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MACo Midwinter Conference: Draft Agenda

Red Lion Colonial Hotel

Monday, February 12-Thursday, February 15, 2007

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2007

8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. School Superintendents Meeting-Lewis Room
 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Coalition of Forest Counties Meeting-Clark Room
 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Registration-Lobby
 1:00-3:00 p.m. All MACo committees meet:
 3:30 p.m. Hard Rock Mining Counties Meeting-Senate Room
 3:30 p.m. 6 County Fort Peck Lake Group Meeting-Governor Room
 3:30 p.m. Urban Counties Meeting-Montana Room
 6:00 p.m. Board of Directors Dinner Meeting-Executive Room

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2007

7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Registration-Lobby
 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. School Superintendents Meeting-Lewis Room
 8:00-10:00 a.m. Road Law Seminar-State/Capitol Rooms
 10:00-10:15 a.m. Break-Natatorium
 10:15 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Road Law Seminar continued
 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m. Lunch-Executive Room
 1:00-2:45 p.m. Road Law Seminar continued-State/Capitol Rooms
 2:45-3:00 p.m. Break-Natatorium
 3:30-4:30 p.m. Road Law Seminar continued Oil, Gas & Coal Counties Meeting-Judicial Room
 4:30 p.m. JPIA/JPA Trustees Dinner Meeting-Clark Room

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2007

8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Registration-Lobby
 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. School Superintendents Meeting-Lewis Room
 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Treasurers Meeting-Gallery Room
 8:00-8:30 a.m. District 6 Vice-Chair Election-State/Capitol Room
 8:30-9:00 a.m. 9-1-1 Program-State/Capitol

Room
 Statewide E911 Deployments and Legislative Issues
 Inoperability Montana Status & Potential Funding
 Questions and Answers
 9:00-10:00 a.m. Secondary Roads Capital Construction Program
 10:00-10:30 a.m. Break-Natatorium
 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Department of Commerce
 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m. Lunch-Executive Room
 1:00-2:00 p.m. Voluntary Employee Benefit Association-State/Capitol Room
 2:00-3:00 p.m. NACo Membership Benefits
 3:00-3:30 p.m. Break-Natatorium
 3:30-4:30 p.m. "Path to Eden"
 4:30 p.m. Reservation Counties Meeting Clark Room
 4:30 p.m. NACo Delegates Meeting-Senate Room
 5:30 p.m. Healthcare Trust Trustees Dinner Meeting-Bitterroot Room

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2007

8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Registration-Lobby
 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. School Superintendents Meeting-Lewis Room
 8:30-9:30 a.m. General Session
 Legislative Issues
 Break-Natatorium
 9:30-10:00 a.m. General Session continued
 10:00-11:00 a.m. Load the buses to go to the Capitol
 11:00 a.m. Lunch in the Rotunda with the Legislators
 1:00-4:00 p.m. Spend the remainder of the afternoon at the Capitol
 1:00 p.m. Bus will load and return to the Red Lion Colonial Hotel
 4:00 p.m. Bus will load and return to the Red Lion Colonial Hotel

Registration forms on the following two pages (2-3).

MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
MIDWINTER CONFERENCE
RED LION COLONIAL HOTEL
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12– THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2007

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Name _____

Title _____

County (or other agency) _____

Spouse's Name if attending _____

	<u>Pre-Registration</u>	<u>On Arrival</u>
• MACo Midwinter Meeting (Monday Afternoon, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) Registration fee covers three lunches, coffee breaks & registration materials.	\$150.00 _____	\$165.00
• Spouse Activities – Wednesday Registration fee covers one lunch, workshop & tour.	\$ 50.00 _____	\$55.00
	TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$ _____

Make checks payable to MACo and send with this entire form to MACo, 2715 Skyway Drive, Helena, MT 59602. If you have questions regarding the Midwinter Conference call Karen Houston at 444-4375 or e-mail at macomtg@maco.cog.mt.us

REGISTRATION FEES WILL BE REFUNDED ONLY IF CANCELLATION
IS REQUESTED BY FEBRUARY 7, 2007

MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
ROAD LAW SESSION ONLY
RED LION COLONIAL HOTEL
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2007

ROAD LAW SESSION REGISTRATION

Name _____

Title _____

County (or other agency) _____

Pre-Registration

On Arrival

• Tuesday Road Law Session

\$50 _____

\$60 _____

Registration fee covers lunch, coffee breaks & registration materials.

TOTAL ENCLOSED\$ _____

Make checks payable to MACo and send with this entire form to MACo, 2715 Skyway Drive, Helena, MT 59602. If you have questions regarding the this session, please call Karen Houston at 444-4375 or e-mail at macomtg@maco.cog.mt.us

REGISTRATION FEES WILL BE REFUNDED ONLY IF CANCELLATION
IS REQUESTED BY FEBRUARY 7, 2007



MACo News

MACo President's Report



MACo President
John Prinkki

I had the opportunity and pleasure to attend the National Council of County Association Executives, with our Executive Director Harold Blattie, January 10th thru the 12th, 2007, in Washington, D.C.. NCCAE is an affiliate of the National Association of Counties.

We used Wednesday the 10th to visit with our Congressional delegation starting with breakfast with Senator Baucus, Senator Tester, and their staff. This was the informal continental breakfast meeting that Senator Baucus hosts every Wednesday. We used the time to get reacquainted with their staff, and to meet new staff.

