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**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS**

VOL. XII, No. 28, July 23, 2012

**eRegions**

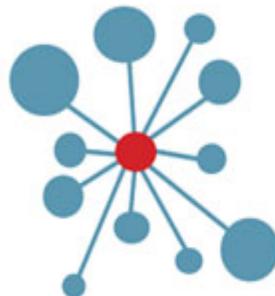
## **EXECUTIVE**BRIEF

Colleagues,

This year we have many new directors signed up for the Executive Directors' Conference (EDC) who've been on the job for two years or less. The faces of our regions are changing and all our Directors should attend the EDC, welcome these new directors, and reengage the peer discussions and sharing we've had for many years. There is a wealth of collective history and knowledge that needs to be passed on.

We've added a new Sequestration section to our web site. You can access our fantastic presentation on what

**Explore Sequestration's Effects:** Significant cuts to federal programs critical to local governments and regions are set to begin on January 2, 2013 unless Congressional action is taken. Click [HERE](#) to access a NARC-prepared presentation that details the basics of sequestration and some of the anticipated effects on the economy and jobs. Feel free to distribute this PowerPoint and use it with Board members, staff, stakeholders and citizens. Contact Shannon Baxevanis at [Shannon@narc.org](mailto:Shannon@narc.org) with any questions or for more information. NARC will continue to provide timely and user-friendly materials to guide members through this complex process.



**converge ■ learn ■ share**

**executive directors' conference  
september 23-25, 2012  
boise, id**

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Sequestration is and its effect on federal spending by clicking [HERE](#).

Starting at the 2010 National Conference of Regions, we've been giving updates on Sequestration, the budget and deficit reduction. This is one more piece you can use to help your board and constituents understand this complex process.

I want to close by acknowledging the tragedy in Colorado over the weekend and all the tragedies this year. Our thoughts, as Board, staff and members, are with the families, friends and the community of Aurora, as well as those around the country who've lost lives, homes and possessions.

Sincerely,  
Fred

## **NARC**LEADERSHIP

**President David F. Shafer,**  
Clerk/Treasurer,  
Town of Munster, IN  
**Chair Sean Dey,**  
Executive Directors  
Council  
Executive Director, West  
Michigan Shoreline  
Regional Development  
Commission

# PROGRAM UPDATE

**First Lady Launches Lets Move! Cities, Towns and Counties:** In Philadelphia last week, First Lady Michelle Obama called upon local elected officials to provide leadership and work for changes that make their communities healthier. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

**White House and USDA Host Food Systems Virtual Meeting:** Last week, the White House and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) hosted a meeting to discuss efforts to strengthen local and regional food systems across the United States, which included the launch of the 2.0 version of USDA's [Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Compass](#), an innovative digital guide and map that highlights USDA-supported local food projects around the country. Click [HERE](#) to access the map.

**USDA Proposes New Rule to Increase Rural Energy Efficiency:** The USDA has announced a proposal authorizing the Rural Utilities Service to implement an energy efficiency loan program in line with USDA's Rural Economic Development Energy Efficiency initiative. Click [HERE](#) to visit NARC's website for additional information.

**Federal Resource Guide for Sustainable Rural Communities Released:** The Partnership for Sustainable Communities, in collaboration with the USDA, published a guide outlining the federal programs available to support rural economic and community development. Click [HERE](#) to visit NARC's website for additional information and a link to the guide.

**Department of Energy Awards Funding for Nuclear Reactor Technology:** The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has awarded \$11 million in funding to improve the technology, safety, performance, and cost-competitiveness in nuclear reactor technology. A total of thirteen projects will use the funding to research improvements that can be made in nuclear reactor structures and efficiency. The Department of Energy also separately provided funding for three university-led projects that will train students in nuclear engineering and allow students to collaborate with U.S. DOE labs. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

**SunShot Summit Recap:** The SunShot Grand Challenge Summit and Technology Forum, held last month in Denver, provided a forum for the

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discussion of the different energy challenges and their impacts on the solar industry. The summit, organized by the Department of Energy, was attended by members of the government, industry, and academia, and included an appearance by Secretary of Energy Dr. Steven Chu. The summit also featured a preview of the Solar Roadmap, a secure webpage that will guide members through the process of solar planning. For more information on the Solar Roadmap, click [HERE](#). For additional information and presentations from the summit, click [HERE](#).

