



County Courier

National Conference of Republican County Officials

February 2018

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Welcome to the February 2018 edition of *County Courier*, the newsletter of the National Conference of Republican County Officials. Whether you are an existing member, a perspective member or just curious, I hope that you will find the *County Courier* interesting.

To those of you who have seen the newsletter previously, you may detect a somewhat different focus than in the past. The hope is to better explain our organization's role within the operations of the National Association of Counties.

It may seem odd that within a nonpartisan group like NACo an allied organization such as the NCRCO exists but we do. There is also a Democrat organization called the National Democrat County Officials active within NACo. Unlike our organization which is a volunteer grass-roots operation, our counterparts are tightly connected to their National Party and take an active role in the election of Democrats in county elections across the country as well as being active in NACo.

I would argue that our individual partisan affiliation is a direct result of how we view government and how we approach solving problems in our communities. Partisanship is not inherently bad nor does it have to be loud and obnoxious: it is simply a natural expression of the competing philosophies that exist in our political environment. In order for NACo to fulfill its mission of providing balanced policy guidance to Congress and the White House, its members must engage in vigorous discussions and debate so that the NACo platform is well vetted and mirrors the needs of all counties. That debate is partisan in nature no matter what euphemism you might choose to attach to it.

The role of NCRCO is to provide policy information of our members, provide a forum for discussion and best practices suggestions that may be of value in their home counties. (continued on page 3 bottom of page)

NACo 2nd Vice President Candidate Gary Moore, Judge Executive Boone County KY



I hope by now you are aware that I am a candidate for the office of 2nd Vice-President of NACo. I am writing to ask for your vote and support in this year's election that will take place at our annual convention in Nashville.

As most of you know, I am the elected County Judge/Executive in Boone County Kentucky and I am in my 5th term, spanning almost 20 years. Boone County is the northern tip of Kentucky and part of the Greater Cincinnati Metro area. My county is urban, suburban, and rural. The Cincinnati International Airport is in Boone County but we also are the home to many new, fast growing communities as well as several thousands of acres of farmland and greenspace.

At NACo I currently serve as your Transportation Steering Committee Chair but over the past few years I co-chaired the NACo - National League of Cities Opioid Task Force and as chair of EELU – the Environment, Energy, and Land-use Steering Committee Chair for 2 years. I am also the Past President of NARC - The National Association of Regional Councils and worked with Cities and Counties across the U.S.

While testifying before Congress several times on NACo national policy I have witnessed just how effective we can be. Just two weeks ago I was part of an infrastructure panel working with staffers on the hill. Whether we are developing transformational and cost-effective solutions or enriching the public's understanding of county government, our organization NACo is so important.

I am seeking this office so that we might have a stronger NACo and build upon this work. We all know how challenging our responsibilities are and we are too often being asked to do more with less and during this challenging time NACo needs strong leadership. Through my involvement in NCRCo and my other NACo work I know many of you and hopefully you know me.

I ask for your vote and support for NACo 2nd Vice President. If you have questions or ideas for me please contact me at Judgegarymoore@yahoo.com or 859-835-7252.

Thank you.

Gary

The NCRCO Website can be found at
ncrco.org or check us out on Facebook.

NCRCO Vice President

Commissioner Darry Stacy



First I want to offer a huge thank you to our President Joe Briggs for doing an outstanding job!

We have so much to celebrate this year that it is difficult to know where to start. However, if you listen to the lying media and fake news, you would believe this is the worst possible start to a Presidential term imaginable. Since you probably did not hear it on the nightly news, let me quickly run down the top 10 accomplishments to this point.

10. Re-building of our military and offensive against ISIS.
9. Neil Gorsuch's confirmation to the Supreme Court.
8. Roll-back over regulations.
7. The Travel ban.
6. Declaring Jerusalem the capital of Israel.
5. Withdraw from the Paris climate deal.
4. Pulling out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership.
3. Roll-back of Obama's Cuba policies.
2. Moving to repeal Obama's net neutrality rules.

And the number one accomplishment that you won't see on Letterman.....

Passage of the largest tax legislation to be approved by congress since 1986.

We have so much to be excited about, please take a moment and memorize some of these accomplishments so that when given the opportunity we can plainly and honestly change the narrative to the truth.

God bless each one of you and what you do each and every day and God bless America!

Darry Stacy

(continued from page 1)

Lastly, we need to make sure that the Republican philosophy is not drown out by our friends across the aisle in the policy setting processes within NACo. This is especially important now that we have the majorities in Congress and a Republican President.

I asked some of the many NCRCO members who chair NACo policy steering committees or hold other offices within NACo to contribute their thoughts to this issue of the *County Courier*. I think the number of NCRCO leaders and members who hold these positions speaks to the quality of our members and our organization. We are the front line in crafting Republican ideas and ideals into NACo Policy.

