

NACE News



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Phillip M. Demery, P.E., Transportation and Public Works Director, Sonoma County, CA



Last year, NACE Executive Committee Members were able to meet with Victor Mendez, Administrator of the FHWA to discuss our participation in the FHWA streamlining effort, Every

Day Counts. There were 10 workshops held around the country as part of the EDC campaign in which some County Engineers were invited. The purpose of the workshops was to provide and share streamlining ideas that

would result in the acceleration of Federal Project delivery.

In March NACE Executive Committee Members were able to meet with Victor again to provide feedback regarding the EDC workshops. The meeting provided us with not only an opportunity to provide direct feedback on the workshops but more importantly to discuss our Federal Project Delivery streamlining ideas. Our ideas were well received and Victor asked for specific recommendations as to moving NEPA Categorically Excluded projects through the process quickly. We hope to have such recommendations formulated and delivered by the end of March. Fortunately, our Federal-Aid Best Practices Task Group and Legislative Committee have already provided the framework for developing the necessary specifics. We look forward to pro-

viding you an update at our NACE 2011 annual conference in April.

Speaking of the annual conference, the Minnesota Association has planned an informative and diverse program. The concurrent sessions are filled with interesting technological and managerial topics which admittedly will make it difficult for attendees to select which session to attend. I also look forward to seeing friends that I have made over the years attending NACE events and the new friends that I have made this year as the NACE President.

As my term comes to an end, I want to thank all of you for the opportunities that you have given me and for the lasting memories. Serving as your NACE President has been an honor and a highlight of my professional career. Thank you

BRIAN C. ROBERTS SELECTED AS NACE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The National Association of County Engineers (NACE) is pleased to announce the appointment of Brian C. Roberts as its new Executive Director. Mr. Roberts will be assuming these duties in early June 2011.

Mr. Roberts, Director of the Water Resources Learning Center, Fairfax, VA, has an extensive background in hydrology, hydraulics and stormwater management. Most recently he has been Executive director of the National Corrugated Steel Pipe Association, Washington, D.C., a position he accepted after heading his own firm which specialized in training and technical support services throughout North America.

During his service in the public sector, Roberts was the chief of the Hydraulics Branch, Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division, Federal Highway Administration responsible for hydraulic design and water quality programs in the Eastern half of the United States. As a workshop instructor and project manager for state highway agencies throughout the nation, he was responsible for keeping these agencies fully informed via publica-

tions and instruction sessions of FHWA activities and technical advances. Roberts developed water quality monitoring programs, erosion control policies and authored the FHWA manual "Best Management Practices for Erosion and Sediment Control."

On the county level, he was project manager, Stormwater Management Branch, Fairfax County, VA Department of Public Works responsible for planning and implementing regional stormwater management programs. Presenting these sessions involved coordination on technical and institutional issues with engineers, developers, county agencies and attorneys. He designed the management storm drainage and flood control projects for the County. Later he served on the County's Environmental Quality Advisory Council.

Roberts has been conducting workshops in the field of water resources for more than seventeen years. He has taught over 400 workshops for various agencies and organizations including Federal Highway Administration, American Society for Civil Engineers, International Erosion Control Association, Soil Con-

servation Service, Port of Los Angeles, Public Works Agencies, various Technology Transfer Centers and more than thirty State Departments of Transportation. Internationally, he has taught in Canada, Australia and the Caribbean.

Roberts holds bachelors and master's degrees in civil engineering from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA. He has held engineering licenses in Virginia and Maryland. He currently Chairs the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Committee on "Hydrology, Hydraulics and Water Quality," as well as the newly formed ASCE Task Committee on Climate Change.

NACE looks forward to having Brian Roberts come aboard and wishes the best to retiring Executive Director, Tony Giancola.

