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## *Southern Governors Support* **New Orleans' Rebirth**



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# state

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Some say today's political culture adds to contention.

By Laura Coleman

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By Jack Penchoff

In February 2005, State Rep. Steve Urquhart told *State News* that the emerging blogosphere had the potential to change state government's relationship with the public.

"Right away I realized this would be an incredible tool for communicating with constituents," Urquhart said. "Politicians can really start a revolution with this. With blogging, the public can be closer to government than ever before."

Less than two years ago, *State News* found few politicians who were taking advantage of Web logs, or online journals.

Today blogging is mainstream. The Pew Internet & American Life Project reported in July that 39 percent of American adults read blogs. And while the report said more than half those adults are under age 30, the other side of that coin is that nearly half are over the age of 30.

**Mary Branham Dusenberry**, *State News* managing editor, reports this month on the growing use of blogs by state leaders and government agencies.

Blogging is still new. The Pew project, for example, reported that most Web log users had been at it one year or less. All indications, however, are that blogging is becoming an increasingly popular way for policymakers and state agencies to interact with their constituencies.

Mary's report includes tips from experienced bloggers for those who have not yet joined the blogosphere.

While Web logs help politicians communicate more effectively with their constituents, there are concerns that legislators aren't communicating enough among themselves. This month **Laura Coleman**, *State News* associate editor, reports on some of the reasons experts cite for the breakdown of civility in state legislatures and consensus-building tips they have to offer.

When politicians work together they can make some major accomplishments. In July, the Southern Governors' Association presented Habitat for Humanity with \$1.5 million raised from corporate underwriters who responded to the SGA's request. And three of the governors added their own sweat to the project. This month, *State News* reports on how Gov. Kathleen Blanco of Louisiana, Gov. Tim Kaine of Virginia and Gov. Mike Huckabee of Arkansas joined a corps of volunteers on a sticky hot afternoon in New Orleans to help build Habitat homes for Hurricane Katrina victims.

Earlier this year nearly a dozen energy experts participated in a two-day energy conference sponsored by CSG's Eastern Regional Conference. **Rona Cohen**, a senior policy analyst for energy and the environment with CSG/ERC, reports on the discussion and how states have taken the lead in addressing energy and climate issues.

We also have reports this month on meetings held by CSG affiliates, the National Lieutenant Governors Association and the National Association of State Treasurers.

—Jack Penchoff is CSG assistant director of communications and senior editor of *State News* magazine.



## NGA Releases Primer for Pandemic Flu Preparation

“Once a pandemic happens, we will divide forever the progress of our nation as pre-pandemic and post-pandemic,” a congressional staffer said during a briefing on pandemic influenza.

The National Governors Association, in its recently released primer on this topic, calls an episode of pandemic influenza the viral equivalent of a perfect storm. Three essential conditions must be met to begin an outbreak:

- A new flu virus must emerge from the animal reservoirs that have produced and harbored such viruses—one that has never infected human beings and therefore one for which no person has developed antibodies.
- The virus has to make humans sick.
- The virus must be able to spread quickly, through coughing, sneezing or a handshake.

The avian flu meets the first two conditions. NGA’s primer examines issues that face governors and top officials should a pandemic outbreak occur. It introduces senior state officials to many of the considerations they will face in developing response plans.

To prepare for a pandemic, the report says, governors and state officials must consider both how to manage the outbreak and how to manage critical operations during the outbreak. The primer includes four key facts that will inform these efforts and help shape response actions:



- The effects of a pandemic flu will be broad, deep and simultaneous, and states must focus resources to ensure continuation of essential services.
- Medical response capability in a pandemic will be limited, strained and potentially depleted during a pandemic, and other measures will be needed to control the spread of the disease.
- Government must work closely with the private sector to ensure critical operations and services are maintained.
- A pandemic will force many key decisions to be made in a dynamic environment of shifting events, and partnerships must be built now and tested to ensure appropriate and rapid action.

To learn more about planning for quick response to a possible pandemic flu outbreak, download NGA’s report at [www.nga.org](http://www.nga.org).

## SLC Explains Farm Bills

The Southern Legislative Conference of The Council of State Governments recently released “The Farm Bill in Context” to inform legislators about the history behind farm bills and how the 2002 bill is likely to be revised.

With the federal deficit at an all-time high, the farm spending may shrink in the 2007 revision. To gauge how a tight budget may affect the 2007 Farm Bill, the report says, consider the fiscal 2006 budget reconciliation legislation that cost agriculture \$2.7 billion, including large cuts to conservation,

energy and rural development, and research.

Because farm bills are intended to increase farm profitability, a cut to farm spending has a profound impact on farm families, particularly in the grain belt, and on rural communities. If farm households are dependent on off-farm income to survive, the report says, rural communities need to have healthy, vibrant economies to provide the jobs these individuals need.

To find out more about how and why the 2007 Farm Bill is likely to change, visit [www.slcatlanta.org/Publications](http://www.slcatlanta.org/Publications).

## States Take Action on Climate Change

With little guidance from the federal government, states have taken up the challenge of setting emission reduction targets, mandating investment in energy efficiency, and developing plans to mitigate climate change, a report from the Pew Institute says.

While confronting climate change will require the national government to assume some responsibility, states and regions have a critical role to play. According to the report, states function as “policy laboratories,” developing initiatives that serve as models for federal action. Indeed, state actions have a significant impact on emissions: Texas alone emits more greenhouse gases than France, and California’s emissions exceed those of

Brazil. States also play a major role due to their jurisdiction over electric generation, agriculture and land use.

The Pew report addresses regional initiatives that address climate change and energy and how states can balance budget restraints, economic development and economic concerns. Regional programs can be more efficient than programs at the state level because they encompass a broader geographic area, eliminate duplication of work and create more uniform regulatory environments.

To learn more about what states or regions are doing to reduce emissions, visit [www.pewclimate.org](http://www.pewclimate.org).

## Louisiana's Opening Doors Program Gets High Scores



A Louisiana program, developed before Hurricane Katrina, helps low-income parents attend community college by covering their expenses and providing financial incentives for success.

The program operated at two New Orleans-area institutions. The colleges offered students a \$1,000 scholarship for each of two semesters if they maintained at least half-time enrollment and a 2.0 grade point average. These scholarships were in addition to Pell Grants and other financial aid and were paid in installments. Most recipients of the scholarships were women who are single parents.

MDRC, a nonprofit, nonpartisan social policy research organization, evaluated the program, assigning low-income parents who met program eligibility criteria to two groups: a program group that received the Opening Doors scholarship and counseling or a control group that received regular financial aid and counseling. Analysis of transcripts for students who entered the study in spring and summer 2004 shows that students in Opening Doors:

- Were more likely to enroll in college full-time.
- Passed more courses and earned more course credits.
- Had higher rates of registration in college in the second and third semesters.

MDRC said it is too early to conclude that the program is an unequivocal success, but early findings suggest that a performance-based scholarship can have a positive effect on persistence and academic achievement among low income parents.

To view MDRC's full report, visit [www.mdrc.org/publications](http://www.mdrc.org/publications).

## Study Shows that Minimum Wage Increase Still Wouldn't Support Families

A study from the National Center for Children in Poverty shows that a full-time job at low wages often does not provide enough to support a family.

The NCCP report, "When Work Doesn't Pay: What Every Policymaker Should Know," reveals that despite government provisions for "work support" benefits, intended to help minimum wage and other low-wage workers provide for their children, the structure of these benefits can cause families to lose benefits of greater value if they earn more.

Work supports such as earned income tax credits, child care subsidies, health care coverage and food stamps are based on earnings. Families, particularly those which rise over the official poverty level, begin to lose eligibility even though they are not yet self-sufficient. NCCP's Family Resource Simulator reveals that a single mother of two small children in Philadelphia who earns \$8 an hour would need to earn \$40,600 a year to cover her family's basic expenses without the help of government benefits, or work in excess of 90 hours a week.

The report urges policymakers to use data like this to understand the dilemmas of low-income parents and realize that these parents may be forced to:

- Select cheaper child care that may be less safe or less stable.
- Go without health insurance or medical care.
- Live in an unsafe neighborhood or in overcrowded housing.
- Go hungry at the end of the month.

NCCP's report explains that the current structure of work support programs falls into two categories: the "cliff" occurrence, in which benefits are completely terminated when the family reaches the eligibility limit and the "phase out" occurrence in which benefits are gradually reduced as earnings increase.

The report outlines a four-prong solution toward ensuring adequate family resources and rewarding progress in the workforce:

- Phasing out benefits gradually to avoid steep cliffs.
- Raising eligibility limits.
- Serving a greater share of eligible families.
- Being mindful of how different programs might affect one another.

The report, part of NCCP's Making "Work Supports" Work initiative, is available at [www.nccp.org](http://www.nccp.org).

# 2006 Voter Registration Deadlines by State

Prepared June 2006 by the National Association of Secretaries of State

State	Deadline For Primary	Deadline for General Election
Alabama	Sat., July 7	Fri., Oct. 27
Alaska	Sun., July 23	Sun., Oct. 8
Arizona	Aug. 10	Mon., Oct. 9
Arkansas	Mon., Apr. 24	Sun., Oct., 8
California	Mon., May 22	Mon., Oct. 9
Colorado	Mon., July 10	Tues., Oct. 23
Connecticut	By 12 noon on Aug. 7	Tues., Oct. 31
Delaware	Sat., Aug. 19 Mon., Aug. 28 <i>for military and overseas voters</i>	Sat., Oct. 14 Mon., Oct. 23 <i>for military and overseas voters</i>
D.O.C.	Mon., Aug. 14	Tues., Oct. 10
Florida	Mon., Aug. 7	Tues., Oct. 10
Georgia	Mon., June 19	Tues., Oct. 10
Hawaii	Thurs., Aug. 24	Mon., Oct. 9
Idaho*	Fri., Apr. 28	Fri., Oct. 13
Illinois**	Tues., Feb. 21	Tues., Oct. 10
Indiana	Mon., Apr. 3	Tues., Oct. 10
Iowa	Sat., May 27	Sat., Oct. 28
Kansas	Mon., July 17	Mon., Oct. 23
Kentucky	Mon., Apr. 17	Tues., Oct. 10
Louisiana	Wed., Aug. 30  <i>Mon., Oct. 9 for Congressional election</i>	Mon., Oct. 9  <i>Wed., Nov. 8 for Congressional election</i>
Maine*	No deadline for registering in person <i>May 26 if by mail</i>	No deadline for registering in person <i>20 days prior to election if by mail</i>
Maryland	Tues., Aug. 22	Tues., Oct. 17
Massachusetts	Wed., Aug. 30	Wed., Oct. 18
Michigan	Mon., July 10	Tues., Oct. 10
Minnesota*	Sept. 12	Sat., Nov. 11

State	Deadline For Primary	Deadline for General Election
Mississippi	Fri., May 5	Fri., Oct. 6
Missouri	Wed., July 12	Wed., Oct. 11
Montana	Mon., May 8	Tues., Oct. 10
Nebraska	Mon., May 1	Fri., Oct. 27
Nevada	Tues., July 25	Tues., Oct. 17
New Hampshire*	Tues., Sept. 5	Sat., Oct. 28
New Jersey	Tues., May 16	Mon., Oct. 4
New Mexico	Tues., May 9	Tues., Oct. 10
New York	Wed., Aug. 23	Wed., Oct. 18
North Carolina	Fri., Apr. 7	Fri., Oct. 13
North Dakota	No voter registration	No voter registration
Ohio	Mon., Apr. 3  <i>Aug. Special Election Deadline Mon., July 10</i>	Tues., Oct. 10
Oklahoma	Thurs., June 30	Fri., Oct. 13
Oregon***	Tues., Apr. 25	Tues., Oct. 17
Pennsylvania	Mon., Apr. 17	Tues., Oct. 10
Rhode Island	Sat., Aug. 12	Oct. 7
South Carolina	Sat., May 13	Sat., Oct. 7
South Dakota	Mon., May 22	Mon., Oct. 23
Tennessee	Tues., July 4	Sun., Oct. 8
Texas	Mon., Feb. 6	Tues., Oct. 10
Utah	Tues., June 6	Tues., Oct. 17
Vermont	By 12 noon on Sept. 5	Mon., Oct. 30 @ noon
Virginia	Mon., May 15	Mon., Oct. 9
Washington***	Fri., Sept. 1	Mon., Oct. 23
West Virginia	Tues., Apr. 18	Tues., Oct. 17
Wisconsin*	Mon., Sept. 11	Mon., Nov. 6
Wyoming*	Mon., July 24	Mon., Oct. 9

\* Indicates states that offer Election Day registration

\*\* Indicates states that have grace-period voter registration

\*\*\* Vote-by-mail states

Source: The National Association of Secretaries of State. [www.nass.org](http://www.nass.org)

# Toll Fellows Focus on Leadership



By Krista Rinehart

The Council of State Governments welcomed 40 state leaders from across the country to Lexington, Ky., July 8–14 for the 20th anniversary session of the Henry Toll Fellowship Program.

