



County Courier

January 2016

National Conference of Republican County Officials

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2016 brings new President to NCRCO

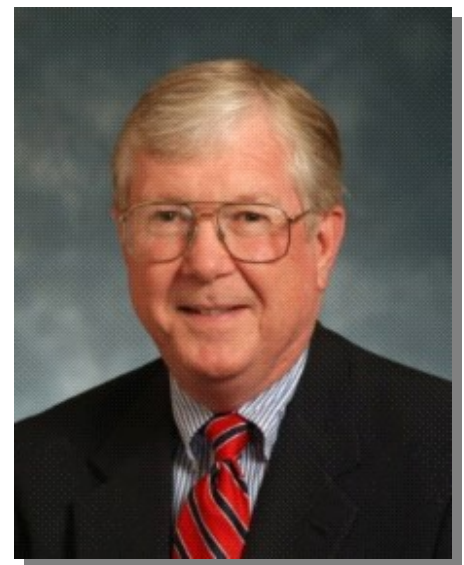
This new year brought with it some changes here at the NCRCO.

President Don Rosier who assumed the position at the Annual meeting in Charlotte last summer resigned to pursue a Colorado US Senate seat.

We wish him well in his new endeavor and will miss him among our ranks.

Having more US Senators with the experience of a county elected official can not help but bring some clarity to the federal situation.

Fortunately for NCRCO, Vice President Jon Burrows of Bell County Texas has stepped up and in accordance with Article VI of the NCRCO Bylaws has assumed the position of President.



NCRCO President

Jon Burrows

County Judge Bell County Texas

Legislative Conference meeting set

The NCRCO will be meeting in conjunction with NACo's Legislative Conference that will be held next month in Washington DC.

The NCRCO Business meeting will be held on the evening of February 22nd in the Washington Marriott Wardman Park Hotel @5 pm.

The Wardman Park is the primary conference Hotel of the LegCon so it will be very convenient for you to attend.

Immediately following the Business meeting we will have a reception with a guest speaker to enlighten us on the current issues swirling around our nation's

capital.

2016 Paid members are admitted free of charge to the reception and can each bring one guest for a fee of \$20.

Speaking of dues.... Our dues run on a calendar year basis and as such they are now due and payable.

Meet our new President

Bell County Judge Jon Burrows is in his 5th term as County Judge. Judge Burrows was raised in Oklahoma. He attended the University of Oklahoma on an Air Force Scholarship and is a retired colonel from the Air Force reserves. Following release from active duty, he entered law school at the University of Texas, where he received his law degree in 1976. He practiced law in Temple until his election as County Judge in 1998.

He and his wife, Katie, have been married 46 years. She retired in 2011 as Chair of the Biotechnology Department of the Texas Bioscience Institute of Temple College. In 2012, she was elected to the Board of Trustees of Temple College. They have two children and four grandchildren.

Judge Burrows has served as Chairman of the Board of the Temple Chamber of Commerce. He served on the Board of Temple College, been President of the Temple Lions Club, been Campaign Chairman of United Way of Central Texas, and has served on many other boards and committees.

He is the Past-President of the North & East Texas County Judges & Commissioners Association, current Chairman of the Hill Country Transit District, and Past-President of the Central Texas Council of Governments. He also served for 10 years on the Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group. He is one of two county appointees by former Governor Perry on the Texas Commission on Indigent Defense, having served since its inception in 2001.

He is a 2008 graduate of the Commissioners Court Leadership Academy sponsored by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service's V.G. Young Institute of County Government.

As the chief elected official in Bell County, he manages a budget of over \$87,000,000. Bell County has about 1,200 employees. County responsibilities include providing a court and records system, a juvenile justice system, a county jail, a juvenile and an adult probation system, operating a county-wide 911 Emergency Communications Center; building and maintaining county roads and bridges; approval of rural subdivision developments; providing indigent health care services and providing numerous other services.

Report of the Issues Committee—Transportation Act

Time to celebrate, a long-term surface transportation reauthorization bill was passed by the House and Senate and has been signed by the President! After a year of short-term extensions of MAP-21, federal highway and transit programs now have a long-term policy framework and funding through the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST). This one goes in the "win" column for counties!

