Reduce repetitiveness:** Exploit every possible opportunity to reduce or displace the incessant, repetitive tasks in keyboarding. This includes everything from frequent breaks to voice recognition software.
6. **Reduce stress and combat aging:** Address lifestyle and work habits to reduce your level of work-obsessed tension. Work on improving sleep patterns and drink lots of water.
7. **Stretches and strengthening:** Frequent stretching will help increase mobility where nerves are most likely to be pinched or compressed. It will also help restore flexibility, resilience and range of motion. Muscle vitality and stamina will increase with strengthening exercises. Especially emphasize muscles that hold the shoulders back, or hold the arms up while extending fingers.

Treatment selections are from "It's Not Carpal Tunnel Syndrome! : RSI Theory and Therapy for Computer Professionals" by Suparna Damany and Jack Bellis. Questions can be directed to Jack Bellis at jackbellis@hotmail.com

Back-pain selections are from "Spine Biomechanics, Government Regulation and Prevention of Occupational Low Back Pain" by William S. Marras, [The Spine](#)

Basic tips for preventing back pain include:

1. **Stretch frequently:** Stand up and walk around to feed the spine and to promote circulation.
2. **Exercise consistently and moderately:** Don't expect the body to perform athletic miracles on the week-end after a week of inactivity.
3. **Avoid prolonged awkward postures** while lifting, sitting, standing or any time.
4. **Avoid repetitive reaching** Working with the arms extended in front flattens the lumbar spine and increases disk pressure.
5. **Avoid quick forceful stretches**, even if they feel good. All stretches should be done slowly, combined with deep breathing to keep the ribs and torso flexible.
6. **Perform dynamic sitting:** Changing positions frequently is the best recipe for spinal health. Remember to stand up and walk around.
7. **Use armrests:** Armrests are fine when relaxed and reclined to unload the spine. They contribute to disc pressure if leaned on while performing work tasks.
8. **Reduce stress:** Stress is the primary contributor to most musculoskeletal disorders and has a significant link to lower back pain. For stress reduction, control the external environment however possible. Reduce noise levels or light if it is irritating. Create a work space that is comfortable.

NACo INFORMATION

2003 KEY CONGRESSIONAL PRIORITIES

1. Remote Sales Taxes: Support the collection and distribution to states and counties of current sales taxes due on purchases made by mail order and over the Internet. Support the Streamlined Sales Tax System and urge states to pass such model sales tax legislation.
2. TEA-21 Reauthorization: Undertake a comprehensive legislative effort to reauthorize the highway, transit and safety programs, with particular emphasis on:
 - * funding that meets the growing transportation needs of county government
 - * implementing a workable environmental streamlining process
 - * improving local government input in the planning and programming of federal funds
 - * develop highway and transit programs that provide for safety, security and reliability.
3. Funding Election Reform: Support multi-year funding to implement election reform as authorized by the 2002 vote
4. Funding Homeland Security: To seek enactment of NACo's basic policies on homeland security, the "First Responders Initiative," including a strong emphasis

on prevention, regional planning, specialized training, interoperability and an "all-hazards approach" to emergency management.

5. Health Care: Medicaid, Uncompensated Care and Public Health: NACo has chosen health care as a top priority because of its impact on county budgets and its ripeness in the legislative process. Health care must be assumed to include mental as well as physical health.
6. Oppose Unfunded Mandates and Preemption: This includes both Congress and the Administration legislation and regulations, such as land-use regulatory authorities and other locally based functions.

The eleven NACo Steering Committees have each identified their most important issues. The eleven committees are:

Agriculture and Rural Affairs
Community & Economic Development
Environment, Energy and Land Use
Finance & Intergovernmental Affairs
Health
Human Services and Education
Justice and Public Safety
Public Lands
Telecommunications & Technology
Transportation

The Committee priorities will appear in future editions of MACo News.

RISK MANAGEMENT SCHOLARSHIPS FOR SMALL ENTITIES

\$1,000 scholarships are available for up to 60 people from small local governments to attend the Public Risk Management Association (PERI) Annual Conference in Reno, Nevada, May 18-21. Applications for the scholarship are due February 22. The aim of the PERI Scholarship is to provide an educational opportunity in risk management to entities which do not have budgets to send staff to national conferences.

The scholarship is open to employees, elected officials, and board members. Eligibility is based on:

1. Employment or official of a County with population of fewer than 100,000
 2. No attendance a PRIMA conference within the past three years
 3. Some responsibilities in risk management and/or insurance function for the entity.
- Only one person per entity may receive a scholarship.

Information and application forms are available at www.riskinstitute.org or from Audre Hoffman, (703)352-1846 or ahoffman@riskinstitute.org

Information about the annual conference is at

When you consider computer technology, the original point-and-click was a Smith and Wesson. (.and sometimes don't you wish you had one to use on your computer?)
Sayings from Hirning

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