



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS



**Tomorrow! Join EDA to Discuss Program Offerings in select Western States**

February 22, 2:00 - 3:00 PM MST

Dial +1 (312) 757-3121 / Access Code: 211-375-093

Please join the US Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Denver Regional Office and NARC for a briefing on EDA programs in the following states: CO, UT, WY, MT, ND, SD, IA, KS, NE, and MO. The EDA Team that will be on the call includes:

- Angie Martinez, Regional Director
- Mari Sutton, Area Director
- Mark Werthmann, Economic Development Representative
- Steve Castaner, Economic Development Representative
- Kirk Keysor, Economic Development Representative
- Trent Thompson, Economic Development Representative
- Alex Smith, Economic Development Representative
- Justin Fazzari, Economic Development Integrator

## EXECUTIVE NOTE

Colleagues,

Last week, nearly 200 NARC members gathered in Washington, D.C. to participate in NARC's annual National Conference of Regions. The conference focused on a wide range of issues from innovations in transportation like autonomous vehicles to effective responses to the opioid epidemic; funding for local priorities such as investment in water infrastructure, economic development, AMTRAK passenger rail, and mass transit, to creating healthier communities, ensuring the health and well being of aging populations and preparing communities to be resilient in the face of changing environmental conditions.

The conference brought together policy makers from around the nation and from a wide range of organizations including leaders from Rice University; the Brookings Institution; the National Governors Association; the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpikes Association; the U.S. Conference of Mayors; the National Association of Counties; National League of Cities; and regional councils. The conference concluded with a NARC-sponsored congressional breakfast that drew 80 members and three prominent members of Congress involved in transportation and infrastructure.

The conference opened with two panels that set the tone for the conference. Led by the Rice University Kinder Institute for Urban Research, director of communications, Ryan Holeywell, the first focused on what a new administration is likely to mean for the nation, and the second focused on transportation and infrastructure and what the nation has to do to address both.

NARC's Transportation, Public Safety, Economic Development and Environment Committees met during the conference. While each focused on a particular issue, they also reviewed and in some cases updated their platforms to ensure that they were up to date and reflected changing and emerging policies. NARC's Board of Directors, led by President Ron Shaffer, Commissioner of Johnson County, KS, and Vice President Bob Dallari, Commissioner of Seminole County, FL, and the Executive Directors Council led by First Vice Chair William Murdock of Columbus, Ohio further reviewed these policies in their business meetings.

Powerful speakers included Dr. Nat Kendall-Taylor, CEO of the FrameWorks Institute, an organization based in Washington dedicated to helping governmental and non-governmental agencies with the language they need to effectively communicate about their programs to local, state and national populations. George Hawkins, CEO and General Manager of the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority, spoke about the challenges and successes of moving a 150 year old water system that has the largest single waste water treatment facility in the nation, into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Lisa Soronen, Executive Director of the State and Local Legal Center, provided the audience with an overview of some of the important legal cases that are currently making their way through the federal courts and could impact local governments and regional councils over the next year.

The conference ended with a congressional breakfast that included three members of Congress including Paul Tonko (D-NY), Rodney Davis (R-IL), and Julia Brownley (D-CA). Each spoke to the importance of investments in infrastructure and of the need to find the appropriate resources to redevelop Brownfields, invest in crumbling roads and bridges, and expand mass transit.

Following their remarks delegates went on to meet with their own congressional delegations. Their goal was to share with their delegations their local priorities and how important the federal programs are to addressing those programs in their regions.

Please take a look at our [photo album on Facebook](#) to see members experiencing the **Union Station mobile tour**, conference sessions, and trip to Capitol Hill for the **congressional breakfast**. Many presentations are also available on our [conference webpage](#).

Press coverage included three articles by Route 50: **Making It Easier for Public Fleets to Adopt Use of Alternative Fuel Vehicles; Transportation Funding, Scrapping Obama-era Rule Among Federal Priorities for Regionalism Group**; and **Private Investment in Public Infrastructure: Trust and Funding Present Obstacles**.

Best,  
Leslie Wollack

## **NEWS FROM WASHINGTON**

*Congress will return on February 27.*

### **Overview**

Congress will return to six straight weeks of legislative action beginning February 27, which will include more nominations and Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolutions to undo a number of

Obama administration regulations.

In a 66-31 vote last Friday, the Senate agreed to advance Commerce secretary nominee Wilbur Ross' nomination to a final confirmation vote after the week-long recess. He had the backing of the backing of the United Steelworkers union. The Senate will return to a vote confirming Wilbur Ross as Commerce secretary, followed by a cloture vote on the nomination of Representative Ryan Zinke as Interior secretary.

On Monday, President Trump named Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster as his new national security adviser. New EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, who was confirmed Friday and then sworn in by Supreme Court Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. later that afternoon, will spoke to agency employees today at headquarters. In his new role, Pruitt is expected to chart a course for a smaller agency that is more deferential to state environmental regulators. In an interview with the Wall Street Journal, Pruitt reiterated plans to withdraw the controversial Clean Power Plan and Waters of the US rule. His focus will be on improved air quality in non-attainment areas, clean up of Superfund sites and support for water infrastructure.