This year's class represented all three branches of state government including state representatives and senators, associate justices and cabinet secretaries. Class members hailed from 26 states, two U.S. territories and one Canadian province.

The Henry Toll Fellowship Program was founded in 1986 on the premise that if states are to meet tomorrow's challenges, they must prepare for them today. Named for Henry Toll, a former Colorado senator and CSG founder, the program serves to equip talented state policymakers with the skills and strategies to meet the challenges ahead.

Aimed at developing leaders from all three branches of state government, the program agenda includes a lineup of dynamic speakers, leadership training and countless opportunities for networking and relationship building.

The 2006 Toll Fellowship Program included leadership and time-management methods for different personality types, pol-

icy and state governance discussions and a session dedicated to effectively preparing for and leading during a crisis.

In addition to focusing on modern day issues and leadership challenges, the Toll Fellows Program also encourages each class to reflect on the nation's founding principles and the role they continue to play in serving the public. To this end, each year the program includes a session on historic leadership roles as seen through the eyes of Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson, as portrayed by Don Hickey and Bill Barker.

Speakers at this year's program included Naval Postgraduate School representatives, time management expert Pam Vaccaro and nationally renowned media and communications specialist Arch Lustberg.

The Toll Fellowship Program is recognized as one of the nation's best leadership development programs and is a hallmark service of The Council of State Governments.

The 2007 Henry Toll Fellowship Program will be held Sept. 29 through Oct. 4. Applications are available online at [www.csg.org](http://www.csg.org), keyword: Tolls.

P



## 2006 Toll Fellows

**Dana Badgerow,**  
Commissioner  
Department of Administration  
Minnesota

**Michael Bertrand**  
Deputy Secretary of Administration  
Vermont

**Curtis Bramble**  
Senator-Utah

**Laura Brod**  
Representative  
Minnesota

**John Coghill**  
Representative  
Alaska

**Maida Coleman**  
Senator  
Missouri

**Russell Copeman**  
Assembly Member  
Quebec

**Chris Corbin**  
Deputy Executive Director of  
Health Policy  
Kentucky

**Dennis Damon**  
Senator  
Maine

**Julie Denton**  
Senator  
Kentucky

**Jane Eberle**  
Representative  
Maine

**Michael Elmendorf**  
Director of Intergovernmental  
Affairs  
New York

**Kevin Elsenheimer**  
Representative  
Michigan

**Rick Farmer**  
Director of Committee Staff  
Oklahoma

**Hollis French**  
Senator  
Alaska

**David Ford**  
Senator  
Indiana

**Chad Gallagher**  
Director of Intergovernmental  
Affairs  
Arkansas

**Martha Geer**  
Associate Judge  
North Carolina

**Carte Patrick Goodwin**  
General Counsel to the Governor  
West Virginia

**Tom Hansen**  
Senator  
South Dakota

**Brandt Hershman**  
Senator  
Indiana

**Nita Rusich Hutter**  
Representative  
Louisiana

**Michael Jackson**  
Director of Budget Development  
Delaware

**Fred Jarrett**  
Representative  
Washington

**Brad Johnson**  
Secretary of State  
Montana

**Gabrielle LeDoux**  
Representative  
Alaska

**Phil Lopes**  
Representative  
Arizona

**Shawn-Michael Malone**  
Senator  
U.S. Virgin Islands

**John Marshall**  
Secretary of Public Safety  
Virginia

**Cristine McCombs**  
Director of MEMA  
Massachusetts

**David McCoy**  
State Budget Director  
North Carolina

**Kathy Miles**  
Representative  
South Dakota

**Blake Oshiro**  
Representative  
Hawaii

**Jose Garriga Pico**  
Senator  
Puerto Rico

**Dominic Pileggi**  
Senator  
Pennsylvania

**Miguel Rivera**  
Labor Commissioner  
Indiana

**Joe Simitian**  
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California

**Kathy Tingelstad**  
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Minnesota

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North Dakota

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Representative  
Washington



# Communication: The Key to Consensus

*Some say today's political culture adds to contention*

**Some policymakers recognize the need to build consensus in state legislatures as one of the most important issues they face. Experts believe it will take a lot of time and effort to reach that goal.**

By Laura Coleman

“That’s the way the framers of the constitution designed the system It’s tougher today because of competitive politics. Stakes are high and competition is intense. Where there’s competition, there’s less civility.”

—Alan Rosenthal  
Professor of public policy, Rutgers University

**D**espite budget crunches, time restraints and lack of information on tough topics, building consensus in state legislatures has become what some policymakers consider the biggest stumbling block statehouses face.

While some say this political climate reflects today’s culture, others believe a legislature where civility is replaced by contention or strained relationships can fail to serve the people it represents.

Former President Calvin Coolidge, noted for being a skilled and effective public speaker but a man of few words in his private life, once said, “I have noticed that nothing I never said ever did me any harm.” Along the same vein, Silent Cal also commented, “No man ever listened himself out of a job.”

Coolidge, who served as governor of Massachusetts from 1919-1920 and as president from 1923-1929, may have been on to something.

Chris Carlson, executive director of the Policy Consensus Initiative, said one reason legislatures face heightened tensions in today’s political culture is that policymakers don’t have as many opportunities to talk and listen in an informal environment.

“There is always conflict about policies,” said Carlson. “The question is, how do you work those issues out?”

## Why Consensus Breaks Down

To Alan Rosenthal, lack of consensus in state legislatures means statehouses are right on target.

“That’s the way the framers of the constitution designed the system,” said Rosenthal, a professor of public policy at Rutgers University. “It’s tougher today because of competitive politics. Stakes are high and competition is intense. Where there’s competition, there’s less civility.”

Rosenthal said these things affect the legislative process. “And the process reflects the social and political atmosphere,” he said. “We shouldn’t try to change that or cure that because it reflects the passions of people, but you can tone down the legislature so people can deal with one another.”

But competition, said Carlson, is not the only cause of a legislative disconnect. “Term limits are an issue. Money in politics creates issues,” she said. “I think that campaigns became increasingly costly and a lot of money comes in from out of state. It influences what people say about each other.”

That, she said, leads to the breakdown of personal and working relationships.

Short legislative sessions and new laws can also cause relationships to deteriorate. For example, ethics laws in Minnesota prevent lobbyists from buying or sponsoring dinners, Carlson said.

“Social capital decreases because legislators don’t know each other as individuals because they don’t see each other anymore. You can’t build consensus on difficult issues in 60 days,” Carlson said, noting that time constraints especially affect part-time state legislators.

The media also play a role in loss of civility and thus, loss of consensus, said Carlson.

“Partisanship can sometimes lead to a breakdown of communication, a lack of trust and a lack of respect,” she said. “Then it’s much harder to talk with other people in a way where it’s not accusing them or without thinking they are out to do you in.”

Carlson said the media creates a one side versus the other side mentality “Most issues aren’t that black and white,” she said. “There are middle kinds of positions.”

## Tips for Building Consensus

Building consensus in state legislatures will require time, patience and common sense. Most tips offered by experts in the field call for policymakers to re-examine the most basic components of communication.

### Lay Ground Rules

Lisa Beutler, associate director of the Center for Collaborative Policy at Sacramento State University, suggested laying ground rules for discussion to build a foundation for collaboration, civility and consensus. In “Collaboration 101” Beutler gave examples of some of those rules. They include:

- Use common conversational courtesy. Don’t interrupt. Use appropriate language.
- Humor is welcome and important, but should never be at someone else’s expense.
- All ideas and points of view have value, even if you don’t agree with them.
- Honor time—make sure to follow time guidelines to respect other group members.

Furthermore, said Rosenthal, legislative parties and caucuses should reach agreement that although campaigns might get negative, they will not make excessive personal attacks or attack the legislature as an institution. “But it will be very difficult to get them to agree on that,” he said.

Rosenthal believes it’s up to legislative leaders to buy into practices that promote collegiality and greater civility.

“Establish in the legislature a place where differences can be fought out but where it’s possible to get together,” said Rosenthal. “Establish that differences don’t get personal, overly political, or become such that they damage the legislature as an

institution. Leaders have got to set an example and indicate to their caucuses that this is the way we have to do it.”

### *Establish The Environment For Discussion*

“Consensus requires communication and negotiation,” said Carlson. “It has to be informal so people can sound each other out without backing each other into corners.”

Carlson said in contemporary politics, some issues require “track two diplomacy” in which people work back and forth across the aisle to come to agreement. “The most effective legislators I’ve seen will go talk to a colleague,” she said. “It’s partly because people need opportunities to float ideas without making commitments.”

Committee chairs and leadership should create opportunities for informal exchanges away from committee meetings, Carlson said. She suggested leadership establish a ground rule during these discussions where you say out loud that “anything you say here will not be quoted.”

### *Build Working And Personal Relationships By Getting Together More Frequently*

Rosenthal said getting members together more frequently establishes bonds that perhaps wouldn’t happen during the session. “What CSG does with Toll Fellows could be done in states for members,” he said.

Getting members together in retreat settings and discussing policy and leadership matters, learning about the budget, and getting to know each other is important, Rosenthal said.

“There are do’s and don’ts of maintaining the legislature as an institution as a healthy institution, which means an institution where you work out differences,” he said. “Get members to feel it in their guts. What that requires is an opportunity to get together at a program that’s interesting and useful.”

Carlson agreed that building relationships, even on a personal level, is crucial. “In order to be able to work with other people, you need to treat them as people,” she said. “Reach across the aisle and get to know each other. The most effective legislators know about each other and talk to each other about their kids or grandkids.”

Rosenthal said a recent Maryland speaker of the house took new and veteran legislators on a bus trip throughout the state where they visited and stayed at state facilities. “Members got to know each other and got to see the state,” he said. “Broadening experiences helps so people can see past their own ideologies, their own political situation and their own constituency.”

However, Beutler recognizes that not all relationships can be mended. “There are a lot of damaged relationships where it is difficult to conceive sitting down with those people,” she said. “In that type of situation, a legislature might need professional conflict-resolution assistance.”

### *Peel The Onion*

To Beutler, building consensus in discussions depends on getting at underlying issues, or “peeling the onion.” Sometimes this takes a collaborative process and sometimes it just requires listening and asking the right questions.

Carlson calls what normally happens during policy discussions a solution war. “Everybody comes and they have the solution and then there’s a war between the solutions,” said Carlson.

“Take a second, back up and get clear about what the problem is you’re trying to address.”

Carlson cites a book, “Getting to Yes,” about negotiation. “The first principle is when people tell you what they want, find out why they want it. What are the needs and interests behind what they want? Needs and interests can conflict between parties,” she said.

Sometimes differing interests are confused with conflicting interests, Carlson explained. For example, one person’s interest could be in transportation, while another person’s interest could be in developing better highways. “Those two could be differing, but not necessarily conflicting,” said Carlson.

Beutler said sometimes a situation lends itself to collaboration. “If you are looking for long-term sustainability, collaboration has a better outcome,” she said. She used a Katrina debriefing as an example. “If they had better collaborative processes in place, they would have had better outcomes. They were operating in silos and if they weren’t, they’d have had better outcomes.”

Carlson said getting stakeholders involved is a good way to get to a conclusion on difficult matters. “Get the people who are involved in the issue to work out proposals to put in front of the legislature,” Carlson said. “But to make that effective, you have to have a commitment on the part of the legislature to do something with what you get back or the citizens will be dissatisfied.”

### *‘It’s Messy’*

If the consensus-building tips don’t work and the going gets tough, said Rosenthal, that’s probably the way things are supposed to be.

“Part of negotiating is to out-tough the other side,” said Rosenthal. “Institute rules and regulations and deadlines, but if people can’t agree, they aren’t going to be able to agree. When it gets bad enough, the press is yelling and screaming, constituents are writing in, somebody bends and we get an agreement. Yes it’s messy, but I don’t know how to do it otherwise.”

“The legislature should be inefficient,” he said. “You have to take all these differences and work it out. It’s more than two sides thinking this is right or that is right. The basic problem is that people don’t agree. But there are ways legislatures can increase communication among members to keep things from boiling over.”

