

### **NARC LEADERSHIP**

**President Stephen Cassano**,  
Selectman,

Town of Manchester, CT

**Chair Anthony Reams**,  
Executive Directors Council  
President, Toledo Metropolitan  
Area Council of Governments

### **EXECUTIVE BRIEF**

Colleagues,

President Obama, in his State of the Union address, called for a three year freeze on discretionary federal spending to cut our national deficit. While the overall budget impact on the deficit will be less than 1% of the total debt, the effects of this freeze on communities can be severe.

*"Like any cash-strapped family, we will work within a budget to invest in what we need and sacrifice what we don't,"* said President Obama. His senior advisors also announced in a pre-speech call with the White House, in which I participated, that there will be a rebalancing of current expenditures—some programs being stepped up others stepped down. Exact details of the 2011 budget have not been unveiled.

The Senate on Tuesday turned aside a proposal backed by President Obama to create a commission tasked with finding ways to reduce the federal debt. According to CQ news, opponents—including 23 Republicans, 22 Democrats and independent Bernard Sanders of Vermont—raised concerns that the commission amounted to an abdication of Congress's responsibility and questioned the types of policy recommendations it would make. Some of the Democratic opponents, as well as their liberal allies off the Hill



## 2010 NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REGIONS

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2010

THE RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL  
WASHINGTON, DC

**REGISTER TODAY!**

*"Energizing Regional Leadership and Shaping Administration  
and Congressional Priorities"*

*"...strong regions are essential for a strong America."*

*President Barack Obama*

### **NOTICE: NARC SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

Monday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>; 12:15 – 1:00 pm

The purpose of this NARC Special Membership Meeting is to discuss recommended changes to the NARC Bylaws. If you have any questions regarding these changes, please contact Fred Abousleman, [fred@NARC.org](mailto:fred@NARC.org) or 202.986.1032 x216.

### **FULL & ONE DAY CONFERENCE REGISTRATION AVAILABLE!**

Stay tuned as additional speakers are confirmed. Conference information and a copy of the draft agenda is available [HERE](#).

### **CONFERENCE AGENDA UPDATE**

#### **MONDAY — OPEN SESSIONS**

*Collaborate with your regional peers on important 2010 issues, focusing on NARC priorities, advocacy and recommendations to share with your Congressional delegation.*

**Environment:** Discussions on Regional Energy Leadership and new Air Quality Standards

**Homeland Security:** Discussions on Next Generation 911, Public Safety Policy and UASI

**Transportation:** Discussions on Transportation Reauthorization and High Speed Rail

**Economic and Community Development:** Discussions on EDA Reauthorization and Economic Recovery

#### **TUESDAY — PLENARIES**

*Explore Administration and Congressional interests for 2010, including improving governmental efficiencies, Livability, job creation and stimulating economic development, and climate change. Representatives from the White House, Congress, Federal Agencies, NARC and our Association partners will discuss their priorities and the role of regions—large and small, urban and rural.*

**Livability and What it Means to Cities and Counties: Partners**

Democratic opponents, as well as their liberal allies off the Hill, argued that the commission would be used to cut entitlement programs such as Social Security and Medicare, while conservatives said it would lead to tax increases.

While we applaud the President's commitment to reducing our national debt **we also want to ensure that the critical programs you deliver will still have the greatest impact.** We will continue to emphasize the importance of regional solutions to many of the problems these discretionary dollars are to address and the economies of scale implementing regional solutions can provide to infrastructure, job retention and creation and social service programs, among others. Please continue to feed us your success stories as we will continue to forward them to the White House.

Over the last two weeks, I've also spent time working on EDA reauthorization. The Brookings Institution hosted a meeting with Assistant Secretary Fernandez, which I participated in; I also met with EDA staff on reauthorization and other matters. Secretary Fernandez has pledged to be with us at the upcoming National Conference of Regions to discuss EDA priorities and cover stimulus spending and job creation—we look forward to a fruitful year of reengagement with the Administration on this important program.

