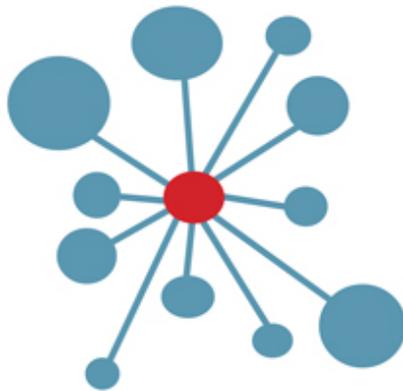




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NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

The Senate resumes session today, and the House will return tomorrow.

Overview

The Senate returns today, and the House tomorrow, to three potentially tumultuous weeks, as both chambers attempt to address numerous issues before they leave for the August recess. With full calendars and only 15 legislative days until the start of the recess, the expectation is that the Senate will not be able to draft a health care compromise that all Republicans can sign onto, and the House will not be able to move forward with tax reform or the national debt.

The Senate is facing the difficult problem of reconciling differences between those who favor complete Obamacare repeal and those who want to continue funding Medicaid expansion. The House is facing deep divisions among its members around increasing the federal debt ceiling, tax reform, and appropriations. While some House Republicans favor using the debt ceiling bill to make deep cuts to the federal budget, many others favor passing a clean version of the bill that would ensure that the federal government has access to the funds it needs to pay its bills. A bill that would raise the debt ceiling and cut funding would likely face a very difficult time in the Senate – and could result in a government shutdown if no agreement to raise the debt ceiling can be found.

Moreover, with only about 30 legislative days left until current appropriations expire, Congress needs to act to avoid a funding crisis. Word on the street is that leadership has already decided to adopt a continuing resolution (CR) through December, if no agreement can be reached soon. The aim would then be to finalize and adopt an omnibus bill before Christmas.

This week the Senate will stay focused on health care while the House Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations Subcommittee will attempt to mark up an appropriations bill that can be considered by the full Appropriations Committee. Unfortunately, the text of the THUD appropriations bill will not be released until the subcommittee meets at 7 PM on Tuesday, so we don't know what cuts may be proposed. On Thursday, the Senate THUD Subcommittee will meet, but they will not have a bill to mark-up for several weeks. Also on

Thursday, the House Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Subcommittee will mark-up their appropriations bill.

Other items to watch this week in Congress:

- Appropriations Markups:
 - The House Appropriations Transportation-HUD Subcommittee plans a markup tomorrow of its spending bill.
 - The full House Appropriations Committee plans to mark up the Agriculture-FDA and Energy and Water Development spending measures on Wednesday.
 - The House Appropriations Interior-Environment Subcommittee and the House Appropriations Homeland Security Subcommittee plan markups on Wednesday.
 - The Senate Appropriations Interior-Environment Subcommittee plans a hearing Wednesday on the budget request for the Indian Health Service. The service's acting director, Rear Admiral Michael Weahkee, is scheduled to testify.
 - Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao is scheduled to testify Thursday at a Senate Appropriations T-HUD Subcommittee hearing.
- Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Markups on Wednesday:
 - **S. 822**, to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, better known as the law that established the Superfund program
 - **S. 1447**, to reauthorize the diesel emissions reduction program
- House Ways and Means Committee Hearing:
 - Social Security Subcommittee will be meeting Friday to discuss the status of Social Security Trust funds

House Energy and Commerce Committee Passes Brownfields Legislation

After the passage of the *Brownfields Enhancement, Economic Redevelopment, and Reauthorization Act of 2017 (HR 3017)*, the National League of Cities (NLC), U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM), and NARC all publicly expressed their approval of the action. NLC **tweeted**, “thank you @HouseCommerce for bipartisan effort to pass a #brownfields reauthorization that supports local cleanup and redevelopment.” **USCM applauded passage**, “we commend Congress for listening to the Conference and making improvements to the bill including: increasing cleanup grant amounts, creating a multipurpose grant, and maintaining funding levels.” And NARC echoed a similar sentiment, “we are happy to report [the passage of HR 3017] with amendments favorable to our requests... We look forward to seeing this legislation reach the House floor for a vote so that local governments will be a little closer to tackling the 400,000-600,000 remaining sites in the U.S.” Check out **NARC’s congressional statement** and **joint letter with NLC, NACo, and USCM** for our stance on the brownfields program.

