

# the Courthouse Journal

[WACOUNTIES.ORG](http://WACOUNTIES.ORG)

June 4, 2009

Issue No. 18

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Courthouse Journal*

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*Washington Association of County Officials  
Washington State Association of Counties*

## **Chelan County Commissioner Ron Walter Elected to NACo WIR Executive Board**

Chelan County Commissioner Ron Walter was elected Second Vice President for the National Association of Counties Western Interstate Region.



Commissioner Walter has been an active member of the NACo WIR Board for the past several years, and is a member of the NACo Public Lands Steering Committee as well as an active and respected member of the Washington State Association of Counties. In the past, Commissioner Walter has served as WSACs Eastern District President, Co-Chair of WSACs Legislative Steering Committee and as a member

of the WSAC Board of Directors. Commissioner Walter is serving in his third term as a Chelan County Commissioner.

As NACo WIR Second Vice President, Commissioner Walter will join an Executive Board comprised of Tim Josi, President and Commissioner, Tillamook County, Ore.; Mike Murray, First Vice President and Commissioner, Lewis and Clark County, Mont.; and Immediate Past President Brian Dahle, a Lassen County, Calif. supervisor.

The Western Interstate Region is affiliated with the National Association of Counties and is dedicated to the promotion of Western interests within NACo. These interests include public land issues (use and conservation), community stability and economic development, and the promotion of the traditional Western way of life. Its membership consists of fifteen Western states, (AK, HI, WA, OR, CA, ID, NV, AZ, MT, WY, CO, NM, UT, ND, SD) with membership funded through the individual state associations. For more information, please visit the WIR portion of the NACo website at:

[http://www.naco.org/Content/NavigationMenu/About\\_NACo/Committees\\_and\\_Caucuses/Western\\_Interstate\\_Region/Western\\_Interstate\\_Region\\_Intro.htm](http://www.naco.org/Content/NavigationMenu/About_NACo/Committees_and_Caucuses/Western_Interstate_Region/Western_Interstate_Region_Intro.htm)

Congratulations to Commissioner Walter!!!

**Job announcements & links to County Employment pages at:**

<http://wacounties.org/>

## **the Courthouse Journal**

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(WSAC) [wacounties.org/wsac](http://wacounties.org/wsac)

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**Tonia Sugarman**, County Training Institute (CPO) and L&I Retro Project Manager

## **WACO Spotlight: Asotin County Auditor's Office**

Hi, I'm Elaine Johnston, Asotin County Auditor. I was appointed in June 1994 and have run successfully ever since. I have had opposition each term except my second. This is my last term; I will have 30 years with the county as of October 2010 and so I will retire December 31, 2010.

I have three full-time employees and one half-time employee. We do vehicle licensing, land transaction recordings, marriage licenses, accounts payable, county payroll, voter registration and elections. Two of my employees do licensing and recording by trading off each month. Dealing with licensing problems full time is very trying, so by trading off they get a little break. We work a four-day work week, and rotate days off so every month everyone gets a three-day weekend. We love the four-day work week, except when someone is on vacation and some one else gets sick!

My other full time employee does accounts payable and payroll. We pay close to three hundred people, including junior taxing districts. During the summer when the Aquatic Center is at full staff, payroll is more. My part-time employee is trained to do licensing, recording and voter registration, so she pitches in where needed.

Our busiest time is during the election cycle. Since we are a vote-by-mail county, we hire extra people to process the ballots as we don't have enough staff to do it ourselves. We also rely on Rural Resources (a training program) to do special projects, such as scanning old documents, etc.

We have in-house recording, payroll and accounting systems, which work very well as we can make changes when needed. We also have VOTEC for voter registration and Hart InterCivic for elections' management. These systems work very well for us now that we have learned how to use them.

