NACA
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THE JOURNAL OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATION
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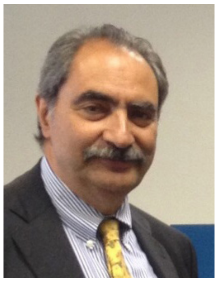
TECHNOLOGY CORNER

with Dr. Costis Toregas, The George Washington University

Be ready before, during and after a disaster – with technology!



As an incessant drumroll, headlines regarding earthquakes, record snowfalls, and hurricanes have brought the preparedness aspects of our nation's counties to the forefront, the way in which we prepare for, protect, and recover from major disasters (manmade or natural) is quickly and harshly put to the test. And if our county system is under stress from a power blackout, terrorism event or a major storm, it is not the right time to discover that we are not prepared or are lacking a key asset! And one asset that we should not forget to keep at the ready is technology.

But rather than assembling lists of technology tools and asking you to pick those relevant to your jurisdiction and available budgets, it might be useful to consider a few general and vital management concerns, and then match them with relevant technologies. In this way, you might find that you can use a variety of methods (including non-technical ones!) to ensure that your management preparations are in line with the seemingly increasing risk from disasters:

1. **Communicate** precisely, clearly, and constantly with the public you serve. Sometimes warnings or directions for taking cover are ignored or never received by those who most need them. The social media strategies now evident in many counties are useful, but for those residents who do not use them or cannot afford them, alternate lo-tech mechanisms must be found. Local TV or radio stations can serve as one-to-many communications platforms to convey important governmental communications, but pre-arranged protocols must be in place ahead of time. Alerting systems that send messages to people who subscribe to receive text messages directly on their smart phones can also play a key communication function addressing a smaller, predefined group or groups. Such systems always require prearranged protocols with telecommunications providers, and as recent difficulties have shown us, the chain of command must be always tested and found healthy.

   It is also vital that all elected officials be briefed often on status and key concerns. Many times, residents will reach out to their representatives directly, bypassing links to the professionals who are directly engaged in managing unfolding disasters and are in a position to know details, and it is vital that correct information is provided to the leadership in a consistent manner. Many counties have created a communications liaison staff position whose sole job is to receive status reports from professional staff and relay them to all elected officials in a consistent manner by phone or email throughout an emergency.
2. **Train,** train, train. Many counties institute monthly or quarterly table top drills to engage multiple departments and agencies, and develop realistic scenarios to stress organizational preparedness to the utmost. These drills can have realistic scripts, use actors to play-act situations and provide real time information flows using simulation software that can both add an air of reality, as well as observe and record staff responses to requests. It is vital to track questions that arise during training events, and ensure that they flow to the right people for answers and modifications to standard procedures.
3. **Relationships** with other jurisdictions and private sector and nonprofit entities are vital in times of disasters. Neighboring communities, the Red Cross, and local utilities are examples of key actors that must be explicitly engaged. Software communication and asset management software platforms

(continued on page 5)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Hannes Zacharias, NACA President

NACA President, Hannes Zacharias

I welcome this first opportunity to greet NACA members in the new year and hope that our respective counties envision a successful 2018. I am particularly delighted to welcome our newest Block State members from Maryland and Virginia. We are looking forward to gathering at the upcoming NACo Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., this March.

Please join your NACA colleagues at the events highlighted on the NACA website (www.countyadministrator.org). Our Idea Exchange is your opportunity to ask questions, share successes and challenges, and learn from your colleagues. Please note that the NACA Executive Board Meeting is open to all interested members and all are welcome to our Sunday reception immediately following the Idea Exchange, generously sponsored by ICMA-RC. Also, join fellow NACA members, Dena R. Diorio (Mecklenburg County, NC), Peter Austin (McHenry County, IL), and Matt Smith (Dakota County, MN), as they lead conversations at workshops and educational sessions.

In advance of the NACo Legislative Conference, NACA board representatives will meet with key staff at NACo and ICMA headquarters to further the collaborative efforts that were initiated by my predecessors, including NACA Past President, Peter Austin (McHenry County, IL). Among our goals, we want to ensure that conference sessions and other professional development opportunities provide content that attracts and benefits county professionals. NACA is now an official partner of ICMA's Local Government Management Fellowship (LGMF) Program and an outreach partner of the ICMA Coaching Program.

