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Johnson takes MACo presidency at 98th conference

Pondera County Commissioner recounts experiences, thanks supporters

Cyndi Johnson, former MACo First Vice President, ascended to the position of President at MACo's 98th Annual Conference, held Sept. 23-27, at Great Falls. The following is Johnson's acceptance speech.

When I first ran for county commissioner, I lost. I was incredibly disappointed and frustrated. I told my husband I'd never do that again...that was three elections, a lifetime of experiences, and a wealth of incredible friendships ago.

Some of those experiences are worth recalling, but my husband wasn't there, so for God's sake don't tell the rest of the story about:

Beer in the parking lot of the Super 8 Motel while we waited for the fire department to put out the fire;

Riding all over Kalispell with Wild Man Vic, searching for the Waylon Jennings wake;

Getting locked outside the Holiday Inn, in the rain, in my pajamas;

Watching John O'Prinkki with limited rhythm on Kennedy Center Stage;

Sharing the hamster dance with Jack Holstrom;

Trying to understand the plight of Barbie dolls in North Central Montana at the hands of Past President Doug;

Underwear shopping with Gary and Jim;

How the promise of road maintenance can save a life when Kathy yelled, "You can't die, Joe, the road isn't paved yet!"

Local government is an awesome institution that involves so many different team members. Our fellow commissioners, other elected officials, and every single county employee make local government a fine-tuned instrument and the Montana Association of Counties is like a concert venue

for our orchestra. As 56 counties in the great state of Montana, we make darned fine music together.

You've all met my daughter, Sheridan. She's really grown up in the Court Office. She was one when I was elected. I thought perhaps she could help me keep my presentation simple and yet highlight the value of all county elected officials and employees, so I asked her for definitions of some of the officials, employees, and terminology. You'd be surprised at the insight of the eight-year-old perspective...

Did you know that the:
Country is one section of a continent;
County is the land around the town you live in;
Government is the same as politicians;
Courthouse (or Court Office, as she calls it) is a very important building right in the middle of town where everybody who gets elected has to go to work;
Assessor is the guy who

talks a lot and lets me tell him everything that's going on;

Clerk and recorder is the person who works next door to my mom and keeps all of the important information in her office and she makes sure you vote;

County attorney works on county stuff like when commissioners really need the judge;

Sheriff is the person in charge of making the county safe who drives a Tahoe;

Deputy is the person in the sheriff's office who actually works (I'm sure she means all deputies);

Justice of the peace is the girl who tells the sheriff or deputy to put bad people in jail;

Jail is where you keep the bad people



New MACo President Cyndi Johnson at the 98th Annual Conference in Great Falls.



MACo Annual Conference

MACo thanks its conference sponsors, exhibitors

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Commissioners, elected officials to also benefit at 2008 Mid-Winter Conference in Billings

The 2008 edition of the annual MACo Mid-Winter Conference, set for Feb. 11-15 at the Billings Holiday Inn, is shaping up to be a

great opportunity for county elected officials to learn more about state and local government issues.

The four-day event is

packed with seminars focusing on a variety of timely and critical subjects relevant to every participant.

For more information

about the next year's conference, call MACo at (406) 444-4360, visit the MACo site at <http://maco.cog.mt.us> or watch *MACo News*.



MACo Annual Conference



2007-2008 MACo Officers

From Left to Right:
Fiscal Officer Allan Underdal, Toole County; 1st Vice President Mike McGinley, Beaverhead County; President Cynthia Johnson, Pondera County; Past President John Prinkki, Carbon County; 2nd Vice President Carl Seilstad, Fergus County, and Urban Counties Rep. Greg Chilcott, Ravalli County

Seen at the Conference





MACo News

MACo was fortunate to have several state and federal leaders attend the 98th Annual Conference in September, including speakers U.S. Rep. Denny Rehberg and Montana Secretary of State Brad Johnson, who both enter-

tained and informed the crowd at the President's Reception. In their absence, Sen. Max Baucus and Sen. Jon Tester were kind to send the following letters to the conference. We've reprinted them here for your enjoyment.

Letter from Sen. Max Baucus

Dear friends,

I'm sorry I can't be with you for the Montana Association of Counties annual meeting. I'd like to thank my good friend, and Past President, John Prinkki. John, you have done a great job for the folks in Carbon County, and across our state, and it's been a pleasure to work with you.

I'd also like to say hello to the new President, Cynthia Johnson. Cindy has done great things in Pondera County, and I am sure that she will be a great President for MACo.

I also want to thank all the retiring county commissioners. I wish you well wherever life may take you.

Montana's 56 counties, from Anaconda-Deer Lodge County to Yellowstone County, represent a wide variety of demographics, each with its own unique needs. And as county commissioners, each of you has worked hard for your county.