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## POLICYUPDATE

*The House and Senate are in session.*

### **House Subcommittee to Hold Hearing on EPA Integrated Planning**

**Framework:** The House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and the Environment will hold a hearing on July 25, "Integrated Planning and Permitting, Part 2: An Opportunity for EPA to Provide Communities with Flexibility to Make Smart Investments in Water Quality." On June 12, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released the [final framework](#) on Integrating Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Planning. The purpose of the hearing will be to ascertain if the flexibility potentially afforded by the framework will be available to all municipalities who chose to submit an integrated plan and to determine if implementation of the framework will alleviate affordability concerns.

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## PARTNERUPDATE

"Can Local Democracy Save National Democracy?" Politics is the way we live together. We cannot do it perfectly, but we are not fated to do it as badly as we do now. Click [HERE](#) to access this latest issue of the National League of Cities' *Emerging Issues* column by Bill Barnes.

**Submit Ideas for the National Brownfields Conference:** Among the topics that will be included in the program are community engagement, environmental cleanup, sustainable solutions, environmental justice and green technology. Session Ideas can be submitted by the public [HERE](#) until August 3, 2012. Brownfields 2013 will take place on May 15-17, 2013 in Atlanta, GA. For more information please contact Grant Sparks at [gsparks@icma.org](mailto:gsparks@icma.org) or 202-962-3657.

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## REGIONS360

### **Member Highlight - AACOG Launches Caregiver Empowerment**

**Webpage:** The Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) launched a new webpage that is dedicated to assisting and providing resources for caregivers nationwide. The site includes information on the caregiving process and what one should expect as a caregiver. Click [HERE](#) to view the webpage.

**Member Highlight - CMAP:** The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) recently released new data and GIS tools to help with identifying portions of their region's green infrastructure network. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about CMAP's regional green infrastructure data.

**Member Highlight - MORPC:** As part of the U.S. EPA's State and Local Climate Energy Program, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is working with the City of Little Rock, Arkansas to replicate their Home Energy Affordability Loan (HEAL) program to reduce GHG emissions. For more information about their partnership and the City of Little Rock's GHG reduction efforts, click [HERE](#).

**Request For Proposals (RFP) from Broward MPO:** Deadline 5:00 PM, August 9, 2012; The Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (BMPO), through partnership with 2-1-1 Broward is requesting proposals from qualified firms to expand the 2-1-1 Broward Telephone and Website Software System. Utilizing a grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and a multi-agency partnership, this project will provide residents of Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach Counties with centralized access to transportation information. A tri-county One Call One Click transportation service will be created utilizing the 2-1-1 phone number and existing call center infrastructures. Deadline for submitting a proposal is 5:00 PM, August 9, 2012. To download the Request For Proposals go to the "Doing Business" page of the Broward MPO website: <http://www.browardmpo.org/doing-business>.

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## GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

**IRS Releases Public Guidance on Qualified Energy Conservation**

### **Bonds**

On June 25, 2012, the U.S. Internal Revenue Service released guidance regarding certain qualified conservation purposes eligible for financing with qualified energy conservation bonds (QECBs). The guidance is expected to make it easier for state and local governments to access more than \$2 billion in existing low-cost financing to fund energy efficiency and renewable energy projects through QECBs. QECBs provide state and local governments with access to low-cost financing to fund energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. For more information, view the [IRS notice](#).