If you are not yet a member I urge you to join the team and help us develop limited government Republican alternatives to the one size fits all "fixes" of the last eight years.

Best wishes,

Joe Briggs, President NCRCO

NCRCO Treasurer Report Commissioner Mike McGinley



Things continue to go well financially for our organization as you will see from the simplified financial report printed below, NCRCO operates on a Fiscal year which runs from August 1 of each year to the end of July but our membership dues are on a calendar year basis.

This means that unless you have sent in your dues or paid on line since the end of December, your dues are not yet paid for this year. Although we will be happy to accept payment at the upcoming NACo event, it would greatly simplify the process for you to either pay on line or pay in advance by U.S. Mail. The dues are \$30 per year which includes your admission to the reception held at each of our events. NCRCO provides appetizers at these events but the bar is no host.

The online payment address is <http://ncrco.org/Join.asp> or it can be accessed by the link on the home page of our website NCRCO.org. NCRCO pays the fees associated with the online transaction so your cost for the annual dues is \$30 no matter how you choose to pay it.

The physical address if you wish to mail in your payment is:

NCRCO Treasurer
c/o Mike McGinley
521 South Dakota Street
Dillon MT 59725

Simplified Financial Report	As of February 25	Revenue	Expenses	Balance
Description				
Starting Balance as of August 1, 2017				\$14,474.48
Transfers		\$0.00		\$14,474.48
Dues		\$450.00		\$14,924.48
Reception guest Income		\$0.00		\$14,924.48
Donations		\$0.00		\$14,924.48
Merchandise sales		\$0.00		\$14,924.48
Calendar year 2018 Expenses			\$0.00	\$14,924.48
Balance as of February 25, 2018				

Immediate Past President Jon Burrows



Do You Miss the Humor of President Reagan? – I Do

A few years ago Inc. magazine writer Sims Wyeth collected 41 of the best Ronald Reagan quotes. Wyeth reminded us that Great Communicators have a way of capturing our imagination, triggering our participation, and making us see things in a new way—even if we don't agree with it. They are also good at making us laugh. Ronald Reagan hit all of the bases. Relevant then. Relevant now. Thanks President Reagan.

Here are some of his most memorable quotes:

The most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the government and I'm here to help.

I want you to know that I will not make age an issue of this campaign. I am not going to exploit, for political purposes, my opponent's youth and inexperience.

Politics is not a bad profession. If you succeed there are many rewards, if you disgrace yourself you can always write a book.

Man is not free unless government is limited.

It's true hard work never killed anybody, but I figure, why take the chance?

Republicans believe every day is the Fourth of July, but the democrats believe every day is April 15.

Entrepreneurs and their small enterprises are responsible for almost all the economic growth in the United States.

They say the world has become too complex for simple answers. They are wrong.

The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things.

Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.

As government expands, liberty contracts.

I've always believed that a lot of the trouble in the world would disappear if we were talking to each other instead of about each other.

Never let the things you can't do stop you from doing what you can.

There is no limit to the amount of good you can do if you don't care who gets the credit.

A nation that cannot control its borders is not a nation.

Do You Miss the Humor of President Reagan? – I Do (continued from prior page)

We don't have a trillion-dollar debt because we haven't taxed enough; we have a trillion-dollar debt because we spend too much.

I know in my heart that man is good, that what is right will always eventually triumph, and there is purpose and worth to each and every life.

We must reject the idea that every time a law's broken, society is guilty rather than the lawbreaker. It is time to restore the American precept that each individual is accountable for his actions.

Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it.

Heroes may not be braver than anyone else. They're just braver 5 minutes longer.

Status quo, you know, is Latin for 'the mess we're in'.

It has been said that politics is the second oldest profession. I have learned that it bears a striking resemblance to the first.

Government is not a solution to our problem, government is the problem. It isn't so much that liberals are ignorant. It's just that they know so many things that aren't so.

The federal government did not create the states; the states created the federal government.

America is too great for small dreams.

The future doesn't belong to the light-hearted. It belongs to the brave.

When you can't make them see the light, make them feel the heat.

Of the four wars in my lifetime, none came about because the U.S. was too strong.

To sit back hoping that someday, someday, someone will make things right is to go on feeding the crocodile, hoping he will eat you last – but eat you he will.

Don't be afraid to see what you see.

Above all, we must realize that no arsenal, or no weapon in the arsenals of the world, is so formidable as the will and moral courage of free men and women.

I have wondered at times what the Ten Commandments would have looked like if Moses had run them through the US Congress.

Government's first duty is to protect the people, not run their lives.

