The Fiscal Crisis: Navigating the Turbulent Economy

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A look back in time
The Council of State Governments Spring Meeting in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, May 16–18, promises to offer informative sessions to help state officials deal with serious issues in serious times. If you can’t make it to all the sessions, check out Capitol Comments throughout the meeting to find out what you’ve missed.

Find out what states are doing to grow volunteerism with their residents in the story on page 16, then check Capitol Comments to get a national perspective on volunteering.

States are measuring their performance by collecting and analyzing data. Find out more about performance management in the article on page 23, then learn more about how states are using performance measurements at Capitol Comments.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provides more than $300 billion in potential funding for states and state-related programs. In order to deliver services and address an unprecedented fiscal crisis, states need to access, use and account for stimulus funding as quickly and efficiently as possible. The Council of State Governments designated StateRecovery.org as a service to states to quickly decipher potential funding opportunities and share best practices by tracking how executive, legislative and judicial branches of state government are responding to this historic legislation.

Look for the Capitol Comments indicator throughout the magazine to find Web extras on the CSG blog.

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**capitol trivia**

**Question:**
Which state has the most state overseas offices, as of 2006?

To find the answer, log onto the State News Web site at statenews.csg.org!
Alzheimer’s Disease, Dementia Triple Health Care Costs

Total health care costs are more than three times higher for people with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias than for other people over age 65, a new report from the Alzheimer’s Association says.

The report—“2009 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures”—details the dramatic rise in costs for caring for a person over age 65 with Alzheimer’s and other dementias as opposed to those in the same age group without the ailments.

Overall annual costs more than tripled, from $10,603 for someone without Alzheimer’s or dementia to $33,007 for someone with Alzheimer’s or dementia, according to the report. Annual Medicaid costs were nine times more for an Alzheimer’s patient over age 65—$6,605 compared to $718 for someone without the disease.

“The Medicaid costs alone for long-term care services and support is reason enough for state government to take a look at it as it affects their bottom line and what they're able to do as a state,” said Mike Splaine, director of state policy and advocacy programs with the Alzheimer’s Association, which produced the report.

More than 5 million Americans over age 65 are afflicted with Alzheimer’s disease, and that number is only expected to rise, according to the report, which was released in March. The report estimates an increase in that number to 7.7 million by 2030 and to between 11 million and 16 million by 2050.

Those rising numbers will be reflected in the cost to care for the ailments, Splaine said.

“The Alzheimer’s crisis, like the disease itself, will unfold gradually, which makes it all too easy to ignore unless we have opportunity to alter its impact,” Splaine said.

Splaine said this new report on the prevalence of the disease provides the needed data for states considering developing state government Alzheimer’s plans—there are 20 of those plans in various stages across the country, he said.

“It provides some of the backup material that they’ll need to deal with not only today’s crisis, but also the pending crisis to come,” he said.

He believes the attention Alzheimer’s disease is getting not only from states, but also from the federal government as Congress considers the Alzheimer’s Study Group report, will help reframe the disease.

“It’s not just a personal and family issue, but a society and economic issue,” Splaine said. And he hopes states will take notice and begin to take action. State plans are a good place to start, he said.

To read the report, visit http://alz.org/alzheimers_disease_facts_figures.asp.

Webinar Planned on Advancing Solar Support Programs

The principal barrier to the widespread adoption of solar photovoltaic systems is the high capital cost, and many states have established incentive programs to make these systems more affordable.

The Clean Energy Group and The Council of State Governments—which have joined in a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Energy’s Solar America Initiative—will host a free webinar June 2 to brief officials on how states are supporting the development of solar energy projects and markets. A panel of leading state solar program managers will discuss the lessons learned and describe how states are revising and crafting new programs to advance solar markets.

Mark Sinclair, vice president of Clean Energy Group, will facilitate and frame the session. Sinclair will describe the characteristics and objectives of an effective solar support program and recent innovations by states to advance solar markets. The webinar will also feature program representatives from four leading solar states—California, Connecticut, Maryland and New York—who will describe their general approach and the unique features of their programs, and offer advice for other states.

The three major types of policy support at the state level are incentives, renewable portfolio standards with solar set-asides and support for local infrastructure. The panel will explore the merits, challenges and effectiveness of each approach in advancing self-sustaining solar markets.

CSG and the Clean Energy Group have also developed a member listserv—the PV Peer Network—as a forum for state leaders to share information and ideas, ask questions about solar programs and policies, and announce upcoming solar events.

To see a range of state solar program approaches, visit http://www.cleanegroup.org/Reports/CEG_Mainstreaming-Solar-Electricity_Apr2008.pdf.

Webinar details and access information for this event will be distributed via the PV Peer Network listserv in May. To become a member of the listserv and receive periodic notices of this and other informational events, e-mail contact information to Maria@cleanegroup.org and put “PV Peer Network” in the subject line. For more information about the PV Peer Network, including materials for this and past webinars, visit the States Advancing Solar Web site at http://www.statesadvancingsolar.org/state-activities/pv-peer-network.
Illegal immigrants are more dispersed across the nation than ever before, according to a new Pew Hispanic Center report released in mid-April. Although California, Texas and Florida still lead the nation in the number of unauthorized immigrants, those border states aren’t the only ones dealing with the issue of illegal immigrants. States such as North Carolina and Georgia have an exploding population of illegal immigrants, according to the Pew Hispanic Center report.

“Unauthorized immigrants are spread more broadly than in the past into states where relatively few had settled two decades ago,” the report said. “This is especially true in Georgia, North Carolina and other Southeastern states.”

Based on March 2008 data from the Census Bureau, the Pew Hispanic Center estimates that unauthorized immigrants now make up 4 percent of the nation’s population.

The report also found the majority of the children of illegal immigrants were actually born in the U.S. and are U.S. citizens—73 percent of the children of illegal immigrants are born here.

Growing illegal immigrant populations in other states that haven’t been long-time immigrant destinations may represent financial implications on already-strained state budgets, Stateline.org reports.

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger estimates illegal immigrants cost the state up to $6 billion a year in health care and other state services costs, according to an April 15 article from the Associated Press. But that’s not what’s to blame for California’s slew of financial troubles, Schwarzenegger told the AP.

Growth in the illegal immigrant population has slowed in California, though, the report said. In 1990 California had 42 percent of the nation’s illegal immigrants living there, according to the report; that declined to just 22 percent of the nation’s illegal immigrants in 2008.

To read the full report, go to http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/107.pdf.

First-Ever Indian Homeland Security Exercise Conducted in Alabama

Alabama’s Poarch Band of Creek Indians, along with the Alabama National Guard and the Alabama Department of Homeland Security, led a homeland security exercise on the Poarch Creek Reservation March 26. The disaster response exercise strived to prepare the local Indian tribe for acts of terrorism and also evaluated first responder efforts, according to the Alabama Department of Homeland Security.

The operation was known as Dragon Slayer.

The homeland security exercise is the first ever conducted on a federally recognized American Indian Reservation, according to a press release from the Alabama Department of Homeland Security.

The simulation involved a Powwow taking place on the reservation—where nearly 20,000 people were gathered, according to Lauren Bethune, spokeswoman for the Alabama Department of Homeland Security. A crop duster plane circled over the powwow and sprayed a liquid type substance—which gets on the people, the animals and the agriculture, Bethune said.

The substance symbolized a deliberate act of terrorism, Bethune said.

The Poarch Creek fire and police departments, health department, local hospitals and ambulance services will join with the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Indian Health Service, Alabama Department of Public Health, Alabama Emergency Management Agency and other state agencies in determining the responses needed, according to the press release.

Indian tribe officials and officials from the Alabama Homeland Security Department intend to use the event as a model for other reservations in the nation, according to the press release.

More than just a homeland security exercise, the simulation demonstrated the relationship with the Poarch Creek Indians and the state of Alabama.

“We are very fortunate in our state to have a good relationship with our tribe,” Bethune said.
Cognitive Impairment in Nursing Home Residents by State, 2007


<table>
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<th>States</th>
<th>Total Nursing Home Residents</th>
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*These figures include all individuals who spent any time in a nursing home in 2007. Percentages for each state may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding. Created from data from Nursing Home Data Compendium 2008 Edition.*
Infrastructure Projects Underway, Will They Stimulate the Economy?
On a stretch of I-295 from Topsham to Gardiner, Maine, the state’s first stimulus-funded project is using $31.5 million this spring to put 250 Mainers to work as pavers, truck drivers and equipment operators, and to finance the pavement, diesel fuel and wooden stakes needed to repave the road’s northbound lanes.

At the same time, many others are expected to see some economic benefit from the project. Those beneficiaries include area hotels, convenience stores, subcontractors, fuel companies and saw mills. State officials estimate another 600 spinoff jobs could also be created by the project.

The Obama administration has high hopes that infrastructure projects funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, like the one in Maine, will create or save 150,000 jobs over the next year and a half and help revive the U.S. economy.

“In a very short time, your cities will be humming with construction workers, engineers, maintenance crews and many others,” U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood told the National League of Cities in March. “This effort not only puts people to work—it gets people to work in a way that moves us toward our long-term goals of energy security and more livable communities.”

Many state government officials have the same high hopes for Recovery Act transportation and infrastructure funding.

“While the package will obviously provide stimulus, the real benefit will be opportunity,” said Washington Sen. Fred Jarrett, incoming co-chair of CSG’s Transportation Policy Task Force. “The post World War II prosperity came from our willingness to invest in public infrastructure. Our 21st century prosperity will come from the investments we’re starting today.”

Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell echoed the same optimism to an audience at the Heritage Foundation in Washington earlier this year: “The good news is we know that infrastructure does create jobs. … And secondly, we want to create orders for American factories. For concrete factories and asphalt factories, and lumber factories, and electrical supply factories and so many different American businesses who desperately need orders, who desperately need work so that they can get these orders and rehire people that they laid off.”

The business community, too, is optimistic.

“Funds invested in infrastructure projects really deliver a double-whammy to the economy,” said Renee Sinclair, northwest regional director of Congressional and Public Affairs for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. “They help create jobs in the private sector today and build our ability to compete in the future.”

**Stimulus Impact of Infrastructure Investment**

Infrastructure investment from the Recovery Act—including $27.5 billion for highways and $8.4 million for transit—is expected to provide one of the most significant returns on investment of anything included in the $787 billion federal stimulus package, leading economists say.

Mark Zandi of Moody’s Economy.com estimates that for every $1 in increased infrastructure spending, real Gross Domestic Product, a measure of the nation’s economy, increases by $1.59. That puts it just below extending food stamp benefits ($1.73) and extending unemployment insurance benefits ($1.64) in terms of stimulus impact.

“The boost to GDP from every dollar spent on public infrastructure is large,” Zandi wrote in January. “And there is little doubt that the nation has underinvested in infrastructure for some time, to the increasing detriment of the nation’s long-term growth prospects.”

Sinclair agrees. In assessing the impact of the stimulus, it’s important to consider both the short term and the big picture, she said. “The business community will be looking both at private-sector jobs created today as well as the impacts these investments will have on America’s ultimate ability to compete with nations like India and China that are presently investing 5 percent to 9 percent of their GDP on infrastructure, while the U.S. has historically invested around 2 percent of our GDP,” she said.

