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DISTRICT COURT SAFETY AND SECURITY

Montana Supreme Court Administrator Jim Oppedahl recently released the final safety and security recommendations from the District Court Council. "You will see a strong theme--that the state and counties must partner with each other to improve court security not only for the safety of judges and state / county employees, but for the safety of the public in the courtroom...I am asking MACo to partner with us to ensure that these recommendations are seriously addressed in all 56 counties.

The Department of Justice will begin a thorough survey of all county court facilities and offices in the next few months. The Justice officials intend to work with local law enforcement and county commissioners when conducting the reviews. I anticipate that by March 2006, we will have a full list of recommendations for security improvements statewide.

Also, we will be developing -- with the assistance of Department of Justice -- standard operating procedures for court safety. These will identify the best practices in court processes to guarantee the safety of public officials and the general public. We will want to discuss these with MACo and the appropriate MACo Committee. Hopefully,

MACo will be willing to endorse these policies and share them with the counties."

The District Court Council Advisory Committee received 176 responses to surveys (90% return) covering elements of court security. The responses provided specific information for the following recommendations:

1. Each county court location should have a District Court safety and security committee to address in-county procedures and needs.
2. A standard threat reporting form, adopted by District Court Council, is for use by District Courts, Clerks of District Courts, lower courts and probation officers.
3. Standard operating procedures will be written and distributed to county sheriffs and court officials.
4. Full participation from MSPOA, MACo, DES coordinators and District Court clerks is asked.
5. A survey will be conducted of every court location and district/youth court office.
6. Four interim projects include:
 - a. Procedures for back-up of computer systems
 - b. Routine testing of panic button systems
 - c. Piloting Flathead County's IT "button panic" system in Yellowstone County and, if operational, providing low-cost alternative to panic buttons systems
 - d. Training on personal safety both in and out of the courtroom.

NEWS

from President Doug Kaercher

Committee assignments are finally completed and you may be wondering why certain changes took place. (See pages 5 and 10) I took a hard look at MACo's budget. Travel costs have skyrocketed since our budget was approved and matching the MACo costs with income will be very difficult this year. So, I asked all committee chairs to reduce their committees to ten members or fewer to help lower the costs.

MACo's committees have had a long history of legislative victories and this reduction of members should not discourage your participation with the committees. MACo, as always, will continue to pay travel expenses for appointed committee members when they travel for MACo committee business. Any other county officials shall be able to participate in any of the committees if they are willing to pay their own travel expenses. We encourage everyone to attend committee meetings of interest during the Mid-winter and Annual Conferences to provide added insights leading towards a unified MACo voice.

Montana has a strong contingency at NACo and has affected national policy, but I have also reduced three NACo committee assignments to offset the budget shortages. We will continue to maintain our strong NACo presence.

I thank all commissioners who have participated and will participate on MACo's committees. Thank you for your willingness to serve for the benefit of all Montana counties.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

December 1-2	Joint JPIA / JPA Trustee Retreat; MACo
December 5	Quality Schools Interim Committee; Capitol
December 5 - 7	Montana IT (MITS) Conference; Helena
December 7 - 9	Government IT Conference; Helena
December 26	Christmas Holiday

UPCOMING EVENTS

Early January	Model Airport Regulations Available
January 18-20	Loss Control Conference; Fairmont
February 13-17	MACo Midwinter Meeting; Great Falls
March 4 - 9	NACo Annual Legislative Conference, D.C.
April 20-21	Joint JPA / JPIA Trustees Meeting

2006 HOLIDAYS

JANUARY 2	New Year Day Holiday (Jan. 1)
JANUARY 16	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
FEBRUARY 20	Presidents Day
MAY 29	Memorial Day
JULY 4	Independence Day
SEPTEMBER 4	Labor Day
OCTOBER 9	Columbus Day
NOVEMBER 7	State General Election Day
NOVEMBER 10	Veterans Day Holiday (Nov. 11)
NOVEMBER 23	Thanksgiving Day
DECEMBER 25	Christmas Day

2006 TRAVEL RATES

MILEAGE	\$0.485 per mile up to 1,000 miles \$0.455 after 1,000 miles
MOTEL ROOMS	\$60 maximum
PER DIEM	\$23 per day \$5 Breakfast; \$6 Lunch; \$12 Dinner

