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NACO REPORTS

MACo News
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ARTICLES ARE WELCOMED
BEFORE THE 20TH OF EACH
MONTH

Email: macopb@maco.cog.mt.us
Subscriptions are \$25 per year.

LAND USE PLANNING NOVEMBER WORKSHOPS Three Locations

**November 10 Miles City
Town & Country Club; 9:30 am**

**November 12 Lewistown
Yogo Inn
Sapphire A Room; 9:30 am**

**November 14 Missoula
Holiday Inn Parkside
Ballroom C; 9:30 am**

The training sessions are designed to include county planning staffs, county planning boards and any employees who work with land development. The training session is offered to JPIA member counties at no charge. Non-member counties are invited to attend, with a \$100 per person fee. Lunch will be provided at each location to allow informal discussion among the participants.

There will be a general presentation about the law which governs land use decisions in Montana: MCA Title 76, Chapters 1 through 3 (with the exception of Chapter 2, Part 3, which addresses municipal zoning).

The materials and presentation will emphasize the subdivision review process, zoning requirements, Senate Bill 326 and its effect on growth policies and the law incorporating growth policies.

Two other areas of the law which will be reviewed are: (1) the Public Participation Act and the Open Meeting Act, after House Bill 94; and (2) an explanation of the history of and present status of the Building Construction Standards law.

Finally, there will be a discussion of court decisions made over the years as well as a discussion of the claims made in litigation.

Attendees are encouraged to contact Myra Shults at (406) 549-7224 prior to the training, if a county has a particular issue for discussion. This is an opportunity to bring questions and copies of county subdivision regulations or growth policies for discussion. Discussing actual situations which are important to the participants, in a round table setting, will provide a break from an all-day lecture.

Even if there are only a few development pressures now in any one county, come to the workshop. When that first subdivision comes in, this workshop will establish a strong frame of reference.

In addition, the County Attorney Association will help organize a session for county attorneys and/or attorneys interested in land use. This session will be held early next year.

CARLA SMITH RETIREES FROM MACo



Carla Smith, MACo Financial Officer, will retire from MACo at the end of December. Her last day in the MACo office will be December 12.

Carla came to MACo in June 1994, after she retired as Vice President of the Administration and Finance Department of the State Compensation Insurance Fund.

Carla and her husband, Rick, are planning to move from Helena to Great Falls to be near their daughter and family.

MACo Executive Director Gordon Morris wrote:

“On behalf of myself and the entire MACo staff, I extend my thanks and appreciation to Carla for her service to MACo and counties all across the State. Carla has made a significant contribution to MACo in so many ways. She deserves a big thank you from all of us.

She has asked for “no fanfare” in her farewell and we will honor this request.

We will miss her as she moves to a new place in her life plan. Sincere wishes go to her and her husband, Rick, as they relocate.

Best wishes to Carla!”

Note: Interviews for Carla’s replacement were conducted October 24--29.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

November 3	County Officials; MACo
November 6	MACo Tax, Budget Committee; MACo; 10:00
November 6-9	NACo Workforce/Human Services; Miami
November 10	Land Use Planning Workshop; Miles City
November 11	Veterans Day Holiday
November 12	MACo Executive Committee Conf. Call
November 12	Tax Reform Committee; MACo; 8:00 am
November 12	Land Use Planning Workshop; Lewistown
November 14	MACo Economic Development Committee
November 14	Land Use Planning Workshop; Missoula
November 18	MACo Transportation AND Public Lands
November 18-20	JPA-JPIA Trustee Retreat; Helena
November 19-20	Association of Conservation Districts; Billings
November 20	FWP Advisory Council; MACo; 8:00 am
November 21	Property Tax Reappraisal; MACo; 9:00 am
November 27	Thanksgiving Day Holiday

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 2-4	MACo Board Retreat; Butte
December 4-5	County Attorneys Association, Billings
December 10	Zoning and Land Use Law Class; Helena
December 11-12	Revenue & Transportation Interim Committee
December 12	BOS Council of Commissioners; MACo; 1:00
December 25	Christmas Day Holiday
2004	
January 1	New Years Day Holiday
January 12-14	MACo Risk Management Conference
January 14-15	Weed Association; Billings
January 19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Holiday
February 9-13	MACo Midwinter Conference; Billings
February 27-March 2	NACo Legislative Conference, DC
April 8-9	JPIA Renewals Meeting

RURAL COUNTIES MATTER

NACo is compiling information on why rural America matters and needs help with examples. Specifically, NACo is collecting county profiles from rural county members on why each county is unique and brings value to all America. For example, does your county have a national park or provide special tourism? Does your county lead the nation in production of a item or crop? Does your county have an unusual hub?

