



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS



## NARC UPDATES

### Staff Update

As of January 1, Erich Zimmermann has been promoted to NARC's deputy executive director. He also retains his title as director of transportation programs. Congratulations, Erich!

### NARC Congressional Briefing Update

For those of you coming to the National Conference of Regions in February, please plan to end your trip to Washington, D.C. at NARC's Congressional Breakfast on Wednesday, February 14! We have several excellent speakers already confirmed and are expecting participation from members of Congress as well. The current plan is to begin with breakfast at 8:00am, followed by a program from 8:30am to 9:30am to highlight the importance of regionalism to an audience of NARC members and congressional staff.

Confirmed speakers:

- The Honorable Gary Moore, Judge/Executive, Boone County, Kentucky
- Scott Bogren, Executive Director, The Community Transportation Association of America
- Elaine Nessel, Executive Director, Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors

NARC is also working with the Congressional Problem Solvers Caucus, a bipartisan group of 48 House members committed to fostering cooperation to solve some of the nation's vexing problems. The eight members of its Infrastructure Working Group were tasked with finding consensus on policy solutions to improve infrastructure and we expect to have participation from this group at the breakfast. **Their recent report** covers surface transportation, ports, water, energy, broadband, and aviation, with a problem statement and solutions for each.

## NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

*Congress is in session.*

## **Overview**

With only four days left until the current continuing resolution expires, efforts to avoid a government shutdown appear *stalled*. Republicans and Democrats cannot seem to reach an agreement that will keep the federal government open, struggling over decisions concerning caps on defense and non-defense discretionary spending, funding the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and protecting individuals enrolled in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

DACA may be the largest obstacle to a budget agreement with increasing numbers of Senate Democrats saying they will not support any appropriations bill that does not include protections for those enrolled in DACA. Hopes of reaching an agreement on DACA appear to be fading after an unsuccessful meeting in the Oval Office last week.

If Congress and the administration are unable to find a solution – temporary or permanent – most of the federal government will shut down on Saturday, January 20, at midnight.

*What does a government shutdown mean?* First and foremost, it means that millions of Americans who receive government services could run out of benefits immediately or shortly thereafter. States and localities could find that the federal funds they rely on are temporarily unavailable and money to pay staff may also disappear. More than that, Americans may further lose trust and confidence in their central government, doubting the governing abilities of both Congress and the administration.

*Who stands to lose the most if the government shuts down?* Some say that Republicans will bear the greatest loss, because a shutdown will demonstrate weakness in the Senate, House, and White House – all of which are Republican-controlled. Others say that the unwillingness of Democrats to cooperate to prevent a shutdown will make them the greatest losers. Ultimately, the American people will suffer the most.

## **106 Lawmakers Call on Trump to Designate Climate Change as Security Threat**

A bipartisan group of 106 House lawmakers **sent a letter to the White House** urging President Trump to include climate change in the administration's national security strategy. They wrote, "as global temperatures become more volatile, sea levels rise, and landscapes change, our military installations and our communities are increasingly at risk for devastation." While the national security strategy is not likely to see a revision, lawmakers were able to pass language in the final *FY 2018 National Defense Authorization Act* that called climate change "a direct threat to the national security of the United States." The bill, which Trump signed into law, also requires Defense Secretary James Mattis to present to Congress "a report on the vulnerability to military installations and combatant commander requirements resulting from climate change over the next 20 years."

## **Multiple Health Programs in Limbo**

Funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which serves nine million children and pregnant women, is still up in the air because of the Capitol Hill gridlock. However, CHIP is not the only health program with an uncertain future. The Community Health Center Fund; National Health Service Corp/Teaching Health Centers; Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; and Public Health and Prevention Fund are all bipartisan-supported programs that face expiration or funding issues due to the lack of a long-term federal spending bill.

## **Trump Administration Opens Door to States Imposing Medicaid Work Requirements**

The Trump administration has issued guidance to states that will allow them to compel people to work or to prepare for work to receive Medicaid. A **letter** was sent to state Medicaid directors that opens the door for states to cut off Medicaid benefits unless someone has a job, is in school, are a caregiver or volunteer, or participate in approved forms of "community engagement." Ten states have been waiting for federal permission to impose work requirements for able-bodied adults, while three more have been contemplating similar actions. **According to *The Hill*** a court battle

is already brewing, with Medicaid advocates arguing that the administration cannot allow work requirements for Medicaid without congressional action first.