<http://data.opi.state.mt.us/bills/mca/2/18/2-18-501.htm>



WORKSHOP Environmental Law and Regulations

December 7 - 8, 2005; 8:30 A.M. (2 Days)
Holiday Inn Helena Downtown

CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS:
1.5 Credits or 13 CLE Credits

REGISTRATION: \$350
http://www.nwetc.org/mpol-400_12-05_helena.htm

Training will cover:

*Montana Environmental Policy Act
Water Quality Act
Subdivision and Platting Act
Montana Hazardous Waste Act
Montana Clean Air Act
Montana Major Facility Siting Act
Statewide Building Codes
Strip and Underground Mine Reclamation Act
Metal Mine Reclamation Act
Open-cut Mining Act
Public Water Supply Act
Motor Vehicle Recycling and Disposal Act
Underground Storage Tank Act
Solid Waste Act
Asbestos Control Act*

WORKSHOP Main Street Revitalization

Monday, December 12, 2006 – Miles City

Wednesday, December 14, 2006 – Lewistown

Friday, December 16, 2006 – Stevensville

This one-day conference has been created for individuals, organizations or communities who would like to discover more about this proven downtown revitalization strategy.

REGISTRATION

Please call Angela Wong at 406-841-2756 or email information to awong@mt.gov to register for workshop in your area. Please register by December 9, 2006.

Sponsored by
Business Resource Division
Department of Commerce

LOSS CONTROL CONFERENCE January 18-20

For the 2006 annual MACo Loss Control Conference program, MACo Risk Management will continue to partner with the MSU's Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) and the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (MSPOA). Each of the three groups will present training on topics relative to their professions.

The Conference will be held at **Fairmont Hot Springs Resort** (Between Anaconda and Butte, MT). **Attendees must reserve their own room before January 2, 2006.** Be sure to refer to the MACo room block to assure the state rate.

The Conference will begin with registration at 7:30 am on Wednesday, January 18 and end at 11:00 am on Friday, January 20, 2006, at 11:00 a.m.

Sheriffs, commissioners, road supervisors, safety directors, and human resource directors should attend the conference, as there will be new information presented. Included in the agenda of workshops are:

*Suicide in Correctional Facilities
Meth Lab Cleanup Program
Behavior Based Safety
Wellness Programs
Community & Personal Preparedness
Cold Weather & Hot Weather Survival
Insurance Claims Processes*

WORKSHOP Government Information Technology

December 7 - 9, 2005

Red Lion Colonial Inn in Helena

The second annual Montana Government Information Technology Conference will foster the sharing of ideas, products, services and experiences. The training will be a detailed overview for elected officials, risk managers, attorneys, environmental professionals, parks and recreation and others within county government.

REGISTRATION: \$60
http://mt.gov/itsd/itgov05/itgov05_registration.asp

Tips on Marketing the NACo Drug Cards

By Peggy Beltrone, Chair, Cascade County Commission

Cascade County launched the NACo Prescription Drug Discount Card program in October. I learned about the card while serving on the NACo Board of Directors.

We signed the standard contract with NACo and the program administrator, Caremark, in early August. Two months later Caremark shipped 40,000 Cascade County Prescription Drug Discount Cards to our offices. We delivered 20,000 cards to pharmacies, non-profits and governmental outlets in the county.

We will be receiving the first written reports of card usage from NACo. Already anecdotal evidence shows the cards are helping people.

Preparation is key to successfully launching the drug cards. NACo has prepared templates for media releases and other marketing materials. They are good resources.

Tips

1.) Work with participating pharmacies in advance. In reflection, we would have given more time to contact all of the pharmacists before the launch. If any of your County's drug stores have existing contracts with Caremark, they are already familiar with the discount card programs for non-profit groups. (See the 'participating pharmacies' link on the Members Only section of the NACo website)

Don't be surprised if you meet initial resistance from some pharmacies. The arrangement with Caremark requires them to discount the drugs and they may not receive reimbursement for the total discount. That said, many of the pharmacists understand that the discount may increase volume and customer loyalty. They are also aware that if people avoid drug purchases and delay treatment of ailments, they can end up sicker and drive up health care costs.

We found it effective for each pharmacy to receive an advance visit from a Commissioner. We each contacted a share of the pharmacies in our county. The pharmacists appreciated the personal contact and information in advance.

Caremark will also contact independent pharmacies, but Caremark does not want

counties to contact chain pharmacies, until there is an approved communication plan. We were not aware of this, and the chain pharmacies continue to be great community supporters.