The fully funded five-year measure represents a compromise between the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform (STRR) Act of 2015, which passed the House in November and the Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy (DRIVE) Act, which passed the Senate in July.

While many county priorities were included in both the STRR and DRIVE Acts, the FAST Act responds to NACo's call for the inclusion of preferred policy reforms and funding from each of the proposals. Rather than going forward with a partially funded six-year bill, as had been previously proposed, Congress ultimately provided a five-year

authorization with sufficient funding to keep the Highway Trust Fund solvent through its duration.

About the FAST Act

The FAST Act is a fully funded five-year bill that authorizes \$280 billion in spending out of the Highway Trust Fund for highway and transit programs.

About the FAST Act

This works out to an average of \$56.2 billion per year, an annual increase in investment of almost \$4 billion over current law. The bill reflects a compromise between the two chambers' reauthorization proposals and includes a number of county priorities, including:

Long-term certainty: The FAST Act is a fully funded five year bill that will provide counties the long-term certainty they need in order to plan,

fund and deliver transformative transportation projects.

Funding for locally owned

infrastructure: The FAST Act increases the amount of funding available for locally owned infrastructure by increasing funding for the Surface Transportation Program (STP) and making an additional \$116 billion available for county-owned highway bridges. This additional funding more than repairs the 30 percent decrease in funding that occurred under MAP-21.

Increased local decision-making: The FAST Act acknowledges and utilizes the value of local decision-making by sub-allocating a great share (up to 55% by FY 20) – or roughly \$28 billion – of the Surface Transportation Program to local areas and local governments.

Funding for off-system bridges: The FAST Act protects set-aside funding for off-system bridges, which provides over \$776 million annually for bridges that are primarily owned by counties and other local governments.

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Provisions to streamline project delivery: The FAST Act builds on the reforms of MAP-21 aimed at expediting and streamlining project delivery. Specifically, the bill establishes a new pilot program to allow states to substitute their own environmental

laws and regulations for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and requires an assessment of previous efforts to accelerate the environmental review process, as well as recommendations on additional means of accelerating the project delivery process.

Report of the Issues Committee—Waters of the US

A federal appeals court has ordered the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to temporarily delay the nationwide adoption of the “waters of the U.S.” (WOTUS) rule.

The order, from the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, was in response to challenges brought by 18 states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

While numerous WOTUS cases have been filed by 31 states and private parties in separate district courts, it was recently decided that all state challenges would be consolidated at the

6th Circuit Court of Appeals for review.

In their decision, two of the three appeals court judges held that the states bringing the challenges, “have demonstrated a substantial possibility of success on the merits of their claims” and ordered the rule to be, “STAYED,

the rule in 13 states: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming.

Prior to this latest court ruling, however, EPA and the Corps were still legally allowed to implement the final rule in the remaining 37 states.



nationwide, pending further order of the court.” However, in the coming weeks, the court must determine whether it has the authority to hear the case.

The Oct. 9 ruling comes after a separate decision, Aug. 27, by the U.S. District Court of North Dakota to delay

In a related but separate development, on Oct. 13, the U.S. Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation denied the federal government’s request to consolidate the various non-state generated lawsuits filed against the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers on the rule. This development only increases the complexity, and likely lengthens the time frame, of the judicial consideration of this rule.

A limited number of the NCRCO “Challenge Coins” are still available for purchase by our members for the low price of only \$10.

Order yours online at NCRCO.org or purchase it at the upcoming NCRCO event.

These high quality metal coins make great presentation gifts, display pieces and attention grabbers at events.

If you are so inclined you may even dare to use them for their more modern purpose of issuing a drink challenge to your military friends.

Just like a famous credit card, Never leave home without your NCRCO Challenge Coin!



Treasurer's Report

NCRCO Treasurer Joe Briggs reported on the Financial status of our organization at the Annual Meeting held on July 9, 2015,

As of that evening membership stood at 93 with cash in the Bank of \$5,522.30, outstanding receivable of \$1,500 and estimated unpaid expenses of \$1,630.