We are also committed to growing the presence of county professionals on NACo committees. NACo is aiming to improve its benefits for county professionals, and NACA members are ideal candidates to help them do just that. As an affiliate of NACo, NACA has the privilege of being able to appoint representatives to NACo Policy Steering Committees: Agriculture & Rural Affairs; Community, Economic & Workforce Development; Environment, Energy & Land Use; Finance, Pensions & Intergovernmental Affairs; Health; Human Services & Education; Justice & Public Safety; Telecommunications & Technology; and Transportation. If you are interested in serving on a committee or would like to learn more about what this responsibility would entail, contact us at NACA@icma.org.

I am pleased to announce that NACA will offer scholarships to county professionals attending the ICMA Regional Conferences (previously ICMA Regional Summits) being held in five locations during March, April, and May. Each of the five scholarships will provide complimentary registration, and a stipend of up to $1,500 for transportation and lodging. The application process and deadlines are available on the NACA website (www.countyadministrator.org).

These scholarships are made possible through the support of ICMA-RC in their commitment to NACA's work on next generation initiatives and efforts to attract and support future leaders to the profession of county administration.

Finally, I would like to announce that NACA has reengaged its committees: Executive, Strategic Plan, Program, Awards and Scholarships, Membership, Communications, and Sponsorship. If you are interested in serving on one of these committees, contact us at NACA@icma.org and we will put you in contact with the respective Committee Chair.

Again, I wish all an exciting and productive year in public service, and I look forward to seeing you in Washington, D.C., during the NACo Legislative Conference.

Best Regards,
Hannes Zacharias, NACA President

NACA

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Inside

First Net: Modernizing Public Safety Communications Through Broadband Technology

by Mark Ryckman, City Manager, City of Corning, New York

Bob McEvoy, Public Service Professor at Rockefeller College, and I recently discussed the tremendous impact of technology has made on local government service delivery. Professor McEvoy had a long, distinguished career as the County Manager of Schenectady County, New York. During his service on the ICMA Executive Board he facilitated the launch of ICMA's long collaborative relationship with NACA. Throughout his career he has encouraged professional local government managers to embrace the use of technology. He asked that I summarize some of my work in the area of public safety technology for the Journal of County Administration, since County Managers are often on the forefront of this field.

Mark Ryckman

Broadband technology has revolutionized business processes and our daily social interactions. The exchange of data using hand-held devices, wearables, and tablets have been widely adopted in the business community and are becoming more commonplace in local government. This broadband revolution is now poised to change public safety.

Currently, most first responders rely on traditional Land Mobile Radio (LMR) systems for their two-way communications. The ability to only transmit voice limits the exchange of critical data. What if firefighters could access floor plans on scene, or police office could stream data back to the command post? With this type of capability, our first responders could significantly improve their situational awareness allowing improved decision making.

Some public safety agencies have already been implementing LTE technology using commercial services. For example, police officers often have mobile data terminals in their vehicles. Unfortunately, these commercial services do not provide first responders with priority access during an incident. They must compete with the general public for service which can hamper public safety communications. During a large-scale incident commercial networks can become overwhelmed, just when first responders need them most. During the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, as well as Hurricane Katrina, cellular services were disrupted. Public safety has long needed its own network to provide reliable service as identified in the 9/11 Commission Report. With the creation of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet), the infrastructure for these solutions has now arrived.

A Purpose-Built Network:

The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 ("the Act") included an often underreported program to improve public safety communications. The International City/County Management Association along with every major public safety professional association advocated for Congress to allocate funding and broadband spectrum to build a nationwide, interoperable public safety broadband network. The final Act adopted by Congress and signed by the President included the creation of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet), and allocated $7 billion of funding along with 20MHz of prime spectrum.

Since the Act was passed, thousands of public safety representatives have provided input to FirstNet detailing the unique needs of public safety. This includes items such as interoperability, public safety grade tower sites and devices, service quality, and priority access to the network.

