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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

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**eRegions**

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Governments

**EXECUTIVE BRIEF**

Colleagues,

Our 2011 Executive Directors' Conference was a tremendous success. Thank you to our local host, the Northeast Florida Regional Council, Brian Teeple and Mario Taylor for their support in getting us to Jacksonville and for their on-the-ground

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## PROGRAM UPDATE

**Green Infrastructure Survey:** NARC is seeking information on regional planning organizations' experiences with green infrastructure planning and implementation. Please take 10 minutes to fill out this short survey before September 30, 2011. The survey can be accessed [HERE](#) and will provide NARC and its research partners with a fuller understanding of regional and local green infrastructure activities, funding streams and federal support, in order to identify opportunities for improvement and targeted resources.

### **Obama Administration Releases National Disaster Recovery**

**Framework:** Last week, the National Disaster Recovery Framework was finalized and includes a new multi-agency effort to strengthen the way the federal agencies work together to support state, tribal, territorial and local communities to recover after disaster strikes. Key aspects of the Framework include: aligns with the long-standing, [National Response Framework](#); recognizes that local, state, tribal and territorial governments have primary responsibility for the recovery of their communities; and, introduces six Recovery Support Functions represented at the federal level by primary coordinating agencies. Click

assistance. Conference highlights include discussions on equality in the region, the ins-and-outs of managing organizations in complex times and social media policy in your organization. We were honored to hear keynote remarks from Congresswoman Corrine Brown, U.S. HUD Director of Sustainable Housing and Communities Shelly Poticha and Captain Jeffrey Maclay, Commanding Officer of Jacksonville Naval Air Base. Thank you to all of our attendees and sponsors of the program – your participation made this event possible.

I also want to thank the Texas Association of Regional Councils and their local host, the North Central Texas Council of Governments, for the gracious invitation to participate and speak at their annual event two weeks ago in Fort Worth, Texas. I was honored to present on new opportunities for regional and local governments in this economic downturn.

Best,  
Fred

[HERE](#) to access the Framework.

**NARC Signs on to Rural Development Campaign Farm Bill**

**Principles Statement:** Last week, NARC joined the National Association of Counties (NACo) and several other Campaign for a Renewed Rural Development partners in signing on to a statement on Rural Development Priorities for the 2012 Farm Bill. Access the principles statement [HERE](#) and view NACo's press release on the statement [HERE](#).

**NARC Transportation Committee Webinar:** NARC's next Transportation Committee webinar is scheduled for Tuesday, October 11, 2011 from 12:00pm-2:00pm ET. This next, monthly webinar will focus on the recently released report from the National Conference of State Legislatures, *Transportation Governance and Finance: A 50-State Review of State Legislatures and DOTs*. Click [HERE](#) to access a copy of the report; [HERE](#) for the webinar agenda and [HERE](#) to register.

**How Do You Think Federal Websites Can Improve?:** The White House, through its Campaign to Cut Waste, is requesting feedback on how federal websites can improve to be more efficient and effective. Click [HERE](#) to learn more and click [HERE](#) to provide your feedback.

**HUD Disaster Recovery Information:** Information on HUD's disaster assistance can be found by clicking [HERE](#). Secretary Donovan's announcements for Disaster Assistance are available by clicking [HERE](#). Click [HERE](#) to access HUD's FAQ about the program.

**National Climate Assessment Request for Information:** The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has issued a request for information, inviting the public to provide comments and expressions of interest in offering technical inputs or assessment capacity on topics related to the National Climate Assessment. Expressions of interest are due by October 1, 2011, and final inputs are due by March 1, 2012. Click [HERE](#) to access the Federal Register Notice for a detailed timeline and more information.

**Opportunity for Stakeholder Comment on Workforce System:** The U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services are jointly seeking input from stakeholders on how to improve the nation's Workforce System. Click [HERE](#) for information on how to contribute your feedback.