We all work hard to address the needs of our constituents. A major concern of mine for our state is health care.

That's why I've worked so hard on the Children's Health Insurance Program. CHIP is a program that is important to all Montanans, because it cares for our greatest resource: our children. I look forward to standing with all of you to make sure our kids get the health care they need and deserve.

Another program that I know is on a lot of your minds is the Secure Rural Schools program. This program is vital for providing good schools, safe roads, and emergency services. However, we must pay for this the right way. I stood with many of you as we fought the unacceptable proposal that would have sold off public lands to pay for this program. And you can bet that I am going to keep fighting until our counties get the resources they need.

I hope you have had a great meeting in Great Falls, and I look forward to seeing you all in the future.

All the best,
Max Baucus

Letter from Sen. Jon Tester

Good morning, everyone,

Sorry I can't be with you today, but thanks for allowing me to say a few words about the great work you folks do.

I know that you all value hard work, honesty, straight talk, and common sense. Those are all Montana values. They're important at all levels of government, from school boards to city councils to county governments and on up to the U.S. Congress.

Thank you for making it happen.

I want to say a few things about some of our accomplishments in the 110th Congress.

Max and I are fighting for and getting funding for much-needed infrastructure projects across Montana. Just the other day, the Senate approved \$20 million in transportation, housing, and urban development projects across Montana.

Improving that sort of infrastructure will bring more good-paying jobs to Montana, it will make our highways safer and more accessible, and it will improve our state's economy.

We passed a major energy bill. It will bring more opportunity to Montana. It will save money. And it will help clean up our air and water.

We gave working Americans a long-overdue raise.

We passed the most sweeping ethics reform since Watergate.

We funded rural schools and farm disaster aid.

I'm making some long overdue changes to give our veterans a fair shake. Just the other week, I got the Senate to set aside \$125 million to increase the VA's mileage reimbursement rate for disabled vets.

I'm happy to say I've got eight offices now open across the state. If you are ever near one, stop in and say hello or give them a call if you need help with something. And if you're ever in Washington, visit me there. It's always nice to see familiar faces in a place like D.C.

Enjoy your time together today, and please be in touch.

Jon



MACo News

Health Care Trust adds new groups, stresses benefits changes

By Owen Voigt, Health Care Trust Administrator

The spring and summer has been exciting and very busy for the staff. Open enrollment was conducted for all of our July 1, 2007, renewing groups plus enrollment for six new groups. Joining the HCT during June and July are the following groups:

- Beaverhead County
- Carter County
- Garfield County
- Teton County
- Great Northern Development Corporation
- Sweet Grass Conservation District

Welcome to the new Health Care Trust groups and thanks for putting your trust in the MACoHCT to handle your employee/retiree and COBRA eligible person's benefits.

Our thanks to all the staff, commissioners, and other elected officials for their assistance in making the transition to the MACoHCT. Our dedicated staffers have conducted follow-up meetings with all the new counties and plan on meeting with Great Northern and Sweet Grass CD soon to go over any questions. HCT field staff will be traveling to see you again soon to answer any questions you may have for us.

For all existing groups remember the benefit changes to the plans effective July 1, 2007:

- Automatically cover Center for Disease Control new approved and recommended immunizations;
- Redefine dependant child definition to simplify recognition of parental support;
- Eliminate the Well Child Benefit Maximum;
- Increase allowance for mammograms from \$125 to \$200;
- Adjust Inpatient and Outpatient Rehabilitation Benefits resulting in an increase in overall benefits;
- Change and move the Employee Benefit Assistance plan to be included as part of the Mental/Nervous and Substance Abuse Coverage.

For all existing groups these changes were included as part of your plans when you joined the MACoHCT.

All members should please make sure you are having an annual exam, this year we know of two instances where during annual preventive exams two cases of cancer were discovered. Had either of these cases gone on for a period of time before discovery the costs could have been close to \$200,000 additional. These two HCT members, by obtaining preventive exams, saved the trust and its members nearly \$200,000 in premium plus enjoyed better and earlier medical results!

By providing exemplary service, fair rates, plans and benefit structures with Montana County and Special District employees in mind the trust has grown to 19 counties, one city, one town, a county hospital, and numerous special districts including an economic development corporation, irrigation, conservation and water districts in just over two years! This is amazing. We at MACo thank you for all your interest and support in the Health Care Trust.

New and existing member groups have told us how much they appreciate the ability to provide multiple plan options to their employees and provide each employee with the opportunity to select a plan that fits their individual needs. If you do not have this option with your current carrier, call us to find out about this great opportunity for you and your staff.

With your support the Health Care Trust is growing! If you are interested in finding out more about the MACo HCT or have any questions please feel free to call us toll free at (866) 669-6428 or direct at (406) 443-8102.