## OTHER NEWS

### **CDBG and HOME: Effective Federal Grants for Mid-Sized Cities**

Earlier this year, the administration proposed the sweeping elimination of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) flexible block grant programs, including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships Grant (HOME). Had the proposal been carried into law, cities across the nation would have lost out on \$3.948 billion for their communities. In response, the National League of Cities created a **CDBG and HOME story map**, to present how 41 cities are using their CDBG and HOME grants to address affordable housing, demand for survival services, and skills alignment with employer needs.

### **NARC Fleets for the Future project: Simplifying Alt Fuel Vehicle Procurement**

Last week, NARC's Fleets for the Future (F4F) grant project was featured in *Advanced Clean Transportation (ACT) News*. The article details the project's success, what to expect in 2018 for vehicle offerings and conference participation, and the best practices guides developed for electric vehicles, gaseous fuel vehicles, fleet financing, and fleet transition planning.

## REGION SPOTLIGHT

### **SPC Using INVEST to Evaluate Long-Range Plans**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) highlighted the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC), located in Pittsburgh, PA, as a case study for its Infrastructure Voluntary Evaluation Sustainability Tool (INVEST). SPC recently used INVEST to evaluate the sustainability of two of its long-range plans: **2040 Transportation and Development Plan for Southwestern Pennsylvania** and **Mapping the Future: The Southwestern PA Plan**. The tool helped SPC identify strengths and challenges within their plans and track the progress made from one plan to the next. To learn more about the enhancements SPC made using INVEST to improve regional planning in their long-range plans, download the **official SPC case study**.

### **Gary Moore Named St. Elizabeth Healthcare Chair**

Boone County, Kentucky Judge/Executive Gary Moore has been elected as chairman of the St. Elizabeth Healthcare Board of Trustees. He has served on the St. Elizabeth Board since 2008. Since that time, St. Elizabeth has been recognized as one of America's 50 best hospitals by HealthGrades, named a Top Performer by Joint Commission, and received the highest hospital safety score for all three of its main hospitals by the Leapfrog Group. Moore has served as NARC president and chair of the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI). He is currently second vice president of OKI and first vice president of the Kentucky Association of Counties. Congratulations, Gary!

## REGIONS LEAD

Visit [www.regionslead.org](http://www.regionslead.org) to read up on the latest NARC blogs. We invite members to submit blogs to the site too. Please send contributions to [anna@narc.org](mailto:anna@narc.org).

### **Will Electric Vehicles Have Their Year in 2018?**

*By Sarah Reed*

Alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) became mainstays in the news in 2017, with several big stories focusing predominantly on electric vehicles (EVs). This, combined with several other factors, could mean a big year in 2018 for EVs and a real shift towards an electric, autonomous, and connected vehicle future.

### **The National Association of Regional Councils' 2017 Wrap-Up**

*By NARC Staff*

Highlighting the innovative initiatives that regional councils are carrying out today and exploring where they can be leaders in their communities drove many of NARC's activities in 2017.

## MEMBER REQUESTS

### **Public Health: Addressing the Public Health Needs of Your Region**

Help NARC learn more about your efforts to create healthy communities. Is your regional council involved in addressing the public health needs of your region and its cities and towns? Are you looking at public health and the built environment? Some examples from your region may include: looking at ways to reduce the number of traffic deaths, creating accident-free bike lanes, ensuring access to affordable and appropriate housing, and improving your community's water and air quality, to name just a few. If your regional council is addressing these or other public health needs within your region, please send the name of your project, a brief description, funding sources, and contact details to Neil Bomberg ([neil@narc.org](mailto:neil@narc.org)).

### **DOE Request: Information on Energy Emergencies Planning**

Based on our recent conversations with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), we have learned that they are very interested in local energy assurance and the importance of a regional approach to prepare for energy emergencies. Has your regional council done any planning in preparation for regional power outages, fuel shortages, or national gas service disruptions? Have you made plans to help keep critical infrastructure facilities in operation, or help emergency responders, medical care facilities, and critical care facilities have the energy supplies they need to function? If you have undertaken planning measures for any of these scenarios, please reach out to Cameron Herbolsheimer ([cameron@narc.org](mailto:cameron@narc.org)) or Maci Morin ([maci.hurley@narc.org](mailto:maci.hurley@narc.org)) and tell us your story.

### **Transportation System Resiliency**

NARC has been asked to participate in a roundtable discussion focused on "Resiliency, Reliability, and Energy Infrastructure Planning." Help NARC share your stories. How are you upgrading and preparing infrastructure (i.e. repairing/building more resilient roads, preparing for transportation fuel shortages, investing in alternative fuels, etc.)? What policies and programs are you implementing to support robust infrastructure investment, planning, and response (i.e. upgrading emergency plans, etc.)? Please send all relevant stories to Leslie Wollack ([leslie@narc.org](mailto:leslie@narc.org)) by February 2.

