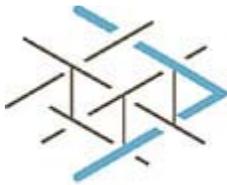


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## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

VOL. XIV, No. 9, March 18, 2014

# eRegions

### EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Colleagues,

Every once in a while, NARC is reminded that our work translates across the country in communities large, small, urban and rural. This morning a Google alert popped up from *The Picayune Item*, the Voice of Pearl River County, MS. The column **“How do we keep them here?”** talks about how one county is trying to attract new residents. Referring to NARC’s *Creating Livable Communities: An Implementation Guidebook*, the author notes that the community already has many of these principles, but will

[PROGRAM UPDATE](#) [POLICY UPDATE](#)  
[REGIONS 360](#) [PARTNER UPDATE](#)  
[GRANT OPPORTUNITIES](#) [UPCOMING EVENTS](#)



### Check Out Our New Webpage for Grants & Opportunities!

Now, you can look to one place for our latest updates regarding grants, webinars, workshops, surveys, and conferences. This webpage compiles information from all three of our newsletters: *eRegions*, *Transportation Thursdays*, and *Development Digest*. Moving forward, these newsletters will only contain new information. Click [HERE](#) for the webpage where you can view the list of grants and events still open!

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## PROGRAM UPDATE

use the rest to continue to increase its livability. Click [HERE](#) to access NARC's Livability website and *Guidebook*.

Last week, we released our summary of the President's 2013 budget request. If you missed it, click [HERE](#).

Finally, we've launched our Annual Conference in Louisville. Registration, hotel and call for session information is available on the [conference website](#). We look forward to seeing you there!

Thank you,  
Lindsey

#### **NARC LEADERSHIP**

##### **President**

**Hon. Penny Gross**

Supervisor,  
Fairfax County, VA

**Chair Jim Hassinger,**  
Executive Directors Council  
Executive Director,  
Southwestern Pennsylvania  
Commission

#### **NARC STAFF**

[Lindsey Riley](#)

Acting Executive Director

[Shannon Baxevanis](#)

Deputy Director

[Mia Colson](#)

Program Analyst

#### **White House Nominations – Transportation Champions of**

**Change: Nomination Deadline: March 27.** If you know of someone making a difference in transportation, help share their achievement by nominating them as a White House Champion of Change today! Selected Champions will be individuals who have provided exemplary leadership to ensure that transportation facilities, services, and jobs help individuals and their communities connect to 21st century opportunities. A champion's work may include transportation projects, services, or advocacy across any mode of transportation. You can submit your nomination via an online form, by clicking [HERE](#). For a list of examples and further details, click [HERE](#).

#### **10 Minute NARC Survey – Creating Effective Green Infrastructure**

**Plans:** NARC is looking for feedback from regional planning organizations and their local governments to assist in creating a green infrastructure framework and tool set, to help regions develop and implement effective green infrastructure plans that incorporate urban forestry as a core component. Click [HERE](#) to take this brief survey.

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## **POLICYUPDATE**

*Congress is in session.*

#### **NARC Signs Letter to Congress on Behalf of HHS Programs:**

NARC was one of 1,065 organizational signatures—representing the full range of stakeholders in the programs of the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), and Education. The letter asks Congress to restore the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 302(b) allocation to the Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee to the FY 2010 level of \$163.6 billion. The programs and services administered by these Departments serve a broad range of constituencies and needs, but they all share a common, fundamental goal of strengthening this nation by improving Americans' lives. Despite their impact on American health, educational and skills attainment, and productivity, these programs and services have eroded since FY 2010. The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 and the subsequent Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 have begun to reverse this trend—restoring FY 2013 sequestration cuts in the aggregate and bringing the FY 2014 302(b) allocation in line with FY 2011 in nominal terms. Click [HERE](#) for the full letter.

#### **Administration Releases Budget Justification Documents:**

**Nathan Devers**

Intern

**Marcy Fritter**

Office Manager

**Taylor Markwith**

Program Associate

**Anna Rosenbaum**

Communications Associate

**Erich W. Zimmermann**

Director of Transportation

Programs

To access past issues of

**eRegions**, **visit our**

**website.**

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homepage —

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**Proposes to Change MPO Threshold:** Last week, part one of the Administration budget rollout was announced, including top line numbers and some supporting information. This week, the Administration provided more detail with budget justification documents. This year's version starts to frame out the Administration's previously proposed four-year reauthorization bill, and contains some good policy: *an overall funding increase, dedicated freight program, and at least a modest increase in metropolitan transportation planning funding.* Though we are still going through the details, one thing did stand out: an administrative proposal to increase the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) threshold from 50,000 to 200,000, with smaller MPOs either being grandfathered or dissolving. There is some question as to whether this is now the Administration's policy heading into reauthorization. We are working to chase down more details, and will provide those as they become available. Click **HERE** to read the justification documents.

