NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS

Update on MPO Coordination Rule
October 14, 3:00 PM ET – Call-in details TBA
Join NARC, AMPO, and NADO for an update on the reopened MPO Regional Coordination rule, the role of the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and a discussion of the costs of merging MPOs based on the experiences of the Lower Connecticut River Valley MPO. Due to the extension, your organization has another opportunity to submit comments on portions of the proposed USDOT MPO Coordination Rule. For action items to reinforce your concerns to the administration and Congress, see **last week's notice**.

Miss the 2016 Executive Directors Conference? Presentations from the conference in South Bend, Indiana are available on our **conference webpage**.

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON
Congress will return in mid-November.

Hurricane Matthew
The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is leading the federal government's efforts to provide assistance and support to individuals and communities in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew. Recovery efforts are underway in Florida and Georgia and response efforts continue in both North and South Carolina, including thousands of water rescues supported by federal responders and assets in the state. FEMA and its partners continue to mobilize additional resources and personnel to support state, local, and tribal efforts as record rains and flooding remains a significant concern for public safety in several states. Local and federal officials are also working to clear debris from major roads, ensure coastal ports are safe to re-open, and support efforts to restore power in affected areas.

Hurricane Matthew could potentially cost tens of billions of dollars in federal emergency aid. It also promises to complicate negotiations on what will likely be a December catchall spending package to fund the government for the remainder of the fiscal year. FEMA has quick access to about $5 billion in its Disaster Relief Fund, but that money will barely make an impact in the mounting costs of cleanup and rebuilding efforts.

When Superstorm Sandy destroyed much of the New Jersey and New York coastlines in 2012, the Obama administration requested $60.4 billion in emergency aid to help rebuild transit systems, homes, businesses and public facilities. Sandy was only a Category 2 hurricane when it made landfall; Matthew is Category 3.

Funding for Wildfires
Pressure is building to change the way Congress funds the cost of fighting wildfires. Senators of both parties have joined the White House in urging action during the lame-duck session aimed at providing a more stable financing mechanism for wildfire suppression. Under current policies, the Forest Service must pull money from other programs each year to meet the growing costs of firefighting. Last Monday, Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Steve Daines (R-MT) wrote a letter to the conferees of the energy bill (**S 2012**) imploring them to include language that will address the Forest Service's chronic budgetary shortfalls. The Obama administration has proposed

providing annual funding amounting to 70 percent of a 10-year average of firefighting costs. Any money above that cap would be considered emergency spending, similar to how natural disaster funding currently operates.

House Passes Bill to Stall Overtime Rule
The House voted 246-177 to **delay** by six months implementation of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) **overtime rule**. Republicans voted unanimously for the bill, along with five Democrats. Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-OR), who introduced an **earlier bill** to phase in the overtime threshold gradually over three years, voted against the six-month delay. The rule, set to take effect in December, will double (to $47,476) the salary threshold under which virtually all workers are guaranteed time-and-a-half pay whenever they work more than 40 hours in a given week. DOL estimates the rule will extend overtime coverage to more than 4 million employees and cost businesses about $1.2 billion annually.

Prior to the vote, Rep Tim Walberg (R-MI) , who introduced the legislation, said the overtime rule "burdens hard-working small business owners" and "jeopardizes vital services for vulnerable Americans." He warned that "time is running out" and said lawmakers should "provide more time to those struggling to implement this rule before an arbitrary and unrealistic deadline." But Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA) said the rule will create about 100,000 jobs and noted that when the overtime rule was last updated in 2004 under President George W. Bush, "only four months" passed between the final rule's announcement and its implementation (compared to more than six months for the new rule).

Sen. James Lankford (R-OK) **introduced** a companion bill Wednesday co-sponsored by Senate HELP Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME). Neither the House nor the Senate bill will likely go anywhere. The **White House said** that President Barack Obama would veto Walberg's bill.

In September, NARC hosted a session at the 2016 Executive Directors Conference in South Bend, Indiana regarding the new labor overtime rules. Click **HERE** for the presentation.

