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This Month in the NEWS

Focus on Trends

In June, The Council of State Governments released a new report focusing on 10 trends that state policy experts, state government leaders and business professionals have identified as major forces of change. Included in the analysis were changes in demographics, state economies, information technology, critical infrastructure, federal-state relations, income distribution and civic engagement, public safety and individual privacy, energy and environment, P–16 education, and health care expenditures and outcomes.

CSG will release issue briefs on these trends at the Annual State Trends and Leadership Conference in Oklahoma City in November. Pick up your copies in the Exhibit Hall, or check the CSG Web site at www.csg.org after the meeting to read these issue briefs.

Question:

Which region of the country spent more from its general fund for elementary and secondary education expenditures in 2006?

To find the answer, log onto CSG’s Web site at www.csg.org!
States May Alter Mental Illness Policies for Gun Purchases

After the recent shootings at Virginia Tech, many states are re-examining rules and practices for submitting names of certain individuals with mental disabilities to the federal database of individuals who are barred from purchasing a gun, according to the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, a Washington D.C.-based nonprofit.

Many states have not, until now, paid much attention to the federal Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act and have been sending only a small number of names—or in some cases, none at all—to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, the center reports. Governors and state legislatures across the country are focusing on the federal database and reconsidering how their states will comply with the requirement, according to the Bazelon Center.

In Maryland, Gov. Martin O’Malley’s administration issued a new gun purchase regulation that requires those wishing to purchase a gun to sign a waiver releasing their mental health records to the state’s police.

The regulation went into effect Aug. 1 and applies to people who have been ordered by the court into mental health treatment or who have checked into a state psychiatric hospital for at least 30 days.

Virginia’s Gov. Timothy Kaine issued an executive order in April requiring state agencies to block gun sales to those who are ordered to inpatient or outpatient mental health treatment.

To help states deal with the issue, comply with the federal law as well as protect people with mental illness, the Bazelon Center released policy recommendations on the issue. According to the center, states should:

- Limit the categories of individuals whose names are submitted to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System;
- Limit the information sent to the background check system to the minimum required by law;
- Limit the length of time the name remains on the list; and
- Protect the privacy of the names submitted.

For more information on state policy recommendations, visit the Bazelon Center’s Web site at www.bazelon.org.

Report Released on High School Exit Exams

While 65 percent of the nation’s public high school students must pass an exit exam to receive a diploma, a report released in September says passing the test doesn’t necessarily mean a student is prepared for college. The report was released by the Center on Education Policy, based in Washington, D.C.

The latest addition to states requiring high school exit exams is Arkansas, added to the center’s list this year. The Arkansas test will include literacy, algebra I and geometry. Students will have three chances to retake the test before graduation, and in 2010 the state will begin withholding diplomas, according to the report.

Only six of the 23 states with high school exit exams that responded to the survey said the exit exam was to measure skills and knowledge needed for college, the report said. Nine of those states said work-readiness was the purpose of the exam.

Eighteen states said the tests determine if a student has mastered the state’s curriculum. Those 18 states said the high school exit exams are used to provide student progress information to state policymakers, according to the report.

Some states use the high school exit exams to fulfill some requirements under the federal No Child Left Behind Act—19 of 26 states said they do this, according to the center’s report.

By 2012, the Center on Education Policy expects 26 states to have high school exit exams in place. When that happens, the center estimates 76 percent of the nation’s public high school students will have to pass the tests in order to graduate.

For more information on the report “State High School Exit Exams: Working to Raise Test Scores” and individual state profiles, visit www.cep-dc.org.
A new Kaiser Family Foundation study reports that Medicaid enrollment has declined for the first time in nearly a decade. The 50-state survey, by the Kaiser Family Foundation’s Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, reports that while Medicaid enrollment is down, 42 states are planning to expand coverage for the uninsured as the economy improves.

The decline of 0.5 percent enrollment for fiscal year 2007 was driven by a better economy, lower unemployment rates and new documentation requirements which are causing delays in processing applications, the Kaiser survey reports.

After an all-time low for Medicaid spending growth last year, Medicaid spending continued to grow slowly by just 2.9 percent in 2007, according to the survey. That slow growth was due mostly to a decline in enrollment and the continued transition of prescription drug costs for people eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare.

With the nation’s growing uninsured population, 42 states report efforts to expand coverage to their uninsured population, the survey found. Of the 42 states planning expansion in coverage, 38 states reported that Medicaid would have a role in financing their plans, while 34 states said Medicaid would play a role in enrollment, according to the report. However, many of the efforts will depend on the outcome of the federal debate on the reauthorization of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), according to the foundation.

For more information or to view the full report, visit www.kff.org.
## Diesel and Gasoline Taxes

### Motor Fuel Diesel Taxes as of July 2007

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<tr>
<th>State</th>
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<td>69.5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Wyoming</td>
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<td>Alaska</td>
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### Motor Fuel Gasoline Taxes as of July 2007

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Source: American Petroleum Institute (API), a Washington, D.C.-based national trade association that represents all aspects of America’s oil and natural gas industry. API’s 400 corporate members are producers, refiners, suppliers, pipeline operators and marine transporters, as well as service and supply companies that support all segments of the industry. For more information, visit www.api.org.
Leadership

Toll Fellows Discuss Policy, State Governance Issues

A CSG Staff Report

States need to teach immigrant parents to speak and read English if they are ever to adequately educate immigrant children.

That was just one message members of The Council of State Governments’ 21st Henry Toll Fellows class heard during a weeklong program in Lexington, Ky., Sept. 29 to Oct. 4.

Sharon Darling, president of the National Center for Family Literacy, discussed the demands immigration adds to an already strained education system. She also told the Toll Fellows about suggested legislation and school programs her organization has helped developed that have proved useful across the country.

The Toll Fellows were also among the first to see CSG’s State Governance Transformation initiative. CSG Executive Director Dan Sprague introduced the new initiative, and challenged the class to identify areas of need in their state and the barriers blocking innovative change.

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The Toll Fellowship Program included leadership and time management methods for different personality types, as well as policy and state governance discussions.

Perennial favorite, nationally renowned media and communications specialist Arch Lustberg returned to teach the class how to more effectively deal with the media and make the most of their speaking opportunities.

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 the program includes a session annually on historic leadership roles as seen through the eyes of Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson, as portrayed by Don Hickey and Bill Barker.

This year’s class represented all three branches of state government including state representatives and senators, district court judges and cabinet secretaries. Class members hailed from 29 states, three 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 former Colorado Sen. Henry Toll, CSG founder, the program serves to equip talented state policymakers with the skills and strategies to meet the challenges ahead.

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.
Led by states like Virginia, public-private partnerships are becoming increasingly common as federal funds dry up and states find creative ways to meet their transportation needs.

By Mikel Chavers
In 2002, Virginia was in a tight spot. The state had been through a decade of traditional planning for the Capital Beltway and the price tag for the project was colossal at nearly $3 billion.

“It was unaffordable and unachievable,” said Pierce Homer, Virginia’s secretary of transportation.

Then the private sector came forward with an idea for the road. The company wanted to do something different. And what Virginia’s department of transportation found in the private sector’s idea is the central appeal of the concept of public-private partnerships in transportation today. The idea, in private industry’s hands, solved 85 percent of the problems for about a third of the cost, Homer said. So the state made a partnership.

“They had built a better mouse trap,” Homer said.

**Widespread Trend**

When it comes to funding transportation projects, the Federal Highway Administration reports 22 states and one U.S. territory have passed legislation that allows for deals between public entities and private enterprise to finance road projects.

While the partnerships take on various forms, many of them are toll roads.

“Practically every state in the country is contemplating tolls,” said Sujit CanagaRetna, senior fiscal analyst for The Council of State Governments’ (CSG) southern region, the Southern Legislative Conference.

“It’s increasingly becoming apparent that states can’t rely on the federal government, mainly through the Highway Trust Fund,” he said.

The Highway Trust Fund, the federal pot of money used to fund road projects, is drying up. Spending in 2007 and 2008 will exceed money coming into the account and the fund will go bust by a projected $4 billion, according to July 2007 estimates from the Office of Management and Budget.

Another option is to raise state gas taxes to meet the transportation budgeting shortfall, but “raising taxes in this political environment is very toxic,” CanagaRetna said.

So states are turning to the private sector—and there’s money to be had. The Federal Highway Administration estimates hundreds of billions of dollars in private equity is available worldwide, “just waiting on the sidelines,” said Jim Ray, the Federal Highway Administration’s acting deputy administrator.

With that in mind, states like Virginia are getting creative as public-private partnerships can take on various forms, experts say.

“Public-private partnerships start as a blank sheet of paper,” Ray said. “The only limitation of what we can harness of the private sector is our own willingness to be creative.”

**States Get Creative**

Although the idea of a pubic-private partnership is nothing new, certain aspects are making these projects new and novel ideas, CanagaRetna said.

“What is interesting is states are now finally creating legislation that allows for these partnerships to gel,” he said.

Twelve years ago Virginia enacted the Public-Private Partnership Act of 1995 and since, the state has several public-private projects under its belt. The Dulles Greenway, dedicated in 1995, was the state’s first private toll road in more than 100 years.

There’s also the Capital Beltway, the road bordering Washington, D.C., that is one of the most congested roads in the country. With that project, Virginia is partnering with construction firms Fluor Enterprises and Transurban to build high occupancy toll lanes on a 14-mile stretch of Interstate 495 beginning in 2008. While carpoolers and buses won’t be charged to drive the special lanes, vehicles with just one person will pay a toll, which will be based on congestion pricing.

In congestion pricing, the price of a toll changes based on the time of day. At peak times the toll is more expensive, while at slower times, the toll is cheaper. Homer said this innovative pricing model will help control congestion on the road and is what makes the idea fitting for private sector involvement.

“What (the private sector is) betting on is how people value their time. They’re willing to take the entrepreneurial plunge and take that risk,” Homer said.

North Carolina is also interested in using new technology when it comes to tolls, said Grady Rankin, chief fi-
Partnerships Take on Risks

Part of determining the creative approach to a public-private partnership, Homer said, is defining where there are clear risks and benefits suitable for the private and public sectors. A good public-private partnership, he said, is when there is “sufficient risk put off of the public sector.”

But that doesn’t mean there are no risks for the state. Worst-case scenario, he said, would be if a partnership project does not succeed and doesn’t garner enough revenue. But that’s where performance or escape clauses in the contracts are important, Homer said.

That risk, however, is something states have seen firsthand in recent years. In Virginia, for example, when traffic on the Dulles Greenway fell short of what was originally predicted, it caused financial strain. So in 2005, an Australian company purchased a portion of the toll road for $533 million.

The potential for traffic estimates to be wrong is one valuable lesson learned so far, said Ray of the Federal Highway Administration.