In addition please add why you think rural America matters and why policymakers and the press should pay heed to the challenges in rural counties. It is NACo’s hope that by telling the stories of rural America, greater focus will be put on the challenges, successes and potential of rural counties.

Please submit your county profile (300 words maximum) to NACo Associate Legislative Director Joe Dunn by email to jdunn@naco.org; by fax 202-942-4281 or mail to NACo’s offices at 440 First Street NW, Washington DC 20001

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for public facilities were awarded to Butte-Silver Bow, Cascade, Dawson and Pondera Counties.

Butte-Silver Bow will replace sidewalks and fire hydrants in a 3-block area and install new sewer and water hookups for eleven new homes. (\$268,000)

Cascade County will install sewer lines, water mains / meters and connect all households in a rural water district to the Great Falls City system. (\$500,000)

Pondera County will expand the nursing home's Special Care Unit for Alzheimer and long-term care patients. (\$302,000)

Dawson County will construct a new Senior Citizens facility. (\$500,000)

For the next public facilities grants, projects which are applying for both TSEP and CDBG will be reviewed concurrently. The next Public Facilities Grant applications will be due May 28, 2004.

LETTERS TO PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AGENCIES

"On the form, you have changed my little boy to a girl. Will this make a difference?"

"I cannot get sick pay. I have six children. Can you tell me why?"

"I am glad to report that my spouse who is missing is dead."

"Anguished English" by Richard Lederer

COUNTIES DISMISSED IN PUBLIC DEFENDER LAWSUIT

Commissioners for Flathead, Glacier, Lake, Ravalli, and Teton Counties, as well as Butte-Silver Bow Chief Executive, had been named as defendants in an American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) lawsuit, claiming that the counties had failed to provide the public defender programs with necessary administrative and financial resources.

At the time the suit was filed, Teton and Glacier Counties relied upon the Ninth Judicial District Court Judge to appoint counsel on a case-by-case basis. The other counties were under year-long flat-fee contracts with individual attorneys located in or near the county seats. One year later, the state assumed all financial responsibility to provide indigent defense.

Butte Silver Bow, Flathead, Lake and Ravalli Counties did not renew their contracts and had no more supervisory or administrative authority over any district court judge assigning indigent defense. Teton and Glacier Counties continued to be served by the District Court Judge.

As a result, on October 3, the plaintiffs filed a dismissal of the claims they had against these counties. The counties agreed to provide the plaintiffs with district court data for three years (FY 2001—FY 2003) including fiscal and budgetary documentation.

NOTE: The State of Montana and Missoula County are still named as defendants in the suit.

WATER GRANT TO PARK COUNTY

Park County was recently awarded a DNRC grant to collect and evaluate surface and ground water data to develop a water resources protection and management plan for northern Park County. The availability and quality of water in northern Park County are under increasing pressures from rapid subdivision developments. In addition, coalbed methane (CBM) development is being considered. Officials have limited information on the aquifers in the region or their interaction with surface water.

The number of wells completed in northern Park County between 1990 and 2000 increased by 50--70%. Much of the new development is occurring in rural areas, which puts a strain on wells for potable water and for septic drains for sanitary disposal.

"These funds will be used specifically to identify and evaluate groundwater and surface water systems in the areas of rapid subdivision development, collect groundwater and surface water information in areas of potential coalbed methane development and develop a water resource protection and management plan for northern Park County," explained Deeda Richard, DNRC Renewable Resource Grant Coordinator.

The deadline for 2004 applications is May 15. For further information about these grants, contact Deeda Richard at 406-444-6783 or

drichard@state.mt.us .