**See next month's issue of
NACE News for photos from
NACE 2011 in Minneapolis!**

CELEBRATE NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT MONTH IN APRIL

Celebrate National County Government Month (NCGM) this month! Booklets and materials to help you plan your county's activities are now available by contacting NACo or clicking [here](#). The theme for 2011 is "Serving Our Veterans, Armed Forces, and Their Families." New this year, NACo will present an award to three counties for their outstanding NCGM activities. Contact: [Jim Philipps](#) • 202.942.4220

HOUSE BUDGET COMMITTEE PROPOSES 30% REDUCTION FOR TRANSPORTATION

AASHTO News

The House Budget Committee approved a Fiscal Year 2012 budget resolution based on a blueprint drafted by Chairman Paul Ryan, R-Wisconsin, that calls for significant reductions in transportation funding. The committee proposes that mandatory budget authority for all federal transportation programs (representing highway, motor carrier safety, highway traffic safety, transit, and Airport Improvement Program contract authority as well as Coast Guard retirement pay) would be cut 30% from current baseline levels, from \$58 billion to \$40.5 billion.

The committee assumes cuts in transportation spending of about \$633 billion over 10 years compared to President Barack Obama's budget request.

The House Budget Committee approved the plan on a party-line of 22-16. It now heads to the House floor for consideration, which is expected next week prior to Congress' two-

"House Budget Committee" continued.

week spring recess that begins April 16.

"America faces two deficits: the federal budgetary deficit and the deficit in preserving the nation's transportation infrastructure," said John Horsley, executive director of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. "In their zeal to reduce the first, we hope Congress does not make the second worse."

Even as House Republicans and Senate Democrats continue to debate closing out the FY 2011 appropriations process Congress faces an April 15 statutory deadline to enact a budget resolution for FY 2012. A budget resolution is not binding law but guides appropriations committees as they formulate spending bills for the federal FY 2012 that starts Oct. 1 of this calendar year.

Ryan released his budget blueprint Tuesday. The plan, dubbed "The Path to Prosperity," would reduce spending to a level below 20% of gross domestic product, close to the historical average of about 18% over the past 40 years. It would trim overall domestic discretionary spending to below FY 2008 levels and freeze it there for five years.

Federal highway assistance would be cut from \$42 billion annually this year to approximately \$30 billion per year. Federal transit funding would be cut from \$11 billion this year to about \$5 billion per year from the Highway Trust Fund, with an undetermined amount of General Fund revenue to be added. (Federal transit programs receive part of their annual appropriations from the General Fund.)

"This cutback would not be a temporary

adjustment related to the current downturn in the economy, but is proposed as a permanent reduction in the role of federal funding in meeting national transportation needs," Horsley said.

Ryan's plan includes a spending outline for Fiscal Years 2012-21 that includes significantly different numbers for transportation than the budget proposed by President Barack Obama in February.

Obama's budget calls for investing \$556 billion in highway, transit, and rail projects over the next six years. Obama's budget includes \$336 billion over six years for the Federal Highway Administration. That would be 43% greater than current highway funding levels. The Federal Transit Administration would receive \$119 billion over six years — a 127% increase over the current authorization level, reflecting the administration's strong support for mass transit.

Ryan's budget plan, on the other hand, includes large cuts to U.S. Department of Transportation funding. It proposes to eliminate all federal funding of high-speed rail, a signature transportation priority for the Obama administration. Obama's request includes \$53 billion for high-speed rail.

"High-speed rail and other new intercity rail projects should be pursued only if they can be established as self-supporting commercial services," according to a House Budget Committee summary of its plan.

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STATEMENT OF VICTOR M. MENDEZ, FHWA ADMINISTRATOR

Hearing on FHWA's FY12 Budget Request Before the Committee on Appropriations. Link to news release from the FHWA:

www.fhwa.dot.gov/pressroom/re110330.htm

AN UPDATE ON THE NACE ROADWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE

By David Brand, County Engineer, Madison County, OH and NACE Committee Chair

The members of your NACE Roadway Safety Committee have been busy over the last year dealing with a number of issues related to roadway safety. While the appearance is that not much has taken shape yet as far as the big issues such as authorization of a transportation bill in Congress, a number of items that need to happen prior to a bill taking shape have taken place on a number of levels throughout the NACE membership. Because of those events, as well as an offer from the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA) to participate in their annual con-



NACE Safety Committee at ATSSA: (left side) Wayne Fingalson, Wright County, MN, Sue Miller, Freeborn County, MN, Jon Oshel, Oregon Assoc. of Counties, Ben Gribbon, FHWA Safety, (right side) Paul Carlson, Texas Transportation Institute, David Brand, Madison County, OH

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"Safety Committee" continued.

vention and traffic expo, the NACE roadway safety committee hit the road and a number of the members traveled to Phoenix, AZ in February to attend their annual conference. While at the conference we held a committee meeting both in person and over a teleconference to share thoughts over a number of current safety issues. Eight of the committee members and partners attended in person and another six were able to participate over the teleconference.