“The traffic modeling is a little more of an art than it is a science, especially when you start looking 20 or 30 years out,” Ray said.

And with long-term lease deals becoming a part of public-private partnerships, some critics are wondering if looking that far ahead is a smart decision for states to make.

In Texas, the state awarded a 50-year contract to a Spanish company to operate State Highway 121 as a toll road. Cintra will provide more than $5 billion—$2.1 billion up front—for the road and other projects in north Texas, according to the Texas Department of Transportation Web site. The agreement will have the road completed by 2011, a quarter century faster than would have been possible with traditional gas tax revenue, the site reports.

Other long-term leases of roads to private companies include the Chicago Skyway, leased for 99 years to a consortium jointly owned by Australian company Macquarie Infrastructure Group (MIG) and Spain’s Cintra. Under the lease, the consortium will operate and maintain the tollway for nearly a century.

Indiana also inked a 75-year lease in June 2006 with Statewide Mobility Partners for the operation and maintenance of the Indiana toll road.

Some States Face Opposition

But some states are finding significant opposition to proposed public-private partnerships, which in some cases, could even jeopardize hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funds.

In Texas, the use of private equity in road projects, including the proposed massive Trans-Texas corridor system, recently came under criticism. State lawmakers called for a two-year moratorium on toll road projects being built by private companies that have contracts with the state’s transportation department. While the bill won’t stop a few listed highways from being built as public-private partnerships, it will prevent most public-private projects from moving forward for the time being.

“Hopefully, by the time we go back in 2009, we will have identified shortfalls in infrastructure needs and identified different funding mechanisms to decide how to pay for the needs that have been identified,” said Texas Rep. Lois Kolkhorst, who serves the state’s District 13. Kolkhorst was the author of amendments on the bill, Senate Bill 792, which placed the temporary hold on the state’s public-private partnerships.

“We went from two projects to multiple,” she said. “We were starting to in-
U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters will speak at The Council of State Governments’ Annual State Trends and Leadership Forum in Oklahoma City Nov. 13. Peters plans to highlight successful state innovative financing and management techniques. She will also discuss America’s aging infrastructure, and explore issues considered by Congress as it debates Surface Transportation reauthorization.

Introduce this concept in areas of highways that were never conceived to be used for private equity? At one point, more than 20 projects were being considered as public-private partnerships, she added.

And in Pennsylvania, after plans to toll Interstate 80 circulated, two U.S. representatives from Pennsylvania sponsored an amendment to an appropriations bill that would bar federal funds from being used to toll I-80 or improve the state’s portion of it. That bill, the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations fiscal year 2008 bill (H.R. 3074), still includes a similar amendment.

“I think the learning curve of using private equity is very steep,” Kolkhorst said.

“P3 projects should not drive a transportation program. Public-private partnerships are a tool to achieve the overall goal of a transportation program,” Hom-er, from Virginia, said.

Criticism Highlights Key Issues

The U.S House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee criticized the use of public-private partnerships that “are not in the long-term public interest.” That’s ac-cording to a May 10 letter from the committee’s chairman, Minnesota Rep. James Oberstar and Oregon Rep. Peter DeFazio, chairman of the Subcommittee on High-ways and Transit.

The letter expressed concern over the “rush of the Administration and some states to embrace PPPs,” warning that the committee will “work to undo” any of these public-private partnerships.

Texas Gov. Rick Perry responded to Oberstar and DeFazio’s letter with his own in July, saying, “I would hope that the federal government would encourage innovation and not stifle it.”

Oberstar and DeFazio followed up their May later with a June paper that elaborated on criticisms of public-private partnerships, highlighting noncompete clauses sometimes included in the agreements. The June paper said the noncompete clauses limit the ability for state and local governments to “meet current and future mobility and safety standards for the traveling public.”

The Indiana Toll Road’s 75-year deal included a noncompete clause that prohibits the state from building or improving limited access highways within a 10-mile corridor on either side of the toll road.

Kolkhorst from Texas said even though some of the Texas public-private partnership contracts didn’t include stated noncompete clauses, stipulations in the contracts worked in much the same way. Those contract terms led to the legislature’s uneasiness and eventually to the two-year pause on the majority of the public-private deals, she said.

But the criticisms haven’t swayed the Federal Highway Administration’s support of public-private partnerships.

“We haven’t changed one bit,” Ray, the acting deputy administrator, said. “We think that state leaders are responsible individuals and that they have the public’s interest at heart. They are closer to the public whose interests they are protecting.”

—Mikel Chavers is associate editor of State News magazine.
Here’s a look at some best practices for public-private partnerships, and what state officials say when it comes to entering into these deals to fund transportation projects.

**Know the Purpose**

“What is critically important is for the public sector to know what they want on the front end of the deal,” said Jim Ray, acting deputy administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.

States have to decide what’s in the public interest, focusing on things like ensuring safety or controlling congestion, to name a few Ray said.

**Have In-House Resources**

Virginia Secretary of Transportation Pierce Homer said staffing is very important. States need in-house resources, he said.

“One of the mistakes that public sector entities make is to assume they can do that all with consultants,” Homer said.

Because Virginia’s public-private partnership program dates back to 1995, the state has been able to develop vital talent on the process in the department of transportation.

“At the end of the day, the state is the owner … you can’t contract that away,” Homer said.

**Be Open and Clear**

Homer said transparency is key when it comes to public-private partnerships. Virginia involves local governments and residents in the process by soliciting public comments and using an independent review panel.

“Every meeting, every piece of paper is out in the open,” Homer said. “Those local government comments are extremely important to the process.”

**Keep Revenue in Corridor**

As a matter of practice and now as a matter of legislation, Virginia keeps revenue generated by a public-private transportation project in the same transportation corridor. This key element is due in part to Virginia’s belief in benefiting the customer, Homer said.

“If you pay a toll or special tax, you should benefit from that,” Homer said simply.

Virginia plans to use any extra revenue generated from its Capital Beltway project for subsidizing mass transit—funding buses that will drive the same route, Homer said.
BioTown, USA is Model Energy Program

By Mikel Chavers

Nearly an hour and a half outside of Indianapolis, in the small, rural Indiana town of Reynolds, 150 of the town’s families drive flex-fuel vehicles, and residents can fill their cars with biodiesel and E85 fuel at the local BP station. Construction is also underway for a special facility that will turn waste—such as cow and hog manure—into energy.

Reynolds has become BioTown, USA, the nation’s first model community that will run completely off biorenewable energy sources, becoming self-sustaining and environmentally friendly. BioTown is a winner of one of eight CSG Innovations Awards.

“Many states have shown great interest in BioTown—all curious to see the end results of the project,” said Indiana Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman. “BioTown is only successful if it can be duplicated.”

With that in mind, the second phase of the model project is already in the works. In March, ground was officially broken for the Technology Suite, a special facility that will take municipal waste such as corn stover, manure and other types of biomass and turn them into electricity, thermal energy, biodiesel and fertilizer.

The facility will contain a gasifier and an anaerobic digester. Brandon Seitz, program manager of the Energy Division of the Indiana Office of Energy and Defense Development, said the digester portion is actually pretty common and the process will basically run the waste products—usually manure—through the digester where methane gasses are let off. Methane gasses are usable as heat and electricity, he said.

In essence, the energy made from the waste will be used in Reynolds’ lights, Seitz said.

What’s left over after that process is a kind of organic solid that can be used for such things as bedding for farmers’ cattle. The best part: “It doesn’t smell,” Seitz said.

Energy Systems Group based in Evansville, Ind., is partnering with the BioTown project to develop the special technology facility. That partnership was more than two years in the making, said Seitz, who heads the BioTown project.

Finding the right partner on the technology suite was just one challenge for Biotown. Once the facility is up and running, transportation of the waste to the facility is a huge issue, he said. Farmers close by are willing to bring their waste to the facility using tanks, while at least one farmer is exploring the idea of using a pipeline to transport waste to the facility.

With more than 150,000 hogs within a 15-mile radius of Reynolds, all that waste is important. By 2008, the BioTown Technology Suite will provide all the electricity for the town, and any excess electricity will be sold to the local electric utility, giving Reynolds some economic advantages, Seitz said.

“This kind of gives a new avenue for something else to use the waste for,” he said.

For the town’s nearly 550 residents, being a part of a project that uses homegrown renewable resources means they’ll soon be independent from foreign energy sources and they will get to use cutting edge technology in their day-to-day lives.

“It’s very rewarding to see this community embrace these new ideas,” Skillman said. “Reynolds has the highest number of users per capita of flex fuel in the world, I’m sure,” she added, taking into account the small size of the town. In November 2005, as a part of the first phase of the project, 20 residents received free General Motors flex fuel vehicles for two years. Others have since purchased their own.

BioTown traces its roots to 2005 when the Indiana Department of Agriculture rolled out a strategic plan that included bioenergy. The biggest initiative in that arena was the BioTown project, and it since has developed into Indiana’s own teaching tool.

“It’s not just about taking waste and making energy,” Seitz said. “We want to make this an educational destination; we want to teach people around the country about bioenergy.”

Fast Facts

- An ongoing exhibit about BioTown at the Indiana State Museum cost $31,047.
- BioTown’s Technology Suite uses an anaerobic digester, a gasifier and fast pyrolysis to turn waste into energy.
- Indiana officials estimate the technology facility in BioTown will generate electricity by fall 2007 and will be fully operational by 2008.
- In September 2007, BioTown representatives traveled to Germany’s BioVillage in the town of Juehnde. The town of nearly 750 residents is the first in Germany to produce all of its heat and electricity from bioenergy.
North Dakota Closes Loophole with PRIDE

By Mikel Chavers

It stemmed from sheer frustration.

In North Dakota, officials were downright frustrated with the lack of options available to deal with parents who do not pay their child support. Many of those parents become chronic nonpayers because they either can’t—or won’t—get a job.

It seemed the district courts were dealing with the same problem over and over. A nonpaying parent would tell the judge he or she couldn’t get a job, and the judge would direct them to Job Service North Dakota, the state’s Workforce Investment Act Agency, for help.

But too many times, left alone, the parent would fall through the cracks in the system. Child support remained unpaid and the parent still didn’t have a job.

“You would have the same people coming back again and again,” said District Judge Allan Schmalenberger of North Dakota’s southwest judicial district. “I just can’t find any jobs,” they said.”

Without a means to pay child support, many delinquent payers were being held in contempt of court. When this happens, they are usually sent to jail until they make a payment, said Mike Schwindt, director of the state’s Child Support Enforcement Division.

But there had to be a better way, he thought.

“What we’re trying to do is not put them in jail; what we really want to do is get people back to taking care of their kids,” Schwindt said.

