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## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

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# eRegions

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### 2011 NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REGIONS

FEBRUARY 13-15, 2011

THE RITZ-CARLTON HOTEL  
WASHINGTON, DC

### **EXECUTIVE BRIEF**

Colleagues,

Thank you to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, NARC Board Member Commissioner James Kennedy and Executive Directors Council Member Jim Hassinger for their invitation to speak and participate in

## **REGISTER TODAY!**

***Last Day to Register: Wednesday, February 9th***

You're invited to join local elected officials, Councils of Government and Metropolitan Planning Organizations from around the country at the 2011 National Conference of Regions - *Renewing the Regional Commitment*. Click [HERE](#) to access the current draft agenda; click [HERE](#) to register or contact Lindsey Riley at [lindsey@narc.org](mailto:lindsey@narc.org) or 202.679.6116 for more information.

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## **PROGRAM UPDATE**

their regional commissioners board retreat last week. The question arose, as it often does at these meetings, about the importance of regions to decision makers in Washington; unabashedly our answer is always that regions are more important now than ever! Cost savings to local governments, regional service delivery programs, joint purchasing, and so many other innovative and successful applications are available to regions and your local governments, making your communities more competitive.

In this spirit please continue to send us or add us to your organization's newsletter distribution lists. Every week we get an glimpse of everything regions are doing around the country – from awards won to projects undertaken. We do our best, and would like to continue to highlight, these achievements amongst your peers. This is one of the easiest peer-exchange networks we can create. Please add me or

**HUD Webinar on OneCPD Technical Assistance Grant NOFA:** Tuesday, February 8, 2011 – 2pm ET; The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) is hosting a webinar where potential applicants can learn more about HUD's new OneCPD and Core Curricula NOFA (available [here](#)). OneCPD is a new cross-program technical assistance effort, designed to help CPD grantees carry out comprehensive and sustainable “place-based” development and revitalization strategies. The NOFA is a request for qualifications to become a TA provider for OneCPD, and applications are due February 24, 2011. Register for the webinar [here](#) and contact [Holly Kelly](#) at HUD with any questions.

**NARC Transportation Committee Webinar:** NARC will host its next Transportation Committee webinar on February 8, 2011 from 12:00pm-2:00pm ET. Jointly hosted with the National League of Cities (NLC), this webinar will address tools for transportation and land use planning and feature three examples on the topic. Click [HERE](#) for the agenda and you can register in advance for this webinar [HERE](#).

**FHWA Requests Feedback on Sustainable Highways Tool:** The U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is requesting feedback on their new Sustainable Highways self-evaluation tool by March 1, 2011. In particular, FHWA would like to get feedback on the credits in the planning phase, though comments are welcome on the project development, operations or maintenance phases. Click [HERE](#) to text the self-evaluation tool.

**EDA Seeks Public Comments on Regulations:** The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) is requesting comments from stakeholders to help the agency update its regulations to more effectively partner with communities and organizations to create jobs and economic growth. Details are available in a Federal Register Notice (available [here](#)) and comments can be posted directly on [EDA's website](#) through March 9, 2011. Please share any submitted comments with Jenee Kresge ([jenee@NARC.org](mailto:jenee@NARC.org) or 202.986.1032 ext. 215), so that NARC can compile and share comments on behalf of NARC's membership as well.

**Administration Launches Startup America:** On January 31st, President Obama launched Startup America, a major initiative to promote innovation and high-growth entrepreneurship, encourage private sector investment in job-creating startups and small firms, accelerate research, and address barriers to success for entrepreneurs and small businesses. As part of Startup America, EDA will soon roll out i6 Green, a follow up to last year's first

[Lindsey Riley](#) to your distribution lists and we will share them in Regions 360°.

Lastly, the 2011 National Conference of Regions is just around the corner - we have fantastic event for you. Four diverse and informative keynote speakers have been confirmed and sessions on everything from education policy to sustainable communities are planned. Make this your yearly go-to meeting in DC! If you are planning trips back to Washington with your constituents, consider planning them in conjunction with the National Conference of Regions, where you can visit your Congressional delegations and network with your peers from around the country. If you haven't already done so, register today.