—*Laura Coleman is the associate editor for State News magazine.*

## **Suggested Reading:**

- “Getting to Yes: How to Negotiate Agreement Without Giving In” by Roger Fisher, William Ury, Bruce Patton and Murphy Guyer—Roger Fisher’s five-step system for how to behave in negotiations.
- “A Practical Guide to Consensus” by Jim Arthur and Chris Carlson—offers concise summaries of the consensus-building process in straightforward explanations.
- “Beyond Adversary Democracy” by Jane J. Mandsbridge—original field research about the theory of democracy and problems of equality, solidarity and consensus.

# Cervical Cancer Vaccine Available

*Will girls and women in your state have access?*

For decades a wide-spread virus—human papillomavirus (HPV)—has been causing most cases of genital warts and cervical cancer in women. But a new and powerfully effective HPV vaccine has the potential to dramatically reduce the threat this virus poses to women’s health.

By Maria Mazzone Garrett



# B

ut will that potential be realized?

The answer in part depends on implementation of recommended vaccination practices. In late June, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), a panel of expert advisers to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), recommended the vaccine for 11- to

12-year-old girls, and can be given to girls as young as 9 years old. The vaccine is also recommended for 13- to 26-year-old girls/women who have not yet received or completed the vaccine series. These recommendations are now being considered by the CDC.

“This vaccine represents an important medical breakthrough,” said Dr. Anne Schuchat, director of CDC’s National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. “As a result, these vaccine recommendations address a major health problem for women and represent a significant advance in women’s health.”

## About the New Vaccines

Gardasil®, manufactured by Merck, is the first vaccine aimed at preventing cervical cancer. In June, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) licensed it for use in girls and women aged 9 to 26. Gardasil protects against four strains of HPV. Clinical trials found that the vaccine was 100 percent effective in preventing cases of high-grade pre-cancer and non-invasive cancer associated with two HPV types among the women who received it. Gardasil was also proved effective in preventing two HPV types, which cause 90 percent of all cases of genital warts.

GlaxoSmithKline is also developing a vaccine, Cervarix. Clinical trials are showing that it is equally as effective as Merck’s vaccine in preventing certain types of cervical cancer. Researchers found that 4.5 years after receiving the vaccine, women still have very high levels of antibodies against the disease. These findings indicate that the vaccine may be effective for the long term. Cervarix is expected to be submitted to the FDA for licensure later this year.

## Vaccination Strategy

A major reason behind ACIP’s recommendation to vaccinate girls in their preteen to early teen years is to achieve vaccination before girls become sexually active. HPV infection rates peak among those in their late teens and early 20s. According to public health experts, this age range is also ideal from a medical

standpoint. One study found that girls between the ages of 10 and 14 produced at least twice as many antibodies to the virus as those in the 15 to 25 age group. According to researchers, this stronger immune response in the 10–14 year old age range could translate into a longer period of protection.

“The widespread availability of an HPV vaccine will help bring us one step closer to our goal of ensuring that no more women die of cervical cancer,” said Susan Crosby, president of Women In Government, a bipartisan organization of women legislators that has been active in encouraging states to establish cervical cancer elimination task forces. “An HPV vaccine should be part of a comprehensive approach to cervical cancer prevention, which also includes screening using advanced and appropriate technologies, such as HPV testing.”

Michigan state Sen. Bev Hammerstrom concurred with Crosby’s recommendation.

“For the HPV vaccine to achieve its true potential, it must be made available to all age-appropriate people, regardless of their socioeconomic status,” said Hammerstrom, the majority floor leader. “State policymakers play a vital role in ensuring this availability.”

The CDC also notes that while the effect of condoms in preventing HPV infection is unknown, condom use has been associated with a lower rate of cervical cancer, an HPV-associated disease.

## What State Legislators Can Do

According to the Women in Government’s Web site, 39 states have enacted legislation creating state task forces aimed at developing effective public health strategies for eliminating cervical cancer. That’s a good start, say Hammerstrom and Crosby, who offered this advice to legislators looking for ways to become involved in preventing cervical cancer:

**Work to ensure that your state adopts comprehensive cervical cancer prevention and elimination strategies.** Crosby said it is particularly important that states fully implement the CDC guidelines regarding HPV immunization as well as any recommendations by your state’s cervical cancer elimination task force.

**Educate yourself about the issue and about prevention strategies.** Read “State of Cervical Cancer Prevention in America.” This report, produced by Women In Government, provides a state-by-state breakout of cervical cancer prevention and elimination strategies and ranks each state’s efforts.

**Collaborate with your state’s National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP).** This CDC program provides free cancer screening tests to uninsured and under-insured women in every state. Pap tests and regular cancer screening continue to drastically reduce cervical cancer incidence and mortality by effectively treating abnormalities before they progress to invasive cancer. Educating women about the importance of screening tests and ensuring that they have access to

The widespread availability of an HPV vaccine will help bring us one step closer to our goal of ensuring that no more women die of cervical cancer.

—Susan Crosby, president  
Women In Government





## Talking Points: HPV and Cervical Cancer

### Key public health facts for legislators

- The most important risk factor for developing cervical cancer is persistent cervical infection with certain strains of the human papillomavirus (HPV).
- HPV is easily transmitted through skin-to-skin contact during sexual activity. The infection often lays dormant in the body for years before causing illness, so it is very difficult to know when or from whom one acquired the virus.
- Most sexually active people get genital HPV. By age 50, at least 80 percent of women will have acquired an HPV infection. Most people will never know that they have HPV because usually there are no signs or symptoms and the virus goes away on its own.
- There are more than 30 strains of HPV that affect the genital tract. Of those, about 10 types are considered high-risk for progressing to cancer. HPV types 16, 18, 31 and 45 are the cause of more than 85 percent of the diagnoses of cervical cancer and high-risk pre-cancerous lesions.
- A new HPV vaccine has been licensed by the FDA for use in girls and women ages 9–26. The vaccine is highly effective in protecting women against HPV strains 16 and 18, which cause 70 percent of cervical cancers. Providing vaccinations to girls and young women before the onset of sexual activity will help protect the next generation from this preventable and deadly disease.
- The American Cancer Society estimates that there will be 9,710 new cases of invasive cervical cancer diagnosed in the United States in 2006, and about 3,700 women will die from the disease this year. The current incidence rate of cervical cancer among American women is eight cases per 100,000.
- Tests and screenings save lives. Widespread use of the Pap smear test to screen for and treat pre-cancerous conditions has led to a dramatic reduction in cervical cancer deaths. In the United States today, 50 percent of the women diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer have never had a screening test; an additional 10 percent have not been screened in at least the previous five years.

them is a critical component of any cancer prevention strategy—and you can help.

**Understand how state laws may impact the delivery of this vaccine.** Because this vaccine is delivered to 11–12 year olds as well as adolescents, it is important to understand how state law may impact the availability to receive the vaccine. Barriers may include consent laws as well as ability of the vaccine through school programs, family planning programs and other provider avenues. State laws related to financing of the vaccine may also impact its availability to all eligible individuals.

**Spread the good news to your constituents.** When talking to constituents, tell them that there's good news: Cervical cancer is preventable, and education, vaccination and early detection are the keys to effective prevention. Advise them to educate themselves and their family about HPV and cervical cancer to protect the next generation from this deadly but preventable disease.

For more information on HPV, visit the CDC's HPV Web site at [www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/default.htm). Visit [www.cdc.gov/cancer/nbccedp](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/nbccedp) to get state contact information about CDC's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program.

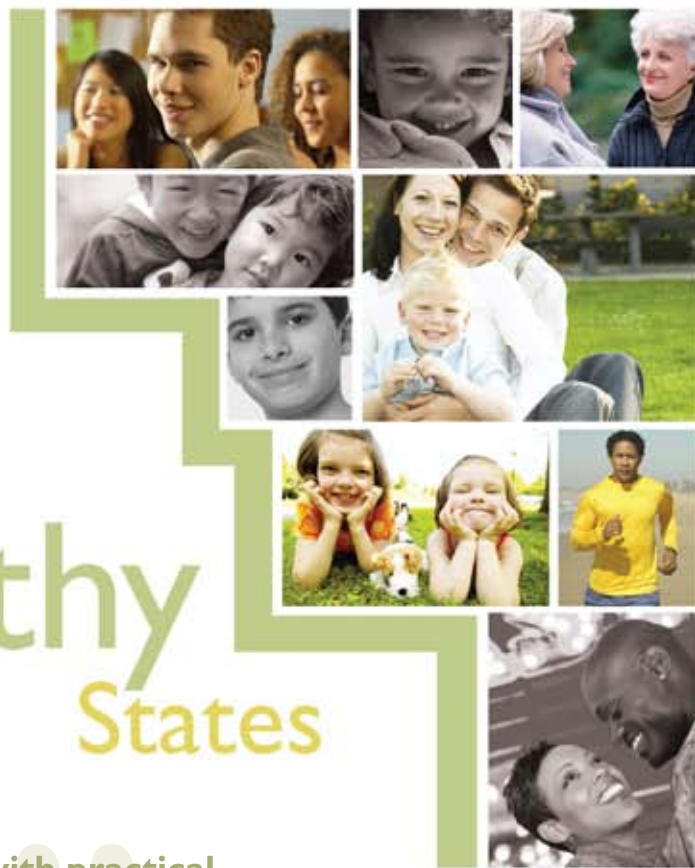
Learn more about the Women In Government's anti-cervical cancer efforts at [www.womeningovernment.org/prevention](http://www.womeningovernment.org/prevention).

—*Maria Mazzone Garrett was formerly a visiting research associate at The Council of State Governments. This article will be printed in the Summer 2006 issue of Healthy States Quarterly. Previous issues of Healthy States Quarterly are available by visiting [www.healthystates.csg.org](http://www.healthystates.csg.org).*

Source: Adapted from CDC's Human Papillomavirus Infection Web site. [www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/default.htm)

## You Need to Know More . . . .

Four upcoming meetings for state legislators and policymakers are designed to highlight innovative state solutions to public health issues. These conferences allow state legislators the opportunity to discuss proven state approaches with experts and other policymakers. Sponsored by the Healthy States Initiative and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Active Living Leadership Partnership, these meetings are offered in a variety of locations to accommodate your personal schedule and location preferences. Travel scholarships are available. The Healthy States Initiative is a partnership of The Council of State Governments, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators and the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators.



# Healthy States

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—Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee

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# A Healthy Start



*Assessment system helps babies by helping mothers*

**The Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) gives legislators crucial information they need to make sure their state's most vulnerable residents are thriving.**

By Jennifer Ginn



“It’s been a very helpful and a very, very good tool to get us to focus on what are the real problems ... and to figure out how to focus our limited resources. There are so many of us who have said for years that we need to focus.”

—New Mexico state Sen. Dede Feldman

**H**ow do you know how healthy the new mothers and infants in your state are? Do you rely on anecdotal information, national trends or information from advocates?

For many state legislators, the information is at their fingertips with an assessment called PRAMS—the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System. The data it contains can be a vital tool to improve the health of a state’s most vulnerable residents.

PRAMS was started in 1987 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It was begun because at that point in time, infant mortality rates were no longer declining as fast as they once had and the prevalence of low birth weight babies had changed little in 20 years. PRAMS goal is to improve the health of newborns by improving the health of mothers.

## How It Works

As of April 2006, 37 states, New York City and the South Dakota Tribal-State collaborative project participate in PRAMS through cooperative agreements with the CDC. Each state’s health department sends out a questionnaire to a representative sample of women who gave birth to a live infant within the previous two to six months. State sample sizes range from 1,300 to 3,400 women per year and PRAMS coverage represents approximately 75 percent of all U.S. live births.

There are three types of questions on the PRAMS questionnaire. Core questions are those that all PRAMS states use. They cover topics such as the use of prenatal care, knowledge about folic acid and abuse during pregnancy. However, a portion of the assessment can be tailored to meet each state’s need.

“In addition to core questions, we have a set of what we call standard questions,” said Norma Harris, PRAMS project officer in the Division of Reproductive Health at the CDC. “Those standard questions have been cognitively tested. States can choose what they’d like to include. In addition to the core and

standard questions, states can also develop and include state-specific questions.”

These are questions that the state develops that are not covered by the standard list of questions. The information, said Harris, can be vital for legislators looking to spend their public health dollars in the most effective way possible.