We are situated in the southeast corner of Washington, bordering Oregon on the south, Idaho on the east, Whitman County on the north and Garfield County on the west. Our area is called the Lewis Clark Valley (Lewiston, Idaho-Clarkston, Washington) and was just voted by *Outdoor Life Magazine* to be the best place for hunting and fishing.

## **Legislative Committee Schedules and Agendas:**

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/calendar.cfm>

**Bill Information:** [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov)

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## **Budget, Finance and Taxes**

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### **Assessors gather in Tri-Cities for Their June Meeting**

The Washington State Association of County Assessors will be meeting at the Shilo Inn in Richland, Washington. The meeting will be from June 8 thru June 10, with a full slate of committee meetings.

Monday, June 8, will kick off with golf at the Columbia Point Golf Course. Tuesday through Thursday will feature committee meetings and guest speaker Dan Blasdel, Franklin County Coroner. Dan will present a discussion on the video that he created about "How to Beat the Reaper". This is an interactive video that Dan created aimed at teenagers and the perils they face. If you would like to see what Dan created, stop by the WACO office; we have a limited number of copies available.

The Assessors will be deciding the course of legislation they may wish to pursue next year, and also discussing the legislation that was passed in the 2009 Session.

Hosts Barbara Wagoner, Benton County Assessor, and Steve Marks, Franklin County Assessor, hope to see you there.

### **Federal Economic Stimulus Funding**

Please remember to visit the following online sites for the latest federal stimulus funding updates (content is updated regularly):

**Federal Site:** [WWW.RECOVERY.GOV](http://WWW.RECOVERY.GOV)

**State Site:** [WWW.RECOVERY.WA.GOV](http://WWW.RECOVERY.WA.GOV)

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## **Courts, Public Safety, Law & Justice**

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### **Gov. Gregoire Announces \$22.4 million in Federal Recovery Money to Bolster Criminal Justice Programs**

*Funding saves or restores 72 jobs; improves prevention, enforcement, prosecution, technology, and witness programs*

**OLYMPIA** – Governor Chris Gregoire today announced that the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) was awarded \$22.4 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to administer Edward J. Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants across Washington.

"These recovery based grants will retain prosecutors, fight gang-related crime, and invest in critical community-based crime prevention programs across the state," said Gregoire. "At a time when law enforcement and judicial agencies are tightening their belts, this stimulus funding will support these vital programs."

The Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Recovery funds will restore 16 state trooper positions that serve local drug task forces, and retain or restore 56 local law enforcement and related jobs across the state.

Grants will be distributed by CTED directly to local governments based on established US Department of Justice formulas to fund improvements in law enforcement, prosecution and court programs, prevention and education, corrections and community corrections, drug treatment and enforcement, planning, evaluation and technology improvements, and crime

victim witness programs. Some of the funds have already started to go to communities, and more will be distributed for specific programs during the next two months. The Byrne Program has distributed funds for criminal justice since 1989.

“The Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants are important to supporting safe, thriving communities that keep us perennially among the most desirable places to live and work,” said Rogers Weed, CTED Director.

Washington State is administering the Recovery Act investments with an unprecedented level of transparency and accountability. Governor Gregoire created a new Web site: <http://www.recovery.wa.gov/>, enabling every Washingtonian to see where their tax dollars are going and hold government accountable for the results. On the federal level, President Barack Obama has appointed Vice President Joe Biden to oversee all states' recovery efforts and to root out waste and fraud. This combined oversight will ensure taxpayer dollars are put to good use and recharge the economy.

CTED is the lead state agency charged with enhancing and promoting sustainable community and economic vitality in Washington. For more information, visit [www.cted.wa.gov](http://www.cted.wa.gov) <http://www.cted.wa.gov/>.

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## ***Environment, Land Use & Resources***

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### **Governor Signs Climate Change Executive Order**

On May 21, the Governor signed an executive order (EO) relating to climate change. The EO involves local governments in several ways and they are described below. WSAC is just beginning to work with the Governor's office and Ecology on implementation issues since we didn't have any input into its development.