MACoHCT

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406.443.8102 ♦ Fax: 406.443.8103

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Health Care Trust Calendar of Events

Oct. 9	MACoHCT Board Meeting
Oct. 12	Renewal rates mailed to groups renewing Jan. 1, 2008
Oct. 19	Open enrollment notices/packets mailed to groups renewing Jan. 1, 2008
Nov. 1	Open enrollment begins for groups renewing Jan. 1, 2008
Nov. 9	Medicare Part D notices will be mailed
Nov. 16	Deadline for signed renewal rates to be returned to MACoHCT for groups renewing Jan. 1, 2008
Nov. 28-30	MACoHCT Annual Board Retreat in Red Lodge
Dec. 15	Open Enrollment period ends for groups renewing Jan. 1, 2008 (Please note: all changes must be received by MACoHCT no later than this date.)

MACo News Invites Letters to the Editor

If you have a compliment, complaint, or suggestion, please let us know!

Please include your name and county with your letter, then send it to:



macopb@maco.cog.mt.us
or
MACo News
2715 Skyway Dr.
Helena, MT 59602-1213

Call us at:
(406) 444-4380



MACo News

Siaperas shares sentiments, sets sail for sunny shores

Dear MACo Staff, Members, and Affiliates,

I can still vividly remember my first days with MACo; how ecstatic I was at getting such a wonderful career opportunity—I actually squealed on the phone when Harold and Sheryl called and offered me the job. My first days weren't filled with paperwork and monotony; they were instead spilling over the rim with excitement, new people, and good times.

I spent my first week with MACo at the Annual Conference meeting members, sponsors, and staff. I remember meeting Doug Kaercher and John Prinkki and wondering if they had been best buds in high school; everyone seemed so comfortable and happy. I wandered around in a haze of hustle and bustle, making small talk and taking pictures, never really knowing who I was talking to or snapping a photo of.

But, as time moved forward, I got to know and grow very fond of the MACo members, affiliates, and staff. I enjoyed coming into the office to work on the newsletter, directory, website, legislative alert, or whatever other publication or design project I had going at the moment. Unfortunately, after about a year working as MACo's Publications Officer, I must sadly announce that my days aiding the wonderful county officials of Montana—and working in the beautiful Big Sky State itself—has come to an end.

For the last few months I've been in the Golden State of California, working long distance for MACo, and during



September, I worked most specifically on training Mike Harbour to take over the helm. He's intelligent and qualified; he will fit in with the MACo team VERY well.

I already miss working with all of you. A member popping into my office to say hi and check out the news was always a nice surprise. I loved Jack's hilarious stories, Karen's kind heart, Fran's sweet smile, Emelia's youthfulness, Greg's insight, Sheryl's understanding and consideration, and Harold's deep well of intelligence. I, of course, miss my partner-in-crime and confidant, Kerissa, as well. I

worked with her years ago, and I'm thrilled that she came back into my life.

MACo was a wonderful place to work, and I can only anticipate that I find another job that I love half as much. I traded the mountains for the ocean, so given that I had a great job in Montana, perhaps I'll find one equally as great in California. I've been really missing the colors of fall though, and there's no trade for that. Thank God my family is in Montana, and I can always go home.

Thank you for everything, MACo, and I'll see you around!

Sincerely,

2007 Montana Faith Community Impact Summit

Please join U.S. Senator Max Baucus and Montana's faith and charitable leaders at the second annual Montana Faith Community Impact Summit on Oct. 8-9 at Flathead Valley Community College.

The summit is designed to:

- Connect people of faith, non-profits, and state and local leaders to effectively address challenges statewide
- Bring together congregations and non-profits with leaders in philanthropy to equip Montanans to meet community needs
- Work together for Montana's future

RSVP at rsvp@baucus.senate.gov. For more information, visit www.fvcc.com, or call Jaime Jutila at (406) 586-6104 or Kristin Bailey at (202) 332-6918.

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County News

County Taxable Values FY 2007 & FY 2008 For Mill Levy By County - Fiscal Year 2008