### **Funders Network Local Sustainability Matching Fund**

The Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities and the Urban Sustainability Directors Network have joined together to launch a Local Sustainability Matching Fund. The fund will provide matching investments from national foundations on a competitive basis to build partnerships between sustainability directors and local place-based foundations to advance discrete sustainability initiatives that demonstrate broad-based community support and engagement. The Local Sustainability Matching Fund will begin accepting applications for its next round of funding in late summer 2012. For more information, visit the [Funders' Network](#).

### **USDA High Energy Cost Grants**

*Application Due: July 30, 2012*

Eligible Entities: County governments, city or township governments, federally recognized Native American tribal governments, independent school districts, public and state controlled institutions of higher education, nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, private institutions of higher education, for profit organizations other than small businesses. The Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the USDA, announces the availability of competitive grants to assist communities with extremely high energy costs. The grant funds may be used to acquire, construct, extend, upgrade, or otherwise improve energy generation, transmission, or distribution facilities serving communities in which the average residential expenditure for home energy exceeds 275 percent of the national average. For more information, visit the [grant opportunity synopsis](#).

### **EDA Strong Cities, Strong Communities Visioning Challenge - \$6 million**

*Application Due: July 31, 2012*

Eligible Entities: Cities with a population of at least 100,000 persons residing within their official municipal boundaries as of the 2010 Census. Cities must also meet the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration's (EDA) economic distress criteria. The Strong Cities, Strong Communities Visioning Challenge is designed to assist cities experiencing chronic economic distress with leveraging innovative ideas and approaches from diverse perspectives to create and adopt actionable economic development proposals and plans. Each city selected for an award under this grant will hold challenge competitions that will incentivize teams of professionals from various fields related to economic development, such as transportation planning and engineering, to submit economic development proposals that outline how cutting-edge concepts and ideas could be applied to address the persistent economic development challenges faced by the city. For more information, visit the [EDA Challenge](#) page.

**ACL: Improving Coordinated Transportation Systems for People with Disabilities and Older Adults**

*Application Deadline: August 14, 2012*

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the FTA have announced a funding opportunity for a five-year project that will identify successful methods and models that facilitate the needs of people with disabilities and the elderly in transportation systems nationwide and empower them to participate in the system's designs to better fit their needs. Any national organization with a demonstrated ability to improve coordinated transportation systems for people with disabilities and the elderly is encouraged to apply. Applicants will be required to submit a Project Narrative, Work Plan, and Budget Narrative. Only one award will be available through this grant. Click [HERE](#) for the grant announcement or click [HERE](#) for more information.

**AIA Sustainable Design Assessment Teams - Technical Assistance**

*Application Due: Two review cycles; upcoming due date is October 12, 2012*

Eligible Entities: Committees with a cross-section of residents, local government agencies, businesses, institutions, and community groups. A letter of support from the local AIA chapter is required. The Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) program focuses on the importance of developing sustainable communities through design. The American Institute of Architects' Center for Communities by Design is seeking potential partner communities that can demonstrate the capacity to convene a diverse set of community leaders and stakeholders for an

intensive, collaborative planning process focused on long-term sustainability. The Center is particularly focused on identifying communities that have the ability to leverage local resources and build strong partnerships for implementation of an SDAT process. Awarded communities will receive pro bono services from a multidisciplinary team through the program, and the AIA commits to funding up to \$15,000 for each project to cover team expenses. For more information, visit the [AIA SDAT page](#).

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## UPCOMINGEVENTS

### ***Green Infrastructure and Transportation Planning to Improve Environmental Outcomes Webinar***

**July 24, 2012, 1:30pm-3:00pm ET**

This Eco-Logical webinar, hosted by the National Highway Institute, will provide best practices for how transportation projects can be used to improve green infrastructure networks and connectivity as well as how established green infrastructure can help to streamline the transportation planning process. The webinar is scheduled to include presentations and discussion about the following topics: Chicago Wilderness's Green Infrastructure Vision; Land-of-Sky Regional Council's Green Infrastructure Framework; and Maryland's Watershed Resources Registry. Please visit the [National Highway Institute's website](#) to register.