FirstNet took that input and issued a request for proposals (RFP) to identify a private sector partner to build and operate the network. The process resulted in the selection of commercial carrier AT&T. Partnering with AT&T is bringing significant benefits to the First Responder community. One of the advantages is AT&T's extensive commercial network which brings 100MHz of spectrum to complement the 20MHz of spectrum allocated by Congress, and AT&T's telecom expertise. Second, FirstNet offers priority and preemption, allowing first responders to transmit data uninterrupted over the network regardless of the general public's usage. It moves public safety to the front of the line during peak periods as experienced during large scale incidents or sporting events. Third, partnering with AT&T will allow FirstNet to expand services into rural areas that have been traditionally underserved. Public safety often has difficulty securing reliable wireless signals in rural areas, especially those with rugged topography.

Marketplace for Innovation:

One of the most significant long-term benefits of FirstNet is the creation of a marketplace for innovation. Having a strong customer base of first responders nationwide using a common network will incentivize private sector interests to develop innovative applications for public safety.

To assist in the development of this technology ecosystem, FirstNet has launched a developer program. The program will connect developers with public safety users to design applications to meet the unique needs of first responders. Through the program, developers will be able to design, test, implement, and maintain these applications. Using open programming standards will increase collaboration in the field, helping to spur further innovation. The developer program will provide these solutions through the FirstNet app store.

(continued on page 5)

FROM YOUR NACO REPRESENTATIVE

by Eugene Smith, NACA Past President, County Administrator, Iron County, Michigan

The fall meeting of the NACo Board of Directors was held in Tarrant County, Texas in conjunction with the 2017 Poverty Summit from December 7 through December 9, 2017. It was an outgrowth of NACo President Roy Charles Brooks' focus on the critical role counties play in breaking the cycle of multigenerational poverty as his term's policy initiative.

The Poverty Summit convened on December 7, 2017, with a broad representation of members of the Board of Directors as well as interested and concerned elected and appointed officials from across the country. While there were many productive sidebar discussions, the thrust of the summit focused upon panel and roundtable discussions on Cross-sector Efforts to Impact Student Achievement; Early Head Start; Urban vs. Rural Poverty: The Effects of Generational Poverty on Children and Communities; and The Impact of the Opioid Crisis on Children and Families. On the social side, summit participants were invited to attend a performance of The Nutcracker by the Texas Ballet Theatre on the evening of the December 7.

The Audit Committee, upon which NACA is represented, met on the morning of Friday, December 8, 2017. Two major issues were addressed. The Committee reviewed and approved the audit engagement letter with Tate and Tryon for the 2017 independent audit. The committee reviewed and approved the RFP selection process to find a new auditor for 2018. Routine business included the review of management and Executive Committee expense reports and a continuing discussion upon a possible change in NACoRF's tax status.

President Brooks convened the Board of Directors meeting on the afternoon of December 8. Minutes were approved. New Members were approved. Audit and Finance Committee reports, both of which include NACA involvement, were presented and accepted. The proposed $24.1 million 2018 budget, which had preliminarily been reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee at a meeting in Washington, D.C., in November 2017, was presented and accepted. The Board recessed at about 4:30 pm.

At 9:30 am on the morning of Saturday, December 9, 2017, President Brooks called the Board back to order. The meeting began with a discussion on 2018 federal policy priorities and the priorities of the Policy Steering Committees. After discussion, amendment and clarification, the Board approved two 2018 Legislative Priorities. The remainder of the morning was spent in deliberating upon strategies for achieving NACo's policy goals and ideas to increase member engagement around county policy issues initiated by panel discussions.

See you all at the Legislative Conference in D.C. ■

2018 ICMA Coaching Program

NACA is now an official Outreach Partner of the ICMA Coaching Program, which offers a suite of services to help you grow, make decisions that benefit your career, gain perspective from others, and achieve your goals.

Along with many other opportunities, the ICMA Coaching Program is offering several free webinars in 2018:

- *Maximizing Your Growth at Each Career Stage – Wednesday, February 28 from 2-3:30 p.m. ET*
- *Entrepreneurial Solutions for Local Government Challenges – Wednesday, March 28 1:30-3 p.m. ET*
- *Creating a Culture for Cultivating Talent and Getting Result – Thursday, May 10 from 1-2:30 p.m. ET*
- *Recognize and Eliminate Bias: Keys to Being a Better Leader and Team Player – Wednesday, September 19 from 1-2:30 p.m. ET*
- *Taking Smart Risks and Rebounding from Setbacks – Thursday, October 25 from 1:30-3 p.m. ET*
- *Gaining Project Support from Your Team, Elected Officials, and the Public – Wednesday, November 14 from 2-3:30 p.m. ET*

Learn more about the ICMA Coaching Program at www.icma.org/icma-coaching-program.