County (Co. No.)	Tax Year 2006 for use in FY 2007	Tax Year 2007 for use in FY 2008	Increase or Decrease	Percent Change
Beaverhead (18)	\$16,315,301	\$16,931,314	\$616,013	3.78%
Big Horn (22)	\$20,284,043	\$22,905,173	\$2,621,130	12.92%
Blaine (24)	\$12,145,187	\$12,424,609	\$279,422	2.30%
Broadwater (43)	\$10,246,303	\$11,062,900	\$816,597	7.97%
Carbon (10)	\$28,709,760	\$29,397,695	\$687,935	2.40%
Carter (42)	\$5,869,968	\$6,017,385	\$147,417	2.51%
Cascade (2)	\$112,851,609	\$116,864,998	\$4,013,389	3.56%
Chouteau (19)	\$19,967,109	\$19,919,281	(\$47,828)	-0.24%
Custer (14)	\$14,287,435	\$14,614,529	\$327,094	2.29%
Daniels (37)	\$4,691,111	\$4,972,286	\$281,175	5.99%
Dawson (16)	\$14,841,406	\$14,709,441	(\$131,965)	-0.89%
Deer Lodge (30)	\$10,345,020	\$10,942,944	\$597,924	5.78%
Fallon (39)	17,658,969	\$20,363,042	\$2,704,073	15.31%
Fergus (8)	\$22,890,088	\$23,371,447	\$481,359	2.10%
Flathead (7)	\$179,564,103	\$193,906,136	\$14,342,033	7.99%
Gallatin (6)	\$181,081,364	\$196,866,339	\$15,784,975	8.72%
Garfield (50)	\$4,738,325	\$4,865,430	\$127,105	2.68%
Glacier (38)	\$19,404,333	\$20,664,613	\$1,260,280	6.49%
Golden Valley (53)	\$4,840,523	\$4,996,049	\$155,526	3.21%
Granite (46)	\$9,324,913	\$9,608,597	\$283,684	3.04%
Hill (12)	\$27,988,794	\$28,322,537	\$333,743	1.19%
Jefferson (51)	\$20,940,973	\$21,712,539	\$771,566	3.68%
Judith Basin (36)	\$10,015,215	\$10,178,439	\$163,224	1.63%
Lake (15)	\$53,772,968	\$57,545,272	\$3,772,304	7.02%
Lewis & Clark (5)	\$95,718,869	\$101,888,410	\$6,169,541	6.45%
Liberty (48)	\$7,114,566	\$7,329,793	\$215,227	3.03%
Lincoln (56)	\$26,988,890	\$27,919,292	\$930,402	3.45%
Madison (25)	\$44,782,040	\$53,060,249	\$8,278,209	18.49%
McCone (41)	\$5,906,318	\$6,116,829	\$210,511	3.56%
Meagher (47)	\$7,463,065	\$7,855,777	\$392,712	5.26%
Mineral (54)	\$8,324,414	\$8,574,833	\$250,419	3.01%
Missoula (4)	\$178,546,389	\$184,460,260	\$5,913,871	3.31%
Musselshell (23)	\$7,031,986	\$7,449,227	\$417,241	5.93%
Park (49)	\$32,990,679	\$34,414,818	\$1,424,139	4.32%
Petroleum (55)	\$1,570,674	\$1,732,155	\$161,481	10.28%
Phillips (11)	\$14,294,394	\$14,390,850	\$96,456	0.67%
Pondera (26)	\$12,173,729	\$12,443,284	\$269,555	2.21%
Powder River (9)	\$4,084,434	\$4,132,334	\$47,900	1.17%
Powell (28)	\$11,732,149	\$12,227,418	\$495,269	4.22%
Prairie (45)	\$3,267,067	\$3,287,850	\$20,783	0.64%
Ravalli (13)	\$64,468,316	\$69,311,577	\$4,843,261	7.51%
Richland (27)	\$17,926,571	\$24,165,980	\$6,239,409	34.81%
Roosevelt (17)	\$23,620,540	\$21,871,317	(\$1,749,223)	-7.41%
Rosebud (29)	\$91,541,991	\$98,383,379	\$6,841,388	7.47%
Sanders (35)	\$29,187,171	\$30,023,573	\$836,402	2.87%
Sheridan (34)	\$7,981,017	\$8,311,137	\$330,120	4.14%
Silver Bow (1)	46,613,831	\$48,415,555	\$1,801,724	3.87%
Stillwater (32)	\$30,462,511	\$32,919,033	\$2,456,522	8.06%
Sweet Grass (40)	\$15,806,506	\$17,252,550	\$1,446,044	9.15%
Teton (31)	\$14,200,163	\$14,517,679	\$317,516	2.24%
Toole (21)	\$14,237,726	\$14,748,596	\$510,870	3.59%
Treasure (33)	\$3,673,569	\$3,823,120	\$149,551	4.07%
Valley (20)	\$23,781,162	\$22,657,191	(\$1,123,971)	-4.73%
Wheatland (44)	\$11,837,312	\$12,291,381	\$454,069	3.84%
Wibaux (52)	\$3,168,700	\$3,243,233	\$74,533	2.35%
Yellowstone (3)	\$230,137,925	\$246,297,279	\$16,159,354	7.02%
Totals	\$1,913,409,494	\$2,028,678,954	\$115,269,460	6.02%



MACo News

911 coloring book features Miller

Blaine County Commissioner Vic Miller is the subject of an educational coloring book for use with children in learning to use 911. Author Lori Buck, Pinellas County (Florida) 911 Community Educational Coordinator, had Miller in mind when she created the book to help children learn not to be afraid of emergency workers.