No government ever voluntarily reduces itself in size. Government programs, once launched, never disappear. Actually, a government bureau is the nearest thing to eternal life we'll ever see on this earth!

Thomas Jefferson once said, 'We should never judge a president by his age, only by his works.' And ever since he told me that, I stopped worrying.

A people free to choose will always choose peace.

Surround yourself with great people; delegate authority; get out of the way.

Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!

Minutes of July 22nd 2017 Annual Meeting

MINUTES

National Conference of Republican County Officials
July 22, 2017 – 5:15 P.M. – Convention Center – Room B243-244

- Jon Burrows called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees.
- J.D. Clark offered an invocation.
- Ron Arlett lead the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Membership roll was taken through a sign-in at the door.
- The event sponsor, The McLane Group, was recognized by Jon Burrows.
- Minutes from the Feb. 27, 2017, meeting were prepared and presented by Darry Stacy. Motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve minutes.
- Financial reports were prepared by Mike McGinley. Motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the financial reports.
- Motions to approve the reports of the Audit Committee, Budget Committee, and Issues committee were made, seconded, and carried.
- Reports from the Regional Directors were presented in the June 2017 newsletter.
- Cindy Bobbitt presented the slate of nominations from the Nominations Committee, all of which were approved by the body through a motion, second, and voice vote. Approved nominations were as follows:
 - President – Commissioner Joe Briggs (MT)
 - Vice President – Commissioner Darry Stacy (OK)
 - Secretary - Judge J.D. Clark (TX) (Beginning a two-year term)

DIRECTORS:

- Region 1 – Commissioner Toni Pappas (NH) (Running for 2nd term)
- Region 2 – Commissioner Christian Leinbach (PA) (1st term)
- Region 3 – Councilman Rob Arlett (DE) (Running for 2nd term)
- Region 4 – Commissioner Chip LaMarca (FL) (Running for 2nd term)
- Region 5 – County Supervisor Chris Bowen (MS) (1st term)
- Region 6 – County Surveyor Kent Ward (IN) (Running for 2nd term)
- Region 7 – Commissioner Tim Dolan (MN) (1st term)
- Region 8 – County Auditor Ryan Wescoat (MO) (Running for 2nd term)
- Region 9 – Judge Jason Brinkley (TX) (Running for 2nd term)
- Region 10 – Commissioner Lew Gaiter (CO) (Running for 2nd term)
- Region 11 – Commissioner Ron Wesen (WA) (1st term)
- Region 12 – Commissioner Demar Dahl (NV) (Running for 2nd term)

-It was noted that Commissioner Mike McGinley will serve the second year of a two-year term as Treasurer, while Judge Jon Burrows will serve as Immediate Past President, per bylaws.

-NCRCO Past Presidents who were in attendance were recognized.

-Information about the social reception was shared, and Incoming President Joe Briggs made brief remarks.

-Meeting was adjourned.

NACo Central Region Representative Cindy Bobbitt



Elections will be held November 6, 2018, with 33 of the 100 seats in the Senate being contested in regular elections and 1 seat being contested in a special election. The winners will serve six-year terms from January 3, 2019, to January 3, 2025. Currently, Democrats have 24 seats up for election, as well as the seats of two independents who caucus with them. [Republicans](#) have eight seats up for election. The seats up for regular election in 2018 were last up for election in [2012](#); in addition, special elections will be scheduled if vacancies occur, as has already happened in [Minnesota](#). After the [2016 elections](#), some state election officials are trying to upgrade voting systems in time for this election.

The [U.S. House of Representatives elections](#), [39 gubernatorial elections](#), and many [other state, county, and local elections](#) will also be held on this date.

Republicans can only afford to lose one Senate seat and still have a working majority with the Vice President breaking the tie in their favor.

Three of the Republican seats are open as a result of retirements in [Tennessee](#), [Utah](#), and [Arizona](#). Democrats are defending ten seats in states won by [Donald Trump](#) in the [2016 presidential election](#), while Republicans are only defending one seat in a state won by [Hillary Clinton](#) in 2016.

So what does this all mean for county elections and county government? It means that as county officials we must continue to focus on achieving results for our residents back home and let them know what we actually do in our everyday services. Walk the walk and talk the talk.

The final passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 was huge. Several of our county priorities were preserved, including the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds and private activity bonds, the tax treatment of certain governmental pension plans and some housing incentives, such as the New Markets Tax Credit. These programs help local governments finance major community development and infrastructure projects that create jobs, foster economic growth and improve residents' quality of life.

It was a disappointment that Congress capped the state and local tax (SALT) deduction. This represents a fundamental erosion of the federal-state-local balance in taxation. This is something that as county officials we should still address to restore this deduction.

