



# At the Center of Everything

The Current Challenges, Great Ideas and Big Issues Shaping U.S.  
County Governments

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A Special Ebook From Route Fifty  
and the Government Executive Media Group

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# Nation's Most-Populous County Hosts National Association of Counties' 81st Annual Conference and Exposition



By Michael Grass

It's easy to forget just how large Los Angeles is—not the City of Los Angeles, mind you, the County of Los Angeles.

This massive county jurisdiction includes laid-back beach towns, dense urban neighborhoods,

sprawling suburban communities, industrial towns, large port facilities, offshore islands, national forest land, two mountain ranges—the San Gabriels and the Santa Monicas—hills, foothills and high desert landscapes.

L.A. County is the largest in the United States by population with around 10.1 million residents, which accounts for about 27 percent of California's population. The county's population is larger than many states, including North Carolina, Michigan, New Jersey and Virginia, just to name a few.

If the unincorporated areas of L.A. County were their own city, it'd have around 1 million residents. Those residents don't have a mayor, but they do have the L.A. County Board of

Supervisors, five elected officials who also represent the county's patchwork quilt of municipalities, the largest being the City of Los Angeles, with about 4.1 million residents.

This month, about 25 miles south of Downtown Los Angeles, in Long Beach, the nation's county government community—a few thousand public servants and other professionals working with county governments—will be gathering at the Long Beach Convention Center for the 81st annual National Association of Counties Conference and Exposition.

They'll be sharing their success stories, discussing their challenges, exchanging ideas and connecting with their colleagues around the nation on critical issues. County governments may not get as much attention as state or municipal governments, but the responsibilities that counties have and the services they deliver are critically important.

"From the seemingly mundane, but critical, tasks of road repair, trash collection and building inspections, to fighting fires, performing surgeries and protecting our most vulnerable—people absolutely depend on the work we do," retiring L.A. County Supervisor Don Knabe, who represents the 4th district, said in his State of the

County Address last November.

While most county governments in the U.S. are considerably smaller than the County of Los Angeles, the issues leaders here are dealing with—including, affordable housing, criminal justice, public health and social services, to name a few—are common to most every county-level jurisdiction in the nation.

Our special ebook, **At the Center of Everything: The Current Challenges, Great Ideas and Big Issues Shaping U.S. County Governments**, is a reminder that **Counties Matter**, a message that the National Association of Counties regularly champions.

We've chosen to look how a handful of issues are impacting county governments, including the nation's opioid abuse crisis, public health threats from the Zika virus and law enforcement technology like body cameras, among others. We'll also take you to some historic county courthouses in Ohio, seats of government that are the often the most recognizable local icons in counties.

*Thanks for reading.*

**Michael Grass**

Executive Editor, *Route Fifty*  
Government Executive Media Group

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# Los Angeles County: By the Numbers

**10.1 million**

The approximate total population of Los Angeles County, California, the most populous county in the United States.

**Five**

The number of members of the L.A. County Board of Supervisors.

**Thirty-Five**

The number of county departments.

**Eighty-eight**

The number of incorporated cities, the most populous being the City of Los Angeles (approximately 4.1 million residents), followed by the City of Long Beach (approximately 494,000 residents)

**2.4 million**

The number of residents each member of the Board of Supervisors represents

**\$28.7 billion:**

The size of the Los Angeles County budget for the 2016-17 budget

(Source: County of Los Angeles)

**4,084**

The number of square miles the county covers

**100,000**

The number of employees who work for L.A. County

MOSQUITO CONTROL

# Counties Use Smart Mapping Technology to Stay Ahead of Zika



By Quinn Libson

Zika-transmitting mosquitos can breed in a teaspoon of standing water. Data-rich maps and GIS software allow counties to stay one step ahead.

For county-level vector control officials, staying vigilant against Zika virus and the invasive species that transmit it—*Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*—comes with specific challenges.

These types of mosquitos are urban dwellers. They live among people and thrive in the tiniest amounts of stagnant water.

“An outbreak can breed within a teaspoon of water,” says David Totman, an industry solutions manager for public works at Esri, a Redlands, California-based company that develops geographic information systems software.

In Arizona, Dan Damian, a GIS programmer analyst with the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department, says that these mosquitoes have the ability to spawn in a vessel as small as a beer bottle cap.