“If they really want to start using evidence-based decision-making, data is one way to support evidence for policy initiatives,” she said. “PRAMS data can provide that. ... It allows them to monitor changes in maternal and child health indicators, for example, prenatal care utilization. ... It can help them figure out what the maternal and child health priorities should be.”

PRAMS data are also of great interest to those working on chronic disease issues because data are collected on outcomes such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity.

Funding for PRAMS runs in five-year cycles, with a new cycle starting in April 2006. During the previous cycle, there were 30 funded organizations. In April 2006, nine additional organizations were funded. States send in applications and the number selected to participate is based on the amount of funding allocated by Congress. Although CDC provides funding for the actual assessment, each state provides additional money to support project operations.

## New Mexico Gets Focused

Dr. Susan Nalder, maternal and child health epidemiologist and New Mexico’s PRAMS director, said her state is one of the few that funds a full-time epidemiologist to work with the assessment data. Information gleaned from PRAMS has been used successfully to promote funding requests to increase home visitation programs for first-time parents. As a part of these programs, a health professional makes regular home visits to check on a child’s progress, identify any potential problems or delays early and answer questions from the parents.

“New Mexico doesn’t have very good coverage for home visiting right now,” Nalder said. “What we do know, when you can offer certain kinds of home visitation programs ... during

pregnancy and then for the first three years of a child's life, it can have results such as optimal readiness for children to learn and improvement in a lot of health indicators, like immunizations, lower injury rates and better breast-feeding continuation. Most critical of all is better parenting and infant development."

One group using the PRAMS data is the New Mexico Early Childhood Alliance, which held its first meeting in April 2006. It was formed to develop policy directions to help improve early childhood development in the state. It is a broad-based alliance that includes representatives from health, education, social services, legal, maternal and child health advocacy and faith communities.

State Sen. Dede Feldman, a member of the alliance, chair of the Senate Public Affairs Committee and co-chair of the health and human services committee, said PRAMS data have been vital in focusing the alliance's efforts. The alliance is using PRAMS information to create the state's Healthy Birth Index, a select group of indicators used to determine if the mother was healthy, the pregnancy was wanted and the family was stable and prepared for the new baby.

"It included things like percent of mothers who did not smoke or drink during their pregnancies, those who were physically abused, those who knew about folic acid and prenatal care," Feldman said. "There are all these measures where we fall very nearly at the bottom of the list when you compare us to the rest of the country. That's something we know we have to improve.

"At that meeting, based on some of this information, we decided there that the first priority was the need to expand home visiting programs. The second priority was the Healthy Birth Index, to have more mothers with all the characteristics on that scale. We figured the best way to do it was to continue doing home visiting programs, which we have started, but the effort has not been fully funded."

Feldman said New Mexico has focused intensely on the health of young children. Lt. Gov. Diane Denish has formed a children's cabinet, which includes eight cabinet secretaries, to focus on how to improve the lives of children. Gov. Bill Richardson even declared 2006 as the Year of the Child. PRAMS data have been essential to the state's efforts, Feldman said.

"It's been a very helpful and a very, very good tool to get us to focus on what are the real problems ... and to figure out how to focus our limited resources," she said. "There are so many of us who have said for years that we need to focus."

## Alaska Sees Possibilities

Dr. Brad Gessner, a pediatrician who is director of the maternal and child health epidemiology unit at the Alaska Department of Health, said PRAMS information has been used in a variety of ways, including in a response to newly released guidelines regarding sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) he submitted to the journal "Pediatrics." In his letter, Gessner provides data from Alaska PRAMS that seems to contradict evidence supporting that infants should not share a parent's bed during sleep.

"We used the PRAMS data to illustrate the SIDS rate has been going down every year since the mid to late '90s, mainly because of Back to Sleep (a campaign that encourages parents

to put babies to sleep on their backs). The proportion of parents reporting co-sleeping with children most of the time has gone up during that time period," Gessner said.

In other words, evidence suggests that SIDS rates have declined during the same time that bed-sharing with mothers has increased. Gessner agrees that evidence clearly shows infants should not bed-share with an impaired parent (i.e., one who has been drinking or taking drugs).

According to CDC, the safest sleep environment for an infant is on his back on his own firm sleep surface close to his caregiver. The sleep surface should be free of blankets, pillows and other loose bedding. Parents or caregivers should never smoke or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs if they choose to sleep with their infant.

Gessner said PRAMS data also have been used to help design the state's SIDS recommendations, evaluate the impact of a folic acid campaign and is now being used to see what the long-term consequences are for infants whose mothers used smokeless tobacco while pregnant. But what experts have learned pales in comparison to what could be accomplished if there was enough state funding to support the manpower needed to analyze the information, he said.

"The key message to me is PRAMS is a potential gold mine of information for designing and evaluating public health interventions that is so poorly funded that most of it can't be realized," Gessner said. "For example, we want to use PRAMS data and link it to our child abuse data then look at what are the things we know about at the time of birth or early infancy that predict child abuse later on. ...

"There are a lot of things that can be done besides saying, 'Here's the proportion of women who report co-sleeping.'"

So while PRAMS can provide a lot of crucial data, just participating is not enough. Using the information to direct policy takes informed people and funding. Nalder and Gessner both urged legislators to learn more about what data are available in their state, how their program is funded and the potential uses of PRAMS data for planning and reviewing programs and policies aimed at reducing health problems among mothers and babies.

"PRAMS is possibly the most utilized public health database that we have," Gessner said. "Even though we're not doing nearly as much as we could, it really is a well-respected source of information."

*—Jennifer Ginn is a health policy analyst at The Council of State Governments.*

## For more information ...

To learn more about the CDC's PRAMS program, visit [www.cdc.gov/PRAMS](http://www.cdc.gov/PRAMS).

To find out if your state is participating in PRAMS and for contact information, visit [www.cdc.gov/PRAMS/states.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/PRAMS/states.htm).

To learn more about PRAMS and chronic disease, visit [www.chronicdisease.org/WH\\_Council/WHC\\_projects.htm](http://www.chronicdisease.org/WH_Council/WHC_projects.htm).



# After The Storm Comes A **Ra**

By Jack Penchoff

**The Southern Governors' Association 72nd Annual Meeting in New Orleans began with work at a Habitat for Humanity site and a two-hour tour of the devastation left by Hurricane Katrina. The SGA also coordinated efforts to raise \$1.5 million to help rebuild New Orleans and other Gulf Coast areas.**

A late morning deluge soaked New Orleans as bus loads of volunteers arrived at Musicians' Village, a Habitat for Humanity housing community in the city's Upper Ninth Ward.

Organized by the Southern Governors' Association, about 130 eager workers were huddled under a large tent as the rain turned the construction site into a muddy field.

However, just as suddenly as the rain clouds rolled in they departed, leaving behind a blue sky, lots of sun and steamy air.

For Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco, SGA chair, rain had once again shaped her activities with SGA. One year earlier her luggage was packed and she was ready to depart for SGA's 2005 annual meeting in Georgia when she was notified that Hurricane Katrina was bearing down on the Gulf Coast with New Orleans in her path.

The governor cancelled the trip to the SGA meeting, where she was scheduled to be installed as SGA chair, and remained in Louisiana to deal with the devastation left by Katrina.

## **A Rainbow**

Even though Blanco did not make it to her installation as SGA's presiding officer, she has used her leadership role to help SGA coordinate a fundraising effort to support construction of Habitat for Humanity homes.

The effort was held in conjunction with SGA's 72nd Annual Meeting in New Orleans July 15-17. SGA also organized a 130-member volunteer corps from the staffs of SGA members, corporate sponsors and intergovernmental agencies.



# inbowl

## Southern governors support New Orleans' rebirth

"After the storm comes a rainbow," Blanco said before the volunteers began their work. "This is a tremendous rainbow of perseverance and progress—rebirth and renewal."

During the past year, SGA worked with corporate underwriters to raise nearly \$1.5 million. That money will cover all the costs associated with the construction of 20 houses, including land acquisition and credit counseling for prospective homeowners, as well as the actual home construction.

Some of the most generous contributions came from 84 Lumber, Entergy, LP Building Products, American Electric Power (AEP), Chevron, Freddie Mac, ExxonMobil, Shell Oil Company and Symantec.

"Organizations like Habitat for Humanity and the businesses you see before you today have built the rainbow of progress for our communities," Blanco said.

### Hammerin' Governors

Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine was probably the most experienced volunteer on the site. While in law school, he took a year off to work as a Christian missionary, serving as principal of a vocational and technical school in a small village in Honduras.

Kaine hammered nails, brushed on paint and carried his own ladder during the afternoon. He compared the work to the Bible story in which Jesus fed thousands of people with just a few loaves of bread and fish.

"This is called the 'loaves and fish' story," Kaine said. "Put a little bit in the basket and see it multiplied."

Kaine's wife, Anne Holton, was also one of the volunteer workers.

Accompanying Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee to the site was his wife Janet, a member of the Habitat board.

The first lady of Arkansas came dressed to work, hammering siding into place.

Huckabee, who admitted his wife's carpentry work was superior to his, did earn applause from Mrs. Huckabee when he flawlessly knocked a nail into a wood stud with five hearty swings.

Musicians' Village was conceived by New Orleans' musicians Harry Connick Jr. and Branford Marsalis, who view the village as a way to help displaced musicians remain in the Crescent City. Project plans call for the construction of 75 homes. The centerpiece will be the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music.

**Continued on page 35**

**"This is a tremendous rainbow of perseverance and progress—rebirth and renewal."**

—Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco



# Blogging Government

*Web journals enhance communication with constituents*

By Mary Branham Dusenberry

**Nearly 40 percent of Internet users read Web logs, online journals that deal with a range of topics. Some state government officials are tapping into this new communications tool to reach more people.**

# T

exas Rep. Aaron Peña sits in a legislative committee room and listens to testimony about a death penalty bill.

His Internet blog is open in front of him, and an audience—also watching the public hearing on Austin public access television—offers comments and questions. It’s instant interaction

from people interested in the considered legislation.

“As this expert was saying things, people would comment to me—‘ask him this question’” Peña recalled. The legislator did, and the expert clarified his testimony.

That’s just one example of how blogs are reshaping government communications.

Peña is one of a small number of state legislators across the country who keep in touch with their constituents—and anyone else in the global village—through blogs, or Web logs—journals kept on the Internet.

The Pew Internet & American Life Project, released in July, found that 8 percent of Internet users, or 12 million adults, keep a blog, while 39 percent, or about 57 million American adults, read blogs, a significant increase since the fall of 2005 when Pew conducted a similar survey.

“It provides legislators with a way to not only get their issues and ideas and concerns out to constituents,” said Pam Greenberg, program principal with the National Conference of State Legislatures, “but also to get things out that may not be covered by the mainstream press. They (legislators) can put out their own unfiltered information.”

NCSL has been tracking legislators’ use of blogs and is set to begin a project to highlight the new ways legislators are using technology to communicate with constituents.

Legislators aren’t the only government officials using blogs. Some state agencies are utilizing the format to reach a new, more tech-savvy generation to get them involved in government. Several governors have blogs, usually written by staff members, to talk about what they’re doing.

Doug Robinson, executive director of the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO), said some state agencies maintain blogs around domain topics, such as education and technology. He said some states use internal blogs to communicate with state employees in a less formal, and often quicker way.

“I think it can be a useful and valuable conduit for information exchange,” Robinson said. “I think blogs are going mainstream for a lot of people. I look at a blog almost every day for content related to technology.”

The Hawaii Legislative Reference Bureau Library, for instance, posts a blog called First Reading that reports on, and offers access to, resources related to state legislative issues as well as information about the state’s resources, studies and reports, and current legislation, according to Stephen Bibbs of First Reading. While it’s set

up to accept comments, Bibbs points out the site is designed as a nonpartisan research tool and addendum to the news.

“It is important we offer all services without expressed political opinion,” he said. “It is true we offer only those resources we feel to be authoritative and valuable, but not in regards to any particular political opinion or interpretation.”

Blogs are a growing communications tool, particularly for younger generations who have grown up with the Internet. The Pew Internet & American Life Project found that more than half—54 percent—of bloggers are under age 30.

While the most publicized blogs focus on politics and government, the Pew study found only 11 percent of bloggers overall focus on the topic. The most, 37 percent, focus on their lives or experiences.

“I see blogs as a part of the whole new, rich media environment,” Robinson said, citing the increased use of podcasts and RSS feeds in the private as well as government sectors.

