



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

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**2017 executive directors conference
october 22 - october 24
san antonio, tx**

Join NARC, the Alamo Area Council of Governments, and your peers in San Antonio, Texas from October 22-24 for a not-to-be missed opportunity to learn from your colleagues and other experts on ideas and best practices from around the nation.

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is in session.

Overview

Though much of Congress' attention is focused on developing a relief package for victims of Hurricane Maria, other important work continues. The Senate Finance Committee is focused on efforts to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which provides health insurance to children whose families are low income but do not qualify for Medicaid. House efforts to reauthorize the Brownfields program may soon come to fruition if the responsible House committees are able to resolve some minor differences. The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee is examining the federal government's response to the opioid crisis, and its leadership is looking at ways to strengthen the *Affordable Care Act*.

Of course, much remains uncertain. Can Congress pass an appropriations bill before December 15 that reflects its priorities, or will Congress simply pass another continuing resolution that maintains current funding levels? Can Congress find a way to reauthorize the heavily indebted National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)? NFIP has been the subject of much debate on Capitol Hill, but failure to reauthorize could leave tens of millions of Americans without financial protection for their homes.

Other issues remain elusive. Is Congress prepared to pass legislation to appropriate adequate funding to equip and train public and private sectors against cybersecurity attacks? And can Congress pass legislation dealing with autonomous vehicles without preempting local authority?

Senate Passes Cyber Crime Fighting Bill

Last week the Senate passed the *Strengthening State and Local Cyber Crime Fighting Act of 2017*

(**HR 1616**), which mandates the National Computer Forensics Institute (NCFI) to “disseminate information related to the investigation and prevention of cyber and electronic crime and related threats, and educate, train, and equip state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges.” The amended Senate version would create a grant program to improve the “identification, investigation, and prosecution of white collar crime... by providing comprehensive, direct, and practical training and technical assistance to law enforcement officers, investigators, auditors, and prosecutors in states and units of local government.” The bill will go back to the House for final approval before it is sent to the president’s desk.

Top Republicans Consider Keeping SALT Deduction

The state and local tax (SALT) deduction seems to have avoided elimination from congressional Republicans, at least partially. When representatives from high-tax states voiced their concerns about the elimination and the negative impact it would have on their residents, tax reform writers began looking at options to limit the SALT deduction by “capping it for high-income earners or giving taxpayers a choice of using the break for property taxes or mortgage interest.” Meanwhile, the administration says that they are open to negotiating the SALT deduction in the comprehensive tax reform plan.

Democrats Introduce Smart Cities Bill

Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Congressmen Suzan DelBene (D-WA) and Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM) introduced the *Smart Cities and Communities Act of 2017 (H.R. 3895)* to promote the advancement of smart cities last week. The bill authorizes \$220 million for each of five years to improve and promote smart city technology and enhance cybersecurity. It would also set best practices and improve federal coordination efforts to provide more rural and urban municipalities with the resources and assistance to leverage the technologies.

EPA to Propose Ending Obama-era Clean Power Plan

Yesterday EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt **announced** that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will propose repealing and replacing the Clean Power Plan (CPP) today. CPP was the centerpiece for *Paris Climate Agreement* efforts to lower carbon emissions from U.S. power plants to 32% by 2030. In March, the administration issued an **executive order** mandating EPA to formally review CPP. Currently, CPP has been **suspended** by the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals after being challenged by 27 states for overstepping its legal authority.

Federal Disaster Assistance Goes Beyond FEMA

When a natural disaster strikes, the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Disaster Relief Fund is the primary financial resource for response and recovery. Yet according to a Government Accountability Office **report**, only \$111 billion of the \$255 billion inflation-adjusted federal expenditures used for disasters from 2005 to 2014 came from FEMA’s Disaster Relief Fund. The remaining \$144 billion came from the budgets of 17 major federal departments and agencies, and five agencies – FEMA, Agriculture, Defense, Housing, and Transportation – made up 92% percent of that total federal spending. This highlights the idea that although the FEMA Disaster Relief Fund is important, the department and agencies in the federal government often come together to provide relief to those who need it most after a natural disaster.