Methane Rule Delay Gets Public Spotlight Today at EPA

Today, a public hearing was held for feedback on a **proposal** submitted by EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt regarding a two year delay on key methane leak detection and repair requirements for new oil and gas wells. Many representatives from green groups such as the Sierra Club and the Moms Clean Air Force gave public comments stressing the proposal’s potentially negative effect on U.S. air quality. Oil and gas representatives highlighted the methane emission reductions American energy companies have already made and how the proposal will allow EPA to take the time to properly reconsider the **Oil and Natural Gas Sector: Emission Standards for New, Reconstructed, and Modified Sources** regulation.

OTHER NEWS

CDC Report: Opioid Prescriptions Are Declining, But Major Variations Exist

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offered a glimmer of hope for the national opioid epidemic last Thursday, releasing a **report** that found opioid prescribing is on the decline. The U.S. peaked at 782 morphine milligram equivalents (MME) per capita in 2010 and declined to 640 MME per capita in 2015. However, the 2015 rate of opioid prescribing is still three times the rate it was in 1999 – that’s enough medication to keep every American medicated around the clock for three weeks.

The report found that some counties had an average per capita opioid prescription amount approximately six times higher than counties in the lowest quartiles, affecting states more heavily

in the south and southwest regions. Counties with higher numbers of opioid prescriptions tend to be whiter; unemployed; uninsured or enrolled in Medicare; have more residents with diabetes, arthritis, or disabilities; and have access to more physicians.

The report recommended that local governments use the findings, combined with CDC's ***Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain*** and **Prescription Drug Monitor Program** data, to identify areas with the largest opioid abuse risks and target interventions with prescribers. With so many recent **local government efforts**, we are likely to see opioid abuse continue to go down in 2016 and 2017.

Why Are Some Small Towns Growing While Others Are Shrinking?

While large metro areas continue to spread out in every direction, many small outlying towns are swallowed up in their wake. So why are towns of 10,000 residents or less growing in several Western and Southern states? *Stateline* reports a number of factors: many small towns attribute the swell to the economic growth in nearby metro areas; some young families choose to move to smaller towns to raise families in quieter suburbs while commuting to the city for work; and urban gentrification has pushed many immigrants and poor families out of the city to seek more affordable housing options. Additionally, many scenic towns that recovered from the recession have seen positive impacts in their housing market.

REGION SPOTLIGHT

MVRPC Introduces the Equity Regional Profile

The Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC) released the *Miami Valley Equity Regional Profile* in partnership with the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. The profile provides historical context on the issue of equity and presents an analysis of equity at the regional and sub-regional level. The study revealed that the MVRPC region faces both racial and economic segregation and that inequity has increased over the years. MVRPC will use the profile to increase awareness and guide future transportation and development projects to help expand opportunity in their region.

Let's Not Get Run Over by Major Transportation Trends

In this blog post, Lyle Wray, executive director of the Capitol Region Council of Governments in Hartford, CT, explores community impacts of ride-sharing and solutions for working with disruptive technologies such as shared rides, electric vehicles, autonomous vehicles, and connected vehicles. Wray suggests developing a framework for measuring impacts, forecasting, and tracking results of pilots aimed at helping communities incorporate these new transportation technologies.

REGIONS LEAD

Visit www.regionslead.org to read up on the latest NARC blogs. We invite members to submit blogs to the site too.

The Federal Budget and Appropriations Process: in Limbo

by Neil Bomberg

Neither the House nor Senate has passed a budget plan that outlines spending for fiscal year 2018 because the majorities in both chambers cannot agree on how much to spend on defense and non-defense programs. Moderate Republicans are concerned that a budget plan similar to the ones proposed by the president or the House speaker would make it very difficult for the House or Senate to maintain spending at current levels, let alone increase spending where consensus to increase spending existed.