That’s where the new program, the Parental Responsibility Initiative for the Development of Employment (nicknamed PRIDE), comes in. The program, a winner of one of CSG’s Innovations Awards, closes the loophole between the judge and existing social services, connecting employment help services to parents who aren’t paying their child support.

Once the program started in April 2005, a PRIDE coordinator could meet with parents immediately after a hearing and provide the help necessary to find and retain employment.

The project blends case management skills, job skills improvement services, job placement services and supportive services to help a noncustodial parent obtain or improve employment so he or she is able to make child support payments.

“It has made a world of difference to us,” Schmalenberger said. He estimates that since its inception, the program has cut the number of return offenders to court in half.

PRIDE coordinators were finding that some of the chronic nonpayers weren’t making child support payments because they were underemployed or unemployed due to a disability, a mental health issue or a substance abuse issue.

Under the PRIDE program, these parents are connected to services that already exist under the state’s Health and Human Services division, such as substance abuse counseling.

In that realm, Schwindt tells of a mother and father who were addicted to methamphetamines. Their children were in foster care and an order was issued against each parent to pay child support.

In that case, the parents were sent to addiction treatment through PRIDE and were able to kick the habit, Schwindt said, adding that the two were able to find and retain jobs with the help of human services and job services.

But PRIDE is not just about counseling.

More than the services offered, PRIDE seeks to help parents overcome obstacles. Through January, PRIDE spent nearly $26,000 on aid such as car repairs, day care, work clothes, transportation, licenses and other tools meant to help parents look for and obtain a job.

“You didn’t have one piece working in one direction and another working in another direction,” Schwindt said. All of the relative issues were addressed and tracked with PRIDE, he said, and the program illustrates multiple branches of government working together.

The project started first in pilot programs in southwest and northeast North Dakota. So far 74 percent of participating parents have obtained employment, taking on average just short of two months to find a job.

The PRIDE program is funded by state grants approved by the North Dakota legislature, and this year, the aim is to expand PRIDE to all parts of the state.

Fast Facts

- The estimated cost to expand the PRIDE program statewide is $555,000 annually, funding the salaries and operating costs for seven and a half positions.

- With PRIDE, the average monthly child support payment increased more than 88 percent.

- Under the program, there was an 18.5 percent decrease in the rate of nonpayment of child support.

- Public assistance benefits to support the parents or parents’ dependents decreased $123,490 per case in the six months following referral to PRIDE.
North Carolina Aims to Cut Energy Usage

By Mikel Chavers

From simply turning off the lights and negotiating utility rates to tuning up digital thermostat controls and hosting energy-saving competitions among participants, North Carolina aims to cut energy usage in state buildings at least 20 percent by 2008.

In fact, just by performing corrective and preventive maintenance procedures like tuning up HVAC systems, the state is expected to save more than $700,000 this year alone.

And in a state where energy spending has seen a 33 percent increase each year for the last three years, state officials are eager to reduce—or at least stabilize—the more than $300 million spent on energy and water utilities a year for public facilities.

Energy consumption is a real issue for states, said Larry Shirley, director of the state energy office. “They’ve got to get a tourniquet and stabilize it,” he said.

That tourniquet has taken the form of a special program used to help reduce energy consumption in state buildings and other facilities, so the state government can lead in the environmentally friendly effort by example. The program, Utility Savings Initiative for State Facilities, is a winner of one of CSG’s Innovations Awards.

A central aim of the program is to get state agencies and public universities to reduce the amount of energy they use by 20 percent over five years, averaging 4 percent a year. Last year, 66 state agencies, community colleges, public universities and affiliates participated in the effort. The state has saved more than $62 million in utility costs since the program’s inception.

Take the 9,000-student Western Carolina University in the small town of Cullowhee, N.C., for example. The university has reduced energy consumption by at least 30 percent since the 2002–2003 fiscal year when the statewide program began, said Lauren Bishop, energy manager at the school.

Bishop acts as a leader for a “conservation awareness team” in the program. In that position, she is charged with getting students and faculty excited about saving energy.

“A lot of times folks like to look at the bottom line,” Bishop said. “But I like to bring in the educational component.”

There’s been so much education and activity from these conservation awareness teams that the initiative’s manager, Len Hoey, has taken to calling them conservation action teams instead.

The action has since spread beyond state colleges, universities and community colleges to reach the K–12 public schools.

The Nash-Rocky Mount Public Schools saved more than $1 million per year in tune-ups and other measures for the last two years, Shirley said. The school system used simple maintenance procedures to make sure the digital systems controlling the HVACs were working correctly, what Shirley calls a “quick payback item.”

Those kinds of measures, he said, required an investment of about $1,000 per building, but resulted in much larger energy savings.

The program also provides an innovative way to fund large capital improvement projects for state agencies. Using the concept of performance contracting, the energy savings realized are used to pay off major renovations and other capital improvements. In recent years such performance contracting wasn’t allowed in light of a tighter budget situation, Shirley said.

The Museum of Art in Raleigh was the first project to use the new performance contracting, he said. That project added new equipment to maintain the comfort and humidity levels of the building, saving the museum 54 percent on its energy bill and costing about $5 million for the improvements, Shirley said.

In fact, the program as a whole has been so successful that this year North Carolina’s legislature voted to extend its standards. With the passage of Senate Bill 668, the goal is for all state buildings to reduce energy use 20 percent by 2010 and 30 percent by 2015.

“And this is because the program has been successful,” Shirley said. “It took our program and codified it.”

Fast Facts

- In July 2002, North Carolina Gov. Mike Easley urged state agencies and public universities to promote energy conservation and save on utility bills.
- The Utility Savings Initiative for State Facilities began in 2002 with start-up costs of $507,650, and current operating cost are now $1.04 million for fiscal year 2006–2007—contributing to combined avoided energy costs of nearly $63 million since 2002.
- The state’s energy office holds an annual 14-day Energy Management Diploma series at North Carolina State University to train energy liaisons and facilities managers.
- To date, nearly $45 million has been identified for performance contracting, where energy savings will be used to pay off major capital projects.
Cell Phone Records Help Virginia Child Support Efforts

By Mikel Chavers

At any one time Nick Young, deputy commissioner and director of Child Support Enforcement in Virginia, is looking for some 125,000 to 140,000 people who have not paid their child support in the state. More than $2.4 billion in unpaid child support is now owed—the cumulative total since 1975.

And the situation isn’t getting any better. The caseload increases steadily each year as traditional methods of punishing delinquent payers fail and as some continue to elude authorities. Young and his department are trying to reverse that downward trend. They’re now tracking delinquent payers using cell phone records.

Seventy-five percent of Americans have cell phones, Young said, and that’s what makes the state’s program beneficial.

“It just became so obvious walking down the street,” said Cindy Coiner, policy specialist for the department. Seemingly everyone—including those the department is looking for—has a cell phone, Coiner said.

The Division of Child Support Enforcement Cell Phone Records Initiative, operational in June 2005, works with the six largest cell phone carriers in Virginia to obtain billing addresses and cell phone numbers for parents who are delinquent in paying child support. The program is one of eight CSG Innovations Award winners.

Since 2005, more than 375 delinquent parents have been located and are now paying child support as a result of cell phone records subpoenaed by Young’s department. Last year, Virginia collected $608 million in child support (some delinquent), a nearly 4 percent increase over the $585 million in child support collected the previous year.

“We’re getting better at collecting it, but the problem is not necessarily going away,” Young said.

But there’s no question obtaining cell phone records on delinquent payers is another powerful tool Virginia’s child support enforcement services has in its arsenal.

Take the case of one man living in a small, rural Virginia community who had not paid child support for his now 10-year-old son for five years. The man was enjoying the Fourth of July with his second family (not the mother and child owed support) when a sheriff served him with a warrant and took him into custody, Young said.

After the man sat in jail for two weeks, his second family paid a portion of the child support money owed—some $4,000—to get him out of jail.

“That was all because we had his cell phone number,” Young said. And that cell phone number was associated with a billing address.

Before that success story, however, the program got off to a somewhat rocky start when the idea was hatched in 2004. At the time, Young was working with the Federal Communications Commission and a few cell phone companies. The idea didn’t come to fruition right away as the Division of Child Support Enforcement got a lot of pushback, Young said.

“A lot of people are skeptical of big government,” Young said.

He said officials knew they had subpoena authority, but child support enforcement hadn’t used it before with cell phone records.

As a combined effort between the Attorney General’s office and the Division of Child Support Enforcement, the project first simply tried to obtain voluntary participation from cell phone companies to get records on some of their customers. But when attempts were unproductive, the program turned to mandatory subpoenas, Young said.

“You had to have the right documents; you had to talk to (the cell phone companies) in the right way,” Young said. “They need to be able to turn to their customers and say they had no choice.”

Now, 12 to 15 states have implemented the program and some are doing data matching, according to Young. He’s also co-chair of the National Cell Phone Work Group formed by the federal child support enforcement office to make the program more widespread. The work group has 10 member states.

“Some states are going to have to have laws passed, and some states will have legislators that are more reluctant,” Young said of the transferability of the program. As for Virginia, Young finds that the numbers on how many noncustodial parents don’t pay their child support speak for themselves.

“We’re here to enforce the law and make parents accountable to their kids,” he said.

Fast Facts

- To date, 4,730 manual subpoenas that were physically signed individually have been generated for 840 noncustodial parents owing child support.
- A recent data match with Verizon turned up information associated with 17,233 noncustodial parents, including 30,714 reported cell phone numbers.
- Instead of using manual subpoenas, Virginia is beginning to electronically transmit inquiry files with some 250,000 names to cell phone companies for data matching.
Arizona Health-e Connection Increases Efficiency, Quality

By Mary Branham Dusenberry

Two tenets are driving the U.S. health care discussion: efficiency and quality of care.

“We have the potential to create efficiencies within health care,” said Chris Cummiskey, Arizona’s chief information officer. “We know the growth of health care spending has outpaced inflation year after year. Can we make the system more efficient? Can we use technology to improve the quality of care for citizens who are seeking health care assistance?”

Arizona is answering those questions with its Health-e Connection, one of eight winners of CSG Innovations Awards.

“The goal is to provide better information to the consumers in a way that can assist them in managing their contacts with hospitals, physicians’ offices, labs and other points in the health profession,” said Cummiskey, “and have one place to keep this information organized in a fashion helpful to a physician.”

Cummiskey said the state also wanted to drive as much efficiency in the health care system as possible so the overall growth in inflation could be controlled. The challenge, it seemed, was to become more efficient in the way services were provided using technology, he said.

To that end, Gov. Janet Napolitano in 2005 convened a steering committee of public and private health care stakeholders to determine a strategy to develop a statewide electronic health data exchange. The committee spent about nine months developing a roadmap for a health information infrastructure across Arizona.

