

ILLINOIS STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES



COUNTY

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2021

Illinois County Officials & Staff

ATTEND NACO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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ISACO'S
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ILLINOIS COUNTY
OFFICIALS & STAFF
ATTEND NACO
ANNUAL
CONFERENCE

isacoil.org



Counties Count!

A Message from the President



By: Deborah Sims, Cook County Commissioner

I hope you've had a joyful summer full of time spent with family and friends. Re-connecting with people on an in-person basis is so important following several months when doing so wasn't easy or, in some cases, possible.

Many of us who serve on county boards are adjusting back to in-person board meetings. It's great to once again see and interact with valued colleagues.

It was also wonderful to attend the National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Conference held from July 9-12, 2021, in Prince George's County, Maryland. This was the first in-person NACo conference since the Legislative Conference held in Washington, D.C. from February 29-March 4, 2020. The Annual Conference in July was well-attended and included dozens of county

officials and staff from Illinois. This *County Quarterly* includes pictures of Illinois delegates at the conference.

Illinois is well-represented in NACo leadership. Will County Board Member Denise Winfrey was recently elevated to NACo First Vice President and Illinois has five other county representatives on the Board. We also have numerous county officials serving on various standing and policy steering committees. This includes Kendall County Circuit Clerk Matthew Prochaska, who serves as Chair of the critical NACo Membership Committee. Getting involved with NACo is how Illinois county officials can influence federal policy. I encourage you to contact ISACo Executive Director Joe McCoy at jmccoy@isacoil.org if you would like to be appointed to a NACo committee.

Speaking of policy development, ISACo is laying the groundwork for our 2022 state legislative agenda. We had great success in 2021 protecting the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF), moving back the statutory deadline for county board reapportionment and influencing the outcome of several other issues. If you have a legislative proposal idea for ISACo to consider as part of our 2022 state legislative agenda, please forward the idea along to info@isacoil.org.

We hope to hear from you. Stay safe!

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A Message from the Executive Director

By: Joe McCoy, Executive Director

The summer months have had a refreshingly normal feel since businesses fully re-opened and social events returned following our state having successfully reached Phase 5 of the *Restore Illinois* plan.

As of this writing, our state has achieved a vaccination rate of 57.4% (12 years of age and older) as increasing numbers of Illinoisans have chosen to be vaccinated. Professional sporting events are being held in venues filled with raucous, exuberant fans and large concert events like Chicago's Lollapalooza festival returned to much fanfare and large crowds. Restaurants and movie theaters are open at full capacity. And we have every indication that our schools will be open for in-person learning throughout the 2021-2022 academic year, albeit with a statewide indoor mask mandate in place.

We've come a long way over the past year-and-a-half of this pandemic. As fall approaches we remain hopeful that our seeming return to normalcy will be permanent despite growing concerns about virus mutations and variants. The rise of the variants creates an uncertainty that all of us would much prefer to move beyond and additional mitigations are always a possibility. Illinois' counties have played an essential role in mitigating the effect of the pandemic on their residents.

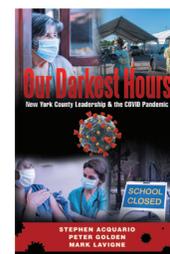
This involved procuring sufficient personal protective equipment for first responders, standing up testing sites, conducting contact tracing, communicating health and safety information as it evolved, modifying how to interact with residents conducting business with the county, distributing and administering vaccines, providing financial assistance to businesses and community organizations and continuing to perform essential services expected by residents. In some cases, state laws were amended to provide local governments with the needed flexibility to meet the new and difficult challenges. And billions of federal dollars have been allocated to Illinois counties as a result of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) Act.

And all of this was done without a pre-developed plan sitting in a drawer waiting to be taken out and deployed during a global pandemic.

I believe a key takeaway from this experience is that county leaders must contemplate, discuss and memorialize the lessons learned from the pandemic response. There SHOULD be plan in a drawer in each county for the benefit of posterity because in all probability there will be another pandemic in our future. There isn't anyone more qualified to document the lessons learned and draft an action plan for utilization by future leaders than the county

officials and staff who are successfully leading the way through the current pandemic. Lives will truly depend on this foresight and hard-earned experience.