Finally, I am looking forward to learning more about Trump's infrastructure plan, because investing in infrastructure means investing in every county and every community, including roads and bridges, public facilities, water and sewer systems, broadband and telecommunications, and the list goes on. Partnerships are critical when it comes to fulfilling our infrastructure needs.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cindy R. Bobbitt".

Cindy R. Bobbitt
NACo Central Region Representative
Grant County Oklahoma Commissioner

NACo Western Region Representative Gordon Cruickshank



What a change we have seen with a new Republican Administration which is a welcome change for many.

National Monuments are being revisited to evaluate the intent of what really needs protected. As a result we have seen some action taken to reduce the size of the monument to be more realistic to the actual protection acreage needed.

Catastrophic Wildfires rocked many states and resources were stretched thin at times. Many resources were sent from around the region to assist which shows how resilient our country is in the time of need. Efforts to include Wildfire into Disaster Funding is being worked on by Republican leaders who see the impact to our citizens and the impacts it has on the region when people lose their livelihoods to fire and everything they worked for is gone.

I recently attended a Forest Service meeting where I learned Agriculture Secretary Perdue has issued initiatives for the Forest Service Management to begin working better with the local stakeholders. His initiatives as I understand is for the Forest Service to be more efficient, customer focused, reduce burden of regulations, provide a responsible use of resources, be held accountable, increase the scale of restoration, increase harvest of timber and do more hazardous fuel treatment.

At this same meeting the discussion then went to the initiatives of Tony Tooke, Chief of the Forest Service. His initiatives were be a good neighbor, improve customer service, partner for shared stewardship, improve the conditions of forest and grasslands, enhance the recreation opportunities and sustain infrastructure.

These comments from the Secretary Purdue and Chief Tooke provide more to me that the new administration has heard our frustrations from the past and are attempting to do something positive as a result. I personally have had two opportunities to ask questions of Secretary Purdue and his answers have proven positive so far.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools (SRS) funding is being worked on more and more every day. I have never in my ten years of working these issues seen the discussions that are being held by Congress on PILT and SRS. However to date there has not been a reauthorization of either program.

Infrastructure is in President Trump's agenda and improvement in many areas is being addressed in some form or another.

I have just touched on a few of the topics of the region. It is exciting to be part of the process to observe and provide information to assist with the education of the people we as elected officials represent.

I look forward to seeing everyone in Washington D.C. in March.

Thank you and safe travels.

NACo Human Services & Education Committee

By Nancy Sharpe, Commissioner, Arapahoe County, CO &
Chair, Human Services and Education Comm.



Our committee is excited to have members of the Trump Administration as well as staff from House Ways and Means and Senate Finance attending our meetings. It has been rare to have members of an administration spend time with our committee to hear directly from counties about issues that are vitally important to us. In our sessions, we will have an opportunity to talk about proposed legislation and current programs that have good outcomes **and** those that need to be changed or eliminated.

This year, Legislative Conference sessions are focused on getting citizens who can work into the workforce and ending the cycle of multi-generational poverty. At the county level, we know what needs to be done to accomplish those goals.

A brief summary of Saturday March 3rd meeting is:

- 9:00** HSE Joint Committee and Subcommittee Meeting will include:
Jerry Milner, Associate Commissioner, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
Marjorie Sims, Managing Director, Ascend, The Aspen Institute
- 12:00** Roundtable Discussion: **Combating Multi-Generational Poverty in our Counties**
- 2:00** Business Meeting

This session will be an outstanding chance to interact with two Republican staff members representing important committees/subcommittees. Joining us are (with a few ideas for discussion) are:

U.S. House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources,
Majority Staff Director, Anne DeCesaro

Counties can talk about what we are doing around jobs and opportunity with specific focus on TANF and reauthorization. We'll also talk about what changes should be made to TANF or other workforce programs to make them more effective and efficient. We can give our perspective on whether current funding is going to programs that serve people most in need.

U.S. Senate Finance Committee,
Majority Senior Advisor for Human Services, Ryan Martin

Counties can suggest how the federal government can better coordinate social services programs that promote work and what barriers there are to better coordination between local government and the federal government.

Please join us for this opportunity to communicate your ideas directly to the Trump Administration.

NACo Rural Action Caucus Update

By J. D. Clark, County Judge, Wise County TX
Chair, NACo RAC Chairman & NCRCO Secretary



With a proposed infrastructure package, a new budget proposal, and Farm Bill talks heating up, the Rural Action Caucus is prepared for a busy year.

The group met in Wise County, Texas, in October for a fall symposium to discuss policy issues affecting rural America and to prepare for our legislative advocacy over the next year. We continue to focus on the opioid crisis, rural poverty, and creating rural opportunity through infrastructure development.