Between the annual meeting and December 31st the expected \$ 1,500 receivable was received and all outstanding payables were satisfied.

Additional memberships, proceeds from the Challenge Coin project sales and a new Platinum Level Sponsorship allowed us to end the Calendar year 2015 with no outstanding debt and a cash balance

of \$11,046.31.

Although NCRCO operates on a Fiscal year of August 1 through July 31 of each year, our dues and sponsorships are on a calendar year. This of course means that our dues are now due. Dues remain \$30 per year and can be paid by Cash, Check or Credit Card.

**NCRCO Treasurer
5900 Western Drive
Great Falls MT 59404**

To simplify the check in process before the events at the Leg Conference I am again asking all of our members to consider paying their

dues in advance.

This simple action will allow us to avoid members having to stand in line to check in at the event. Pre-Paid members will find their name badge ready for pickup and you can proceed directly into the meeting rather than being delayed.

Prepayment can be accomplished either by using the secure credit card system (PayPal) that can be accessed from our website or by sending your check for \$30 along with your contact information to the address displayed in the red box.

We will of course be happy to accept payment at the conference as well, but I hate lines, don't you?

It's 2016 and I Don't Use Twitter"

There, I said it.

Do I have to explain myself? OK, FINE!



"You're not on Twitter!?" People look at me like I'm still living in the Stone Age, old school, perhaps even a little rebellious. Do you think I'm an outcast, a recluse? Well, I think I'm just misunderstood because I don't want to end up in the wrong place – especially in a hashtag#.

I don't "use" Facebook either! YIKES... Confession, well.... I do "lurch" in the background and "stalk" my grandsons pictures. So I guess I did surrender to

looking at Facebook pictures but I don't "post." Hum... does that sound familiar?

I fully appreciate the wide-ranging benefits Twitter offers with a system of two-way communications designed to further each party's needs.

I recognize Twitter's numerous features allowing users to transmit information, access instantaneous news, stay in touch with their favorite people such as Trump, Fiorina, Cruz and Carson as well as to interact with our senators and congressmen along with their staff.

The level of creativity required in crafting a masterful tweet, both witty and informative, while balancing a 140-character limit is fascinating to me. I love all my friends, but is it really necessary to share every mindless thought or minor detail about your life with the world?

Actually, I've encountered somethings in everyday life that prompts me to think, "I'd tweet that." However, at this point I'm only fooling myself. I just can't convince myself to take the leap.

So here I stand, caught between a rock and a hashtag, unwilling to bite the bullet and succumb to Twitter.

**"So here I stand, caught
between a rock and a
hashtag"**

Who knows, perhaps the 2016 Presidential campaign will push me over the edge.

But for now, I'm with Yogi Berra, "If you don't know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else."

With that in mind, the NCRCO Business meeting will be Monday, February 22 beginning at 5:00 p.m. followed by the reception at 6:00. Make a note of this, so you know where you are going! The speaker and program are still being finalized. See you there!

Cindy R. Bobbitt
Immediate Past President

Minutes of the 2015 Annual Meeting

July 12, 2015 5:00 pm
Charlotte, NC
NASCAR Hall of Fame
Meeting Room

The meeting was called to order by President Cindy Bobbitt (OK), who also welcomed members and guests.

Jon Burrows (TX) opened in prayer.

Roll call was taken by sign in sheet. A quorum was declared present.

Immediate Past President Christian Leinbach (PA) recognized Devnet, Inc. for their sponsorship.

Arthur Scott, with NACo Legislative Affairs, told us about the "Counties Connect America" Initiative.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Secretary Beryl Amedee (LA) offered the minutes from February 23, 2015. Ray Valdes (FL) moved for approval, Jon seconded. Minutes were approved.

Treasurer Joe Briggs (MT) offered the financial report. RayValdes (FL) moved for approval. Christian seconded. Financial report and budget were approved.

Audit Committee report was issued by Ray Valdez, Chairman. Gordon Cruickshank moved for approval. Dick Cecil seconded. The report was approved.

The Budget Committee report which included the proposed budget for FY2015-16 was offered by Joe Briggs (MT), Chairman. Gordon Cruickshank moved for approval. Ken Klein (WA) seconded.