The EO also addresses many of the provisions in the proposed final striking amendment to **SB 5735** (which didn't pass the Legislature) and goes a bit further. The provisions not addressed in **SB 5735**, but which are in the EO, include those related to:

- \* Developing emission benchmarks by industry sector
- \* A low-carbon fuel standard
- \* Working with WSAC and AWC on adapting to sea-level rise resulting from climate change
- \* Working with public agencies on changes in water resources likely to result from climate change
- \* Working with public and private entities on potential changes to the vehicle-miles-travelled benchmarks

#### **Highlights of the EO:**

- \* Ecology will participate in the regional greenhouse gas reduction program (Western Climate Initiative) and work with the federal government to develop a program that reflects Washington State's priorities.
- \* Ecology will work with the state's largest emitters to estimate their emissions, and their share of the reduction needed to achieve the statutory reduction level in 2020. This work is to be completed by Dec. 1, 2009. By October 2010, Ecology will develop reduction strategies and actions to achieve the 2020 targets.
- \* Ecology will work with businesses and stakeholders to develop emission benchmarks by industry sector for those facilities likely to be covered by a federal or regional cap and trade program. The EO directs Ecology to support the use of these benchmarks to distribute allowances in a regional or federal cap and trade program, and to recognize early actions to reduce emissions.
- \* The EO envisions the benchmarks as complementing the federal program, or to be used in the absence of a federal program. This could be the first step toward a state regulatory approach to limiting greenhouse gas emissions.

- \* Ecology is directed to establish an agreed order with TransAlta to achieve the state's emissions performance standard by 2025, which would require TransAlta to cut its emissions in half. This could be accomplished by sequestering emissions, switching fuel source from coal to biomass, natural gas or another lower-emitting fuel source, by shutting down for periods of time, or even installing technologies which may or may not be available on the market today.
- \* Ecology will work with DNR and stakeholders on recommendations for forestry offsets and financial incentives.
- \* Ecology will work with the Departments of Commerce and Transportation on a low-carbon fuel standard, and recommend by July 2010 which standards or requirements should be adopted, and whether by rule or legislation.
- \* WSDOT will work with public and private sector entities on potential changes to the vehicle-miles-travelled benchmarks in statutes, including addressing low-emission vehicles and other strategies to reduce transportation emissions.
- \* WSDOT will work with the regional transportation planning organizations representing the seven largest counties to adopt regional transportation plans that provide transportation alternatives, reduce greenhouse gases, and achieve the statutory benchmarks to reduce vehicle miles travelled.
- \* The Governor's office will lead the effort to develop a project to electrify I-5, in collaboration with Oregon and California, and seek federal funds to purchase electric vehicles and finance infrastructure. This effort should complement **HB 1481**, which requires that certain counties and cities in the Central Puget Sound area are preempted on certain siting issues.
- \* Ecology will work with WSAC and AWC to address the impacts of sea-level-rise on shorelines.
- \* Ecology and the Health Department will work with other public agencies on how to address expected changes in water resources due to climate change impacts.
- \* Implementation of the EO is expected to cost up to \$800,000, and the funding would come from reprioritizing some of Ecology's air quality program, as well as funding provided to WSDOT in the budget, and by reprioritizing within existing appropriations.

## **Energy Efficiency Grants Open for Application**

On Thursday, March 26, 2009, the Department of Energy (DOE) published formula grant regulations governing the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program. The EECBG program provides federal grants to local governments, states, and tribal governments to increase energy efficiency usage while decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.

For the first time, the EECBG was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 at a tune of \$3.2 billion, with the majority of the money slated to be awarded as formula grants to "eligible" units of government. Almost \$1.9 billion will be available for "eligible" cities and counties, more than \$770 million is allotted for the states, territories, and District of Columbia, and close to \$54 million is available to tribes. The rest of the money, approximately \$455 million, will be awarded through a separate competitive grant program (program guidelines yet to be published).