Others estimate the potential impact of infrastructure investment in different ways:

- Standard and Poor’s DRI—an economic forecasting report—says that for each dollar invested in highway construction, $1.80 of GDP is generated in the short term.
- According to the American Public Transportation Association, every dollar taxpayers invest in public transportation generates about $6 in economic returns.
- Americans for Transportation Mobility, a coalition based in Washington, D.C., reports that transportation improvements resulting in a 10 percent increase in travel speed leads to a 15 percent to 18 percent increase in the size of the labor market.
- The Federal Highway Administration estimates that every $1.25 billion spent on transportation projects supports approximately 35,000 jobs.

**Will ‘Shovel-Ready’ Projects Make a Difference?**

But many remain skeptical that the amount of infrastructure investment in the Recovery Act and the kinds of projects it funds can help revive the nation’s economy or even make a dent in meeting the nation’s transportation needs.

The extent of those needs was brought into the spotlight once again in March with the release of the American Society of Civil Engineers’ “2009 Report Card for America’s Infrastructure.” The report found that the U.S. needs to spend $2.2 trillion in the next five years just to restore the infrastructure to good condition. According to the report, the nation’s infrastructure overall got a D in the report card and the nation’s roads rating was a D-minus.

Congress is currently working on a new multi-year authoriza-
tion of federal transportation programs to replace the legislation that expires in late September. That’s expected to inject billions more into the nation’s infrastructure.

Many state officials around the country had hoped the stimulus bill would provide a significant down payment on major infrastructure improvements. That down payment could then be followed by an even more significant infusion of cash from the next authorization bill.

But some aren’t convinced it’s working out that way. According to a March article in the Boston Globe, of the 65 highway projects in Massachusetts eligible for stimulus funding, “25 are paving jobs and another 10 are to repair or build sidewalks, bike paths and other trails.”

Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick’s administration has expressed concern that dozens of worthy projects don’t fit the federal government’s criteria for stimulus money eligibility and that could mean fewer jobs may be generated by the initial round of stimulus spending, according to the Boston Globe.

The Federal Highway Administration’s implementing guidance for the Recovery Act contains the following project priority criteria to be considered during project selection:

- Three-year completion priority—Priority should be given to projects/activities projected for completion by Feb. 17, 2012.
- Economically Distressed Areas—Priority should be given to projects in economically distressed areas.
- Expeditious project delivery—Preference should be given to projects/activities that can be started and completed expeditiously including a goal of obligating at least 50 percent of the funds not later than June 17, 2009.
- Maximizing job creation and economic benefit—Recipients should also use funds in a manner that maximizes job creation and economic benefit.

Some analysts believe projects like road repaving in Oklahoma and bridge repainting in New Jersey are simply unlikely to leave a lasting legacy on the nation’s infrastructure or its economy by triggering additional development that would employ more Americans.

“It takes more than digging ditches and laying asphalt to ensure that investments create improvements in mobility that spur job creation and increase productivity,” Sam Staley and Adrian Moore of the Reason Foundation, a libertarian think tank, wrote in a December commentary on the group’s Web site. “To maximize the impact of any infrastructure spending, the transportation investments must be the right kind, in the right place, and at the right time. Those are no small obstacles.”

And as Reason’s Robert Poole writes: “What today’s single-digit return on investment says is that much of what we spend on highways is not targeted to projects that can make a big difference—such as widening truck-clogged interstate corridors and adding congestion-priced express lanes to gridlocked freeways. Instead, most of it funds lots of small stuff that keep the wheels turning.”

Shovel-Ready: Choosing the Right Projects

Beyond the first round of shovel-ready projects, the American Society of Civil Engineers has ideas for what states should consider in future stimulus-funded infrastructure priorities. The organization in December issued a series of criteria it says projects supported by an economic stimulus investment should meet. They include:

- Projects must create and sustain employment increases;
- Investments must provide long-term benefits to the public (such as congestion relief);
- Long-term maintenance and upkeep needs of all infrastructure projects—existing and new—must be taken into account; and
- To ensure accountability and transparency, an auditing program must be established to review the program and measure desired outcomes.

The society goes on to cite the following principles to guide prioritization and selection of projects to ensure these criteria are met:

- The project should deliver measurable improvements in public health, safety and quality of life;
- The project should provide substantial, broad-based economic benefit;
- The project should be designed and built in a sustainable and cost-effective manner, and proper consideration must be given to lifecycle costs; and
- The project should have a significant environmental benefit such as area restoration, improved air quality through reduced congestion and better watershed management through eliminating vulnerabilities in a system.

10 state news may 2009
Sinclair to Speak at CSG Spring Conference

Renee Sinclair, Northwest regional director of Congressional and Public Affairs for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, will be among the featured speakers when CSG’s Transportation Policy Task Force convenes at the CSG Spring Conference in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. Sinclair is a former journalist and served four terms in the Washington state House of Representatives. She’ll discuss the business community’s perspective on the impact of the stimulus and look ahead to the Congressional debate on the next federal authorization of transportation programs.

State government officials from around the country will also weigh in on their experiences with the stimulus during the task force meetings.

The task force meets Saturday, May 16, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. and Sunday, May 17, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. For more information and online registration, visit http://www.csg.org/meetings/spring.aspx.

Sinclair said, however, that the Recovery Act’s accelerated timetables could produce an impact sooner.

“Because of requirements within ARRA that the funds be pushed out immediately, most states are looking to have (requests for proposals) out by July,” she said. “While many projects will run into next year and beyond, in terms of people working, I believe we will begin to see impacts as early as September/October 2009.”

—Sean Slone is a transportation policy analyst at The Council of State Governments.
States Take Action on Texting, Cell Phone Use While Operating a Vehicle

While there are many things that may distract drivers, cell phone usage—both texting and talking—has drawn the attention of legislators across the country. They’ve banned the use of handheld devices and prohibited new drivers from using cell phones behind the wheel. This year, legislators focused on text messaging while driving.

By Jennifer Horne Boyter
n September 2008, a Metrolink commuter train failed to stop at a red-light signal and crashed head-on with a freight train; 25 people died.

Metrolink officials said the engineer ignored the signal; he had apparently been distracted by a text message from a teenage passenger.

Text messaging has been cited as the cause in similar accidents, including the 2007 deaths of five recent high school graduates in New York who were killed when their car swerved into the path of an oncoming tractor-trailer, seconds after the driver received a text message on her phone.

Sending and receiving text messages while driving is just one aspect of a much larger problem—distracted driving, experts say. Driver inattention is a leading cause of traffic crashes, responsible for about 80 percent of all collisions, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

“All it takes to cause an accident is to be distracted for as little as three seconds,” said John Townsend, manager of Public and Government Affairs for AAA Mid-Atlantic. As a result, AAA and other safety organizations urge motorists to refrain from all distracted driving activities, which include using cell phones in addition to other activities such as eating, putting on makeup or adjusting the radio.

“Driving is a full-time job and requires full-time attention,” Townsend said.

While there are many things that may distract drivers, cell phone usage—both texting and talking—has drawn the attention of legislators across the country. States have taken different approaches to combat distracted driving—such as banning the use of hand-held devices and prohibiting new drivers from using cell phones while driving—but this year, legislators focused on text messaging while driving.

“People should drive with both hands on the wheel, which is why using a cell phone is dangerous, but texting poses the most extreme peril of all,” said Maryland Sen. Jamie Raskin, who sponsored legislation this year to make it a misdemeanor in the state for anyone to write, send or read a text message while operating a vehicle. “If a person is texting while driving, he or she is using both hands on the little electronic device and paying no attention to the road. That’s terrifying.”

The Maryland legislation makes writing or sending a text message a primary offense, meaning violators can get a ticket for doing it without committing any other traffic offenses. The fine could be up to $500.

**States Ban Texting**

Maryland is one of 35 states this year that considered bills to ban text messaging while driving. As of April 14, four states—Arkansas, Maryland, Utah and Virginia—have approved the bans this year. Similar bans were approved by the Alabama House, Illinois House, New Hampshire House and Wyoming Senate. Mississippi also passed legislation to prohibit only drivers with an intermediate license, a temporary learning permit or a temporary driving permit from texting while driving. But the trend is nothing new. It started in 2007 when Washington became the first state to ban text messaging by drivers. Before this year, six other states—Alaska, California, Connecticut, Louisiana, Minnesota and New Jersey—as well as Washington, D.C., had already followed suit.

The reasons are clear: Raskin said lawmakers heard “lots of gory testimony” from family members of victims of traffic crashes caused by texting while driving. “This is a form of accidental death and destruction that is completely avoidable. The carnage on our highways is unacceptable and we need to take the tough measures to dramatically improve safety on the roads,” he said.

Illinois Rep. Tom Holbrook, who sponsored similar legislation, spoke on the House floor about attending the funeral of a young man from his district who died in a car accident while texting his girlfriend. “People think they can multi-task, and they can’t. The results are death and carnage on the roads,” he told the Illinois House.

Raskin believes there are two reasons legislatures are focusing on texting while driving instead of the broader issue of distracted driving.

“Texting is the most extreme form of not paying attention while driving,” he said. He also believes there are “generational politics at work. It’s teens and people in their 20s who seem to text more, and a lot of older legislators seemed more comfortable banning texting before cell phone use.”

**Dangers of Cell Phone Use**

But talking on cell phones is also a problem.

Studies that analyzed the cell phone records of drivers involved in crashes have found using a cell phone while driving is associated with approximately a quadrupling of crash risk. A study from the Harvard Center of Risk Analysis estimates that cell phone use while driving contributes to 6 percent of crashes, which equates to 636,000 crashes, 330,000 injuries, 12,000 serious injuries and 2,600 deaths each year. The study also put the annual financial toll of cell phone-related crashes at $43 billion.

Similarly, driving simulators find that cell phone use impairs several aspects of driver performance and most severely affects reaction time. For example, a 2008 study by Carnegie Mellon University found talking on a cell phone while driving reduces the amount of brain activity devoted to driving by 37 percent.

University of Utah researchers found that cell phone users are more likely to drift out of their lanes and miss their exits than people having conversations with someone else in the vehicle.

Because of the recent rise in text messaging use, few studies have specifically examined the correlation between text messaging and vehicle accidents.

David Strayer, psychology professor and research team director at the Applied Cognition Lab at the University of Utah, is a lead-
“If a person is texting while driving, he or she is using both hands on the little electronic device and paying no attention to the road. That’s terrifying.”

—Maryland Sen. Jamie Raskin

Addressing Distracted Driving

While texting has been the focus this year, several states in recent years passed high-profile legislation to ban the use of all hands-held mobile devices. Six states—California, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Utah and Washington—plus Washington, D.C., and the Virgin Islands ban the use of hand-held mobile devices and require motorists to use hands-free devices instead.

But using hands-free devices may not be fixing the problem of driver distraction. Studies by David Strayer from the University of Utah and others have found using both hand-held and hands-free mobile devices carry similar risks. In a 2006 report published in the journal Human Factors, Strayer concluded that “legislative initiatives that restrict hand-held devices but permit hands-free devices are not likely to eliminate the problems associated with using cell phones while driving.” Those studies found it is the actual act of talking on the cell phone that is distracting.

Pennsylvania has no prohibitions on the use of cell phones by motorists, but the legislature is considering legislation to require hands-free devices (and also to prohibit text messaging while driving). The push toward hands-free devices is perhaps due to PennDOT estimates that put crashes involving drivers using hand-held phones at 1,200 each year.