("Be Ready Before" from page 1)

such as WebEOC are increasingly popular to provide explicit linkages between disparate agencies. If you serve a smaller community, chances are that a neighboring county or state agency may already have a platform that needs your engagement – find out and take advantage!

4. During disasters, residents are anxious to know **when help is on the way.** During major snow storms, the ability to share snowplow routes or expected target times by which streets or neighborhoods will be attended to can be literally life-saving. Here, the existence of good operational information on asset location (for example GPS), coupled with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is the way to establish such capacity. And cloud-based, smart-phone app solutions exist that reduce one-time costs and can have you up and running quickly and efficiently.

5. **Alternates to the power grid** for a variety of functions – from charging phones to powering radios and TVs and other vital tools must be considered. Given the degree of reliance of our public safety and disaster management agencies on computers and the web, backup power supplies (UPS or uninterrupted power supplies) or other means of providing power, as well as surge protection should be factored into plans. In addition, the distribution and fueling requirements to keep the UPS systems in operation can also bring their own logistical challenges that must be factored into an overall plan.

6. **Situational awareness** is vital to proper planning and execution, and it has been significantly improved recently with the addition of autonomous vehicles and directed drones which carry cameras or smart phones. Both can give emergency managers the ability to collect data about a dangerous situation without putting people at risk, and to proceed based on facts rather than assumptions.

7. And finally, even though a disaster may be unpredictable, it is vital for each government entity to **develop a disaster plan** and keep it as current as possible. Simple things like proper telephone numbers for officials that must be notified under certain conditions, and proper protocols for identifying patients that need power at all times, or hazardous sites that must be tracked in times of flooding can all be developed and stored in a cell phone message or cloud-based document that can quickly be updated and shared in times of crisis.

Ultimately, surviving a disaster requires strong management skills, and good advance preparation. But a pinch of technology will always be helpful; it's never too late to review your own plans, and make sure that you are comfortable with your own strategy. ■

("First Net" from page 3)

Role of County Managers:

County governments are in a unique position to assist in the deployment of FirstNet. Counties are often operating large regional communications systems for public safety. As community leaders, county managers can start taking steps to take advantage of this new technology. First, county managers can begin by inventorying the data needs of first responders in their regions and prioritize what is important. Do firefighters need to see floor plans? Do dispatch centers need to stream video to police units in the field? Would emergency room personnel want to receive vital patient information from an ambulance en route to the hospital?

Second, encourage departments and agencies in your jurisdictions to organize and format their data for use over LTE networks. Fire departments can begin digitizing floor plans. Law enforcement agencies may want to compress video or select lower video quality to speed transmission. Encouraging close communications with your IT departments will help to ensure the data formats selected are the most useful.

Third, begin budgeting for LTE services, devices, and applications. Who needs a device? What types of applications would be most useful? Are there other commercial service subscriptions that can be migrated to FirstNet's new service plans? Budgeting for this transition may take some time, especially if there are no pre-existing vendors or services identified on state bid lists.

Fourth, begin to establish your governance structures. Who will be responsible for overseeing this new technology? Identify who has the authority to make decisions, provide general oversight, and daily operations. Partnerships among agencies may require intermunicipal agreements to clearly define roles and responsibilities.

Conclusion:

It's exciting to see this revolution in broadband technology finally coming to public safety. First responders have long needed a reliable nationwide network to share mission critical data. After several years of planning, FirstNet is now in the deployment phase. I encourage county managers to take the lead in coordinating the use of this network at the local level to ensure the deployment devices and applications are done on a cost-effective basis with sound governance structures. For more information, visit www.FirstNet.gov.

Mark L. Ryckman is the City Manager for the City of Corning, New York. He also represents ICMA on FirstNet's Public Safety Advisory Committee. ■

by Bob Schultze, President and CEO, ICMA-RC
and John Saeli, Vice President, Market Strategy and Government Affairs, ICMA-RC

Tax Reform Enacted, Retirement Plan Simplification and Enhancement Act Introduced, DOL Extends Fiduciary Rule Transition Period, Trump Administration Regulatory Agenda


Bob Schultze


John Saeli

In the first year of the Trump administration, several events occurred in Washington affecting public retirement plans. Tax reform legislation signed into law in December 2017 will affect many aspects of the U.S. economy, including public plans. In the same month, Representative Richard Neal (D-MA) introduced the Retirement Plan Simplification and Enhancement Act, which includes a wide range of enhancements that could be included in pension legislation at some point in the future. On the regulatory front, the Trump administration extended the fiduciary rule transition period to July 1, 2019, and the Trump administration released its first regulatory agenda.