In addition, each state is required to use 60% of their allotted funds for sub-grants to non-eligible units of government. The criteria governing the sub-grants will be decided individually by each state.

For the purpose of the EECBG program, an "eligible" county has a minimum population of at least 200,000 and/or is one of the 10 most populated counties in the state where it is located. "Eligible" cities are those with populations above 35,000 and/or one of the 10 most populated cities in the state. The 2007 U.S. Census Population is used to calculate population data. "Eligible" units of governments apply directly to the DOE for funding.

According to the DOE, eligible city populations within a county cannot be included in a county's population numbers. In other words, eligible city numbers are subtracted from the overall population numbers of a county. Additionally, the DOE considered two equally weighted factors: resident and daytime (commuter) population to come up with the list of "eligible" units of government.

Non-eligible units of government can access EECBG money either through their state energy offices or through a DOE EECBG competitive grant process, yet to be determined.

To see a list of entities eligible for formula grants and allocation amounts:  
<http://www.eecbg.energy.gov/grantalloc.html>.

Applications for eligible cities and counties must be submitted no later than June 25, 2009 at 8:00 PM Eastern Time.

**Eligible units of government MUST follow several procedures before they can access this money:**

1). Register - In order to do business with the Federal government, a three-step registration process is required of all applicants. Please allow 21 days to complete the registration process.

Step 1: Request a DUNS Number at:

<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/displayHomePage.do>

Step 2: Register with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR) at:

<http://www.ccr.gov/>

Step 3: E-Business Point of Contact must register in FedConnect at:

<https://www.fedconnect.net/FedConnect/>

2). Apply – For complete application instructions, and program information, go to <https://www.fedconnect.net/FedConnect/> and search for Reference Number DE-FOA-0000013.

3). Develop and Submit - an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy (EECS) either with the application or within 120 days of the award. This detailed report will list baseline and current ghg emissions, goals, and implementation strategies for the county and include a proposed budget for the proposed projects.

4). Reporting Requirements - Additionally, there are a number of reporting requirements attached to these formula grant funds. They include, but are not limited to - quarterly financial reports, unexpected incident reports, quarterly performance progress reports, and annual reports.

The EECBG Program is administered by the Office of Weatherization and Intergovernmental Programs in the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy in the DOE. For a list of frequently asked questions and a summary of the program, go to: <http://www.eecbg.energy.gov/>

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## **General Government Issues**

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### **CTED Begins Listening Tour Across the State**

The Legislature renamed the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development as the Department of Commerce this legislative session. The bill requires the Director to examine the Department's efforts to ensure they are organized around a concise mission. The Governor has also asked him to focus its efforts on job creation. Consequently, the Director and his senior management team will be hosting seven meetings around the state to get input from their stakeholders. They might be asking your county to attend a meeting. This will be an excellent opportunity for you to let them know what areas the Department should focus on and/or what they might relinquish or transfer to another agency.

## **Legislative Assembly Days Set--Mark Your Calendars.**

The Legislature's Assembly days during the 2009 interim will be held in Olympia on the following dates:

October 1-2 (Thursday and Friday)

December 3-4 (Thursday and Friday)

In addition, the Senate and House Leadership is requesting that Chairs and others responsible for the scheduling of committees, task forces and other entities not schedule meetings during the month of August. This will ensure that members and staff have some time they know can be scheduled for non-legislative activities during the summer. Scheduling the fall Assembly a little later than usual will also ensure that there is enough time to prepare for those meetings. The schedule also allows time for development of a legislative response to the September 17 revenue forecast, if necessary.

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## ***Public Health & Human Services***

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### **Federal update on Behavioral Health and Disabilities Issues**

Congress returns to work this week in Washington D.C., and health reform is a priority on the agenda. The attached newsletter from our NACO affiliate NACBHDD (National Association of County Behavioral Health and Disabilities Directors) includes information on federal legislation related to Medicare and housing, and a congressional briefing on law enforcement and individuals with serious mental illness.