We were able to arrange a meeting with Senator Tester and his Chief of Staff, Steffani Shriock, at 11:30 to discuss the Secure Rural Schools. We emphasized the importance of not allowing the issues of Forest Reserve Payments and PILT to be separated, or decoupled. We also discussed the need to support the Rail Competition Act, the Essential Air Service, and counties participation in the CREB program. Harold and I were also able to relay the feelings of our counterparts from the State of Washington. Their position is similar to ours in that if there were better resource management of the forests with more logging, without timber sales being log jammed in the court system, then there

would be no need for reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools, and there would be less danger from severe fires in the wild lands interface area.

We had a similar discussion with Congressman Denny Rehberg that afternoon. Congressman Rehberg asked that we tape our conversation about the Secure Rural Schools Act to use in promoting a reauthorization bill that he has co-sponsored with 30 other House members. We also met with Senator Max Baucus staff and discussed the same issues at noon on the 12th. The Montana Association of Counties has a good relationship with our Congressional Delegation.

The main focus of the Presidents and Exec's meeting was to become more familiar with the services provided by NACO. NACO is separated into three organizations. The two non profits provide the legislative assistance and lobbying efforts, and receive donations to do research. The independent for profit Financial Services Center offers the deferred compensation program through Nationwide Retirement Solutions, group purchasing options, and insurance products such as the new health insurance coverage for jail inmates that could save counties considerable taxpayer dollars for inmate health care. Some jails have had to pay for expensive heart surgeries and other medical procedures. The various services available can be reviewed at the naco.org website, or contacting MACo.

NACO is largely responsible for the increases in Payment in Lieu of Taxes that is a large part of the Carbon County budget. The NACO Transportation committee was able to assure that Secondary Roads in the state that are still gravel are eligible for federal funding.

NACO's legislative agenda includes several priorities that effect Montana:

- Farm bill Reauthorization
- Health and Human Services reform
- Secure Rural Schools and PILT
- Aviation Reauthorization,
- Essential Air Service
- Support Efforts to assist counties with Methamphetamine Crisis
- Oppose unfunded mandates/preemption

There are many programs through the National Association of Counties, and many of these will be discussed at the Mid-winter meeting in Helena, February, 12 thru the 15th, 2007.

We also heard from the Secretary of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff, about the Administrations strategy for defending both our Southern and Northern borders. Secretary Chertoff also discussed the Interoperability of Communications stressing that he does not believe in top down management or that one size should fit all situations. He believes in working with States and local governments to build reliable and interoperable communication systems without wasting precious tax dollars. It is not necessary to build elaborate systems that in and of themselves do not provide for multi jurisdictional communications in the midst of a disaster. Secretary Chertoff feels that the biggest problem with communications during a disaster is the protocol used by the multitude of agencies involved.

Secretary Chertoff also mentioned a Federal Identification law that will be effective in 2009. They are still designing the system that will likely involve a computerized chip located in your driver's license.

On Friday morning the 12th of January, 2007, in the Indian Treaty Room of the Old Executive Office building, Colleen Landkamer, President of NACO, signed an MOU along with Dale Bosworth of the US Forest Service, and Kathleen Clark Director, United States Department of Interior, the BLM. The purpose of the MOU is to establish a framework for the BLM, Forest Service, BLM to work collaboratively on initiatives that mutually benefit each organization. This MOU extends a program that has worked fairly well for the last ten years.

John Prinkki, Commissioner
President, Montana Association of Counties



MACo News

Court Reminder

The Commission on Courts of Limited Jurisdiction would like to remind counties that any changes in Justice Courts must be reported as soon as possible to the Commission through the Supreme Court Administrator's Office.

Statute and commission rules require that a newly appointed justice of the peace must receive a training waiver before the new judge can sit as a judge. A form to report changes or new appointments is available at: www.montanacourts.org/lcourt/lcourt_forms.asp.

Newly appointed judges receive a visit from a training judge and assistance in complying with the training requirements – including taking the required certification test.

In addition, if a local government makes a decision to create a **city court or combine a city court with a JPs' duties, the OCA needs** notice to address any information technology or other issues that may be created by that decision.

Questions about specific Commission policies can be directed to Karen Sedlock at ksedlock@mt.gov or 841-2967.

Mark Your Calendars

<i>February</i>	
Feb 12-15	MACo Midwinter Meeting, Helena
<i>March</i>	
Mar 1-4	Legislative Transmittal Break
Mar 3-7	NACo Legislative Conference, Washington, DC
<i>April</i>	
April 25-27	JPIA/JPA/HCT Trustees meeting (TENTATIVE)
April 27	Legislative Sine Die
<i>May</i>	
May 8-12	WIR, Fairbanks, AK
<i>June</i>	
June 4-15	District Meetings (TENTATIVE)
June 22	MACo Board of Directors Meeting (TENTATIVE)
<i>July</i>	
July 12-18	NACo Annual Conference, Richmond, VA
<i>September</i>	
Sept 23-27	MACo Annual Conference, Great Falls

MACo Staff: Watch For This New Face

Dennis is the new Senior Claims Adjuster in the MACo Claims Office. His responsibilities include adjusting property and liability claims in Montana.

Dennis has over 23 years experience in the insurance industry and over three years investigating experience for a law firm. He began his career with State Farm Insurance in Billings, MT. He later moved to Kalispell, and was promoted to Claims Superintendent for the Great Falls Claims Office. He has experience in adjusting and managing liability and 1st party claims for bodily injury and property damage. After leaving State Farm he was an investigator for the law firm of Lewis, Slovak, and Kovasich in Great Falls.

