

Countyreview



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Illinois leading nation in Green Building

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) announced that Illinois continues to lead the nation in LEED green building. The 2016 national rankings placed Illinois third on the annual list, making Illinois one of only two states to remain in the top ten since the list began in 2010. The annual list highlights states throughout the country that made significant strides in sustainable building design, construction and transformation over the past year.



"Illinois has a strong history of and appreciation for architectural innovation. It is evident as you walk down the streets of Chicago, drive by the buildings in Springfield or tour one of our many world-class education institutions," said Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity Acting Director Sean McCarthy. "Green builders employ the most advanced technology possible to create a sustainable future, while also driving our economy and making our state a better place to live, work and invest."

Illinois had a total of 151 LEED-certified projects representing 2.82 gross square feet of certified space per resident in 2016. According to USGBC's 2015 Green Building Economic Impact Study, LEED construction is projected to support 413,000 total jobs in Illinois and have a total impact on GDP of \$36.13 billion from 2015-2018.

The LEED green building certification system is the foremost program for the design, construction, maintenance and operations of green buildings. More than 59,000 commercial, neighborhood and residential projects are currently LEED certified, comprising more than 6 billion square feet of construction space in all 50 states in the U.S. and in more than 164 countries and territories globally.

To learn more about Illinois LEED-certified projects visit www.usgbc.org.

President's Message

by Deborah Sims, Cook County Commissioner



I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year! I hope that you have all enjoyed the recent holiday weeks in the company of your family, friends and loved ones.

As we return to work in 2017, Illinois counties will face some new, and some quite familiar, circumstances. At the state level, ongoing budgetary and legislative stalemates will require our members to become even more creative and flexible in developing solutions to minimize the impact of the disagreements on the residents we all serve.

In addition, as last November's never ending election campaign season illustrated, the federal agenda also has a significant impact on the activities and responsibilities of members of the ICA and our peers across the nation. Soon, ICA members, as well as counties across the nation, will be faced with new challenges and opportunities as a result of the new administration in Washington, D.C., as well as the changing composition of the Cabinet, the Congress and the Courts. New priorities, challenges, opportunities are sure to result from this reshuffling of government personnel.

The National Association of Counties (NACo) provides services, information and support to county-level governments, totaling 3,069 across the country. The organization's resources facilitate information-sharing among counties of all sizes, ensuring that all are aware of their colleagues' efforts, best practices in service delivery, and much more.

If you are not a participant already, I strongly encourage all ICA members to join and participate in NACo and avail yourselves of its many benefits. Programs like NACo's partnership with Nationwide to provide deferred compensation accounts and investment services for county employees is but one of many strategic relationships that provide tangible benefit to our members.

As events get scheduled over the next year, I hope you'll join me in participating at the NACo Legislative Conference to be held February 25-March 1 at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C. Also, don't forget to mark your calendars for July 21-24, 2017, for the annual NACo conference, held this year in Columbus, Ohio.

It has been both an honor and a pleasure to serve you all in the past year. I look forward to our continued collaboration as we work to make Illinois an even better place to live, work and raise a family.



DuPage County Office of Homeland Security develops Event Ready program

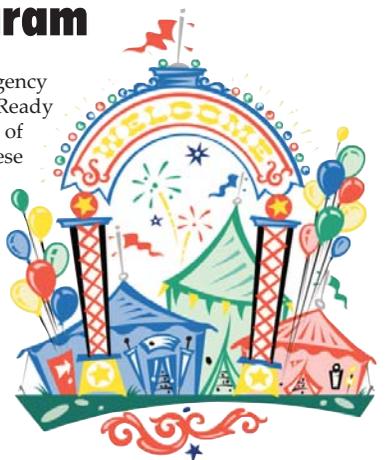
The DuPage County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (OHSEM) has developed a program called Event Ready that guides communities and other organizations in the process of planning, training and facilitating large scale special events. These events include the DuPage County Fair, Lisle's Eyes to the Skies, Naperville's Ribfest, Itasca's Fourth of July fireworks and many more.

Event Ready is designed to protect everyone attending these events. OHSEM works with each community to build a specialized plan that includes three components: An Event Planning/Training Guide, which provides best practices for events and ways to mitigate risk from both natural and man-made hazards; an Emergency Response Plan, which addresses how emergency situations will be handled; and Incident Action Plans, which synchronize operations at the incident level.