New technology may cut down on the use of cell phone use behind the wheel. A Canadian software company—Aegis Mobility—developed DriveAssist, a program that can tell when a phone is in motion, meaning it’s inside a moving vehicle. It sends a signal alerting incoming callers that the recipient is driving and will not accept the call. The service offers options to the caller, including the opportunity to leave a message, send an audible alert asking the driver to pull over to complete the call, or request a callback. It always allows 911 calls and offers an override feature for passengers.

The software will allow parents to block teens from using a cell phone while driving and employers to block employees from using a cell phone while driving a company vehicle. Aegis Mobility expects the program to be available through all major wireless carriers by the end of 2009 for $10 to $15 a month.
As of June 2008, there were 262.7 million wireless telephone subscribers, representing 84 percent of the total U.S. population, according to the CTIA—the Wireless Association, a Washington, D.C.-based organization which represents the wireless industry.

Americans spend 2.3 trillion minutes on cell phones each year, and send more than 75 billion SMS (text) messages, CTIA reports.

The number of cell phone subscribers has increased to 194.4 million in June 2005 from 97 million in June 2000.

In 2000, only 12.2 million SMS messages were sent. This increased to 7.2 billion in 2005. Since then, the number of text messages has increased by more than 1,000 percent.

41 percent of Americans have logged on to the Internet outside of their offices or homes, either with a wireless laptop connection or a handheld device, according to a 2007 Pew Internet Project survey.

Insurance companies are excited about the program; Nationwide Mutual Insurance announced in October 2008 that it will provide discounts to policyholders who install the software.

Such programs could be complementary to legislation banning phone use in cars.

A complete ban on cell phone use in cars, in fact, is what the National Safety Council is calling for. The council is lobbying employers to enact policies and for legislators to pass laws banning the behavior.

Janet Froetscher, president and CEO of the National Safety Council, equates the anti-cell phone movement to the one against drunken driving. “Driving drunk is also dangerous and against the law,” she said in a press release. “When our friends have been drinking, we take the car keys away. It’s time to take the cell phone away.”

—Jennifer Horne Boyter is the public safety and justice policy analyst for The Council of State Governments.

BTW: Facts on Cell Phone Use

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Rising Interest in Volunteerism Benefits States

States see many benefits from volunteer participation of their residents. The national emphasis on volunteering—with approval of The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act—may bring more benefits to states.

By Ericka Harney
Utah has long been the state with the most volunteer participation—with nearly half its population donating time to voluntary service during the year, according to the Points of Light Foundation.

In that state volunteers do everything from helping homebound seniors to providing tutoring—and the state helps coordinate their efforts through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America programs.

The benefits are hard to ignore. For example, AmeriCorps volunteers placed with the Youth Garden Project helped build organic gardens and implement community service projects, specifically with juvenile offenders. More than $13.5 million was committed from the Corporation for National and Community Service for the state of Utah’s programs alone.

And with the final version of the federal Serve America Act signed by President Barack Obama on April 21, things will change for volunteers in states like Utah and across the nation. The president included changes to national service as part of his campaign last fall.

The House on March 31 approved a final version of The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, a bill that will not only sustain many volunteer programs but also significantly enhance volunteer offerings of the federal and state governments.

Shar Lewis, executive director for the Utah Commission on Volunteers, is optimistic about what the new Serve America Act could mean for her state—especially in tough times like these when the best help is often free help.

“We are excited about the opportunities the Serve America Act will provide to our state. The investment in our communities and in national service programs couldn’t have come at a more crucial time when the need for volunteer service is growing daily,” Lewis said. “With a tradition of high levels of volunteer service in Utah, we feel poised to respond quickly, efficiently and effectively to these new opportunities.”

In fact, Utah, like all other states, formed a special commission on volunteerism. The Utah Commission on Volunteers is part of the lieutenant governor’s office. Utah Lt. Gov. Gary Herbert shares Lewis’ views on the state’s ability to administer these new program additions under the proposed Serve America Act such as expanding AmeriCorps, providing fellowships for students and offering nonprofits funds to design groundbreaking initiatives with the Social Innovation Fund.

More than that though, Herbert sees the federal act as a much-needed boost for the economy in Utah and other states, according to a press release.

And with the economy in recession, one can hardly argue that increasing volunteerism is a bad idea.

“I was greatly encouraged to see Senators Hatch and Kennedy introduce the Serve America Act because, though we’ve enjoyed much success in our state’s volunteer efforts, the ailing economy has been particularly hard on the nonprofit sector, leading to a decline in services offered by charities and community organizations,” Herbert said in a press release.

“This landmark legislation will help our state by supporting nonprofit organizations that are hurting as a result of the evaporation of wealth, the state and local budget crunch, and increasing demands for services that accompany difficult economic times.”

Utah isn’t the only state that sees the potential benefit from collaborating with the nonprofit and faith-based community when it comes to volunteering. Kentucky also sees the value of the volunteer.

“We all know there is a lot of work to be done and AmeriCorps is certainly a cost-effective, efficient and beneficial way to get that work done,” said Melissa Newton, the training director for the Kentucky Commission on Volunteerism and Service.

“Not only are more services provided, more students tutored, houses built, seniors assisted and disasters responded to but the AmeriCorps members themselves are bettering themselves and earning a scholarship while providing those services,” Newton said.

The Kentucky Commission on Volunteerism and Service was established in 1994 by executive order and organizationally is part of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. More than 33,000 people participated in the national programs offered by the state office in 2008. They worked with 60 projects throughout the state and provided service for domestic violence prevention, foster grant parent care and child advocacy in court, just to name a few.

But not everyone is a fan of the Serve America Act. While increasing volunteerism and participation in national programs facilitated by the states is generally seen as a positive benefit for the states from the legislation, there are several opponents to the act. Some congressional members see the Serve America Act as too pricey.

The act will put $6 billion over the next five years into national service programs, the majority of which are managed by the states. “While our economy and our government is in financial trouble, it is not the best use of taxpayer dollars to spend the level of money on new and existing programs included in this bill,” South Carolina Rep. Joe Wilson said in a press release. Others are more concerned about capacity and capability of state commissions to facilitate increased participation in these programs. Previous efforts to expand opportunities to serve in 2003 failed due to lack of funding and staffing.

Since some of the volunteer opportunities, like AmeriCorps and revisions to the Senior Corps, offer a modest stipend and educational benefit totaling a little more than $5,000 per person, some consider it a payment for volunteering.

Volunteers and the Recovery Act

Still, volunteering may offer a bright spot during a time of high unemployment and a flailing economy. Many out-of-work professionals are finding volunteer jobs to be a resume addition while they’re searching for work and, at the same time, nonprofits are grateful for the experienced individuals.

Neva Geisler, director of volunteer engagement for the United Way of Treasure Valley, in Boise, Idaho, said this year’s ed Way of Treasure Valley, in Boise, Idaho, said this year’s
received more than $201 million in stimulus funds. Nearly $90 million of those funds go directly to funding AmeriCorps volunteers at the state and national level, putting an estimated 13,000 additional AmeriCorps members to work. Another $65 million will be awarded to offset the cost of 3,000 Volunteers in Service to America members of the AmeriCorps.

While these funds will continue to provide for the service that these volunteers commit to, they come with a small caveat. Funds will be awarded in the form of grants only to current grantees with proven track records who can demonstrate the capacity to effectively and quickly get these resources into use.

Higher education institutions will also see benefits from the stimulus funds. AmeriCorps members can receive education awards and interest forbearance on school loans for their service. The Recovery Act stipulates $40 million for the National Service Trust Fund to add to the funds expended for this purpose.

The combination of the support from the Recovery Act with the service impacts of the Serve America Act will provide for much needed support in the states and across the country.

“History has shown that in times of crisis, Americans turn to service and volunteering for healing, for rebuilding and for hope. The spirit and generosity of the American people is one of our nation’s greatest assets,” said U.S. Rep. George Miller from California in a press release. Miller is the chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee.

“This legislation is just what we need, at this pivotal moment, to get our nation back on track,” he said in the release.

—Ericka Harney is The Council of State Governments’ fund development coordinator.

Serve America Act

The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act will sustain many programs but also will have significant additions to the offerings of the federal and state governments. According to the summary from the Corporation for National and Community Service, the goals of the bill are:

Increasing Opportunities for Americans of All Ages to Serve
- Establishes the Summer of Service program, awarding $500 for education to students in sixth through 12th grades
- Increases AmeriCorps positions from 75,000 to 360,000 by 2017
- Increases the maximum Pell Grant level for participants in AmeriCorps programs
- Expands age and income eligibility for foster grandparents
- Provides $1,000 education award to individuals 55 and older for performing 350 hours of service with the option to transfer the award to a child or grandchild
- Establishes the Call to Service Campaign and the September 11 National Day of Service

Supporting Innovation and Strengthening the Nonprofit Sector
- Creates the Social Innovation Fund to expand proven initiatives and provide seed funding for experimental initiatives
- Establishes the Volunteer Generation Fund for grants to states and nonprofits to strengthen the volunteer infrastructure
- Provides Nonprofit Capacity Building grants for assistance to small and mid-size nonprofit organizations to strengthen capabilities for volunteer management
- Creates the National Service Reserve Corps of former Senior Corps, AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve participants to be called into service by FEMA in times of natural disasters

Strengthening Management, Cost-Effectiveness and Accountability
- Increases support for state commissions
- Increases duties and capacity for the board of directors at the Corporation for National and Community Service
- Merges funding streams for better flexibility for grantees, including state commissions, and consolidates application and reporting requirements
- Ensures continuous evaluation for programs to achieve performance and cost goals
- Balances competition to the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, a program that links retired professionals with those who need assistance in their area of expertise
- Authorizes the Civic Health Assessment, an evaluation of participation in volunteering, voting, charitable giving and interest in public service to measure civic health of communities
The current recession has forced many states to make deep cuts in their budgets. Many states are laying off state employees.

By Mikel Chavers
This year, 27,137 California teachers received pink slips.

That’s almost three times as many teachers who received them than last year, when an estimated 10,000 teachers received the official layoff notices threatening their jobs.

And if all state education employees are taken into account—including school bus drivers, secretaries, cafeteria workers, nurses, administrators and so on—probably close to 45,000 employees total received pink slips this year, according to State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell.

Those notices have deeply affected morale.

“Today many teachers are receiving pink slips in our district,” said Susie MacPhee, a more than 10-year classroom veteran, who teaches special education in the Santa Ana Unified School District in Orange County, Calif. And although she hasn’t received a layoff notice because she teaches special education where funding is “safe,” according to O’Connell, the situation is taking its toll on her work environment.

“Pay raises have been on hold. … Supplies and materials are limited. Medical insurance costs are increasing. Class sizes are rising. Field trips are no longer possible,” MacPhee said.

When compared to previous years, the situation for California teachers is worse in some ways and better in others, MacPhee said. Teachers haven’t been asked to take a pay cut to preserve teacher jobs this year—but then again many more are receiving pink slips, she said.

Susy Yoon, a preschool special education teacher in the same Orange County district, said last year more than 500 teachers in her district received pink slips.

That’s because the budget situation is pretty dire in California. And this year, not even education is immune from the deep cuts. In fact, O’Connell has a four-letter word for the situation.

“Ugly,” he said.