A primary ingredient of the roadmap was the development of a nonprofit board of directors to advance health information technology and health information exchange throughout the state. Arizona has received guidance from e-health initiatives in Washington, D.C.

“Fortunately for our situation, Arizona is out in front of the curve in terms of developing this e-health approach,” Cummiskey said.

He said a successful e-health program requires buy-in from many different stakeholders, including the many smaller physician offices in Arizona with five physicians or less.

“How do you incentivize technology at the physician level?” he said. “You’ve got a real challenge in how do we get doctors’ offices who are dealing with mountains of paper to work with emergent technology.”

In addition, Cummiskey said the health information infrastructure accessible to hospitals, physicians, labs and clinics needs to be planned. “If you’re serious about moving that information, you’ve got to have the infrastructure to do it,” he said.

The state is encouraging regional health information organizations at the local level, such as one established in southern Arizona, based in Tucson. These regional organizations, Cummiskey said, will be responsible for developing health information technology at the physician level, and an exchange process that connects communities and medical data.

Cummiskey said the program plans to develop a system in which individuals own, and have access to, their medical information. The data would be a compendium of their medical histories and medications used becoming “a summary of their health experience throughout their lives that can be controlled by the individual patient,” he said.

The goal is to establish the infrastructure and have electronic medical records for every Arizonian by 2010. The state recently received a Medicaid transformation grant, which will provide $12 million to establish electronic medical records for the Medicaid population in Arizona. Cummiskey said the finance model for other Arizona patients is still unclear at this point.

The state faces many challenges in moving the information. Arizona Health-e Connection must sort out how the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements and state and local rules and policies affect the exchange of health information, Cummiskey said.

He said the state received a grant from the National Governors Association to develop a template to work through privacy issues and ensure the information is secure. Cummiskey said the state hopes to have those templates available in December, not only for Arizona’s program but for use by other states as well.

Management of the program has transitioned to the nonprofit organization, and Arizona’s Health-e Connection recently selected Brad Tritle as the organization’s first executive director.

“We are working at the nonprofit to make sure we are aligning our strategies, that over the next 12 months we have good standards in place (and) have good guidance as to what we can expect from the state perspective,” Cummiskey said.
GMAP Program Keeps Washington Government Accountable

By Mary Branham Dusenberry

Washington Gov. Christine Gregoire is focused on results.
That’s one reason she implemented the Government Management Accountability and Performance program, one of eight winners of CSG Innovations Awards. The program is a disciplined method of performance review that leaders can use to make decisions and achieve results.

“She personally reviews performance results from directors and holds those directors accountable,” Larisa Benson, director of the GMAP program, said of Gregoire. “We focus on making our data timely and accurate. Meetings are real-time, problem-solving sessions.”

The state agencies involved in GMAP meetings develop follow-up plans to help improve services to Washington residents.

“It’s a change in the culture of state government from a focus on the processes to a focus on results,” Benson said. “If a leader does it, it must be important. Every time (Gregoire) is in there, she reiterates that we are focused on results important to citizens. It’s a balance between policy and management efforts.”

GMAP meetings are focused on a specific topic and include every agency that has some impact on that subject. The topic areas covered in GMAP sessions are health care, vulnerable children, economic vitality, Puget Sound clean-up, government efficiency, public safety, transportation, Workfirst, a program designed to help low-income families, and education.

“We’re not there to blame anybody, but if we have the data on the table and everybody in the room, you can’t pass the buck. You have to stay there until you solve the problem,” said Benson.

Agency heads can be part of multiple GMAP sessions. For instance, the secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services participates in four different GMAP sessions each month—for health care, vulnerable children and adults, public safety and juvenile corrections.

Washington has seen some success because of the program, which has been in place since June 2005. The governor released a report highlighting a dozen significant achievements. Among them:

- Response to child abuse reports are faster;
- Error rates on tax returns and food stamps are among the lowest in the country;
- Job placement rates in some unemployment offices have almost doubled; and
- Fewer workplace injuries and claims have lead to a reduction in workers compensation premiums.

“Fewer kids are being abused, more people are getting jobs, roads and bridges are built on time and on budget. We’re preventing traffic fatalities,” Benson said. “I’m not saying we’ve got it figured out. We’ve got a long way to go. We have been able to make some significant progress.

“We actually take action based on the results we’re getting, which, I think, is why we’re getting better results,” said Benson. “The most innovative thing we’re doing is that we’re doing it by results, rather than agency by agency. If (agency employees) know we’re going to follow through, they put their best efforts there.”

The program is modeled after programs such as CompStat in the New York City Police Department and CitiStat in Baltimore.

“Nobody had done it at the state level or did it by results,” said Benson.

“I tell people this is just common sense. It’s just good management,” she said.

GMAP started out with the governor’s top priorities, and then added other policy areas as the GMAP staff expanded. The education initiative was launched in September. “That’s a tough one,” Benson said, “because we have a fractured accountability environment there.”

GMAP continues to expand in policy areas, and is automating the reporting process to allow agencies more time for development. The program is also continuing efforts to deepen the use of GMAP principles in agencies. According to the Innovations Awards application, Washington agencies now hold internal GMAP sessions to improve accountability.

Benson offers this advice to other states considering a similar program:

“Start with what you have,” she said. “Don’t wait for the perfect measure. You’ll never find the perfect measure. The best way to get better measures is to start using the ones you have. People will tone up the measures.

“The second thing is to take the time to understand the operating theory behind your programs. Start with why you’re doing that program and how you know whether it works or not.”

Fast Facts

- GMAP reports have three primary types of information: data, analysis and action plans.
- Agencies have implemented GMAP principles internally to drive accountability throughout their organizations.
- The governor’s GMAP forums have expanded the number of policy areas from the original six to nine.
Pilot Program Helps Connecticut’s Homeless

By Mary Branham Dusenberry

Homelessness is often a proxy for a host of other problems.
“The people that wind up homeless are typically people who have a bunch of other problems,” said Patrick Hynes, director of Offender Programs and Victims Services for the Connecticut Department of Corrections.

If they have cycled in and out of jails or prisons, making connections that will eliminate the recurring path to homelessness is often difficult.

That’s where Connecticut’s Supportive Housing Pilot Program comes in. The program is one of eight national winners of CSG Innovations Awards.

The program, a collaboration of the state, the nonprofit Community Renewal Team and the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness, seeks to address the revolving door relationship between homelessness and prison. It assists those people cycling through prison and shelters with housing and total wraparound services, including mental health, employment assistance and food vouchers, according to Christopher McCluskey, director of forensic services for CRT.

CRT is a community action agency, which also operates shelters throughout the Hartford region. Clients are assessed for all possible services, including housing, when they come in, according to McCluskey.

“Automatically, in real time, the clinician or case worker can see what this client is eligible for,” he said.

McCluskey said many times, clients will not get all the assistance for which they are eligible because they may have to fill out multiple applications.

“They’re apprehensive about going and sharing information with multiple people,” said McCluskey. But CRT can identify in one interview any part of the human services infrastructure that can benefit clients.

“I think the biggest reason for our success in this program is our staff,” said McCluskey. “They’re truly committed to these clients. These are individuals who come with multiple issues. The need is so great and there are no other services available that are consistent with what we do in this model.”

CRT has worked with landlords and businesses to help place clients in the pilot housing program in apartments and jobs. McCluskey said CRT has developed a database of employers willing to work with clients.

“We’re seeing more and more success in getting these clients employed,” McCluskey said. “They’re addressing the substance abuse, and getting gainful employment they can be proud of.”

The Department of Corrections provides funding for apartments, but landlords didn’t like the idea of having former inmates lease from them. CRT found it was easier to take on master leases of all its clients in this program, with a goal of eventually turning over the lease to individual clients.

“Once the landlords know our clients and know us, we’re in a much better position to have those leases signed over to a client,” McCluskey said.

Fifteen participants now live in the CRT-leased apartments, and are working and participating in treatment.

“We’re putting them in a spot where they can be successful,” McCluskey said. “We get their foot in the door and provide them with the tools to be successful and take it on their own.”

And most have been, McCluskey said one of the biggest obstacles for individuals with chronic substance abuse is avoiding relapse. Parolees face strict provisions and responsibilities to the Department of Corrections. Technical violations, in which an individual becomes a user again, are the primary reasons program participants return to prison.

Hynes said the state evaluated the program in September. He believes there will be enough support to expand the program with CRT and replicate it in another city.

“I think it’s working because we are wrapping a whole bunch of services around people and are identifying a certain population,” said Hynes. “It’s designed for a population that has a history of homelessness.”

CRT is actively recruiting individuals directly from shelters in the Hartford region to expand the program. McCluskey said changes have been made as the program has progressed, based on research and opinions of participants. For instance, clients in the beginning were placed in congregate facilities instead of scattered site apartments.

“In my personal viewpoint, putting individuals into their own scattered site apartment where there’s no stigma attached … this is individuals being successfully reintegrated into society,” McCluskey said.

“We could sit in this room and put together a tremendous program. We could have some brilliant people at the table, but if we don’t go to the individuals living it and (ask) what they need … We need to know what our population is saying they need in order for the program to be successful,” he said.

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Fast Facts

- Clients give 30 percent of their income to the program to help augment the costs of the apartment.
- Program combines a rent subsidy program with intensive substance abuse recovery and employment services.

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New Jersey Knowledge Initiative Provides Needed Information

By Mary Branham Dusenberry

As New Jersey officials were discussing ways to bring high tech, small startup businesses to the state, talk eventually turned to infrastructure.

“I realized what was missing was an information infrastructure,” said Norma E. Blake, the state librarian. “Owners of small businesses, some researchers and students had to go to either one of our major universities or drive to universities out of state in order to access this timely data (and) very expensive information materials.

“These articles on data clinical trials that are very expensive, and large companies have the money to purchase them, as do large universities,” Blake said. “For smaller entities, it is just out of the price range.”

Some information databases cost as much as $17,000 or more for a subscription.

Enter the New Jersey Knowledge Initiative, in which the state library bought access to databases and provided access at every county college as well as all the four-year colleges and universities. Desktop access was given to 350 businesses working with the Economic Development Authority.

The program is one of eight to be recognized with a CSG Innovations Award.

Blake said university librarians surveyed researchers as well as faculty members in science, medicine, technology and business fields to determine what databases they needed access to. The state library worked with the major business organizations in the state and surveyed their business members to find out what information they needed to run their businesses and get grants successfully.

The state library developed a list of the most highly sought databases.

The state library was able to get $6 million over a two-year period from state government to develop the program. With that funding, the state library purchased $74.5 million worth of access.

“It was a significant savings for everyone, and also gave access to people who never would have had access,” said Blake.

Getting such a discounted rate took some effort.