My state county association counterpart in New York, Steve Acquario, was involved in such an effort, albeit more broadly, through the New York State County Executives Association (NYSCEA). NYSCEA commissioned the creation of a book to document and share the difficult lessons learned during the pandemic. The book, entitled *Our Darkest Hours: New York County Leadership and the COVID Pandemic*, includes first-person accounts of the experiences faced by local leaders working to protect their residents from COVID-19. It also reviews the public policy behind the fractured federal and state response to the pandemic and how state and local authority were impacted and altered. The book is available for purchase on



Amazon and may prove to be a useful guide for all county officials seeking to extract key lessons learned from their own experiences for future application.

As always, thank you for your commitment to public service. It's truly an honor for ISACo to support county officials in any way we can.

Stay on Top of Legislation Affecting Counties with

ISACo's Bill Tracker

By: ISACo Staff

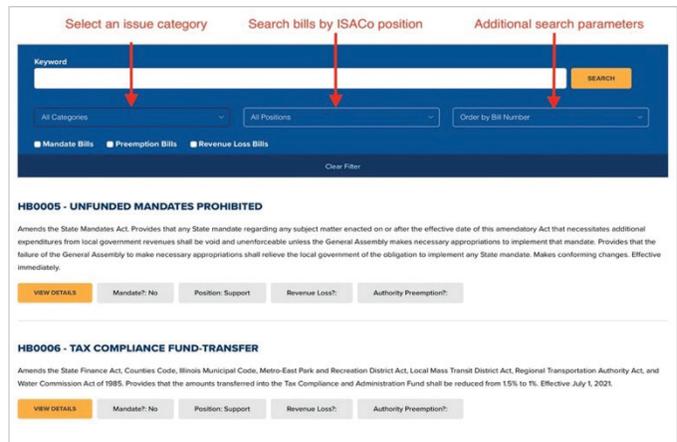
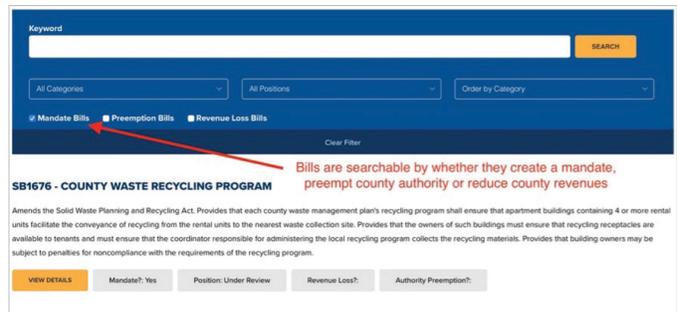
ISACo launched an updated website at the end of 2020 as part of an effort to continually provide enhanced services for our members. The website intends to be the foremost repository of useful information of interest to Illinois counties and hosts news stories, state and federal legislative updates, ISACo's social media feeds, policy briefs, fact sheets, membership information and more.

The website includes a bill tracking feature allowing ISACo staff to curate a comprehensive list of legislation of interest to counties. The bills are organized by category and searchable by bill number, title, ISACo position and anticipated impact on counties. Our bill tracker makes it easier for county officials and staff to focus on the legislation that matters to their counties among the thousands of bills introduced in the General Assembly each year.

The following images use arrows to illustrate how to access the bill tracker and the information available to county officials and staff utilizing our system.

Any questions about ISACo's bill tracking system should be directed to info@isacoil.org.

ISACo has also published a comprehensive report that includes bills enacted into law in 2021 that affect or are of interest to counties. Our *Public Acts Report: Legislation of Interest to Counties Approved in 2021* will be updated to reflect any additional legislation enacted prior to the end of the year. The report is available on ISACo's website (www.isacoil.org.)



Does Your County Have a Problem Requiring a Legislative Solution?

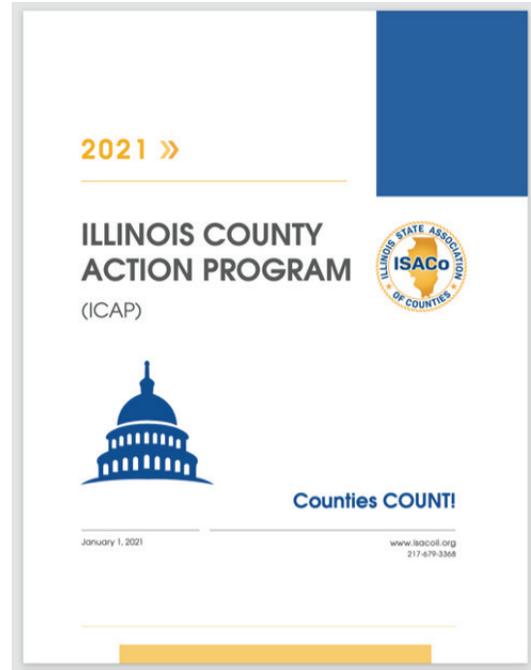
ISACo is working to develop the Association's legislative agenda for 2022.