Dennis earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Montana State University. His big plans for now are to try and sell his home in Great falls and move to Helena.



Senior Claims Adjuster, MACo Claims
Dennis Jupka

MACo and the Montana Legislature

A new page on the MACo website dedicated to helping our members keep track of the happenings at the 60th Montana Legislature. You'll find the MACo Resolutions, links to bills pertaining to MACo resolutions, MACo's Weekly Legislative Updates, links to bills and bill status reports, hearings calendars, committee listings, Legislator contact information, and much much more. Just enter the following URL at the top of your web browser and check it out: <http://www.maco.cog.mt.us/Legislature/Legislative.htm> You can also go to www.maco.cog.mt.us and click on "Maco and the Montana Legislature" un-

A Valentiné From MACo

We cannot do great things on this Earth,
only small things with great love.

~ Mother Teresa

Happy Valentiné's Day!





Stretching can be Valuable Component to Comprehensive Ergo Program

By Joshua Clifton, *Prevention*

For years, safety experts have emphasized the importance of warming up prior to performing work and the need for employees to periodically stretch throughout the day. However, many employers remain skeptical of the benefits of a formal program.

Michael Melnik, founder and president of Prevention Plus Inc. in Minneapolis, said there are several perceived negative aspects of warm-up and stretching programs—they take too much time, lack scientific evidence, cost too much, or fail to attract employees who are embarrassed to perform exercises on the job. However, he said these employers are often against the concept from the start.

“They say they want to see literature supporting a stretching and warm-up program,” Melnick said. “The data exists, but there are many other variables. Most employers who do these types of programs are doing seven other health and safety initiatives. This argument typically means that they don’t want to do it.”

Melnik said these preconceived notions are also a result of the way many of these programs have been administered in the past. “We have taken stretching and turned it into a time-consuming, embarrassing and awkward activity,” Melnik said. “Where did we go wrong? Stretching is a normal behavior and needs to be presented as such.”

Melnik said there are many practical ways to explain the benefits of a warm-up and stretching program. However, if employers are looking to get everyone on board, he recommended that they:

- **Conduct a pilot program.** Employers need to learn how to market and sell the program. The best way to accomplish this, he said, is to develop a pilot warm-up and stretching program. “You have to create a grassroots campaign,” Melnik said. “Too often we look at the worst department and require them to do the stretching program. You’ll never be able to sell it that way if it looks like a punishment. Stretching programs are like a product. Employees need to wake up in the morning and feel like they need it.” Start small by choosing a department at your company to launch the program. Melnik said that if the program is seen as a special treat for employees, word will spread about it through word-of-mouth; they’ll be asking what they can do to participate in a similar initiative.
- **Create the right environment.** Melnik said the main reason more people don’t stretch is because most work environments are not conducive to stretching. “People who warm up and stretch before, during and after a softball game are often the same people who won’t stretch at work,” he said. “Why? The difference is the environment. A softball field or a gym is a normal and comfortable place to stretch. Everyone is doing it so it makes people more comfortable. The workplace is generally not perceived the same.” Melnik said the easiest way to get people stretching more at work is to create an environment that invites the behavior, and then supports and encourages it when it happens.
- **Remove embarrassment from the equation.** Melnik said employers need to acknowledge that some workers are going to find the stretching and warm-up exercises embarrassing. “You need to let them know that you did not start the program to make them feel embarrassed,” he said. “Tell them that you wanted them to understand the concept

and that you will provide a place for them to stretch in private.” Melnik said employers must carefully package a program to remove the perceived negative aspects so that everything they are saying will fail to give employees ammunition to use against it.

- **Evaluate the workplace.** Melnik said it is important to do a risk assessment of the workplace and design stretches that apply directly to the tasks that employees are performing.
- **Support the program.** “Warm-up and stretching programs are living, breathing entities,” Melnik said. “They need ongoing support in order to survive.”

What are some common stretching exercises?

“I’ve been doing stretching and warm-up programs for 15 years, and none of them look the same,” Melnik said. “There are literally thousands of stretches out there.” The Canadian Center for Occupational Safety and Health recommended the following exercises, many of which employees can perform at their workstations:

- **Hand and forearm stretches.** Start with your hand open. Make a fist and keep your thumb straight, not tucked under your fingers. Slide your finger tips up your palm so they are near the base of your fingers. You should feel a stretch in your hand. Do not force your fingers with your other hand if something is painful. With your hand open and facing down, gently bend wrist from side to side, as far as possible. Hold for three to five seconds and repeat three times.
- **Shoulder stretches.** Raise the top of your shoulders toward your ears until you feel slight tension in your neck and shoulders. Hold this feeling of tension for three to five seconds. Then relax your shoulders downward into their normal position. Do this two or three times.
- **Shoulder rolls.** Slowly roll your shoulders backward five times in a circular motion. Then roll them forward.
- **Head glide.** This helps stretch the chest, neck, and shoulder muscles. Sit or stand upright. Without lifting your chin, glide your head straight back. You will know if you are doing this exercise correctly if it gives you the feeling of a double chin. Hold this position for 20 counts, and then repeat five to 10 times.
- **Back and side stretches.** Interlace your fingers and lift your arms over your head keeping the elbows straight. Press your arms as far back as you can. To stretch your sides, slowly lean to the left and then to the right.
- **Leg and ankle stretches.** To perform an ankle flex, hold one foot off the floor with your leg straight and alternately flex your ankle (point your toes up) and extend (point your toes down). Repeat with the other leg. For a leg lift, sit forward so that you are not touching the chair’s back. Place your feet flat on the floor. With a straight leg, lift one foot a few inches off the floor. Hold momentarily, and return your foot to the floor. Repeat with the other leg.