We met with Roger Wentz, ATSSA CEO as well as Joe Jeffery, ATSSA Board Chairman to discuss how NACE and ATSSA can continue to get the message out to locals about road safety. We agreed to again work together towards putting out a companion/follow-up booklet to the highly successful Low Cost Local Road Safety Solutions document jointly published in 2006. We are currently refining our focus for topics and working towards a document to get out in 2012.

Topics also discussed in the NACE committee meeting ranged from sign retro-reflectivity requirements, local safety plans, road safety audits, the new Highway Safety Manual (HSM), the MIRE report on roadway infrastructure data collection, and opportunities for NACE members through safety partner organizations. The progress of a number of these safety partner groups, such as the National LTAP safety working group, AASHTO SCOTS, and TRB were discussed in greater detail. NACE continues to have a number of members active in these partner groups as a way of linking priorities and issues but we could always use more.

The second valuable aspect of traveling to the conference was the addition of a whole track of educational sessions billed as the ATSSA Roadway Infrastructure Safety Conference. The sessions were very heavily geared towards local issues and a number of the safety committee members as well as partners presented topics in these breakout sessions. A number of these sessions were well attended by ATSSA members as well as locals. The hope for ATSSA, as well as NACE, is that this could build over the next few years to offer another opportunity for local road professionals to be involved in the safety discussion while also helping keep them up-to-speed on industry trends and opportunities.

It is apparent to all that roadway safety will continue to be both a focus as well as an opportunity for NACE members in the next authorization and beyond. If you have any questions or would like to become more involved in the roadway safety, please feel free to join us in Minneapolis for our next NACE Roadway Safety Committee meeting or contact me directly at dbrand@co.madison.oh.us

NACE AT CONEXPO 2011 SHOW




The NACE Executive Director and NACE members worked the CONEXPO 2011 show recently held in Las Vegas. Over 145,000 attendees visited over 2,000 exhibitors over several acres of inside and outside booths and spaces in and around the Convention Center. The NACE delegation in the early week consisted of Tom Stoner, Rod and Sherri Meredith who are shown above taking a breather at the NACE booth. Additionally, Mark Craft, Richie Beyer and Wayne Fingalson worked the show later in the week. NACE board member Duane Ratermann and Dan Ratermann, NACE Past President, stopped by to visit us as well.

NACE uses this tri-annual show to increase our visibility with the many equipment companies and as a result have been able to increase our corporate membership and exhibitor participation at our annual conferences.

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TIME TO TAKE ACTION

By: Tom Stoner, South Central Vice-President

It's been over two and one half years since I wrote my first news article as a NACE vice-president. A lot has happened in that time period. But I'm more concerned about what HASN'T happened.

At the time I wrote that first article, Iowa, (and the rest of the nation), was enduring a continuing crisis in road funding. We hadn't seen an increase in the rate of fuel taxes in nearly 20 years. Our roads and bridges were falling apart. Construction cost inflation was running well above the general rate of inflation. Material and fuel costs were skyrocketing. We were unable to adequately maintain, let alone upgrade our system. Additionally, health insurance costs were taking a larger percentage of our budget.

So what HASN'T happened? The trends remain the same. Now you can add unemployment insurance cost increases to the mix. Fuel taxes are the same, only now it's been over 22 years since an increase. Attempts to redistribute the limited funds continue. The special interests continue their clamoring. The high population areas need more money, the heavy haulers need more money, the farmers need better roads on which to transport their produce, and the commuters need better roads to get to work. Non-farm businesses need access to customers and supplies. The elderly need access to medical facilities. Police and emergency services need better access. The kids have to get to school. The list goes on and on.

We are closing more bridges, (four here in the past 4 months). Roads are being closed. Oil roads, and some P.C. and A.C. paved roads,

are being returned to rock. Maintenance levels are being reduced. Attrition continues to reduce our workforce. Our income continues to plummet. And the general public wants to know why something isn't being done.