If your county has an idea for a legislative proposal we'd like to consider it!

Proposals submitted to ISACo will be discussed by the Legislative Committee and, if approved, by the ISACo Board of Directors for possible inclusion within our 2022 Illinois County Action Program (ICAP).

Your idea(s) should be sent to info@isacoil.org. Please explain the issue to be addressed and what the recommended solution would be.

ISACo's 2021 ICAP is available on our website at www.isacoil.org.



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Illinois County Officials and Staff Attend NACo Annual Conference



Prince George's County, Maryland
July 9-12, 2021



The National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Conference was held from July 9-12, 2021, in Prince George’s County, Maryland. There was a great turnout from Illinois county officials and staff who availed themselves of the wide array of educational session and networking opportunities. During the conference ISACo hosted a dinner sponsored by our corporate partner Nationwide that was attended by 60 guests.



LEADERSHIP

The Need for

Leadership Development

By: Tim Rahschulte

Recently, the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the National Council of County Association Executives (NCCAE) conducted research on the top challenges across the states. As expected, the challenges are many. Among them, and interestingly enough, what is needed to address all of them is leadership development: making existing leaders better and emerging leaders ready.

Preparing the next generation workforce, managing a growing retiring workforce, and instilling a positive leadership mindset, capability, and culture is a big

challenge; among the most challenging of challenges, for sure. Challenges also included COVID management, fiscal constraints, rural deployment of broadband, jails, preemption, unfunded mandates, taxes, justice reform, schools, election fraud, and the opioid crisis, among others. As noted, the challenges are many. One point of absolute consensus was the need to continuously improve service delivery amid constraints, limitations, and pressures.

Continuous improvement requires leadership. To address the myriad of challenges amid the unique constraints of county government (fiscal and otherwise) requires positive leadership. General Colin

Powell said, "Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier." This leadership mindset is true for any four star general in the US Army, secretary of state, county commissioner, or frontline leader responsible for the deliver of services. Our counties need positive leadership to continuously improve. And, because of the changing landscape of county business, our leaders need continuous development; to sharpen skills, increase capabilities, and broaden their network of peers and collaborators.

It's because of the challenges facing county leaders and the need to continuously improve that the NACo High Performance Leadership

Academy exists (www.naco.org/skills). Our goal is to make leaders better, period. In collaboration with General Powell, Dr. Marshall Goldsmith, and over 100 industry executives, this Academy addresses the five most needed leadership competencies:

- ✔ Leading and making decisions: Engage teams and stakeholders to foster positive climates and exceed common expectations
- ✔ Organizing, planning and managing change: Plan, lead and execute organizational change more effectively and consistently
- ✔ Collaborating and building relationships: Establish alignment and strong partnerships through building stronger relationships
- ✔ Communicating and presenting data: Create clarity, confidence and community
- ✔ Executing and delivering business value: Measure projects and processes to deliver results aligned with county and community priorities

The NACo High Performance Leadership Academy is an online 12-week program that will empower frontline county government professionals with the most fundamental leadership skills to address the greatest challenges in the business of our counties and deliver results for our community constituents.

Visit www.naco.org/skills to learn more.



Tim Rahschulte is the CEO of the Professional Development Academy and chief architect of the NACo High Performance Leadership Program (www.naco.org/skills).

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ISACo updates!***

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ISACo congratulates McHenry County

for being named one of Engaging Local Government Leaders' (ELGL) 2021 "Best Places to Work in Local Government."



2021 Winners:

Best Places to Work in Local Government

City of Norfolk, VA
City of Fort Collins, CO
City of Parkland, FL



City of Hopkins, MN
Pasco County, FL
McHenry County, IL



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ISACo's Corporate Partner Program was established to provide a forum for companies and organizations to build relationships with county officials while supporting the important work of ISACo.

The program offers five options for corporations and organizations to become associate members of ISACo while receiving benefits for this status.

Contact us for additional information about how your company or organization can become a part of ISACo.



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County Quarterly Newsletter

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