2.) Offer packets of cards to each pharmacy to display. People who are eligible to receive the discounts will appreciate being able to get a card at the drug store. Most of our pharmacies willingly display our cards in the displays we purchased for \$1.20 each at Azar Inc. (www.azardisplays.com/). NOTE: Make sure you label your displays with information on who to call for refills.

3.) Know the uninsured numbers for your county. In 2004 Montana had a 19.1% uninsured rate. Helpful information is on these census web sites: http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032005/health/h06_000.htm and--or <http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/p60-229.pdf>. From these, we learned Cascade County had an uninsured rate of 15% or 11,727 residents who did not have health insurance.

4.) Time your launch for the biggest media exposure. We choose to launch the cards at our Tuesday morning public meeting. The media were already in attendance. It is a good idea to have a pharmacist or two lined up to do media interviews. Some chain pharmacies forbid media interviews. Have multiple copies of the NACo media packets available for the reporters.

5.) Ask your TV station to produce a PSA . One local TV station is preparing a Public Service Announcement. The script has been reviewed by NACo and Caremark.

6.) Enlist County staff to help distribute the cards. Our RSVP Director delivered cards to human service agencies in the County. Our Health Director distributed cards to the Health Department and the Community Health Center.

7.) Follow-up is important. Remember to check in with your pharmacies and card outlets on a regular basis to see if there are any questions or if card supplies are running low. Send a thank you to the pharmacies and other outlets when you get the first numbers back on card usage. This will reinforce their valuable contribution to a winning effort.

2005 -- 2006 MACo COMMITTEES

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JACK KNORR, MACRS
JIM GHEKIERE, Weed Association

IN MEMORIAM

JAMES A. "Jim" STRAW

Jim Straw, 80, passed away at his home in Billings after a long bout with cancer.

Jim was born in a little home-
stead shack on the Little Porcupine
Creek, near Forsyth. He was the fifth of
eleven children and graduated from
Billings Senior High.

Jim served as Yellowstone
County Commissioner 1979 through
1984 and served as MACo President in
1983-84. He spent a number of years
coaching Little League and Pony/Colt
Baseball. He served as president and
governor in Optimist International and
was a volunteer at St. Vincent dePaul.

Jim is survived by his wife of
56 years, Helen, six children, three
sisters, and a brother.

New Associate Director



Sheryl Wood begins her service as MACo's Associate Director on December 1, 2005. Sheryl is from Billings where she served as Yellowstone County's Executive Secretary for many years. She has local government and legislative experience, as well as a knowledge of technology, finance, communication and human resources. Her professional experience includes being project manager for an engineering firm and a technology specialist for a rural school. In 2004, Sheryl served as president of the Montana Association of Female Executives, and has been active in the Billings community by serving on boards and committees. Sheryl and her husband Bill have four children and three grandchildren.

Sheryl said, "It is an honor and a privilege to be working with Harold and all of the MACo staff, the Executive Committee and county officials around the State. I look forward to being an integral part of MACo's mission to provide essential services to counties, and to help promote their best interests in serving their constituents."

MACo President, Doug Kaercher said: "It is my pleasure to welcome Sheryl to the MACo staff as our new Associate Director. The Executive Committee is expecting good things from Sheryl from her experience in local government and her legislative skills. Sheryl will staff the MACo IT, Economic Development and Health and Human Services committees, as well as act as MACo staff liaison to the Urban Counties. As she gets her feet wet, these duties will expand. Please give Sheryl a call and welcome her to our organization and see how she can help you."

Harold Blattie, MACo Executive Director, added, "Sheryl's dedication, enthusiasm and can-do attitude will be an asset to MACo. Her diverse background and hands-on county experience will allow her to immediately begin to provide services to member counties."

PLEASE SUPPORT MACo SUPPORTERS



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COUNTY NEWS

COUNTY OFFICIALS

PARK COUNTY's chose Bill Hurley to be the first County Director of Operations. Hurley has a background in the defense industry as a scientist and government contract manager.

FALLON COUNTY issued a declaration of intent to consolidate the office of the county superintendent of schools with the clerk and recorder at the end of 2006. Because there are no longer any rural schools, they felt a full-time superintendent was not needed.

ANIMAL CONTROL

SANDERS COUNTY considered a "potentially dangerous or vicious dog" control ordinance. Concerns from the public included immunizations, muzzles, liability insurance, appeals process and law enforcement services for complaints.