Our legislative representative in Des Moines recently asked us to try to quantify how we have "cut back". (The same question that we answered in February of 2009.) He needs more information to take to the new legislators on the magnitude of our problem. Because, unfortunately, the general public continues to believe that all government is solely inefficient and needs to be streamlined. So to address that belief, I suggested we do a little more soul searching at the local and state levels to try to get a feel for what the general public sees. And in doing so, I uncovered a clear and blatant truth that no-one in government seems willing to recognize.

Even though local and state road construction/maintenance resources continue to be reduced; local, state and federal government, in general, is rapidly growing. "Non essential" and "social" services are being expanded at an amazing rate and there seems to be no slowing on the horizon. And the reason they are growing is that members of the general public, (the voters), demand more and more services. (And lower taxes). And they are only willing to cut the services they don't need or want. But what are those non-essential services?

After all, we have to help the elderly, we have to help the infirm, we have to help the unemployed, the food supply must be safe, we must buckle up, put on our helmets, put out those cigarettes and step away from that salt shaker. We have to save the fishes, and

the wildlife, and the trees. The water needs to be cleaned, the air has to be scrubbed, and, if all else fails, it's for the children.

So I challenge each and every one of you reading this to look back ten years at your own government subdivision. Calculate what percentage of your effort was dedicated to transportation ten years ago and then calculate what percentage of the effort is serving in that capacity now. In my county it was 43%; now it's 29%. No other department in my county has reduced personnel; and new departments have been formed. I'm convinced that's quite typical.

Don't even get me started on the Federal government.

My belief is that the citizens we serve have to make a few simple choices. Do you want "Big Brother" to take care of you, or do you want to do more of it yourself? If you want Big Brother in your life, you must be willing to give up more of your resources, (taxes), and your freedoms to let "him" in.

On the transportation front, do you want to pay more at the pump or do you want to pay more in vehicle repair bills? It has been calculated that a dime added to the tax on a gallon of fuel would increase the average annual cost to drive a vehicle by \$100. How much did your last alignment cost? And what's the current price of a new set of tires? What about property damage, injuries and fatalities? So now what? We can all continue to sit in our local coffee shops and blame the government for our woes, or we can take action. We can educate our legislators, and mobilize our peers. We need to do our homework, and then our civic duty, and use our God given skills to make changes. I'm trying.



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FEDERAL STREAMLINING – EFFORT ON SEVERAL FRONTS

By Ramon D. Gavarrete, P.E. Southeast Region Vice President and County Engineer, Highlands County, Florida

In 2008 NACE President Sue Miller established the NACE Federal-Aid Improvement Task Force to study how improvements in the administration of federal-aid dollars by local agencies could be attained and to pursue improvements in the federal-aid highway program to allow more accessibility of federal-aid funding to local agencies. Associated with this would be an effort to “Restore the Partnership” among government agencies by the establishment of improved communications and collaboration with state departments of transportation and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Division offices located in every state.

Subsequently, in April, 2009 the NACE Board of Directors adopted the NACE Federal-Aid Process Streamlining Issue Paper. One year ago, representatives from the NACE Executive Committee met with Mr. Victor M. Mendez, Administrator, U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and members of his senior staff to discuss the streamlining of the Local Public Agency (LPA) federal program. As a result of discussions like the above, NACE representatives were invited to attend several of the Every Day Counts (EDC) summits held around the nation. This effort is now continuing with NACE members participating at a state level in the implementation of the EDC initiatives. This is a continuing effort and on March 3, 2011 representatives from the Executive Committee once again met with Mr. Victor M. Mendez, FHWA Administrator, Mr. Gregory G. Nadeau, FHWA Deputy Administrator, and Ms. Cheryl Walker, Special Assistant to the Administrator. Mr. Mendez requested specific recommendations as to moving the NEPA Categorically Excluded projects through the process quickly and establishing thresholds for the review process based on project costs. These specifics will be submitted to the Administrator by the end of March.

At a State of Florida level, the Florida Association of County Engineers and Road Superintendents (FACERS) and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) have engaged in the Local Agency Program Community of Practice (LAP CoP). The creation and utilization of Communities of Practice teams is a unique and viable solution to the challenge of getting the right people at the table at the right time to handle the right issues. The concept of LAP CoP is being applied to address

the streamlining effort related to FDOT’s technical guidelines for projects administered by local agencies and funded with federal dollars.