CDBG Coalition Letter to Congress
Last Tuesday, NARC and 13 organizations known as the CDBG Coalition sent a letter to House and Senate leaders thanking them for their leadership and support of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and $3.0 billion in formula grants for CDBG in the FY2017 Transportation-HUD spending measure. The coalition asked for continued support for this level of funding in the final FY2017 appropriations measure.

OTHER NEWS
New EPA Resiliency Portal Launches
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) unveiled a new **online tool** to help communities develop step-by-step plans for adapting to the impacts of climate change. The Adaptation Resource Center will help local governments get regionalized information on climate impacts, provide case studies about the experiences of other communities, and detail potential federal sources of funding and technical assistance. ARC-X will help community leaders continue to deliver reliable, cost-effective services even as the climate changes.

NACo State of County Finances
An examination of the audited financial statements of over 2,000 U.S. counties reveals that the effects of the Great Recession continue to impact county budgets. The National Association of Counties (NACo) **report** shows that recovery has been uneven across the nation while costs and demand for mandated services increased, and federal and state support declined. Examining annual county revenues and expenses between 2007 and 2013, the latest year available, from the largest group of county governments reporting financial information in the same format (2,112 counties in 45 states and the District of Columbia), the report finds that **general revenue recovery has been slow and uneven across counties**; **counties are struggling with the costs of mandated services rising faster than inflation**; and **state and federal funding is increasingly insufficient to cover mandated county services**.

USCM to Host Bipartisan Forum with Presidential Campaigns

Under the leadership of U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) President Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett, a bipartisan delegation of mayors who serve in the organization's leadership **convened** in Oklahoma City on September 29-October 1 to identify specific areas of focus they believe the next president of the United States should prioritize. The foundation for these conversations was ***The 2016 Mayors' Compact for a Better America: A Call to Action***, which urges the president and Congress to invest in and protect America's cities. Over the course of the three-day meeting, mayors considered key issues such as the growing need for a national infrastructure investment policy; ongoing efforts to reduce crime and terrorism, reforming the criminal justice system, and strengthening police-community relations; and the public-policy implications of deploying autonomous vehicles in cities. They also held a working session with several police chiefs to develop recommendations for the next president that address the complex safety and policing issues cities are facing.

On October 13, USCM and the NYU Wagner Graduate School for Public Service will host a bipartisan discussion with mayors and the presidential campaigns on why infrastructure in U.S. cities is key to both economic security and public safety, and to urge a stronger federal partnership with cities. USCM leadership will engage in an interactive question-and-answer session with surrogates representing both the Trump and Clinton campaigns who will present their candidates' views on infrastructure. NARC will report back on the outcome of this discussion.

ACL's NIDILRR Seeking Input to Guide Strategic Planning
Comments Due: December 12
The Administration for Community Living's (ACL) National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) is seeking comments and will be hosting several listening sessions across the country to help inform future funding priorities and strategic direction. Mandated by Congress to develop a long-range plan every five years, NIDILRR is committed to incorporating input from key stakeholders—especially people with disabilities. Consult **this flyer** for in-person meeting location details and call-in information.

REGION SPOTLIGHT
Pam O'Connor to Attend Habitat III in Ecuador
NARC Board Member Pam O'Connor will represent NARC as a member of the U.S. Delegation to the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (**Habitat III**) in Quito, Ecuador next week. This global conference brings together representatives from numerous countries to focus on sustainable urban development. As a prelude to the conference, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development **prepared a report** to share the U.S. story around housing, community development, and the fostering of inclusive, sustainable, and resilient neighborhoods and communities across the United States over the last 20 years since Habitat II. The report focuses on three themes: Investing in People and Communities for Upward Mobility, Securing Housing Options for All, and Building Resilience in an Era of Change. The report also references the important work of regional governments working across jurisdiction to tackle complex cross-border issues. Councilmember O'Connor will be sending reports from Quito so be sure to follow **her** and **NARC** on twitter.