2010 National Conference of Regions registrations continue to grow. We have surpassed last year attendance for this major stand-alone national event—thank you! With one month out, we are confirming a solid line-up of speakers and have many opportunities for discussion on critical issues—jobs, climate change, water, security and other topics. Tuesday, February 23rd will be important, as we round out our discussions and presentations on the important Livable Communities initiative

*discuss their priorities—the role of regions—large and small, urban and rural.*  
**Livability and What it Means to Cities and Counties: Partners Respond to New Opportunities**  
**Climate Change: Impacts on Local Governments and Regions: What this Legislation Means for Your Region**  
**Exploring the DOT-HUD-EPA Sustainable Communities Partnership: Federal Priority for Regions**

## ROOM RESERVATION UPDATE

If you have not already made your hotel reservation, please be aware that there are no additional rooms available at the conference hotel (the Ritz-Carlton) for the night of Tuesday, February 23rd. We do have an overflow hotel available, the Renaissance M Street Hotel, located one block from the Ritz-Carlton. If you have not made your hotel reservations and plan to stay over on Tuesday evening, please reserve your room at the overflow hotel:

### Renaissance M Street Hotel

**Phone:** 202-828-8217 and ask for the NARC overflow room block

**Online:** Click [HERE](#) to access the online reservation link

If you have any questions, please contact [Lindsey Riley](#), 202.986.1032 x220.

## CONGRESSIONAL MEETINGS

While you are in Washington, on Wednesday, February 24th, we encourage you to visit your members of Congress. If you need assistance in setting up meetings or preparing materials, please contact Shannon Menard, [shannon@NARC.org](mailto:shannon@NARC.org).

## **NARCPROGRAM**

**Commerce Department Issues Smart Grid Interoperability Framework:** The U.S. Department of Commerce National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) issued an initial framework to transform the nation's electric power system into an interoperable Smart Grid, a key component of the Obama administration's energy plan and its strategy for American innovation. Click [HERE](#) to access the framework.

**EPA Strengthens Air Quality Standard for Nitrogen Dioxide:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a new national air quality standard for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). EPA set the new one-hour standard for NO<sub>2</sub> at a level of 100 parts per billion (ppb). EPA also is retaining the existing annual average standard of 53 ppb. NO<sub>2</sub> is formed from vehicle, power plant and other industrial emissions, and contributes to the formation of fine particle pollution and smog. EPA is establishing new monitoring requirements in urban areas that will measure NO<sub>2</sub> levels around major roads and across the community. Monitors must be located near roadways in cities with at least 500,000 residents. Larger cities and areas with major roadways will have additional monitors. Community-wide monitoring will continue in cities with at least one million residents. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

**NARC Green Infrastructure Webinar Draws over 50 Attendees:** NARC's *Learning Series* webinar on green infrastructure, held this past Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, featured two of NARC's *Regional Centers of Excellence* (RCE) and a speaker from the U.S. Forest Service. Click [HERE](#) to view the webinar presentation, as well as NARC's final reports on the 2009 RCE initiatives and the two individual RCE projects carried out by the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (Green Bay, WI) and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (Philadelphia, PA).

**EPA Office of Water Outlines Priorities:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Water Assistant Administrator Peter S. Silva distributed a January 25 memo highlighting specific areas of interest EPA will pursue. Two



the important Livable Communities initiative.

As always we will continue to provide insight on the issues of importance to all regions—large and small, urban and rural. In addition to our other presenters, we have received verbal confirmation that the USDA Office of Rural Development and the White House Office of Urban Affairs will be joining us, providing a balanced and important look at programs across the federal spectrum and how we can leverage all these opportunities to best meet community needs.

I want to thank the Department of Labor for recognizing the important work regions can do in job creation and economic development. Four regions were awarded substantial funding through a rigorous application process to train workers in emerging green and energy jobs. I want to reaffirm my commitment to working with you and our federal partners on identifying new funding opportunities and making the right connections to support your work. Click [HERE](#) for additional details about this award.

357 – 300 – Zoom

357mph is the speed record set by the French in 2007 for high speed rail. \$300 billion is how much China will spend on high speed rail by 2020. Recently, President Obama announced the first stimulus high speed rail line to break ground between Tampa and Orlando. High speed rail will have significant benefits for America's urban and rural communities through greater connectivity to jobs, ease of commuter congestion, and enhanced environmental and community benefits. Click [HERE](#) to access a list of all the corridors funded.