Contact Michael Melnik at (800) 887-2282. Visit the Canadian Center for Occupational Safety and Health’s Web site at www.ccohs.ca.

Joshua Clifton is a Chicago-based journalist who specializes in workplace safety and health issues. For more information, contact him by e-mail at joshuaclifton@hotmail.com.



What is Conflict in Your Workplace Costing You?

By Jacquie Gibson
Montana Consensus Council

The cost of workplace conflict is the sum of a series of hidden costs. When continued conflict resides in the office or unit or agency, the following effects are eating away at your budget:

- **Productivity** is reduced by distraction, worry, gathering support, and actively avoiding the other person – wasted time not used for work.
- **Decision-making** may be compromised because of the concentration on the conflict. One bad decision, poorly thought out because of conflict, can make a project or action more costly than it might have been.
- **Stress** can lead to sickness, which leads to compensation claims, absenteeism, health insurance costs, even employee turnover.
- **Loss of skilled employees.** Loss of one or more employees, by resignation or involuntary termination, can raise the costs. Replacement of a skilled employee includes recruiting costs, application and interviewing time, and training – at least as much as 33% of the annual salary of that person, and for professional staff 150%.
- **Restructuring due to conflict** is costly. Separating conflicting employees, moving their spaces or offices, changing their hours or responsibilities because the conflict is not effectively managed, can reduce the *efficiency* of the conflicting parties, their supervisor, and employees in proximity.

● **Lowered job motivation** is an obvious result of unresolved conflict. Even if the lowered motivation is only measured at 10%, that's 10% of each affected person's annual salary being wasted.

● **Damage and property loss** can occur as a result of these other factors. Is that damage due to carelessness or sabotage? "Accidental" damage or "inadvertent" misplacement or loss can affect inventory and equipment from everyday supplies to expensive lab equipment.

● **Bullying** is often a long-term, high cost conflict condition in the workplace, usually well-hidden by threat and intimidation, increasing all the above factors, often for years.

Always, employees' reduced motivation, enthusiasm and loyalty raise costs.

The following example is based on the methods of Daniel Dana, Ph.D. and Douglas E. Noll: **Scenario:** Joe and Marcia are two managers in a health-related agency. Their very different management styles (Joe is more collaborative, Marcia more autocratic) have led their employees joining the conflict in support of their managers. Some employees are shared, putting those employees in awkward positions. In a recent decision to upgrade a laboratory, meetings were acrimonious, the decision took 10 weeks to make, and two employees left in disgust. Some restructuring separated Joe and Marcia, but conflict between their subordinates continued, resulting in equipment damage due to inadvertence and carelessness, and perhaps malice. Joe eventually resigned.

What might be seen to be the cost of this conflict?

Conflict Effects	Time/Increased cost	Formula	Cost
Wasted time	25% or 30% of time spent on conflict 20% for 10 weeks	$(\$50,000 \times 30\%) + (\$50,000 \times 30\%) + (\$65,000 \times 25\%) =$ $\$46,250 \times 20\%$	\$9,260
Lowered job motivation	10% erosion over 10 weeks for 13 employees	$\$615,000 \times 10\% \times 20\%$ (time)	\$12,300
Loss of efficiency through restructuring	10% of salaries of all involved and affected employees	$(\$50,000 \times 2) + \$65,000 +$ $(\$45,000 \times 10)$ $\times 10\%$	\$61,500
Property damage	Value of inventory and equipment losses from theft, accidents, inadvertent loss, or malice	$\$150,000 \times 10\%$	\$15,000
Loss of skilled employees	150% replacement cost for professional employee 33% replacement cost for two staff	$\$50,000 \times 150\%$ $+$ $(\$35,000 \times 33\%) \times 2$	\$98,100
Total Cost			\$196,160

("Workplace Conflict" Continued on page 18 . . .)



Market Value and Debt Limit of Coun-

Tax Year 2006 (for Fiscal Year 2007 Use)