The state budget California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed in late February includes $8 billion in cuts for education for the current year, according to O’Connell. But going forward another 16 months, education will face a total of $12 billion in cuts, O’Connell said in March.

The pink slips sent March 13 threatening thousands of jobs is perhaps the most attention-grabbing sign of how California has been forced to deal with budget cuts in an economy that’s in recession.

Like California, other states are feeling the pinch, and many states are forced to cut the state employee payroll. After talks between the Vermont State Employees Association and the state broke down in mid-April, the state moved to cut at least 320 state jobs. Virginia’s Department of Transportation, another state agency that has to cut its payroll, was forced to lay off 450 hourly employees in March.

And more layoffs are coming.

On the Chopping Block

Although a record number of pink slips were sent out to teachers, not all state employees receiving the notices in California will be laid off. Typically the state sends more layoff notices than it actually needs, a legal step to ensure all are notified that they may lose their job, according to O’Connell.

“But this budget is so bad that we’re not crying wolf,” O’Connell said. “This potentially—aabsent the economic stimulus package—would be really ugly. Now it’s just going to be ugly.”

Experts are even predicting California’s budget situation to get worse, according to O’Connell, who heads the California Department of Education.

“What’s not calculated in there is our legislative analyst says that the state budget is already $8 billion out of whack even though (the governor) just signed this (in February),” O’Connell said. “So there may be more potential cuts looming.”
California already underfunds education, according to O’Connell. When compared with other states, O’Connell said his state ranks about 47th in education funding—and he doesn’t see that getting any better; he predicts California’s ranking will slip to 48th or 49th.

Even though the federal Recovery Act helped the state a little with education funding, it still wasn’t enough to stave off all expected layoffs.

“Now we’re hopeful that the economic stimulus package will save many of these jobs because it would just be devastating to lay off this many professional educators,” O’Connell said.

But Recovery Act funding is just one-time money, and although O’Connell said the funds will likely save several thousand teaching jobs in California, it will far from solve the problem.

Intervention programs—such as those targeted to English language learners and to those who need help passing high school exit exams—will most likely suffer from education cuts.

And those teachers who get to keep their jobs will have to deal with less-than-ideal circumstances. Yoon in Orange County said three years ago, her school provided teaching materials and supplies such as construction paper, glue, paint and other office supplies. But this year, the school stopped purchasing those items.

“This affects me tremendously since most of my curriculum is revolved around arts and crafts and hands-on activities,” Yoon, who teaches 3- to 5-year-olds with moderate to severe autism, said. “Sometimes simple office supplies like staples and binder clips are not available, so I have to go out and buy most of them on my own.”

Despite Stimulus, Transportation Departments Still Cut

While federal stimulus funding has helped save a small portion of jobs on the chopping block in California’s Department of Education, it hasn’t saved jobs in Virginia’s Department of Transportation. Even though shovel-ready road construction projects were touted as the quickest way to jumpstart a stalled economy, Virginia’s transportation department layed off 450 hourly employees in March.

Those layoffs came after years of budget cuts. In the last 12 months, the department cut more than $3 billion in construction projects, according to Jeffrey Caldwell, chief of communications for the Virginia Department of Transportation.

The department is looking at a $2.6 billion budget shortfall, and in February it cut another more than $2 billion—or what amounted to 800 construction projects—from the six-year transportation project plan. The remaining $600 million to be cut is coming out of staffing and services, Caldwell said.

The 450 part-time positions cut in March were just the first wave. The second wave of cuts will include 1,000 full-time positions in all areas of the department’s business, according to Caldwell. When it’s all said and done, the department will shrink from its February 2009 payroll of 605 hourly employees and 8,400 full-time salaried employees to a total of 7,500 employees by July 1, 2010.
Part of the reason for the layoffs is just the department’s strategy to live within its means. Since construction projects have been cut, there hasn’t been as much work for the 8,400 employees. The department will be cutting jobs across the board, and will need to cut staff in the preliminary engineering department, for example—a symptom of having fewer construction projects to work on, Caldwell said.

“We just don’t have as much work,” he said.

The department isn’t cutting any field maintenance crews or emergency response personnel, he added.

Perhaps cuts in the department aren’t too much of a shock. The number of employees has decreased anyway over the years mostly due to attrition and just not filling spots as they become open, Caldwell said. In 2000, there were 10,500 total employees compared to today’s 8,400.

Virginia’s Department of Transportation received an estimated $694 million in Recovery Act funding, and that’s “a very quick infusion of money, but very short-term,” Caldwell said.

Although stimulus funding for transportation couldn’t keep the department from cutting jobs in a recession, it did help fund much-needed projects and perhaps draw more attention to an important issue—transportation funding, according to Caldwell.

“Stimulus money is certainly welcome not only from a perspective that it provides more cash for transportation projects, it’s also getting people to understand how important transportation for us is,” Caldwell said.

It’s been no secret that transportation funding is in danger in Virginia. For the last three years, the state has been debating long-term transportation funding, but still hasn’t come up with new revenue sources to keep the department safe from deep cuts, according to Caldwell. Old funding sources for transportation—such as the gas tax and revenue from new vehicle sales—has been steadily declining, leading to less money for road projects.

“We just don’t have a long-term state funding solution,” Caldwell said. “With that reality, we just realize we can’t continue to delay making some long-term decisions—we want to reorganize ourselves around that.”

And part of the solution is laying off state employees.

Pay Cuts Stretch Across Board

Vermont is also no stranger to those kinds of measures. Gov. Jim Douglas identified the need to trim $17 million in labor costs to help the state deal with a budget deficit. In March, Douglas proposed a 5 percent pay cut for all executive branch employees making at least $30,000 a year—and that move was supposed to save 320 jobs.

But that didn’t happen. When the employee association and the state couldn’t reach an agreement, the state was forced to cut jobs, according to Vermont Administration Secretary Neale Lunderville. That process started in mid-April, he said.

“Since they refuse concessions, the only thing we can do is the layoffs,” he said.

The work force reduction summary, published in March, listed the jobs on the chopping block. The cuts could force the state to close the Northeast Regional Correctional Facility, and cut the state red meat inspection program and the Public Oversight Commission.

Those 320 jobs on the chopping block include Matt Bedia’s job as an animal health specialist in the Agency of Agriculture, according to the Vermont State Employees Association.

Bedia, who began working as a dairy inspector for the state in 2003, was sent to Iraq in April 2004 with the Vermont National Guard, according to the employee group. Bedia was wounded in a mortar attack and was sent to Walter Reed Army Medical Center for severe wounds, the association reports.

“I was hit in the back and messed up pretty good. The two guys to my left and right were killed,” Bedia told the Vermont State Employees Association. “My injuries ended up leaving me 70 percent disabled, but, thankfully I am still able to perform the service I do for the state.”

So now, Bedia, along with more than 300 others, could lose his job.

“None of us can figure out the logic about why the state is cutting these jobs,” Bedia told the employee group. “We are Vermont’s first line of defense against a horrible disease making its way into the state and impacting our animal populations or causing a lot of harm to our food and dairy products.”

But Lunderville said the layoffs are necessary to deal with the state’s serious budget gaps.

“This is a time where we hope, where we’re looking to share the sacrifice broadly,” Lunderville said.

Lunderville himself has already taken a pay cut—part of the 5 percent pay cut ordered for all the nearly 600 exempt (they aren’t paid overtime), salaried employees in the executive branch.

Vermont’s payroll has increased over time and since 2000, total payroll for the state—including benefits and overtime—increased 67 percent, according to documents from Lunderville’s office (Please see chart). In that same period, the average state employee’s salary in Vermont also increased by 36 percent, from $38,097 a year in 2000 to $50,014 a year in 2008.

Lunderville said that’s just not sustainable—particularly in tough economic times.

“These are very difficult times and we don’t want to add to the unemployment rolls but we also have to be mindful that we are public servants supported by taxpayer dollars,” Lunderville said.

—Mikel Chavers is associate editor of State News magazine.
States Use Performance Measurement to Improve Programs

Over the last decade, the use of performance measurement and management has exploded across all levels of government—from the federal government tracking social benefits to states closely monitoring child protective services to cities filling potholes. Performance measurement is now recognized as a management tool, and some experts say states are in the middle of a kind of performance measurement revolution.

A CSG Staff Report
The concept of performance measurement starts with something pretty simple: collecting, analyzing and reporting data.

But performance management is so much more than just collecting data on state services, according to Rakesh Mohan, director of Idaho’s Office of Performance Evaluations. Mohan will speak at The Council of State Governments Spring Meeting in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, where CSG will hold a special half-day session on the topic.

In fact, Idaho has a front seat to the evolution of performance measurement because the process is still in its formative stages there, according to Mohan.

Idaho’s Office of Performance Evaluations was created 15 years ago to provide information to the legislature by conducting performance evaluations of state agencies and programs. The office is a nonpartisan, independent office, working under the direction of the bipartisan Joint Legislative Oversight Committee.

But before Mohan’s group started to make changes to the performance measurement process in late 2004, performance measurement consisted of a really thick book with a whole bunch of statistics from different state agencies—from the transportation department to the department of environmental quality—that was sent around to legislators and others officials, Mohan said.

Problem was, no one actually read what was inside that big book, he said, so it did little good.

So last year, representatives from state agencies started presenting their performance data orally to the different legislative committees. The oral presentations were mandated through a law passed in 2005, Mohan said.

“The concept is the ongoing dialogue about the performance measures,” Mohan said. So it’s not just the data, he said. In Idaho through the oral presentations, the different branches of state government were communicating with each other.

“All of a sudden, they were working on problems together rather than guessing what each side is doing.”

And that’s how to use performance measurement effectively, according to Mohan.

“Performance measurement won’t solve all your problems and it may not solve any of your problems just by looking at the numbers,” Mohan said. By orally presenting the data, agency officials and legislators, for example, started to get to the real heart of the problems, determining through discussion if the right data was collected, and what’s more—if it’s even cost-efficient to measure certain things.

This way, “they will have a better relationship with the agencies as a result—now there will be a communication between the two bodies of government, and they can say, ’now I understand what the legislative intent is,'” Mohan said.

Because Mohan knows that in the public policy process, rarely is the legislative intent of a law clear to both the state legislature and the agency in charge of carrying out the law. The agency has its own interpretation of what the legislature wants and what the government wants and even the public has a different interpretation of what the new law will bring, Mohan said.

So data is often collected on what the agencies think the goals of the policies were, he said. And that’s not always helpful.

The key is to get information that’s meaningful and “makes you ask smarter questions about the issue,” Mohan said. Smarter questions lead to more targeted measures, better results and in the end, hopefully better government, he said.

“Good government is not possible without an effective accountability system,” Mohan said. “Citizens need performance reporting to hold their governments accountable.”

The goal is better service to the state’s residents.

“A key issue in performance measurement is making better decisions in improving our programs to serve the public,” said Lyle Wray, executive director of the Capital Region Council of Governments, a collaborative effort among chief elected officials of 29 Metro Hartford, Conn., municipalities.

Changing Policy for the Better

Harry Hatry of the Urban Institute identifies several tasks that can be accomplished by public managers through the use of performance measurement. The benefits include better response to demands for accountability from elected officials and the public, innovation in solving state problems, evaluations of progress, in-depth examinations of performance problems and possible solutions, and support for strategic planning, Hatry said.