We will be featuring high speed rail at the NCR this year and look forward to the discussion. I also encourage you to read the article on high speed rail in this month's *Wired* magazine. (click [HERE](#)) as

Agency's (EPA) Office of Water Assistant Administrator Peter S. Silva distributed a January 25 memo highlighting specific areas of interest EPA will pursue. Two themes for the national water program are Sustainable Communities and Healthy Watersheds. Within each of those themes, the following priorities were outlined:

- **Sustainable Communities:** Making America's Water Systems Sustainable and Secure; Safeguarding Public Health; and, Restoring and Protecting Urban Waters
- **Healthy Watersheds:** Focusing Efforts in Key Geographic Areas; Strengthening Protections for Our Waters; Improving Watershed-Based Approaches; Taking Action on Climate Change; Assuring the Safety of Chemicals; Expanding the Conversation on Environmentalism and Working for Environmental Justice; and, Building Strong State and Tribal Partnerships.

Click [HERE](#) to read the full memo.

## **NARCPOLICY**

**Principles of President Obama's State of the Union Address:** On Wednesday, January 27, President Obama delivered his 2010 [State of the Union Address](#) and focused on the following building blocks of his agenda. It is anticipated that these themes will mirror the President's fiscal year 2010 budget request, which will be submitted to Congress on Monday, February 1.

### **Restoring the economy and creating jobs**

- passage of a Jobs Bill
- \$30 billion of repaid TARP money to help community banks give credit to small businesses
- a new small business tax credit
- elimination of all capital gains taxes on small business investment
- tax incentive for large and small businesses to invest in new plants and equipment in the US
- rebuilding and building infrastructure
- building of clean energy facilities
- tax breaks to companies creating U.S. jobs
- financial reform
- encouraging American innovation
- exporting of more domestic goods
- extension of the middle-class tax cut

### **Investing in clean energy and climate solutions**

- passage of the climate change bill
- creating more clean energy jobs
- building new safe, clean nuclear power plants
- opening new offshore areas for oil and gas development
- investment in advanced biofuels and clean coal technologies
- providing incentives for energy

### **Advancing education**

- investing in the skills and education of Americans
- revitalizing community colleges
- expanding education reform
- providing incentives for families and students for higher education

### **Reforming healthcare**

### **Changing the way Washington works**

- Limiting the influence of lobbyists and special interest groups in federal government activities
- Earmark reform – putting earmark requests on a single website for public knowledge
- Re-establishing bi-partisan working relationships

### **Reforming immigration**

### **Reducing the deficit**

- Enacting a three-year government spending freeze on all non-military and non-entitlement programs
- Eliminating programs that don't work
- Creating a bipartisan fiscal commission

on high speed rail in this month's *Wired* magazine (click [HERE](#)), as it captures the needs of the country and provides insight into this amazing technology.

Best,  
Fred

#### **NARCSTAFF**

[Fred Abousleman](#)

Executive Director, x216

[Sylvia Bryant](#)

Office Manager, x218

[Naomi Friedman](#)

Deputy Director, x224

[Jenee Kresge](#)

Program Analyst, x215

[Shannon Menard](#)

Policy Manager, x217

[Lindsey Riley](#)

Member Services Manager, x220

[Erika Young](#)

Transportation Director, x212

To access past issues of *eRegions*, [visit our website](#).

Make NARC your homepage — [click here to learn how](#).

- providing incentives for energy efficiency and clean energy

**House Jobs Bill Summary Available:** Please click [HERE](#) to access a brief summary and [HERE](#) for a detailed analysis of the HR 2847, the Jobs For Main Street Act of 2010, which was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on December 16, 2009. The Senate is working on a separate version that has yet to be released. Click [HERE](#) to view the rumored Senate jobs bill totals and general program allocations. Please contact Shannon Menard, Policy Manager, at [shannon@NARC.org](mailto:shannon@NARC.org) for questions or more information.

**Federal Agencies to Host FY 2011 Budget Briefings:** The following federal agencies will hold briefings via conference call and/or webcast on Monday, February to discuss the president's fiscal year 2011 budget, explaining the vision and numbers:

- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development** at 2:30pm EST. Click [HERE](#) to join HUD's webcast.
- **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency** at 2pm EST. To participate via conference call, dial the toll-free number at 1-888-539-8821 with Conference ID 54117840. Click [HERE](#) to join EPA's webcast. Conference call and webcast questions may be submitted during and after via email to [ocfoinfo@epa.gov](mailto:ocfoinfo@epa.gov).
- **U.S. Department of Transportation** at 1pm EST. To participate via conference call, dial 1-800-230-1096.
- **U.S. Department of Transportation** at 1pm EST. To participate via conference call, dial 1-800-230-1096 at least 15 minutes prior to the call, and indicate you're calling in for the "Stakeholder Briefing."

