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eRegions

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executive directors' conference
september 21 - september 24, 2014
des moines, ia

Register Today!

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Dear Colleagues,

NARC continues to develop an exciting agenda for the Executive Directors' Conference in Des Moines, September 21-24. Speakers include:

- The Honorable Frank Cownie, Mayor of Des Moines, who will introduce his city and region;
- John Feather, PhD, Chief Executive Officer of Grantmakers in Aging, who will present an overview of GIA and its member foundations, trends in aging populations, and the types of projects and research that GIA members fund;

Erich W. Zimmermann

Director of Transportation
Programs

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- Bill Peterson, Executive Director, Iowa State Association of Counties, who will discuss strategies to work with elected officials – both at the state legislature and on your Boards; and
- Susan Gaffney of the Government Finance Officers Association to provide an overview of trends in state and local finance.

In addition, the Conference will provide ample opportunity for you to network with your colleagues and learn about best practices in regional cooperation. I am particularly excited for the "Rapid Fire Innovation" session, which will give each organization time to highlight an interesting new project, study, or other innovation, while introducing their attendees to the group.

We have extended the "Early Bird" discount for the Conference through Friday, August 22. Register today to get these great savings! Click the image above for registration and hotel details as well as a copy of the draft agenda. See you in Des Moines!

Thanks,
Joanna

PROGRAMUPDATE

CSG Policy Academy - Solar Ready II: On August 13, members of the U.S. Department of Energy *SunShot Initiative Rooftop Solar Challenge Solar Ready II* (SRII) team hosted a Policy Academy session at the Council of State Governments (CSG) Annual Conference in Anchorage, Alaska. State government attendees heard from solar experts on solar technology and policies, current markets and trends, the value of solar technology, and benefits and barriers to solar technology. The SRII team also led discussions on solar energy and net metering, and the future for solar technology in states. The Policy Academy allowed state legislators and staff to reflect on their state's current solar policies and explore ways to incorporate additional policies that promote solar.

New Study Finds Trees Save Lives and Reduce Respiratory

Problems: This summer, the U.S. Forest Service calculated that trees save over 850 human lives a year and prevent 670,000 incidences of acute respiratory symptoms. These numbers are substantial; researchers value the human health effects of reduced air pollution at nearly \$7 billion every year. Click **HERE** to read the study.

Federal Report Highlights 5 Years of Progress Providing Communities with Affordable Housing, Efficient Transportation, & Economic Growth:

In celebration of the fifth anniversary of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a report demonstrating how the three agencies are cooperating to help communities provide more housing choices, make transportation systems more efficient and reliable, and create vibrant neighborhoods that attract business development and jobs while protecting the environment. To read the report, click [HERE](#).

POLICYUPDATE

Congress is on recess.

FAA Announces Virginia and New York UAS Test Sites Now

Operational: The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recently announced that the unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) test sites at Griffiss International Airport located in Rome, New York, and at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, are operational. These are the final two of the six test sites to become operational. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx said “we have undertaken the challenge of safely integrating a new and exciting technology into the busiest, most complex airspace in the world. The six test sites are going to play a key role in helping us meet that challenge.” Click [HERE](#) for the press release on Rome, New York. Click [HERE](#) for the press release on Virginia.

REGIONS360

MORPC, Ohio-Indiana Mayors to Continue Exploration of a Proposed Columbus to Chicago High-Speed Passenger Rail Corridor:

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) along with the cities of Columbus and Marysville jointly announced they will collectively evaluate the feasibility of the Columbus-to-Chicago high speed passenger rail line. "Today's announcement represents a significant milestone in the planning and evaluation of the proposed rail corridor from Columbus to Chicago," said MORPC Executive Director William Murdock. The Ohio cities represented are Columbus, Marysville, Kenton and Lima. The Indiana cities include Fort Wayne, Warsaw,

Plymouth, Valparaiso and Gary. Click [HERE](#) to read MORPC's full press release.

MEMERREQUESTS

Member Survey - Comments Needed on Metropolitan Planning

Notice of Proposed Rulemaking: Comments to the docket on the Noticed of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on Metropolitan Planning and Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Planning are due September 2.

- Attached [HERE](#) is a document with questions generated by the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and NARC in relation to the NPRM. We'd like to hear your concerns, thoughts, and ideas regarding these issues.
- Attached [HERE](#) is a background document that contains explanatory text from the NPRM alongside the changes to the federal code that governs Metropolitan Planning Organizations that is being discussed. This should help provide some additional background as to what is contained in the NPRM itself.

If you previously submitted similar comments through U.S. DOT (formally or informally), feel free to share those with us in order to avoid duplicating your efforts. Please submit your feedback on any or all of these questions by **Wednesday, August 20 at 5:00 PM ET** to erich@narc.org.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

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

USDA – Grants for Increased Economic Opportunity and Improved Quality of Life in Rural Areas

Deadline: November 12

On August 13, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued a press release announcing the availability of nearly \$6 million in grants to qualified organizations under the *Rural Community Development Initiative*. These grants will be offered to qualified intermediary organizations that will provide financial and technical assistance to recipients to develop their capacity and ability to undertake projects related to housing, community facilities, or community and economic

development that will support the community. Submissions must be made to the USDA Rural Development state office where the applicant's headquarters are located. Click [HERE](#) to apply.

U.S. Forest Service - Community Forest Program Funding

Deadline: January 16, 2015

The *Community Forest Program* is a grant program that authorizes the U.S. Forest Service to provide financial assistance to establish community forests that provide continuing and accessible community benefits. Click [HERE](#) for the funding opportunity.

UPCOMINGEVENTS

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

WEBINAR: Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Grants: Opportunities to Align and Leverage Partnership Investments

August 20, 1:00-2:00 PM ET

Speakers from the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, the Environmental Health Coalition, and others will discuss how communities interested in area-wide planning can align their grant activities with other investments to advance their brownfields redevelopment goals. Click [HERE](#) to register.

WEBINAR: Grey to Green Conference Webcast

August 25, 8:00 AM- 5:15 PM ET

Green Roofs for Healthy Cities is streaming *Grey to Green* keynote presentations and selected technical assistance sessions. The webcast will allow individuals, who cannot travel to the event, the ability to take advantage of the content being provided. To learn more about which presentations will be featured during the webcast, click [HERE](#).

WEBINAR: Green Infrastructure and Smart Growth

September 3, 1:00- 2:30 PM ET

Speakers from EPA, the city of Little Rock, Arkansas, and Upstate Forever Communities will discuss how communities can leverage green infrastructure as part of broader smart growth initiatives. This webinar qualifies for 1.5 CM credits from the American Planning Association. Click [HERE](#) to register.

NARC CONFERENCE: Executive Directors' Conference

September 21 - 24; Des Moines, IA

Join the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and
NARC for the 2014 Executive Directors' Conference in Des Moines, IA.
Click [HERE](#) to register!

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