Washington Gov. Christine Gregoire has long been a proponent of good governance through performance monitoring. The governor implemented the Government Management Accountability and Performance program, commonly called GMAP, which won The Council of State Governments’ State Governance Transformation Award in 2008.
Through GMAP, the governor gets regular performance-based reports from various agencies to gauge how well the state is serving its residents. The data included in these reports are used to support focused management decisions in a way that is open and accountable to the public. A number of tangible successes of the program were recently highlighted in a press release from the governor’s office, including:

- Washington’s children are safer because of major improvements to social worker response to reports of abuse. Social workers now respond to reports of child abuse within 24 hours 96.5 percent of the time, up from 65 percent in 2004. As a result, repeat instances of child abuse have declined by a third.
- The state’s effort to contain costs for prescription drugs has saved more than $85 million since 2005. The state has also contained growth in state health care costs.
- The state’s highways are safer despite more people driving. In 2007, fatalities were 1 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled—an all-time low.

Maryland’s Gov. Martin O’Malley—called the “Stat Governor” by Governing Magazine—also recognizes how continually measuring progress can lead to strategies for improvement.

As mayor of Baltimore City, O’Malley implemented a data-based approach to management that received the Innovations in Government Award from Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government. When he became governor, O’Malley brought those skills to state government and developed StateStat, which allows managers to continually evaluate performance and discuss that performance with the governor at bi-weekly meetings.

Using the information gained through the StateStat system, managers can closely monitor performance trends and develop strategies to improve performance outcomes.

O’Malley’s use of the city concept at the state level is an example other states can follow. The International City/County Managers Association pioneered performance measurement as a service to its local government members for the last 10 years. The association’s Center for Performance Measurement helps local governments improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public services through the “collection, analysis and application of performance information.”

Not a Silver Bullet

But performance measurement is not the cure to all problems, experts say; the data has to be managed properly.

Mike Lawson, director of the Center for Performance Measurement at the International City/County Managers Association, said, “performance management is the use of performance measurement in a regular and disciplined manner to continually move an organization toward achieving an organization’s mission and strategic objectives as well as to foster an organizational culture of continuous improvement and excellence.”

Lawson said the cities and counties that participate in the Center for Performance Management almost always have an appointed city manager or county administrator. Those leaders keep elected officials focused on policy outcomes and measures of those outcomes.

“That keeps the elected policy leaders for the community focused on the right goals for residents and local businesses—and makes it clear for management that they need to deliver on those goals, although the mix of inputs and outputs may change not only from year-to-year, but also from month-to-month or even week-to-week,” Lawson said.

He said a good performance measurement system involves everyone in the organization. For cities and counties—and for states as well—that means elected officials along with public employees.

“It is elected officials that determine the clarity of mission and the clear objectives,” Lawson said. “If performance measurement doesn’t include elected officials, then all of the best measurement systems mean nothing if operated outside the context of agreed-upon goals and objectives.”

And, Mohan said, success of the program depends on the process being simple, understandable, accessible and affordable.

While data are important, Lawson said it should inform decisions, not drive them.

“Legislative debates that return to the issue of objectives for all appropriate stakeholders—and then permit data to inform how well programs, activities, regulations—or taking no action—best
serves those goals. A properly framed question like, ‘what are we trying to achieve here?’ is almost always appropriate when discussing the relevance and importance of data to a policy issue.

Mohan would agree. “Performance measurement is inherently a political process,” he said. “You cannot take the politics out of the public policy process; therefore performance measurement should not be used to make the policy process all empirical, based on data and statistics.”

He stressed the importance of involving all policymakers and stakeholders, defining program success and agreeing on the cost of measuring success.

“With increased demand for accountability, I believe performance measurement is here to stay,” he said. “It is not a temporary fad that some folks thought would soon go away. If we connect performance measurement with performance auditing/evaluation, we will get the most value for every dollar we spend on performance measurement.”

—Mikel Chavers, associate editor of State News magazine, contributed to this report..

Performance Measurement in Action

Just One Example: Highway Fatality Rates

One commonly recognized use of performance measurement is the tracking of transportation-related outcomes—particularly in the area of highway safety. An example is highway fatalities due to traffic crashes. The accurate measurement of traffic fatalities provides the federal government and states with historical and comparative information that can help policymakers better understand how to craft strategies designed to reduce the number of people killed on U.S. highways. The U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Safety Administration Fatality Analysis Reporting System tracks highway fatalities.

To provide the context necessary to make this information meaningful, the data is displayed as fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. Adding this contextual element of vehicle miles traveled makes it easier to compare fatalities across states because the number of fatalities is usually highly related to the number of vehicles on the road. For example, a state with relatively fewer cars on the road will likely have fewer fatalities. It would be difficult to compare a heavily populated state with a large number of drivers and vehicles on the road—and thus, a larger number of fatalities—to a more sparsely populated state with a fewer number of drivers and vehicles. Without the contextual element of vehicle miles traveled, it would appear that the more sparsely populated state is doing much better at reducing fatalities, which isn’t accurate. Additional contextual elements, such as the type of vehicles involved in fatalities (large trucks, motorcycles, etc.) would be even more beneficial in comparing this outcome across states.

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Safety Administration Fatality Analysis Reporting System
State Programs Connect with Communities to Help HIV/AIDS Patients Stay Productive and to Prevent HIV Transmission

Today 1 million people have AIDS or are infected with HIV. Although it used to be a death sentence, people infected with HIV/AIDS are living longer. And with the help of innovative state programs, many are able to live productive lives.

By Ann Kelly and Jeremy Williams
Gina Brown has a chronic disease that requires continuous medical treatment. She’s been infected with HIV since 1994.

Because drug treatments weren’t available then to prevent HIV from progressing to AIDS, Brown—who was diagnosed with HIV during a prenatal visit—was told she would die from the disease. Fifteen years later, Brown works for the NO/AIDS Task Force in New Orleans, has a healthy teenage daughter, and advocates that women should be tested for HIV and know their status.

She’s living with HIV.

“We all start out thinking HIV is a death sentence, but it’s a chronic disease now.” Brown says in her video on the Southern AIDS Living Quilt Web site. She’s one of 30 women who share their stories on the site, an effort among several Southern states to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS and to encourage testing for the disease. The effort is called a living quilt because women living with the disease continuously add their stories, helping the site grow organically.

“The stories help to put a face on what AIDS looks like—and it looks like everybody,” said Evelyn Foust, AIDS and STD director at the North Carolina Division of Public Health and co-chair of the Southern AIDS Coalition. She helped develop the AIDS Living Quilt Web site.

“The women who tell their stories on the Living Quilt are heroes because they are going public in the face of the stigma that still exists, in order to motivate women to take charge of their own health,” Foust said.

Knowledge is a key in battling the disease. Since the advent of antiretroviral drug therapy in the 1990s, HIV/AIDS infections are no longer a death sentence. HIV patients who are diagnosed early and receive treatment are living longer, more productive lives.

For that and other reasons, states across the country are searching for ways to raise awareness of HIV, reduce the associated stigma and encourage people to know their HIV status through testing. State health and Medicaid officials are working with people living with HIV/AIDS, community advocates and faith-based organizations to halt the spread of HIV.

Through these efforts, states are helping communities sponsor testing, providing information to individuals about how to avoid infections, getting those who are infected in treatment, and coordinating care for people who have HIV/AIDS.

An estimated 1 million people in the U.S. are infected with HIV or have AIDS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But one in five of those with HIV/AIDS don’t know they have it and are likely to give it to others. Each year 56,000 Americans are infected with HIV that could have been prevented, according to CDC’s most recent estimates.

Twelve states have AIDS case rates higher than the national rate of 12.5 per 100,000 people. Rates are also highest in metropolitan areas, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation, and Washington, D.C., reported in March that the severe epidemic of HIV/AIDS has infected at least 3 percent of the District’s residents.

The South has the highest estimated number of people living with AIDS.

And when it comes to the people affected by the disease, of all the HIV/AIDS racial/ethnic disparities, African-Americans are the hardest hit. (See page 30)

Raising HIV Awareness and Encouraging Testing

The CDC recommends routine HIV testing in all medical care settings for patients ages 13 to 64, and at least once a year for those at high risk of infection. But the recommendations say patients should have the choice to opt out of testing, and a majority of state laws adhere to that recommendation, according to a recent Annals of Internal Medicine report.

North Carolina acted on those recommendations and made HIV testing part of routine medical care in 2007. Since then, HIV testing at the state health department clinics has more than doubled, according to Foust. Legislators supported new funding for the expanded testing, and the efforts have paid off, she said.

“Together with increased federal funding, we have done a phenomenal job of getting more people tested and getting more patients treated who are in the early stages of HIV,” she said. “We are beginning to see progress in reduced death rates from AIDS, and now is not the time to reduce funding for these important programs.”

North Carolina isn’t alone in reaching out to communities to identify and counsel those infected with HIV. State programs, all with CDC-funded positions, are referring HIV positive patients to treatment programs and educating them on how changing risky behavior can help avoid infecting others. And since HIV patients are living longer, programs also reinforce prevention education, motivate patients to take their medication for the rest of their lives, and refer them to sources of care and services as their medical, psychological and other needs change.

Even for those who are not infected with the disease, state prevention efforts focus on teaching behaviors to protect people from becoming infected and emphasizing periodic re-testing for HIV.

Mississippi, for example, has seen a dramatic increase in HIV infections in recent years. So the state’s Department of Health STD/HIV Office is working to reach people in nontraditional ways, said spokesperson Juania Davis. She said there is a greater need for more “culturally sensitive programs and activities that bring about awareness in order to make more people more aware, particularly those most susceptible to infection.”
Mississippi is targeting young people through teen summits and addressing cultural barriers that hinder education, awareness and testing, Davis said. “The perception of the community is so important when addressing this issue,” she said.

State health departments have found willing partners in faith-based organizations on many health issues, and particularly on preventing HIV/AIDS. The Rev. J. Lee Hill, an associate pastor at The Riverside Church in Manhattan who helps coordinate HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention programs for youth in New York City, said HIV/AIDS “is no longer consigned to a particular group or population.”

Hill believes it is imperative that everyone from government officials to everyday citizens participate in this important fight. “It’s an issue that affects us all,” he said.

And that’s a reason behind the Southern AIDS Living Quilt Web site, launched last October. The stories emphasize that ordinary women, especially women of color, can have HIV and still live normal lives. In addition, health professionals, advocates and clergy deliver messages that many women can have HIV and not be aware of their status, and all need to be tested and take precautions against HIV infection.

“The reason we are targeting women in the South is that when you look at new AIDS cases, they represent the biggest disparities in the South, and new AIDS cases are still over-represented in the South,” said Foust.

Tanya Bass, an HIV/AIDS health educator in North Carolina, has used the Living Quilt stories as a teaching tool in her work with college students.

“The students said the stories made HIV infection real for them,” Bass said. “By presenting the information in the way students are accustomed to learning, with a real person telling their story, they learned about the impact of HIV in our community much better than they would from reading a report.”

When the Southern AIDS Living Quilt was launched, state health department events focused on HIV/AIDS in Southern states, particularly how the disease affects women. In Florida, which ranks third behind New York and California in the number of AIDS cases since the beginning of the epidemic, the Living Quilt was presented at the University of Miami medical school where Florida women told their stories publicly, some in Spanish.