#### **REGIONS360°**

**Gary Pitner, Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (PRPC) Executive Director named *Amarillo-Globe News* Man of the Year:** For the last 24 years, Mr. Pitner has been executive director of the PRPC, which works with the Panhandle's city and county governments to deliver programs, services and activities effectively and efficiently. Click [HERE](#) for more information on Gary's work and that of his organization.

**Yakima Valley Council of Governments (YVCOG) Participates in USDA Rural Jobs Forum:** U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) hosted a forum in Yakima, WA on January 28 (one two in Washington State) focused on rural issues and economy/jobs. There were representatives from small business, growers, shippers and local EDA's from all over eastern Washington in attendance. J. Page Scott, Executive Director of the YVCOG participated to weigh in on the impact of:

- 1) lack of certainty in federal funding for infrastructure and how long it will take for local jurisdictions to ramp up projects once funding is identified; impact on construction businesses not able to invest in new equipment or hire employees when they don't know when their next jobs are going to be coming; and
- 2) complexity of federal funding programs and how intimidating that is for small communities to know where to start to find funding for their projects.

Ms. Scott suggested that the burden of knitting together federal funds to address a community's needs should be on the agencies to work out those details, and not on the "idea people" to figure out the systems and facilitate the coordination among divisions and departments' programs. USDA staff commented that they were hearing that consistently around the states. A report summarizing the comments and suggestions will be forthcoming from USDA next month. Click [HERE](#) to access a *Yakima Herald* article and [HERE](#) for a local TV new report video on the forum.

**Texoma Council of Governments (TCOG) Weatherization Program Helps Low Income Families:** Launched in November 2009, TCOG's weatherization program is now ahead of schedule helping low income families weatherize their homes. A local news station, KXII, spoke with TCOG and a homeowner receiving weatherization to see just how far those stimulus dollars are going. Click [HERE](#) to access the full story.

**Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Establishes Policy Directions of the *Go To 2040* Comprehensive Plan for Region.** By 2040, the seven-county region can have better transportation, increased economic development, cleaner air and water, more-accessible jobs and housing, and other quality-of-life improvements, with this plan. The agency today

**Plan for Region.** By 2040, the seven-county region can have better transportation, increased economic development, cleaner air and water, more-accessible jobs and housing, and other quality-of-life improvements, with this plan. The agency today released its preferred Regional Scenario -- one last precursor to the *GO TO 2040* comprehensive regional plan that will be available in draft form this spring, with implementation of the final plan to begin in October 2010. Click [HERE](#) to access a copy of the *Go To 2040* Comprehensive Plan.

## **GRANT OPPORTUNITIES**

**NACo now accepting applications for coastal county initiative grants:** The Coastal Counties Restoration Initiative (CCRI) program will be accepting applications for the 2010 round of funding until March 29. CCRI will provide between \$50,000-\$100,000 to improve stream, river, estuarine and other important marine habitats, and remove barriers such as dams and culverts for fish migration and passage. For more information, please click [HERE](#).

**EDA Announces Available Grant Funding:** EDA's Community Trade Adjustment Assistance (Community TAA) Program, which was created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), is aimed at helping to create and retain jobs by providing project grants to communities that have experienced, or are threatened by, job loss resulting from international trade impacts. A total of \$37 million is available for grants to support a wide range of technical, planning, and infrastructure projects to help communities adapt to pressing trade impact issues and diversify their economies. Click [HERE](#) for more information on the program.

**DOT Announces Funding For Urban Circulators Projects:** The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) [announced](#) the availability of \$280 million for urban circulator projects such as streetcars, buses and bus facilities to support communities, expand business opportunities and improve people's quality of life while also creating jobs. The money is the first batch of funding by the Obama Administration for its DOT-HUD-EPA Sustainable Communities Partnership. Proposals must be submitted by February 8.

- A maximum amount of \$25 million per project will be made available from approximately \$130 million in unallocated discretionary New Starts/Small Starts Program funds. Eligible projects include streetcars and other urban circulator systems. Priority will be given to projects that connect destinations and foster the redevelopment of communities into walkable, mixed use, high-density environments.
- A second pot of money totaling \$150 million in unallocated discretionary Bus and Bus Facility funds will be available for projects that will foster the preservation and enhancement of urban and rural communities by providing new mobility options which provide access to jobs, healthcare, and education, and/or contribute to the redevelopment of neighborhoods into pedestrian-friendly vibrant environments. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) plans to announce grants early in 2010.

