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2015 NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REGIONS

FEBRUARY 8-10, 2015
WASHINGTON, DC

Happy Holidays! We hope you have an enjoyable holiday season with friends and family. This eRegions newsletter will be the last of the year; we will resume publication on January 5, 2015.

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Dear Colleagues,

Washington has averted a shutdown! On Saturday, the U.S. Senate passed the so-called CROmnibus appropriations bill (H.R. 83), funding most of the Federal government through September 2015 in a vote of **56-40**. The exception is the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which is funded through February 27. Since the CROmnibus still needs to go through a number of procedural hurdles before becoming law, the Senate also passed another continuing resolution through Wednesday, December 17, which President Obama signed late on Saturday. The President is expected to sign the bill on Wednesday, after the Office of Management and Budget's review and the enrollment process is complete. See [NARC's website](#) for a summary of the CROmnibus.

In National Conference of Regions news...We just confirmed Joseph Szabo, Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration and soon-to-be Senior Fellow at Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, to participate in our freight panel. Szabo joins a distinguished group of speakers - including Bruce Katz and Ray LaHood - for this year's conference. Please remember that early-bird registration ends December 17th! Click [HERE](#) to see the updated agenda.

Thanks,
Joanna Turner

PROGRAM UPDATE



Solar Ready II Team Meeting in Texas: Last week, the Solar Ready II team convened in Arlington, Texas at the offices of the North Central Texas Council of Governments. The purpose of the meeting was for the ten participating regional councils to present their individual Solar Ready II projects and discuss goals, successes, challenges, and next steps with the team. In addition, participants received a tour of the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport solar installation. Other meeting attendees included a representative from the U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative, several NARC staffers, and Meister Consultants Group. The Solar Ready II project, funded by the *U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative Rooftop Solar Challenge II*, is striving to reduce the soft costs associated with solar energy development through the adoption of solar best management practices on the local level. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about Solar Ready II.

POLICY UPDATE

Senate is in session today; House is on recess.

A Note from GOVERNING Magazine: For over 25 years, GOVERNING has been unwavering in its commitment to provide job-critical news, analysis, and resources for state and local government leaders. GOVERNING connects America's leaders by providing intelligence and analysis on management, policy, and politics to help guide and inspire innovative leaders across state and local government. [Start a FREE subscription](#) to GOVERNING today and get the news that state and local government professionals depend on.

REGIONS360

In Memory of ETCOG's Glynn Knight: The East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) lost a cherished member of its family on Friday, December 5th. Glynn Knight, ETCOG's previous Executive Director, lost his battle with pancreatic cancer. Glynn's leadership at ETCOG and the East Texas region began in 1980; he retired in 2007 with a total of 26 years and five months of dedicated service. He was the second Executive Director of the organization. Glynn is survived by his wife, Dorris, three sons, daughter in laws, and grandchildren.

NVRCs Syrian Refugee Effort: This year, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) and its members, Paxton Van Lines, and Maersk continued last year's efforts to raise blankets and money for Syrian refugees in Turkey. This year, they collected approximately 30,000 blankets and over \$100,000 USD. The initiative began following a cultural exchange trip to Turkey when several Northern Virginian elected leaders, traveled in for a fact-finding trip sponsored by the American Turkish Friendship Association, an educational, cultural, and business exchange organization. The effort was spearheaded by former Town of Purcellville Mayor Bob Lazaro, Loudoun County Board of Supervisors Chairman Scott York, NVRC Executive Director Mark Gibb, NVRC Chairman Penny Gross, Fairfax Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova, and the American Turkish Friendship Association. This is a humanitarian effort that OTHER regional councils could JOIN. Click [HERE](#) to see the website they used for collecting donations, and [HERE](#) for a video that was produced last week by the American-Turkish friendship Association.

MAPA's Heartland 2050: The Metropolitan Area Planning Agency's (MAPA) Heartland 2050 is a long-term vision of the future for the greater Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area based on the core values of area residents. Communities of color are driving the Omaha Council Bluffs region's population growth, and their ability to participate in the economy and thrive is central to the region's success now and in the future. While the region demonstrates overall economic strength and resilience, wide racial gaps in income, employment, and education – along with a shrinking middle class and rising inequality – place the region's economic future at risk. MAPA created an action plan to help community leaders identify strategies to help them make decisions that will help them create the kind of place where the next generation will want to live and work 40 years from now. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about the vision, and [HERE](#) to the equitable growth profile summary. The action plan is not yet public.

Community Leaders Gather to Discuss Regional Transportation Decision-Making: Leaders from around the Washington D.C. region recently gathered for the Transportation Planning Board's 13th Community Leadership Institute. This meeting was held for participants to discuss how transportation decisions are made in the region and how community leaders can become more involved in the decision-making process. Over the course of three days, participants engaged in numerous experiential learning activities and group discussions to build a greater shared understanding of regional transportation issues. One of the most significant activities highlighted the challenge of accommodating future growth in the region given the funding constraints.

WMSRDC Lake Michigan Water Trail Plan: The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) recently completed work on the [***Lake Michigan Water Trail Plan***](#). The plan includes a section on the West Michigan Region with recommendations for improving non-motorized watercraft experiences along Lake Michigan and within coastal waterways. The plan includes sample recreation plan language for local communities and a list of the U.S. National Park Service's national water trail best management practices. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about the goals of the *Lake Michigan Lake Action Management Plan*.

MEMBERREQUESTS

Please send all responses to Anna Rosenbaum, anna@narc.org.

Communications Strategies: Does your COG have a written communications strategy that you can share? The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) in Detroit is interested in expanding their communications program and would like to see how other COGs have identified their communications goals, and their strategies to implement those goals.

GRANTOPPORTUNITIES

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

UPCOMINGEVENTS

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

WEBINAR: Freight Advisory Committees- Overview from Committee Organizers

December 17, 2014 1:00-2:30 PM ET

This Federal Highway Administration webinar will provide an overview of MAP-21 provisions encouraging state freight advisory committees and the benefits of freight advisory committees in general. One initiative pursued by many public sector agencies is the creation of such committees for their organizations. Though the creation of state freight advisory committees is encouraged in MAP-21, many states and metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) have independently worked to create such committees. This webinar will review the performance of these committees as well as discuss the activities conducted by state departments of transportation and MPO-organized freight advisory committees. Click [HERE](#) to register.

NARC CONFERENCE: NARC's 2015 National Conference of Regions

February 8-10, 2015 – Washington, DC

Registration is open for the National Conference of Regions. This conference is a forum for locally-elected officials and their Regional Councils to explore federal policy issues, and discuss NARC's legislative priorities for the 114th Congress. Click [HERE](#) for the conference webpage.