The LAP CoP is made up of FDOT staff members and FACERS representatives. FDOT staff members include those directly responsible for the implementation of the Local Agency Program (LAP) and other staff members with expertise in the technical areas associated with the LAP program processes. In addition, some FDOT members have no job responsibilities related to the LAP program at all. These members are vital to providing the perspective of a “non-stakeholder”. Their function is to look at the big picture and validate that the processes make sense and can be successfully implemented. FACERS representatives include County Engineers, Construction Managers, and Engineering Directors from the counties of Palm Beach, Volusia, Lake, and Highlands; as well as a long standing member of FACERS who is now retired, but with vast experience with FDOT, and local agencies.

Much of the appeal of the Community of Practice approach comes from the empowerment given to the group to identify needed improvements through the members’ determination of the critical areas that are in need of analysis. Florida is unique in that the Department of Transportation (DOT) is decentralized, and therefore, some districts have their own preferences. Through the exchange of ideas, the team has identified discrepancies in district preferences between the Districts, ambiguities between the Local Agency Program

Manual and established practices, and areas for improvements, within the Local Agencies and the Florida DOT.

Although the LAP CoP effort is still in its infancy stage, the utilization of this approach has gained support from stakeholders and management. The commitment level of all of the LAP CoP members speaks volumes as to how this is the “right” time and the “right” approach to address LAP technical process issues and to improve the guidelines and documentation available to individuals developing and administering LAP projects.

As Local Partners we must communicate with our state’s Department of Transportation. Streamlining the Local Public Agency program cannot, and will not be accomplished, just through legislative efforts. As Administrator Victor M. Mendez stated, this is a “combined mission”.

I would like to acknowledge Ms. Cheri Sylvester, Quality Assurance Administrator, Specifications and Estimates Office with the Florida Department of Transportation for her contribution for this article.

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REGIONAL PAVEMENT PRESERVATION PARTNERSHIPS FOR COUNTY ENGINEERS

By John Rice, Kent County Road Commission and NACE Northeast Region Vice President

We are constantly being challenged with having to more with less at a time when we have less revenue and more road and bridge deterioration to deal with and more demands from the public. At some point we find ourselves only able to do less with less. To that end, it is in our interest to slow the rate of deterioration through timely preservation of the system. In my county we have invested in an aggressive Pavement Preservation (PP) program to address the ongoing deterioration of the system by keeping the good roads in good condition and the fair roads in fair to good condition. Those in poorest condition are the most costly to rebuild and improvements have been deferred until Federal funds become available for a specific project. As a result of our PP funding priority, our road system is fairing better in overall condition ratings than our neighboring local agencies and the state as a whole. NACE members have identified PP as a key strategy in our funding priorities and goals to promote local, state and federal funding initiatives around the country. In 2010 the NACE PP Committee directed our group effort to promoting awareness and participation in the AASHTO sponsored TSF.2, Regional Pavement Preservation Partnerships (PPP).

The American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) is dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of highway assets. In May 2006, the National Center for Pavement Preservation (NCP) was contracted to develop and administer its new Transportation System Preservation Technical Services Program (TSP?2). The program was initiated as an efficient means to disseminate information to AASHTO member agencies for preserving their highway infrastructure, including both pavements and bridges. Its principal mission is to serve as a clearinghouse with comprehensive and up-to-date information on efficient and effective preservation measures that enhance highway performance and extend useful life.

Last year NACE PP Committee members attended three of the four regional PPP, the MPPP, NEPPP, and RMWPPP. In 2011, NACE PP Committee members have signed up to attend all four PPP. You are encouraged to attend any one of the four PPP that are close to your home area. The format of the meetings is information sharing between State DOT's, Academia, Industry and Local Agencies to identify and promote BEST PRACTICES in the field of PP. In 2011, the location and dates of the meetings are:

Midwestern (MPPP) Bismarck, North Dakota, 10/25/2011 - 10/27/2011

North Eastern (NEPPP) location pending, 11/7/2011 - 11/9/2011

South Eastern (SEPPP) Oklahoma City, Ok, 5/4/2011 - 5/6/2011

Rocky Mountain West (RMWPPP) Reno, Nevada, 10/4/2011 - 10/6/2011

For more information on the Regional PPP in your area, visit the TSP.2 website at: <http://www.tsp2.org/pavement>.