## Closing the Distance

Peña’s blog is personal. He talks about topics ranging from his views on redistricting in Texas to his visits in the district. He also talks about personal things, and, he says, that helps show people that he’s human. “If I’m watching a show about Superman and I want to make a cultural comment, I’ll comment about it,” he said.

“There was a distance between constituents and elected officials,” Peña said. “That distance is furthered by Web sites. With blogging, which is interactive—the feature that makes it distinct ... the interactive, instantaneous and linking nature—that allowed me to be a three-dimensional person.”

Peña began his blog in response to a political rival raising questions about his service to the district. Peña began posting to his blog, showing exactly what he’d been doing. That has helped, and Peña believes he won that and subsequent elections because of the rapport he’s built with constituents.

“I have to credit the dialogue or relationship that I built with my constituents,” he said. “Actually he (his political opponent) did me a great favor in helping me realize the gulf that lies between elected leaders and their constituents and how that gulf doesn’t have to be there.”

Blogs, Robinson said, are “more citizen-friendly and less formal. That’s why there’s an explosion in blogging. It gives people

“Blogging is not about going to the podium, grabbing a mike and making an announcement. Blogging is mingling with friends and acquaintances, and even potential enemies, at a cocktail party and having conversations. It’s about establishing a relationship.”

—Ric Cantrell

Assistant to majority leadership in the Utah Senate



the ability to present their personal experiences, opinions, in a way not as structured as a press release, not as structured as a sound bite.”

That may have the effect of reaching people who may otherwise have no interest in seeking out information about their governments. Sen. John Valentine said The Senate Site—the blog of the majority party in Utah—has found that to be the case through comments from readers.

“Based on the comments we’re getting, it appears that we’ve got people that would not otherwise be engaged in government, who are now, for the first time, hooking in and recognizing that this is their government, not just their parents’ and grandparents,” Valentine said.

“I think the new technologies open up yet another way for people to be able to communicate with their government,” he said. “There’s no way that is going to be a cure-all, but it appears to me that having multiple ways of communication is very healthy to understanding how your government works.”

That’s one reason behind a blog through Arkansas Secretary of State Charlie Daniels’ office. Crystal Shell, communications coordinator for Daniels, said the secretary of state introduced a blog for youth—based on grade level—two years ago to give students a forum to talk about voting and youth issues.

Many students are interested in the blog, but haven’t addressed the specific topics sought for the government-sponsored site. The blog hasn’t taken off like the office hoped it would, but Shell said it’s obvious from the number of posts submitted for consideration that youth are interested in blogging.

“You try to come up with different ways to get youth involved in politics,” Shell said. “In the last few election cycles, there was such a decline in participation among younger voters. We tried to find ways to communicate ... to use their technology. Bring it to them in forms that we hope to participate in.”

While at this point the blog hasn’t been as successful as the secretary of state had hoped, Shell still thinks it can work. Daniels’ office is planning education forums for teachers, hoping to get students interested from that perspective.

“I’d love for it to be a big thing and have kids go at it,” she said. “It is the younger generation’s forum. It’s quick, fast. It seemed to be something that kids would latch onto, an instant gratification sort of thing, which we all know the younger generation likes.”

Valentine recognizes the blog will attract a particular audience, and said it’s good to make sure every segment of the population has a way to communicate. “I still get regular handwritten letters from constituents,” Valentine said. “I find I can predict

their age by the way they communicate.” He knows, for the most part, that the under-30 population will most likely communicate through e-mail or blogs, while the 30 to 60 set will communicate through e-mail, “snail mail” or telephone, and the over-60 set will communicate by handwritten letters.

Not everyone with a blog allows for the interactive communication. According to the Pew study, 87 percent of bloggers allow comments. Minnesota Rep. Ray Cox, who’s been blogging since December 2002, isn’t one of them, and he likes it that way. “I do get a lot of comments from people ... a lot of face to face comments,” he said.

## Sharing Information

In addition to their interactive nature, blogs allow government officials to share unfiltered information, and address issues of concern in their states.

Bibbs, of the Hawaii Legislative Reference Bureau, said new technology “facilitates the implementation of traditional services and expands the platform of interchange.

“Blogs,” he said, “not only level the communication field between officials and the public, they contribute to the defining and prioritizing of issues.”

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger’s home page in California, for instance, in July added a daily blog from State Fire Marshal Ruben Grijalva about the wildfire season, including information about the fires to which crews have responded, heat advisories and other potential problems.

“That’s good information for the press and the public, and it serves as a magnet for people to our site,” said Jimmy Orr, director of e-communications for the California governor’s office.

The blogs on Schwarzenegger’s home page don’t allow for public comments yet, but Orr said that could come in the future. The revamped version of the Web site has only been online a few months. “You walk before you can run,” Orr said of changes down the line.

Right now, the governor’s office is focused on getting information out to the people of California. Cabinet heads and other members of the governor’s staff post information about Schwarzenegger’s actions of the day and other topics of interest in their areas of expertise. It’s written in a more informal style, and addresses the news of the day.

Ric Cantrell, assistant to majority leadership in the Utah Senate, said The Senate Site had three goals at inception.

“One was the perennial concern with how the media tells the story of the legislative process,” Cantrell said. “We have a cadre of talented, bright, sincere reporters. The issues range from agriculture to tax reform to social issues. There’s huge varieties of issues. We had a concern that sometimes we needed to tell people what was happening here without a filter.”

In addition, Cantrell said there are often issues in the legislature “that don’t rise to the level of a press release or a press conference.” Still, political and government junkies, he said, have an interest in those items. “It’d be nice to have somewhere to get those out to political junkies.”

Third, the blog helps put a face on legislators. “One of the problems a legislator faces is that people see them as a dehumanized moonlit mass they don’t like,” Cantrell said. “These are real

people. They're individuals. I wanted people to see my senators as individuals and less as a two-dimensional caricature of a person.

"The people own the government. I wanted to make sure they know their government."

Orr couldn't agree more. "Most people will never make it to the Capitol. Most people will never meet the leader of their state," he said. "The closest they're going to come to interacting with the leader is the Web site so it's really important that you treat the Web site as a valuable, if not the most valuable, part of your communications shop."

Cantrell said "nobody knows where this is going to end up. It's going to be interesting to ride this thing and see where it takes us."

One thing is certain, however, according to Cantrell: Blogs have created a more informal dialogue between government and constituents.



"Blogging is not about going to the podium, grabbing a mike and making an announcement," he said. "Blogging is mingling with friends and acquaintances, and even potential enemies, at a cocktail party and having conversations. It's about establishing a relationship."

—Mary Branham Dusenberry is the managing editor of *State News* magazine.

## Starting a Blog: Find your voice, and stick to it

### So you want to start a blog.

Some people in state governments across the country say it's a quick and easy way to get your message to your constituents. Blogs, they say, also facilitate conversation about government with a new generation.

But experienced bloggers say those interested in starting one should keep some things in mind:

### Blogs should be updated regularly.

"If people go to your site and it looks like a library or archive site, they'll never come back," said Jimmy Orr, director of e-communications for California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. "If you're able to put up new content, there's a reason for them to come back."

The Web, Orr said, doesn't operate on a conventional five-day workweek. "It's important that other elements of our society—if they want a successful Web site—they have to treat it that way," he said. "If you want communications with your people, whether in politics or business, that's important."

### Blogs are not a substitute for personal interaction.

Those who read blogs are "not the full range of your constituency," said Texas Rep. Aaron Peña. "It's a segment of your constituency. I've found myself at points getting lost in the intellectual dialogue with people who are probably from Austin or Houston or Dallas or L.A. And I cannot forget I represent a whole different group of people."

### Blogs don't take the place of the media.

Ric Cantrell, assistant to the majority leadership in the Utah Senate, said The Senate Site in Utah adds perspective and depth to the issues. "We don't have any interest in supplanting the media," he said. "We have a strong interest in holding them accountable."

Cantrell said if he knows a reporter is working on a story, he'll hold off writing about that topic in a blog. "I didn't want the attitude that we're trying to scoop the media," he said. "You need a healthy media and a healthy blog community. People can get a perspective of what's going on in a healthy blogging community."

### Blogs can show how people, politicians in particular, evolve on an issue.

Peña said he's tried to get some of his Texas colleagues involved in a legislative blog much like the ones in Utah and Minnesota. "They're still holding to the idea you can only hold one position," he said, "that you can't evolve."

He's found the blog shows him how his position on different issues has changed. "It helps me to flesh out the various thoughts floating through my mind on an issue," Peña said. "I'll have an initial reaction and then with time and listening to arguments, I'll have a secondary reaction. I'll even have a later reaction."

"As I write (the blog), I will see the evolution of my position and it helps me to see why I did it," he said. "I can see how I've changed as a representative and as a person."

Minnesota Rep. Ray Cox said that may prohibit some elected officials from blogging. "I think the hesitancy is that it gives your opponent a little more ammunition if they want to mine (the blog)," he said.

### Find your voice and respect your audience.

"Don't phony up," Peña said. "Your audience can tell when you're being phony."

Cox said blogs can show your audience a personal side. "Let them know you have a family, you have kids," he said. "You can incorporate all those threads in there and put a real normal human voice to a politician, rather than a sound bite the 10 o'clock news captures."

### Blogs need to be interesting.

"We saw a lot of blog sites that were pretty bland and not very fun to play on," said Sen. John Valentine of Utah. "We wanted a site that was fun to come to."

### Blogs don't have to be difficult to create or maintain.

"You have existing resources," Orr said. "You have a cabinet, you have staff. So the value is to take advantage of those resources and to say to your cabinet officials, 'I want you to blog for me on this.'"

# Energy Solutions

## *In The Pipeline*



*States adopt policies to increase renewable energy use*

By Rona Cohen

**States are not waiting for the federal government to tackle energy and climate concerns. At least 20 states have Renewable Portfolios Standards that require utilities to gradually increase the portion of electricity produced from renewable resources and seven states require a percentage of gasoline sold within their borders contain a bio-based fuel.**

“Quite a few independent assessments in the past couple of years have concluded that renewable electricity standards (will be) the most important driver for the development of new renewable energy sources in the U.S. and Canada for the next 10 years.”

—Alan Noguee, director  
Clean Energy Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists

Skyrocketing fuel prices, growing global demand and instability in the Middle East have become critical concerns in the national debate over forging an effective energy policy in the U.S.

State officials have become increasingly frustrated with the federal government's failure to include climate change in its energy discussion and are taking the lead in developing policies that are climate-friendly and reduce our reliance on foreign sources of energy.

“Significant numbers of states are moving down the road of an energy policy, which has positive influence on the climate side,” said Jonathan Pershing, director of the Climate and Energy Program at the World Resources Institute. “As we deal with energy and climate questions, they are intersecting.”

Pershing was one of a nearly dozen experts who participated in a two-day energy conference sponsored in May by The Council of State Governments/Eastern Regional Conference (CSG/ERC) in Cambridge, Mass.

Experts warn that time is running out to halt the buildup of greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere before they reach a tipping point. By 2030, global emissions must peak if the earth's inhabitants are to have a chance at averting major climate-related disaster, said Pershing.

The U.S. produces 20 percent of global greenhouse-gas emissions, but has rejected the Kyoto Protocol climate change treaty, which requires industrialized countries to slash their emissions of carbon dioxide from 1990 levels by 2008–2012. The treaty went into effect last year.

Despite inaction at the federal level, states are moving ahead with an array of innovative policies with an eye toward achieving multiple energy and climate objectives.

Promising actions include:

- An effort among seven Northeastern states to implement a cap-and-trade program for carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from power plants;
- Standards in place in 20 states and the District of Columbia to promote renewable energy;
- State-based climate action plans;
- efforts to encourage energy efficiency in the electric sector and in the use of consumer appliances; and
- Programs to reduce automobile emissions.

## Replacing Foreign Oil

Coal, nuclear power, natural gas and oil account for 85 percent of U.S. fuel use. There is currently adequate supply to meet

demand. However, soaring prices for oil and gasoline—which now averages \$3 per gallon nationwide—are hitting consumers hard and driving policymakers to seek alternatives.

Coupled with high costs, security concerns are also key: The U.S. consumes one-quarter of global oil supply, but possesses only 3 percent of world oil reserves. Additionally, demand is rising fast, and studies show that global oil production will likely peak between now and soon after 2030, according to Pershing.

“The question is, what do you do to replace it?” he said.

Options include aggressively pumping to get more out of existing oil fields, or extracting heavy oil from tar sands. The processes could potentially yield significant quantities of oil, but have enormous environmental costs, experts said.