P I L T F U N D I N G
CURRENT FUNDING COMPARED TO FULL FUNDING POTENTIAL

COUNTY	2003	FULL	COUNTY	2003	FULL
ANAC.-DEER LODGE	\$ 261,459	\$ 388,231	MADISON	\$ 487,840	\$ 1,079,134
BEAVERHEAD	513,222	1,111,443	McCONE	163,478	359,871
BIG HORN	55,158	81,902	MEAGHER	111,745	290,363
BLAINE	356,195	627,574	MINERAL	116,858	232,125
BROADWATER	373,475	554,558	MISSOULA	628,542	933,296
BUTTE-SILVER BOW	289,047	429,194	MUSSELSHELL	99,470	149,996
CARBON	613,244	1,121,679	PARK	792,382	1,431,136
CARTER	110,473	250,137	PETROLEUM	45,482	90,461
CASCADE	271,612	403,305	PHILLIPS	261,231	679,055
CHOUTEAU	205,380	304,960	PONDERA	134,477	199,680
CUSTER	445,354	661,939	POWDER RIVER	141,855	327,892
DANIELS	267	397	POWELL	340,988	861,080
DAWSON	86,319	128,172	PRAIRIE	82,275	201,313
FALLON	109,765	167,894	RAVALLI	1,371,653	1,432,835
FERGUS	637,201	946,894	RICHLAND	70,679	104,948
FLATHEAD	658,999	1,094,835	ROOSEVELT	5,528	8,208
GALLATIN	904,550	1,343,129	ROSEBUD	433,077	643,058
GARFIELD	111,887	231,563	SANDERS	166,332	246,980
GLACIER	542,789	805,965	SHERIDAN	2,412	3,581
GOLDEN VALLEY	40,070	59,499	STILLWATER	247,114	366,930
GRANITE	127,993	268,851	SWEET GRASS	306,812	576,332
HILL	64,506	95,783	TETON	356,992	530,083
JEFFERSON	547,266	988,329	TOOLE	61,066	90,674
JUDITH BASIN	168,792	396,354	TREASURE	979	1,454
LAKE	154,525	229,448	VALLEY	524,356	1,136,833
LEWIS & CLARK	1,251,357	1,421,728	WHEATLAND	82,134	121,958
LIBERTY	45,169	67,069	WIBAUX	35,481	52,684
LINCOLN	317,881	472,008	YELLOWSTONE	103,419	153,897

MACo ASSOCIATE MEMBERS ELECTED OFFICIALS

ASSESSORS

President Cele Pohle
Powell County

ATTORNEYS

President Brad Light
Cascade County
MACo Board of Directors
Leo Gallagher
Lewis and Clark County

CLERKS AND RECORDERS

President Paulette DeHart (MACo Board)
Lewis & Clark County

CLERKS OF DISTRICT COURTS

President Cheryle L. Demmon
Mineral County
MACo Board of Directors
Marilyn Hollister
Rosebud County

CORONERS

President Bill Jones
Yellowstone County
MACo Board of Directors
Joseph Christiaens
Pondera County

MAGISTRATES

President John Seiffert
Carbon County
MACo Board of Directors
Gary Olsen
Broadwater County

SHERIFF AND PEACE OFFICERS

President Greg Hintz
Missoula County
MACo Board of Directors
John Strandell
Cascade County

SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS

President Dottie Donovan
Beaverhead County
MACo Board of Directors
Karla Christensen
Garfield County

TREASURERS

President Carol Bean (MACo Board)
Custer County

ART KLEINJAN HONORED



Art Kleinjan, Blaine County Commissioner, received the Montana Council of Community Mental Health Centers Award at the Regional Council of Behavioral Healthcare Centers Conference in Breckenridge, Colorado. This award recognizes the contributions he has made on the Board of Golden Triangle Community Mental Health Center, as well as his advocacy for mental health consumers and services statewide.

He served on the Board for 20 years and has been the chair for over 15 years. He worked with three different Executive Directors. He helped start the local advisory board – the only one in the region that has run continuously.

Art is a strong advocate and an effective spokesman for people who suffer from mental illness. He consistently drives 460 miles round trip to Helena to attend meetings or to testify. He supported the successful effort to pass Montana's mental health insurance parity law.

Although this award is for his accomplishments in support of mental health, it is only a small part of Art's community involvement.

