



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS



EXECUTIVE NOTE

Dear NARC Members,

NARC's 49th **Annual Conference and Exhibition** is fast approaching! We have a great lineup of speakers already confirmed, and a number of exciting announcements you'll see in the next several days.

With six weeks left until the conference, we have reached 66% of our minimum registration goal. It's a good start, but we are counting on you to help us surpass our minimum goal. To help you make the decision to register, we extended our early bird rate through Friday, May 1st! Maybe now you can bring those extra-supportive board members and that stellar staff person you would like to reward. Don't delay; that May 1st deadline is just around the corner!

Thanks,
Joanna

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is in session.

This Week in Washington

The Senate will consider the human trafficking bill, *Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015* (**S 178**). The Senate will also likely vote on whether to confirm Loretta Lynch for AG and whether to pass their bill on the Iran compromise. The House is in pro forma session today, but will continue appropriations and defense authorization work later this week. House Lawmakers will also consider bills on cybersecurity (**HR 1731**, **HR 1560**) and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (**HR 1195**). Leaders in the **House** and **Senate** appointed their budget conferees, who will meet today to begin the process of combining the two chambers' fiscal 2016 budget blueprints, both of which aim to eliminate the deficit in the next ten years by reducing spending without increasing taxes (**H Con Res 27**, **S Con Res 11**).

USDOT Continues Efforts to Prevent Derailments Involving Flammable Liquids

Last Friday, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) issued a series of safety advisories and other actions to supplement their efforts to prevent accidents involving flammable liquids. The series includes: a **Safety Advisory** to remind shippers and carriers of their responsibility to ensure that emergency response information is immediately available to first responders; a **Safety Advisory** to remind railroads operating high-hazard trains that certain information may be required by USDOT personnel during investigations following an accident; an **Emergency Order** to require that trains transporting large amounts of flammable liquid through certain highly populated areas adhere to a maximum authorized operating speed of 40 mph; a **Safety Advisory** recommending that railroads use highly qualified individuals to conduct brake and mechanical inspections; a **Notice and comment request** seeking to gather additional data concerning rail cars carrying petroleum crude oil; and a **letter** to the Honorable Edward Hamberger, president of the Association of American Railroads, asking continued commitment of its member railroads to address safety issues.

House Passes State and Local Sales Tax Deduction

On April 16th, the House passed the *State and Local Sales Tax Deduction Fairness Act of 2015* (**HR 622**) in a 272 – 152 vote. The legislation would permanently extend the tax deduction for state and local sales taxes. Current law allows taxpayers who itemize to claim a deduction for state and local sales taxes, in lieu of a deduction for State and local income taxes. The White House issued a **Statement of Administration Policy** opposing the bill, due to the lack of offsets. At this point, the Senate aims to develop a comprehensive tax reform package and does not plan to move HR 622 or any other tax extenders separately.

Senators Introduce Repatriation Bill for Transportation

Last Thursday, Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Rand Paul (R-KY) introduced the *Invest in Transportation Act of 2015*. The bill would allow companies to voluntarily return their foreign earnings to the U.S. at a tax rate of 6.5 percent. The rate is only for repatriations that exceed each company's average repatriations in recent years, and funds must have been earned in 2015 or earlier. Companies have up to five years to complete the transfer, but must bring home money starting in the first year. All tax revenues generated by the program would be transferred into the ailing Highway Trust Fund. In the House, Representative John Delaney introduced the *Infrastructure 2.0 Act* (HR 625), which would subject U.S. multinational corporations to a one-time 8.75 percent tax on existing overseas profits. H.R. 625 is projected to generate \$175 billion, of which \$50 billion would capitalize the American Infrastructure Fund, while \$120 billion would be transferred into the Highway Trust Fund.

OTHER NEWS

NLC Report on Fiscal Structures

The National League of Cities (NLC) released the *Cities and State Fiscal Structures* report, providing a comparative assessment of the fiscal systems for cities across the 50 states. The **analysis** reviews local taxing authority, revenue reliance and capacity, state aid, and tax and expenditure limits, and finds that no state has expanded the fiscal authority of its cities since the start of the recession. The report was produced in partnership with NLC's state league members and was last issued in 2008.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

ASPA honors MARC Executive Director

Last month, the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) presented David Warm, Mid-America Regional Council's (MARC) executive director, with its 2015 National Public Service Award. ASPA and the National Academy of Public Administration established this national award in 1983 to honor leaders at every level of government who have made outstanding and lasting contributions to the field of public service and exhibited the highest standards of excellence, dedication, and accomplishment. Under 25 years of David's leadership, MARC has taken on a broad range of regional initiatives and functions, and has become widely regarded for innovation and effectiveness in areas that include transportation, environmental protection, emergency management, community development, aging services, early education, and local government cooperative services.

GRADD Secures Funding for Union County Housing

Union County is set to receive more than \$800,000 in state and federal grant money to build new homes for families with low to moderate incomes. Along with the Green River Area Development District (GRADD), Union County government officials have been working on securing Community Development Block Grant funds for more than five years. The money will go toward the demolition of ten houses that are among the 'worst of the worst' in terms of their structural condition. As part of the program, new houses will be built on the same lot. The families benefiting from this grant money are categorized as very low income. Many of them are disabled or elderly. Union County pitched in \$30,000 as part of the program. The county was able to parlay that money into more than \$400,000 in federal grant money and \$370,000 in Kentucky Housing Corporation funds.

ARC's Livable Centers Initiative Awards \$800,000 to Eight Communities

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) awarded \$800,000 in its latest round of Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) grants to eight metro Atlanta communities. The LCI grants will help these communities create new plans for quality growth and help develop innovative policies that support more vibrant, connected communities. Once their studies and plans are complete, these communities will be eligible for additional LCI funding for transportation projects needed to implement their plans. Since its inception in 1999, LCI has assisted 112 communities with more than \$194 million in planning and implementation grants to devise strategies that reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality by better connecting homes, shops, and offices.

FEATURED JOBS

Supervisory Emergency Management Specialist (Mitigation)

Federal Emergency Management Agency, Washington, DC

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

Using EPA's Greenhouse Gas Inventory Data Explorer

April 22, 1:00 PM ET

On April 15, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released the **20th Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks**, which provides a comprehensive look at the total greenhouse gas emissions for all man-made sources in the U.S. EPA is improving access to this data with the Explorer Tool, which highlights key data to create customized graphs, examine trends, and easily download. This webinar will provide an overview on the tool.

Key Findings from the Federal Reserve's 2014 Joint Small Business Credit Survey

April 30, 3:00 - 4:00 PM ET

Small businesses employ half of the nation's private sector workers and now create two-thirds of net new jobs. The pace of recovery from the Great Recession for small firms has been slower and more uneven than larger companies in the private sector. An important part of measuring the small business recovery is tracking firms' demand for and ability to access capital. The **Joint Small Business Credit Survey**, a collaboration between the Federal Reserve Banks of New York, Atlanta, Cleveland, and Philadelphia, attempts to capture changing aspects affecting small business credit demand and access to capital. Members of the Joint Small Business Credit Survey team will discuss survey results and present findings that provide insight into the dynamics behind aggregate lending trends. They will also shed light on noteworthy segments of the small business credit market, including small dollar borrowers. Preregistration required.

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