The Issues Committee Chairman, Gary Moore (KY), lead a discussion of several issues of interest. Waters of the US and Transportation Reauthorization are issues we urge NACo to focus on. (It was noted that President Obama is expected to veto WOTUS.) Ray Valdez (FL) moved for approval. Don Rossier (CO) seconded. Motion passed.

The report of the Membership Committee by Chairwoman Beryl Amedee (LA) was that membership has increased to 101, which means membership has tripled in 3 years.

Hospitality Chairman Don Rosier (CO), led a discussion concerning the venue at the Leg Con hotel.

Regional Directors' reports were presented in the May 2015 newsletter. Region 3 Director Jason Williams (NC) welcomed everyone to NC.

ELECTIONS

Nominating Committee Chair, Christian Leinbach (PA) (Immediate Past President), presented a slate of nominees for office as follows:

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President

Commissioner Don Rosier (CO)

Vice President

County Judge Jon Burrows (TX)

Treasurer

Commissioner Joe Briggs (MT)

Secretary

Councilman Ken Klein (WA)

President Cindy Bobbitt (OK) called for a vote. Gary Moore (KY) moved to accept the slate as presented. Dick Cecil seconded. Motion passed.

DIRECTORS

Region 1

Commissioner Bronwyn Asplund-Walsh (NH)

Region 2

Commissioner Jeff Haste (PA)

Region 3

Commissioner Jason Williams (NC)

Region 4

Tax Collector Ray Valdes (FL)

Region 5

Probate Clerk Paul Boyd (TN)

Region 6

Commissioner Gary Lee (OH)

Region 7

Commissioner Duane Sutton (SD)

Region 8

Commissioner Robert Boyd (KS)

Region 9

Commissioner Darry Stacy (OK)

Region 10

Commissioner Nancy Sharpe (CO)

Region 11

Commissioner Gordon Cruickshank (ID)

Region 12 - OPEN

President Cindy Bobbitt (OK) called for a vote. Gregg Chilcott (MT) moved to accept the slate as presented. Kent Ward seconded. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

Don Rosier (CO) presented outgoing President Cindy Bobbitt (OK) with a gift plaque for her service.

Greg Chilcott (MT) addressed the body and asked for their support of Lesley Robinson of Montana for the position of Western Region Director. Lesley is a NCRCO member but is currently speaking to a State Caucus Meeting, she will be joining our gathering for the reception.

Hearing no further business, Terence Farrell moved to adjourn. Jeff Ownby seconded. Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Beryl Amedee (LA), Secretary

Regional Director's Reports

Regions 1, 2 & 3

REGION 1 Report - (Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont).

By Bronwyn Asplund-Walsh, Merrimack County Commissioner, New Hampshire

New Hampshire

It's getting down to the wire in New Hampshire. It's been retail politics with the candidates who have survived being the ones who have made the best impression.

The most important thing is the talent level of all of them.

At the same time Hillary is spinning a web and somehow has kept from being indicted and called out for the continuing use of lies and phony rhetoric. Her rival for the nomination at least, while a declared Socialist, has been given credit for not lying.

Stay tuned to see if New Hampshire makes the choices that will help us retake the White House.

Massachusetts

In Massachusetts Governor Baker has been praised by the Speaker of the House as someone who listens and negotiates in good faith. More proof that Republicans bring a higher skill level to bear to find solutions that work. In this case the speaker a democrat has taken the no new taxes stand proposed by the Governor. This is the way Republicans and Democrats are working together in MA.

REGION 2 Report - (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut.)
By Jeff Haste, Dauphin County Commissioner, Pennsylvania

New York

Most of the State is gearing up for this year's Presidential election. Local organizations and individuals have been hosting Debate Watch parties. The New York State Federation of Republican Women will meet 4/10 - 4/12 at the Desmond Hotel, Albany NY.

New Jersey

Interest is peaking with New Jersey Governor Chris Christie running for

President. Debate watch parties are the place to be. Republicans at the State level are battling the Democrats' effort to eliminate competitive districts with their redistricting attempts. The Monmouth County Republican Committee will host its 53rd Lincoln Day Dinner, February 19 in Eatontown NJ.