### ***EDA Disaster Relief Funding Webinar***

**August 2, 2012, 3:00pm-4:00pm ET**

Representatives from the U.S. EDA will speak about the Disaster Relief Funding application process, including how to apply, who qualifies to apply and what projects are eligible to be funded. Past grant recipients will also offer their perspective. Further details to come. Click [HERE](#) to register now!

### ***Beating the Heat: Effective Approaches to Heat Island Reduction Webinar***

**August 8, 2012, 2:00pm-4:00pm EDT**

The heat island effect can increase summertime energy use, air conditioning costs, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, heat-related illness and mortality, and reduce water quality. In this webcast: Learn about the benefits of taking local action to reduce heat islands;

Hear from local governments and organizations about heat island reduction strategies, monitoring and evaluation; and Listen in as cities share lessons learned on how to design and implement effective programs and policies, including cool pavements, shade trees, and cool roofs. [Reserve your webcast seat now.](#)

***13th National Tools of the Trade Conference***

**September 12 - 14, 2012, Big Sky, MT**

Join transportation professionals from around the country to network, share ideas, and learn about the latest developments and opportunities for transportation planning in small and medium sized communities. Click [HERE](#) for additional information.

***2012 Ohio Conference on Freight***

**September 13-14, 2012, Sandusky, OH**

The Ohio Conference on Freight will take place Thursday and Friday, September 13-14 at the Kalahari Convention Center in Sandusky, Ohio. The conference will feature discussions on topics such as highway, rail, infrastructure planning, aviation, energy, maritime, policy, and economics. The 2012 conference will focus on building professional capacity in all aspects of freight transport, strengthening relationships between public and private sectors, and examining state and federal policies that support freight related economic development. To register or receive more information, click [HERE](#).

***EcoSummit - Ecological Sustainability: Restoring the Planet's Ecosystem Services***

**September 20-October 5, 2012, Columbus, OH**

The 4th International EcoSummit will be held this year in Columbus, Ohio between September 30 and October 5. The Summit will feature Pulitzer Prize winners among other distinguished guests, and it will be the first conference ever linking the Ecological Society of America, The International Association for Ecology and the Society for Ecological Restoration International. Among the topics covered will be ecological restoration, ecological engineering, global change, wetland management, corporate involvement, and sustainable economies. EcoSummit will also host a film festival, which is accepting submissions of short films until August 1st. For more information on the film festival, click [HERE](#), and for more information on EcoSummit click [HERE](#).

***2012 Executive Directors' Conference***

**September 24-26, 2012, Boise, ID**

Save the Date! Join Executive Directors and senior staff of regional councils and metropolitan planning organizations at this premier regional training event. Registration information and an agenda will be available in mid 2012.

***200Columbus Presents idUS***

**September 28, 2012 – October 8, 2012:**

200Columbus, an initiative announced to celebrate the bicentennial of Columbus, OH, announced a series of events and presentations entitled idUS. idUS will host many speakers and workshops with a central theme of green technology and innovation. This event also coincides with EcoSummit, which will take place between September 30th and October 5th in the same area. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

***EPA to hold Water Quality Standards Virtual Academy Webinar***

**October 4, 2012, 1:00-4:00pm ET**

EPA will launch its Water Quality Standards Virtual Academy webinar with Water Quality Standards 101. Learn how you can use Water Quality Standards (WQS) to protect water resources! This webinar is aimed at a broad audience, including states, territories, tribes, environmental groups, industrial groups, municipalities, the academic community, federal agencies, watershed groups and any other interested parties. Click [HERE](#) to register.

***ICMA 2012 Annual Conference***

**October 7-10, 2012, Phoenix, AZ**

ICMA's 2012 Annual Conference, October 7-10, Phoenix/Maricopa County, Arizona, will convene thousands of local government managers and their staffs from around the world. Over three days, members and guests will learn about key local government management issues and leading practices, exchange ideas, and network. Visit the ICMA Conference online at [icma.org/conference2012](http://icma.org/conference2012).

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