"He has a youthful exuberance and curious quality to him that has made him a lifetime friend and someone who deeply cares about community education," Buck said. "The coloring book features illustrations of Vic as I perceived him as a child — slightly mischievous and kind of klutzy. I admire his intelligence."

Buck, who met Miller when he was a student at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland, has collaborated with him on a number of writing projects.

Being chosen for inclusion in the book was an honor for Miller, he said. "She has been a treasure to work with over the years on writing projects and is certainly a life-long friend. She has an infectious passion for community education and saving lives."

Illustrated by Lee Burgess, the book is designed to be a useful tool that children can become familiar with and involves the entire family.

The coloring book is available through Buck at (727) 464-3858 or ed911@aol.com. It also will be available for download soon at <http://www.pinellascounty.org/911/ColorForms.htm>.

State DES orientation set for January

If you want to learn more about the state Disaster & Emergency Services (DES) Division, then be sure to attend the state's three-day training program at the Helena Armed Forces Reserve Center at Fort Harrison on Jan. 8-10, 2008. Topics to be covered are the Local Government Disaster Information Manual (LGDIM) and state functions during an emergency or disaster.

Course participants will have the opportunity to meet and visit with state DES staff, tour the headquarters building, meet with other emergency managers and public officials and share your experiences and concerns in the field of emergency management. This course is for all disciplines that work together in planning for or responding to emergencies.

The course was developed during the past ten years by county and state emergency managers to provide an introduction and overview to how the emergency management system works in the State of Montana. Intended for state, tribal and county officials who are responsible for emergency management functions, the primary objective of the program is to provide you with an overview of the emergency management system in Montana, expectations, the people that work within the system and the resources that are available to assist you.

For more information, visit www.mt.gov/dma/des and click on training, or contact Fred Naehrer, Training and Exercise Manager at (406) 841-3968 or fnaehrer@mt.gov.



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MACo News

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County News

Davey named to Y'stone griz committee

Maureen Davey, Stillwater County, has been appointed to the Yellowstone Grizzly Coordinating Committee (YGCC), the coordinating body created to manage and promote the exchange of information about the Yellowstone grizzly bear population. Davey will be a voting member representing MACo on the committee, which consists of a variety of federal, state, county, and tribal agency representatives.

The YGCC's primary duties include:

Coordinating implementation of the Final Conservation Strategy for the Grizzly Bear in the Greater Yellowstone Area (March 2007);

Ensuring the population and habitat data are collected annually by the IGBST, as specified in the Conservation Strategy, and evaluated to assess current status of the grizzly bear population;

Sharing information and implementing management actions in a coordinated fashion;

Identifying management, research, and financial needs successfully implement the coordinated Conservation Strategy;

Implementing a Biology and Monitoring Review as necessary, and submit a petition for re-listing as appropriate to ensure agency responsiveness to changing circumstances of the grizzly or its habitat in the Greater Yellowstone Area; and

Appointing a chairperson and members of the Information and Education team, and coordinating information and education efforts.

Historical society, Utah group join to offer records preservation for Montana counties

The Montana Historical Society is teaming up with the Genealogical Society of Utah to provide free microfilming of county records across the state.

"This is important for both the preservation and access to a wide variety of historically significant records," said Society Archivist Karen Bjork. "It also saves counties thousands of dollars in funds that are much needed in other areas of government."

The Utah genealogical society provides the volunteers as well as the cameras and supplies to microfilm the records. The Montana Historical Society and the Utah society receive copies of the public records that are preserved.

"We will be putting the records on line so that local governments as well as researchers can easily access them by computer," Bjork said.

The public records that are microfilmed include birth and death certificates, divorce documents, probate records, land records, school census, tax records, cemetery records and voter registration records kept in the Clerk of District Court and the Clerk and Records Offices from the 1860s until 1950.

Counties can add to the list, for example, Flathead County added jail registers and sheriff's fee books.

Jan Hardesty, Flathead County Records Manager, whose county signed up in March for the project, said the quality of the images produced so far are "amazing."

"The volunteers have been here since the middle of March, and they have already saved our county \$47,543 for having the DVDs produced and duplicated," Hardesty said. "By the time our project is done, they will have saved at least \$132,000, if not more."

Volunteers can be bonded and covered by workman's comp insurance, and even fingerprinted, Hardesty said, "so there are no security concerns at all."

Bjork said that the records are not only invaluable to genealogists, but can also be a treasure trove for all kinds of researchers.

Counties interested in participating in the project can contact Bjork at kbjork@mt.gov or (406) 444-7428.