Pennsylvania

It is January 2016 and the Democrat Governor still has not been able to get his 2015 budget passed !! Counties and School Districts have had to borrow money to stay in operation. As we begin the Legislative election cycle, a number of incumbent legislators are calling it quits and some of the County Commissioners ranks will be looking to fill some of these spots. In last year's County races, the Republicans had a net gain of 2 more Counties joining the Republican ranks. Of the 67 counties in PA 53 are now republican, 13 are democrat and 1 blended.

Connecticut

With the upcoming Presidential primaries around the corner, we have been hosting all that want to come see us and ask for our help.

REGION 3 Report - (Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia).

By Jason Williams, Gaston County Commissioner, North Carolina

West Virginia

The West Virginia Legislature has signaled that it will take up a Right-to-Work (RTW) bill in the 2016 session. Current West Virginia law allows for what's called a union shop. Under such an arrangement, a worker at a unionized business must be a member of the union or pay a fee to the union. If they don't, they can - and indeed must - be fired. An RTW law would allow workers to choose for themselves if they want to turn over part of their paychecks to the union without fear of losing their jobs.

RTW is an obvious benefit to workers, but it is more than just allowing people to keep more of what they earn.

According to WV county economic development specialists, one of the most important criterion businesses look at when determining whether to open a facility in a particular state is the existence of an RTW law. This is one of the key factors why half of the 50 states have already passed RTW. Since 2012, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin have passed RTW laws. Kudos to West Virginia for wanting to try a different course.

North Carolina

According to Forbes magazine, the last several years have been referred to as the golden age of state tax reform. That's certainly the case in North Carolina. NC lawmakers used 2015 to build upon their historic tax reform package of 2013, referred to by Tax Foundation economist Scott Drenkard as "one of the most impressive state tax reform efforts we've seen in the last 10 years."

In 2013, North Carolina's income tax was cut from 7.75 to 5.75. Before the adjournment of their legislative session this year, North Carolina lawmakers passed legislation to provide further income tax relief, taking the rate down to 5.499 percent. Lt. Gov. Dan Forest reiterated that the ultimate goal is to eventually eliminate the state's income tax. North Carolina looks to remain a leader in tax reform in the coming years.

Virginia

The Virginia GOP has come out strong against the President's Executive Action on guns. The VA GOP Chair calls the actions of the President purely political citing that his "emergency" regulations, "would not have prevented a single shooting." He went on to say, "They're *designed to shore up Hillary Clinton's far left base, and keep the campaign donations from anti-gun zealots like Michael Bloomberg coming. Our Commonwealth and our country*

Regional Director's Reports

Regions 4 & 5

REGION 4 Report - (Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Puerto Rico, Virgin Island).

By Ray Valdes, Seminole County Tax Collector, Florida

The usual and logical practice in submitting an article for the NCRCO Newsletter by a Region Director is to present current events within the states of the Region. In that regard, in my opinion, South Carolina will be the first meaningful early Primary vote and Florida with it's "winner take all" 99 delegates vote on Super Tuesday in March, 2016 will be a major factor in our Republican Presidential selection process.

Whoever eventually wins the Republican nomination, the road to victory in the November, 2016 General Election will go to the candidate that outperforms in three factors: 1) a well targeted grass roots get out the vote focus; 2) effective use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapshot); and 3) effective engagement with like minded Hispanic voters.

In some cases the factors overlap. Did you know Hispanics are the most active over 18 age group (80% of adults versus 70% of all others) on social media?

To win voter targeting and turn out, the Republican National Committee (RNC) began in early 2013 to assemble an "expert" team to analyze and determine why Mitt Romney lost in 2012 and to develop a game-winning strategy to win the presidency in 2016. Overwhelmingly it was decided there was a need to create a new advanced state-of-the-arts software platform to be housed in a new vastly expanded RNC Data Center. Funding and adequate staffing by the RNC was committed to design a superb data service to be available to any Republican candidate running for office anywhere in the nation.