## **FEATURED JOBS**

*[View full list of jobs!](#)*

### **Community and Economic Development Director**

Wasatch Front Regional Council, Salt Lake City, UT

### **Executive Director**

Indiana Association of Regional Councils, Indianapolis, IN

### **Animal Control Director**

Cumberland Animal Control, Cumberland County, NC

### **Executive Director**

Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, Oklahoma City, OK

## **FUNDING**

*[View full list of grants!](#)*

### **HUD Office of the Secretary Launches EnVision Center Demonstration**

Commitment Letter Due: February 12

The HUD Office of the Secretary recently announced that it will select ten communities to participate in an EnVision Center demonstration. The demonstration is designed to test the effectiveness of collaborative efforts by government, industry, and nonprofit organizations to accelerate the economic mobility of low-income households through EnVision Centers. These centers act as centralized hubs that offer support through their four pillars: economic empowerment; educational advancement; health and wellness; and character and leadership. HUD will provide technical assistance, evaluation and monitoring, online resources, stakeholder offerings, and a network of support from all HUD departments to help communities empower people to leave HUD-assisted housing through self-sufficiency. If you are interested in having your community participate, submit a commitment letter ([sample letter here](#)) with the information required by the Federal Register Notice to [EnVisionCenterDemonstration@hud.gov](mailto:EnVisionCenterDemonstration@hud.gov).

## **USDA Conservation Innovation Grants**

Applications Due: February 26

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) are competitive grants that drive public and private sector innovation in resource conservation. Authorized by the 2002 Farm Bill, CIG uses Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds to award competitive grants to non-federal governmental or nongovernmental organizations, American Indian Tribes, or individuals. CIG projects inspire creative problem-solving that boosts production on farms, ranches, and private forests - ultimately, improving water quality, soil health, and wildlife habitats. Projects may be watershed-based, regional, multi-state, or nationwide in scope.

## **EPA Environmental Education Grants**

Applications Due: March 15

Under the Environmental Education Grants Program, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) seeks grant proposals for environmental education projects that promote environmental awareness and stewardship and help provide people with the skills to take responsible actions to protect the environment. This program provides financial support for projects that design, demonstrate, and/or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques. EPA anticipates awarding three to four grants in each EPA Region, for no less than \$50,000 and no more than \$100,000 each, for a total of 30-35 grants nationwide.

## **EVENTS**

*[View full list of events!](#)*

### **Leveraging State Farm to School Networks to Affect Legislation**

January 18, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

Join the National Farm to School Network to learn how state farm to school networks and stakeholders can have an impact on local and state legislation that supports farm to school efforts. Hear Natalie McKinney, executive director of the Kōkua Hawai'i Foundation and NFSN Hawai'i Core Partner, discuss lessons learned from organizing, advocating, and keeping the pressure on to successfully pass state farm to school policy. Attendees will learn about the importance of advocacy and education with policy decision makers, and take away tips and tools for jumpstarting advocacy efforts in their own communities.

### **Connected Intersections Tame Traffic Now & Prepare Communities for a Smarter Future**

January 18, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

Learn how Connected Intersections can help your community reduce traffic congestion and improve safety today, and prepare you for a future that includes smart highways and autonomous vehicles. *Government Technology* will present an hour-long, interactive webinar that explains why adding connectivity and data analytics capabilities to your existing traffic intersections is both easier and more important than ever to consider. Content will cover how Connected Intersections can help fast-growing cities smoothly accommodate greater traffic volumes; improve intersection safety for motorists and pedestrians; deliver new data insights for traffic planning; and position communities of all sizes for innovative smart transportation initiatives.

### **Utility of the Future: Achieving and Maintaining Economic Health for the Community**

January 23, 1:00-2:30 PM ET

As part of the webinar series, *Enabling the Water Resources Utility of the Future*, this webinar will focus on Achieving and Maintaining Economic Health for the Community. Leading clean water utilities will discuss innovative assistance programs to support low-income ratepayers and small water systems serving surrounding communities, enhancing the overall economic and social well-being of the entire area.

### **Resilient Counties: Engaging Your Local Utilities in Disaster Planning and Response**

February 6, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

Utilities are vital to the day-to-day life of the average American—whether electric, gas, wastewater, or drinking water. When a utility's service is interrupted, it can pose life threatening challenges to residents. A lack of electricity to power home medical equipment. Untreated water. These issues

are heightened in disaster situations. Join NACo for an interactive webinar on engaging local utilities to improve resiliency in a disaster situation.

## CONTACT US

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