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Transportation committee discusses future program policies

By Jaime Doggett, Meagher County Commissioner and NACo Transportation Steering Committee Member

The NACo Transportation Steering Committee met in subcommittee in July at NACo's 2007 annual conference in Richmond, Va. The four subcommittees (Highway-Highway Safety, Mass Transit-Railroads, Airports, and Ports) provided an opportunity for members to discuss issues in an informal setting and review new proposed NACo policy.

The committee reviewed reports, a legislative update and considered resolutions. There was one new resolution proposing to Create a National Indemnity Liability Fund for Transit Properties. The full committee also reaffirmed all previously passed committee resolutions.

In anticipation of future NACo work on the reauthorization process of the federal highway and transit programs, two speakers discussed their views on future policy. Mort Downey is the Chairman of PB Consulting. He has a long career in transportation, including eight years as Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation and is chair of the Intergovernmental Forum on Transportation Finance. The second speaker was John Horsley, Executive Director of the American Association of State Highways and Transportation Officials, and a former president of NACo. With Congress in the midst of reauthorizing the airport and aviation bill, we also heard from Deborah McElroy, Vice President of the Airports Council International (ACI), on this issue. ACI is an association that represents airports, including many county-owned facilities.

The Federal airport and aviation programs expire on Sept. 30, 2007. This year, Congress is reauthorizing these programs and hopefully enacting a bill that the President will sign. The Bush Administration has made its proposal on these programs and recommended a major restructuring of how airport and aviation programs are financed by eliminating the ticket tax, replacing it with a user fee, and increasing the fuel tax for general aviation. Much of NACo's focus has been on the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), Essential Air Service (EAS), the Small Community Air Service Development Program and the financing of the programs. NACo members have testified before

Congressional committees that are considering the airport legislation. The Senate Commerce Committee approved its bill in May and the full Senate will take action later this year. Included in the bill is a \$25 per flight surcharge on any plane using controlled airspace, which will impact business jets, with the proceeds being used for air traffic control modernization. There is no Passenger Facilities Charge increase in this legislation. The Senate increased AIP funding for capital improvements at airports to an average of about \$4 billion annually over four years, about \$500 million more than present. EAS - which subsidizes air service to rural communities - is authorized at \$133 million annually, a slight increase for the 143 communities that currently get EAS service, including several in Montana. In the bill is a NACo provision that requires a marketing plan for airline bidding on EAS service. Funding for the Small Community Air Service Development Program, which provides grants to small and rural communities to maintain and attract expanded air service, was increased to \$35 million.

This is a transition year for Highways and Transit. Much of the focus is on the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, which is holding hearings, having papers prepared and studying the programs to determine what its recommendations will be to Congress at the end of the year. Many are looking to this commission to develop a framework for the next reauthorization of the highway and transit programs in 2009. The NACo Transportation Steering Committee will be meeting in Tarrant County (Fort Worth), Texas, this month to discuss these same issues and provide input from county officials in this important process.

The FY08 appropriations process has begun slowly. The House Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee has approved its bill. The House bill funding level for the federal-aid highway program is \$40.2 billion, representing full funding at the SAFETEA-LU guaranteed level. Similarly, transit would receive \$9.73 billion, the guaranteed

Please See "Transportation..." Continued on Next Page

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NACo names winning counties

Congratulations to the winning counties of Phase 1 of the County ENERGY STAR Change a Light Campaign. These counties collected the highest percentage of pledges from their employees between July 1 and Sept. 13, 2007. Winners were selected in the following categories (small county category: pop. under 50,000; medium county category: pop between 50,000 and 500,000; large county category: pop over 500,000).

Hennepin County, MN; 1,101 pledges collected
Carroll County, MD; 249 pledges collected
Habersham County, GA; 48 pledges collected

The County ENERGY STAR Change a Light, Change the World Campaign is a call-to-action to encourage counties to help change the world, one light, one energy-saving step at a time. NACo, in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR program and NACo corporate member Office Depot, is challenging counties to collect the most signed ENERGY STAR Change a Light pledges from county employees and residents.

There's plenty of time to register your county as a participant in Phase 2: County Residents. Simply visit www.naco.org/regcal and follow all instructions carefully. Winners will be selected based upon the percentage of the county population taking the pledge (based on the most current census information).

A \$3 off coupon for individuals taking the pledge is provided by Office Depot. For more information, visit www.naco.org/regcal.

County climate forum a success

More than 100 people participated in NACo's first-ever County Climate Protection Forum in Washington, D.C. on Sept. 20-21. The two-day dialogue and peer-to-peer networking forum provided county officials and staff from across the country the opportunity to discuss and learn best practices, tools and resources to assist them in developing and implementing successful climate change programs at home.

The first step for a county to participate in the program is to adopt a pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a numerical target. NACo offers counties a pledge template allowing them to select from existing national campaigns with quantifiable targets to reduce global warming, or to establish their own goals.