MUSEUM

BEAVERHEAD COUNTY is asking the non-profit local museum association to relinquish its say over the museum and its artifacts. The control of the museum has been in a long standing dispute under the loose-knit partnership between the non-profit and the County.

ROAD PROJECT

HILL COUNTY completed paving the last nine miles of an unimproved road south of the Canadian border. This section had been awaiting pavement for at least 15 years. The road was paved on the Canadian side about 25 years ago. State, local and Canadian officials gathered to celebrate the project.

AIRPORT AFFECTED AREAS

According to Myra Shults, the model regulations for airport affected areas will be available the first of January.

PROPOSED RESERVATION CASCADE, BLAINE, FERGUS, HILL, AND GLACIER COUNTIES have worked on resolutions supporting the federal recognition of the Little Shell Tribe. The Tribe's ideal is to have a base in Cascade County with satellite offices in the other four counties. Commissioners considered the possible loss of taxable property to form the reservation.

FOR SALE USED FIRE ENGINE WITH EQUIPMENT

1990 Smeal Crossmount Pumper with a gas GMC, 5 speed w/2 speed axle, new tires, pump CXRT Waterous, Akron Eductor Foam System, Deck Gun w/Stinger monitor & tips, Elkhart Sidewinder Front Monitor w/joystick, 1000 gallon fold-a-tank, 300' 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " hose and 600' of 3" hose, appraised September 24, 2005 at \$52,000.

Deadline for sealed bids with Cashier's check for 10% of the total bid is **10:30 AM on Monday December 12, 2005**. The bidding envelope should be marked "Used Toole County Fire Engine Bid" on the lower right corner. Acceptable bids will be greater than or equal to 90% of the appraised value, with the right to accept or reject any or all bids in the best interest of Toole County.

Bids can be mailed to the Toole County Commission at 226 1st St S, Shelby, MT 59474, or delivered to the Commission office before the deadline. Terms of sale are cash. Questions? 424-8310

GALLATIN COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Gallatin County is looking for an effective leader with strong personal relationship and management capabilities: supervises, coordinates and carries out various administrative and management activities relating to organization and policies, practices and procedures established by the County Commission. BS or Masters in Public or Business Admin., preferred + 5 yrs experience as administrator/manager in public employment involving responsibility for budget, finance, organizational planning & implementation. Full Time \$5416--\$7500.00/mo Contact Local Job Service or fax resume, cover letter and references to 582-9210.

www.co.gallatin.mt.us

FLATHEAD COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR

Flathead County is seeking an Emergency Management Coordinator. Position requires knowledge of operation of an emergency communications system, applicable laws and regulations, emergency procedures, management practices and standard governmental budget procedures. A bachelor's degree in public administration, public safety, communications or closely related field or equivalent experience is desired.

Contract position: Salary DOE Submit County application, resume, references and salary history to Flathead Job Service
427 1st Avenue East,
Kalispell, MT 59901.

Deadline: 5:00 p.m.
Friday, January 20, 2006
www.co.flathead.mt.us

JOB STRESSSSSS: WHAT IS IT ??

PART ONE OF TWO PARTS

The impact of employee stress and burn-out is becoming more acute. There are five major categories of employee stress:

1. PRESSURES AT WORK

Employees often deal with impulsive or irrational members of our society. From the first day of public service, every county employee discovers that they are apt to become "all things to all people"--a referee, a counselor, a lawyer and sometimes a doctor. Mostly, county officials and employees are controllers. The public expects county employees to control the outcome of every contact, guided by training and experience.

Early on, county officials and employees learn to suppress emotions in order to be able to move through sometimes very unpleasant situations in order to get the work done. Unfortunately, this suppression of emotion can spill over into personal lives and harm loving relationships with family and home.

2. BEING INVOLVED IN CRITICAL INCIDENTS

A critical incident is any event that:

- is sudden and unexpected
- causes a person to experience strong emotions
- causes a person to feel fear
- disrupts one's sense of control.

Examples include

death or injury to a family member or co-worker
natural disasters
multiple accidents
terrorism
threat to self, co-worker or family member.

3. ATTITUDE OF GENERAL PUBLIC

Some people see county officials and employees as leaders and/or icons of justice. Some think officials are mean or have no compassion because they show little emotion. County officials and employees deal with negative reactions and receive little gratitude or recognition from "upright" citizens.

4. ATTITUDE OF ADMINISTRATION

Employee morale may be low in some departments because:

Employees have no say.
Job assignments do not fit capabilities.
Emotions are to be kept under control.
Job promotions are indiscriminate or non-existent.
Compensation is not awarded for excellence in work.