<u>County</u>	<u>Market Value</u>	<u>Debt Limitation</u>
Beaverhead	\$490,596,382	\$6,868,349
Big Horn	\$695,463,089	\$9,736,483
Blaine	\$316,186,711	\$4,426,614
Broadwater	\$260,091,192	\$3,641,277
Carbon	\$698,596,330	\$9,780,349
Carter	\$136,381,395	\$1,909,340
Cascade	\$3,315,675,178	\$46,419,452
Chouteau	\$529,534,540	\$7,413,484
Custer	\$415,455,339	\$5,816,375
Daniels	\$144,434,519	\$2,022,083
Dawson	\$387,247,103	\$5,421,459
Deer Lodge	\$296,051,379	\$4,144,719
Fallon	\$298,555,203	\$4,179,773
Fergus	\$632,220,936	\$8,851,093
Flathead	\$6,056,947,702	\$84,797,268
Gallatin	\$5,518,104,168	\$77,253,458
Garfield	\$150,642,323	\$2,108,993
Glacier	\$396,686,403	\$5,553,610
Golden Valley	\$98,816,333	\$1,383,429
Granite	\$296,155,592	\$4,146,178
Hill	\$755,441,728	\$10,576,184
Jefferson	\$589,657,710	\$8,255,208
Judith Basin	\$226,755,824	\$3,174,582
Lake	\$1,764,930,753	\$24,709,031
Lewis And Clark	\$2,763,699,935	\$38,691,799
Liberty	\$203,576,627	\$2,850,073
Lincoln	\$1,128,712,323	\$15,801,973
Madison	\$1,293,349,978	\$18,106,900
McCone	\$183,746,492	\$2,572,451
Meagher	\$210,585,442	\$2,948,196
Mineral	\$250,513,412	\$3,507,188
Missoula	\$5,779,793,837	\$80,917,114
Musselshell	\$217,751,166	\$3,048,516
Park	\$1,004,675,667	\$14,065,459
Petroleum	\$49,611,498	\$694,561
Phillips	\$312,029,229	\$4,368,409
Pondera	\$340,474,060	\$4,766,637
Powder River	\$126,598,050	\$1,772,373
Powell	\$382,586,994	\$5,356,218
Prairie	\$92,555,806	\$1,295,781
Ravalli	\$2,008,322,565	\$28,116,516
Richland	\$530,984,678	\$7,433,785
Roosevelt	\$428,216,465	\$5,995,031
Rosebud	\$1,803,496,920	\$25,248,957
Sanders	\$877,739,736	\$12,288,356
Sheridan	\$239,129,121	\$3,347,808
Silver Bow	\$1,796,326,331	\$25,148,569
Stillwater	\$842,641,915	\$11,796,987
Sweet Grass	\$487,805,677	\$6,829,279
Teton	\$403,096,844	\$5,643,356
Toole	\$380,255,160	\$5,323,572
Treasure	\$83,955,336	\$1,175,375
Valley	\$484,912,603	\$6,788,776
Wheatland	\$331,620,801	\$4,642,691
Wibaux	\$81,940,503	\$1,147,167
Yellowstone	\$6,941,428,966	\$97,180,006
TOTAL	\$56,532,761,968	\$791,458,668



County News

Counties Could Lose Millions in Funding if Law Isn't Renewed

By KARL PUCKETT
Great Falls Tribune Staff Writer

A law that has sent millions in revenue generated from National Forest lands to the states is expiring.

The thought has county officials in Montana perspiring.

It's called the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000. The funding comes from mineral resources, grazing fees and other sources. It's appropriated to states where national forests are located.

This year, the final year of the act, Montana counties will get \$13 million from the U.S. Forest Service. The check hit the mail Wednesday.

But if the act isn't reauthorized, states could lose millions of dollars in federal funding.

"It's a huge amount," Montana Association Counties Executive Director Harold Blattie said.

Congress let the act expire before adjourning in 2006 and MACO is lobbying hard to get the Act reauthorized in 2007. So are the National Association of Counties and National Coalition of Forest Counties and Schools.

If the act is not reauthorized, every county in Montana will pay the price - whether or not forested land lies within its border, according to MACO.

"As it stands right now the counties will not have that payment a year from now," Blattie said.

Northwest Montana's Lincoln County alone got \$6 million in 2005.

Flathead County received a \$1.5 million total payment, and Lewis and Clark County got \$446,551. Judith Basin's allocation was \$82,000, while Meagher County received \$141,247. Cascade County got \$49,688. The breakdown for 2006 payments was not immediately available.

The final year's funding was announced Thursday by Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns. The Forest Service falls under the USDA.

The \$12.9 million Montana is getting is part of \$385 million in Forest Service revenue distributed to 41 states

and Puerto Rico for improvements to public schools, roads and stewardship projects.

Oregon is getting \$149 million, the most in the nation, followed by California (\$66 million), Washington (\$42.3 million), Idaho (\$21 million) and Montana.

Authority for the Forest Service to make the payments expired at the end of fiscal year 2006.

Bobbie Mixon, a Washington D.C.-based Forest Service spokesman, said the sixth and final payments were sent to states Wednesday evening.

"The states were aware this was coming and prepared for it," Mixon said. "The level of their preparedness depends on the states and who you ask."

Since 1908, the Forest Service has been returning 25 percent of revenue derived from timber harvesting and other sources to counties. That fund still is in place and counties will revert to using it if the Secure Rural Schools Act and Community Self Determination Act of 2000 is not extended, Blattie said.

The act was meant to be a six-year safety net for timber counties, which saw large payment reductions under the 25 percent program because of declining timber sales in national forests.

Under the temporary funding, counties received 85 percent of the average of the three highest-receipt years between 1986 to 1999.

Blattie said payments would be far lower under the 25 percent plan. He estimated Montana counties could lose as much as \$10 million combined.

All Montana counties, even those without forests, could end up picking up the tab, he said.

Every county receives payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) from the federal government. PILT is reimbursement for the loss of taxes because federal lands can't be taxed. Blattie predicted PILT would be lowered for some counties in order to "backfill" counties that lose the most funding from the discontinuation of the Secure Rural Schools Act and Community Self Determination Act.

"Every county in Montana will lose revenue," he said.

WANTED

Roosevelt County has an opening for **ROAD FOREMAN**
Salary: \$18.00 to \$20.00 per hour (depending on experience). Open until filled. Applications & Revised Job Description available at Northeast Montana Job Service Workforce Center, Wolf Point, MT.

Tel.: (406)653-1720, FAX: (406)653-1196, Jobline: (406)653-1194

The Flathead County Finance Department is seeking a **STAFF ACCOUNTANT**.