These tools answer questions such as, "Who has the authority to close or evacuate the event? What do you do if you find a suspicious package or encounter a missing child? What happens if there is a heat advisory or severe weather?" OHSEM's goal is to reinforce a community's capabilities and equip them with the necessary training and tools they need to run an event.

The first year of an event, OHSEM builds a plan that includes maps of the area created by the County's GIS department and trains those involved with the event. In subsequent years they assess the event, including what worked, what didn't and what can be improved.

Sgt. Steven Schindlbeck from the Naperville Police Department expressed his gratitude for the program. "Thank you for the planning, seminars and on-site support that the DuPage County OHSEM provided for Ribfest, as well as other large scale special events held in Naperville throughout the year."



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Funds ensure continued supplies of Narcan



Kane County Sheriff Donald Kramer hands a check to KCHD Executive Director Barbara Jeffers, MPH, to be used to help continue the successful Narcan program. Looking on from left, Nurse Judy Zwart, Support Associate Diane Dawson, Nurse Cheryl Kane and Director of Disease Prevention Sharon Sillitti.

Using money from the Drug Education Fund, Kane County Sheriff Donald Kramer presented a \$60,919.00 check to the Kane County Health Department to help continue the Narcan training program. The money will go to supply police officers and some school nurses with Narcan, an overdose response drug.

KCHD staff has been training police departments and other first responders in its use since 2014. Narcan has been effective in reversing heroin overdoses and is being carried by police and first responders as a way to give quicker treatment before paramedics arrive. As of December, 2016, a total of 48 people have been saved in Kane County by police officers responding to the scene of an overdose and administering Narcan. A total of 2,300 doses were purchased as well as 2300 nasal atomizers using the funds from Sheriff Kramer.

"The Kane County Health Department will continue to reach out and provide training to partner agencies," said Executive Director Barbara Jeffers. "We want to thank Sheriff Kramer for the generous donation, and also to all the officers who have undergone the training in this important initiative."

DuPage County Event Ready *continued*

The Event Ready program continues to grow and ensure the safety of citizens and residents of DuPage County, at planned, forecasted, and spontaneous events throughout the County. It's already helped protect more than 3 million people who attend events over the past five years. To date, there has not been one injury or casualty due to severe weather at a special event in a municipality that has utilized the event Ready Program.



The first year of an event, the DuPage County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management builds a plan that includes maps of the area created by the County's GIS department and trains those involved with the event.

This Program was also highlighted at a recent National Weather Service workshop and training exercise that included emergency managers, fire service and law enforcement personnel from across Illinois and Indiana.

The Chicago/Romeoville National Weather Service, in a joint partnership with OHSEM, has endorsed the Event Ready Program. On Dec. 13, 2016 both agencies conducted a webinar in an effort to promote this program and partnership on a nationwide basis.

It is through ground-breaking collaborative partnerships such as this that many injuries are being prevented and lives saved.

McLean County Health Department celebrates 70th anniversary

The McLean County Health Department has reached a milestone, celebrating 70 years of providing public health services for McLean County residents and visitors.

Rooted in the passing of the Searcy-Clabaugh Public Health Law in 1943, which made it possible for the development of county health units in Illinois, McLean County residents voted at a judicial election in 1945 to levy a tax to provide for a county public health department. In November 1946, the McLean County Health Department officially opened its doors, assuming the activities of the 66-year old Bloomington City Health Department and expanding services to all of McLean County and making the health department legally responsible for the protection of community health.

From infectious diseases, sanitary nuisances and environmental dangers to mental health coordination, HIV counseling and testing, West Nile Virus surveillance and bioterrorism planning and response, the health department's focus has steadily expanded over the years, to keep pace with an ever-changing world and an ever-mobile community.

While the goal of public health has always been to ensure a safe and healthy community, how we reach that goal has evolved over time as a result of advances in science and technology along with the emergency of new threats and needs within the community.

At its inception, the McLean County Health Department employed two employees – a director and a sanitary engineer. Today, the health department employs nearly 90 individuals.

Beginning in January watch for a year-long series of highlights on the McLean County Health Department's website <http://health.mcleancountyil.gov> that call attention to significant events and items of interest in the agency's history. You can also follow the agency on Twitter (@McLeanHealth) or on Facebook.com/McLeanHealth.





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AND WHO DOESN'T LIKE TO SAVE MONEY?



President Preckwinkle, Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways issue first-ever call for projects

New program encourages investments that support the County's priorities

The Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways (DoTH) is seeking applications for transportation-related projects throughout Cook County as part of the President Toni Preckwinkle's initiative to build and maintain a comprehensive regional transportation network.

