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## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

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# eRegions

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### **EXECUTIVE BRIEF**

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## **EXECUTIVE**BRIEF

Colleagues,

Last week, I visited the Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (**MPOAC**), where Erich, Lindsey, and I discussed the prospects of transportation reauthorization, and how NARC is working in Washington to serve our members through advocacy, research, and programmatic efforts. I thank MPOAC, as well as each of you, for your continued support of our organization. NARC's strength in Washington is because of the active participation of all of our members. We are your eyes and ears in DC – so please continue to invite us to your

**Anna Rosenbaum**

Communications Associate

**Erich W. Zimmermann**

Director of Transportation  
Programs

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meetings, and please let us know what you need!

This week, we continue to support the efforts of regional councils throughout the country by connecting with officials from the Administration on NARC's priorities. Shannon, Nathan, and I will meet with senior staff from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the U.S. Department of Defense to discuss the *Older Americans Act*, U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), and homeland security issues, respectively.

And of course, we continue to plan the 48th Annual Conference, June 8-11, in Louisville. I hope to see you there, meet you in person, hear about your unique regions, and discuss how NARC can continue to support your efforts.

Sincerely,  
Joanna Turner  
Office: 202.986.1032 x216  
Direct Dial: 202.618.5689

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## PROGRAMUPDATE

**Free Solar Energy TA at NARC's Annual Conference:** Are you trying to incorporate solar into your comprehensive plan? Do you want to streamline solar permitting in your region? Do you want to know about your region's solar potential? Solar experts from the *SunShot Solar Outreach Partnership* will be on hand during NARC's 48th Annual Conference and Exhibition to provide free technical assistance (TA) consultations on planning for solar energy use. If you're interested, register for your free on-site TA consultation by emailing Mia Colson, [mia@narc.org](mailto:mia@narc.org).

**Reforming America's Job Training Programs:** Earlier this month, President Obama and Vice President Biden announced specific measures that will be taken by the Administration to help individuals get trained with the skills that businesses need now. Many businesses across the country are looking to hire, but those looking for jobs often do not have the skills that these positions require. To remedy the situation, the Administration announced new federal investments including a "nearly \$500 million competition in which the federal government will award grants to community colleges and employers

partnering together to develop job-driven training programs,” and a “\$100 million competition for *American Apprenticeship Grants*, which will expand the types of apprenticeships that help put young people and experienced workers on an upward career trajectory”. Click [HERE](#) for additional information.

**EDA Re-Launches EDA.GOV Website:** According to an EDA press release last week, the EDA relaunched its redesigned website with changes that include more content and easier navigation. These changes are meant to improve overall functionality. Additional resources on the site include more case studies and a state-by-state resources directory. It also includes quick links to the pages that were identified as the most in demand, and provides EDA applicants with more information about the application process. The website will also connect visitors to EDA’s social media outlets. The re-launched website can be accessed [HERE](#).

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## **POLICYUPDATE**

*Congress is in session.*

**Appropriations Update:** Congress continues to work on the fiscal year (FY) 2015 spending bills, with a great deal of activity centered in the U.S. House of Representatives. This week, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science (CJS) is scheduled to take up the FY15 CJS Appropriations bill. This bill funds all U.S. Department of Commerce programs, including the EDA. Upon subcommittee passage, the bill will next be considered by the full House Appropriations Committee and if it is approved, can move to the House floor. More information on the bill will provided as it is released by the Committee. House Appropriations Committee Chairman Rogers (R-KY) has said he hopes the Committee can approve all 12 bills before the July Fourth recess. The Senate Appropriations Committee is expected to begin markup of its funding bills in late May. Senate Majority Leader Reid (D-NV) has allocated four weeks of floor time in June and July for appropriations bills.

**Senator Carper Proposes Federal Gas Tax Increase:** In an effort to help find a solution to the pending insolvency of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) has proposed raising the federal gas tax. Carper is arguing that increasing the gas tax should be just one of many funding sources to ensure HTF solvency. His proposal

would raise the current 18.4 cent gas tax three or four cents a year for up to four years. After that, increases would be tied to inflation. The gas tax has not been raised since 1993, and the idea still faces significant resistance in Congress. In recent congressional hearings, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee members have said that a federal gas tax increase is a nonstarter, and unlikely to be part of any reauthorization bill.

#### **President Planning to Release Transportation Reauthorization**

**Proposal:** U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Anthony Foxx said last week that President Obama will soon be presenting Congress with a transportation reauthorization proposal. The Administration did not publicly release a specific bill in the transportation reauthorization debate of 2012. It was previously announced that the President's plan would call for a four-year, \$302 billion bill, and would use \$150 billion from corporate tax reform to pay for it.

**U.S. DOT Bus Tour State Fact Sheets:** U.S. DOT Secretary Foxx recently concluded a week-long, eight-state bus tour called "Invest in America: Commit to the Future," to promote the Administration's four-year, \$302 billion transportation funding plan. The eight states include: OH, KY, TN, GA, MS, AL, LA, and TX. Click [HERE](#) for the fact sheets.