“We were able to do it because we were able to convince the vendors we were giving them a market they never had before and could never get on their own,” said Blake. “They were never going to get the county colleges to have their products.

“By adding on to the rest of their market and offering this low cost deal, they were able to get additional customers.”

All the businesses with desktop access have 50 or fewer employees, and in many cases are just two people sitting in an office, according to Blake. “This is a market they never would have had,” she said.

Some of those people came from larger corporations and were familiar with the information available on the databases, but couldn’t afford the access.

The investment has paid off, according to Blake.

“It does make a difference to a businessperson where they locate if they can get information,” she said. “It really spurs economic development in the state. It makes New Jersey just a business friendly environment because it pulls together all the business organizations and statewide organizations.

“It’s a way of bringing partners together to benefit business.”

Blake points to a resident of central Jersey who had a small business and wanted to invent an insulin pump.

“In order to do his business, he was having to travel to Rutgers or the University of Delaware,” said Blake. “Some of that information doesn’t appear for free in print yet. It’s so brand new and you have to pay bucks to get access. He was able to use the New Jersey Knowledge Initiative from his desktop and was able to get a major research grant.”

New Jersey is interested in shared services and the cost-effectiveness of a state-wide buy, because the state is home to many scientists and engineers, and considered a leader in scientific innovation, according to Blake.

“It made sense for libraries to do that. Our job as librarians is to guide people to the best sources and to guide them to use them most effectively,” she said.

“We have a new system in our state whereby any student who goes to one of our two-year county colleges will have all their credits accepted when they go to a four-year college,” she said. “It’s very important they know how to use database and resources when they get to the four-year colleges.”

Blake said four other states have expressed interest in replicating the New Jersey Knowledge Initiative. She said it’s important to have the funding and commitment for the program.

Fast Facts

- More than 8 million articles and records were used during the first 18 months of the New Jersey Knowledge Initiative.
- The $3 million annual operational costs are funded 100 percent by state legislature appropriations.
- The initiative is the only statewide library database access program focused on business and economic development.
eastern

- Connecticut’s Supportive Housing Pilot Program
- Delaware’s Energy Risk Management Program for the State and Aggregation Partners
- Maine’s Air Monitoring Data Service
- Massachusetts’ Department of Correct/MassHealth Pilot Program
- Massachusetts’ DD Suite (Developmental Disabilities Suite)
- New Jersey’s Knowledge Initiative
- New Jersey’s Pathways Leading Apprentices to a College Education (New Jersey PLACE)
- New Jersey’s Rapid HIV Testing at Publicly Funded Counseling and Testing Sites
- Rhode Island’s Marine Septic No Discharge Compliance Program
- Rhode Island’s DMV/AAA of Southern New England Partnership
- Vermont’s Vermont Votes for Kids

midwestern

- Indiana’s INShape Indiana
- Indiana’s BioTown, USA
- Indiana’s Digital Building Review, Approval and Recording
- Michigan’s Business Portal
- Michigan's Continuity of Government Initiative
- Michigan's Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Plan Implementation
- North Dakota’s Parental Responsibility Initiative for the Development of Employment (PRIDE)
- Ohio’s Best Rx
- Ohio’s TEPOhio (Transitional Education Program Ohio)
- South Dakota’s Community Transition

southern

- Georgia’s Faster, Friendlier, Easier Service to Georgians —The Governor’s Customer Service Initiative
- Kentucky’s e3.ky.gov
- North Carolina’s Utility Savings Initiative for State Facilities
- Oklahoma’s Department of Energy Management’s Weather Notification System
- Oklahoma’s SoonerCare Emergency Room Utilization Project
- South Carolina’s Teen After-School Center
- Tennessee’s Value Plus Schools Initiative
- Texas’ Emergency Technology Fund
- Virginia’s Sanctions Reference Points
- Virginia’s Division of Child Support Enforcement Cell Phone Records Initiative

western

- Arizona’s EZVoter Registration
- Arizona’s Health-e Connection
- Colorado’s Senior Service
- Utah’s State Construction Registry (SCR)
- Washington’s Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP)
The National Association of Secretaries of State is hoping to generate support for a rotating regional primary system. The association’s bipartisan proposal divides the country into four regions and establishes primary windows in March, April, May and June.

By Trey Grayson

It was a long, hot summer for the 2008 presidential campaigns as candidates dashed across the country raising record-setting sums of money preparing for the gauntlet of early primaries they will soon face.

The 2008 presidential nominating schedule is already the most frontloaded in U.S. history. Thirty-five states plus the District of Columbia will vote in January or February—three times the number that had done so in 2000. Twenty states—including the delegate rich states of California, Illinois and New Jersey—will vote Feb. 5, the first date that non-early voting states are allowed to hold their contests. Many experts believe the nominations will effectively be decided by that date.

Meanwhile, the political parties are vowed to strip some early voting states of their convention delegates if those states hold their primaries in January, which is a violation of party rules.
As a native Kentuckian, I appreciate a good derby, but this is too much. The states keep jockeying for influence and position by moving their presidential primaries earlier and earlier, and it has morphed our process into a two-year campaign-a-palooza driven by big money and shallow rhetoric. The process has gone awry, and it needs to be fixed.

In this new era of yearlong campaigns and national strategies, the pressure for states to hold early presidential nominating contests has had an unsettling effect on the process. More than 20 states have chosen to buck the system and move their 2008 contests earlier this time around.

Some states object to the influence that Iowa and New Hampshire seem to have in the process, arguing that their populations are too small and too homogenous compared to the rest of the country. Others simply seek to have more influence in a system that has traditionally bestowed media attention and economic benefits upon a handful of early voting states.

They also argue that candidate policy discussions center around issues of importance in early voting states, but not necessarily in the rest of the country.

How does frontloading affect the quality of our presidential selection process?

In addition to pitting the states against each other for primacy on the calendar, the current presidential nominating system and the increasingly frontloaded calendar negatively impact our process.

Too Much Money

Candidates are forced to establish enormous war chests to compete in the primary gauntlet. They must buy expensive advertising and develop a large campaign operation to help them run just about everywhere at once. Those who cannot keep up with the pack are shut out of the race.

Too Little Voter Interaction

Because of the financial demands of this primary process, the principal focus of candidates will not be discussing how to govern and lead our nation but rather raising the campaign funds necessary to compete. Ironically, the prolonged primary will provide voters with fewer details about a candidate’s plan for our country’s future. Instead it will produce more sound bites via staged political events. All this will be an effort to free up more time for the candidate to garner the almighty campaign dollar.

Finishing First

Whether it is Feb. 5 or the week after, the furious frontloading effectively condenses the primary contest to the point where voters don’t get to take a hard look at the candidates before casting a ballot. The schedule is particularly frustrating for those who are part of the roughly 40 percent of the American electorate that will not vote before March next year, essentially rendering their votes useless. And this schedule leaves us all to endure a general election campaign that lasts an exhausting nine months.

These problems only scratch the surface of the potential challenges a front-loaded primary presents. What might be the most unnerving impact of all is that some states will start voting this December. Regardless of when Iowa and New Hampshire hold their contests, a number of states that are at the head of the pack will begin balloting before 2007 is over, due to early voting laws designed to make voting more accessible to citizens.

Rotating Regional Primary: A Solution for All States

Naturally, focus now turns to a solution for this problem. Unfortunately, it is too late to fix the process for 2008, but steps can be taken for 2012. The National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) is hoping to generate support for rotating regional primaries as a step toward that goal. The association’s bipartisan proposal, created by the nation’s chief state election officials, divides the country into four regions and establishes primary windows in March, April, May and June. Iowa and New Hampshire would retain their early status to allow lesser-known, under-funded candidates to take advantage of the tradition of retail politics in those states, while the regional order rotates every four years, with each section of the country eventually voting first.

By staggering the voting over a period of four months, the rotating regional plan provides a more reasonable timeframe for campaigning that can alleviate some of the pressures—financial and otherwise—that quickly drive presidential candidates out of the race. It also forces our presidential nominees to pay attention to issues of regional concern, not just those taking priority in early primary states.

At the same time, more states get a reasonable say in selecting the candidates before the nominations are decided, and each region of the country has the opportunity to lead off the process every 16 years. In turn, voters get a longer look at the candidates and how they perform.

Although they are not without potential problems, rotating regional primaries remain the best solution for our ailing presidential nomination system. The Commission on Federal Election Reform, co-chaired by former President Jimmy Carter and former Secretary of State James A. Baker III, endorsed the NASS plan in its 2005 report, “Building Confidence in U.S. Elections.” Numerous respected political pundits, campaign operatives, newspaper editorial boards and academics have followed suit.

Adopting a new system will not be an easy task. The Republican Party does not allow revisions to the presidential nomination process outside of its conventions, which currently limit reform discussions to one short window of time every four years.

Solving this problem may require our national parties to change party rules, require states to take collective action on the issue, have Congress pass a new law or a combination of these ideas. Any option will take time to implement, and as such, we do not have the luxury of waiting to address this issue.

U.S. Sens. Joseph Lieberman, I-Conn., Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., and Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., kick-started the reform debate by introducing and receiving a hearing on federal legislation to establish a rotating regional primary system in 2012. Hopefully, this move will serve as the impetus for action on presidential primary reform.

The frontloaded 2008 calendar and the resulting presidential nominating process are a recipe for chaos, but the states fighting for a voice are right when they argue that our process is unfair and must be changed. Under a regional rotating system, all states can play a part and remain relevant to the selection of the president of the United States. States should lead the call for that change.

—Kentucky Secretary of State Trey Grayson is the co-chair of the National Association of Secretaries of State’s Subcommittee on Rotating Regional Presidential Primaries.
The Council of State Governments Justice Center recently released *Repaying Debts*, a first-of-its-kind comprehensive guide, supported by the U.S. Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Assistance. The report details how policymakers can increase financial accountability among people leaving correctional facilities, improve rates of child support collection and victim restitution, and make individuals’ transition from prisons and jails to the community safe and successful.

By Danielle Langone
Victims and children of individuals released from prisons and jails often don’t get the restitution and support they are owed, according to *Repaying Debts*, a report recently released by the CSG Justice Center.

Former inmates typically must make payments to a host of agencies, including probation departments, courts, attorneys general’s offices and child support enforcement offices. While coordinated collections efforts among these agencies could increase rates of repayment to victims, families and criminal justice agencies, there is rarely a single agency tracking all of an individual’s court-ordered debts and facilitating payment.

Exacerbating the problem, state and local governments often have conflicting policies governing collection of fines, fees and restitution. For example, some agencies prioritize the collection of fines, fees or surcharges, while others prioritize victim restitution. These agencies often lack coordinated collection efforts.