The upcoming Farm Bill process is of huge interest to the caucus because it creates funding opportunities for rural counties and communities to improve/create infrastructure such as community facilities, rural broadband, and wastewater treatment plants. We look forward to being engaged in the Farm Bill discussions so we can find more opportunities for rural America to grow and thrive.

NCRCO members will be interested to know that RAC is organizing and hosting a Farm Bill Summit in Palm Beach County, Florida, from April 5-7, 2018. This event is open to all counties- not just RAC members- and will be a great opportunity to learn more about what to expect from the Farm Bill and to be involved in developing our engagement on the bill. The Farm Bill has huge implications for our counties, and this would be a great opportunity for NCRCO members to have a voice in the process.

More information is available at <http://www.naco.org/events/naco-2018-farm-bill-summit>.

Finally, I encourage any NCRCO members who are not members of RAC to please consider joining.

Much of rural America is represented by Republican leaders, and we need to ensure that those voices are well-represented on RAC. Feel free to contact me for any more information about RAC, its mission, or how to join.

The RAC committee will be meeting at the upcoming NACo Legislative Conference on Sunday March 4th from 10am to noon in Columbia 6 & 8, located on the Terrace Level.

NACo Telecommunications & Technology Committee

By Jason Brinkley County Judge, Cooke County TX
Chair, NACo Telecom & Technology & NCRCO Director



The Telecommunications and Technology Steering Committee handles policy matters that impact counties concerning telecommunication regulations, information technology development, implementation and deployment, as well as a number of other similarly related issues. Two issues that I wanted to take a few moments to discuss are the rollout of the 5G (5th Generation) mobile wireless network and the debate on “net neutrality”.

Recently, a White House memo was leaked that discussed nationalizing the 5G (5th Generation) mobile wireless network. While we support increased wireless infrastructure, the obvious concerns from a local government standpoint is the intrusion and infringement on local control and involvement in the process. This includes, but is not limited to, the pre-emptive use of county rights-of-way. As a republican and as a local official, I am a firm believer that the government closest to the people governs best, and this big government intrusion would have tremendous negative effects to free market and local governments.

As T&T Chair, one question that I have been asked several times in the past few months is: What is or should be NACo’s position on “net neutrality”. The answer is that our Committee has not taken a position on the issue, and I personally believe that is the correct position. For those who do not know, “net neutrality” is regulation of the internet to ensure equal access to content and for telecom providers to be subject to similar regulations as utilities.

Rules were put in place in 2015, under the Obama administration to do just that. More recently, the FCC under the Trump administration has reversed the 2015 rules. I could go into an in-depth discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of “net neutrality”; however, the issue of “net neutrality” is largely a partisan or free market debate and not a federalism debate. That is to say, whether “net neutrality” rules are in place or not has almost zero direct impacts on how local governments operate, and any impacts that it might have may be drastically different depending on what state you are in or the size of your county.

Thank you

The NACo Telecommunications & Technology Committee is scheduled to meet on March 3rd from 9am to Noon in the Cabinet room on the concourse level. Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington DC.

NACo Transportation Committee
By Gary Moore County Judge Executive, Boone County KY
Chair, NACo Transportation Committee

President Trump's Infrastructure Plan



As chair of the NACO transportation steering committee, as Judge Executive of a rapid growing Kentucky county, and as a Republican that believes in limited federal government, I am pleased that our nations' infrastructure is one of President Trump's major priorities. The announcement of our President's infrastructure package included this quote:

"To help build a better future for all Americans, I ask the Congress to act soon on an infrastructure bill that will: stimulate at least \$1.5 trillion in new investment over the next 10 years, shorten the process for approving projects to 2 years or less, address unmet rural infrastructure needs, empower State and local authorities, and train the American workforce of the future."

While there are parts of his program that concern me I applaud the effort. There are many things other than infrastructure that he could be focusing on and we know that counties own 46 percent of the nation's roads, 38 percent of the nation's bridges and are involved in over one- third of the nation's airports and transit systems.

Counties invest over \$122 billion each year in construction, maintenance and rehabilitation of the nation's infrastructure network, but we cannot address the substantial project backlog without a strong partnership with and assistance from the federal government.

This increased attention from the White House is a welcomed development.

Gary W. Moore

The NACo Transportation Committee is scheduled to meet on March 3rd from 9am to Noon in the International Ballroom West on the concourse level. Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington DC. The 1st hour of the meeting will be dedicated to the resolutions submitted for review at this conference. The rest of the time until noon will be used for subcommittee meetings. The committee will recess and then reconvene at 1:30pm for their business meeting.