For the first time, Cook County is launching an \$8.5 million program to help cover the cost of planning, engineering, right-of-way acquisition and construction associated with transportation improvements sponsored by local governments and private partners. This new program seeks projects that broaden the County's traditional focus on County roads to include pedestrian, bicycle, transit and freight-related improvements.

The call for projects, dubbed "Invest in Cook," is an initiative of *Connecting Cook County*, the County's first long-range transportation plan in 75 years. *Connecting Cook County* lays the groundwork for how the County invests in transportation to attract and retain businesses, people, capital and talent.



"Invest in Cook ties transportation investments to greater economic growth and to more livable communities by making sure businesses and residents have safe and convenient transportation options," said Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle.

"The goal of Invest in Cook is to ensure that transportation investments are made wisely by identifying the universe of transportation needs and prioritizing them," Preckwinkle said.

"Invest in Cook ties transportation investments to greater economic growth and to more livable communities by making sure businesses and residents have safe and convenient transportation options."

DoTH has expanded its traditional focus on its own roads and bridges to include partnering with local communities in an effort to build and maintain a comprehensive network that addresses multiple modes of transportation.

"*Connecting Cook County* calls on Cook County to be a leader in setting and implementing regional transportation policies," Preckwinkle said. "Different levels and units of government need to collaborate to deliver regionally significant improvements that yield long-term results."

In addition to funding projects, Invest in Cook will provide technical and grant-writing expertise to help communities tap into new funding sources and accelerate the completion of projects that may have languished.

"Invest in Cook means communities that have suffered inequities in the distribution of transportation resources will see much-needed capital investments," said Cook County Commissioner Deborah Sims, the chairwoman of the County's Roads and Bridges Committee. "I am eager to see investments in disadvantaged communities that retain companies, create jobs and make communities better places to live."

DoTH is seeking applications from local governments and transit agencies. Private for-profit or non-profit organizations can submit project proposals, but must have a public sponsor. Deadline to apply is 5:00 p.m. on March 17, 2017.

Invest in Cook seeks projects consistent with the priorities detailed in *Connecting Cook County*:

- Prioritize transit and other transportation alternatives
- Support the region's role as North America's freight capital
- Promote equal access to opportunities
- Maintain and modernize what already exists
- Increase investments in transportation

Cook County transportation staff will evaluate and score the proposals using publicly available, performance-based criteria and a qualitative assessment to determine which projects will be chosen this year.

Program information is available at www.cookcountyil.gov/InvestInCook.

Award letters will be sent out in the summer of 2017, and a corresponding list of grantees will be published on the project webpage.



IT'S TIME TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP



As a non-profit association that provides services to county government, the Illinois Counties Association is committed to promoting and advancing educational opportunities for Illinois students.



ICA will be awarding academic scholarships throughout the State of Illinois to students wishing to pursue higher education during the 2017-2018 academic year. For details or to apply online, visit IllinoisCountiesAssociation.org. **Submission Deadline:** April 30, 2017

Filing a claim with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

County Veterans Service Officers provide valuable assistance to ease the process

by Michael A. Iwanicki, Superintendent, McHenry County VAC

Laws, regulations and court orders have made filing a claim with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) quite a daunting task for our returning Service Members and older veterans alike. Although the basics of the process for the two most common categories of claims have not changed significantly since WWII, technology has made more information available to assist with fulfilling the elements needed to file a successful claim.

Once the correct information is available now there are choices on how to submit the claim to the VA; electronically, in person, or through a professional advocate. To gain a rudimentary understanding of the VA Claims process one needs to understand: Who is the VA?, What are the two common claims?, What is needed?, and the best way to file.



County Veterans Service Officers (VSO) provide a free service and are highly trained, certified by an independent organization, and accredited by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to present and prosecute claims on behalf of veterans and their eligible dependents.

Not surprising there tends to be a lot of confusion about what the VA is in the first place. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is made up of many sub-departments falling into three major categories; Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and the Cemetery Administration. The Veterans Health Administration is the most publicly visible arm of the VA. They are the Hospitals, Community Clinics, Doctors, and nurses that are providing health care to our military veterans.

The Veterans Benefits Administration is tasked with determining eligibility for a multitude of benefits offered to qualified veterans and returning service members. The Cemetery Administration, of course, is tasked with managing the many Veterans Cemeteries, the largest local one being the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery. Not only are these separate departments within the same agency, they don't necessarily communicate effectively between the departments. A VA Doctor may be well aware of a veterans potentially Service Connected condition but there is little likelihood that the VBA will ever know. Ultimately, it is the veteran or the veterans surviving dependent that must provide the required information to the Veterans Benefits Administration.