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## **REGIONS360**

**EPA to Award \$4.2 Million to Six U.S. Ports:** In an effort to curb port emissions, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be awarding \$4.2 million to six U.S. ports. That money is going to be used to retrofit or replace diesel engines. The ports that will be receiving the money include: the Port of Seattle, WA; the Port of Hueneme, CA.; the Port of Tacoma, WA; the Maryland Port Administration; the Virginia Port Authority; and the Port of Los Angeles, CA. The EPA is hoping that this program will incentivize other ports to take on measures that will cut emissions and reduce pollution to help protect the environment. Millions of Americans work and live around these ports, and these measures are aimed at providing a cleaner and safer environment to protect them.

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## **GRANT OPPORTUNITIES**

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

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## UPCOMINGEVENTS

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

### **WEBINAR: Three Promise Zone Initiative Stakeholder Sessions**

*Deadline: Register by COB Friday, April 25*

#### **Promise Zone Initiative Stakeholder Session (TRIBAL)**

*April 29, 2:00 PM ET - Click [HERE](#) to register.*

#### **Promise Zone Initiative Stakeholder Session (URBAN)**

*April 29, 3:30 PM ET - Click [HERE](#) to register.*

#### **Promise Zone Initiative Stakeholder Session (RURAL)**

*April 30, 3:00 PM ET - Click [HERE](#) to register.*

The *Promise Zone Initiative* is part of President Obama's plan to partner with and invest in communities to create jobs; increase economic security; expand educational opportunities; increase access to quality, affordable housing; and improve public safety. This interactive session will give you the information you need to know about the *Promise Zone Initiative*. Topics will include: the public comment period for the second round of applications, eligibility criteria, best practices from the first round, timeline for the second round, and details on the President's *Promise Zone Budget Proposal*.

### **WEBINAR: A Question of Equity: Net Metering and the Costs and Benefits of Rooftop Solar**

*May 1, 3:00- 4:00 PM ET*

The popularity of small scale, on-site power sources known as distributed generation has surged, and is transforming the way that electricity is generated, transmitted, and distributed. This webinar features electric power and solar industry perspectives on the deployment of rooftop and utility-scale solar, including how to capture the value of distributed solar, while recognizing the value of the electrical grid. Click [HERE](#) to register.

### **WEBINAR: More Bang for the Buck: Integrating Green Infrastructure into Existing Public Works Projects**

*May 6, 1:00-2:30 PM ET*

Integrating green infrastructure into "business as usual" in city, state, and regional public works projects is one of the most efficient ways to achieve wide scale and cost effective implementation. This webcast

will share lessons learned from both municipal and county officials experienced in the art of coordinating green infrastructure improvements with scheduled street improvement, parks improvements, and projects on public sites. Click [HERE](#) to register.

**WEBINAR: The Renaissance in U.S. Manufacturing**

*May 6, 2:00 PM ET*

*May 8, 2:00 PM ET*

After decades of decline, U.S. manufacturing is showing signs of a comeback. Driven by the dynamics of domestic and international costs, locating production in the U.S. is regaining its competitive edge. Join Regional Economic Model, Inc. (REMI) for a session examining the past, present, and potential future of manufacturing in the U.S. They will begin by providing context for the declines of the past and reasons for the gains of the future. Using data and examples from around the country, they will discuss how regions will be differentially affected. They will also discuss the economic effects attracting and retaining manufacturing to help communities understand the costs and benefits. Q&A will follow the presentation. Click [HERE](#) to register for either session.

**INFORMATION REQUEST: Truck Freight Bottlenecks**

*Deadline: May 9*

The Texas A&M Transportation Institute, in association with Cambridge Systematics and the University of Washington, is performing a literature review for *National Cooperative Highway Research Program's* Project 8-98 "Guide for Identifying, Classifying, Evaluating, and Mitigating Truck Freight Bottlenecks." Are you aware of documented practices or studies for identifying, classifying, evaluating, and mitigating truck freight bottlenecks? This documentation could be part of freight plans, congestion studies, congestion management process (CMP) activities, goods movement studies, etc. If you have any documented practices to submit (U.S. or international), please send them to Bill Eisele at [bill-eisele@tamu.edu](mailto:bill-eisele@tamu.edu).

**WEBINAR: Transit Safety and Mobility Applications in a Connected Vehicle World**

*May 14, 1:00 PM ET*

This U.S. DOT's Talking Technology and Transportation (T3) session will provide an overview of two projects (*Pedestrian in Signalized Crosswalk Warning* and *Vehicle Turning Right in Front of Bus Warning*) and descriptions of the applications (Forward Collision Warning,

Emergency Electronic Brake Lights, and Curve Speed Warning), results, lessons learned, and objectives of the independent evaluations. Click [HERE](#) for additional information and to register.

**WORKSHOP: Context Sensitive Solutions National Dialog 2 Boise, Idaho**

*June 12, 11:00 AM ET*

The workshop will include an up-to-date overview of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) plus presentations on exemplary CSS projects, plans, and programs from the surrounding region. The case studies are drawn from submissions from across the country, and were selected as examples of effective application of CSS principles. You can participate either on-site or through the webcast. Click [HERE](#) for additional information and 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. Click [HERE](#) to access the draft agenda, registration and hotel information. See you in Louisville!

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