To help continue and broaden the county dialogue on climate protection, an online discussion forum has been established for counties to ask questions, discuss progress, and suggest ideas to others. Begin interacting with counties across the country today at www.naco.org/climatediscussion.

Additional information on NACo's County Climate Protection Program and PowerPoint presentations from the County Climate Protection Forum are available at www.naco.org/climateprotection.

Transportation committee discusses future program policies

Continued from Page 12

level. The AIP gets \$3.6 billion, a slight increase over present funding. EAS is continued at today's level of \$109 million. Amtrak funding, which has generated considerable controversy over the last several years, is set at \$1.45 billion, \$104 million over the FY07 level.

Congress will continue to consider reauthorization proposals for Amtrak. The Bush Administration has Amtrak reform plans on the table, including reduced funding for passenger rail from \$1.294 to \$800 million. The Senate has approved a six-year bill that would make available \$3.3 billion in operating subsidies and \$4.9 billion in capi-

tal grants for intercity service. As always, one focus will be on appropriating enough funds for Amtrak to continue its present service and make some capital improvements.

The Transportation Steering Committee hosted one workshop "Fueling Your Fleet with Alternative Fuels." A panel of county officials presented different methods they use to fuel vehicles. Many take advantage of biodiesel and alternative fuels. They gave examples of several cost-saving practices, as well as shared "green" alternatives that have been successful in their jurisdictions.

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MACo News

Johnson takes MACo presidency at 98th annual conference

Continued from Page 12

so they won't do any more bad things. You need to keep them alive so you have to feed them
Treasurer: the people just down the corner who trade in my money
Taxes: you just pay a lot of money for these

Office of Human Services: office at the end of the hallway with the really loud ding-a-ling-a-ling-a-ling (I'm not sure if that means the people who work there or the bell on the door)

Meeting: a place where a lot of people from the court office go to make sure they're doing the right thing. I don't know for sure if they ever get anything done

Law: a rule for the whole town to follow or else you'll be in trouble
Road department: boy people and some girls who work on county roads so you don't slip and slide all over and wreck your pickup

DES: Department of Economic Stuff
Driver's Examiner: she rides with people who are learning how to drive and examines teenage drivers

and trucker drivers and Harley Davidson drivers;

Public Health Nurse: almost a doctor;

County Commissioner: does lots and lots of stuff. There are three commissioners in most counties except that one where the people made them have five because they thought five would get work done – I'm not sure if that will happen.

Now, as you travel to your homes tomorrow, go safely, and remember, regardless of which elected office or position you hold, you are important, you do make a difference, and even eight-year-olds pay attention.

I'm honored to serve with this executive team: John Prinkki, Mike McGinley, Allan Underdal, Greg Chilcott, and your new 2nd Vice President Carl Seilstad. Thank you for your friendship and mentoring and exemplary leadership.

Working with all of these men reminds me of some of the reasons men are happier than women:

Men can play with toys all their life.

Men can wear shorts no matter what their legs look like.

Men have one wallet and one pair of shoes, which are good for every season.

Men can choose whether or not to grow a mustache.

Men can do their fingernails with a pocket-knife.

Men's bellies usually hide their large hips.

Chocolate is just another snack.

The whole garage belongs to them.

Men only have to shave their faces and necks.

Men can keep the same hairstyle for decades.

Men can do their Christmas shopping for 25 relatives on Christmas Eve in 25 minutes.

For men, wrinkles add character.

Men can go on a week's vacation and pack only one suitcase.

Men don't have to stop and think which way to turn a screw.

I'm also honored and thankful to be able to

work with my fellow commissioners Joe Christiaens and Sandra Jane Broesder. They are willing and understanding and able commissioners and Pondera County is well served by their dedication and integrity.

Thank you, Ken and Sheridan, Mariah, and Darin, for your immense patience in allowing me to serve the Montana Association of Counties.

Harold, Sheryl, MACo staff – you are the glue and glue is good stuff, the strong stuff. Thanks.

To you, members of the Montana Association of Counties, I reminded you just a few years ago that you make this organization great and strong, credible and effective. I am humbled by your faith in me to lead. I look forward to the next year with a song in my heart because, together, we are a force to be reckoned with. Together, we will make good things happen for the state of Montana!

Thank you!



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Around Our Counties

County Officials

RICHLAND COUNTY has a hired a second Deputy County Attorney. Janet Christoffersen started the new position in early September. In addition to county work, Christoffersen also will handle some Sidney city criminal cases.

TETON COUNTY hired Deb Coverdell as the new Disaster and Emergency Services/Emergency Medical Services (DES/EMS) Director in late August. Coverdell was the former DES Coordinator.

SWEET GRASS COUNTY Public Works Director Jack Knor is retiring at the end of the year. Knor was a former Road Supervisor in Stillwater County before joining Sweet Grass in July 2006.