Most veterans or their family are focused on one of the three major categories of VA Benefits Claims; Service Connection which is a chronic illness or injury related to military service, Pension which is a benefit offered to eligible war era veterans or their surviving spouse, and Dependency and Indemnity offered to eligible surviving dependents whose veteran spouse passed due to a service connected condition.

The remaining two major categories require three elements to be considered by the VBA. First there needs to be a current diagnosis of a chronic condition such as hearing loss, arthritis due to traumatic injury, PTSD, or chronic sinusitis. Second there must be an in service incident related to the condition. Finally there must be a Nexus or link between the in service incident and the currently diagnosed condition. Sometimes the VA makes this easy by drawing the link for the service member by declaring the condition presumptive such as adult onset diabetes and Agent Orange exposure, ALS and military service, or fibromyalgia and service in the Gulf. In such cases the veteran only must show the required service and the diagnosed condition, the VA assumes a presumptive condition was caused by the qualifying military service.

In most cases the veteran must be able to provide some kind of evidence of how the in service incident lead to the current chronic condition. This is frequently done with medical records, doctors opinions, and/or qualifying statements from family or friends. Once the evidence is put together the service member or surviving spouse must now decide how to file the claim.

The person filing the VA Claim (hereafter referred to as a claimant) now must decide to submit the claim in person, electronically, or through a professional advocate. Filing in person requires that the claimant complete ALL VA required forms and submit the forms and evidence either by mail or in person to the VA Regional Office, for northern Illinois that office is in Chicago. The claimant may choose to file electronically through an approved portal currently E-Benefits which is not a bad choice for the computer savvy. In each of the above should the claimant make an error on the form or is missing paperwork, the VA will notify him or her and provide the necessary form or highlight the error on a submitted form.

The claimant may choose to use a Professional Advocate. Such Advocates include County Veterans Service Officers who provide the service at no charge, qualified attorney's or financial planners who may charge for some of the services, or a non-accredited representative who can assist with the claim but is not authorized to submit the claim on behalf of the claimant.

The VA helped make that choice easy in a 2004 report that shown claimants who prepared and submitted a claim on their own were less than 50% successful at getting the claim approved, Attorney's (who at the time were very limited at what they could represent) were less than 40% successful, and professional Veterans Service Officers were as high as 70+% successful at helping the claimant receive an award.

Since the report, more freedom was provided claimants who wish to use an attorney. Previously attorneys received little or no training on prosecuting VA claims, and were more likely to receive claims difficult if not impossible to win. Ultimately, as a typical claimant may only file a couple claims in his/her lifetime, even the VA recommends seeking Professional Advocates who have significant education and experience working with the client and the VA.

County Veterans Service Officers (VSO) such as those at the VAC of McHenry County provide a free service and are highly trained, certified by an independent organization, and accredited by the US Department of Veterans Affairs to present and prosecute claims on behalf of veterans and their eligible dependents.

Once accredited a VSO with the VAC is required complete annual continuing education in order to continue as a professional advocate for claimants. An accredited VSO will assist the veteran through ALL the elements of the claim including reviewing the outcome to ensure all information was properly evaluated by the VA.

Filing a claim with the VA can make filing a complete 1040 by hand and working with the IRS seem like a snap. Some are prepared for the challenge, most are not. Considering the complexity of the law and associated regulations that govern VA Claims it is in the best interest of service members or a veteran to strongly consider seeking a professional advocate.

For assistance in filing a VA claim contact your County Veterans Assistance Commission. For additional information please contact Michael Iwanicki at MIwanic@co.mchenry.il.us or 815-334-4229.

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Local professor recipient of the Will County Land Use Department 2016 Amicus Terrae-Friends of the Land Award

Professor Maria Rafac has been named the 2016 winner of the Will County Land Use Department's Amicus Terrae – Friends of the Land Award. She is an architect, educator, and the sustainability coordinator at Joliet Junior College. The Will County Land Use Department created the Amicus Terrae, or Friends of the Land, award in 2009 to recognize public servants of Will County who go above and beyond to effectively protect the local ecosystems of plants, animals, soils, waterways and mankind.

"Professor Rafac is a true example of good citizenship," said Will County Executive Larry Walsh, whose office oversees the Land Use Department. "Her dedication to protecting our natural resources exemplifies the purpose of this award."