We look forward to seeing you next week. Safe travels to DC.

Best,  
Fred

**NARCSTAFF**

**[Fred Abousleman](#)**

Executive Director

**i6 Challenge**, which awarded \$12 million in competitive grants for partnerships using cutting-edge research to create new businesses and jobs. A fact sheet on Startup America is available [here](#) and the full White House press release on the initiative is available [here](#).

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## POLICYUPDATE

*The Senate is in session. The House is out of session.*

**FY12 Presidential Budget Request:** On Monday, February 14th, the President is expected to release his fiscal year 2012 budget request. This is technically one week behind the normal release schedule.

**House Republicans Prepare Budget Cuts:** House Republicans are preparing a bill that will cut government spending in FY11 by \$32 billion from current federal agency budgets. The bill would fund the government for the remaining seven months of the fiscal year (the current continuing resolution expires on March 4) and is scheduled for floor action the week of February 14 (NARC's conference week). Click [HERE](#) to see the cuts proposed by the House Appropriations Committee.

**Senate Appropriations Chairman Announces Earmark Ban:** Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI) imposed a moratorium on earmarks in FY11 and FY12 appropriations bills. This aligns with the House and Presidential opposition to accepting or funding earmarks in upcoming spending bills. Inouye plans to have the Senate Appropriations Committee review earmark policy to come up with a definition for the spending. Click [HERE](#) to read Chairman Inouye's full statement.

**Senators Introduce Federal Spending Cap:** Senators Bob Corker (R-TN) and Claire McCaskill (D-MO) introduced the Commitment to American Prosperity Act (CAP Act) that would put caps on future federal spending to address the nation's growing debt. The draft measure would cap federal spending starting in fiscal 2013, and would reduce discretionary and mandatory spending, including federal agency budgets and Medicare and Social Security, each fiscal year over the next 10 years, until federal expenditures fall to less than 21 percent of gross domestic product, compared with nearly 25 percent now. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the Corker-McCaskill bill total spending would be limited to \$3.649 trillion in fiscal 2013, or 22.25 percent of GDP. Cosponsors of the bill include Senators Richard Burr (R-NC), Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), Johnny Isakson (R-

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GA), Inhofe (R-OK), Mark Kirk (R-IL), John McCain (R-AZ) and Lamar Alexander (R-TN). Click **HERE** for more information; click **HERE** for a short summary on the bill.

**Debt Commission Recommendations May Get New Life:** Senators Mark Warner (D-VA) and Chambliss (R-GA) are creating legislation based on last year's recommendations from the **National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform**, which proposed to reduce deficit spending by \$3.9 trillion over the next decade through entitlement changes, tax code overhaul and spending cuts. Chambliss and Warner have been some of the leaders of an informal gathering of senators who have been meeting periodically since last summer to discuss ways to curb the deficit. Click **HERE** for the final commission report.

**House Republicans Examine Regulatory Impact on Economic Growth:**

House Republicans are preparing a review of the impact of federal regulations on jobs and economic growth. Tomorrow, the House Rules Committee will take up a resolution that would direct ten standing committees to inventory and review existing, pending and proposed regulations and orders from agencies of the federal government. Click **HERE** to view the proposed resolution.

**Senators Introduce Bill to Block EPA Regulation of Greenhouse Gases:**

Senators Fred Upton (R-MI) and Inhofe (R-OK) introduced a discussion draft bill that would block the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) authority to regulate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The bill would add a new section to the Clean Air Act (PL 101-549) exempting greenhouse gases from EPA's purview, and repealing numerous EPA actions to implement new emission restrictions. The bill will be examined at a February 9 House Energy and Commerce Energy and Power Subcommittee hearing. Similar legislative efforts include: Senator John Barrasso's (R-WY) S.228, which would block regulation of GHGs under a host of environmental laws, including the Clean Air, Clean Water, Endangered Species and National Environmental Policy acts; and Senator Jay Rockefeller's (D-WV) S.231, which would suspend the EPA rules for two years. NARC is closely monitoring these efforts; click **HERE** for a brief listing of related legislative activities.