**Leaving Prison or Jail in Debt**

Many people leave prison or jail with a substantial amount of debt, including supervision fees, victim restitution and child support. For example, 58 percent of men released from prisons in Ohio and 39 percent of men released from prisons and jails in Texas report owing monthly probation or parole supervision fees, according to a policy associate with the Urban Institute.

Even further evidence from the report: An analysis of restitution debt in Maricopa County, Ariz., Probation Department, found that the 15 percent of people on probation with restitution orders owed an average of $3,500.

A 2001 study by the Center for Policy Research in Denver found that people released on parole owed an average $16,600 in child support.

The financial obligations of people released from prisons and jails often go unfulfilled, according to an examination of court-ordered obligations in 11 states by the National Center for State Courts. That organization found an average of $178 million per state in uncollected court costs, fines, fees and/or restitution.

Typically, people released from prisons and jails have insufficient resources to pay these debts—leaving victims, families and criminal justice agencies to compete for a share of the small payments that can be made. Nationally, two-thirds of people detained in jails report annual incomes under $12,000 prior to arrest, according to a 2002 Department of Justice report. In one 2004 Urban Institute study, three-fourths of people released from prison owing child support, restitution and supervision fees reported difficulty paying off these debts.
Federal law provides that a child support enforcement officer can garnish up to 65 percent of an individual’s wages for child support. But at the same time, probation officers in most states can require that an individual dedicate a percentage (without a cap) of his or her income toward the combined payment of fines, fees, surcharges and restitution.

The inability of people released from prisons and jails to meet their financial obligations can contribute to their reincarceration. A national study from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics found that 12 percent of probation revocations were due at least in part to a failure to meet the financial portion of probation requirements.

States Make Headway

While no state has addressed this issue comprehensively, several have made headway, including consolidating the debt collection process; prioritizing the collection of victim restitution over other payments to the state; and modifying child support orders for parents who are incarcerated, when appropriate to improve long-term compliance.

In New Jersey, the Adult Probation Department consolidates the debts of people under supervision, and the department’s staff is charged with helping people under intensive probation supervision with all their repayment requirements. Staff collects information about all debts an individual has been ordered to pay by various courts and directs payments toward restitution and other financial obligations. Then, judges determine how payments are proportioned, prioritizing child support, a victim compensation program and restitution.

Texas took another approach. In 2005 the Texas legislature reviewed the collections practices of courts statewide and found the courts were unable to provide information about what percentage of the total assessed court fines and fees were actually collected. A legislative review body was directed to study the purpose, collection, and use of court fines and fees. The review found that a Collections Improvement Program implemented in a handful of courts was effective in increasing compliance with financial obligations. The legislature approved legislation requiring cities and counties with population levels above a certain threshold to implement the program and to provide annual reports about their collection practices.

Arizona prioritizes the collection of victim restitution before other obligations. As part of the Financial Compliance Program of the Maricopa County Adult Probation Department, 14 full-time probation officers are dedicated to collecting probation supervision fees and victim restitution. They review individuals’ assets and obligations at the first probation contact, set up payment plans and advise individuals of the sanctions associated with nonpayment. As a result, administrators of the Arizona program report a high collection rate.

Arizona’s Department of Corrections is also piloting victim impact classes in six of its 10 prisons. The 10-week program is designed to help prisoners realize the consequences of their actions. As part of the program, victims make presentations to prisoners about how crimes such as robbery, substance abuse, drunken driving and violence can affect victims.

Yet another approach is a North Carolina statute that provides for the suspension of child support orders during any period when the supporting party is incarcerated, is not on work release, and has no resources with which to make payments. The provision is meant to minimize the accrual of child support arrears during periods of incarceration. It’s also meant to provide an opportunity for the individual to find legitimate employment upon release from prison or jail that can provide steady child support and other debt payments.

To address the issue in Massachusetts, the Corrections Department each month sends a list of people who are incarcerated to the Department of Revenue, which is responsible for child support enforcement statewide. The Department of Revenue, in turn, performs a data match to identify which people have outstanding child support orders and sends this list back to the Corrections Department. A Revenue worker helps incarcerated parents submit a modification request to the court, and also informs court personnel of a parent’s release date, so child support modification orders can be reversed when the parent returns to the community and resumes making regular support payments.

Though a handful of state and smaller jurisdictions have had great success, the failure of people returning from prisons and jails to meet their financial obligations is a growing concern as the number of people in the nation’s prisons and jails continues to increase. To learn more about this issue and the CSG Justice Center’s report, Repaying Debts, visit the Justice Center’s Reentry Policy Council Web site at www.reentrypolicy.org.

—Danielle Langone is a communications associate with the CSG Justice Center.
For state officials who want to address the debts owed by individuals leaving prisons or jails, the CSG Justice Center report includes six broad recommendations and guidance for implementing them. Here is a look at those recommendations:

1. Identify all state and local laws that can affect the financial obligations of people released from prisons or jails.
   Laws and policies that govern what financial obligations may be imposed on a person sentenced to prison or jail vary significantly from one state to another, and even possibly across the cities and counties within a state. The report recommends that states compile relevant information and data from various agencies involved in this process, and use the information to inform the collaborative development of a strategic plan.

2. Coordinate the collection systems of the different agencies involved in collecting debts held by people sentenced to prison or jail.
   Policies governing the collection of fines, fees, restitution and child support are often at odds within different units of government, making it difficult for people released from prisons and jails to meet their financial obligations.
   The report encourages policymakers to pursue a number of strategies for improving and coordinating collections practices, including determining financial sanctions in one lump sum and setting priorities for disbursement, consolidating collection efforts, providing resources to pursue unmet obligations, keeping individuals apprised of the status of their payment efforts, capping collections at a set rate, and calculating realistic payment plans.

3. Enact child support laws and related policies that encourage parents released from prisons or jails to maintain legitimate employment, which will help enable them to provide long-term support to their children.
   While a child's needs for financial support do not diminish when a parent is in jail or prison, most incarcerated parents have little or no ability to meet their child support obligations, according to a 2003 article in Corrections Today.
   Research highlights the importance of programs that support employment and stable lifestyles, and in appropriate situations, facilitate and strengthen family connections during incarceration. Parents who make regular child support payments are likely to have improved familial ties that can help reduce recidivism and restore stability, according to a 2005 study. Realistic payment amounts can also help to ensure long-term payment compliance.
   To this end, the report recommends child support policies that increase compliance by people who are incarcerated or returning from prisons and jails. This includes working with custodial parents to determine appropriate child support during incarceration, including modifying child support orders of people who are incarcerated and have no means to pay child support, and using enforcement mechanisms other than reincarceration when warranted by the circumstances to encourage payment.

4. Ensure victims receive the restitution they are owed by ordering restitution when appropriate; enforcing restitution orders; and educating crime victims, criminal justice personnel and people who owe restitution about its importance.
   Despite the value and emphasis lawmakers have placed on restitution, it is not always ordered or enforced, according to a 2004 U.S. Sentencing Commission report. This happens for several reasons: the victim may not know his or her rights; law enforcement personnel may not collect information about a victim's financial losses; the prosecutor may not seek restitution; the judge may not order restitution; or the agency responsible for collections may not pursue restitution. The report recommends several methods for ensuring victims receive the compensation to which they are entitled. This includes educating criminal justice staff, victims and people who owe restitution about the restitution process and importance of restitution; pursuing civil remedies for outstanding payments; and withholding state tax returns and garnishing wages.

5. Make certain new fines, fees and surcharges do not reduce the ability of people returning from prison or jail to pay child support and restitution.
   Court-ordered fines, fees and surcharges, unlike child support and restitution, are financial obligations to the city, county or state—not to individuals. With a growing percentage of criminal justice agencies' budgets dependent on these fees, tensions arise surrounding the priorities of these agencies and the needs of victims and families who rely on individuals released from prisons and jails for compensation and support, according to the report.
   The report recommends policymakers take steps such as preparing re-entry impact statements when introducing legislation that contemplates new or increased fines, fees and surcharges, and limiting the reliance of criminal justice agencies on fee collection to support operational costs.

6. Establish sanctions and incentives to more effectively encourage people released from prisons or jails to meet their court-ordered financial obligations.
   When people released from prisons and jails fail to meet their financial obligations, it’s often either because they are unwilling, but able, to do so, or because they lack the necessary means to pay their debts despite their best efforts. The report's recommendations address both cases, suggesting sanctions and incentives or rewards (e.g., waivers of interest on accumulated debts). These recommendations also suggest strategies to increase the earning capacity of people with limited education or marketable job skills. They also consider the possibility of nonmonetary payment options, such as community service, for people who are indigent or disabled.
How do we guarantee the energy for America’s future?

By building smart.

America’s electric companies are committed to building cleaner power plants to produce the electricity needed to keep our nation’s economy growing for future generations. That’s a smart thing to do because even with gains in energy efficiency the US government is projecting a 40% increase in demand for electricity by 2030. We’re also taking action to reduce emissions, improve energy efficiency and invest in new technologies. Building an affordable, reliable electric future is smart for America.

Get energy active.

Find out more about building for our future at www.getenergyactive.org.
There’s no silver bullet approach to reforming the nation’s high schools. But states are finding success with the different approaches they’re taking now. The high school curriculum is changing. Many states are requiring students to take more rigorous course loads, even if they don’t plan to attend college. Some require students to take four years each of English, math, science and social studies in order to graduate, while others require exit exams for courses and/or graduation.

“In the early part of this work, many individuals thought that simply raising the standards, expecting more from students, was enough,” said Dane Linn, director of the Education Division, Center for Best Practices at the National Governors Association. But educators found that wasn’t enough.

“Most policy initiatives have been a silver bullet approach,” Linn said. “The states would focus on new programs instead of policy infrastructure in place.”

NGA is working with states on redesigning high schools and has developed an action agenda. The organization brought together representatives from local schools, state and national levels to discuss issues pertinent to high school design.

NGA isn’t alone in pushing for changes in high schools. Education associations like the National Association of State Boards of Education and the Council of Chief State School Officers are working with their members to develop plans for improving schools.

The Need for Change

“The demands of the work force are changing,” said Melissa McCabe, a senior associate with CCSSO. “The number of blue collar jobs is growing smaller and smaller, while managerial and professional and white collar jobs are expanding. If high schools don’t change, they’re not going to be producing students prepared for the 21st century work force.”

Many believe the nation’s high schools have to change to meet the challenges of a growing global economy. That’s the focus of new high school redesign efforts across the country.

By Mary Branham Dusenberry
In addition, many states assessed the success rates of their students and found some dismal results.

Rhode Island, for instance, issues an annual report to high schools about how well their students performed in the first year of postsecondary education. Students who met admission standards for state universities did well, according to Jack Warner, commissioner of Rhode Island’s System of Higher Education. But those who attended community colleges did not. About 58 percent of those entering community colleges needed two or more remedial classes in reading, English or math, he said.