Rafac was chosen for exceptional leadership in sustainability. Since 1997, Rafac has led faculty, staff and students of Joliet Junior College in efforts to increase recycling, improve energy efficiency, and enhance awareness of environmental issues. She became the first sustainability coordinator at JJC, taking on the role of community advocate and participating in many local efforts.

"This award means a lot to me personally and professionally," Rafac said. "It is an external validation that I am doing something right."

Rafac began teaching a transferable credit course in sustainability in 2016 and established a campus observance of America Recycles Day. She said she involves her students in imaginative and creative coursework and extracurricular activities to promote sustainability. In addition, Rafac, her husband and five children are also involved with local environmental groups.

"This is the highest honor for me to receive this award from Will County Executive Walsh and the Land Use Department," she said. "This award denotes a crossroads of my work academically, professionally, and personally, how it all comes together."

Land Use Department Director Curt Paddock said Rafac embodies the ideals of Aldo Leopold, the 20th century philosopher who developed the concept of land ethics and is the inspiration for this award. "Professor Rafac is committed to preserving, protecting, and defending the health, harmony, and integrity of our community," Paddock said. "That is the true impetus of this award and Professor Rafac is an excellent example of commitment to these ideals."

Union County Tourism Board encourages grant applicants

A recently formed board tasked with advising the Union County Commissioners on the distribution of tourism grants continues to meet monthly and is encouraging applicants for Fiscal Year 2017.

The Hotel Operators' Occupancy Tax Board – unofficially referred to as the Tourism Board – was established by the Commissioners to develop an application process for those seeking the dollars generated by the Occupancy Tax and to make recommendations on what projects to fund.

While the Union County Board of Commissioners retains the final say on grant applications, the intention is to rely heavily on the individual expertise of the Tourism Board's members who are appointed by the Commissioners to two-year terms.

The grant application form is available along with meeting minutes and agenda at unioncountyboards.com. Members of the Tourism Board encourage 2017 grant seekers to get applications in as early as possible.



McHenry County State's Attorney expands First Offender Program

McHenry County State's Attorney Patrick Kenneally has expanded the county's First Offender Program to include misdemeanor offenses. The First Offender Program is designed to remove first-time, non-violent offenders from the criminal justice system and divert them to a less costly process administered by the State's Attorney's Office with the cooperation of a panel of citizens that volunteer their time.



Specifically, a first-time offender charged with a crime writes out a statement admitting to the offense, appears before a panel of citizens who are informed of the details of the offense and meet with the offender. Thereafter, the panel of citizens place requirements on the offender that must be completed within a certain period of time. These requirements may include making full restitution to the victim, writing a letter of apology, completing community service hours, obtaining a high school diploma, seeking counseling, and not committing further offenses. Upon successful completion of these requirements, the offender's case is dismissed. If the offender fails to complete the program successfully, the case is returned to the courts for prosecution.

Previously, this Program was only available to first-time felony offenders. For felony offenders, 81% of participants did not reoffend within three years of acceptance.

"The State's Attorney's Office recognizes that all of us confront difficult times that can lead to isolated decisions that we regret, do not necessarily define our character, and result in criminal charges," said Kenneally. "While holding everyone that has violated the law accountable is paramount, inflexible approaches to prosecuting first-time offenders can cause unnecessary hardship by imposing criminal convictions that can have collateral consequences later in life. In addition and in most cases, it is imprudent to expend limited court resources, derived from taxpayers, formally prosecuting first-time, non-violent offenders."

Study to track hazardous materials shipments in three central Illinois counties

An analysis of hazardous materials shipped by truck and train through a three-county area in central Illinois will begin this spring.



David Butt, director of the Office of Emergency Management for Sangamon County, announced that the study will include major railroads, as well as commercial-truck counts for hazardous materials at 20 locations in Sangamon, Christian and Menard counties. The study will track nine federally designated hazardous materials ranging from explosives to radioactive materials.

Previously, only Sangamon County was tracked. A \$40,000 grant for local emergency service programs from the Illinois Emergency Management Agency made the addition of Christian and Menard counties possible. Funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation, a little more than \$2 million in three-year grants was awarded statewide. The data will be shared with local emergency service agencies for planning purposes.