Many state policies have centered on the automotive sector, which accounts for roughly two-thirds of all petroleum consumed in the U.S.

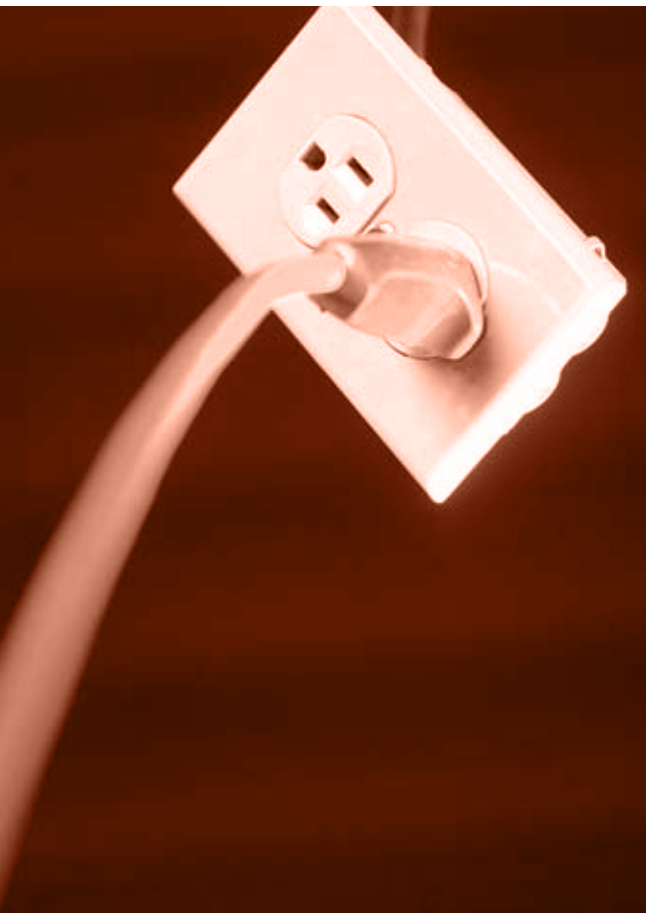
Ethanol shows the most potential for replacing gasoline during the next 30 years, said Jason Grumet, executive director of the National Commission on Energy Policy.

In fact, seven states have adopted mandates requiring that a certain percentage of gasoline sold within their borders contain some bio-based fuels, including ethanol made from corn, soy, switchgrass and other crops.

These efforts are promising, but in the near-term, perhaps the most significant oil-demand reduction measure the U.S. could take using existing technology is to increase corporate average fuel economy standards, according to Grumet. Congress, however, has resisted recent efforts to tighten the standards. Currently, the average fuel economy of U.S. cars and light trucks is 21 miles per gallon, below that of most other developed nations, and down from a peak of 22 mpg in 1987.

Some state policymakers have been examining emissions- or efficiency-based incentives to encourage reductions in tailpipe releases of greenhouse gases and other pollutants. Such policies provide people with incentives at the point of purchase of a car that are related to the emission benefit the car has to offer. They can be structured to be revenue neutral—for example, they could be set up as either an incentive program, a disincentive program or both, to create revenue neutrality, said David Cash, director of air, energy and waste policy at the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs.

Based on Cash's modeling for Massachusetts, a broadly-based incentive-disincentive program could potentially lower gasoline consumption by 15 percent by 2020, and raise fleet fuel economy by 17 percent. Consumers would save around \$900 million in gas expenses per year. There would also be substantial CO<sub>2</sub>



reductions: 10 percent by 2010 and 20 percent by 2020. State tax revenues would decrease, however, because drivers would be purchasing less gasoline, said Cash.

Possible difficulties with emissions-based incentives include federal pre-emption, given that the federal government has the right to regulate fuel efficiency. Since these policies would be emissions-based, they could be perceived as falling under the jurisdiction of the federal government, said Cash.

Historically, Congress has established and tightened fuel economy standards, but the Clean Air Act grants California, which has some of the poorest air quality in the nation, the right to enact stricter standards than federal ones. All other states are required to either comply with the federal rules, or to legislatively or administratively adopt California's, but they are prohibited from setting their own rules.

Nine states have adopted or are poised to adopt strict greenhouse-gas emissions standards established by California in 2002, accounting for 18 percent of the new car market. In the adopting states, model year 2016 vehicles will emit 36 percent fewer greenhouse gases than model year 2008 vehicles.

## Greater Fuel Diversity Needed

Speakers at the CSG/ERC conference stressed the need to diversify the nation's current supply of fuel used to produce electricity. One alternative they proposed is to burn more coal or convert it to liquid form. The U.S. has the world's largest reserves of coal—even with current production, domestic supply would last more than 250 years.

But coal prices have risen substantially in recent years, and coal is intrinsically dirty—for example, it emits twice the quantity of greenhouse gases per kilowatt-hour as natural gas. Nevertheless, new technology to capture and store CO<sub>2</sub> from coal plants could go a long way toward mitigating the impact of dirty emissions, experts said.

Another option is to boost usage of natural gas, which is considered to be cleaner than other fossil fuels because it emits less CO<sub>2</sub> per unit of energy when burned. There is some potential to boost extraction of natural gas from U.S. reserves, but environmental and siting concerns might hinder such activity; hence, in the future the U.S. will likely resort to importing greater quantities of natural gas from the Middle East and Russia.

Nuclear power, which does not emit greenhouse gases, is a carbon-free alternative that runs into significant environmental hurdles. A major concern is finding a safe, adequate storage site for nuclear waste—a prospect that seems increasingly fraught, given that plans for creating a site at Yucca Mountain remain in limbo. No nuclear plants have been built in the last 25 years, and the public remains jittery about supporting new construction.

Nationwide, roughly 20 percent of electricity is derived from nuclear power, but plants currently in operation are expected to be gradually retired over the next 50 years.

## States Drive Development of Renewable Energy

In light of these challenges, states across the U.S. have been designing and implementing an array of policies to reduce energy demand and encourage development of non-fossil fuel supplies. These policies have helped to serve multiple goals,

“Significant numbers of states are moving down the road of an energy policy, which has positive influence on the climate side. As we deal with energy and climate questions, they are intersecting.”

—Jonathan Pershing, director  
Climate and Energy Program at the World Resources Institute

including lowering spending on energy, reducing load growth, stabilizing energy prices, creating jobs, providing energy security and reducing carbon emissions, experts said.

More than 20 states have a Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). An RPS is a market-based mechanism that requires utilities to gradually increase the portion of electricity produced from renewable resources.

Studies show the standards have been a critical force behind development of clean energy sources nationwide. The U.S. Energy Information Administration calculates that more than 4,500 megawatts of new renewable energy development had already come online through November of last year as a direct result of renewable standards—approximately twice the quantity that had been developed for the voluntary market, said Alan Noguee, who directs the Clean Energy Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists.

“Quite a few independent assessments in the past couple of years have concluded that renewable electricity standards (will be) the most important driver for the development of new renewable energy sources in the U.S. and Canada for the next 10 years,” said Noguee.

Wind, solar and other clean energy resources can yield significant long-term economic advantages, experts said. While renewable energy technologies are capital intensive, and require significant investment up front—for machinery and installation—their fuel and operating costs are low compared with fossil fuels. As a result, renewables can help stabilize electricity prices and provide a hedge against increases in volatility, particularly for natural gas, said Noguee. Several studies have shown that increased penetration of renewable energy will be associated with declining natural gas prices, he said.

Renewable technologies also lead to new jobs in construction, operation and maintenance—about twice as many jobs per megawatt-hour as fossil-fuel plant construction, said Noguee. Development of renewable energy also contributes to property tax revenues or payments in lieu of taxes that are typically equivalent to 1 to 3 percent of assessed value, he said.

In the Northeast, there is substantial renewable energy project development in the pipeline. But Massachusetts and other states have also struggled to meet their standards, partly due to hurdles surrounding the siting and permitting processes, said Noguee. Projects have also had difficulty securing long-term contracts for their output.

States should strive to achieve greater harmonization of their standards to create a broader market, he said, adding that ultimately, the U.S. needs a national renewable energy standard to build on the success of state programs.

A study performed by the Union of Concerned Scientists found a 20 percent national standard would actually reduce both electricity and natural gas prices for consumers, according to Noguee.

A 20 percent national standard would also cut the growth of power plant carbon emissions by 59 percent relative to business as usual, said Noguee.

## Energy Efficiency Yields Multiple Benefits

Some states have also supported measures to reduce demand and cut costs by investing in energy efficiency. Five states in the Northeast have enacted stricter appliance efficiency standards than federal standards.

A study by Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships aggregated the efficiency potential in five New England states, and showed that combined investments in programs like energy efficiency standards for appliances and equipment can actually reduce electricity load growth substantially, said Dan Sosland, executive director of Environment Northeast, a research and advocacy organization. He said energy efficiency can offset growth and demand for electricity at a cost of up to one-tenth of the cost of alternative generation.

Sosland noted that investment in efficiency can yield other benefits: It creates jobs, thus keeping money in a state or region that would otherwise be exported. Energy efficiency also reduces and avoids greenhouse gas emissions.

But Sosland added that better policies are needed to provide a market push for investment. “How do we allow efficiency to enter into markets that it’s been closed to, and therefore get more revenue into efficiency investments in the region? Let’s find ways to qualify it as an energy resource in the region and allow it to compete for revenue,” he said.

Part of the problem is that states still have a regulatory structure that ties revenues to sales, thus enabling utilities to earn more revenue when they sell more energy.

“Over time, that creates a management culture that wants to maximize benefits to shareholders. It’s putting the incentives in the wrong place,” said Stephen Cowell, chairman and CEO of Conservation Services Group, a nonprofit agency that works with utilities and industry to promote the use of energy efficiency and renewable energy. “We really do need to address that going forward.”

—Rona Cohen is senior policy analyst for environment and energy with CSG’s Eastern Regional Conference.



# Competing in a Global

**Those attending the National Lieutenant Governors Association annual meeting in July focused on technology and education as ways to compete in a global economy.**

By Julia Nienaber Hurst

**T**echnological advances and international trade are expected to have a major impact on states' futures.

"As we move through the first years of the 21st century, Washington State is rapidly becoming more integrated with the world community," said Washington Lt. Gov. Brad Owen.

"The future of our young people, our communities, our economy and our way of life rests largely on our vision for the future. So we must work hard to protect our future by doing well in the present moment ... while securing our place in the vibrant and growing international trade market."

Speakers at the annual meeting of the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) in July stressed that state officials planning for success in the future should be aware of tools to improve international trade, advances in technology and the need for students to be educated in science, technology and mathematics. Twenty-three of the nation's lieutenant governors attended the meeting.

## International Trade

Exports fuel the U.S. economy, according to Tom McGinty, acting deputy director general of the U.S. Foreign and Commercial Service. "More than 20 percent of the goods produced in the U.S. are exported, and more than 200,000 small businesses are involved in international trade," he said. "In the

U.S. manufacturing sector alone, more than one in every five jobs is supported by exports."

The Commercial Service has 1,700 trade specialists in more than 250 offices in the U.S. and 80 foreign countries. The service offers everything from export counseling and customized market research to pre-arranged overseas business appointments, trade events and more. It provides low-cost, quick credit checks and due-diligence reports on foreign buyers and distributors.

"In 2005, the service facilitated nearly 12,500 export successes worth billions of dollars," said McGinty. Fees are charged for various services, but some states reimburse companies for the work.

The potential for exporting to the U.S. economy and jobs is tremendous. Ninety-five percent of the world's consumers live outside the U.S. Small and medium-sized business account for 97 percent of U.S. exporters, but about two-thirds of them currently sell to only one foreign market, according to McGinty. The world continues to become more global and markets can expand.

## Advancing Technology

Advancing technology is one element rapidly driving globalization, according to Microsoft General Counsel Brad Smith.

"There is more computing power in today's telephone than was in Apollo to the moon 37 years ago," said Smith.

He predicts technology development will occur around four factors in the next 10 years. These include more powerful computers in more places and the continued growth of connectivity. Smith said inter-connectivity will grow as an issue. He said

# al Economy

*Lieutenant governors discuss future based on technology, international trade*

The future of our young people, our communities, our economy and our way of life rests largely on our vision for the future. So we must work hard to protect our future by doing well in the present moment ... while securing our place in the vibrant and growing international trade market.

—Washington Lt. Gov. Brad Owen

the industry will see software as a service, making all devices “talk” to each other easily.

The industry itself will change, he noted. “This industry is young. Microsoft is only 35 years old,” Smith said.