If you have not had an opportunity to hear Azarius Reda, RNC Chief Technology Officer present an overview

of the mind blowing detail capabilities of the platform, you have missed a revelation on future political campaigning. Access allows Republican campaigns and candidates to read and write data to and from the data platform through applications, routines, protocols and tools to continuously retrieve, input, and/or modify unbelievable local individual and/or grouped voter information without RNC participation.

You can access over 300 TERABYTES of data and over 20 years of voter contact information. You can pinpoint any single issue or characteristic, or design groupings to identify any or every voter within a specific target area you select, and then receive instant results and/or a printout in minutes.

To further assist you, the RNC has already sub-divided many high value states into thousands of target "Turfs" (the RNC has switched to "turfs" instead of precincts as a preferable geographic grouping of persuadable voters).

If we field solid Republican candidates, this new data manipulation capability, use of social media, and reasonable demographics should propel us to win the voter targeting and turnout of our expanded base in the 2016 General Elections.

REGION 5 Report – (Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee)

By Paul Boyd, Shelby County Probate Clerk, Tennessee

The GOP continues to dominate in the Deep South

Alabama

While the Great State of Alabama has been solidly red for quite a while now, the GOP has still found ways to grow. Northwest Alabama has moved from a democrat stronghold to fertile republican ground, as evidenced by the election of David Black to the Colbert County Commission. Also Alabama saw several county officials defect from the

democrat party and become Republicans this past year. Lauderdale County District Attorney Chris Connoly, Circuit Clerk Missy Holman Hibbett and County Commissioner Faye Parker were all welcomed into the Republican Party. District Judge Jeb Fannin and Circuit Clerk Brian York joined the party in Talladega County.

Kentucky

2015 was an exciting election year for the commonwealth. The Kentucky GOP was able to pick win big and pick up the Governor's Mansion with the Election of Matt Bevin and his running-mate, Jenean Hampton, the new Lt. Gov.

Mississippi

The Magnolia State also held state elections in 2015. Once again the good people of Mississippi chose to keep republican leadership in all but 1 of the 8 statewide Constitutional offices. This ticket was of course led by the re-election campaign of Gov. Phil Bryant

Tennessee

Here in the Volunteer state, Governor Bill Haslam and the GOP supermajorities, in both the state house and state senate, are preparing for the start of a new session of the general assembly. Issues expected to take center stage this year include: Structure and Funding of Higher Education, Abortion Regulation and restrictions, Criminal sentencing reform and discussion of gas and diesel fuel taxes. Also a huge topic will be the state's expected \$600 million surplus this year.



McLANE GROUP
Leading the Charge

Regional Director's Reports

REGION 6 Report – (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio)

By Gary Lee, Union County Commissioner, Ohio

Hello from District 6. I am Gary Lee from Union County Ohio your NCRO representative.

All four states have been busy putting the final touches on our 2016 budget. Like everyone else budgets are still a very difficult task. In Ohio, state finances are doing very well while local government budgets are still stretched to the "Nth" degree.

There is a lot of interest in county level offices with more than normal head to head competition for the high profile offices in the primary.

Even more interesting is the Presidential race. A lot of attention is just ready to come our way considering the early March primary. Just like everywhere else everybody is asking, "Will Donald Trump remain the front runner?"

One thing seems apparent, Republican principles are still agreeing with a majority of down to earth voters, but it is a long time to November! I am sure we will keep it together and deliver a Republican Presidential winner this fall.

Look forward to seeing you all at a NACO conference this year.

REGION 8 Report – (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska)

By Robert Boyd, Riley County Commissioner, Kansas

The New Year is upon us in the nation's heartland, but not the cold. Our temperatures are moderate and rainfall higher than normal which is good for agriculture, heating bills and outdoor activities such as campaigning. There is a bundle of that going on in Iowa as we are 20 days from the caucuses. Most all the candidates are crisscrossing the state mustering supporters to engage and participate in caucuses. The news media is also out in force preparing for the nation's first

political test of the year. Come February, the state's focus will return to local issues, economies and governance.

Region 8 is a predominately agricultural region thus its economic outlook is lower because of the commodity price decrease of the last few quarters. All four states do forecast an improved construction economy for 2016 which provides great hope for a short, soft economic slowdown for the region. Our citizens remain positive which is great for our Republican message.