OTHER NEWS

Mark Your Calendars: Imagine a Day Without Water is October 12

This Thursday, October 12th, the Value of Water Campaign is holding its annual *Imagine a Day Without Water* campaign. The campaign encourages nonprofit organizations, local governments, public utilities, and businesses to hold events to raise awareness and education around the value of water. The benefits go beyond just humanitarian. If we make the necessary investment in our water infrastructure across the U.S., the campaign reports that over \$200 billion in annual economic activity and 1.3 million jobs would be created. Access the **campaign’s webpage** for promotional resources and suggestions for how your organization can participate. Join NARC by **signing up** to participate in *Imagine a Day Without Water*.

The Importance of Bringing Broadband to Rural America

In a special op-ed for *Route Fifty*, Consumer Technology Association CEO Gary Shapiro makes the case for broadband investment spurring economic activity in rural America. Rural Americans have

lower levels of high-speed internet access, and this directly limits their access to jobs, healthcare, and education. Increasingly, technological innovations and broadband expansion efforts have brought new economic life to rural areas. Rural hosts on the Airbnb platform made a collective total of \$494 million between February 2016 and February 2017. And by incorporating drones into rural industry processes, **PwC forecasts** increased global market values for mining and agriculture, to the tune of \$4.4 billion and \$32.4 billion respectively. Shapiro calls on federal investment in broadband infrastructure in rural communities and bipartisan action to support broadband connectivity programs.

33,000 Jobs Lost in the Month of September

According to the **Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Report**, the U.S. lost 33,000 jobs in the month of September. This marks the first month of declining employment in seven years. Early takeaways have said that Hurricanes Harvey and Irma may be partly to blame, causing short-term disruption in the leisure and hospitality industries. Carl Tannenbaum, chief economist for Northern Trust, **told *The New York Times*** that “the numbers were certainly blown around a lot by the storms... As winds calm, my guess is the employment figures will stabilize.”

REGION SPOTLIGHT

Mapping Hard-to-Count Populations for the 2020 Census

Want to help identify areas in your region that are at high-risk of not being captured in the 2020 Census? The mapping team at the Center for Urban Research of the City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate Center has developed an **interactive map of hard-to-count districts** for 2020. Search by congressional district or state legislative district to display hard-to-count neighborhoods and other details.

Funding Economic Development in Your Region

Effective economic development strategies, programs, initiatives, and education all demand funding, and most communities rely on a mixture of sources to support their economic development efforts. The National League of Cities (NLC) identified these common funding strategies that may help your region: Dedicated City Funding; Targeted State Funding; Federal Funding Support, including Economic Development Administration (EDA) Planning and Local Technical Assistance Programs, Community Development Block Grants, New Markets Tax Credits, and Historic Preservation Tax Incentives; as well as Public-Private Partnerships.

FEATURED JOBS

View full list of jobs!

RFP for Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, Oklahoma City, OK

Senior Accountant

San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

Planner

Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission, Dothan, AL

REQUESTS

CDBG Coalition Requests Your CDBG Stories

Does your regional council have any success stories about the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in your region? The CDBG Coalition, of which NARC is a member, is looking for CDBG project information and stories to include in their *CDBG National Report*. Please submit your stories to Sarah at sarah@narc.org by November 30 and include the following information: project name, location, project year, project description, use of CDBG funds, target population, amount of CDBG funds, leveraging, jobs created (if any, both temporary and permanent), project impact, a high-resolution photo, quote from a beneficiary, and project contact information.

Your NFIP Needs

NARC is looking for regional information and stories to share with our congressional contacts about the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) as the December reauthorization deadline approaches. If you have any regional success stories or ideas about what should be addressed by the reauthorization of the NFIP, please share them with Maci at maci.hurley@narc.org.

Regional Council Anniversaries

Has your regional council celebrated a milestone anniversary recently or somewhat recently? If so, NARC would love to hear about it. Please share the details of events you hosted, social media campaigns, and general marketing collateral with Anna at anna@narc.org.