PONDERA COUNTY Attorney Mary Ann Ries is now working full time in that position; the job had been part time until August. Ries was the county's former Justice of the Peace.

CASCADE COUNTY has a new Clerk of Court: Ruth Reeves was appointed to the position starting in September to replace Nancy Morton. Reeves, a former deputy clerk, has served in the department for more than 25 years. Morton stepped down in August due to health reasons.

McCONE COUNTY recently honored Rodent Control Officer Joe Morin on his 92nd birthday. Morin's government career began when he was 18; he's worked for the county since 1971.

PETROLEUM COUNTY's former sheriff was fined and jailed last month for stealing a trailer in July 2006.

Subdivisions

FLATHEAD COUNTY Planning Board members voted in September to recommend approval of the final five phases of Eagle's Crest Subdivision near Lakeside. The 821-unit proposal had been reviewed earlier this year, but the board then recommended county commissioners deny the effort. Once finished, Eagle's Crest will double the population of Lakeside.

CASCADE COUNTY commissioners have approved a preliminary plat for the first three phases of The Ranches at Belt Creek, an 810-acre subdivision with houses starting at \$500,000. The 68-home proposal still needs final approval from the commissioners before work begins on the site southeast of Belt.

LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY commissioners OK'd a 130-acre subdivision in the east valley designed for 65

homes and 44 condos. The Heron Creek development is located 15 miles east of Helena and will have 37 acres of parks and open space, as well as four ponds.

MISSOULA COUNTY commissioners rejected, for the second and final time, the Clearwater Meadows Subdivision near Clearwater Junction, in September. The project would've contained 59 homes on 202 acres in Greenough, east of Missoula and south of Seely Lake. It was the developer's second proposal to the commissioners.

RAVALLI COUNTY commissioners narrowly denied both a 20-lot subdivision east of Florence and a 20-lot project in Hamilton Heights in September. A variety of reasons were given, included the impacts to adjacent agricultural land and emergency access.

GRANITE COUNTY Planning Board members voted 5-to-1 to recommend conditional approval of plans for 10 single-family homes and

six duplexes on 8.25 acres at Denton's Point on Georgetown Lake. The Lakeside at Georgetown subdivision still needs final commissioner approval.

Miscellaneous

SHERIDAN COUNTY Librarian Shelia Lee and Court-house Custodian Fran Steinberg are acquiring portraits of every commissioner in the county's 94-year history to display for the public. If you have photos of former Sheridan commissioners, call Lee at (406) 765-2317.

JEFFERSON COUNTY is featured in a new exhibit entitled, "Jefferson County on the Move: Historic Photos of Carriages and Autos 1896 to 1932" at the Jefferson County Museum in Clancy from Oct. 3 to Nov.10.

MADISON COUNTY should be breaking ground on the new Madison Valley Hospital and Clinic this fall, due in part to more than \$3 million in donations for the almost \$10-million project. The new 36,000-square-foot hospital will replace the existing

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Announcements & Reminders

2008 HOLIDAYS

The following is a list of legal holidays in 2008 and the dates they will be observed by most state employees.

<u>Legal holidays</u>	<u>Observed</u>
New Year's Day	Tues., Jan. 1
Martin Luther King, Jr., Day	Mon., Jan. 21
Lincoln's & Washington's Birthday	Mon., Feb. 18
Memorial Day	Mon., May 26
Independence Day	Fri., July 4
Labor Day	Mon., Sept. 1
Columbus Day	Mon., Oct. 13
State General Election Day	Tues., Nov. 4
Veterans' Day	Tues., Nov. 11
Thanksgiving Day	Thurs., Nov. 27
Christmas Day	Thurs., Dec. 25

NOTE: If the holiday occurs on a weekend, the workday closest to the holiday is treated as the holiday for pay and leave purposes.

Mark Your Calendars

<i>October</i>	
Oct. 1	Law & Justice Interim Committee, Capitol
Oct. 3-5	Governor's Work Comp Conference, Big Sky
Oct. 3-5	WIR Board Retreat, St. George, UT
Oct. 9-10	Legislative Finance Committee, Capitol, Room 102
Oct. 16-17	Water Policy Committee, Helena
Oct. 19-20	State Admin. & Veterans Affairs Interim Committee, Capitol
Oct. 29-31	AGRIP Governance & Leadership Conference, Savannah, GA
<i>November</i>	
Nov. 7-9	Rocky Mountain Fair Association, Billings
Nov. 8-9	Law & Justice Interim Committee
Nov. 16	Child, Families, H&HS Interim Committee, Helena
Nov. 28-30	JPIA/JPA/HCT Trustee Retreat, Red Lodge
<i>December</i>	
Dec. 10-14	Commissioner Certification, Helena

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