Tom Liberti, the HIV/AIDS bureau chief in the Florida Department of Health and one of the founders of the Southern AIDS Coalition and the Living Quilt, said the presentation was important in addressing the problem. “It is critical that we turn the tide on the 56,000 new HIV infections annually. These women’s stories will motivate women to be tested and others to stay on their medica-
Florida is making progress in controlling HIV infections. The state in 2007 saw a 13 percent decline in the number of AIDS deaths, consistent across all groups including African-Americans, he said.

“We continue to build on existing relationships with church and other community leaders to include AIDS prevention activities in their work,” Liberti said. “Prevention grant funding is being targeted to specific communities such as African-American women, Haitian communities or men who have sex with men. Finally, expanded testing programs funded by the CDC African-American initiative reached over 370,000 people in Florida for 2008, representing the largest publicly funded testing program in the United States.”

Medicaid Covers Treatment and Prevention

Those who test positive for HIV/AIDS need treatment, experts say. States help provide some of that treatment. Medicaid is the largest health insurance coverage program for people with HIV in the United States. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, total Medicaid spending for HIV reached $7.5 billion in the 2008 fiscal year, with states providing $3.4 billion of that. Although Medicaid HIV costs have increased, they represent less than 2 percent of all Medicaid spending, according to Kaiser.

Most HIV/AIDS patients qualify for Medicaid because they are low-income, disabled and receiving Supplemental Security Income benefits, according to Kaiser. A few states have also implemented federal Medicaid waivers to cover low-income people with HIV before they become disabled. Coverage of HIV/AIDS medications may be available through Medicare Part D for dually eligible disabled Medicaid recipients, and also through AIDS Drug Assistance Programs in all states, which is supported by a combination of federal and state funding.

For state Medicaid programs, patients living longer with HIV/AIDS result in increased costs for long-term antiretroviral drug therapy medical treatment. A 2006 Cornell University Medical School study reported in Medical Care, the journal of the American Public Health Association, estimated that lifetime medical costs for HIV exceed $600,000.

But, early treatment with antiretroviral drug therapy can delay the onset of AIDS with its debilitating effects that often cause people to leave the work force. A recent CDC study, completed in collaboration with Emory University’s Center for AIDS Research and Georgia State University, found that productivity losses were up to five times higher than the direct costs of medical care for people with HIV/AIDS. According to the authors, the additional years of productivity in those receiving antiretroviral drug therapies far outweigh the additional costs of treatment.

1 Million With HIV/AIDS and Counting

More than 1 million people in the U.S. have HIV/AIDS, and about 56,000 Americans are infected with HIV each year; according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But, one in five is not aware of their disease and likely to spread it to others.

More than half of the newly infected are men who have sex with men (including all racial and ethnic groups).

Although African-Americans made up only 12 percent of the U.S. population, nearly half of all people living with HIV/AIDS were African-American in 2007.

A similar disparity exists for Hispanics and Latinos. With only 15 percent of the population from these groups, 18 percent of all people living with HIV/AIDS are Hispanic or Latino.

Disparities are most pronounced among women. The new HIV infection rate in African-American women is 15 times that of white women, and the rate among Hispanic women is four times the rate in white women.

Among men, new HIV infection rates in African-Americans are six times those of whites, and Hispanic men are infected twice as often as whites. Young African-American men have experienced the highest increases in HIV infection rates in recent years.

Risky Behaviors Lead to Infection

Men living with HIV/AIDS most often contracted the disease through male-to-male sexual contact. As for women, nearly three-fourths of those with HIV/AIDS were infected through high-risk heterosexual contact.

Sixteen percent of all men and 26 percent of all women with HIV contracted the virus through injection drug use and sharing dirty needles, and fewer cases involve transmission between mother and child before or during childbirth or through breastfeeding.

HIV/AIDS in the South

A nearly 26 percent increase in HIV/AIDS cases has been reported in the South since 1996, the greatest increase of any region.

Although only 36 percent of the nation’s population lives in the South, the region accounted for approximately one-half of all AIDS deaths in 2005, and more than one-half of all Americans living with HIV live in the South.

More than one-half of African-Americans living with AIDS and 58 percent of new AIDS cases reported in 2006 among African-Americans occurred in the South.

Over the past 15 years, the greatest increases of HIV for Hispanics or Latinos have been in rural areas of the South.

Lack of increased federal funding for the region despite increased diagnoses and generally underfunded health care throughout the region is becoming increasingly problematic. According to the Southern AIDS Coalition, the South had the highest number of people living with AIDS in 2005 (approximately 170,000), but it ranks last in per-person spending ($6,565/person—$1,082 in CDC HIV/AIDS funding and $4,548 in Ryan White HIV/AIDS funding).

Southern states comprise approximately 65 percent of all AIDS cases among rural populations in the U.S., according to the Southern AIDS Coalition. This is particularly significant because problems with screening and treatment for HIV/AIDS are exacerbated in rural areas.

Higher rates of poverty and unemployment compared to the rest of the country entail greater levels of homelessness, another major factor affecting the success of treatment and prevention programs.

The highest rates of uninsured and underinsured residents in the country cause limited access to advanced treatments such as antiretroviral drug therapy, drastically reducing their life expectancy and, in turn, the years of productivity that they would otherwise contribute to the work force.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Southern AIDS Coalition
All attendees will enjoy the Opening Night Reception at the National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial. Officially designated by Congress as the National World War I Museum, the facility is the only American museum solely dedicated to preserving the objects, history and personal experiences of a war whose impact still echoes in our world today.

Spouses, guests and youth will have special day trips designed especially for them. They can enjoy options such as:

- A tour of Kansas’ capital city—View the beautiful Kansas Capitol building, enjoy lunch at the Governor’s Mansion, and visit the Brown v. Board of Education site.
- A trip to the Deanna Rose Farmstead—Children will enjoy a true farm experience, including gathering eggs and milking cows!
- A tour of the Arboretum and Botanical Gardens—Monet Garden—Learn how to adapt the Monet concept of plants, themes and colors to your personal gardens.

To register or for more information, go to the CSG Midwest Web site—www.csgmidwest.org—or call The Council of State Governments’ Midwestern Office at (630) 925-1922.

SPEAKER HIGHLIGHTS

Keynote Address: Living the Dream
Robert Ballard, oceanographer

Ballard will speak about his underwater adventures, including his discovery of the Titanic wreckage, as well as his efforts to spark young people’s interest in math, science and technology.

Special Focus: Professional Development
David Landis, negotiations expert
Bill Graham, communications specialist

Tuesday afternoon’s professional development sessions will focus on strategies for building consensus and improving communications skills.

Elections and the American Presidency
Douglas Brinkley, historian

Brinkley, an award-winning author, will offer his insights on how elections have shaped our nation and its highest office.

Reaching for the Stars
Sam Gemar, former NASA astronaut

Gemar has traveled 10 million miles in space and has flown three missions—on space shuttles Atlantis, Columbia and Discovery.
If states are to build robust solar markets, they must act to address the real barriers such as high up-front costs, lack of easy financing, unfriendly permitting requirements and lack of installer channels. States can learn from leading solar states like California, New Jersey, New York, Colorado and Massachusetts.

By Mark Sinclair

Read the Report
States across the country are taking a leadership role in the support of solar photovoltaic energy technologies, recognizing the energy, environmental and economic value of solar-generated electricity. In fact, the United States’ 2007 solar photovoltaic growth rate of more than 45 percent was among the highest in the world, due in large part to the support from state solar programs.

Recent results from the leading state solar programs are impressive.

For example, the California Solar Initiative has an ambitious goal of installing 3,000 megawatts of new grid-connected solar panels in the next 10 years. And the California program is off to an impressive start: Twice as many megawatts of solar power were installed in 2008 as in 2007, and more than 440 megawatts of distributed solar photovoltaic systems are now in place across the state.

On the east coast, New Jersey’s Clean Energy Program leads the way, having supported more than 3,500 solar photovoltaic systems through 2008, with an overall goal of installing 2,300 megawatts of solar by 2021.

New Jersey and California are not alone in their solar commitment. States like Maryland, Massachusetts, New York and Colorado also have established bold solar programs.

To examine these state solar efforts, Clean Energy Group recently released a report, “Mainstreaming Solar Electricity: Strategies for States to Build Local Markets,” which provides a blueprint of strategies states can pursue to effectively mainstream solar electricity, based on the real-time experience of the major state solar programs. The report recommends that states serious about solar technology development focus their attention on certain challenges and interventions.

**High Upfront Costs**

The major obstacles to solar technology growth are the significant upfront costs of a photovoltaic system and restrictive codes and regulations. Photovoltaic system costs include both hardware—modules and inverters—and non-hardware, such as marketing, sales, local transportation, hiring and training, insurance, permitting, installation and inspection.

Hardware costs generally are set by the market, driven by technological innovation and other factors out of the control of state solar programs. But what states can control are non-hardware costs, which are equal to 50 percent or more of the total system price.

To remove regulatory hurdles and provide the incentives needed to spur demand and build local markets, an effective state solar program should:
- **Provide sustained financial support for projects.** Recognize that photovoltaic markets cannot function successfully in the near future without predictable, long-term government incentives and policy support.
- **Establish photovoltaic-friendly laws and regulations.** Pursue a comprehensive public policy agenda that includes expanded net metering and simplified interconnection standards. States can also modify their Renewable Portfolio Standard policies to require that a certain share of renewable generation must come from solar photovoltaics. This is sometimes referred to as a “solar set-aside.”
- **Ensure sensible program design.** Design solar incentive programs to avoid onerous program administrative requirements that can drive up installer costs in the name of consumer protection, such as expensive local permitting fees and duplicative inspection requirements.
- **Stimulate long-term financing.** Facilitate creation of long-term, favorable solar financing programs through partnerships with area banks or innovative public financing tools such as those in Berkeley, Calif., which tie loan repayment to property taxes.
- **Promote photovoltaic-friendly building codes.** Promote standard building codes and permitting requirements that specifically and fairly address the characteristics and requirements of photovoltaic systems.
- **Walk the talk.** Encourage a formal state government commitment to installing photovoltaics on public buildings.
- **Support training.** Advance work force development by supporting installer training and certification programs to meet the demand for trained technicians.
- **Promote education and marketing.** Educate consumers and private lending institutions about the benefits of photovoltaic technologies and pursue cooperative strategies to grow photovoltaic markets.

Reflecting these key ingredients, several best practices are emerging as key to ensuring state solar program effectiveness.

States such as California are offering consistent, stable, long-term state financial incentives—a best practice. Sustained, long-term state solar incentive programs enable more significant photovoltaic cost reductions by attracting suppliers and installers and creating a competitive local market. The California Solar Initiative was designed to create a mature market. The initiative is a 10-year, $3.3 billion program with rebate levels reduced each year by approximately 10 percent to reflect declining prices and a more “transformed” market for solar PV.

This approach allows California to set the maximum cost of the program; if the initial subsidy is too high, the payment levels are self-correcting. A gradually declining incentive is appropriate for an industry with the potential for high cost-reductions and rapid growth.

Whatever funds are made available for solar incentives, it is critical for states to commit these resources to ensure long-term continuity of the incentive program—for at least five to 10 years. Long-term support allows a local solar technology infrastructure to develop and stabilize, without boom and bust cycles.