**Obama Promotes Overhaul of Energy Efficiency Tax Incentives:**

Last week, President Obama called for a re-examination of energy efficiency tax incentives through an effort called *The Better Buildings Initiative*, which aims to reduce the energy consumption of commercial buildings by 20 percent over 10 years. Click **HERE** to read the White House fact sheet.

**Surface Transportation Authorization Field Hearings Announced:** House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica (R-FL) announced the locations of the anticipated surface transportation authorization field hearings. Chairman Mica has repeatedly stated that the bill will be a smaller version than previous legislative attempts and will require the program to spend within the means of the revenues generated by the Highway Trust Fund. The Committee is seeking information on how to consolidate and improve the performance of programs, cut government red tape and streamline the project delivery process, increase private sector investment in our infrastructure, identify creative financing alternatives, as well as other ideas. Click [HERE](#) for the Committee's press release.

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## REGIONS360<sup>0</sup>

### **Alamo Area Council of Governments Region Welcomes First Chevy**

**Volt:** The sight of the Volt, a fuel-efficient car that runs primarily on electricity, in San Antonio is exciting for AACOG's [Alamo Area Clean Cities Coalition](#), who supports local initiatives that reduce petroleum consumption through the use of alternative fuels and vehicles. One of the most promising aspects of electric vehicles is keeping money invested here in the region by using electricity from local sources instead of oil from foreign countries to power the vehicle. To read the article in the San Antonio Express-News, [click here](#). For more information about the Alamo Area Clean Cities Coalition, contact [Chris Ashcraft](#) at (210) 362-5228.

### **NARC Congratulates Brazos Valley Council of Governments for EPA**

**Award:** The [Brazos Valley Council of Governments](#) (BVCOG) in Bryan, TX was recognized by the U.S. EPA for helping reduce air pollution and improve people's health and overall quality of life through smart growth neighborhoods, and received EPA's Building Healthy Communities for Active Aging award in the achievement category due to their commitment to active lifestyles. Other winners included: the City of Charlotte, NC (achievement award), and the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, Va. and the Philadelphia Corporation on Aging, Pa in the commitment category.

### **NARC Congratulates Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission for**

**TechColumbus Innovation Award:** The [Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission](#) (MORPC) won its first Innovation Award in the category of Innovation in Non-Profit Service Delivery at the recent 2010 TechColumbus

Innovation Awards ceremony. The annual TechColumbus Innovation Awards recognize and celebrate the outstanding achievement of central Ohio's technology organizations and business leaders. MORPC was selected from among 16 nominees that have applied or implemented a technology or process change that has positively impacted the ability of the organization to provide services, such as, by measurably increasing the number of constituents served, by measurably increasing the extent to which one or more constituents has been served, by measurably increasing generation of funds through fundraising efforts, or by achieving some other significant described impact.

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## GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

### **U.S. EPA Accepting Applications for SmartWay Program – *Deadline: February 10, 2011***

The U.S. EPA's SmartWay Program and National Clean Diesel Campaign are announcing the availability of funding assistance to create finance programs, such as low-cost leases or revolving loan programs, to achieve significant reductions in diesel emissions throughout the United States. The SmartWay Finance Program is soliciting proposals for projects that reduce diesel emissions through the creation of national, tribal, regional, state or local finance program(s). Finance programs include, but are not limited to, those that provide the loan recipient a specific financial incentive (i.e., longer terms or lower rates) to purchase or lease eligible retrofitted vehicles or equipment. The proposed finance program should maximize the total project funds available for financing eligible diesel emission reduction solutions and be sustainable to maintain the program. Eligible entities include regional, state, local, or tribal agencies or port authorities with jurisdiction over transportation or air quality, and certain non-profit organizations and institutions.

### **U.S. DOT's Transportation Infrastructure and Innovation Act Offers Credit Assistance - *Deadline: February 18, 2011***

The U.S. DOT's Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act Joint Program Office announced the availability of funding to support new applications for credit assistance. Click [HERE](#) for additional information.

### **EPA Sustainable Communities Building Blocks Technical Assistance:**

*Deadline for Letter of Interest: February 23, 2011* The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced the availability of technical assistance via the Building Blocks Program, which supports the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. Local governments may apply for one of eight

tools to be implemented during a day-long workshop, involving key community partners including MPOs and/or other regional planning organizations. Additional information can be found [HERE](#), and the Request for Letters of Interest is available [HERE](#).

