



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS



**REGISTRATION IS OPEN!**

## NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

*Congress is on recess and will return Monday, April 24. Please see NARC blogs (in the Regions Lead section below) for connecting with lawmakers while they are home.*

### **After the Recess**

Congress is on recess for the next two weeks, and government funding under a continuing resolution (PL 114-254) runs out April 28. This means there will be just four legislative days to finalize fiscal year 2017 spending bills when Congress returns. As lawmakers left town last week, there were 115 outstanding issues on which House and Senate appropriators hadn't reached agreement. If lawmakers do not reach an agreement, the government will shut down on April 29. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell feels 'optimistic' that they will reach an agreement before the CR expires.

Meanwhile, the Senate will consider nominations to fill vacant spots in the administration, including: Rod Rosenstein for deputy attorney general, Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue for agriculture secretary, Robert Lighthizer for U.S. Trade Representative, and Scott Gottlieb to head the Food and Drug Administration.

House Republicans will continue to work on a measure to replace Obamacare, and will also begin hearings on their proposal to overhaul the corporate and individual tax codes.

### **Regulation Reversals**

Republicans only have a few days left to use the *Congressional Review Act* to rescind a series of rules issued in the final days of the Obama administration. The top remaining target for

Republicans is an Interior Department rule requiring companies to find and repair methane leaks in pipelines, processing equipment, and wells. Rolling back regulations on coal valuation, chemical safety, prepaid credit cards, and regional haze in Utah are the topics of other rules being reviewed.

### **CBO Cost Estimate of MPO Coordination Rule Repeal Bill**

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) just completed its cost estimate of **H.R. 1346**. CBO found that under the rule, MPOs will incur administration costs to comply. Under the repeal bill, MPOs would save about \$80 million per year over the 2018-2021 period. The repeal bill can now go to the House floor.

### **SCOTUS Update**

After 419 days of stories and opinions about the fate of the Supreme Court, Neil Gorsuch was confirmed as the 113th justice. Chief Justice John Roberts formally swore him in at 9:00 AM this morning. Gorsuch is likely to cast a deciding vote in a number of upcoming high-profile cases. It is likely that these high stakes are what led Republicans to trigger the “nuclear option” last week, killing the 60-vote filibuster threshold for Supreme Court nominees.

## **OTHER NEWS**

### **FrameWorks Communications Toolkit on Aging**

The way Americans currently think about aging creates obstacles to productive practices and policies. How can the field of aging help build a better understanding of aging, ageism, and what it will take to create a more age-integrated society? A new **evidence-based communications** toolkit for **reframing aging** is now available via the Frameworks Institute. This toolkit includes materials designed to build framing concepts and skills, with examples and guidelines to help advance the conversation about older people in the U.S.

## **REGION SPOTLIGHT**

### **Volkswagen Chattanooga Partners with Chattanooga 2.0 to Establish Workforce Development Program**

Volkswagen Group of America, Chattanooga Operations, and Chattanooga 2.0 have established a new workforce development program, the Volkswagen Neighborhood Talent Pipeline. This free **five week program** introduces qualified participants to the manufacturing process with the goal of preparing them for careers at Volkswagen Chattanooga. Upon completion participants will receive the Chattanooga Manufacturing Excellence Program industry certification from the Tennessee College of Applied Technology at Chattanooga State, an OSHA-10 certification, and will receive priority to available entry-level production jobs with Aerotek at Volkswagen Chattanooga with an average starting wage of \$14.50.

### **Preparing for the Silver Tsunami by Mentoring The Next Generation**

Over the past few months, Broward MPO hosted students from three local high schools for "Think Like a Planner" workshops. These innovative and engaging sessions help introduce students to the world of transportation planning and learn about potential careers in the industry. In these workshops, students examined the Cypress Creek Mobility Hub and broke into groups to brainstorm about making the area safer for all modes of transportation, especially for those who walk, bike, and take transit. The students then presented their ideas as a proposal to a three judge panel made up of transportation professionals and board members.

The idea for the "Think Like a Planner" workshops came out of Broward MPO's *Strategic Business Plan*. Students benefit by learning about career opportunities and the basics of transportation planning, and the MPO gets to teach the students about the work the agency does and increase awareness of the MPO's goals and mission.

### **SNHPC's "Becoming Age-Friendly" Program**

The Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) is collaborating with AARP, Tufts Health Plan Foundation, and the City of Manchester to engage communities in making the region more livable and age friendly for senior residents. The concept of an age-friendly community is in part about adopting features like: safe, walkable streets; additional housing and transportation options; access to key services; and opportunities for residents to participate in community activities. Current efforts include focus group research and an online survey for residents.

## 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.

### **Budget Facts and Talking Points to Share with Congressional Leaders**

by Neil Bomberg

These budget facts and talking points will help you talk to your senators and representatives during this congressional recess, which ends April 23.

### **Take Action! Tell Congress: Don't Cut Non-Defense Discretionary Programs**

by Neil Bomberg

Your senators and representatives are back home in their state and home districts until Sunday, April 23. This two week recess affords us a great opportunity to educate our federal elected officials on the impacts that the budget and appropriations recommendations from the White House will have on many of the programs important to regions.

### **The Problem with Block Grants**

by Neil Bomberg

We all like block grants. They give us the flexibility we say we need to effectively implement programs, and they come with few strings attached. All 50 states and thousands of localities need flexible funding to address local issues in ways that are not hamstrung by laws, rules, and regulations; and reflect state, region, and local needs. What we often don't get is the connection between block grants and funding cuts, and the connection is very strong.