5. PERSONAL LIFE PRESSURES

Personal life may suffer because of low pay and/or lack of benefits while trying to raise a family, shift work which prevents employee from being with friends and family at important times and social snubs because of the type of work. These and others could lead to negative moods, decline in health, using alcohol/drugs to numb out, and social withdrawal--all signs of BURN-OUT.

WARNING SIGNS OF BURNOUT

1. Frequent headaches
2. Frequent indigestion
3. Pain in neck and/or lower back
4. Feeling anxious for no specific reason
5. Insomnia
6. Overreaction to minor incidents
7. Lack of appetite or overeating
8. Hostility to coworkers or citizens
9. Argumentativeness
10. Feeling of "running on empty"
11. Temper flare-ups
12. Increased use of alcohol or drugs
13. Suspiciousness
14. Dread going to work
15. Unresolved fatigue
16. Increase in accidents
17. Increase in errors
18. Lowered concentration or memory lapses
19. Feeling consumed by negative side of job
20. Feeling lonely or disconnected from others

(Next issue: What to do about job stress and burnout...)

New DNRC Web Site Explains Water Right Adjudication Fees & Process

57,000 unexamined water rights in Montana's stream adjudication are soon to be under serious scrutiny by a cadre of trained Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC) water resource specialists because of the passage House Bill 22 in 2005.

HB 22 not only provides the direction, but also the funding, to examine the 57,000 remaining water right claims in the next 10 years (by 2015) and to have decrees issued in all basins in the next 15 years (by 2020). The new law requires all water right owners to pay a fee to help fund the conclusion of the adjudication.

According to Jim Gilman, DNRC Adjudication Manager, "We've created a website that is very user-friendly and provides a wealth of information about HB 22--how it affects Montanans' water rights and what water right owners can do to assist in the examination of their water rights.
www.dnrc.mt.gov/house_bill22

The website contains links for folks to look up their water rights as they appear in our records. They can find directions and forms to correct or update ownership errors. For those folks who don't have access to the Internet, they can get copies of the website information from their local DNRC Regional Water Office."

DNRC specialists will be examining each of the remaining unexamined water right claims for accurate and complete information. This involves a review of the claimed water use, comparing all the supporting documents, and a detailed analysis in accordance with the Supreme Court water right claim examination rules. Once all claims in a basin are examined, the DNRC issues a summary report to the Water Court. The Water Court then issues a basin decree.

The examination of these claims is already under way. "This process is happening and we don't want folks to be caught off guard when they receive a notice in the mail about their water rights or a notification that they will be charged a fee for the water rights they own," explained Gilman.

What are the reasons for examination of all of the remaining water rights in the state?

Gilman explained, "First, it allows us to finish the general stream adjudication and have final decrees that are useful for many different purposes, including distribution by water commissioners during times of shortage. Secondly, it affords everyone with a filed protection of that water right under Montana Water Law. Third, it protects the water in each basin not only for domestic use but other uses as well, which can have serious impacts on economic development in the state. Fourth, it ensures that we have the most up-to-date information and delineation of our water use when we negotiate with neighboring states and Canada."

In addition to the website, the agency is sending out notices and letters to those water right holders that are affected, printing brochures, and conducting an aggressive marketing campaign to ensure Montanans understand HB22 and water rights in general. "We realize that this process can be somewhat confusing, so, we're asking people to use the website, although they are welcome to contact their local DNRC Regional Water Office for more information.

www.dnrc.mt.gov/house_bill22

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John Prinkki, Subcommittee Vice Chair
Carbon County
Richard Dunbar, Phillips County
(Represents Oil, Gas, Coal Co's)

HEALTH

Bill Kennedy, Yellowstone County

HUMAN SERVICES AND EDUCATION

Doug Kaercher, Hill County

JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Gary Fjelstad, Rosebud County
Chuck Maxwell, Yellowstone County
Jay Bell, Yellowstone County

PUBLIC LANDS

Connie Eissinger, Subcommittee Chair
McCone County
Mike Murray, Subcommittee Vice Chair
Lewis and Clark County
Alan Thompson, Ravalli County
(Represents Forest Counties)

TRANSPORTATION

Jamie Doggett, Meagher County

B.L.M. Resource Advisory Councils

BLM Resource Advisory Councils (RAC) recently reorganized and two County Commissioners will begin serving on their respective RACs.