For more details including job description and salary, please visit www.co.flathead.mt.us prior to February 2, 2007.



County News

COUNTY OFFICIALS

DANIELS COUNTY Commissioner Norman C. Ruud has resigned his position for District No. 2 as of January 5, 2007.

ROADS

BEAVERHEAD COUNTY commissioners signed an agreement and accepted control of the Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.

HEALTH

DEER LODGE COUNTY residents will have one more option

for treating mental illnesses. The state Department of Public Health and Human Services has received a rare Medicaid waiver that will allow some Montanans who have a severe disabling mental illness to get care in their own homes rather than in nursing homes.

GRANITE COUNTY Medical Center, in collaboration with St Patrick Hospital and the International Heart Institute, announced the availability of Echocardiogram services. An Echocardiogram is a test that uses sound waves to create a moving picture of the

heart. The picture is much more detailed than an x-ray image and involves no radiation exposure.

SUBDIVISIONS

BROADWATER COUNTY received the largest proposed development plan so far in Montana. Rolling Glen Ranch Planned Unit Development would be a 2,599-lot community, spread over 1,726 acres, located west of U.S. Highway 287, about 2.5 miles north of Interstate 90.

MISSOULA COUNTY commissioners unanimously turned down Clearwater Meadows Ranch, a

119-home subdivision billed as affordable housing between Missoula and Seeley Lake.

MISCELLANEOUS

GARFIELD COUNTY fossil hunters discovered the death poses of two beasts—a meat-eater and a plant-eater—with their tails crossed like swords frozen in the sandstone of western Garfield County.

CHOUTEAU COUNTY'S new drug and alcohol counseling program, called New Horizons, is now licensed by the State of Montana.

Montana Awarded \$1.2 Million In Fuels Reduction Funds

By Dan Bushnell
DNRC Public Info. Officer

Missoula, Mont.- The Montana DNRC has received preliminary notification that it will receive nearly \$1.2 million dollars in federal grant funding for fuels mitigation projects throughout the state. The funding will be used for projects in Missoula, Flathead, Mineral, Ravalli, Lincoln, Sanders, Lewis & Clark and Stillwater Counties.

The grant program, called the Western Wildland Urban Interface Grant Program, provides funding for fuels mitigation, education, prevention and homeowner action projects throughout the western United States. The USDA Forest Service provides the funds, which are delivered to grant recipients through state foresters and their network of project partners.

"Montana competes with 17 western states and protectorates, such as American Samoa and Guam, for the available funding," said DNRC Director Mary Sexton. "We submitted 10 proposals totaling about \$1.7 million - to have 6 funded for \$1.2 million is great news." Sexton noted that the funds for actual project work won't be available until July 1, but that will provide grant recipients with time to prepare to begin work over the summer.

DNRC National Fire Plan Coordinator Paula Rosenthal explained how the DNRC would implement the funded projects. **"We have a network of local government partners and other organizations, such as Resource Conservation & Development Areas (RC&Ds) who will manage these mitigation projects at the local level," said Rosenthal. "They provide technical expertise, fiscal and administrative oversight, and project management to ensure that the goals of the project are met."**

Once completed, the approved projects represent hazardous fuels reduction treatment on approximately 1900 acres of private property within the wildland urban interface. All programs are offered as a cost-sharing partnership with homeowners, who not only pay for part of the work, but must agree to maintain the project into the future. Most projects also contain an education element to provide resources for homeowners about how to protect their property from wildfires.

Applications for next year's Western Wildland Urban Interface Grant Program will be available mid-June. Communities, homeowner

groups, and fire agencies should be reviewing their Community Wild-fire Protection Plans and designing projects in high priority areas ahead of the application period, Rosenthal said.

The DNRC administers another fuels mitigation grant program in direct partnership with the Forest Service. The Community Protection Fuels Mitigation (CPFM) Grant Program provides cost-share assistance for fuels treatment on non-federal lands adjacent to federal lands that are also scheduled for treatments. It provides an opportunity for landscape level treatment across ownerships. The application period for the CPFM Program opens May 1st.

For more information contact Dan Bushnell, DNRC Public Info. Officer, at (406) 444-0465 or dabushnell@mt.gov.

For additional information about the National Fire Plan or available fuels mitigation grant assistance, contact Paula Rosenthal at DNRC's Fire & Aviation Management Bureau, 542-4335.

NOTICE: MT Land Info Act

The 2005 Legislature passed the Montana Land Information Act (MLIA), which added a one dollar per page recording fee to all documents that meet the requirements as defined in 7-4-2636 MCA. Of this dollar fee, 25 cents is retained by the counties to go into a county land information account and 75 cents is transferred to the State to go into the Montana Land Information Account. The Montana Department of Administration, with advice from the Montana Land Information Advisory Council, administers this account.

Grants for activities that promote the strategies of the annual Montana Land Information Plan are available to state agencies, local governments, tribal governments and the university system. It is estimated that between \$600,000 to \$700,000 will be available for State Fiscal 2008.

All documents, including the MLIA statute, administrative rule, 2008 Land Information Plan, and the 2008 grant document are available at <http://giscoordination.mt.gov/mlia.asp>. The grant document contains the procedures and instructions for applying for a MLIA grant. Grant applications are due February 15, 2007.