If you would like more information, please contact Jim Colvin, Administrator, Chelan-Douglas RSN, at (509) 886-6318 or [JColvin@cdrsn.org](mailto:JColvin@cdrsn.org)

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## ***Association News***

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### **WSAC Legislative Steering Committee**

The LSC will be meeting in conjunction with WSAC's Joint District Meeting in Kennewick, Washington. The meeting will be on Thursday, June 11, from 1:45pm-3:30pm, at the Red Lion Columbia Center. The agenda will be emailed out Friday.

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## ***Training & Upcoming Events***

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**Washington Counties** – [wacounties.org/Calendar of Events](http://wacounties.org/Calendar%20of%20Events)

**County Training Institute** – [www.countytraininginstitute.org](http://www.countytraininginstitute.org)

### **Hawkins Sworn in as New Yakima County Coroner**

*by Gordon King, Yakima Herald-Republic, 5/27/2009*

Jack Hawkins was sworn in Tuesday as Yakima County's new coroner, a spot to which he was appointed earlier this month.

Hawkins, who has served as acting coroner since Maury Rice's March 31 retirement, was chosen by the county commissioners on May 5. They selected him over two other finalists, Alberta Redwing and David Johnson.

The decision ultimately came down to Hawkins' experience, first as deputy coroner under Rice, then as acting coroner, said Commissioner Kevin Bouchey. "He had proven himself," said Bouchey.

Hawkins said it felt good to be the new coroner officially. "I've been doing the work now for several months," he said.

Hawkins, a Republican, will face election this fall to finish Rice's term. The seat will be up for election again in 2010 for a full term.

Redwing finished first in a vote by Yakima County Republican Party officers that narrowed the field from five candidates to three finalists. That vote, which allows the party to forward its recommendations to the commissioners for a final decision, actually had Hawkins third behind Redwing and Johnson.

A former Benton County deputy coroner, Redwing has said she plans to run against Hawkins this fall. Johnson, a Yakima County sheriff's deputy, has said he will not enter the race.

Commissioner Mike Leita alluded to the possibility of a contested race Tuesday after Hawkins was sworn in. "I voted for Jack Hawkins, and I will vote for him again," Leita said of the appointment vote and the upcoming election.

### **Steve Dorey Passes Away**

We at WACO were saddened to hear of the passing of Steve Dorey, husband of Lewis County Assessor Dianne Dorey.

Steve, age 58, passed away suddenly in Olympia on May 26. Over the years, Steve and Dianne have cared for and provided for over 125 foster children in their home. We would like to extend our condolences to Dianne and her three sons, Bryce, Jacob and Stephen Dorey.

Steve was born in 1951 in Washington, D.C. Funeral services were Monday, June 1, in Chehalis, Washington at St. Joseph's Catholic Church.

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## Good Things

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### Cold-Case Playing Cards Bring Police New Leads

by Diana Hefley, HeraldNet, 5/24/2009

Some laughed, recounting funny stories and happy memories. Others cried when they talked about what was taken from them. Many unleashed angry words for killers who walk free. Some said they hold out hope for answers and a few believe they'll never know what happened.

No matter where they are in their grief, the relatives and friends of the victims featured in the state's first deck of cold-case playing cards want the community to remember that justice is unfinished for someone they love, someone they miss.

"As the years go on, even in the cold cases, they still want to know their loved one isn't forgotten," said Jenny Wieland, executive director of Family and Friends of Violent Crime Victims. "They also want people to know who the victims were and not just the horrific ways they were murdered."

The Snohomish County Sheriff's Office last year created the cold-case cards featuring 52 unsolved homicides and missing persons cases dating back to the 1970s.