**U.S. HUD to Award \$25 Million through New Rural Innovation Fund –**

*Deadline: February 23, 2011*

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) **announced** that \$25,750,000 will be available for grants made through the Rural Innovation Fund (RIF). RIF replaces HUD's former Rural Housing and Economic Development Program, and will award grants on a competitive basis to state housing finance agencies, community development corporations, state community and/or economic development agencies, local rural non-profit organizations, federally recognized Indian tribes and consortia of these eligible groups. Successful grant applications will propose new and innovative solutions to poor housing conditions and concentrated poverty in rural and tribal areas. HUD is particularly interested in proposals that incorporate an "entrepreneurial approach" to addressing these problems.

Eligible housing and economic development activities include:

Commissioning architectural and engineering plans; Construction of innovative new housing units; Demolition and/or rehabilitation of existing housing units to increase sustainability and/or energy efficiency; Land acquisition; Homeownership counseling Revolving loan programs and microlending programs to establish or grow local businesses and create jobs; and, Direct financial assistance in the form of grants, loans and funding for Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) for affordable housing, entrepreneurship and economic development leading to job opportunities. Additional information is available by clicking [HERE](#).

**Your Town Regional Planning Workshop Grant Opportunity:** *Deadline:*

*February 25, 2011*

The National Endowment for the Arts issued a request for proposals for *Your Town: The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design* to nonprofits, community organizations, and local governments to address critical regional planning issues through design by bringing design professionals to a community for a multi-day workshop. Applicant towns must have a population of less than 50,000 and/or be located in a non-metropolitan county or a metropolitan county on the urban fringe. For more information click [here](#).

**Our Town Grant Opportunity:** *Statement of Interest Deadline: March 1, 2011*

The National Endowment for the Arts will offer grants to nonprofit design and

cultural organizations in partnership with a local government entity for *Our Town*, a new grant opportunity designed to contribute toward the livability of communities and help transform them into lively, beautiful, and economically sustainable places with the arts at their core. Regional councils can work in partnership with a local government to develop a Statement of Interest, required for potential applicants to receive an invitation to apply. For more information click [here](#).

**Environmental Justice Small Grants: *Deadline: March 31, 2011***

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is accepting grant applications for \$1.2 million to support projects to research, educate, empower and enable communities to understand and address local health and environmental issues. Eligible applicants include non-profit community based organizations (e.g. faith groups, environmental justice groups) and tribal governments. COGs/RCs may want to partner with such entities. Forty grants of up to \$25,000 each to support projects that address local environmental issues through partnerships, and four grants of up to \$50,000 each to gather science on the environmental and health impacts of exposure to multiple sources of pollution. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

**FY11 Environmental Workforce Development Grants Available: *Deadline: March 18, 2011***

The U.S. EPA recently announced the availability of \$4 million to fund approximately 13 awards of up to \$300,000 each. Regional councils are specifically named as eligible applicants for the awards, which will support the delivery of environmental workforce development and job training programs focused on hazardous and solid waste management, assessment and cleanup-associated activities. Additional information is available [HERE](#) or at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

**Citizenship and Integration Direct Services Grant Program Deadline:**

*Deadline: April 1, 2011*

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Citizenship will provide federal funding to nonprofits or local governments to prepare Lawful Permanent Residents for citizenship. The grants provide up to \$75,000 per year, for a total of \$150,000 per grantee to provide citizenship instruction for the civics and English portions of the naturalization test. Additional information and a full application packet is available [here](#).

**DOL Releases Grant Applications for Trade Adjustment Assistance**

**Community College and Career Training Program - *Deadline: April 21, 2011***

Last week the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) announced the release of \$500 million in grant funds for the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) program. While applicants must be institutions of higher education eligible for training under the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, regional councils and Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) have proven to be key partners for similar work undertaken through NARC's *Pathways Out of Poverty* project, also funded by DOL ETA. Projects to expand and improve the delivery of education and career training programs for workers eligible for training under the TAA for Workers program to become employed in high-wage, high-skill occupations will be considered under the TAACCCT program. The full grant announcement is available [HERE](#), and a toolkit for potential applicants is available [HERE](#).