Announcements & Reminders

MSAWRA: Annual Conference

The officers of the Montana Section of the American Water Resources Association announce the theme for the 2007 annual conference: "Irrigation Management in Transforming Western Landscapes." The conference will be held in Lewistown, Montana on October 11 and 12, with a pre-meeting workshop on October 10. This year's winning student presenter will be awarded an expense-paid trip to the annual National AWRA meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico on November 12-15, 2007. For more information, please call 994-1772 or email water@montana.edu.

Radon Resistant New Construction Workshop Opportunity

APPLY NOW for an all-expenses-paid sponsorship to attend the National Environmental Health Association's Radon Resistant New Construction Workshop! Learn how to develop a successful community action plan and gain new knowledge and skills of RRNC. Last year, several county teams were selected for the opportunity. **Letters of intent due Friday, February 23rd.** Go to the following link for more information: <http://www.neha.org/pdf/research/RRNC%202007%20Info.pdf>. Although this is a NEHA event, not a NACo event, we're very interested to know of the counties that will be submitting applications so please drop me a line with your information when you apply!

Communities in Action taking applications for VISTAs

Are you a non-profit organization working for the betterment of your community? Do you have great ideas, projects, and plans that you just don't seem to have the spare time to tackle? Are you located in Eastern Montana? If so, Communities In Action and AmeriCorps*VISTA might be the answer you've been searching for.

AmeriCorps*VISTA (Volunteer In Service To America) is an indirect service program dedicated to the eradication of poverty, and its members serve in hundreds of organizations throughout the country working to fight illiteracy, improve health services, create businesses, increase housing opportunities or bridge the digital divide.

When VISTA members complete their year long commitment to service with an agency, they leave behind lasting solutions to some of our country's toughest problems. VISTAs primarily work on implementing or supporting sustainable projects in your community. A sustainable project is one that builds capacity for a current non-profit or community organization.

With Communities In Action, AmeriCorps*VISTA members have been serving in Richland County volunteering at agencies like local Boys & Girls Clubs, hospitals, museums, economic development, schools, drug and alcohol programs, health departments, and domestic violence shelters to name

a few. Communities In Action is expanding their service area and requesting proposals from non-profit entities located in Eastern Montana counties (Carter, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Garfield, McCone, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Treasure, Valley, and Wibaux) striving for community betterment to acquire an AmeriCorps*VISTA member to supplement their mission.

A new AmeriCorps*VISTA recruitment cycle is quickly approaching and it is time for application submissions to Communities In Action. For a copy of the application please contact Melissa Boyer (mbhealth@richland.org) or at Richland Health Network (433-6946).

There is no application fee. If a member is placed with an agency, a cost-share in the amount of \$2500 will be required to be paid to Communities In Action within 3 months of the placement of a member. In return, members are required to spend a minimum of 40 hours per week at their placement site. For their service, they receive \$833 per month for a living allowance, \$550 relocation allowance, mileage or free airline ticket from their home of record to their service site, health coverage, loan forbearance or deferment, and at the completion of their service, either an education award in the amount of \$4725, or a \$1200 cash stipend. VISTA benefits are paid by Communities In Action.

Seminar: Interconnection and Preemption of Highway Traffic Signals with Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Signals

Interconnection and preemption course is an in-depth look into the operational requirements necessary to successfully interconnect and preempt a highway traffic signal with adjacent highway-rail grade crossing warning devices. It includes history, background and review of basic traffic signal sequencing and timing as well as railroad train detection circuits and timing parameters. The seminar then goes into industry definitions and standardized terminology relating to interconnection and preemption followed by MUTCD requirements. Progressing through development of preemption requirements at a "typical" intersection and how to develop the proper timing values. Also, various "how" and "how not to" videos are shown and special

situations such as turning moves and presignals are discussed.

A good class mix of participants generally enhances the training course. Traffic engineers involved in signal design, traffic signal technicians and maintenance personnel, railroad signal maintainers and supervisors and managers will all benefit from this course.

February 13 -14, 2007 8:00am - 5:00pm at the Hampton Inn: 3000 Hwy 12 East; Helena, Montana 59601. Call for room reservations at (406) 443-5800, and to register call Kris Christensen at (406) 444-7286 OR email krchristensen@mt.gov. The course cost is \$120.00, which includes two lunches plus materials.



NACo Urges Congress to Pass *Secure Rural Schools Bill* to Continue Critical Funding for Forest Communities

By Jim Philipps
NACo

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Counties (NACo) today called on Congress to pass legislation to reauthorize the just-expired Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 to ensure uninterrupted federal payments to western U.S. forest counties and schools.

The legislation (H.R. 17), which would continue stable safety-net payments to counties and schools struggling with the loss of historic revenue sharing from federal timber sales for 7 years, was introduced today – the first day of the 110th Congress – by Reps. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) and Greg Walden (R-Ore.).

“NACo applauds Congressmen DeFazio and Walden for their continued leadership on this issue and calls on Congress to reauthorize Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act,” said NACo Executive Di-

rector Larry E. Naake. “Without these federal payments, forest counties and schools will surely suffer needlessly if payment are interrupted or eliminated.”

NACo is fiercely supportive of the Secure Rural Schools and Self-Determination Act. Title I of the Act provides a “safety-net” for counties and schools unable to depend on the timber revenue sharing promised in the early days of the National Forest System. Title II gives county-level Resource Advisory Committees – comprised of diverse stakeholders – a say in selecting projects on the National Forests. Title III provides funds forest related county programs such as Community Wildfire Protection Planning, forestry education and search and rescue operations. Support for reauthorization in the 109th Congress was bi-partisan and widespread, with 139 co-sponsors in the House and 31 in the Senate.