ARC Broadband Planning Primer and Toolkit
The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and North Carolina Broadband Infrastructure Office released a **Broadband Planning Primer and Toolkit** to help rural Appalachian communities expand broadband service, as part of the Obama administration's **Broadband Opportunity Council**. The primer and toolkit provides information on broadband technology and planning with the focus of identifying unserved demand for broadband, forming creative partnerships, and lowering barriers to entry for new and existing providers into underserved markets. It is bolstered by real-life stories of broadband planning and adoption across the Appalachian Region. Research summarized in the resource indicates that 80 new jobs are created for every additional 1,000 broadband users served, and that gaining 4 Mbps of broadband speed can increase household income by $2,100 a year. Investing in critical infrastructure, including broadband, is part of ARC's 2016–2020 **Five-Year Strategic Plan for Capitalizing on Appalachia's Opportunities**.

Public Libraries Win Awards for Creative and Inventive Approaches to Community Issues

Addressing citywide racial equity, helping adults earn a high school diploma, and partnering with small businesses to provide training to help them succeed are just a few of the initiatives being led by public libraries in North America. The Urban Libraries Council (ULC) recently recognized 20 public libraries as Top Innovators for programs, services, and operating practices that have made a significant impact on those they serve and their communities. The 2016 Top Innovators and Honorable Mentions were presented on October 6 as part of ULC's 2016 Annual Forum.

FEATURED JOBS
View full list of jobs!

Contracts and Procurement Analyst
San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

Division Manager, Community Development
Atlanta Regional Commission, Atlanta, GA

GIS Analyst/Planner
Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments, Albany, OR

Senior Planner
Central Texas Council of Governments, Belton, TX

FUNDING
View full list of grants!

EPA Offers Assistance to Help Rural Communities Revitalize Downtowns
Letters of Interest Due: November 6
EPA invites rural communities to apply for planning assistance to develop strategies that help grow the economy and revitalize downtown neighborhoods. EPA is offering this assistance as part of Rural Advantage, a suite of federal economic development planning assistance programs for rural communities. Rural Advantage is part of the Obama administration's commitment to place-based strategies to help communities develop competitive advantages. In these places, federal experts are working side by side with residents and local leaders to create customized solutions, bolstering coordination across agencies, and improving how we interact with and serve community partners.

EVENTS
View full list of events!

BroadbandUSA Webinar Series: Community Initiative Update and Broadband Adoption Discussion
October 13, 2:00–3:00 PM ET
Participate in this formative discussion about the BroadbandUSA Community Connectivity Initiative. In addition to providing an overview of the initiative, we'll demonstrate the latest prototype and dig into topics that shape our understanding of broadband adoption and digital equity. Be ready for an in-depth discussion around topics such as: how existing national data sources can highlight systemic digital divides and inform local conversations; ways to measure and promote device ownership; expanding digital skills training to include coding, computer science and privacy; and recognizing and reinforcing community-based programs that drive adoption.

Pew Live Webcast: How Can States Use Data to Improve Policies?
October 14, 9:30 – 11:30 AM ET
States are increasingly using data and evidence to achieve the best outcomes for citizens—and their bottom lines. Join The Pew Charitable Trusts and Atlantic Media's Route Fifty for a discussion with Colorado Governor John W. Hickenlooper and other officials on how the state has developed effective evidence-based policies and systems. Speakers will address: how Colorado policymakers at all levels of government use data to improve decision-making; how data-driven election administration can enhance accuracy, cost-effectiveness, and security; and why using evidence and evaluation in tax incentive policy benefits states' budgets, businesses, and taxpayers.

BroadbandUSA Webinar Series: What is Digital Inclusion?

October 19, 2:00–3:00 PM ET

When we hear the terms "digital inclusion" and "digital equity" related to technology and broadband, do we really know what they mean? Access to affordable and robust broadband is important but it is only one factor to enable everyone to be online. Join experts from the field to learn about the history of digital inclusion and how the definition has evolved over time. The speakers will highlight some of their work in the digital inclusion/digital equity space and give real life examples of their work.

2017 Solar Eclipse Webinar: Prep for August 21st 2017

November 3, 1:00–2:30 PM ET

This **webinar** is designed to help you understand what is known about the upcoming solar eclipse, how state and local agencies (DOTs) have begun to address this truly "rare" event, and how to get your community involved in the planning and promotion of this special event.

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