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

Jean Griswold Foundation Grants for Aging in Place

Applications Due: October 31

The mission of the Jean Griswold Foundation is to provide grants to select nonprofit organizations to build, strengthen, and sustain programs that enhance the quality of life for low-income elderly and adults with disabilities who choose to "age in place." The foundation offers support to applying agencies that are within a 25-mile radius from one of the 200+ Griswold Home Care offices throughout the U.S. Most awarded grants are between \$500 and \$2,000.

The Laura Jane Musser Fund Rural Initiative Program

Applications Due: November 2

The Laura Jane Musser Fund wants to encourage collaborative and participatory efforts among citizens in rural communities that will help to strengthen their towns and regions in many civic areas including, but not limited to, economic development, business preservation, arts and humanities, public space improvements, and education. They are offering up to \$5,000 for planning and up to \$25,000 for implementation for projects that help achieve their mission. These grants are only available to nonprofits and local governments in Colorado, Hawaii, Michigan, Minnesota, select counties in Texas, and Wyoming with a population of 10,000 residents or less. The applicant must be able to demonstrate the rural characteristics of their location.

Priority will be given to projects that incorporate the following efforts:

- Bring together a broad range of community members and institutions
- Provide the opportunity for diverse community members to work together
- Contain measurable short-term outcomes within the first 12 to 18 months
- Include community members actively in all phases of the process
- Work toward an outcome of positive change within their community

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

National Good Food Network Webinar: #CommunityFood: Investing in the Future

October 12, 3:30 PM ET

"Investing in the Future" via young farmer training, farm to school programs, and other approaches to youth development through food systems is one of eight promising trends identified in *[From the Ground Up: Inspiring Community-based Food Systems Innovations](#)*, a publication commissioned by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and produced by the Wallace Center that highlights key themes and strategies that community food organizations are using to effect change. This webinar is the second of a four-part #CommunityFood series based on the findings of the report, and will feature two organizations doing extraordinary work with youth. Hear from MA'O Organic Farms in Hawaii about how their Youth Leadership Training program is shaping students' livelihoods and restoring connections with the land, their culture, and their community. You'll also hear from Grow Dat Youth Farm in Louisiana about their Advanced Leadership Program that supports youth as they transform their communities, environments, and selves. Join us on October 12 as we dig into the nuts and bolts of how these organizations are teaching and inspiring the people they work with, uncover the best practices and lessons learned along the way, and share helpful resources.

Communicating Risk: Analyzing, Mapping and Visualizing County Data for Decision-Making

October 31, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

Effective risk communication is an interactive process that requires transparency and open discourse. This process should empower both local elected officials to make data-driven decisions that bolster societal resilience, while mobilizing the community's residents to take an active role in crisis preparedness. Data analysis, mapping and visualization are particularly useful tools to leverage when communicating risk. Learn how counties across the country are utilizing these tools to increase their sustainability and resilience to economic and natural disasters.

Are You Ready for Public Engagement? A Conversation for Cities, Counties, and Special Districts

November 8, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

Join Sarah Rubin, Public Engagement Program Director at the Institute for Local Government, and Ashley Trim, Executive Director of the Davenport Institute for Public Engagement and Civic Leadership at Pepperdine University for an interactive webinar about how public engagement can help you build trust and develop sustainable policy within your community. We will look at setting a good foundation for public engagement within your organization, and explore some key questions to ask before you get started.

NARC & APA Webinar! Trees and Stormwater: A Tool for Your Community

November 9, 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM EST

Using trees in landscape design provides a multitude of environmental benefits, particularly when they are used in new and retrofitted stormwater management installations. This webinar will introduce a new free interactive web-based tool developed by the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Council of Governments and the U.S. Forest Service that will help you maximize the value of trees in stormwater management. Join the American Planning Association, National Association of Regional Councils, and national experts in green infrastructure design for an introduction to this exciting new tool that enables strategic placement of trees to improve stormwater management.

CONTACT US

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