Critical Partners and Next Steps for Expanding Diversion Opportunities and Treatment Courts for Veterans

This presentation from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) discusses diversion opportunities specifically designed for veterans, including using the Sequential Intercept Model to identify alternatives to arrest and post-arrest strategies. The presentation includes an example of a veterans' court that uses peer mentoring and additional resources for more information.



Download the educational presentation at www.naco.org

Together Summit sets road map for continuing to make Lake County among the healthiest places to live, work and play in the country

What will it take for Lake County, Illinois to become one of the healthiest places in the country in which to live, work and play? This is a question that the Lake County Health Department/Community Health Center (LCHD/CHC) and a number of Lake County leaders talked through as a major focus of the Together Summit held on January 24th.

The event was hosted by 20 co-sponsor organizations and included members of the County Board, Board of Health, city and village administrators, as well as more than 200 other leaders from hospital/health systems, higher education institutions, park districts, community based organizations, and faith communities, all focused on learning and discussing how to collectively improve the health and quality of life of Lake County residents.



“When there is better integration of public health strategies with economic development, justice, housing and other priorities, we can maximize outcomes,” said Lake County Board Chairman Aaron Lawlor. “There’s a lot we can do individually, but we can get a lot more done together.”

“There are many organizations in this county dedicated to improving health and quality of life for our residents,” said Mark Pfister, the Health Department’s Interim Executive Director and Director of Prevention. “Ensuring Lake County has a great quality of life takes everyone working together. The Health Department is launching this initiative to show the important connections our work to improve health outcomes has on the success of our students, workforce, economy and overall quality of life.”

Lake County Board Chairman Aaron Lawlor said, “The issue of public health isn’t just for doctors and nurses to worry about. Whether you are a businessman, teacher, mayor, pastor or parent – we all have a critical role to play. Businesses can’t grow their top line when sick leave, reduced worker productivity and higher insurance premiums are decreasing their bottom line. Students who are frequently home sick can’t learn effectively, and families who can’t access a local grocery store often fill their fridge with unhealthy and expensive food items that can lead to diabetes and heart disease. When there is better integration of public health strategies with economic development, justice, housing and other priorities, we can maximize outcomes. There’s a lot we can do individually, but we can get a lot more done together!”

Tyler Norris, the new Chief Executive Officer of the Institute for Mental Health and Wellness and the former Vice President of Total Health with Kaiser Permanente, appealed to Together Summit participants to understand



More than 260 community leaders attended the Together Summit on January 24th to discuss what it will take for Lake County, Illinois to become one of the best places in the country in which to live, work and play.

that it takes all of us working together, across all of our sectors in the community, to really promote and assure health across social and economic barriers that people and communities face. Norris stated, “Since most of what actually creates health exists outside of the health care delivery system, the role of leadership is not as simple as allocating staff and financial resources to care services. Effective healthy community leaders must design and implement community processes that result in economic, socio-cultural and environmental changes that are conducive to creating health in the first place.”

This call to the coordination of leadership, strategies, and investments was a critical part of the Together Summit message.

LCHD/CHC staff, including Health Equity Coordinator Jon Ashworth, presented the identified priority health issues of Lake County, emphasizing the barriers residents face to being and staying healthy. He also spoke of the 2016-2021 Community Health Improvement Plan, which was based on a county-wide assessment and guided by the Live Well Lake County Steering Committee. This committee guides the community health assessment process, prioritizes community issues, and collaborates with members and non-members to take action and improve the overall health and quality of life of all residents in Lake County.

Specific community health improvement initiatives and the power of collective impact were discussed. Lea Bacci, the Health Department’s Assistant Prevention Coordinator, discussed an example of a policy initiative being introduced across Lake County to increase the minimum age of tobacco sales to 21. The goal of Tobacco 21 policies is to help reduce the #1 cause of preventable death, cardiovascular disease from smoking. Delaying the onset of smoking prevents long-term smokers. Ninety-five percent of adult smokers began before the age of 21. Adam Carson, the Health Department’s Director of Strategic Initiatives, discussed a framework to engage whole communities in active living. He emphasized that it’s imperative for communities to examine their walkability both in design and safety. Aaron Lawlor, Lake County Board Chairman, discussed actions being taken to build Lake County’s behavioral health capacity and infrastructure to meet the needs of those with poor mental health and substance abuse.

The Together Summit ended with an opportunity for participants to share input regarding which community health improvement initiatives they would like to join. Based on a survey of participants, 98% of survey respondents expressed that they want to be part of at least one of the following Lake County community health improvement initiatives: Tobacco 21, walking initiatives, and building behavioral health capacity and infrastructure.