The cards were distributed in jails and prisons in an effort to solicit new leads in stalled investigations. A \$1,000 reward is offered to inmates who step forward with information about a killing or disappearance. Investigators believe people who end up behind bars may hear jailhouse confessions or have direct knowledge of the crimes.

"We want anybody who has information, no matter how small they think it might be, because it might be key, to pass it along," sheriff's cold case detective Jim Scharf said.

Scharf and his former partner Dave Heitzman got the idea for the cards after reading about detectives in Florida who had solved a handful of murder investigations using tips that came from cold-case playing cards there.

Snohomish County police haven't made any arrests in the cases featured on the cards, Scharf said.

"We've gotten tips pointing us in some direction we haven't had before," he said. "We've gotten good information that's been helpful. We've gotten some names of potential suspects we didn't have before."

Detectives have interviewed about 30 people who called the tip line after seeing the playing cards. About a dozen of the calls came from inmates. The other interviews were with people who saw the cards while they'd been in jail or read about the cases in *The Herald*, Scharf said.

Every Sunday for a year, *The Herald* published a story about one card in the deck. Every playing card also was made available on the newspaper's Web site. More than 7,100 visitors viewed the deck online. Almost every week the stories ranked among the most read stories on the Web site.

Readers called into the newspaper just to say they remembered the cases. One woman asked where she could donate reward money for a 1972 homicide. The victim, 16-year-old Jody Loomis, had lived in her neighborhood.

"It's hard to look at all of those cards, all of those unsolved cases," Becky Von Rotz said. "But you never lose hope. You hope someone will come forward. I hope that, not only for my son, but all of these people on the cards."

Her son, Kyle Von Rotz, is featured on the two of hearts. He was shot to death in 2001. He was 22.

Barb Porter said the cards give her some hope that her son's killer will be caught.

"I'm hoping and praying someone will come forward," she said.

Christopher Porter is featured on the king of spades. He was gunned down in his Lynnwood-area home in 2005. He was 43.

Judy Kenworthy has learned over the past 20 years not to expect answers. She doesn't believe police will ever catch her daughter's killer.

Robin Kenworthy is featured on the king of clubs. The 20-year-old's body was discovered in 1988 in a remote area in east Snohomish County.

Her mother hopes other people will see her daughter's card and take to heart the dangers of drug addiction.

"Maybe someone else will find some way to save another child," Judy Kenworthy said. "If it gets through to even one, it's worthwhile."

Scharf said he hasn't given up on the cards. People come and go from the state's jails and prisons. Maybe someday a person with the right information will come across the cards and have the courage to speak up, he said.

The detective hopes to find the money to have another 5,000 decks printed and distributed in more prisons and jails. The first decks were funded by a grant from the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians.

A large poster depicting all 52 cards hangs inside the Everett office of Families and Friends of Violent Crimes Victims. The victim advocacy center was founded by relatives of missing persons and homicide victims. Many of those cases were unsolved and some are still cold cases, said Wieland, whose daughter was murdered in 1992. Many of those families lobbied the sheriff's office to fund a cold-case squad.

"We've worked with some of the cases in the deck. We know these families and we know how it's impacted them," Wieland said. "We've heard how appreciative they are that their loved ones have not been forgotten. Every time we look at that poster, we hope a resolution will come. We know there are people out there with answers."

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# Attachments

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## Welcome to the U.S. Communities Purchasing & Finance Agency

### (U.S. Communities) website <http://www.uscommunities.org/>

The Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO), the National Association of Counties (NACo), the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP), the National League of Cities (NLC), and the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM), jointly sponsor the

### U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance (U.S. Communities)

Designed in cooperation with an Advisory Board of local government purchasing officials, U.S. Communities pools the purchasing power of public agencies, achieves bulk volume discounts on behalf of public agencies, competitively solicits quality products through a lead public agency and provides a purchasing forum for public agencies nationwide.