**U.S. DOT Holds Webinar to Discuss Proposed Safety Performance**

**Measurement Rulemaking:** The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) today held a webinar to outline the notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) regarding performance measures for safety, which was recently released. This safety NPRM is the first of many rulemakings that will be rolling out in the next several months, putting in place a national performance management framework to be implemented by states and MPOs over the coming years. The four proposed measures regarding safety contained in the NPRM are: number of fatalities; rate of fatalities (per 100 million VMT); number of serious injuries; and rate of serious injuries (per 100 million VMT). States are required to set one statewide target for each measure, and also have the option of setting separate targets for all of its urbanized areas and non-urbanized areas. The result could mean as many as 12 targets or as few as four.

After the states set targets, MPOs will have 180 days to set their own targets. MPOs must coordinate with their state in setting targets and determining how best to provide the data for the state to use in its own process. MPOs have two options when it comes to target setting: (1) establish their own numerical targets that will apply to the entire MPO planning area or (2) agree to support the state DOT targets in project selection and prioritization. It should also be noted that the safety targets apply to all public roads, not only those that receive federal aid highway dollars.

U.S. DOT will be holding a second webinar (covering the same information as today) on March 19 (Please note that date has changed). Register for the webinar [HERE](#), and click [HERE](#) to read the entire NPRM and supporting documents. **Finally, be on the lookout for an upcoming webinar hosted by NARC to discuss the NPRM and gather your reactions to its contents.**

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## REGIONS360

**MORPC Backs Data Bills:** On February 25, Nancy Reger, MORPC's Director of Regional Data & Mapping, testified before the House Shared Services and Government Efficiency Subcommittee in support of the following bills introduced by Representatives Mike Duffey and Christina Hagen:

- [HB321](#) – To create the DataOhio Board, and to specify requirements for posting public records online
- [HB323](#) – To establish an online catalog of public data at data.ohio.gov
- [HB324](#) – To establish the Local Government Information Exchange Grant Program and to make an appropriation

MORPC serves as an informational hub for the region, providing demographics, maps and tools to inform decisions. In order to achieve this and do it well, MORPC recently created a Department of Regional Data and Mapping to address the increasing need for communities to have ready access to information. Along with support testimony, MORPC made a recommendation for language to be added to allow other entities, like regional planning commissions, to be eligible to apply for the Local Government Information Exchange Grants - to assist members in getting their data online.

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## PARTNERUPDATE

### **Call for Speakers: 100th ICMA Annual Conference**

*September 14-17; Charlotte Convention Center - Charlotte, NC*

ICMA is accepting applications from speakers wishing to be part of the program at the 100th Annual Conference. They are looking for the best combination of panelists to share their experience and expertise for selected sessions based on the educational program thematic areas. All applications must be completed electronically and submitted to

[callforspeakers@icma.org](mailto:callforspeakers@icma.org). Click [HERE](#) for the application and further details. *Application Deadline is April 4.*

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## GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Click [HERE](#) to view the list of grants still open!

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Click [HERE](#) to view the list of events still open!

### **Date Change! WEBINAR: U.S. DOT Safety Performance Measurement Rulemaking**

*March 19, 1:00 – 4:00PM EST*

On March 11, U.S. DOT published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the [Federal Register](#) as required by MAP-21. The NPRM proposes safety performance measures, State DOT requirements, and MPO requirements for establishing and reporting specific annual targets for fatalities and serious injuries for the purposes of carrying out the Highway Safety Improvement Program. The public is encouraged to review the NPRM and submit comments to the docket. The comment period closes on June 9. This webinar will provide 1) an overview of the approach to implementation of the safety performance requirements in MAP-21; and 2) details of the Safety Performance Measures NPRM. Click [HERE](#) to register.

### **WEBINAR: Talking Freight - Innovative Low Cost Freight Transportation Collaborations**

*March 19, 1:00 PM EST*

Both private sector freight shippers, carriers, and public sector transportation agencies have worked to identify ways to increase the efficiency of the transportation system, specifically freight movement. To achieve these increased efficiencies, both private and public organizations have entered into public-private, private-private, and public-public partnerships that allow participants to gain greater benefits than they would individually. This webinar will provide examples of innovative low-cost solutions that benefitted the participants. Click [HERE](#) to register.