To learn how to get involved with improvement activities in Lake County through Live Well Lake County, visit www.LiveWellLakeCounty.org.

Alexander County still recovering from last year’s floodwaters

Alexander County is still recovering from flooding that occurred over a year ago. In January 2016, Mississippi River floodwaters left a three-quarter-mile hole in a levee in the county – destroying homes, businesses and farms in its path.

“I thought that we would’ve had it back by now,” County Board Chairman Chalen Tatus told KVFS News, “because other counties up and down the river have had theirs already put back with the Army Corps of Engineers but we’re on our own.”

The county recently learned it did not qualify for a \$1 million grant it applied for through the Delta Regional Commission and has run out of options for outside help, Tatum said. “We got shot down twice, three times,” he said. “We’re back doing it ourselves, so we got a lot of good farmers that are going to pitch in and said they would help rebuild it.”



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Investing in a Volatile Market: It takes a plan

The ups and downs of the investment markets make some investors nervous, but consider this: Most investors through the NACo Deferred Compensation Plan are retirement plan investors. They're in it for the long term. And retirement plan investors who stay the course often capitalize on market movements that create the buy-at-low-price opportunities necessary for long-term portfolio growth.

History shows that investment markets have grown over time, despite short-term ups and downs. Actually, these fluctuations are important. They create buying opportunities that may lead to profit over time. In fact, Wilshire Funds Management recently noted that while past performance is never a guarantee, "we should expect and welcome this type of volatility because it's healthy and it is often followed by periods of strong returns."¹

Yet, when the markets get volatile, many investors flee to what they perceive to be safer investments, often sacrificing opportunities for long-term gains. But options that appear to be less risky also tend to offer lower returns – returns that may not keep pace with other risks, such as inflation. The Dept. of Labor calculates that what cost \$10,000 in 1995 likely costs more than \$15,637.53 today.² Think about what that could mean to your money 20 years from now.

Many experts say you'll need 70% to 90% of your current income to maintain your standard of living in retirement.³ But when you consider additional factors, such as rising healthcare, long-term care costs and longevity, financial experts say today's workers may need considerably more assets at their disposal when they retire.

The most relevant healthcare costs to retirees are those they must pay themselves. A 65-year-old couple retiring today can expect to spend about \$220,000 over the next 20 years on out-of-pocket health care expenses.⁴ According to the National Clearinghouse for Long-Term Care Information, at least 70% of people over the age of 65 will require some form of long-term care at in their lifetime. Based on a national average of \$6,235 per month for a semi-private room, the cost of long-term care can be expensive.⁵

What are we getting for our healthcare money? We're living longer.

The Census Bureau projects that the population age 85 and over could grow from 5.5 million in 2010 to 19 million by 2050. Some researchers predict death rates will decline more even rapidly, leading to faster growth of this population. Living past 100 is becoming more and more probable.⁶ Although



it seems odd to say, living longer is a real risk. Especially to your money.

So, rather than trying to avoid market swings altogether, recognize that they happen and prepare for them. The NACo Deferred Compensation Plan helps county workers be more confident about their preparations. Participants have automatic access to My Interactive Retirement PlannerSM, a tool that allows them to input all their potential retirement assets to formulate a potential retirement income plan. The Planner can also incorporate projected health care costs, to help participants get a

more realistic picture of their retirement budget – allowing them to understand their needs better, so they can build an investment strategy through the NACo Plan to address those needs.

Investing for retirement is all about striking a balance between market risk and return. The NACo Deferred Compensation Plan offers a broad mix of investment types that may help each county worker find the balance that fits their risk tolerance.

Nationwide has developed a series of topical workshops and videos to help county workers understand general principles of retirement planning and long-term investing. Visit nrsforu.com to learn how these tools can help participants make informed decisions about investing in the NACo Deferred Compensation Plan.

County leaders wanting to learn more about educating employees about weathering market volatility or to learn more about the NACo Deferred Compensation Program can contact their Nationwide representative toll-free at 877-496-1630 or visit nrsforu.com.