Art serves on the Sweet Memorial Nursing Home Board, chairs the Bear Paw Economic Development Board and chairs the Montana Association of Oil, Gas and Coal Counties. He was appointed by US Secretary of Interior to the BLM Resource Advisory Council and chaired the Governor's Task Force to resolve issues related to the Missouri River Breaks National Monument.

Art also has been a 4H leader for 30 years and was inducted into the Montana 4H Foundation Hall of Fame in 2001. He is a volunteer fireman, has twice chaired the Eagles Lodge and is active in his church's parish board.

His style is open and direct. You know where you stand with him and he will always listen to other points of view. A Navy veteran, he has been a rancher for most of his life. He and his wife, Alice, have 5 children, 19 grandchildren, and 3 great grandchildren.

STRATEGIC NATIONAL STOCKPILE

The purpose of the Strategic National Stockpile is to augment state and local medical supplies in response to terrorism, natural disasters or industrial accidents. The Stockpile has repeatedly demonstrated the ability to get 50 tons (a 747 wide-body jet) of antibiotics and medical supplies anywhere in the country within 12 hours.

Congress created the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) in 1999. It is owned by the Department of Homeland Security and it is managed by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. In addition to responding to disasters, the SNS can also provide training, guidance, evaluation and planning assistance to state and local governments.

The complexities of planning and implementation for a disaster, which might require the services of SNA, are frequently underestimated, according to Richard Nolan. He spoke recently at the Carbon County Health Board meeting. "The critical actions in any response are the efforts of the state and local authorities to move the supplies we deliver to those who need them. Those efforts involve receiving, storing, staging, distributing and dispensing the supplies."

The Montana contact and coordinator for SNS is Art Bicsak in the MT Department of Public Health and Human Services.

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

California state and local government structure is an outgrowth from the 1879 Constitution, when there were 800,000 people in the state. Then came technological advances changing demographics, environmental needs, private sector changes, educational failures, severe health care deficiencies, inefficient service delivery, rapidly deteriorating infrastructure, government growth and population of 35,000,000.

The state has basically the same government structure set 124 years ago. Within that structure are 7,000 units of local government with 15,000 local elected officials.

So, they recalled the governor and elected a movie star to "change" things.

CA County; Volume 19, No. 3
Editorial by Tim Smith, Sonoma County Supervisor
President, California State Association of Counties

IN MEMORIAM

Former Richland County Commissioner Eugene Iversen passed away in October. Iversen served on the Richland County Commission from 1984-1990.

In addition to his local government service, he and his wife, Louise, owned a school bus business and Gene's Equipment. He was known as "Mean Gene" to many school bus riders. He retired to work part time at Sidney Red-E-Mix and for the Beet Growers Association.

He trained several horses for roping, racing and riding in annual wagon trains.

He is survived by his wife, four children and their families.

IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS FOR 9-1-1

The Public Safety Foundation of America (PSFA) distributes funds to assist public safety communication agencies. The final round of four grant lettings will be in December.

The application process involves a pre-application questionnaire to verify that the applicant's project is within PSFA funding priorities. The Pre-application Questionnaire and the grant guidelines are available online at www.PSFA.US. If the pre-application is accepted, the agency is assigned a grant number and a full month will be allowed to complete the application.

PSFA is encouraging electronic submissions of grant pre-applications. In addition, the pre-application can be requested by email (PSFA@APCO911.org) or by phone 386-322-2500 or by FAX 386-944-2730.

Round Four

Pre-application due	Dec. 5
Application due	Jan. 2

COUNTY NEWS

NEW OFFICIALS

BEAVERHEAD COUNTY Attorney is Marvin McCann, who was appointed to replace Michael Riley.

ANACONDA-DEER LODGE appointed Janice Thomas as the new Treasurer. She replaces Patty Donahue, who passed away in July.

GALLATIN COUNTY developed a new County Administrative Officer position and hired Randy Kuyath for the work.

LAND USE / DEVELOPMENT

PARK COUNTY gave preliminary approval for a 931-acre subdivision with 38 residential lots ranging from 6 to 30 acres in a gated community.

LEWIS and CLARK, MADISON, PARK AND RAVALLI COUNTIES were selected to participate in the 2003 Western Community Stewardship Forum. The three-day training session focused on land-use management and techniques to tackle growth issues. The Forum is a joint effort of NACo and the Sonoran Institute. Previous Montana county participants have included **CARBON, GALLATIN, and JEFFERSON COUNTIES**.