In the Western Montana RAC, **David Schulz, Madison County Commissioner**, is a new appointee. In the Eastern Montana RAC, **Betty Aye, Powder River County Commissioner**, was re-appointed.

The RACs are composed of citizens chosen for their expertise in natural resource issues to help BLM carry out its stewardship of public lands. BLM manages more land than any other federal agency and relies on 24 RACs across the West, where most BLM-managed land is located.

MONTANA TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION WEBSITE

The Montana Taxpayers Association's new internet web site, MonTax.org, has been designed to be a one-stop repository of information on a wide variety of taxation and public expenditure issues.

For a limited time, full and open access to the entire site is provided for non-members who use the user name and password below.

Username: montax

Password: joinus

Simply enter the username and password into the blocks of the Member Signup area on the left side of the home page and click the Login button. Remember to check back often for updates and new information.



DEBT COLLECTION FOR COUNTIES

Counties are experts at collecting property taxes. This is partly due to the fact that citizens generally recognize the value of the investment they have in their homes and don't want to risk losing it. The county treasurers' offices are usually quite adept at quickly following up with those property owners who don't pay and encouraging them to do so.

However, when it comes to chronic property tax delinquencies and other types of fees or fines owed to counties, collection can be difficult. When citizens either can't or don't pay court fines, traffic fines, bad checks, ambulance or EMS services, building permits, etc., local governments often find it very difficult to collect.

This is especially true when the task of collecting is left to the individual county office that is focused on providing services rather than tracking down monies owed. Many counties have come to rely on private collection firms to assist in recouping older debt, but determining when to hand over collectibles can dramatically impact how much is eventually recovered.

According to information from the US Department of Commerce, **one dollar owed to the county today is worth only 45 cents one year from today.**

For counties which don't have staff dedicated to tracking down debt, **delinquent accounts should be outsourced as quickly as possible.** Generally as soon as delinquent accounts are no longer being actively pursued by county staff, it's time to outsource. Good public sector collection firms operate on a contingency fee basis so there is no cost to turn over delinquent accounts. The collection agency is only paid a percentage of funds they actually collect. Some states even allow the county to charge an "add-on" fee to the original debt amount so that the debtor pays the fee to the collection firm and there is no cost to the county for the service.

To help counties more effectively manage their receivables, NACo staff worked with Hamilton County, OH on a public procurement process and selected a contingency fee-based debt col-

lection program with MAXIMUS. MAXIMUS was chosen for their public sector collection experience, knowledge of local government, and extremely reasonable fees. The benefits they offer are:

- Increased revenue from debt formerly classified as uncollectable
- Contingency fee based – no up front costs
- Services by highly trained professionals who understand the public sector debt collection processes
- Streamlined process and state-of-the-art technology
- Easily customized process.

For more information please contact:
 Nancy Irish

Director of Program Management
 NACO Financial Service Center
 440 First Street NW

Washington DC 20001
 202-661-8824 nirish@naco.org

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All contracts are competitively solicited, non-exclusive and require no fee to participate.

Contact: info@uscommunities.org
www.uscommunities.org

GRANTS FOR COMMUNITY BASED WETLANDS

NACo and the Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program are accepting applications for the 2006 Five Star Restoration Challenge Grants. The Five Star Program provides modest financial assistance on a competitive basis to support community-based wetland, riparian and coastal habitat restoration projects that build diverse partnerships and foster local natural resource stewardship through education, outreach and training activities. Project sites can be public land, such as parks, streams and school campuses or private land, such as corporate facilities.

In 2005, 53 projects out of approximately 220 applicants received grants averaging \$10,000. A diverse group of partners, funds, and/or participants may offer the cash and in-kind services to complete the restoration project including:

- ◆ Local or tribal governments (county commissions, departments of planning, environment or parks and recreation)
- ◆ Universities and local cooperative extension districts

- ◆ Schools or youth organizations (e.g., state or local youth conservation corps, county job training programs)
- ◆ Local businesses or corporations
- ◆ Conservation organizations or local citizens groups
- ◆ State and federal resource management agencies
- ◆ Foundations or other funding sources

Begun in 1997, The Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program is a partnership between NACo, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Wildlife Habitat Council, with support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. **The deadline for applications is March 10, 2006.**

For more information visit www.naco.org/techassistance under "water quality", or contact Erik Johnston
202/942-4246
ejohnston@naco.org.

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