### **Budget**

The Trump administration is aiming to release a fiscal 2018 budget outline on March 14. Last week, the Senate also approved the new Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Mick Mulvaney, former South Carolina fiscal conservative member of Congress, who will have to sell the president's agenda for the balance of 2017 and fiscal year 2018, in addition to gaining congressional approval to raise the debt ceiling. While in Congress, Mulvaney regularly voted against raising the federal borrowing limit.

Mulvaney will have to work with a so-called "skinny budget" or bare-bones budget already requested by the new administration. The president is expected to submit a new budget request in May. OMB will face pressure from defense spending hawks eager to increase military spending without increasing the overall federal budget.

The current federal spending measure will expire on April 28 and Congress will need to find common ground to prevent a government shutdown. Most local government programs for transportation including transit, Amtrak passenger rail, TIGER programs, water infrastructure, and economic development spending under EDA are all at risk with a budget goal of increasing defense spending while reducing overall spending levels.

### **Trump Signs Bills Undoing Rules**

Last week, President Trump signed two bills to end Obama environmental regulations. The first is the Office of Surface Mining's Stream Protection Rule that was finalized in December and protects waterways from coal mining waste. The rule was criticized for its likely effect on jobs and imposed new monitoring and permitting requirements. The second was a financial disclosure requirement that obligated energy companies to disclose payments to foreign governments. These two instances of overturning rules mark the second and third times that the CRA of 1996 has been used successfully. The Senate also sent a resolution to the president blocking a gun sales regulation last week. The House has passed several other CRA resolutions, as the GOP hopes to undo several more regulations instituted at the end of the Obama administration.

### **Modernizing Environmental Laws House Subcommittee Hearing**

Last week, the House Subcommittee on the Environment held a hearing on the challenges of expanding infrastructure and promoting manufacturing. On the panel of witnesses was New Bedford, MA Mayor Jonathan Mitchell, the Chair of the Energy Committee for the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Mayor Mitchell testified about the importance of brownfields redevelopment and how it can be a great economic development tool. He spoke about their positive experiences in New Bedford and provided several recommendations for the Brownfields Law, including full funding, creating a multi-purpose grant, clarifying eligibility, and removing barriers for local and state governments. Mayor Mitchell closed by emphasizing the importance of Brownfields Law reauthorization and its ability to jump start development in communities. Paul Tonko (D-NY), a leader on brownfields reauthorization, stressed the regional role in brownfields programs while speaking at NARC's congressional breakfast last week.

## REGION SPOTLIGHT

### **NARC Autonomous/Connected Vehicle Working Group**

NARC held a listening session on autonomous and connected vehicles this week at our National Conference of Regions in Washington, DC. Members gave feedback on what their regions have done around this issue and ways NARC can help moving forward. The working group plans to hold regularly scheduled calls and/or webinars and will provide input into actions NARC can take to prepare regions for this technology. If you are interested in joining this working group please email Sarah Reed at [sarah@narc.org](mailto:sarah@narc.org).

### **NARC Tours Union Station**

Last week at NARC's National Conference, attendees and staff participated in a mobile tour of Union Station train station in Washington, D.C. Phil Hancock, Assistant Secretary at Amtrak, guided us through the building, providing interesting photos and facts about its history along the way. Visit NARC's website to see photos of the tour and learn more about this historic transportation hub.

## FEATURED JOBS

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

### **Field Data Collection Intern**

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Chicago, IL

### **Executive Director**

Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments, Salem, OR

### **Planner/Research Analyst**

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Philadelphia, PA

### **Transportation Program Manager**

Yakima Valley Conference of Governments, Yakima, WA

### **Executive Director**

Merced County Association of Governments, Merced, CA

### **Director, Sustainable Solutions and Transportation Alternatives**

Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, Dayton, OH

## FUNDING

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

### **RFQ: ACRP Research Roadmap on Select Airport Topics**

Qualifications Deadline: March 9

TRB's Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP) is seeking qualified research teams to conduct research to develop a research roadmap in the topic areas of airport design and construction, and airport operations and maintenance. The request for statement of interest, qualifications, and availability will be used to establish a short list of qualified teams for each topic area that will be invited to submit proposals to conduct the research.

## EVENTS

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

### **One Water Webinar: Thriving Cities Tackle One Water Management**

March 1, 2:00 - 3:00 PM ET

As our population becomes more urbanized, the vitality of our growing cities are largely dependent on the sustainable management of water. Water is rapidly growing in strategic importance for cities and their elected leaders, and sustainability has become a key unifying theme for innovative local governments around the world. This webcast will dive into the innovative approaches both the City of Philadelphia and City of Syracuse are taking to advance one water solutions in their regions. From accelerating green infrastructure projects to harnessing the power of data, these cities are taking the next step in holistic water management. Speakers include: Adria Finch,

Innovation Project Manager for the City of Syracuse and Christine Knapp, Director of the Office of Sustainability for the City of Philadelphia. This webinar is part two of a six-part series designed to go more in depth to the recently published **One Water Roadmap**.

**Save the date! 51st Annual Conference & Exhibition**

June 4-7 - Monterey, CA

Join NARC and the California Association of Councils of Governments for NARC's 51st Annual Conference and Exhibition, which focuses on promoting effective regional cooperation and solutions through interaction and education.

## CONTACT US

*Copyright © 2017 National Association of Regional Councils, All rights reserved.*

[unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)