Louisiana saw more than 30 percent of its incoming freshmen drop out of school, according to Leslie Jacobs, chairman of the Louisiana High School Redesign Committee.

“I think the high number of students who are dropping out, and the low number of graduation rates, is driving these efforts,” said Carlas McCauley, project director for NASBE’s high school redesign initiative.

High schools are also undergoing change because the global economy requires a lot more education at the secondary level.

That’s certainly true in North Carolina. For generations, students could drop out of school or have a high school diploma and were guaranteed a full-time, good-paying job in the state’s primary industries of furniture manufacturing and tobacco, according to J.B. Buxton, deputy superintendent at the state’s Department of Public Instruction. But the changing economy put an end to that.

Louisiana officials learned the changing economy is requiring much different educational standards as well. Representatives of the state’s businesses and industries told the high school redesign committee their employees would need similar education requirements as colleges and universities.

“The difference between being college ready and work ready are not that great anymore,” Jacobs said. “What would be blue collar jobs now require a lot more math and science. With the advent of technology, jobs are more sophisticated.”

That means preparation for those jobs in high school is different.

Louisiana is among a number of states requiring students to take a more rigorous course load, and will require every student to take the four core courses each year starting next year.

But many believe it will take more than one or two changes to bring the nation’s high schools up to the level they need to be to compete in a global economy.

**States Take Multi-Pronged Approach**

NGA has been pushing the idea that “fixing our high schools is very complex and requires a multi-prong strategy,” said Linn.

That strategy can include such things as increased offerings of Advanced Placement courses in high schools, end-of-class exams, particularly for basic college-preparatory subjects like Algebra I, and more rigorous course requirements.

Louisiana Assistant Superintendent Donna Nola-Ganey said the state’s redesign effort has focused on increased rigor in classes. She said the committee discussed what the schools could provide for those students who weren’t going on to a four-year college.

“We are trying to change the mindset that college can mean technical college, community college and four-year colleges. With this high school redesign effort, we’re not trying to push people into a four-year college, but we think all children should aspire to some form of postsecondary education,” she said. “We also know that even if they don’t go on to postsecondary education, the jobs out there now require higher level courses.”

With that in mind, Louisiana’s high schools are starting to require four credits of English, science, social studies and math, with a provision that students can opt out of the requirement after two years with parental permission. The state also will require students to take end-of-course exams and is looking into alternative diplomas for special education students.

Louisiana, like many states, offers dual enrollment programs in which students can earn both high school and college credit for classes taken in the program.

Debra Mills, vice president of partnerships for the Center for Occupational Research and Development, a nonprofit education advocacy group based in Texas, said dual enrollment is just one component of high school redesign in many states.

“(Those involved in) education seem to want to pick a specific magic button and think that’s going to change our education dilemma,” she said. “In reality, it’s a system problem and the entire system needs to be reworked.”

Dual credit enrollment has boomed, Mills said, because the program gives students a taste of what college is like and could draw more students to postsecondary education. Many states have embraced dual enrollment, while others let local districts decide how it will look.

“It’s been my experience that a lot of innovation will come from the field if the state will put policies in to encourage the innovation,” said Mills.

She said dual enrollment can be part of a career pathways system, in which students take classes that correspond to their chosen path. Mills said that’s important because it allows students to focus on their future while in high school.

“We’ve got to move our school systems to where we are connecting education with the economic development of our country or we’re going to be in serious trouble,” she said.

North Carolina offers dual enrollment classes online and free to students, but the state has taken college coursework one step further. Buxton, with the state’s education department, said the Learn and Earn program—the “crown jewel” of North Carolina’s reform—lets students earn a high school diploma and an associate degree in five years. Students attend
their high school classes on a college campus at no cost to them.

“We have literally brought students to higher education,” said Buxton. “We have an articulation agreement, so if you finish an associate degree in a community college, you are guaranteed a seat somewhere and guaranteed to enter as a junior. You already have two years of a bachelor’s degree at no cost.”

The early college program has grown from five locations in the 2004–05 school year, to 42 this year and will grow to 70 next year. The program is targeted to low-income, first generation college students, according to Buxton. “What we’re seeing is we can put them on the college campus and give them that sense of confidence,” he said, “and wrap support around them in high school.”

North Carolina also has created theme-based schools inside larger comprehensive high schools as one way to address that need. The schools focus on such things as pre-engineering, health and life sciences, financial services, biotech, and international trade and commerce.

Preparing Students for Higher Education

High school redesign also has focused on ensuring students are ready for postsecondary learning. Many states are taking a hard look at curriculum alignment between high schools and postsecondary education.

Rhode Island, for instance, has been working for the past four years to get high schools and colleges on the same track. The state formed task forces for each core subject.

“Both high school and college faculty talked about what the expectations were and where the gaps might be between high school expectations and college expectations,” Warner, of the state’s higher education system, said. “We wanted to get clear about what the expectations (for colleges) are.”

The goal was determining how to avoid remediation once students enter college. In addition, the board of regents for K–12 adopted revised high school diploma requirements that take effect in June 2008. The college and university faculty looked at grade span expectations and offered input into what should be expected of students.

“Higher education needs to be more engaged in high school reform if we want to get a better-prepared graduate from our high schools,” Warner said.

The state adopted the New England Common Assessment Program test, which high school juniors will take for the first time this fall, to assess whether students are adequately prepared for college-level courses.

“If he or she meets the expectations and standards, that student should not be assessed for remedial classes,” Warner said. “If the student falls short, the high school could intervene and work on reading, writing and math skills. We want to reduce the rates of remediation that students will take when they reach higher education.”

Other states are making similar changes. Maryland, for example, requires students to demonstrate knowledge in one course before moving to an advanced level, according to Linn. And several states have formed P20 councils to look at education from preschool through higher education, according to McCauley.

Garnering Support for Change

Change doesn’t come easy. Linn said NGA advocates making changes soon, but states need to make sure the changes are helping.

“We can’t say we’ll fix this problem in 15 years,” he said. “This country doesn’t have 15 years. At the same time, we have to be committed to developing, to sustaining this work over a long period of time. We need to re-evaluate our investment in current programs, and make sure the policy decisions we’re making are actually improving student graduation rates and student readiness for college.”

That’ll require robust data systems, he said. “Otherwise, we’re evaluating progress on anecdotes and that’s not good,” said Linn.

But getting to the point of change requires support from stakeholders. Louisiana recognized that early on in its campaign to change high schools.

“Our first phase was actually building the case. Convincing people it needed to be done and why,” said Nola-Ganey. “If you even think about redesigning high schools, you need to get input from parents, educators and communities. Then you’ll have buy-in from the very beginning.”

—Mary Branham Dusenberry is managing editor for State News magazine.

Resources

To learn more about high school redesign efforts, visit:

- http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0502ACTIONAGENDA.pdf
PLEASE JOIN US IN ...
State Officials Gather for Eastern Leadership Academy

The Council of State Governments’ Eastern Regional Conference held its third annual Robert J. Thompson Eastern Leadership Academy in Philadelphia Sept. 16–20. The program, located at the University of Pennsylvania, helps the region’s best and brightest officials develop leadership skills and examine the most significant policy issues facing states today.

Lawmakers and state officials from all three branches of government from eight Eastern states, Puerto Rico and the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Québec participated in the academy.

By focusing on the most important regional trends facing state government officials today, scholars from the University of Pennsylvania and other experts provided a context for fellows to effectively analyze policies and programs, evaluate information and communicate successfully with constituents and colleagues.

Participants praised the program as “practical and hands-on.” One academy fellow described the program as “a great chance to improve your effectiveness as a public servant, connect with like-minded individuals, and perhaps, be inspired.”

This year’s program focused on leadership lessons from senior elected officials, decision-making in times of crisis, conflict resolution, lessons on consensus-building, strategies for time management and media relations.

Distinguished experts who addressed the attendees include:
- Vermont Gov. James Douglas
- National Assembly of Québec Member Russell Copeman, CSG/ERC chairman
- Michael Useem, professor, Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania
- Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director, Annenberg Public Policy Center
- Alan Rosenthal, professor, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University
- New Jersey Assembly Speaker Joseph J. Roberts Jr.
- Vermont House Speaker Gaye Symington
- Retired Nebraska state Sen. David Landis
- Arch Lustberg, renowned media trainer
- Pam Vaccaro, president, Designs on Time

“Sharing ideas and strategies in different policy areas and building skills with colleagues from around the Northeast, Eastern Canada, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands presents a great opportunity to understand and gather best practices,” said Copeman, who is serving as CSG/ERC chairman and delivered the graduation address at the academy.

APPAPA Calls for Voting Rights

The American Probation & Parole Association (APPAPA) released its newest resolution on voting rights for convicted felons. The organization has released more than 15 resolutions on matters from mental health to youth courts.

The most recent resolution calls for voting rights for citizens who have been convicted of felonies upon completion of their sentences. The association also advocates for no loss of voting rights while convicted felons are on community supervision.

For more information on the resolution, visit APPAPA’s Web site at http://www.appa-net.org/about/res/voting_rights.htm.
State attorneys general and assistant attorneys general from eight western states joined with state attorneys general from all 31 Mexican states, the Federal District, and Mexico’s attorney general, Eduardo Medina Mora, for the 19th National Conference of Attorneys General of Mexico in Jiutepec, Morelos, Sept. 21–22.

Topics at the conference included human trafficking, firearms smuggling, efforts to reduce methamphetamines, Internet crimes against children, and money laundering. Medina Mora provided an overview of strategic and collaborative drug interdiction efforts between both countries at the federal level, as well as the implementation of regulatory controls on Pseudoephedrine, a key ingredient used in the manufacture of methamphetamines.

Participating attorneys general shared perspectives on the need to work cooperatively to reduce the smuggling of firearms into Mexico, diminish substance abuse and continue to make effective strides to interrupt and bring to justice money laundering, drug trafficking and human trafficking criminal organizations that operate on both sides of the border. Additionally, the attorneys generals shared information on successful efforts to extradite wanted fugitives via the Article Four Prosecution Process and collaborative efforts between Arizona and Sonora to track stolen vehicles.

Participants were also briefed about recent state-to-state cooperation, including an agreement of understanding signed Sept. 19 between Idaho Attorney General Lawrence Wasden and Morelos Attorney General Juan José Francisco Coronato. That agreement was aimed at exchanging information on best practices in the area of criminal investigations, training on criminal procedures and forensic gathering techniques, sharing information on wanted criminals, and prosecution tactics on human trafficking cases.

This exchange marked the second official collaborative meeting between U.S. and Mexico state attorneys general as part of the U.S.–Mexico Alliance Partnership. The partnership is administered by the Conference of Western Attorneys General (CWAG) and The Council of State Governments–WEST (CSG–WEST) as part of a broad partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development.