## **NARCSTAFF**

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**DOT Seeks Nominations for Transportation Planning Awards:** The U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program requests nominations for the 2012 Transportation Planning Excellence Awards. The award program recognizes outstanding initiatives across the country to develop, plan and implement innovative transportation planning practices. The application period will be open from October 1, 2011 through December 1, 2011. For more information, visit [www.planning.dot.gov/tpea2012](http://www.planning.dot.gov/tpea2012).

**Promising Results from the National Solar Jobs Census 2011:** The Solar Foundation has pre-released its top-line solar jobs numbers from its [National Solar Jobs Census 2011](#). In part, Census 2011 found: 100,237 jobs as of August 2011; 6.8% growth from August 2010 to August 2011; and 6,735 new solar jobs created between August 2010 and August 2011, among many other findings. Compared with the overall economy, which grew only 0.7% during that same period, the solar industry is an economic bright spot. NARC is a partner on the Solar America Communities Outreach Partnership, along with The Solar Foundation, for more information about this, visit NARC's solar energy webpage by clicking [HERE](#).

**New DOE Report: Solar on Low-Income Housing Developments:** A case study published by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), available by clicking [HERE](#), examines a recent initiative by the Northeast Denver Housing Center, which has led to the installation of solar PV systems on 12 existing buildings in the Whittier Affordable Housing Project in northeast Denver. These PV systems (a total of 47.72 kilowatts) provide energy for 30 affordable housing units. In addition, NDHC also developed a job training program for residents, training 15 low-income community members, and did extensive education and outreach to the neighborhood. The goal of the solar installations is to "reduce the electric bills of Denver's most economically distressed families." To learn more about innovative ways to create more opportunities for solar in your region, visit NARC's solar energy webpage by clicking [HERE](#).

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## **POLICYUPDATE**

*Congress is scheduled to be out of session to observe Rosh Hashana, but may be in for work surrounding the Continuing Resolution (CR).*

**Congress Continues to Debate FY12 CR and Disaster Funding:** Last week, the House-passed Continuing Resolution (CR), HR 2608, was blocked by the Senate, and now the two chambers must come to agreement before October 1, the beginning of the new fiscal year, to keep the government running; to date, none of the FY12 appropriations bills have been passed by Congress, necessitating a CR. Much of the Senate opposition to HR 2608 was in the proposal to offset a portion of \$3.65 billion in emergency disaster aid with spending cuts from other funding pots and programs. Senate Majority Leader Reid has scheduled a vote on Monday evening to invoke cloture on a motion to amend the House-passed measure by removing the spending offsets. The House bill would provide \$1.043 trillion to keep the government funding until November 18 (this is the spend rate set by the debt limit law that was enacted in August (PL 112-25) and \$3.65 billion in disaster funding. This would reduce most agency and program funding by 1.5% from current levels.

**Sen. Menendez Reintroduces Livable Communities Act:** Last week, Senator Menendez (D-NJ) and seventeen Senator cosponsors reintroduced the Livable Communities Act, which would provide federal funding and support for comprehensive regional planning and implementation and authorize the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Sustainable Communities Regional Planning and Community Challenge Grants at \$880 million over five years (roughly equivalent to FY10 funding but lower than the originally released 2009 bill by Senator Dodd, which sought nearly \$2 billion). Additionally, the bill would create a loan program for infrastructure improvements (streetscape, utilities) in preparation for transit oriented development. Along with federal agency coordination, the bill directs agencies to streamline requirements, reduce redundancy, and eliminate red tape to become more efficient in both their internal operations and their engagement with communities in the field. Click [HERE](#) to read a summary of the bill, which includes a brief comparison with the original 2009 Dodd bill; and [HERE](#) for the full bill text. NARC has strongly supported and been active in all legislative and programmatic activities surrounding this effort.