FLATHEAD COUNTY is re-hearing all zoning changes handled since October 2001. Commissioners hold two or three public hearings per day on the 42 zoning changes and text amendments they already approved once.

MISSOULA and YELLOWSTONE COUNTIES are concerned with the lack of city building code inspections in the former donut areas around the cities. A 2003 law ordered cities to turn over building code inspections to state inspectors. Counties may need to establish a process for inspections.

BEAVERHEAD COUNTY housing project drew protest when area landlords expressed frustration over an apartment proposal because the new complex would be tax-exempt.

BUTTE-SILVER BOW granted \$1 Million and a 10-year tax break to the company that plans to reopen a copper and molybdenum mine. The mine would reopen this fall and provide about 350 jobs.

RICHLAND COUNTY oil drilling has increased every year. So far this year 175 permits have been issued; there were 224 in 2002; 166 in 2001; 112 in 2000; and 96 in 1999. Horizontal drilling has gained interest with 162 permits, compared to 20 in 1999.

BUILDINGS and GROUNDS

RAVALLI COUNTY must submit its purchase of the former Marcus Daly Hospital to the voters. The County moved into the building in April 2002 after vast remodeling.

BIG HORN COUNTY executed a buy-sell agreement for the purchase of a gas station across from the courthouse for \$55,000.

GALLATIN COUNTY reversed a plan to sell ten acres to the Fair because of environmental clean-up costs. In addition extensive fair-grounds renovations are needed. The Fair Board is considering a ballot measure for funding.

SHERIDAN COUNTY has been asked to assume ownership of an unlicensed mausoleum.

FERGUS COUNTY Fair Board would like to become an independent entity to manage the county fair. At issue are the budget and employee compensation.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

BIG HORN COUNTY'S five-year pact to provide law enforcement for the City of Hardin ended. They are in process of considering a city police department, after nearly 25 years of county services for the city.

BUTTE-SILVER BOW added a \$10 surcharge for each traffic violation to help finance two additional traffic enforcement officers.

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY has been asked to forgive a \$37,000 bill to the City of Billings for housing misdemeanor offenders of city ordinances.

GALLATIN COUNTY has been offered the technology to allow emergency dispatch operators to locate a wireless caller using 9-1-1. It will allow them to trace the caller's location to the nearest cell tower.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

NURSING HOMES

PRAIRIE COUNTY closed Prairie Manor, its home for the elderly, after 30 years of operation. The Manor Board hopes to seek grants for remodeling and then re-open.

POWDER RIVER COUNTY will ask voters to approve a special levy to keep Powder River Manor open for its 28 residents. The Manor needs 36 residents to break even financially.

SWEET GRASS COUNTY voters passed a mail ballot to fund deficits faced by the Pioneer Medical Center. 62% of registered voters participated.

FALLON COUNTY received a list of eight major repairs needed for the Fallon Medical Center. The top priority for the hospital is repair and upgrading the boiler system.



JANITORIAL ERGONOMIC RISKS

By

Emelia McEwen, MACo Assistant Risk Manager

Janitorial staffs are the people behind the scenes who make our schools, offices and health-care facilities clean and safe. Good ergonomic practices can make the difference between a healthy working staff and one that is sidelined with injuries.

Risk factors such as heavy repetitive lifting, prolonged grasping, working in confined spaces, working with toxic chemicals and working in awkward postures can all be present during typical janitorial tasks.

Lifting trash receptacles, hauling and emptying trash and relining the cans are tasks where injuries frequently occur. Cans may be too large and deep, creating awkward, extra-heavy lifts. Limiting the size and weight of trash bags can reduce these hazards. "Framed" receptacles can allow side access for easy trash removal and wheeled collection can make transporting garbage easier.

For handling items such as laundry, spring-loaded platforms can help assist in lifting items from deep bins.

Janitorial crews usually carry their supplies with them. Rolling carts for transporting cleaning supplies and rolling mop buckets should have large, low resistance wheels to enable travel on mixed floorings, door sills and elevator gaps. All wheeled items should be well-maintained to ease transport and to minimize force needed. Handles should be at waist height and heavy items should be pushed,

rather than pulled along, to use larger muscle groups.