Tax Reform Enacted. President Trump signed tax reform legislation (H.R.1) into law on December 22, 2017, making the most substantial amendments to U.S. federal tax law since 1986. H.R.1 generally reduces individual and corporate income tax rates, effective January 1, 2018, and makes substantial changes to many deductions, credits, and other provisions of the tax code.

The tax reform law contains virtually none of the onerous provisions affecting tax deferred retirement plans that were considered during the legislative process and are discussed later in this article. The following provisions would directly affect public Section 457(b) deferred compensation and Section 401(a) defined contribution plans as well as Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs):

- *Extension of Time for Terminated Employees to Repay Loans:* The period in which a terminated participant can repay an outstanding loan through a loan offset contribution to an IRA or another employer plan in order to avoid taxes and penalties for a distribution is substantially extended from 60 days after severance to the individual's tax return due date, including extensions, for the year in which the offset occurred.
- *Roth Recharacterizations:* Participants making a rollover contribution or conversion of pre-tax assets in an IRA, qualified retirement plan, 403(b) plan, or 457 to a Roth IRA are no longer permitted to subsequently "recharacterize" the assets back to pre-tax status in the year in which the rollover occurred. This prohibits participants from undoing a decision to move assets into a Roth IRA should their investment performance subsequently reduce assets in their account. All other aspects of pre-tax/Roth rollover contributions and conversions are unchanged. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has clarified that recharacterization is allowed through October 15, 2018, for a 2017 Roth conversion.
- *Length of Service Awards for Public Safety Volunteers:* The annual limit on the accrual of length of service awards for a volunteer who provides firefighting and prevention, emergency medical, and ambulance services is doubled to $6,000. There is also a cost-of-living adjustment in $500 increments based on the rules for increasing plan limits. In addition, the legislation clarifies the method for valuing a length of service award that is paid as a defined benefit plan.
- *2016 Disaster Area Tax Relief:* Tax relief is provided for certain retirement plan and IRA distributions taken on or after January 1, 2016, and before January 1, 2018, by individuals: 1) whose principal place of abode was located in a presidentially-declared disaster area at any time during 2016, and 2) who sustained an economic loss by reason of the events giving rise to the disaster declaration. Specifically, the Act: 1) provides an exception to the 10% early distribution penalty; 2) exempts the distribution from mandatory 20% withholding; 3) permits payment of applicable income taxes over a three-year period; and 4) permits re-contribution of the distribution to a plan or IRA within three years. This special tax treatment is limited to aggregate distributions not in excess of $100,000.

Retirement Plan Simplification and Enhancement Act Introduced. Representative Richard Neal (D-MA), ranking member of the House Ways and Means Committee, introduced the Retirement Plan Simplification and Enhancement Act on December 1, 2017. The bill, aimed at simplifying and enhancing a variety of retirement plan rules, contains proposals that have

(continued on page 7)

("Tax Reform Enacted" from page 6)

appeared in other legislation (including bipartisan bills), with provisions that would: 1) expand coverage and increase retirement savings; 2) preserve income in retirement; 3) simplify the rules for defined contribution plans and required minimum distributions; and 4) clarify and simplify defined benefit plan rules. Because of Representative Neal's long history working on retirement issues and his seniority on the tax writing committee, it is possible that provisions from the bill could be folded into broader legislation. The following is a review of a few of the numerous provisions of this bill:

- *Make Saver's Credit Available via Form 1040-EZ:* Enhance use of the Saver's Credit by low and middle-income individuals to save for retirement by directing the Treasury Secretary to make the Saver's Credit available on the Form 1040-EZ.
- *Update Rules for Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs):* Increase the mandated age for beginning RMDs from age 70½ to 71 in 2019, then to 72 in 2024, and to 73 in 2029. Thereafter, the starting age for RMDs would be adjusted in a manner proportional to increases in life expectancy. In addition, participants would no longer be required to comply with RMD rules for a year if they have a balance in their retirement plans and IRAs of not more than $250,000 on December 31 of the prior year.
- *Enhance Auto Escalation:* Modify auto escalation features as follows to facilitate enhancement of retirement savings (while the public sector is not subject to these provisions, they may be used in the design of auto escalation features in 457(b) deferred compensation plans):
  - The automatic enrollment safe harbor cap that limited escalation of employee deferrals to 10% of employee pay would be removed.
  - An alternative automatic enrollment safe harbor would be established with a minimum default contribution of 6% in the first year, 7% in the second year, then 8% in the next year, 9% the following year, and 10% in all subsequent years (the minimum for the current safe harbor is 3% for all years). Under the new safe harbor, employers would be required to make matching contributions that vary by contribution level on behalf of all eligible, non-highly compensated employees.
- *Enhance Target Date Fund Disclosures:* In order to provide for better comparisons and aid participant decision-making, direct the Department of Labor (DOL) to modify regulations so that an investment that uses a mix of asset classes can have a primary benchmark against a blend of broad-based securities market indices. In such instances: 1) the index blend would need to reasonably match the fund's asset allocation over time; 2) the index blend would need to be reset at least once a year; and 3) the underlying indices would need to be appropriate for the investment's component asset classes and otherwise meet conditions for index benchmarks under the DOL rule.

DOL Extends Fiduciary Rule Transition Period. On November 27, 2017, the DOL released a widely expected extension of the transition period for its Fiduciary Rule for an additional 18 months until July 1, 2019. This will allow the DOL additional time to consider changes to Fiduciary Rule's exemptions, potentially in coordination with the Securities and Exchange Commission, which is working on a related project regarding the standard of care for retail investment advice. The DOL rule requires that brokers and other financial professionals providing investment recommendations to ERISA plan participants and IRA savers act solely in the best interest of participants, imposing a fiduciary obligation on such practices for the first time. The DOL decided not to enforce the rule during the transition period extension for an investment fiduciary, acting in good faith to comply with the rule.

Trump Administration Regulatory Agenda. The Trump administration released its regulatory agenda in December 2017, which included the following with respect to public sector retirement and savings plans (while certain of these apply to ERISA plans, such regulations often become reflected as public sector "best practices.")

DOL Agenda

- *Fiduciary Rule:* The agenda noted a request for information previously released regarding the Fiduciary Rule and prohibited transaction exemptions. No date was targeted for further action. (The transition period for the rule was subsequently extended to July 1, 2019, as described above.)
- *Fiduciary Relief for Lifetime Income Qualified Default Investment Alternatives:* The DOL plans to "explore whether, and to what extent, regulatory amendments would be appropriate to facilitate the use of lifetime income products and features as, or as part of, qualified default investment alternatives" in its long-term agenda.
- *Other "Long Term" Projects:* The DOL lists its projects regarding pension benefit statements (including a lifetime income disclosure), the safe harbor for selection of an annuity distribution option, and fee disclosure for welfare plans as next actions "to be determined."

IRS Agenda

- *Governmental Plan Definition:* The IRS's project to define entities that

(continued on page 8)

(“Tax Reform Enacted” from page 7)

can sponsor governmental retirement plans, on which no action has been taken since 2012, continues to be listed. The next step in the process is for the IRS to release a proposed regulation for public comment.

- *Cadillac Tax:* The IRS continues to list proposed regulations on the excise tax on high cost, employer-sponsored health coverage, also called the Cadillac tax, as a project. Absent further Congressional action, the tax goes into effect in 2020 and would apply to state and local employers.
- *457(f) Plans:* The IRS proposed regulations governing 457(f) plans in June 2016, which have yet to be finalized, continue to be on the IRS’s agenda. ■

NACA Events at 2018 NACo Legislative Conference

MARCH 3-7, 2018 - Washington, D.C.

EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
NACA Executive Board Meeting	Saturday, March 3	3:00pm-5:00pm	Washington Hilton Hotel Room: Northwest, Lobby Level
NACA Idea Exchange	Sunday, March 4	2:30pm-5:00pm	Washington Hilton Hotel Room: Lincoln East, Concourse Level
NACA Reception Sponsored by ICMA-RC	Sunday, March 4	5:00pm-6:00pm	Washington Hilton Hotel Room: Oak Lawn, Lobby Level

SESSIONS LED BY NACA MEMBERS

Building Citizen Buy-In

Monday, March 5 from 10:45am – 12:00pm

Room: Columbia 9 & 10, Terrace Level

with Dena R. Diorio, County Manager, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

County government management and operations rely on citizen engagement for many reasons, including votes on bond proposals and tax increases, input on budget proposals and key advisory boards. This workshop will focus on more ways counties can harness and increase citizen engagement in overall operations and management, validating decision-making and working effectively as a community. This workshop covers using social media to rapidly mobilize a community, successful messaging and other public outreach tools.

Building Trust Through Performance Metrics

Monday, March 5 from 3:15pm – 4:30pm

Room: Columbia 6 & 8, Terrace Level

with Peter Austin, County Administrator, McHenry County, Illinois

In an increasingly complex world, counties are tasked with meeting growing demands with fewer resources. To meet this challenge effectively, many counties track performance to review progress and adjust day-to-day operations. This session discusses how counties of all sizes track performance, existing processes and lessons learned.

Counties Care: How to Effectively Serve Families in Need

Tuesday, March 6 from 8:00am – 9:15am

Room: Columbia 6 & 8, Terrace Level

with Matt Smith, County Manager, Dakota County, Minnesota

The roots of poverty strike deep within a community. The experiences of children aged 0-3 can have a profound impact on their social and economic wellbeing later in life, and cycles of poverty can perpetuate in a family simply because of inadequate care for the county’s youngest residents. This workshop will bring together county leaders to discuss their work in trying to break this cycle of multigenerational poverty through early childhood development efforts. *Breakfast will be provided for attendees.*

2018 ICMA Regional Conferences

ICMA Regional Conferences are two-day learning experiences with career-building, mentoring, and leading ideas to help local government professionals and their communities thrive. In 2018, the Regional Conference program (formerly known as the Regional Summits) is full of new educational breakout sessions, hands-on lessons, and networking opportunities that offer local government professionals the leadership essentials needed to succeed.

With the generous support of ICMA-RC, NACA is pleased to offer five scholarships, one for each of the five 2018 ICMA Regional Conferences. These scholarships of up to $1,500 will cover registration, hotel, and travel expenses for NACA members attending an ICMA Regional Conference for the first time. Learn more about the scholarships and apply at www.countyadministrators.org.

The 2018 ICMA Regional Conferences will be held at the following locations:

- *Midwest Region: Columbus, Ohio – March 7-9*
- *Northeast Region: Hershey, Pennsylvania – March 21-23*
- *Mountain Plains Region: Arvada, Colorado – April 11-13*
- *Southeast Region: Mountain Brook, Alabama - April 25-27*
- *West Coast Region: Stevenson, Washington – May 2-4*

State and Local Pensions: A Long-Term View

by Gerald Young, Senior Research Associate, SLGE

A recent Center for State and Local Government Excellence infographic shows state and local pension data from the Public Plans Database for funded ratios, required contributions paid, and investment allocations, assumptions and returns. Each is illustrated by at least a ten-year trend. This is a follow-up to SLGE's recent release "Infographic: Public Plans Data 2016 Snapshot," with a focus on fund management and performance, both before and since the Great Recession.

Highlights include:

- While the tech boom of the 1990s fueled funded ratios at or above 100%, subsequent recessions have brought ratios lower.
- Most plan sponsors are now paying the full or close to the full required contribution. The average required contribution paid was 96% in 2016.
- Even with the share of pension plans in the 100% + category declining from their highs in 2001-2007, many plans remain on track to reach full funding, with 77% in the 60-100% range in 2016.
- Those contributing 80% or more of their required contribution never dipped below 70% of the funds represented, and as of 2016, that total is back up to 89% of funds.
- If investment assumptions in a recession are not adjusted to match longer-term actual experience, the result can impact the funded ratio.
- For both state and local pension plans, the return on investment performance depends upon the investment portfolio. While some portions of the average portfolio have remained stable, the share invested in equities declined in the space of a single year, and fixed income instruments declined gradually over time.
- Looking ahead, the majority of state and local government pension plans are well positioned to meet their obligations by making their full required contributions, building up pension reserves, and adjusting both their investment return assumptions and, as appropriate, their asset mix.

Access the full SLGE publication at www.slge.org. ■

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