## **PARTNER UPDATES**

**The APCO Institute Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) Program. Comprehensive. Customized. Cost-Effective:** The public expects 9-1-1 telecommunicators to be prepared for the unexpected. **Are yours?** Give your staff the essential tool for effective response to critical situations—The [APCO Institute Emergency Medical Dispatch Program](#). With in person and online training opportunities, your personnel will be certified to present the EMD course within your agency and begin using customized EMD Guidecards and/or APCO's customized software program. Click [HERE](#) to learn more. at: For questions, contact: APCO Institute at [institute@apco911.org](mailto:institute@apco911.org) or call (888) 272-6911.



## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**February 3, 2:30 pm ET, Webcast:** The Assistant Secretary Mercedes Márquez from the Office of Community Planning and Development will host a webcast, *Catalytic Investment and Capacity Building*, on two new initiatives in HUD's FY 2011 budget. In addition to fully funding CDBG, the FY11 Budget includes \$150 million for a new Catalytic Investment Competition Grants program for neighborhood and community revitalization through targeted economic investment. The budget also enhances and broadens support for the affordable housing and community development field through an enhanced Capacity Building program. To access the webcast, click [HERE](#).

**February 4, 2 pm ET, Webinar:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) is hosting a webinar titled, *Stay Ahead of the Story: Media Relations Strategies for County Officials in Tough Times*. Click [HERE](#) to register.

**February 4, 3 pm ET, Webinar:** The United States Department of Energy is offering a webinar, *The Community Energy Challenge*, featuring a Whatcom County, WA program, which uses funding and local partnerships to implement a business and



*Challenge*, featuring a Whatcom County, WA program, which uses funding and local partnerships to implement a business and residential retrofit program, including a social marketing campaign to inspire participation. To register for this and other DOE webinars, click [HERE](#).

**February 4-6, Seattle, WA:** The Local Government Commission will host the 9th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth: Building Safe, Healthy and Livable Communities” conference. Click [HERE](#) for additional information or to register.

**February 10-11, Washington, DC:** The Coalition for America’s Gateways and Trade Corridors (CAGTC) is hosting its 2010 Annual Meeting. For additional information or to register, contact [Adrienne Gildea](#). Click [HERE](#) to access the current agenda.

**February 11, 2 pm ET, Webinar:** NACo is hosting a webinar titled, *How to Lobby Congress Without Leaving Home*. Click [HERE](#) to register.

**February 17, 1 pm ET, Web Workshop:** ICMA is hosting a web workshop, titled: [Creating a Culture of Leadership](#). This Web workshop will focus on strengthening your own leadership skills as well as on developing a culture of leadership throughout your organization. NARC members enjoy the ICMA member rate for this event. Click [HERE](#) to register and get the ICMA member rate.

**February 21-23, Washington, DC:** NARC will host the 2010 National Conference of Regions. A draft agenda is available on the conference website. Click [HERE](#) for additional information and to register for the conference.

**February 28–March 2, Arlington, Virginia:** The [Appalachian Regional Commission](#) will be hosting their annual Development District Association of Appalachia training conference with a focus on how Local Development Districts (LDDs) can help promote and develop energy-efficiency efforts. The event will feature sessions for LDDs on policy impacting energy-efficiency efforts, and examples of local projects that showcase effective energy savings for local governments, businesses, and homeowners. Click [HERE](#) for the conference agenda, registration and additional information.

**June 15-17, Cleveland, OH:** Save the date! NARC and the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency will host the 44th Annual Conference and Exhibition. Additional information will be available in the coming months.

BUILDING REGIONAL COMMUNITIES – LARGE, SMALL, URBAN AND RURAL – THROUGH ADVOCACY, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1666 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, NW – SUITE 300 – WASHINGTON, DC 20009  
202.986.1032 (T) – 202.986.1038 (F)  
[WWW.NARC.ORG](http://WWW.NARC.ORG)

We are sending you this e-mail primarily for your information, to meet your needs, further our valued relationship, and because you requested to receive electronic newsletters from the National Association of Regional Councils. Please forward as appropriate. If you prefer not to receive any further messages from us or would like us to add your colleagues to this distribution list, just reply to this e-mail and let us know.