## MEMBER REQUEST

### **NACo/NLC Request for Information: Water Affordability/ Integrated Planning Issues**

Please send responses to [anna@narc.org](mailto:anna@narc.org) by Wednesday, April 12 at Noon ET

NACo and NLC have been asked to testify before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's Water Resources and Environment subcommittee on EPA's *Integrated Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Planning Approach Framework* (Integrated Planning) and related water affordability issues.

We are seeking information from communities and regional councils who manage wastewater and/or stormwater infrastructure and related activities? Has your community faced increased costs to upgrade systems and/or meet federal *Clean Water Act* (CWA) mandates? Is your county facing CWA litigation or consent decrees as a result of violations at these facilities? As the list of CWA mandates for wastewater and stormwater management responsibilities grow, local governments struggle to keep the systems affordable for residents. Recognizing these challenges, EPA instituted its Integrated Planning policy to help local governments meet CWA requirements by prioritizing environmental priorities (i.e. where and how to invest environmental dollars in a sustainable manner while promoting regulatory flexibility).

NACo and NLC requests answers to the following questions. Please feel free to include other relevant information.

- Does your organization directly operate wastewater and/or stormwater infrastructure? If so, what type of infrastructure and activities does this include?
- How are wastewater and stormwater activities funded in your community? (i.e. user fees, stormwater tax, general fund, etc.). Are you concerned about water affordability, especially for low-income populations? Do you track how increased water rates impact these populations?
- Are you currently facing Clean Water Act litigation related to violations of wastewater and stormwater systems and/or completed consent decrees?
- Do you have a green infrastructure program? If so, could you briefly explain it?
- Is your county considering undertaking integrated planning, either through a negotiated process with EPA or informally to improve processes? If so, what is under your plan? (i.e. drinking water, wastewater, water quality standards, stormwater, etc.).

- Have you faced barriers/challenges/problems to complete an integrated plan? If so, what? What tools or improvements must be made or offered at the federal level to help your organization complete an integrated plan?

## **FEATURED JOBS**

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

### **Albany Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordinator**

Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments, Albany, OR

### **RFQ No. 17-02: Audit Services**

Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization, Fort Lauderdale, FL

### **Program Coordinator Multimodal and Livability**

Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, Oklahoma City, OK

### **Transportation Engineer IV**

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Washington, DC

### **Transportation Engineer II**

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Washington, DC

### **Capital Programs Manager**

Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, Cleveland, OH

### **Manager of Strategic and Long Range Planning**

Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, Cleveland, OH

## **FUNDING**

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

### **Grant Opportunity Available for Respite Care Programs**

Applications Due: April 13

Pioneered by the late Dana Reeve, the Quality of Life Grants Program recognizes projects and initiatives that foster community engagement, inclusion, and involvement, while promoting health and wellness for individuals living with paralysis and their families. This new pilot grant program is available to nonprofits that provide needed respite care services to prevent caregiver 'burn out.' This Respite Care Grant Program will award grants up to \$10,000 for nonprofits to provide episodic planned and unplanned respite care services to children or adults of any age living with paralysis. Paralysis causes include spinal cord injuries, chronic diseases, or birth conditions including (but not limited to) stroke, spina bifida, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Applications can focus on an expansion of an existing program or a new program or service.

## **EVENTS**

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

### **Live Stream: National Forum on Public Safety and Community Development**

April 18, 8:30 AM - 3:45 PM ET

A healthy and thriving community is built upon the footing of safe neighborhoods with fit and affordable housing; and that community development and public safety are intertwined and interdependent in fostering positive social and economic outcomes for citizens, residents, and visitors throughout the nation – with innovative and supportive public safety technologies and proven community development practices as core elements for success. Over the course of several months, experts from an array of interested and invested organizations have discussed the confluences between 21st century policing and community development. Out of these conversations came the idea to open up a facilitated dialogue regarding the role of technology in advancing solutions, and to better understand the issues and opportunities, while working together to create positive outcomes through the venue of a National Forum on Public Safety and

Community Development.

**NARC Webinar! Tapping into the Technical Assistance to Brownfield Communities Program**

April 20, 2:00 - 3:00 PM ET

Are you facing challenges related to brownfields? Would you be interested in learning how you can receive free assistance from brownfield experts? Through funds provided by EPA, the Technical Assistance to Brownfield (TAB) communities program **provides free assistance** to local, county, regional, state, and tribal governments, as well as not-for-profit entities. The TAB program provides a range of assistance, including: guidance on developing grant proposals, prioritizing brownfield sites, interpreting site characterization results, explaining clean-up technologies, navigating regulatory programs and requirements, layering funding and financing options, engaging the community stakeholders, and much more. Join NARC and the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) to learn how your community can access this benefit. The webinar will provide examples of how NJIT has assisted hundreds of communities, and will give you information on how you can tap into the TAB program.

**NIST-funded Center for Risk-Based Community Resilience Planning Webinar**

April 27, 9:00- 11:00 AM MT

A Resilient Community is one that is prepared for and can adapt to changing conditions and can withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions to its physical and social infrastructure. Modeling community resilience comprehensively requires a concerted effort by experts in engineering social sciences and information sciences to explain how physical, economic and social infrastructure systems within a real community interact and affect recover efforts. Join this webinar to learn more about the Center's Special Issue of Resilient and Sustainable Infrastructure, which features six papers on the virtual community Centerville. The modeling and analysis theory behind each paper will be explained followed by a demonstration of IN-CORE, the Interdependent Connected Modeling Environment for Community Resilience. Presentations on the first validation study, The Joplin Hindcast, and the Center's First Field Study, The Lumberton, NC Floods of 2017, will also be highlighted. Q&A to follow.

**Registration Open! 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.

**CONTACT US**

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