FATALITIES DROPPED 3% IN 2010; LOWEST LEVEL IN 61 YEARS


The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recently announced that the number and rate of traffic fatalities in 2010 fell to the lowest levels since 1949, despite a slight increase in the number of miles Americans drove during the year.

"Last year's drop in traffic fatalities is welcome news and it proves that we can make a difference," U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said in a statement. "Still, too many of our friends and neighbors are killed in preventable roadway tragedies every day. We will continue doing everything possible to make cars safer, increase seatbelt use, put a stop to drunk driving and distracted driving, and encourage drivers to put safety first."

NHTSA's early projections for last year indicate the number of traffic fatalities fell 3% from 2009, going down from 33,808 to 32,788. Fatalities have dropped 25% from the 43,510 fatalities in 2005. The decrease in fatalities for 2010 occurred despite an estimated increase of nearly 21 billion miles in national vehicle miles traveled. The same estimates also project that the fatality rate will be the lowest recorded since 1949, with 1.09 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, down from the 1.13 fatality rate for 2009.


"The decrease in traffic fatalities is a good sign, but we are always working to save lives," said NHTSA Administrator David Strickland. "NHTSA will continue pressing forward on all of our safety initiatives to make sure our roads are as safe as they can possibly be." NHTSA's latest statistical projections of traffic fatalities in 2010, including regional estimates, are available at bit.ly/deaths040111.

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NACO'S 2011 LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

By Ron Young, Alcona County Road Commission and NACE Director to NACO

Held March 5-9 in Washington DC, I attended the conference as the NACE representative to the NACo Board of Directors. The following highlights some activities and information from this year's conference.

The NACo Transportation Steering committee met and reaffirmed existing NACo transportation policies and added a new policy concerning eligibility for funding through the public lands program. This policy originated in Oregon and calls on Congress to amend the Federal Lands Highway Program to make it available to fund improvements to any road that accesses or passes through federally managed forest lands, specifically including lands managed by the U.S Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management

The Affiliates Council met to report on affiliate activities and discuss common concerns. NACE is one of some twenty plus affiliate organizations within NACo. Some affiliates have regular meetings in conjunction with NACo Conferences. They suggested a reduced registration rate for affiliate members to attend the NACo conference or one day exhibit hall passes. NACo First Vice President Lenny Eliason chaired the meeting and noted that attendance at the Legislative conference is down 6%. He reported that reduced rates were not feasible at this time.

A New World in Transportation was an interesting workshop session that featured Polly Trottenburg, Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy USDOT and James O'Keefe, a staff representative for the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. Trottenburg discussed key elements of the administration's vision for the next transportation reauthorization which included: \$32 billion for a transportation version of race to the top, consolidation of 55 programs to five core programs, expansion of the National Highway system from 163,000 miles to 220,000 miles, a Rural Road Safety program, and continuation of the Every Day Counts initiative.

O'Keefe gave the administration credit for structure, but cautioned against getting excited about the numbers as the proposal is only half funded and would require a doubling of all taxes to meet the need. He discussed possible elimination of the rural road set aside and a shift to performance-based outcomes. He suggested the Highway Safety Improvement Program would become more data driven.

The NACo Board of Directors consists of 126 elected and appointed county officials from active member counties or designated officials. 26 of these represent affiliate organi-

zations. The NACo Board met to consider the following items:

David Agnew, Special Assistant to the President in the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and the new liaison to counties (replacing Michael Blake), spoke to the Board about his new role and plans for working with counties. Agnew said he wants to "build on the relationship that has been created in the past two years," to make it better, more effective and "increase the level of influence" for counties. The federal government needs to work with local governments on an innovation agenda, Agnew said, and focus on issues such as schools, infrastructure and transportation. With the budget discussions that are going on, he said it is difficult to know what is going to happen.

Bob Neilson, President of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), spoke to the Board about housing issues. He noted that a strong construction industry provides jobs, tax revenue and other local economic activity. Major issues of the NAHB are a severe shortage of financing for acquisitions and building, rising inaccurate appraisals, potential loss of the mortgage interest deduction, and local land use issues vs. climate change. He said local governments should have control of local land use decisions. "Land is uniquely local," he said, and decisions should be made locally.