Issues facing our state leaders are generally similar; budgets, Medicaid and funding education are priorities in each state, yet each state has significant differences addressing these issues. Kansas is facing a \$27 million budget short fall after massive cuts last year to close a \$200 million shortfall. The income tax cuts enacted in 2012 have not produced the expected economic growth and the state funding deficits have sky rocketed. The legislature will tackle this issue as well as school funding formula this session while the executive branch addresses mental health facilities, Medicaid issues and transportation. All in all it promises to be a contentious year with more challenges and funding falling to our counties to address.

Nebraska like Kansas enjoys a Republican state government however it has avoided the budgeting crisis of their neighbor. They will debate funding of course, we are Republicans after all, but their issues are efficiencies rather than crisis. Like Kansas, Nebraska is solidly Republican thus even though it is neighbors with Iowa, candidates make few visits. Carly Fiorina and Marco Rubio have recently made the trek to Cornhusker land for campaigning receiving large turnouts for each event.

Missouri is facing all the issues of its neighbors plus issues of national interest. The aftermath of the Ferguson crisis has prompted much debate nationwide and within the state. The legislature will be responding this year as several items related to the incident and its aftermath are brought up. The

Regions 6, 8 & 9

nation will be following the local debate as we all try to learn from their experiences. The state and St. Louis governments are being asked to step up to support efforts to keep the Rams in the city. Another interesting debate with national implications. Go Chiefs!

REGION 9 Report – (Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas.)

By Darry Stacy, Cleveland County Commissioner, Oklahoma

Hello from one of the Reddest Regions in the U.S., Region 9 of the NCRCO.

Region 9 consists of Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Arkansas. However, to stay Red we must continually be vigilant and dedicated to our values. We are considered potential battle ground states in the near future. As oil prices continue to remain low, county governments across the nation have to prepare for the reduced gross production taxes that will impact county budgets. While Republicans in Congress have been able to lift the oil export ban, it will take time for that economic impact to trickle back into county coffers. As every state starts to feel the financial belt tighten, Republican County Commissioners have to lead the charge for fiscal responsibility.

Our President has also decided to make a final assault on our Second Amendment rights as he transitions out of office. We must continue to stand strong on these issues and push forward, not just defend, retreat and reestablish lines.

Finally, remember as our National Platform states, We are the party of independent individuals and the institutions they create-families, schools, congregations, neighborhoods-to advance their ideals and make real their dreams. Foremost among those institutions is the American family. It is the foundation of our society and the first level of self-government and must be preserved. If I can ever be of assistance please give me a call and continue to stay ever vigilant.

Regional Director's Reports

REGION 10 Report – (Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming)

By Nancy Sharpe, Arapahoe County Commissioner, Colorado

As legislatures in our states come back into session, counties are waiting to see what legislation will impact us at the county level. Local control, excessive regulation and unfunded mandates will top the list of general concerns as they do most sessions.

A few of the state issues that appear to be on agendas are transportation funding, additional gun background check requirements, driver's license requirements for illegal immigrants, jobs, oil and gas regulation and healthcare. As legislative sessions progress, there will be more to report.

In Colorado, Jefferson County Commissioner Don Rosier has stepped into a crowded field of Republicans who have announced as candidates to run against incumbent U.S. Senator Michael Bennet (D). Many of you know Don from his service to NCRCO over the years. The primary race will be a difficult one so we wish Don a lot of luck and know that he is definitely up to the challenge.

REGION 11 Report – (Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington)

By Gordon L. Cruickshank, Valley County Commissioner, Idaho.

I posed a few questions to County State Executive Directors to understand their perspectives for the states in Region 11.

1st question was on the governors.

Alaska

Alaska's governor is in his first year of being in office. He is an Independent.

Idaho

Idaho's governor is in his first year of a third term. He is a Republican and has just started a PAC called "Otterpac" which I understand is to assist "traditional" Idaho Republicans.