Another best practice to building an effective solar program is for a state to establish specific installed capacity goals for photovoltaic. State policymakers should consider publicly committing to an installed megawatt solar capacity goal. Doing so creates clear market expectations, strengthens investor confidence and provides predictability for future program budgeting and continuity.

A stronger way of doing this is to create a solar set-aside in a renewable portfolio standard—another best practice. Renewable portfolio standards require utilities to supply a specific percentage of electricity from renewable resources. When it comes to solar, a renewable portfolio standard can expand state solar markets and states are increasingly establishing a solar share or set-aside—a requirement that some portion of the standard come from solar resources. This mechanism allows solar technologies to compete against less costly renewable technologies, such as wind and landfill gas.

Another best practice is to adopt solar-friendly interconnection and net metering rules. Successful solar states have crafted and
adopted simplified interconnection standards and net metering policies to promote the broader deployment of customer-sited solar systems. Effective interconnection standards enable customers to connect solar installations to the utility grid without undue delay and expense. Net metering laws allow customers to send excess on-site solar generation back to the grid and receive a payment for it.

State solar programs should establish simple program requirements, which make it easy for the public to understand and access incentives. States should make sure electronic applications and tracking systems are user-friendly and should process funding decisions and notifications in rapid turnarounds.

States should offer long-term project financing options to overcome initial cost barriers. While consumer, home equity and home improvement loans can be used to finance photovoltaic installations, the paybacks on photovoltaic systems generally fall well outside the practical loan term for such instruments. In response, some states have established special solar loan programs, featuring low-interest rates and simple application requirements. To be effective, these loans should have a low interest rate, below that on a 30-year home mortgage, and require no debt service coverage requirements or liens on property (other than the solar system being financed).

Large solar installations on commercial buildings are increasingly owned by third parties—specialized firms that invest in these systems to capture federal tax benefits and sell the power back to the building owner or occupant under long-term agreements. This model creates a sound business case for the installation of solar photovoltaic systems on buildings without the building owner needing either the technical knowledge nor upfront capital to install the system.

Yet another best practice is favorable tax treatment of solar. A state’s sales and property tax policies are important tools that can either encourage or discourage solar technologies. In particular, sales taxes on equipment and property taxes can be significant for solar energy technologies because these systems are capital intensive. To encourage solar markets, many states exempt photovoltaic systems from sales tax or from increasing the assessed valuation of buildings.

States such as Oregon, New York and Connecticut are encouraging solar-friendly construction policies and practices. Many states seek to encourage high-value applications for which photovoltaic technology is particularly well-suited and more cost-effective, such as in public buildings, schools and new home construction. Such solar applications help to educate officials and the public about the benefits of the technology, provide high visibility and offer economies of scale, reducing solar costs due to the larger size of most public buildings.

States can demonstrate their confidence in solar technology by adopting policies that require the inclusion of photovoltaic systems as appropriate for all publicly funded building projects. The additional expense for a photovoltaic system installation will often be very small in the context of a project’s total design and construction cost. And because these buildings will likely be used for a public purpose for the system’s life, a life cycle analysis of costs and savings should justify the additional expense.

For example, Oregon requires installation of solar energy systems on public buildings in an amount determined by the total building cost: Solar technology investment must amount to at least 1.5 percent of the total contract price. The policy also applies to major renovation projects if the cost of the renovation exceeds 50 percent of the total value of the building.

Leading solar states also often provide support for renewable energy installations in public school construction projects. These projects provide high demonstration value and an important teaching tool. New York has been a leader in targeting “Solar on Schools” through the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority’s School Power Naturally program. Connecticut also has a noteworthy High Performance Schools program.

Lastly, it’s a best practice to support installer training. A qualified work force is necessary to meet growing solar demand. An ample supply of installers and installation companies creates competition that drives prices down and quality up. To support this work force development, many states offer training to installers, local code officials and inspectors. Some states also target builders and architects.

New York is a leader in the integration of photovoltaic courses and certifications in secondary school and state college curriculum. Its energy authority provides funding to technical schools, colleges, and continuing education programs to develop and implement nationally accredited solar installer training programs.

—Mark Sinclair is vice president of Clean Energy Group.
Asthma is the fourth most common reason for pediatric physician office visits, one of the leading causes of school absenteeism, and the third most common reason for pediatric hospitalizations, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. That means that on the average 15-member youth sports team, at least one player will have asthma, and it may be undiagnosed.

That’s why in recognition of Asthma Awareness Month in May, the National Lieutenant Governors Association set a goal of providing complimentary asthma training to 6,000 coaches in seven participating states by July 4. For example, Missouri Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder is working with St. Louis Rams linebacker Chris Draft and Maryland Lt. Gov. Anthony Brown with Baltimore Ravens rookie Haruki Nakamura to educate coaches, athletic trainers, physical education teachers and adults who work with children about asthma.

People with asthma generally may participate in various physical activities, but the athletes, coaches, children and instructors should be aware of asthma, its symptoms and management. NLGA is promoting a complimentary 30-minute training video, “Winning with Asthma.” Any person can access the special Web site training, but people in the seven participating states who watch the video can receive a coach’s clipboard, letter of completion and an asthma desk reference booklet.

Legislators are invited to join their lieutenant governor in promoting this program in Arkansas, Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, Oklahoma and Tennessee. All New York legislators are invited to promote this program to constituents, as sponsored by the New York Department of Health and NLGA.

Simply let instructors and coaches in your community know they may log on to www.winningwithasthma.org to complete the 30-minute training. The training strives to equip instructors and coaches with potentially life-saving information for their teams and students, as well as teach them how to identify asthma in an athlete who may not realize they suffer from the illness. “Winning with Asthma” originated from the Departments of Health in Minnesota and Utah.

NLGA is an affiliate of The Council of State Governments.

The nation’s seconds-in-command met in Washington, D.C., in March to address a range of pressing issues including discussion of the economy, education and the National Guard, and veterans. Moody’s economy.com economist Mark Zandi discussed the need for leaders to examine the permanent societal changes that will occur as a result of the recession. He said state leaders should protect assets central to the state and should plan now for the new realities that will emerge after the recession. He noted a state’s core assets vary from state to state and region to region.

Twenty-three members of the National Lieutenant Governors Association attended the meeting and approved seven resolutions. The resolutions were in support of National Guard facilities in support of improved mental health support for veterans, in support of both pre-kindergarten and STEM education, and in support of public diplomacy and an economic development dialogue with Mexico. The resolutions may be viewed at www.nlga.us.

NLGA is an affiliate of The Council of State Governments.
Organized Crime Tops Border Issues List at 19th Binational Forum

The Merida Initiative and efforts to combat organized crime headlined the discussion March 5–6, as lawmakers from the U.S.—Mexico border region convened in Tampico, Tamaulipas, for the 19th Border Legislative Conference.

Participating border state legislators, as well as members of Mexico’s federal Congress, openly discussed the Merida Initiative as well as other issues affecting both countries including agriculture, the environment and the effects of the current economic crisis on the border region.

Border legislators expressed support of the efforts by both federal governments to combat organized crime and to promote security along the border as part of the Merida Initiative. Moreover, legislators expressed the need for greater coordination among federal, state and local law enforcement entities.

Participants adopted the recommendations by the Border Legislative Conference Agriculture Work Group. The recommendations include seeking greater harmonization of agriculture policies aimed at promoting long-term sustainability and requesting additional state resources to combat cattle fever ticks.

On the issue of border environment, lawmakers agreed to continue working toward the development of state regulations aimed at better managing waste tires and eliminating tire piles. The Tamaulipas delegation showcased a new tire law that will be used as a model for other border states.

Members also expressed the need for greater collaboration among state and federal governments on the development of infrastructure programs to make efficient use of limited resources. For more information about the 19th Border Legislative Conference, please visit the Web site at www.borderlegislators.org.

BLC Enhances Interbranch Cooperation along the Border

The Border Legislative Conference joined forces with the Environment Work Table of the Border Governors Conference in to convene the 10 State Environmental Retreat in San Francisco.

While the Border Legislative Conference has previously worked with the different work tables of the Border Governors Conference, this was the first time the two entities combined efforts to convene a joint meeting aimed at enhancing state legislative-executive branch cooperation.

The meeting provided the opportunity for members of the Border Legislative Conference to openly discuss and exchange ideas with the environmental secretaries from the 10 border states. Border legislators and environmental secretaries focused on developing better mechanisms to manage waste tires and improve air quality along the border. Both issues are within the regulatory and lawmaking jurisdictions of border states.

Representatives from Border Governors Conference expressed interest in replicating and using this kind of executive-legislative branch cooperation as a model for other work tables, such as economic development, security and transportation.

Interbranch Interaction Important for State Courts

Identifying the ways the three branches of government can cooperate in assuring state courts meet the challenges in serving the public is the focus of the American Bar Association’s Commission on Fair and Impartial State Courts. The commission will hold a summit on the subject May 7–9 in Charlotte, N.C.

And an interbranch mission is something the ABA and The Council of State Governments share. The May summit aims to attract representatives from all three branches of state government from every state, according to an ABA press release.

Retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor will keynote the summit and is the honorary chair of the Commission on Fair and Impartial State Courts.

“Courts are the ultimate shield of our citizenry when special interests pull society or government in one direction or another,” H. Thomas Wells Jr., president of the American Bar Association president, said in a press release. “Executive and legislative branches are charged with leadership and policymaking, but it is the courts which ensure that individuals do not fall victim to the whims of the majority, that fundamental rights are preserved as essential to the common good.”

For more information on the upcoming summit, visit www.abanet.org.
Guide Focuses on Community Corrections’ Responses to People with Mental Illnesses

The Justice Center recently published a guide that reviews the body of research on community corrections supervision for people with mental illnesses and distills the findings to help policymakers and practitioners develop effective interventions. “Improving Outcomes for People with Mental Illnesses under Community Corrections Supervision: A Guide to Research-Informed Policy and Practice” explores the extent to which people with mental illnesses become involved in the community corrections system and why traditional supervision and treatment strategies are not generally effective. It summarizes evidence-based and promising programs, strategies and techniques to improve results for the justice system and for people with mental illnesses.

“More than 1.5 million people released from jail each year have serious mental illnesses and many will require special supervision strategies and treatments to safely and successfully rejoin their communities,” said Assemblywoman Sheila Leslie, the specialty courts coordinator of Nevada’s Second Judicial District and board member of the Justice Center. “State lawmakers in Nevada, as is the case everywhere, are concerned about the costs and public safety issues associated with high probation and parole revocation rates among people with mental illnesses. In particular, we need to improve how this population is supervised, and this report highlights the research we should use to inform state policy and funding decisions.”

The guide also discusses how the research can help shape agency operations, program design and implementation decisions. Research questions that should be investigated further to expand the evidence base are also identified.

Please visit www.consensusproject.org/downloads/community.corrections.research.guide.pdf to download a free copy of the report.

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Platinum Level
- AT&T

Gold Level
- Altria Client Services, Inc.
- Reynolds American
- State Government Affairs Council (SGAC)

Silver Level
- Eli Lilly and Company
- GlaxoSmithKline
- Kraft Foods Global, Inc.
- National Beer Wholesalers Association

Bronze Level
- AstraZeneca
- Bayer Healthcare
- Intuit
- Takeda Pharmaceuticals North America, Inc.

Quartz Level
- Comcast
- Endo Pharmaceuticals
- HCA – Hospital Corporation of America
- National Education Association
- The Procter & Gamble Company
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.