Smith said Microsoft realized in the 1990s that it was developing items which created new legislative and regulatory issues.

“The technology can be used for good and bad, creating policy issues such as fraud and cyber-stalking,” he said. He noted that the company will promote broad consumer privacy protection at the federal level, then look to the states for enforcement, in the coming months and years.

He stressed that research- and development-based industries must be protected under intellectual property law, which must be properly enforced.

“These industries will go and locate to areas where creators reap rewards, not pirates,” said Smith.

This is an issue which may come to the forefront in the next few years in a variety of creative industries, including technology, pharmaceutical, arts and process development.

## Electronic Health Care

Smith said the industry has been slow to apply new technologies to education and health care.

Dr. David Brailer, the first presidential appointee to coordinate national health care technology efforts, said action in the states would likely propel national advancements in applying technology to health care.

**Continued on page 34**

## State International Trade

### North Dakota

In March 2005, the U.S. Foreign and Commercial Service opened an office in Fargo, N.D. For more than 24 months, the service worked with the governor’s office on four trade missions led by the lieutenant governor and chairs of the board of the North Dakota Trade Office. Missions to Japan, Taiwan, Australia and Russia brought millions of dollars in new business contracts to more than a dozen rural companies. Members of the Trade Office are reimbursed for using Commercial Service programs.

### California

The Commercial Service facilitated more than 1,900 export transactions in 2005, including assistance to a small company, Certified Worldwide, which would have had difficulty entering the export market without help. It now market vitamins and food supplements in four countries.

### Connecticut

In 2003, then-Lt. Gov. Jodi Rell, signed a partnership agreement which reimburses qualified small and mid-sized companies up to 50 percent of the Commercial Service fees. Today, Gov. Jodi Rell touts the 315 firms with new successful exports under the program, which saved the state money by allowing it to close its own overseas offices.



# CA Convenient Truth

*Gore says state treasurers can address global warming*

**On the heels of his best-selling book and successful film production of “An Inconvenient Truth,” former Vice President Al Gore brought his message of global warming and environmental sustainability to the National Association of State Treasurers (NAST) and College Savings Plans Network (CSPN) annual conference.**

By Kerry Holt

Former Vice President Al Gore calls the world’s climate crisis the greatest challenge confronting humanity today. “We cannot wait any longer to solve this problem—we’re out of time,” Gore told those attending the annual conference of the National Association of State Treasurers (NAST) and College Savings Plans Network (CSPN).

Gore said state treasurers can play a key role in addressing the crisis.

“(You) may have a greater capacity to address this crisis than anyone in the world,” he told the July gathering at The Greenbrier. “As stewards of public funds, you invest in the best interests of your constituents and you invest for the long-term. Short-term speculation exacerbates this crisis.”

Gore has been spreading his message about global warming and environmental sustainability after publication of his best-selling book and successful film production, “An Inconvenient Truth.”

Gore characterized the climate crisis as “the most serious manifestation of the collision of human civilization with the earth’s ecology.” The crisis has been ignored or tolerated for years, Gore said, adding that we are approaching new territory that we “never encountered before in human history.”

Gore attributed the climate crisis to two main factors: population and technology.

“The world has experienced a population explosion, quadrupling in less than 100 years,” he said. He noted that while some nations have slowed their population increases, “the life expectancy in every nation in the world has increased significantly.”

According to Gore, as the number of people grows, the Earth attempts to accommodate their needs, sometimes unsuccessfully.

Technological advances serve immediate needs, Gore said, raising the standard of living for some of the world’s poorest citizens. But, he added, technology also has unforeseen and unfathomable consequences.

Former Vice President Gore joined state treasurers in attendance at the NAST and CSPN Annual Conference, from left, Braxton Powell of Virginia, Nancy Kopp of Maryland, Vernon Larson of South Dakota, Ron Crane of Idaho, Mike Fitzgerald of Iowa, Robert Kline of Michigan, Jack Voight of Wisconsin, John Perdue of West Virginia, Gore, Michael Murphy of Washington, Randall Edwards of Oregon, Ron Ross of Nebraska, Edward Alter of Utah, David Lemoine of Maine, Laksana Mack of Washington D.C., and Michael Ablowich of New Hampshire.



“Technology, in general, is 1,000 times more powerful than 50 years ago, making humanity the proverbial ‘bull in a china shop’—we can easily and with little regard cause much damage. Technology may improve our standard of living, but it has also allowed the exploitation of Earth,” he said.

Gore noted that people can’t, and wouldn’t want to, stop technological advancement, but he said they can manage those tools in an efficient manner, with more thought placed on preserving the environment.

Detailing the damage already done, Gore cited new evidence of the crisis. He shared a dramatic statistic regarding the world’s oceans: 25 million tons of carbon dioxide is absorbed into the ocean each day. In fact, the pH level of the oceans are changing, things are dying and the food chain as we know it is at risk.

Gore also said members of the scientific community agree about the urgency of the situation. “In science, researchers rarely reach a consensus on anything,” he said. “So for them to reach such a strong consensus on the emergency of global warming indicates how significant a crisis we are dealing with.”

Gore acknowledged that we can’t do much to reverse the damage already done, but he said there are some things that can prevent the problem from growing. “I am so pleased to see the state treasurers not get bogged down in the despair of the situation,” he said, “and from very early on you’ve been in the lead, taking this issue into account when discussing your investment options.”

Gore complimented the recent action at the Institutional Investor Summit on Climate Risk recommending the Securities and Exchange Commission require that companies disclose the risk associated with climate change as part of their securities filings. He noted that several state treasurers were among the 28 institutional investors who signed a letter to SEC Chairman Christopher Cox asking that the commission enforce existing disclosure requirements on material risks, such as climate change, as well as provide interpretive guidance on the risks posed by climate change.

Gore also praised the six state treasurers who, as part of the Investor Network on Climate Risk, are pushing for a face-to-face-meeting with independent members of the Exxon Mobil board of directors. Citing a concern that Exxon Mobil’s handling of climate change is lagging behind other competitors, the treasurers and other institutional investors have been seeking a meeting since May.

“Treasurers have been successful in bringing progressive change,” Gore said, but cautioned that work still remains.

In particular, Gore recommended treasurers look at the structure of their investments. “Treasurers are in the catbird seat because of their ability to drive financially responsible global decisions. But we don’t have a lot of time to steer this course,” Gore said.

The vice president talked about the need for state treasuries to invest public funds over the long-term in environmentally conscious ways. “The attention span in the investment arena changes investment actions. As treasurers your fiduciary obligation runs in the face of short term return,” he said.

In closing, Gore had one note of advice for the nation’s fiscal fiduciaries: “Don’t let the demand for a quick return make you discharge your obligation to be stewards of investment capital while avoiding eco-consequences.”

You can download presentations from other speakers at the NAST & CSPN Annual Conference at [www.nast.org](http://www.nast.org).

—Kerry Holt is the communications manager for the National Association of State Treasurers.



Former Vice President Al Gore took a moment after his comments to personally meet with the state treasurers in attendance. State Treasurers Mike Fitzgerald of Iowa and Jack Voight of Wisconsin took the opportunity to speak with Gore.

“There is more computing power in today’s telephone than was in Apollo to the moon 37 years ago.”

—Brad Smith, Microsoft general counsel

Specifically, he said a federal commission working to set national standards for electronic medical records is looking to adopt as many as 35 requirements, rather than the possible hundreds of requirements. He noted the goal is to generate interest in and use of affordable technology, but to do it in a way which guarantees current and future inter-connectivity. He encouraged states to set up commissions and to begin to look at standards to generate adoption of this technology.

Kansas Lt. Gov. John Moore noted that use of electronic medical records and identification cards could save potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars in the health care system. He said the number of insurance claims rejected for lack of proper identifying information could be nearly eliminated. Many feel electronic medical records would also reduce errors in the medical system.

### STEM Education

Nearly every speaker at the conference noted that U.S. students must make gains in science, technology, engineering and

mathematics (STEM) education to compete effectively in a global market.

Cindy Dietz, chair of the Iowa Math and Science Coalition, said slightly more than half the states have or are developing a coalition of business, education and government leaders to promote gains in STEM education. Yet, representatives from industries ranging from aerospace and health care to technology and retail agree that American students and workers must improve their science and math skills to compute in the continually globalized world.

—Julia Nienaber Hurst is executive director of the National Lieutenant Governors Association.

Visit [www.nassmc.org/locations.html](http://www.nassmc.org/locations.html) to see if your state has a STEM coalition and find contact information on same.

Visit [www.export.gov/eacl/index.asp](http://www.export.gov/eacl/index.asp) or call 1-800-USA-TRAD(E).

## NLGA Annual Meeting Attendees

Those attending the National Lieutenant Governors Association annual meeting were Delaware Lt. Gov. John Carney, front left, Arizona Secretary of State Jan Brewer, Lt. Govs. Jane Norton of Colorado, Catherine Baker Knoll of Pennsylvania, James ‘Duke’ Aiona of Hawaii and Aito Sunia of American Samoa; Lt. Govs. Barbara Lawton of Wisconsin, middle row left, Bill Bolling of Virginia, Rick Sheehy of Nebraska, John Cherry of Michigan, Carol Molnau of Minnesota, and Jack Dalrymple of North Dakota; Lt. Govs. John Moore of Kansas, back row left, Gary Herbert of Utah, Brad Owen of Washington, Pat Quinn of Illinois, Peter Kinder of Missouri, Dennis Daugaard of South Dakota, and John Bohlinger of Montana.



## After the Storm continued from pg 20

Anyone who falls within the income guidelines for a Habitat house can apply for a home in the village, but special outreach will go to musicians. Connick and Marsalis hope their fundraising efforts will also help build an additional 225 homes in the Upper Ninth Ward.

### Concerts Help Project

Seed money for Musicians' Village came from proceeds of two benefit concerts last fall in New York City.

In April, the Dave Matthews Band pledged a matching grant to Habitat of up to \$1.5 million.

Musicians Village is being built on a former vacant lot that was the site of a school building torn down 15 years ago.

Following the work at Musicians' Village, Blanco and Hunt Downer, assistant adjutant general of the Louisiana National Guard and former Louisiana speaker of the house, took the governors, their staffs and other guests on a two-hour tour of some of the most devastated neighborhoods in New Orleans and St. Bernard Parish.

—Jack Penchoff is CSG assistant director of communications and senior editor of State News.



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An Initiative of The Council of State Governments



# Passing Through

*States influence debate on new passport rules*

**The Council of State Governments has led efforts to limit the impact of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), which would require passports for all travelers crossing U.S. land and air borders.**

**By Kristi Guillory**

For most Americans, international travel is a luxury, but for hundreds of thousands of citizens along the U.S.-Canadian border it is a daily necessity.

However, a decision by the United States Congress to require passports for all travelers crossing U.S. land and air borders jeopardizes the quality of life and economic vitality of hundreds of communities where border crossings are frequent, but passports are few. Given the likely impact of this policy, known as the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), The Council of State Governments has led an aggressive education campaign attempting to temper the negative consequences state leaders believe will result from WHTI implementation.

WHTI is a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of State (DOS) joint initiative to implement Section 7209 of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA).

Section 7209 of the IRTPA requires by Jan. 1, 2008, that all U.S. citizens and foreign nationals present a passport or combination of documents that denote identity and citizenship when entering the United States from other points within the Western Hemisphere. The implications of WHTI are particularly important for border communities where citizens make frequent crossings to commute to work, do business, go to a baseball game, or carry out any number of activities that one might find in a close-knit community.

Over the past year, CSG passed both regional and national resolutions calling for a delay in implementation of WHTI. CSG/Eastern Regional Council (CSG/ERC) brought a delegation of legislators from the northeastern states and the eastern Canadian provinces to Washington, D.C., to meet with Sen. Susan Collins, Sen. Patrick Leahy and an array of other senior leaders in Congress and the administration.

In addition, CSG staff from both the Midwest and headquarters offices led delegations to Ottawa to meet with the U.S. ambassador and senior Canadian leaders to discuss WHTI. CSG staff from the Midwest, national and Washington offices held follow-up meetings with key congressional staff to make sure state concerns remained on the front burner.

In January, the DHS and DOS announced plans to implement a new program called the People Access Security Service (PASS) system, which would feature a small card employing biometric technology that would be cheaper than a passport. However, DHS has not yet issued standards for the PASS card, and it is unclear whether DHS will ever promulgate these technical standards.