Regional Director's Reports

Region 1

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



By Toni Pappas, Hillsborough County
Commissioner, New Hampshire

New Hampshire

Although the Congressional delegation is totally Democratic, the State Legislature is in Republican hands. A sample of accomplishments in 2017 includes the passage of constitutional carry of concealed weapons, accelerated tax cuts, a fiscally conservative balanced budget, the delivery of VA reform, the prevention of a costly toll increase, and the slashing of 1600 burdensome regulations. Also, Republican Governor Chris Sununu has made a phenomenal choice in the nomination of Justice Robert Lynn to be the new Chief Justice of the New Hampshire Supreme Court. Justice Lynn is a strong voice for conservative jurisprudence. Because of these successes, Republican candidates look forward to winning elections in 2018.

Maine

Republican Governor Paul LePage has implemented the largest tax cut in Maine's history. He has recently made a push to pull control of jails from Maine's counties. He proposes to hand oversight of 15 county jails to a State Commission and to close 5 jails while regionalizing the system. Maine voters will select a new Governor to replace outgoing Governor LePage from one of the largest fields of candidates in recent history. President Trump is hoping LePage will challenge Senator Angus King for Maine's Senate seat in 2018. While his aides have advised caution, the President has hinted he would offer his endorsement if LePage enters the race against King. The Primary Election will be held June 12.

Massachusetts

Republican Governor Charlie Baker is defying the laws of political gravity. Not only is Baker more popular than any other politician in solidly Democratic Massachusetts, he is the most popular Governor in the nation. He offers a ray of hope to other Republican Governors facing blue-state electorates in November. Governor Baker is popular because of his commitment to managing bipartisan government focused on the issue citizens care about. He does not engage in partisan rhetoric, but concentrates on doing the work he was elected to do. To date voters approve of the job Baker has done with the transit system and winter storms. He has made few mistakes for the Democrats to pounce on in the upcoming 2018 election.

Regional Director's Reports

Region 5

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



By Chris Bowen, Forest County Supervisor, Mississippi

After losing a comprehensive report that I have been constructing in the "notes" portion of my phone, I lost them all in one fell swoop, but to surmise what I remember, is that the Alabama election to replace former Senator Jeff Sessions turned into a fiasco in which the Democratic candidate won by margin of 21,000 votes, and Nick Sabin (Head coach of Alabama) received 22,000 votes. The Republican was burdened with allegations of sexual misconduct with a minor.

In Tennessee, there was considerable consternation created by a movement led by democratic legislative members to impeach the president of United States. Republicans also criticized the city of Memphis and their City Council for the midnight removal of statues of Confederate generals and the park closures where they were located.

In KY, economic reporting provided that they were a great place for manufacturing companies to make and ship products to every corner of the globe. In 2016 alone, 222 manufacturers announced facility location or expansion projects with a reported capital investment of more than \$2.2 billion and 7,535 additional jobs.

In MS, the Republican administration and super majority in the legislature continue doing exactly what they promised which is to reduce the size of government. Unfortunately, this has meant the elimination of funding for the annual rural firetruck subsidies that the counties were receiving, as well as a cut of \$25 million to our local system bridge program, and not fully funding of homestead reimbursement coming back to the counties. Mississippi counties do not receive any sales taxes and survive solely off of ad valorem taxes.



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.

Regional Director's Reports

Region 9

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



By Jason Brinkley, County Judge
Cooke County, Texas

Arkansas – The Rockefeller Republican Center in Little Rock was completed in 2017, and a dedication ceremony was held in October 2017. The Center serves as the Republican Party of Arkansas state headquarters and construction was funded by donations.

The State's fiscal legislative session began on February 12th. This is the 5th Fiscal Session to be held since the passage of Amendment 86, which required appropriation bills to be valid for one year instead of two. In election news, Governor Asa Hutchinson will face a primary challenge by Jan Morgan. Democrats will field candidate Jared Henderson and Libertarians candidate Mark West.

Louisiana – Louisiana legislators will likely be headed into a special session to fix an estimated \$1 billion shortfall for the fiscal years starting on July 1st. GOP legislators are vocal about solving the shortfall without raising taxes. The Democratic governor John Bel Edwards has other plans. In an effort to increase transparency GOP lawmakers and conservative organizations are wanting a searchable website that they are calling Louisiana Checkbook, showing where tax dollars are being spent.

Oklahoma – The 2018 Oklahoma Legislative Session began on February 4th. There will also be a special session held concurrently with the regular session to finalize the current fiscal year's budget. The Oklahoma governor's race is shaping up to be a hotly contested one. With current Republican Governor Mary Fallin term-limited, the field is wide open. In total 11 candidates have declared, 6 republicans, 2 democrats and 3 libertarians.

Texas – James Dickey, the former chairman of the Travis County GOP was elected as the new Texas GOP Chairman, this past summer, over Rick Figueroa from Houston.