**House Passes Bill to Block EPA Regulations:** Last week, the House passed HR 2401, the Transparency in Regulatory Analysis of Impacts on the Nation Act of 2011 (TRAIN Act), which would require studying the economic impact of several U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

(EPA) regulations and actions in a number of areas, as well as block two EPA air pollution regulations - mercury and toxic emissions from fossil fuel-powered utilities, as well as delay a rule requiring 27 states to reduce utility emissions that impact air quality in downwind states until at least 2015. The bill also includes an amendment that would require EPA to account for feasibility and cost when establishing national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS), effectively negating a 2001 Supreme Court decision that upheld the EPA's practice of considering only public health concerns when setting the standards. While the bill will likely be rejected by the Senate, President Obama has already issued his threat of a veto if the legislation reaches his desk. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

**Senate Homeland Security Committee Approves DHS**

**Authorization:** Last week, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee passed S 1546, which would authorize U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) programs. This represents the first time the agency has been authorized since its formation in 2003. Click [HERE](#) to access a bill summary, outline and full text.

**NARC Highlights Need for Federal Role in Creation of Performance**

**Measurements:** NARC recently expressed to Administrators Mendez and Rogoff the need for a federal role in the creation of performance measurements on the local and regional levels. Highlighting the importance of support in both the data and communication areas (among other areas), NARC expressed its desire to continue to work with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Agency (FTA) to develop appropriate and flexible performance measurement systems at the local and regional levels. Click [HERE](#) and [HERE](#) to access NARC's letters to Administrators Mendez and Rogoff, respectively.

**President Releases Deficit Plan:** Last week, President Obama released the details of his plan to reduce the deficit by \$3.5 trillion over the next decade. The President outlined a mix of tax increases and spending cuts to achieve his goal - \$580 billion in cuts from and reform to mandatory spending programs (\$248 billion from Medicare and \$72 billion from Medicaid), \$1.1 trillion draw down of military in Iraq and Afghanistan, and tax increases of \$1.5 trillion. This plan serves as guidelines to the super deficit committee that is undertaking efforts. Click [HERE](#) to access the full plan.

**Transportation Extension Becomes Law:** Last week, President

Obama signed H.R. 2887, the Surface and Air Transportation Programs Extension Act of 2011, which reauthorizes current programs and taxes for the Federal Aviation Administration and federal surface transportation programs for four and six months, respectively. The temporary authorization extension contains no policy changes. Click [HERE](#) to see NARC's letter or support for the passage of a clean authorization extension and [HERE](#) for NARC's member release regarding passage.

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## PARTNERUPDATE

**Solar Survey:** The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) is conducting a solar survey of local governments to collect data on what local governments are doing related to the adoption of solar energy. The survey was sent to the Chief Elected or Appointed Official of all city- and county- type local governments with a population of 2,500 or above and can also be completed online (the URL and your jurisdiction's unique 6-digit identifier are provided on the paper survey). If you need to obtain your identifier or have questions, please email [solar@icma.org](mailto:solar@icma.org).

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## REGIONS360

**DAR Chairman Speaks to GRADD Board:** The Green River Area Development District (GRADD) welcomed the Chairman of the Delta Regional Authority (DAR) Chris Masingill during their recent Board of Directors meeting. Chairman Masingill spoke to the necessity of regionalism. Click [HERE](#) to access his video remarks.

**MWCOG Climate Change Plan:** Climate change is already altering a reality in metro Washington, DC and it will only intensify. For this reason, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) partnered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to develop a climate change plan. Click [HERE](#) to access additional information about the project, along with the report.

**TMACOG Ohio Conference on Freight:** NARC would like to congratulate the Toledo Area Metropolitan Council of Governments (TMACOG) on the successful completion of its 5th annual Ohio Conference on Freight. If you attended the conference, please click [HERE](#) to complete TMACOG's follow-up survey.

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# GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

## **EPA Accepting Applications for Environmental Education Sub-Grants Program**

*Application Deadline November 8, 2011*

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the availability of \$1.5 million in grant funding for the Environmental Education (EE) Sub-grants Program for 2011. The purpose of this competitive grant program is to increase environmental awareness and stewardship. This funding will provide participants in EE grant-funded projects with the skills necessary to make informed environmental decisions and take responsible actions toward the environment. EPA expects to award one (1) grant for approximately \$150,000 in each of EPA's ten (10) Regions. EPA will be hosting conference calls for potential applicants interested in additional information about the application process. To participate, dial the toll free number and enter the conference ID code. The call-in number for the calls are 1-866-246-5569.