CSG's education efforts on WHTI contributed to a decision by the U.S. Senate to amend the FY 2007 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill making significant changes to the WHTI program. If adopted, the amendment will delay implementation of WHTI until June 1, 2009, or no later than three months after the secretaries of DHS and DOS have made the following certifications:

- The card used to enter the United States has been certified by the National Institutes of Standards and Technology to meet the standards of the International Organization for Standardization;
- The technology used for the card must be shared with Canada and Mexico;
- An agreement must be reached with the United States Postal Service on the fee charged for the passport card;
- An alternative procedure must be developed for groups of children traveling across international borders under adult supervision;
- The technology used to process the passport card has been installed at ports-of-entry; and
- The passport card is available for international travel by U.S. citizens between the U.S., Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda, and an implementation date for land and sea borders has been established.

While the ultimate fate of WHTI remains in flux, close cooperation between states and their Canadian counterparts in addressing important issues is clearly a rising trend.

*—Kristi Guillory is senior policy analyst and assistant counsel in CSG's Washington D.C. office.*

## NLGA Begins Campaign to End Cervical Cancer



*New officers for the NLGA are Michigan Lt. Gov. John Cherry, chairman, Wisconsin Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton, vice chairman, and North Dakota Lt. Gov. Jack Dalrymple, treasurer.*

The National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) is conducting an educational campaign to directly educate constituents on cervical cancer. “Ending Cervical Cancer in our Lifetime” is the goal of this 10-state campaign, which began Aug. 1 and will end by Christmas.

Cervical cancer is almost entirely preventable and is largely curable if caught early. A virus is the cause of cervical cancer and the campaign will communicate methods to avoid or reduce transmission of the virus. Women will be encouraged to obtain regular Pap tests and lieutenant governors will distribute information on each state’s free and reduced cost program for Pap smears as part of the campaign.

The following states will participate: Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, Pennsylvania and Utah. Each lieutenant governor will pass out 8,000 NLGA educational brochures and 8,000 bead kits for awareness bracelets.

The campaign is funded by an independent public policy grant from Merck & Co. Inc. and was approved at the NLGA annual meeting in July.

New officers were selected at that time. Michigan Lt. Gov. John Cherry is chair, serving with vice chair, North Dakota Lt. Gov. Jack Dalrymple, and treasurer, Wisconsin Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton.

## 2006 Western Legislative Academy Graduates 39

After a competitive selection process, 39 state legislators from around the West were chosen for this year’s Western Legislative Academy. From June 12–15, these newer lawmakers spent three and a half days in intensive legislative skill and institution building classes offered by CSG-WEST.

The Academy took place in Colorado Springs, Colo., where the El Pomar Foundation donated the use of the historic Penrose House as the WLA campus. Lawmakers spent a half day at the United States Air Force Academy where they worked on some of the same team-building and leadership exercises given to officers and cadets.

Classroom time was devoted to such topics as principled ne-

gotiations, communications, time management, ethics, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People and how to work with legislative leaders and statehouse journalists. Academy participants heard each day from experts in legislative institutions. The Academy’s prestigious faculty includes leading academics, corporate trainers, the military, veteran legislative leaders and communications experts.

At the end of the Academy, participants chose Idaho Rep. Richard Wills as 2006 class president. He will represent all WLA alumni for the year of his tenure.

Since its creation in 2000, the Western Legislative Academy has graduated 263 lawmakers.



*Pictured are members of the Western Legislative Academy Class of 2006. Front row: Washington Rep. Timm Ormsby, left, Montana Rep. Gary MacLaren, Colorado Rep. Dale Hall, Wyoming Sen. Austin “Kit” Jennings, Idaho Rep. Eric Anderson, Arizona Rep. Nancy McLain, Arizona Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick, Utah Rep. Julie Fisher, Colorado Rep. Judy Solano, Hawaii Rep. Rida T.R. Cabanilla, Idaho Rep. Frank Henderson, Colorado Rep. Nancy Todd, Oregon Rep. Sara Gelsler and Oregon Sen. Doug Whitsett. Second row: Idaho Rep. Richard Wills, Utah Rep. Curtis Oda, Montana Rep. Jeanne Windham, Washington Rep. David Buri, New Mexico Sen. Vernon Asbill, Alaska Rep. William A. Thomas Jr., Idaho Sen. John McGee, Washington Rep. Larry Haler, New Mexico Rep. Keith Gardner, New Mexico Rep. Peter Wirth, Nevada Assemblymember Brooks Holcomb and Arizona Rep. John McComish. Back row: Wyoming Rep. John Hastert, Colorado Rep. Jim Kerr, Oregon Rep. Mac Sumner, Utah Rep. Patrick Painer, Oregon Rep. Kevin Cameron, Alaska Sen. Bert Stedman, Wyoming Sen. Michael Von Flatern, Alaska Rep. Carl Gatto, Nevada Assemblymember Susan Gerhardt, Nevada Sen. Steven Horsford, New Mexico Rep. Hector Balderas, Montana Rep. Robyn Driscoll and Utah Rep. Mark Wheatley.*

This calendar lists meetings as designated by CSG's Annual Meeting Committee. For details of a meeting, call the number listed. "CSG/" denotes affiliate organizations of CSG. Visit [www.csg.org](http://www.csg.org) for updates and more extensive listings.

## September 2006

- Sept. 10–12 **CSG/Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Forum for State Legislators and Policymakers: Healthy Lifestyle Behaviors: Childhood and Beyond.** Contact Tiffany Luke, (859) 244-8257 or [tluke@csg.org](mailto:tluke@csg.org).
- Sept. 17–21 **CSG East—Eastern Leadership Academy—**Philadelphia, PA—University of Pennsylvania. Contact Pam Stanley at [pstanley@csg.org](mailto:pstanley@csg.org) or (212) 482-2320.
- Sept. 18–22 **CSG/National Emergency Management Association—Annual Conference—**Orange Beach, AL—Perdido Beach Resort. Contact Karen Cobuluis at (859) 244-8143 or [kcobuluis@csg.org](mailto:kcobuluis@csg.org).

## November 2006

- Nov. 29–Dec. 1 **State International Development Organization—Annual Meeting—**Phoenix, AZ. Contact Chris Whatley at (202) 624-5460 or [cwhatley@csg.org](mailto:cwhatley@csg.org) or Ellen Golden at (202) 624-5460 or [egolden@csg.org](mailto:egolden@csg.org) or visit [www.sidoamerica.org](http://www.sidoamerica.org).
- Nov. 30–Dec. 3 **CSG—2006 Annual Trends and Leadership Forum—**Phoenix, AZ. Contact Wanda Hines at (859) 244-8103 or [whines@csg.org](mailto:whines@csg.org).

Other meetings have value to state officials. Purchase a meeting listing by calling (800) 800-1910 or by e-mailing [sales@csg.org](mailto:sales@csg.org). Announce your meetings to thousands in the state government market through an advertisement or a Web listing.

## December 2006

- Dec. 3–6 **CSG/National Association of State Treasurers—Treasury Management Conference and Exposition—**New Orleans, LA—Sheraton New Orleans Hotel. Contact Kerry Holt at [kholt@csg.org](mailto:kholt@csg.org) or (859) 244-8175.

## January 2007

- Jan. 26–28 **CSG/National Association of State Personnel Executives—2007 Mid-Year Meeting—**Arlington, VA—Hyatt Arlington. Contact Leslie Scott at (859) 244-8182 or [lscott@csg.org](mailto:lscott@csg.org), or look for more information at [www.naspe.net](http://www.naspe.net).



Although the federal government tends to get more attention, state officials are often on the front lines of cutting-edge trends and issues. On the other hand, sometimes in the community of state governments, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

In print since 1958, *State News* (formerly *State Government News*) has chronicled many of the changes ... and continuities.

Here's what we reported on:

## 40 Years Ago—September 1966

### Seat Belt Use Mandatory in Most States

A 1966 California study found that two-thirds of people whose automobile had seat belts actually used them in highway driving, but only one-third used them in town driving. According to the study, conducted by Dean Manheimer of the Family Research Center of the California Department of Public Health, only 28 percent of the 1,850 Oakland drivers surveyed owned seat belts.

Dr. Paul Joliet, chief of the U.S. Public Health Service Division of Accident Prevention, said as many as 5,000 lives could be saved and a quarter million hospitalizations prevented annually if everyone used seat belts. "The big need now," he said, "is to get everyone in the habit of using seat belts all the time.

#### Update:

*Seat belt use is mandatory in most states, with California among those states with the best highway safety laws. Others, as cited in a 2004 report by the Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, are North Carolina, Tennessee, New Jersey and Washington. The report found 29 states lack laws that allow police officers to ticket motorists just for not wearing their seat belts—so-called "primary enforcement" laws. Tennessee was the only state in 2004 to pass such a law, which increases seat belt usage by 10 percent to 15 percent, the report said.*

*Education on the use of safety belts seems to have some success in spurring use. A 2001 "Click It or Ticket" campaign in South Carolina helped boost seat belt usage to above 80 percent, the eighth highest in the nation at the time, according to the National Safety Council.*

## 25 Years Ago—September 1981

### There's No Business Like Show Business

States were reaping rewards from the establishment of state film commissions, according to a story in the September 1981 issue of *State Government News*. The story focused on the actions states were taking to attract film projects.

According to the *Hollywood Reporter*, as reported in *SGN*, 49 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands—as well as some metropolitan areas—had established film commissions and hired directors. The primary goal of the office was to promote locations and solve location problems.

#### Update:

*States have continued to pursue film projects from Hollywood. A 2005 article by Stateline.org reported that 36 states have adopted tax incentives to entice production companies to make movies in their states.*

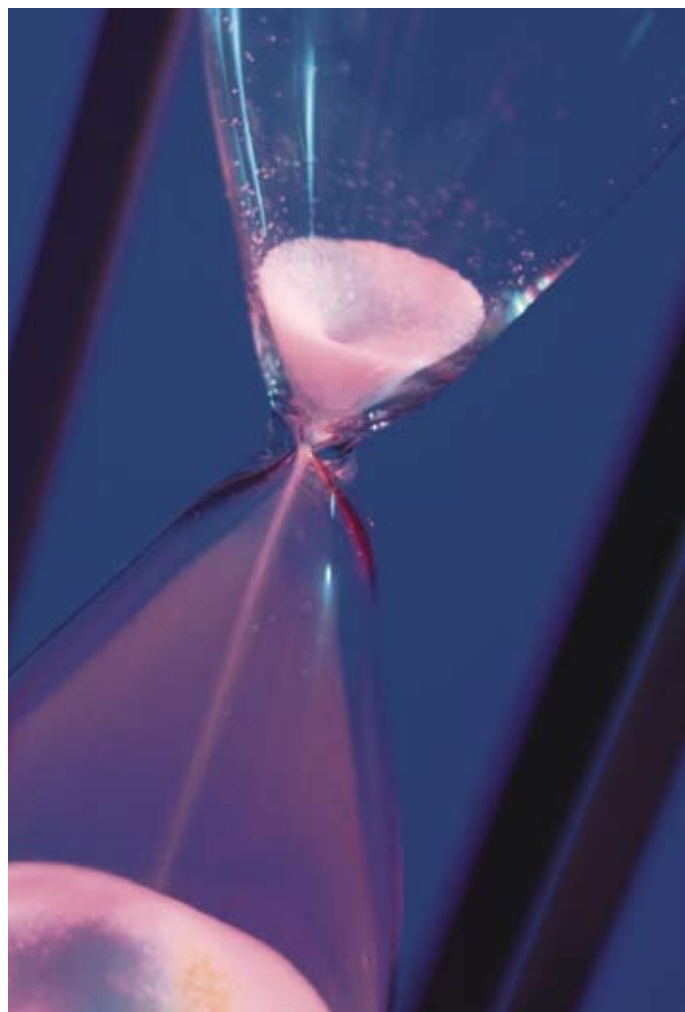
*The 36 states with incentive programs rely mainly on sales- and use-tax exemptions, according to the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI). Some waive lodging taxes on hotel rooms used by production workers for more than 30 days, while others allow free use of state property for filming.*

## 10 Years Ago—September 1996

### Treasurers Look For Best Returns

Interviews with state treasurers attending the National Association of State Treasurers' annual meeting in 1996 showed they share a passion for getting the most out of the public dollar. The interviews were featured in a September *State Government News* article.

Most of the state treasurers said safety, liquidity and yield were among the top factors in considering investments. Treasurers also tout in-state investments, as long as they are in line with other returns on investments.





# Phoenix

Annual State Trends and Leadership Forum

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