The Texas legislature only meets biannually and therefore is not in session until next year. There are very few statewide contested GOP primary in March. The most interesting being former Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson is challenging current Land Commissioner George P. Bush citing a dispute about of all things how to remember the Alamo.

Regional Director's Reports

Region 11

Region 11 Report—(Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington)



By Ron Wesen
Skagit County Commissioner, Washington

Alaska

House Democrat majority and Independent Governor Walker are pushing an education-based income tax as part of a solution to grow a stable economy. The Senate Republican Majority do not agree.

Alaska had their regular session in January 2017 with three special sessions trying to balance revenues with expenses. North Slope oil production rose for a third consecutive year, not seen since 1988. Increased production will help the State revenue. Legislators are trying to adopt a sustainable and balanced budget. Community Assistance Programs have been cut back to \$30 million during last year's sessions. Other areas the state has looked at reducing are past liabilities of the PERS/TRS state controlled plan for employees.

Idaho

Executive Director Dan Chadwick retired after 27 years of service at Idaho Association of Counties. Republicans have a majority in the house and the senate along with Republican Governor Butch Otter. Idaho counties have nine priorities for the 2018 Legislative session. Allow electronic legal publication as an alternative of newspaper. Early voting ballot security. Qualification of student election workers. Interest on delinquent taxes. Delinquent tax payments. Newly acquired federal lands by conservation donations. Justice Fund levy increase. Records retention for law enforcement digital media.

Montana

The State of Montana's 65th Legislative session officially closed on April 28, 2017. Montana Legislators only convene every other year. Republicans hold a 59 to 41 majority in the House and a 32 to 18 majority in the Senate. A special session had to be called by Democrat Governor Steve Bullock on November 14, 2017. Historical fire season expenses and revenues not high as anticipated caused a \$227 million shortfall just seven months after a balanced two-year budget was passed. Governor Bullock proposed 1/3 cuts in spending, 1/3 revenue increases and 1/3 transfers to make up the \$227 million short fall.

Oregon

Oregon State Legislators meet for a long session (160 days) in odd-number years and short session (35 days) in even number years. Democrats hold majority in both the House and the Senate, with Democrat Governor Kate Brown. Counties are trying to get better funding sources and local control on land use issue in this year's session, such as funding for Water resources department to map groundwater resources. One would allow County Video Lottery Funding to fund counties a fixed amount plus 2.5 percent of actual video lottery sales.

Regional Director's Reports

Region 11

Region 11 Report—(Continued from prior page)

Oregon (Continued)

Bill to raise the document recording fee from \$20 to \$75. Currently collecting \$28 million per biennium with \$20, would increase to \$105 million with \$75 fee. The bill would allocate to the same specific housing related pots of money.

Currently Oregon counties are unable to approve Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) except in very limited situations. Most counties would like more local discretion to approve ADUs in rural residential zones with local restrictions to provide more housing options.