Where Do Job Programs Stand in the Face of Potential Labor Department Cuts?

by Neil Bomberg

On Tuesday, June 27, 2017, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education held a hearing at which the current Labor secretary, R. Alexander Acosta, testified on the president's budget and other matters. While the conversation often strayed in various directions, including worker safety, foreign workers, public safety, and worker layoffs, it ultimately returned to jobs, and the clear belief by most members of the subcommittee that putting Americans to work requires a robust and effective workforce development system.

FEATURED JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Planner I

Palm Beach Metropolitan Planning Organization, West Palm Beach, FL

Director of Transportation

Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, Portage, IN

Regional Planner/Policy Analyst

Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, Portage, IN

Head of Finance and Administration

Mid-America Regional Council, Kansas City, MO

FUNDING

View full list of grants!

EDA Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs

Applications Accepted on Rolling Basis

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) is seeking applications from rural and urban areas that support construction, non-construction, technical assistance, and revolving loan fund projects under **EDA's Public Works** and **EAA programs**. These projects should be designed to leverage existing regional assets and support the implementation of economic development strategies that advance new ideas and creative approaches to advance economic prosperity in distressed communities. A portion of the funding will be designated specifically to assist communities and regions that have felt an impact from the decline of the coal industry. See U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross' **recent announcement** making \$30 million available to assist coal communities in their economic diversification efforts through the 2017 Assistance to Coal Communities (ACC 2017) initiative.

HUD Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants

Applications Due: August 28

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is offering \$5 million for Planning Grants, including Planning and Action Grants. Planning Grants are two-year programs that assist communities with severely distressed public or HUD-assisted housing in developing a successful plan to transform the neighborhood and build the support necessary to implement it. Planning and Action Grants are 3.5-year grants where applicants spend the first two years planning and the remaining time implementing action activities that use momentum to turn planning to successful implementation.

EVENTS

View full list of events!

EESI 20th Annual Congressional Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency EXPO + Forum

July 11, 9:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Livecast: www.eesi.org/livecast

The Expo will bring together 40 businesses, trade associations, and government agencies to showcase renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. In every state across the country, these technologies are having a significant impact in business development and job creation in the manufacturing, transmission, power, transportation, and building sectors. The Expo is being held in cooperation with the bipartisan House Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Caucus and the Senate Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency Caucus.

REMI Webinar: ECFRPC Presents the Economic Effects of Tourism in Orlando

July 12, 2:00-3:00PM ET

Home to the nation's second largest convention center and six of the world's most visited theme parks, the International Drive Resort Area (I-Drive) in Orlando, Florida is one of the country's busiest tourist destinations. The East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC) used

the REMI model to calculate I-Drive's economic value to Orange County and the Metro Orlando region and quantify the economic impact of future projects. For this webinar, ECFRPC Economic Development Manager Nieves-Ruiz will discuss the findings and methods for evaluating direct and indirect effects of tourism.

Government Benchmarks 2017: How Does Your Digital Strategy Stack Up?

July 26, 2:00-3:00PM ET

Audience engagement is essential for government organizations to accomplish their missions. But how do you know if your audience is engaged and your campaigns are working? Are you measuring, monitoring and improving on the metrics that matter? Granicus, a cloud solutions provider for governments, analyzed over 1.4 million emails sent from 3,000 public sector organizations to develop the 2017 public sector benchmark metrics. This webinar will offer tips on how to assess the performance of your digital campaign, where you stand in comparison to other public sector organizations on key benchmarks, and best practices for improving key outcomes.

Southern Transportation and Air Quality Summit

August 29-30 - Arlington, TX

The Southern Transportation and Air Quality Summit 2017 is an event sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration and EPA Regions 4 and 6. The Summit brings together stakeholders from both the transportation and air quality communities to discuss current and coming regulatory environment, technologies and current practices vital to the field of air quality and transportation. The summit is geared to practitioners involved with public agencies at all levels. The registration fee is \$75.00 per person. This year, STAQS is being hosted by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) and Texas Transportation Institute.

CONTACT US

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