When mopping, frequently changing movement styles while working (pushing, pulling and moving the mop with the entire body) helps to prevent muscle fatigue.

Housekeeping tasks often involve working with deep sinks. Bending over the sink and handling items can place strain on the back. Placing an overturned dishpan in the bottom of the sink can bring items within an easier reach. Using a small pan at waist height for washing and using the deeper sink for the rinse may be an option, too.

Scrubbing and other deep cleaning tasks are generally the most hand intensive, and cleaning out bathtubs is especially taxing to the upper body. Knee pads for protection is advised. Alternating hands and varying tasks can help to give the small muscles of the hands and forearms a break. Padded non-slip handles are useful for scrub brushes and other cleaning tools. When sweeping, debris should be pushed rather than pulled, and the common pile can later be vacuumed rather than picked up. Chemical cleaners can be used to loosen tough dirt for easier scrubbing as long as ventilation is adequate.

Choosing lightweight vacuum cleaners and those with adjustable height handles will help to minimize shoulder stress and ensure that the equipment fits more than one worker. Proper

equipment maintenance can help to reduce the force needed for operation.

Eliminating clutter and quickly cleaning up spills can prevent accidents. Safe chemical and equipment storage and easy access to them can also reduce or prevent accidents.

Good janitorial ergonomics requires an efficient "material flow" plan to help minimize repetitive movements and injuries. Planning an efficient program may take some time, but it can pay off in decreased work-related injuries. Often the staff has the best ideas for efficient work flow, so include all staff in planning the program. Establishing a structured program makes all workers aware of and responsible for their own safety concerns.

Recent Canadian OSHA studies focused on cleaning nursing home properties. They included making beds, cleaning bathrooms and tubs, dusting and vacuuming. Cleaning bathtubs and making beds are the most physically awkward and demanding tasks on the upper body. Vacuum cleaners and supply carts are the largest and heaviest pieces of equipment. The study recommended lighter-model vacuums with adjustable height handles, self-propelling motors, and low-noise emissions. The study also identified employee education on correct and safe lifting techniques as a most important injury prevention measure.

MACo BOARD OF DIRECTORS SYNOPSIS OF MINUTES—SEPTEMBER MEETINGS

MACo FY03 Audit: Tom Swindle, TOS & Associates, presented the MACo FY 2002-03 Audit. He noted that the revenue generated by the GIS project skewed the financials for the year. Expenditures would have exceeded revenues by approximately \$40,000. Also, the SWIM Grant would be less than anticipated in the coming year.

MACo Dues Proposal: Dan Watson, Fiscal Officer, outlined the reasons for the dues recommendation. Over the years a concerted effort has been made to maximize revenue sources and keep dues as low as possible. However, this effort has reached its limit. An analysis of the reserves and the decrease in anticipated revenues makes this request necessary.

Board member Mark Rehbein asked what level of reserves was needed. Dan responded that 25% of the expenditure total would be adequate.

1st Vice President Bill Kennedy suggested restructuring (staffing changes, eliminating a district meeting series, etc.) as a means to reduce expenditures.

Board member Elaine Mann noted that without the increase in dues we might lose more than we would gain in terms of legislation both at the state and the federal levels.

Board member Joan Stahl recommended a combination of reductions and an increase. She supports the NACo "Adopt a County" Proposal.

Board member Art Kleijan appreciated MACo publica-

tions but suggested eliminating the multiple copies going to counties.

Fiscal Officer Watson closed by noting that, while there was a one-time increase in dues in 1996, dues have not been adjusted since 1983.

Budget Amendments: Dan Watson, Fiscal Officer, presented the Board with three proposed amendments to the MACo adopted budget for FY 04:

1. NACo Full Membership was adopted without objection.

2. Local Government Center Certification Proposal would develop a 40-hour training agenda for County Commissioners over a 2-year period. MACo would contract with MSU Local Government Center to develop the training materials. The motion passed with Board member Mark Rehbein in opposition.

3. PILT / WIR Assessment—Board member Mark Rehbein stated that he felt the assessment should fund all costs associated with the PILT effort, WIR and Public Lands. With no further discussion the budget amendment was adopted.