Sept. 27, 2011, 2:00 pm EDT (ID code: 97740900)

Sept. 30, 2011, 12.00 pm EDT (ID code: 97741103)

For more information on eligibility and application materials, click [HERE](#).

For direct questions on the Environmental Education Sub-grants Program for 2011, send emails to [EEgrants@epa.gov](mailto:EEgrants@epa.gov).

## **2012 NSDI Cooperative Agreements Program**

*January 2012*

Preliminary information regarding the 2012 National Spatial Data Information (NSDI) Cooperative Agreements Program has been released. A full grant announcement will be posted by the end of October. Click [HERE](#) to access the information that is available now.

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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## ***Innovative Solutions for Solar Financing Webinar***

**September 27, 2011, 2:00pm ET:** Join ICMA and NARC for a [Solar America Communities Program](#) webinar on solar financing. Learn from Sonoma County, California and the Joint Venture Silicon Valley Network as they detail their efforts to overcome major barriers to adopting solar

technologies in their region. Advanced registration is required; please click [HERE](#) to register.

***U.S. DOE Webinar: Advanced Topics in Power Purchase Agreements***

**September 28, 2011, 2:00pm ET:** This webcast is the second of a two part webcast series. The first webcast presented basic information about Power Purchase Agreements as a way to leverage private capital to install large-scale solar energy. This webcast will cover the sometimes complex terms and conditions, several different legal structures, and the roles of the various parties, including how to share risk and reward. Click [HERE](#) for registration and additional information.

***Heartland Active Transportation Summit***

**September 30-October 1, 2011, Omaha, NE:** Metropolitan Area Planning Agency, in conjunction with its partners, is pleased to announce the Heartland Active Transportation Summit (HATS). The Professional Summit (Day 1) will cover a wide range of topics on complete streets including policy, liability issues, engineering, sustainability and public health. The Professional Summit will be held in the Scott Conference Center in Omaha and features national experts from Minneapolis, Kansas City, Madison, Omaha and the Nebraska Department of Roads. Former Congressman and Chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Jim Oberstar, will be the keynote speaker. The Community Summit (Day 2) will be held in the CPACS building on UNO campus and will focus on cyclists, advocates, and others from the community interested in supporting alternative transportation. Registration rates are being kept intentionally low for both days and include a complimentary lunch. For more information or to register, click [HERE](#).

***Solar Workshop: Solar as a Sustainability Approach in the Metropolitan Washington Region***

**October 6, 2011, 9:00am-4:30pm:** MWCOG and NARC will be hosting a solar energy workshop in Washington, D.C. on “Solar as a Sustainability Approach in the Metropolitan Washington Region” as part of the Department of Energy’s Solar America Communities Outreach Partnership. This is the partnership’s first regional solar PV outreach workshop. Click [HERE](#) for additional information and to register.

***Solar Powering Your Community Workshop: Getting Started with Solar in Your Community – Dallas, TX***

**October 21, 8:00am-1:00pm:** This *free* half-day workshop, in conjunction with Solar Power International, will focus on important concepts related to residential and small scale commercial solar installations, including how to create a local-level solar program and install solar on municipal and other community facilities. As a participant, you will learn about policy considerations in the state of Texas and learn best practices from communities across the state, including the Solar America Cities of Austin, Houston, and San Antonio. To learn more or register, click [HERE](#).

**2011 Water Resources Summit**

**October 25, 2011, College Park, MD:** Join the Horinko Group for the Second Annual Water Resources Summit, hosted on the campus of the University of Maryland. The topic of this year's summit is *Sustaining Our Nation's Water Resources: Answering the Call for Stewardship*. The summit will focus on Water Governance, Water Advocacy, and the Business of Water, and will feature speakers from the public, advocacy, and the business sector. To view the full agenda and register, please click [HERE](#).

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