- 1 Stay in Your Seat and Get to Your Destination, Wilshire Funds Management Market Insights (August 2015)
- 2 Inflation Calculator, U.S. Department of Labor, <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpi/calc.pl> (accessed 09/17/2015)
- 3 Taking the Mystery Out of Retirement Planning, Department of Labor (February 2010)
- 4 How to tame retiree health care costs, Fidelity Benefits Consulting (June 2014)
- 5 LTCI's Revolutionary Evolution, Paula Dorian-Gray, Life Insurance Selling (November 2011); Costs of Care – Long-Term Care Information, LongTermCare.gov (accessed 09/17/2015)
- 6 Older Americans 2012: Key Indicators of Well-Being, Federal Interagency Forum on Aging (June 2012); A Profile of Older Americans 2014, Social Security Administration; An Aging Nation – The Older Population in America, Census Bureau (May 2014)

Investing involves market risk, including possible loss of principal. No investment strategy – including asset allocation and diversification – can guarantee a profit or avoid loss. Actual results will vary depending on your investment and market experience.

Retirement Specialists are registered representatives of Nationwide Investment Services Corporation: Member FINRA. Nationwide representatives cannot offer investment, tax or legal advice. Consult your own counsel before making retirement plan decisions.

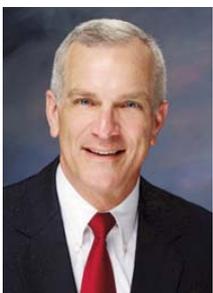
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Disposal boxes for U.S. flags ready

After a pilot program last fall, a program that provides flag disposal boxes is ready to go national. Through a partnership between NACo, the National Flag Foundation and the National Sheriff's Association, counties can request flag disposal boxes to place throughout their counties so residents can drop off their old, tattered and torn flags for a proper, dignified disposal.

The 25 counties in the pilot program have already seen great success.



"The community response continues to grow as more people learn about how they can properly dispose of their worn out flags," said David Zimmermann, Tazewell County Board Chairman. "This new NACo benefit allows our citizens to conveniently and respectfully recycle their flags while helping enhance our county's reputation as a positive resource for people's needs."



Several counties saw this flag disposal program as a good starting point for flag etiquette education and a useful community service.

Proper disposal of the American flag is a sign of respect. It honors our history, the people who fight to protect our freedom and is an homage to the reverence for our great nation. When a flag is worn, tattered, ripped or soiled beyond repair, it is no longer fit to serve as a symbol of our country and should be retired and disposed of properly.

This program is generously supported by Nationwide Retirement Solutions and Lamar Advertising. This is a free program for NACo member counties. To get flag retirement boxes for your county, please visit www.naco.org/flag.

In
Memory

Joan Patricia Murphy
Cook County Commissioner (6th District)
1937-2016



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Adams County Board accepts bids for new ambulance facility

The Adams County Board has accepted a bid for construction of the new ambulance building as reported by the *Herald-Whig*. The low bid of \$1.448 million came in below the \$1.5 million estimated cost determined by the Ambulance Location Committee.

"We still plan to work with the contractor to see if there is any way we can adjust the scope of the project to bring it down even lower," said Committee member Matt Obert. "...but the time frame is very short."

The building is anticipated to be completed by June. Rather than the base estimate, an alternate bid that increases the building's length by 10 feet was approved. The additional space will improve efficiency in the vehicle bay area.

The 6,300-square-foot building will feature a four-bay garage for three ambulances and a supervisor's vehicle, with living quarters for ambulance personnel. Two bays will face north, and two will face south.

The construction project is not expected to raise taxes. Blessing Hospital has offered \$125,000 toward the project and the site of the new ambulance building was donated to the county by ADM.

"We don't have a complete answer of how we plan on funding it, but the county does have enough clout and authority to issue bonds that we could pay off," Obert said. "We also want to refer this back to the Finance Committee to see if there are other funds available that could reduce the bond need."

Klingner and Associates will oversee all construction to ensure it remains within the bid and meets specifications.

Rendering shows the new Adams County Ambulance Service facility.



Fulton County hog confinement project called off

One of Illinois' largest pork producers has cancelled plans to build a 20,000-hog confinement in downstate Fulton County. An affiliate of Professional Swine Management formally removed its notice of intent to construct from the Illinois Department of Agriculture, the *Chicago Tribune* reported.

The decision came a day after local residents protested the hog confinement at a public meeting. Some residents fear that waste from the facility could pollute rivers and creeks. Nearly half of the 1 million fish killed in Illinois water pollution incidents from 2005 to 2014 were due to waste spills from hog confinements, the newspaper reported. The project was supported by the Fulton County Farm Bureau.

State agricultural officials said Professional Swine Management could restart the permitting process if it turns in a new application. The company has installed 27 hog operations with a total of more than 120,000 sows in Illinois, Iowa and Missouri. Fulton County has at least five of the facilities.

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