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In Memorium of NARC's First President, Walter A. Scheiber:

Walter A. Scheiber, the first President of the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), and the first executive director of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG), passed away Wednesday, October 8. Mr. Scheiber was at the national forefront in the field of regionalism and an expert on inter-governmental relations. He was instrumental in the founding of NARC, which developed an award in his honor. The Walter Scheiber Leadership Award recognizes the significant impacts an Executive Director has made at the local, state, and national levels. Click [HERE](#) for our member release.

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Dear Colleagues,

Today, the National League of Cities released its 29th annual survey of city finance officers on the fiscal outlook for their communities, finding that city finances are turning the corner and a broader economic recovery is taking hold at the local level. According to the survey, more city finance officers reported improved conditions this year than any in the 29-year history of the

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survey, with 80 percent reporting that their cities are better able to meet fiscal needs than in 2013. “The nation’s economic health depends on the economic health of local governments,” stated NLC Executive Director Clarence Anthony at the launch of this year’s report held at the Newseum with NLC President and Mayor of St Paul, MN Chris Coleman; Jason Furman, Chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisors; and a panel of city finance experts. Click [HERE](#) to watch a video of the event.

For the first time since 2008, cities are increasing rather than decreasing the size of municipal workforces and property tax revenue is anticipated to increase in 2014. Sales and income tax revenues continued to increase through 2013, but are projected to slow this year. Ending balances are nearing pre-recession highs, but still fall below 2006 levels. NLC President Mayor Coleman stressed his optimism about the future of cities and called for a continued strong federal partnership and investment in infrastructure. NLC priorities include passage of a long-term comprehensive surface transportation bill and passage of the *Marketplace Fairness Act* as key to continued local fiscal health. Click [HERE](#) to see NLC’s release concerning the report.

Thanks,
Leslie Wollack

PROGRAM UPDATE

EPA Extends Comment Period for Waters of the US Rule: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) are extending the comment period for the proposed rule, *Definition of Waters of the United States Under the Clean Water Act*, originally published on April 21, 2014. The agencies are extending the comment period in response to stakeholder requests for an extension. Comments must be received on or before November 14. Local infrastructure, such as public safety ditches and retention ponds, could be federally regulated under the new rule, which you can read [HERE](#). NARC has been asked to sign onto a letter for the docket from NLC and NARC on this issue. Please contact Joanna Turner for more information.

Commerce Secretary Announces New Members to Serve on

NACIE: U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker named the members of the National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship (NACIE). The Council will operate as an independent entity within the Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (OIE), which is housed within the U.S. Commerce Department's Economic Development Administration (EDA). NACIE members will advise the Secretary of Commerce on issues related to accelerating innovation, expanding entrepreneurship, and developing a globally competitive workforce. NACIE does not contain any regional or local government representatives, despite applications from NARC and other similar associations. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

NIST Releases Updated Framework for Smart Grid Standards:

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) released its [***Framework and Roadmap for Smart Grid Interoperability Standards***](#) that provides information on new smart grid standards for the electrical industry that state and local regulators can incorporate within their regulatory framework. While the NIST standards are voluntary, they are often used as benchmarks for the private sector when interacting with regulators. Click [HERE](#) for the NIST smart grid report.

DOL Delays Enforcement of Home Care Rule:

Last week, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced that it will temporarily suspend enforcement of a final rule providing overtime and minimum wage protections to home care workers. For the first six months after the rule takes effect on January 1, 2015, DOL will not bring enforcement actions against employers that fail to comply with new requirements imposed by the rule. During the subsequent six months, beginning July 1, 2015, DOL will exercise its discretion in determining whether to bring enforcement actions, giving strong consideration to the extent to which states and other entities have made good faith efforts to bring their home care programs into compliance. DOL will continue providing technical assistance throughout the year. The announcement is a response to appeals from state and other officials who had sought a delay of the rule's effective date. Click [HERE](#) for the policy, and [HERE](#) for a blog post about the announcement.