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<th>May 2009</th>
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<tr>
<td>May 3–6</td>
<td>National Association of State Technology Directors (NASTD) Midwestern Region Seminar—Madison, WI—The Madison Concourse Hotel. Contact Pamela Johnson at (859) 244-8184 or <a href="mailto:jjruble@csg.org">jjruble@csg.org</a>. Visit <a href="http://www.nastd.org">www.nastd.org</a>.</td>
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<td>May 12–15</td>
<td>National Association of State Treasurers (NAST) Treasury Management Conference &amp; Exposition—Atlanta, GA—Marriott Marquis Hotel. Contact Adnée Hamilton at (859) 244-8174 or <a href="mailto:ahamilton@csg.org">ahamilton@csg.org</a>.</td>
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<td>May 16–18</td>
<td>CSG 2009 Spring Conference—Coeur d’Alene, ID. Contact registration at (800) 800-1910 or <a href="mailto:registration@csg.org">registration@csg.org</a>.</td>
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<td>June 2009</td>
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<td>June 6–9</td>
<td>National Association of State Technology Directors (NASTD) Western Region Seminar—Whitefish, MT—Grouse Mountain Lodge. Contact Pamela Johnson at (859) 244-8184 or <a href="mailto:jjruble@csg.org">jjruble@csg.org</a>. Visit <a href="http://www.nastd.org">www.nastd.org</a>.</td>
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<td>June 13–17</td>
<td>National Association of State Chief Administrators (NACSA) &amp; National Association of State Facilities Administrators (NASFA) National Conference &amp; Resource Expo—Orlando, FL—International Plaza Hotel. Contact Marcia Stone at (859) 244-8181 or <a href="mailto:mstone@csg.org">mstone@csg.org</a>.</td>
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<td>June 27–July 1</td>
<td>National Association of State Technology Directors (NASTD) Southern Region Summer Seminar—Louisville, KY—The Brown Hotel. Contact Pamela Johnson at (859) 244-8184 or <a href="mailto:jjruble@csg.org">jjruble@csg.org</a>. Visit <a href="http://www.nastd.org">www.nastd.org</a>.</td>
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<td>July 2009</td>
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<td>July 10–14</td>
<td>CSG/Midwestern Legislative Conference—15th Annual Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development (BILLD)—Madison, WI—Huno Center of Executive Education—Contact Laura Tomaka at (630) 925-1922 or <a href="mailto:ltomaka@csg.org">ltomaka@csg.org</a>.</td>
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<td>July 11–15</td>
<td>National Association of State Personnel Executives Annual Meeting—Park City, UT—Park City Marriott. Contact Jessica Ruble at (859) 244-8179 or <a href="mailto:jruble@csg.org">jruble@csg.org</a>.</td>
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<td>August 2009</td>
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<td>Aug. 2–5</td>
<td>CSG/ERC Annual Meeting—Burlington, VT—The Hilton Burlington Hotel. Private sector contact is Michelle Shiwamber at (854) 383-5728 or <a href="mailto:mshiwamber@csg.org">mshiwamber@csg.org</a>. Public sector contact is Cynthia Vallee at (859) 383-5726 or <a href="mailto:cvallee@csg.org">cvallee@csg.org</a>.</td>
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<td>Aug. 5–8</td>
<td>CSG/WEST Western Legislative Academy—Colorado Springs, CO. Contact Mary Lou Cooper or Cheryl Duvauchelle at (916) 553-4423 or <a href="mailto:csgw@csg.org">csgw@csg.org</a>.</td>
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<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>. Visit <a href="http://www.csgmidwest.org">www.csgmidwest.org</a> for more information.</td>
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<td>Aug. 9–12</td>
<td>National Association of State Technology Directors (NASTD) 32nd Annual Conference &amp; Technology Showcase—Montgomery, AL—Renaissance Montgomery Hotel &amp; Spa at the Convention Center. Contact Pamela Johnson at (859) 244-8184 or <a href="mailto:jjruble@csg.org">jjruble@csg.org</a>. Visit <a href="http://www.nastd.org">www.nastd.org</a>.</td>
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<td>Aug. 15–19</td>
<td>CSG/Southern Legislative Conference—63rd Annual Meeting—Winston-Salem, NC. Contact Elizabeth Lewis at (404) 633-1866 or visit <a href="http://www.sclstate.org">www.sclstate.org</a> for additional information.</td>
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<td>Aug. 21–24</td>
<td>Southern Governors’ Association (SGA) 75th Annual Meeting—Williamsburg, VA. Contact Liz Purdy Porter at (202) 624-5897 or <a href="mailto:sgawgsa@sga.org">sgawgsa@sga.org</a>.</td>
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<td>Aug. 23–26</td>
<td>CSG/American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) 34th Annual Training Institute—Anaheim, CA—Hilton Anaheim. Contact registration at (859) 244-8204 or <a href="mailto:kcobuluis@csg.org">kcobuluis@csg.org</a>. Visit <a href="http://www.appa-net.org">www.appa-net.org</a>.</td>
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<td>August 2010</td>
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<td>Aug. 8–11</td>
<td>CSG/Midwestern Legislative Conference—65th Annual Meeting—Toronto, ON, Canada. Contact Cindy Andrews at (630) 925-1922 or <a href="mailto:candrews@csg.org">candrews@csg.org</a>. Visit <a href="http://www.csgmidwest.org">http://www.csgmidwest.org</a> for more information.</td>
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<td>Aug. 15–18</td>
<td>CSG/American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) 35th Annual Training Institute—Washington, D.C.—Hilton Washington. Contact Kris Chappell at (859) 244-8204 or <a href="mailto:kcobuluis@csg.org">kcobuluis@csg.org</a>.</td>
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<td>Aug. 21–26</td>
<td>2010 Henry Toll Fellows Leadership Conference—Lexington, KY—Hyatt Downtown. Contact Krista Rinehart at (859) 244-8249 or <a href="mailto:krinehart@csg.org">krinehart@csg.org</a>.</td>
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**Conference Calendar**

**September 2009**
- Sept. 12–17: 2009 Henry Toll Fellows Leadership Conference—Lexington, KY—Hyatt Downtown. Contact Krista Rinehart at (859) 244-8249 or krinehart@csg.org.

**October 2009**
- Oct. 5–8: CSG/WEST Annual Meeting—Santa Fe, NM. Contact Cheryl Duvauchelle or Lolita Urubita at (916) 553-4423 or csgw@csg.org.

**November 2009**
- Nov. 2–9: Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision (ICOS) Annual Business Meeting—Reno, NV—Grand Sierra Hotel. Contact Barno Saturday at (859) 244-8235 or bsaturday@interstatecompactor.org.
- Nov. 12–15: CSG 2009 Annual Conference—Las Quinta, CA. 800-800-1910 or registration@csg.org.
- Nov. 29–Dec.1: National Association of State Treasurers (NAST) Issues Conference—New York, NY—The Barclay InterContinental Hotel. Contact Adnée Hamilton at (859) 244-8174 or ahamilton@csg.org.

**January 2010**
- Jan. 31–Feb. 3: CSG/American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) Winter Training Institute—Austin, TX—Hilton Austin. Contact Kris Chappell at (859) 244-8204 or kcobuluis@csg.org.

**March 2010**

**July 2010**
- July 31–Aug. 4: CSG/Southern Legislative Conference—64th Annual Meeting—Charleston, SC. Contact Elizabeth Lewis at (404) 633-1866 or eleeis@csg.org.
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—May 1969

Hawaii Dedicates New Capitol

Hawaii, which is celebrating 50 years of statehood this year, formally dedicated its new state capitol in March 1969, but construction was expected to continue until June of that year, according to an article in the May 1969 State Government News. The building’s most unusual feature, according to the article, is its cone-shaped skylight instead of a traditional rotunda; the design suggests a volcanic crater. The building was surrounded with water to emphasize Hawaii’s island character, the article said.

Update

The State Capitol was one of 11 state buildings targeted in 2008 for retrocommissioning as part of the Lingle-Aiona Administration’s commitment to increase the state’s energy independence, according to a state press release. State agencies—the Department of Accounting and General Services, along with the Energy Efficiency Branch of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism—will identify opportunities to save energy and reduce operating costs in state buildings.

The 11 buildings contain more than 1.4 million square feet of space and consume about 33 million kilowatt hours of electricity annually. This represents between 14.4 and 36.9 kilowatt-hours of electricity per square foot annually, and operating costs ranging from $2.50 to $6.27 per square foot per year, according to the press release.

25 years ago—May 1984

Education Reform Ongoing

States were in the process of adopting educational reforms called for in 1983 by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, according to an article in the May 1984 issue of State Government News. The magazine surveyed states—and 42 had responded along with Puerto Rico—about whether the recommendations were applicable to their situations.

Among the responses: 30 states said action was taken to strengthen high school graduation requirements, 10 were working on requirements, and two were planning changes. On content, five states met the call for high schools to require a minimum of four years of English, three years of math, three years of science, three years of social studies and one-half year of computer science; 12 states were working on those recommendations; seven were planning for them; and 15 didn’t want those requirements.

The commission recommended extending the school day or school year to cover what students needed to learn. But only two states said they had seven hour school days, while 15 were considering long days. And only one state had a school year of 200 to 220 days; only 12 states responded favorably to a longer school year, according to the article.

Update

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes $44 billion for states and schools to lay the foundation for a generation of education reform, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

“Given our economic circumstances, it’s critical that money go out quickly but it’s even more important that it be spent wisely,” Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said in a press release. “The first step toward real and lasting reform that will ensure our students’ competitiveness begins with absolute transparency and accountability in how we invest our dollars, educate our children, evaluate our teachers, and measure our success. We must be much more open and honest about what works in the classroom and what doesn’t.”

The guidelines released in April targeted comprehensive education reform by receiving commitments from states to collect, publish, analyze and act on basic information regarding the quality of classroom teachers, annual student improvements, college readiness, the effectiveness of state standards and assessments, progress on removing charter caps, and interventions in turning around underperforming schools, the release said.

10 years ago—May 1999

Saving for College

State college savings programs saw a 500 percent growth in the eight year span from 1991 to 1999, an article in the May 1999 State Government News said. The College Savings Plans Networks, a network of the National Association of State Treasurers, which is an affiliate of The Council of State Governments, found in a survey that 73 percent of parents interviewed were saving for their children’s college education. At the time, states offered enrollment in two types of plans: a prepaid tuition program and savings plan trusts. In both state-sponsored plans, federal taxes until the child begins college, then the funds are taxed at the child’s lower income level, according to the article.

Update

Legislation introduced by Congressmen Earl Pomeroy of North Dakota and Pat Tiberi of Ohio in March proposes three improvements to the 529 accounts, according to a press release from the College Savings Plan Network. The changes would encourage low- and moderate-income families to save for college by extending the SAVERS Credit to contributions to 529 accounts; allow for the purchase of computers with funds from the 529 account; and provide greater flexibility to manage investments by allowing investors to adjust their investment allocation twice a year, instead of the current once a year change.

“This new legislation will provide an invaluable college savings incentive for low-income families, which is a policy priority for states that administer the plans,” Jackie Williams, executive director of the Ohio Tuition Trust Authority and immediate past chair for the College Savings Plan Network, said in the release.

Learn more about these plans at www.collegesavings.org.