For its 2010 Independent Audit report, NACo received an unqualified or "clean" opinion on its financial statements. The Management letter noted no significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal controls. NACo's internal audit reviewed conference registration policies and procedures and NACo's record retention and destruction policies. It did not identify any significant deficiencies.

The Finance Committee reported a strong financial year for NACo with net operating income of \$1.6 million. This was due to increases in non-dues revenue and proactive expense management. Membership and conference revenue was down, but revenues from NACo for-profit enterprises and corporate partners grew significantly. Expenses were below budget in a number of areas such as employee health premiums, printing costs, consulting fees, officer travel and one-time performance payments.

A Board Member asked that the Board not meet during the Western Interstate Region (WIR) Conference because of travel costs and the difficulty for county officials to travel to multiple meetings each year. It was reported that the cost of the WIR Board meeting and staff travel is approximately \$20,000 and that the conference is self-sustaining. After much discussion on the importance of this meeting,

the Board voted to keep the WIR Conference Board meeting.

The NACo Board sitting as the Resolutions Committee heard reports from all 11 steering committees and adopted resolutions recommended by those committees. A copy of the adopted interim resolutions is available at <http://www.naco.org> and will be voted on by the NACo membership at the NACo Annual Conference and Exposition set for July 15-19, 2011, Multnomah County/Portland Oregon. The Membership Committee reported that 725 counties are receiving a free trial membership in NACo through a special fund that was established through an agreement with NACo's Prescription Discount Card Program partner, CVS Caremark. The initial response to the trial membership has been positive. Retention of these new members will be the primary goal of the committee.

As of early February, there were 174 counties that had not renewed their memberships for 2011, which is almost identical to last year. Twenty-one counties have indicated they are considering cancelling their NACo membership.

The NACo Prescription Discount Card Program continues to grow and has 1,382 counties participating in the program. The overall average savings for the program is 24.9%. Twenty-five counties are currently participating in a pilot program for the NACo Dental Discount Card Program.

The Programs and Services Committee reported their work plan for this year is designed to support the Strategic Plan to advance the goals of increasing member engagement, better demonstrating value to members, and increasing public awareness and understanding about counties.

The Information Technology Committee Reported on a County Chief Information Officer (CIO) Forum held on Friday, March 4. Forty county CIOs and NACo Premier Corporate Members attended in-person. In addition, 17 county CIOs from throughout the country participated online. Cisco Systems enabled this remote collaboration.

They also reported that a very successful Technology Summit was held on Saturday, March 5. The over 200 attendees consisted mostly of county elected officials. The theme for the summit was County Survival Strategies in Tough Economic Times. The summit showcased counties that have leveraged technologies to reduce county operations cost and enhance service delivery from the prospective of county elected officials, county managers, county chief information officers, county geospatial information officers and state association executive directors. This summit was provided at no cost by sponsors

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AT&T, Cisco, ESRI, IBM, Microsoft and Motorola.

The first general session featured Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, U.S Attorney General Eric Holder, and former Congressman Joe Scarborough.

Admiral Mullen gave an impressive presentation on the status of our military. He noted that the 2.2 million citizens serving in our military have never been better and couldn't be more proud of them. However, we are in our 10th year of war with 5,800 making the ultimate sacrifice and 50,000 wounded. He spoke on the need for broad community support for post active duty troops returning to civilian life. Most are in their early 20s and have huge potential, but will need help in transition with

education, healthcare, and jobs.

Attorney General Holder spoke about an extraordinary opportunity for transparency and accountability in the justice system. He discussed the need for drastic change in the effectiveness of juvenile justice noting horrific examples of justice gone wrong. He called for being smart on crime not just tough on crime.

Joe Scarborough, from MSNBC's Morning Joe Broadcasts gave an entertaining presentation on the national budget crisis and political scene. He noted that 60% of the national budget is consumed by Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. Another 30% is consumed by the pentagon and debt interest. The remaining 10% is considered discretionary spending. He further noted that current dis-

cussions to slash and burn the 10% of discretionary budgets won't solve anything. He held out hope that current political divisions may make workable compromises possible as happened during the Clinton administration. However, in our current environment of talk radio, cable news, and the internet conspiracy theories about 24 hours a day.

As always the NACo Legislative Conference was interesting and informative. I have appreciated the opportunity to represent NACE on the NACo Board of Directors.

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