However, the 109th Congress adjourned last month without reauthorizing the law.

NACo Seeking *Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program* Applications for Wetland Restoration Projects

By Jim Philipps
NACo

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Counties (NACo) and the Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program project partners are currently accepting applications for the 2007 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.

Program partners are pleased to announce the availability of special funding under the Five Star Restoration Program through a partnership with Southern Company and its operating companies (Georgia Power, Alabama Power, Gulf Power, and Mississippi Power). In addition to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funding for projects located within any U.S. state or territory, \$200,000 in additional grant funding from Southern Company is available for projects located in portions of Ala., Ga., Fla. and Miss.

In 2006, 39 projects out of 126 applications from across the country received grants averaging \$13,000. Examples of entities that received funding and assistance through the Five Star Program include county and city governments, non-profits, schools and school districts, and local environmental

groups. The stars in “Five Star” are the partners, funders, and/or participants who offer cash and in-kind services necessary to complete the restoration project including:

- ◆ Local or tribal governments (e.g., boards of county commissioners, 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 funders.

Begun in 1997, The Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program is a partnership between NACo, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Wildlife Habitat Council, and made possible with support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the newest program partner, Southern Company. The deadline for applications is March 9, 2007.

For more information about the Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program, how to apply, and examples of past Five Star projects, visit www.naco.org/techassistance under water quality, or contact Erik Johnston at 202/942-4246 or ejohnston@naco.org.



NACo's *Jobs Online* Fills National Recruiting Needs at Bargain Prices

When it comes to finding that perfect person to fill a position at your county, there is a trustworthy service that can help you do so in a fast and affordable manner. The National Association of Counties' Web site, www.naco.org, has a section entitled "Jobs Online," where organizations can post job openings of any length for a bargain price compared to other classified ad services.

This service is available to any business, but is especially popular among county and city governments, state associations and regional community organizations. The job postings can be viewed by anybody — the service is not restricted to NACo members.

Since county officials and employees from all over the nation are regular visitors to www.naco.org, Jobs Online can give your county the opportunity to reach a broader audience than your local paper or county Web site. You

may find the ideal candidate if you reach out to NACo's widespread audience!

For more information or to post a job, contact NACo's Jobs Online representative, Allison Mall, at 202/942-4256 or amall@naco.org. Or, go to www.naco.org/jobsonline and fill out the online form. Ads will be posted within 24 hours.

NACo is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation's 3,066 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public's understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money.

NACo is Now Accepting Applications for a New Technical Assistance Program Available to Rural Counties

As part of the Rural Health Works program, NACo will select a limited number of counties to receive technical assistance awards on a competitive basis. The award includes intensive TA on the Rural Health Works model. Rural Health Works is a community engagement process that assists counties to evaluate their healthcare system and to generate county-specific data on the importance of the health care sector to the local economy. The ultimate goal of the project is to strengthen rural economies by increasing the use and expansion of health services.

At the end of the project, participating counties will receive the following county-specific reports:

- An economic impact report describing economic activity in terms of both dollars produced and jobs produced by the health care sector;

- A directory of health and human services provided in the local service area;
- A survey of the health services utilization patterns of the community and the reasons for those patterns;
- A compilation of secondary data regarding the community. This report includes health data such as local leading causes of death compared to the state, infant mortality and related data, local disease issues, as well as other demographic data including incarceration rates, graduation rates, etc.

To apply, download an application from www.naco.org. The deadline to apply is 2/5/2007, and awards will be announced 2/12/2007. More information is available in NACo's *County News*.



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The National Association of Counties (NACo), in Partnership with Nationwide Retirement Solutions (NRS), and state associations of counties, provides county employees with a Section 457 Deferred Compensation Program.

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Conclusions

... Continued From Page 7: Workplace Conflict

Too high? Even if we're 25% off on our estimates, there's still \$147,120 in hidden losses. We still have not accounted for the other losses attributable to this conflict: reduced decision quality, lost work time and increased health costs due to the stress of the conflict. If your agency has more than 50 employees, you know you have conflict that's affecting your bottom line. If your company is smaller, the hidden cost of conflict would be an even greater percentage of your total revenues.

Conflict costs money and directly affects the bottom

line. Peacemaking and conflict resolution are not only right, they are financially sensible.

The Montana Consensus Council, in addition to its public participation and planning services, has professionals on staff and on contract to be available to cities, counties and state agencies to facilitate the resolution of expensive conflicts. We have formulas for determining the costs of your workplace conflict. Call Judy at 444-9838 or Jacquie at 444-4457.

Infrastructure Planning and Financing Workshops: "Planning for Infrastructure Improvements" W2ASACT Funding Workshops Spring 2007

Does your community have problems related to your drinking water or sanitary sewer systems and you are thinking that maybe you will need to tackle an infrastructure problem within the next few years? If the answer is yes, you should plan to attend one of the one-day workshops, which will provide you with information about what goes into getting a project completed, the timelines involved, the technical assistance available to help guide you, and the various public infrastructure funding

programs available to help finance the project.

This workshop is especially intended for those of you that may not be familiar with what is involved in getting a project constructed, or that are unfamiliar with the grant and loan programs available to finance infrastructure projects. Engineers and recently elected public officials who have never been to these workshops are especially encouraged to attend.

For more info., dates, and locations call (800) 841-2770.

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