NACo Public Lands Committee: Beaverhead County Commissioner Donna Sevalstad, Coalition of Forest Counties Chair, suggested adding members from MACo. Many states have multiple representatives and, hence, more votes on important public land issues. The Coalition intends to continue to fund one position and they would like

MACo to fund an additional member at approximately \$5,000. 1st Vice President Bill Kennedy suggested eliminating staff participation in WIR and/or Public Land Committee travel as an offset. The Board postponed any action on the request until the Forest Coalition makes a final recommendation.

E-government RFP: Executive Director Gordon Morris distributed a proposed RFP for e-government services for counties. Based on Conference discussion and IT Committee review, a meeting with the representatives from both the Clerk and Recorders Association and the Treasurers Association will be set to review and discuss it.

Board Retreat: Executive Director Gordon Morris distributed a draft agenda for the December Board leadership retreat in Butte. A Board meeting with the Tax and Finance Committee to discuss the MACo budget and dues proposal was scheduled for Tuesday, December 2, at 1:00 pm before the Retreat. Board member Tom Hatch intends to canvas his district commissioners on this subject and recommended others do likewise.

Rural-Urban Issue: Executive Director Morris distributed a "Food For Thought" report from the Rural-Urban Study Group. Board member Allan Underdal commented that MACo represents one unit as a whole and counties are all equal.

NACo INFORMATION

HEALTH COMMITTEE

Bill Kennedy, Yellowstone Co.

US Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson acknowledged that counties do need to be included during the Medicare reimbursement debate in Congress. He stated, "Over the last year counties spoke loud and clear and opposed our last recommendations. I will work hard to have the counties at the table." A subcommittee has been set up by President Karen Miller to meet with Secretary Thompson. I will represent Montana and rural counties at the meeting later this year.

The major issues for our Congressional agenda include:

- a) Medicare Reimbursement
- b) Pharmacy Plan (National Drug Program)
- c) Children's Health Insurance
- d) Rural Hospital Funding
- e) Behavioral Health

The Health Steering Committee is looking for input on rural health care. Please forward to me your problems in providing healthcare, hospital and nursing home coverage in your communities. Rural ambulance service is a hot issue and I ask for your assistance on information.

President Karen Miller appointed me as Vice Chair of the Health Steering Committee and Rural Action Caucus for year 2004. I am honored to serve as your representative to NACo. Please give me your feedback at bkenedy@co.yellowstone.mt.us or Fax (406) 256-2777 or call (406)

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

Carol Brooker, Sanders County

1. The committee reviewed House and Senate efforts with respect to Workforce Investment Act reauthorization, noting that the House bill reflected some substantial changes in favor of local governance. This was achieved through a consortium of organizations working with the bill's principle author, Rep. Buck McKeon.
2. The committee reviewed proposals for pension reform and efforts by both houses to make changes to public pension law permanent. We also discussed efforts by the Department of Labor to update the Fair Labor Standards Act. It would help establish tests for distinguishing between hourly and salaried workers.
3. The committee reviewed and approved substantial modifications to the workforce section of the labor and employment platform. These changes were made to streamline the platform and allow it to reflect overall changes in attitude toward the way workforce programs should be implemented.
4. Finally the committee reviewed and approved resolutions supporting full funding for workforce programs and urging US Department of Labor to adopt simplified performance measures.

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Kathy Bessette, Hill County

I was pleased with the new language in the platform for a comprehensive policy to recognize the challenges rural county governments are facing and to urge coordination between local, regional and state governments.

The new platform states, "federal policies should support the continued existence of family farms," and includes an examination into the declining revenue to food producers while there has been no reduction in the cost of food.

Reaffirmed Resolutions

- 1) Recognizing negative economic impact from loss of crop protection chemicals and the need to preserve pesticide uses;
- 2) USDA Rural Strategic Investment Program and additional funding for infrastructure, public services and innovative projects;
- 3) Rural Broadband Access Program to provide high speed broadband to rural communities;
- 4) Low interest loans for entrepreneurial activities by rural communities, farmers and small businesses.

New Resolutions

- 1) Country-of-origin labeling provisions from the 2002 farm bill;
- 2) Department of Homeland Security resources for the cooperative extension service to educate the public on agro-terrorism;
- 3) US tariff on imported citrus products.

A resolution from the Community and Economic Development Committee to reauthorize the Economic Development Administration passed.

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