New Report Focuses on Transportation Funding Challenges:

According to a new report recently released by Pew Charitable

Trusts, as part of its *Fiscal Federalism in Action* series, transportation spending at all levels of government has declined over the last decade. The report highlights the stark funding challenges that all levels of government face in providing adequate resources for infrastructure, and counters the notion that local funding sources can make up for the recent decrease in federal funding. The report examines the role that each level of government plays in surface transportation funding. Click [HERE](#) for the report.

Getting to the Route of It: The Role of Governance in

Regional Transit: The Eno Center for Transportation released a report with case studies highlighting regional transit governance. This report is framed around the relationship between regionalism, funding, and customer service. The ability of transit organizations to respond to changing and expanding transit demands is shaped to a large extent by individual governance and organizational structures. Click [HERE](#) for the report.

POLICYUPDATE

The Senate is in session; The House is in district work period.

Reauthorization for the Export-Import Bank Strategy

Unveiled: Today, leaders from the House Financial Services Committee unveiled a proposal to provide a long-term reauthorization for the Export-Import Bank. The measure would renew the Ex-Im Bank for five years, until Sept. 30, 2019, and would make several changes to protect taxpayers from risk. The proposal calls for an expanded reserve fund, requiring the agency to hold enough money to cover 95 percent of the losses that could occur under a worst-case scenario. It also would establish a permanent chief risk officer and would boost anti-fraud and corruption safeguards. Although legislation on the Ex-Im Bank is not expected to pass in the lame duck, this proposal is likely to guide the conversation in the next Congress. Click [HERE](#) for the text, and [HERE](#) for the summary.

Senator Boxer Urges Highway Reauthorization in Lame Duck:

Though Congress recently extended the most recent transportation authorization bill through the end of May 2015, likely pushing action off for the new Congress that will be seated next

year. Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) recently sent a letter to House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp (R-MI) urging action well in advance of this new deadline. She would prefer action during the post-election session of Congress that will occur in December. You can read the letter [HERE](#).

REGIONS360

TMACOG Hosts Ohio Conference on Freight: The Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG) recently held the latest iteration of its annual freight conference, and the event attracted more attendees than ever before. NARC has sponsored the event since its inception, and has been pleased to watch it grow into an event that attracts participants from the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. Speakers and presenters brought expertise from all modes and included government and business leaders. Presentations from this year's conference will be posted [HERE](#).

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

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

U.S. Rural Infrastructure Opportunity Fund: Rural communities looking to make investments on infrastructure projects now have a new option for private sector funding. In an effort to revitalize economies across rural America, CoBank has partnered with Capitol Peak Asset Management to set up the U.S. Rural Infrastructure Opportunity Fund. Community leaders are encouraged to submit basic project proposals through www.ruralinfrastructurefund.com to be considered for financing through CoBank's initial \$10 billion investment in the fund. With CoBank's upfront funding as a stamp of approval for projects, additional private sector investors will be encouraged to participate. Projects of any size are eligible and criteria for selection may vary.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

LISTENING SESSION: EPA Holding WIFIA Listening Sessions
October 7 – Los Angeles, CA

October 29 – Atlanta, GA

October 30 – Dallas, TX

November 17 – San Francisco, CA

EPA is holding listening sessions to discuss the *Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA)*, the law establishing a five-year pilot program to rely on public-private partnerships for a variety of water and wastewater infrastructure projects. The pilot program aims to support large-scale water infrastructure projects costing at least \$20 million. Smaller projects serving fewer than 25,000 people will be eligible if the cost of the project surpasses \$5 million. EPA will provide loan guarantees and direct loans at long-term Treasury rates. EPA will give an overview of WIFIA, provide a summary of financial assistance options and terms under the law, and detail the status of agency efforts to get the program up and running. The listening session is targeted at private finance sector representatives, municipal and state governments, and regional utility decision makers. Click [HERE](#) to RSVP.

WEBINAR: Mock DUI - Office of Safety, Noteworthy Practice Series

October 23, 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM ET

This free webinar describes a community-based program in Seminole County, Florida that targets youth drinking and driving. The program presents the dangers of teen drinking and driving and the long term consequences through a reenactment of prom night. It is an example of how EMS, Engineering, Education, and Enforcement work together to reduce injuries and fatalities. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

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