Montana

Montana's governor is in his first term,

is a Democrat and will seek reelection. However two Republican candidates have filed and are actively campaigning. Brad Johnson is a former MT Secretary of State and Greg Gianforte is retired from the software business.

Oregon

Oregon's governor Kate Brown, a Democrat, was selected to fill the vacated seat when then Governor Kitzhaber resigned. Oregon is running a special election in 2016 to elect the governor. One Democrat has filed and One Independent has filed. Three Republicans filed for this seat: W. Ames Curtright, retired businessman, Bob Niemyer, mechanical engineer and Bud Pierce a Physician.

Washington

Washington's governor is a Democrat and is up for election. Two Republicans have filed to start fund raising to run in this race. They are William L. Bryant and Javier O. Lopez. One other David W. Blomstrom is running as an independent, partly to promote a new political party, the Fifth Republican Party according to his website.

2nd question was on congressional Senate offices.

Alaska

Alaska's Senator Murkowski, a Republican, is running and no opponent as of this writing.

Idaho

Idaho's Senator Crapo is a Republican in his fourth term, is running and so far no opponents have filed.

Montana

Montana's Senators get to sit this election out. Senator Daines is a Republican and Senator Tester is a Democrat.

Oregon

Oregon's Senator Wyden a Democrat is running in 2016. He has two Democrats running as challengers. Three Republicans have also filed for this seat: Mark Callahan, Information Technology Consultant, Dan Laschober, Business

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Financial Consultant and Faye Stewart, Commissioner from Layne County, Oregon.

Washington

Washington's Senator Patty Murray, a Democrat, is up for election. Chris Vance a Republican is seeking this seat.

3rd Question was on congressional Representative offices.

Alaska

Alaska's Representative Don Young is a Republican and seeking another election. When challenged in prior elections it has been noted no one can touch him.

Idaho

Idaho Representative Mike Simpson, a Republican, is running for his tenth term. No one has filed, however he had a highly contested race in 2014 and talk is 2016 will be no different.

Idaho Representative Raul Labrador a Republican is running for his third term. So far no one has mentioned running against him.

Montana

Montana Representative Ryan Zinke is a Republican and in his first term and will seek reelection. He has a Democrat who is challenging this seat.

Oregon

Oregon Representative District 4 has Jo Rae Perkins, Ex-Financial Advisor, a Republican running for this seat. This seat is currently held by Representative Defazio, a Democrat, who will seek reelection.

Oregon Representative District 5 has two Republicans seeking this office, Seth Allan, Mental Health Care Provider and Colm Willis, Political Consultant and Ex Congressional Aide. It is unknown if Representative Kurt Schrader will seek reelection.

Washington

Washington State has 10 Congressional Districts. Only one Democrat currently in office has said he will not seek

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reelection. All seats are reported will have contested races.

4th question was on the perspective of local races.

Alaska

Alaska reports most folks are so intent on "hating" the Congress and the Legislature that local races are not on their radar screen.

Idaho

Idaho counties is hard to gauge what the feeling is, one county is feeling the pressure after a law enforcement shooting incident which resulted in the death of a prominent rancher. For 2016, 88 of the 132 commissioner seats, all 44 county sheriffs and all 44 Prosecuting Attorneys are up for election. The Republican Party holds the majority of the seats. Idaho generally sees a 25% to

40% turnover in seats.

Montana

Montana is reporting not expecting to see any abnormal turnover with local races. The vast majorities are Republicans and most turnovers occur during the primary elections.

Washington

Washington is reporting expecting a 25% to 33% turnover in county elections either from retirement or being defeated.

5th question was any comments on the Presidential race.

Alaska

Alaska reports that they are very RED so expect that to be where their vote will go.

Idaho

Idaho reports having moved their

Primary for President up to March and only for the presidential race. Marco Rubio has significant financial and personal support as does John Kasich. Both are active organizations in Idaho. Idaho also is a primarily RED state however the Democrat party is working hard to change that.

Montana

Montana says that many people like what Donald Trump is saying and the issues he is raising but few actually view him as Presidential.

Washington

Washington has generally vote "D" in presidential politics.

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 Region 6: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio
 Region 7: Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin
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 Region 9: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas
 Region 10: Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming
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