You can obtain information on how to contact all U.S. Communities suppliers by telephoning (866) 472-7467 or by sending an email to [info@uscommunities.org](mailto:info@uscommunities.org)

U.S. Communities | 2175 North California Blvd., Suite 550, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

(866) 472-7467 | [info@uscommunities.org](mailto:info@uscommunities.org)

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"Results from our internal customer satisfaction survey show that our customers want two things from Purchasing. First save us time in the procurement process and second save us money. When Kansas City, Missouri uses a U.S. Communities contract we save both time and money for our customers."

**Ray Burnett,**  
**Commissioner of Purchases and Supplies**  
**Kansas City, MO.**

## **DC Update**

### **June 1, 2009**

Congress returns this week after a week long Memorial Day recess. Upon their return, FY 2010 appropriations, including health reform, will be a priority on the agenda. Also, last week's announcement of Supreme Court nominee, Sonia Sotomayor, from President Obama will require time in the Senate's schedule for confirmation hearings. Many disability groups have reviewed her previous rulings and are encouraged by her understanding of disability issues. NACBHDD will keep members updated as the confirmation process moves forward.

### **Medicare**

Representatives Lucille Royal-Allard (D-CA) and Pete Sessions (R-TX) introduced the Guidance, Understanding, and Information for Dual-Eligibles Act of 2009 (GUIDE), H.R. 2390. The bill would create a three year Medicare prescription drug outreach demonstration program. This program would assist individuals with behavioral health and cognitive and mental disabilities who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid (dual eligibles) navigate the Medicare Part D prescription drug program.

### **Housing**

Prior to recess, Congress has passed the Helping Families Save Their Home Act, S. 896. Included was an amendment for the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act (HEARTH Act)—a bill to reauthorize the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance programs. President Obama signed the legislation on May 20, 2009. The legislation reauthorizes, improves, and increases funding for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Programs, the primary federal funding source of rental subsidies for permanent supportive housing for people with disabilities. It also continues and strengthens the programs' emphasis on funding for permanent supportive housing for people with disabilities.

The legislation authorizes \$2.2 billion in funds. The funds can be used for rental subsidies, support services, or capital funding for permanent supportive housing.

### **Hearing Held on Restraint and Seclusion**

House Education and Labor Committee chairman George Miller (D-CA) recently held a hearing on the use of seclusion and restraint used in schools. Federal law regulates these activities in hospitals, residential treatment centers and other facilities receiving federal

funds, however no protections exist for children in public and private schools. The General Accountability Office (GAO) recently released a report, *Seclusions and Restraints: Selected Cases of Death and Abuse at Public and Private Schools and Treatment Centers* (<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d09719t.pdf>). The report included hundreds of allegations since 1990, a number of which include children with disabilities.

### **Congressional Briefing on Law Enforcement and People with Serious Mental Illness**

This week a Congressional briefing on law enforcement interactions with individuals with mental illness will be held. The briefing will highlight a recent report completed by the Council of State Governments Justice Center titled: *The Law Enforcement Response to People with Mental Illnesses: A Guide to Research-Informed Policy and Practice*. Check the following link to view the report: <http://consensusproject.org/downloads/le-research.pdf>

Presenters include:

- Fred Osher, M.D. Director, Health Systems and Services Policy, Council of State Governments Justice Center, study co-author;
- Judge Steven Leifman, Special Advisor on Criminal Justice and Mental Health, Supreme Court of Florida;
- Art Wallenstein. Director, Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation, MD; and
- Fred Frese, Ph.D., a psychologist who is a leading expert and spokesperson on serious mental illnesses, diagnosed with schizophrenia at age 25.

As Congress convenes this week, check for email alerts and future DC Updates for more information. Should you have any questions, please contact Maeghan Gilmore, [mgilmore@nacbhd.org](mailto:mgilmore@nacbhd.org) or Melissa Stein, [mstein@nacbhd.org](mailto:mstein@nacbhd.org).