Washington

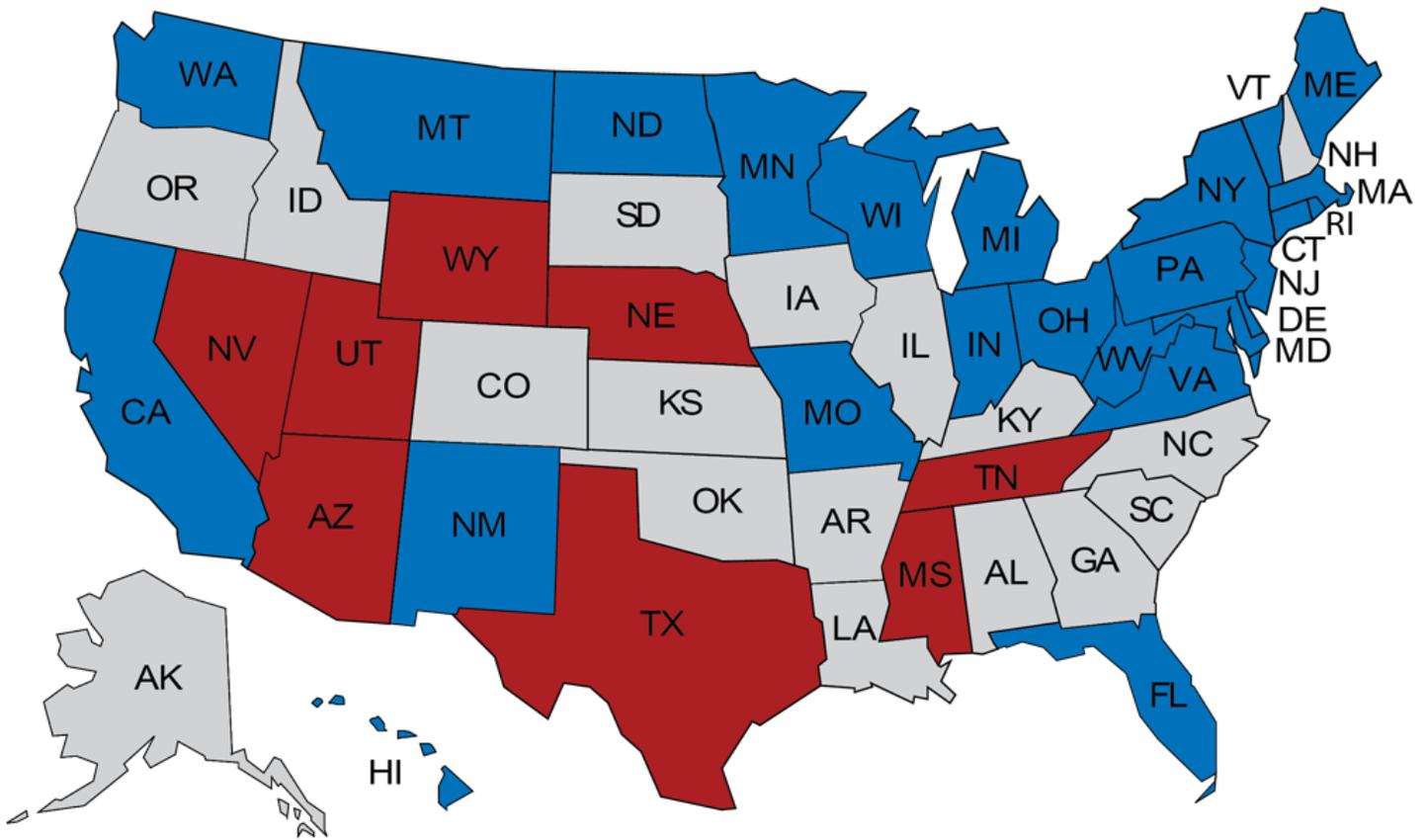
Washington State Legislators are finishing up their short session next month. They had the longest session in history last year, and still were not able to pass a Capital budget and a water bill to fix a State Supreme court ruling. The Republicans had a one seat majority in the Senate until a special election was held last year and the seat flipped to a Democrat. Washington State House, Senate and Governor are democrats. Counties are pushing for adequate funding for trial court indigent defense, rural water solutions, foundational public health services, and local government property tax revenue.

Do you know other who should be a member of NCRCO or someone who you would like to receive an electronic copy of our newsletters?

If so, please send us their email address!

Send the request to jbriggs@briggscom.com

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Democratic seats: 25

Republican seats: 8

Currently the US Senate is a closely divided body narrowly controlled by Republicans. We hold 51 seats and the Democrats and the “Independents” that caucus with them hold 49.

Not only does this only provide a razor thin majority for our Senators to work within but some of the most important votes require 60 “ayes” to pass. The map above is a representation of which Senate seats are up for election in 2018. Those states in Red are Senate seats currently held by Republicans and the Blue are seats held by the Democrats or the “Independents”.

Although only having to defend eight seats while our opponents must defend twenty five is certainly an advantage, our one seat majority leaves no margin for error. Our goal must not be just to maintain those seats we currently have but instead we must also win as many as possible of the Blue seats in order to strengthen our majority.

NCRCO is not a PAC so it is not our role to engage in these efforts as an organization, but it certainly is appropriate to urge our members to get engaged in their Senate races back home.

Please consider yourself urged!

NCRCO Annual Business meeting and RECEPTION are approaching fast!

At each of the NACo membership meetings our association gathers to conduct our business and to relax with great speakers. The 2018 NACo Leg Conference in Washington DC will be no exception.

The NCRCO Legislative Business Meeting and Reception will be held on Monday, March 5, 2018, at the Washington Hilton Hotel. The Business Meeting will be at 5:00 p.m. in Room Columbia 5 & 7 followed by the Reception at 6:00 p.m.

The business meeting is open to the public but the reception is members and their guests only. Our guest speaker has yet to be announced but we have invited one of the Trump Cabinet members to join us. We are hopeful that their schedule will be able to accommodate us.

2018 NCRCO paid members will find their tickets waiting for them at the business meeting for pick up. You can also purchase a guest ticket in advance online by using the link provided to paid members.

Guest tickets are \$20 and your annual dues remain \$30. Dues are now due for 2018, please use the online payment system or be prepared to pay at the door.

NCRCO Treasurer
c/o Mike McGinley
521 South Dakota Street
Dillon MT 59725

NCRCO Annual dues are \$30