For more information about the U.S.–Mexico Alliance Partnership, contact Edgar Ruiz at (916) 553-4423 or Karen White at (916) 323-1992.
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 for updates and more extensive listings.

### November 2007

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 5–8</td>
<td>CSG/CSG-West—Western Legislative Academy—Colorado Springs, CO. Contact Mary Lou Cooper at (916) 553-4423 or <a href="mailto:csgw@csg.org">csgw@csg.org</a>.</td>
<td>Colorado Springs, CO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 6–7</td>
<td>Midwest Legislative Conference/Midwestern Education to Workforce Policy Initiative Summit—Des Moines, IA—Embassy Suites on the River. Contact Laura A. Tomaka, 630-925-1922 or <a href="mailto:ltomaka@csg.org">ltomaka@csg.org</a>.</td>
<td>Des Moines, IA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 11–14</td>
<td>CSG Annual State Trends and Leadership Forum—Oklahoma City, OK. Contact Registration at 1-800-800-1910 or <a href="mailto:registration@csg.org">registration@csg.org</a>.</td>
<td>Oklahoma City, OK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 12–14</td>
<td>CSG/State International Development Organizations—Annual Meeting—Oklahoma City, OK. Contact Chris Whatley, Director of International Programs, at <a href="mailto:cwhatley@csg.org">cwhatley@csg.org</a> or (202) 624-5460.</td>
<td>Oklahoma City, OK.</td>
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### December 2007

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<tr>
<td>Dec. 2–5</td>
<td>CSG/National Association of State Treasurers—NAST Treasury Management Conference—San Antonio, TX—Hyatt Regency Hill Country. Contact Adnee Hamilton at (859) 244-8174 or <a href="mailto:ahamilton@csg.org">ahamilton@csg.org</a>.</td>
<td>San Antonio, TX.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 7–9</td>
<td>Eastern Regional Conference Executive Committee Meeting—Washington, DC—Doubletree Hotel.</td>
<td>Washington, DC.</td>
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### January 2008

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<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 25–27</td>
<td>National Association of State Personnel Executives, Mid-Year Meeting—Washington, DC—Embassy Suites Washington D.C. Convention Center. Contact Lisa Collins at (859) 244-8179 or <a href="mailto:lcollins@csg.org">lcollins@csg.org</a>.</td>
<td>Washington, DC.</td>
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### February 2008

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### March 2008

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<tr>
<td>March 9–12</td>
<td>National Association of State Treasurers (NAST) Legislative Conference—Washington, DC—Willard Inter-Continental Hotel. Contact Adnee Hamilton at (859) 244-8174 or <a href="mailto:ahamilton@csg.org">ahamilton@csg.org</a>.</td>
<td>Washington, DC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 10–14</td>
<td>CSG/National Emergency Management Association—NEMA Mid-Year Conference—Washington, DC—JW Marriott. Contact Karen Cobulus at (859) 244-8143 or <a href="mailto:kcobulus@csg.org">kcobulus@csg.org</a>.</td>
<td>Washington, DC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 12–14</td>
<td>CSG/National Lieutenant Governors Association—State Federal Meeting—Washington, DC. For more information, visit <a href="http://www.nlgaz.org">www.nlgaz.org</a>.</td>
<td>Washington, DC.</td>
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### April 2008

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<tr>
<td>April 8–10</td>
<td>CSG/State International Development Organizations—SIDO White House Forum—Washington, DC. Contact Chris Whatley, Director of International Programs, at <a href="mailto:cwhatley@csg.org">cwhatley@csg.org</a> or (202) 624-5460.</td>
<td>Washington, DC.</td>
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### July 2008

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<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 12–16</td>
<td>National Association of State Personnel Executives, Annual Meeting—Oklahoma City, OK. Skirvin Hilton, Convention Center. Contact Lisa Collins at (859) 244-8179 or <a href="mailto:lcollins@csg.org">lcollins@csg.org</a>.</td>
<td>Oklahoma City, OK.</td>
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### August 2008

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<tr>
<td>Aug. 3–6</td>
<td>CSG/American Probation and Parole Association—33rd Annual Training Institute—Las Vegas, NV—Rio All-Suite Hotel. Contact Kris at (859) 244-8204 or visit <a href="http://www.appo-net.org">www.appo-net.org</a>.</td>
<td>Las Vegas, NV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 8–12</td>
<td>CSG/Midwestern Legislative Conference—14th Annual Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development (BILLD)—Madison, WI—Fluno Center of Executive Education. Contact Laura Tomaka at (630) 925-1922 or <a href="mailto:tomaka@csg.org">tomaka@csg.org</a>, or visit <a href="http://www.csgmidwest.org">http://www.csgmidwest.org</a> for more information.</td>
<td>Madison, WI.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 16–20</td>
<td>CSG/Southern Legislative Conference—Oklahoma City, OK. Contact Elizabeth Lewis at the Southern Legislative Conference at (404) 633-1866 or visit <a href="http://www.sclatnost.org">www.sclatnost.org</a> for additional information.</td>
<td>Oklahoma City, OK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 18–21</td>
<td>National Association of State Treasurers (NAST) Annual Conference—Rockport, ME—Samoset on the Ocean Resort. Contact Adnee Hamilton at (859) 244-8174 or <a href="mailto:ahamilton@csg.org">ahamilton@csg.org</a>.</td>
<td>Rockport, ME.</td>
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### September 2008

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<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 8–11</td>
<td>CSG/National Emergency Management Association—NEMA Annual Conference—Portland, OR. Contact Karen Cobulus at (859) 244-8143 or <a href="mailto:kcobulus@csg.org">kcobulus@csg.org</a>.</td>
<td>Portland, OR.</td>
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### December 2008

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<tr>
<td>Dec. 4–7</td>
<td>CSG Annual State Trends and Leadership Forum—Omaha, NE. Contact Registration at 1-800-800-1910 or <a href="mailto:registration@csg.org">registration@csg.org</a>.</td>
<td>Omaha, NE.</td>
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### August 2009

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 15–19</td>
<td>CSG/ Southern Legislative Conference—Annual Meeting—Winston-Salem, NC. Contact Elizabeth Lewis at the Southern Legislative Conference at (404) 633-1866 or visit <a href="http://www.sclatnost.org">www.sclatnost.org</a> for additional information.</td>
<td>Winston-Salem, NC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 9–12</td>
<td>CSG/Midwestern Legislative Conference—64th Annual Meeting—Overland Park, KS. Contact Cindy Andrews at (630) 925-1922 or <a href="mailto:candrews@csg.org">candrews@csg.org</a>, or visit <a href="http://www.csgmidwest.org">www.csgmidwest.org</a> for more information.</td>
<td>Overland Park, KS.</td>
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### Spring and Fall 2008

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CSG/State International Development Organizations—SIDO China Market Research Missions. Contact Chris Whatley, Director of International Programs, at <a href="mailto:cwhatley@csg.org">cwhatley@csg.org</a> or (202) 624-5460.</td>
<td>China.</td>
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</table>
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—November/December 1967

**Raising Cigarette Taxes**

Pennsylvania Gov. Raymond P. Shafer signed a bill in October 1967, to raise the state's tax on cigarettes from 8 cents to 13 cents, according to an article in the November 1967 State Government News. The increase meant Pennsylvania had the highest cigarette tax in the nation.

Before that, New Jersey, Washington and Texas shared the highest cigarette tax rate at 11 cents per pack. For states surrounding Pennsylvania, the taxes per pack were as follows: New York, 10 cents a pack, plus an additional 4 cents per pack in New York City; Delaware and Ohio, 7 cents; West Virginia and Maryland, 6 cents; District of Columbia, 3 cents; and Virginia, 2.5 cents.

Pennsylvanians filed suit in the state courts and U.S. District Court to challenge the new tax on constitutional grounds.

### Update

States often look to cigarette taxes as a way to increase revenue. Cigarette taxes were frequently tapped to plug budget holes during the 2001-05 economic downturn, according to a March 2007 story on stateline.org. This year, several states looked at increasing the per pack taxes on cigarettes to fund various programs, including health care. For instance, Iowa Gov. Chet Culver signed into law a $1 tax hike on a pack of cigarettes. That more than tripled the previous rate of 36 cents a pack.

Other states that considered cigarette tax increases this year included Delaware, adding 45 cents to the 55-cents-a-pack cigarette tax; Indiana, adding 25 cents to the 55.5-cents-a-pack tax; Oregon, adding 84.5 cents to the $1.18-per-pack tax; and Tennessee, adding 40 cents to the 20-cents-a-pack tax.

New Jersey had the highest state cigarette tax in the country at $2.58 per pack, according to the Stateline article.

### 10 years ago – November/December 1997

**Paying for Prevention**

State governments were investing increased sums of money to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural hazards, according to an article in the December 1997 State Government News.

The article, authored by National Emergency Management Association Executive Director Trina Hembree (Sheets), discussed the areas in which states were investing money. She cited a 1997 report that showed the costs for protecting lives and property were rising. The 44 responding states reported spending more than $611 million on mitigation in 1995 and more than $689 million in 1996. The increased spending, she wrote, showed states were rapidly adopting the philosophy of preventing loss before disasters strike.

### Update

States continued to try to prepare for disasters over the last decade. This year, in fact, several states touted improved emergency management plans and stressed the need to be prepared for a predicted active hurricane season.

State steps to improve public awareness and preparation fit into a larger effort by the Federal Emergency Management Agency—widely criticized for its handling of Katrina—to redefine itself and oversee a coherent division of duties among local, state and federal authorities, according to a story on stateline.org. That mission now includes a more concentrated effort to keep the public informed and prepared, according to FEMA Administrator R. David Paulison.
CSG provides insights about major trends to state officials. It also highlights state responses to these trends. Our Innovations Awards Program, now in its 22nd year, is a key component of both endeavors. We invite your agency or department to consider applying for a 2008 award.

Qualified programs must address an issue under one of the following categories and related subcategories:

- Infrastructure and Economic Development: Business/Commerce; International Trade; Transportation
- Government Operations: Administration; Elections; Public Information; Revenue
- Health and Human Services: Aging; Children and Families; Health Services; Housing; Human Services
- Human Resources/Education: Education; Labor; Management; Training and Development; Personnel; Workforce Development
- Natural Resources: Agriculture; Energy; Environmental Protection; Natural Resources; Parks and Recreation; Water Resources
- Public Safety/Corrections: Corrections; Courts; Criminal Justice; Drugs; Emergency Management; State Security; Public Safety

Regional panels of state officials review the applications and determine the Innovations Award winners.

Download an application: www.csg.org/programs/innov/apply.aspx
Contact: Nancy J. Vickers, nvickers@csg.org, (859) 244-8105

deadline
March 1