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## UPCOMINGEVENTS

### ***Transportation and Land Use Webinar***

**February 8, 2011, 12:00-2:00 pm ET:** NARC and the National League of Cities will host the next NARC Transportation Committee webinar, focusing on best practice examples of how regions are linking transportation and land use, and how local elected officials can play a role in developing the regions they represent. The agenda is forthcoming. NARC members can attend for free; click [HERE](#) to register.

### ***HUD Webinar on OneCPD Technical Assistance Grant NOFA***

**Tuesday, February 8, 2011 – 2pm ET:** The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) is hosting a webinar where potential applicants can learn more about HUD's new OneCPD and Core Curricula NOFA (available [here](#)). OneCPD is a new cross-program technical assistance effort, designed to help CPD grantees carry out comprehensive and sustainable "place-based" development and revitalization strategies. The NOFA is a request for qualifications to become a TA provider for OneCPD, and applications are due February 24, 2011. Register for the webinar [here](#) and contact [Holly Kelly](#) at HUD with any questions.

### ***2011 Good Jobs Green Jobs Conference***

**February 8-10, 2011, Washington, DC:** NARC and its *Pathways Out of Poverty* project team will present a workshop on February 8th on the importance of partnerships in regional workforce and economic development

programs, entitled "Partnerships and Pathways: Keys to Success in Regional Green Jobs Training and Placement." The 2011 Conference is the leading forum for sharing ideas and strategies for building a green economy that creates good jobs, reduces global warming and other environmental problems, and secures America's economic and environmental future. Click [here](#) for a full conference agenda and registration information. Contact [Jenee Kresge](#) if you plan to attend the conference.

***2011 National Conference of Regions***

**February 13-15, 2011, Washington, DC:** NARC will host its 2011 National Conference of Regions, which will focus on Obama Administration's priorities, Congressional activities, and critical policy issues and pending federal legislation that will impact regions. Click [HERE](#) to register for the conference.

***2011 Green Infrastructure Conference***

**February 23-25, 2011, Shepherdstown, WV:** The Conservation Fund and its partners will host speakers from across the country to discuss key elements for success and vital lessons-learned. Featured topics include green infrastructure and public health, social equity, transportation, economic development, climate change and more. For more information please click [here](#).

***Financial Markets Boot Camp: An Insider's Perspective on Unique Financials Tools For Local Elected and Senior Government Officials***

**March 12, 2011, Washington, DC:** The Arizona State University School of Public Affairs is hosting the Financial Markets Boot Camp to build the financial governance capacity and economic sophistication of local and state public servants in their interaction with the private market and its stakeholders. The fee for the Boot Camp is \$75 and includes lunch. For details and registration, click [here](#).

***24th Annual GIS-T Symposium***

**March 28-30, 2011, Hershey, PA:** For more information on this event, please click [HERE](#).

***2011 National Brownfields Conference***

**April 3-5, 2011, Philadelphia, PA:** What began as a response to an overwhelming brownfields concern has become one of the largest environmental conferences in the United States. A partnership between the U.S. EPA and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) has developed the National Brownfields Conference into the premier international forum focused on redeveloping America's brownfield properties

and promoting environmental revitalization and economic redevelopment. Registration is free; visit [www.brownfields2011.org](http://www.brownfields2011.org) for more details.

***NARC's 46th Annual Conference and Exhibition***

**June 13-15, 2011, San Diego, CA:** Join us for the the largest national event focused on promoting effective regional cooperation and solutions through interaction and education. NARC's annual conference is the premier place to learn how to engage in effective regional collaboration. Click [HERE](#) for additional information.

***NLC's 19th Annual Leadership Summit***

**September 15 - 17, 2011, Minneapolis, MN:** Join renowned leadership scholars and authors Dan Buettner, Lindsay Strand, John M. Bryson, Barbara C. Crosby, and John Luthy as you engage in a unique, reflective program that will help guide your work and leadership in local government. Insightful learning experiences will provide you the opportunity to reflect, recognize and discover what you can do to enhance your success as a local leader. Click [HERE](#) for additional information.

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