### **WEBINAR: EPA Brownfields Training, Research, and Technical Assistance Grant Application Guidelines - New Request for Proposals**

*March 20, 2:30 – 4:00 EST*

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced funding available to conduct research or provide technical assistance to communities facing brownfields cleanup and revitalization challenges. Focus areas include technical assistance for workforce development, environmental justice, and financing strategies, as well as research on the benefits of brownfields redevelopment in brownfields-impacted communities. More information about the grant is available [HERE](#). To learn more about the guidelines or ask questions, access the webinar [HERE](#). The webinar call-in number is (866) 299-3188, conference code: 2025662772#. For further assistance, please contact Joe Bruss at (202) 566-2772 or [bruss.joseph@epa.gov](mailto:bruss.joseph@epa.gov).

**WEBINAR: Managing Invasive Plants & Pests**

*March 20, 1:00-2:00 PM EST*

The many benefits we enjoy from urban trees, including improved air quality, safer streets, and stormwater management, all depend on urban tree health. Increased human mobility and climate change threaten the health of our urban forests, leaving many native trees susceptible to invasive species and pests. Pest awareness campaigns, identification tools, and volunteer invasive removal training are proving to have a measurable impact on canopy health in several cities across the county. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

**WEBINAR: AMBAG's Experience and Usefulness of the TMIP Peer Review Process**

*March 20, 2:00 PM EST*

Under the Travel Model Improvement Program (TMIP), Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) conducted a peer review for its current Regional Travel Demand Model and future Model Improvement Plan (MIP). During the peer review all Regional Transportation Planning Agencies, Transit Agencies, Caltrans Executive Directors and their technical staff were invited to participate. TMIP Peer Review provided very specific assistance for our future Model Improvement Plan. Attendance is limited to 100 connections and is first-come, first-served. Click [HERE](#) to log on. Participant Passcode: 8344566.

**WEBINAR: The California Drought & Related Climate Science Needs**

*March 24, 1:00-2:00 PM EST*

This webinar will cover the framework for water management in

California & relevant agency roles; present hydrologic & water supply conditions; state response actions to drought; and need for improved subseasonal and seasonal climate forecasts that could support water agency decision-making. Click [HERE](#) to register.

**WEBINAR: Solar Energy Solutions for Transportation: Improving Air Quality and Saving Fuel with Idle Reduction Technology**

*March 25, 2:00-3:00 PM EST*

Join us for NARC's first solar transportation webinar focused on improving air quality and fuel consumption through the use of solar technology in trucking. The average heavy-duty truck uses up to 2,500 gallons of fuel per year idling, driving up transportation costs, and producing thousands of pounds of greenhouse gas emissions. We will explore the regulatory and market forces behind the demand for idle reduction technologies, and review innovative solar powered idle reduction systems as a cleaner and more cost effective alternative. Click [HERE](#) to register.

**SURVEY: Request for Information - Connected Vehicle Pilot Deployment**

*Comments due April 12*

U.S. DOT published a Request for Information (RFI) on the Federal Register for the Connected Vehicle Pilot Deployment Program. The Department seeks comments and innovative ideas from the public sector, private sector, and academic communities concerning the connected vehicle pilot deployment program described in the RFI. Your input will be used to help refine the plans for one or more pilot deployments, which combines connected vehicle and mobile device technologies innovations to improve traveler mobility and system productivity while reducing environmental impacts and enhancing safety. Click [HERE](#) to submit a comment and to view additional information.

**WEBINAR: The Impact of Sustainability on Municipal Bond Ratings & Investment**

*April 25, 2:00-3:00 PM EST*

In today's tight fiscal climate, local governments need to know how their sustainability efforts can generate economic returns and attract outside investment. Join STAR Communities and a panel of experts for a discussion of the municipal bond rating market and how local efforts in sustainability and resilience factor into investment decisions. Click [HERE](#) to register.

**CONFERENCE: NARC's 48th Annual Conference and Exhibition**

*June 6-11, Louisville, KY*

The Annual Conference and Exhibition is the largest national event focused on promoting effective regional cooperation and solutions through interaction and education. Held annually in June, NARC's Annual Conference is the premier place to learn how to engage in effective regional collaboration. Additional information will be available in early 2014. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

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