And in California, Bryan Kriete, a vector control technician for Santa Cruz County, acknowledges that “pretty much every house has some standing water in pots or tarps.”

As *The New York Times* has reported, many county governments, particularly in the rural South, still lack vector control departments and remain shockingly unprepared for a potential Zika outbreak.

On the other hand, many counties around the country have been investing in ways to make their operations more agile and with help from GIS companies like Esri, they are embracing technologies that can make even the smallest vector control department able to nimbly tackle these thorny problems.

## Making the Complex, Routine

In Maricopa County, where Phoenix is located, staying ahead of mosquito populations, and the risk of Zika, can at times require some creativity. This weekend, Phoenix will host the Copa America Centenario, or as the county’s vector control officers have come to call it, the Copa Zika.

 Felipe Dana. AP File Photo





“We want the public to be looking at these maps and doing their own vector control work.”

Bryan Kriete, a vector control technician for Santa Cruz County

“We’ve mapped the locations where the teams from South America will stay,” says Damian—acknowledging that Zika has the highest chance of being transmitted from someone who has traveled from the virus-affected areas—“and we’ve added mosquito traps to those locations.”

Large international soccer events aside, the process of monitoring mosquitoes in Maricopa County is an exercise in making the complex, routine.

*Aedes aegypti* mosquitos have called Maricopa County home for the past 10 years. The species is very well-established in the area, according to Damian. To add to the challenge, in terms of area size, the county is one of the largest in the country—covering nearly 10,000 square miles.

A total of only 25 inspectors responsible for vector control monitor 750 trap sites across that staggering area every week, and service about 4,000 known breeding sites, along with tackling mosquito-related citizen complaints.

It’s hard to imagine where this operation would be without the use of smart mapping technology.

As it stands now, every one of these 25 inspectors has a laptop equipped with Collector, an app produced by Esri. Every time they visit

a trap—which they locate with the help of geotagged information saved in Collector—they record the data from the trap from the field and automatically sync that information with highly detailed interactive maps.

Once the analysis of mosquitos found in traps comes back from the lab, that information too is added to the maps.

**‘The Data Is the Currency’**

In Santa Cruz County, Zika-transmitting mosquitos have not yet been detected. The invasive *Aedes aegypti* have been detected in Alameda County to the north, and the bugs are “solidifying their presence in counties to the south,” as Kriete puts it—aware of the battle-heavy undertones of his phrasing.

So for now, the work of the vector control



team in Santa Cruz County is all about surveillance. That means laying traps in vulnerable locations, monitoring the mosquitos in those traps and then analyzing the information they collect. Vector control officials use ArcGIS and Esri’s Collector app to record trap locations, measure areas, and upload information—all in real-time—to readily accessible data-rich maps. “The data is the currency,” says Matt Price, a GIS manager for Santa Cruz County. “It’s really just environmental monitoring, but when you add years of data, you can start to predict when mosquitoes will breed, you can send people out in advance.”

Santa Cruz County has not yet made the information they collect on local mosquitos available to the public. According to Price and Kriete, detecting *Aedes aegypti* mosquitos would likely be the catalyst that would change that.

In the event that mosquitos that can transmit Zika do come to Santa Cruz County, Kriete says, “we want the public to be looking at these maps and doing their own vector control work.” After all, with these invasive species able to breed in the smallest amounts of standing water, every citizen would need to pitch in to keep populations under control.

**Emphasizing Vector Control Beyond the Disease of the Moment**

Vector control officials from both Maricopa and Santa Cruz Counties mentioned the advances that Esri’s GIS tools have made possible.

In Santa Cruz, Kriete highlighted that previous iterations of this technology were out of the price range of a small county like his. The Collector app has brought smart mapping within their reach in a big new way.

Dan Damian, along with Kriete and Price, expressed excitement about new vector control-specific templates that Esri is rolling out to go along with the app—templates that assist with planning for adulticide operations, mosquito larvicide reporting, citizen mosquito service requests and more.

David Totman of Esri was quick to note that Esri’s view of this issue is a long-term one. “Zika is just the newest disease.” And, who knows what mosquito-borne disease will come next.

For Totman and Esri, a long-term approach means having a robust vector control operation in place, regardless of which disease is on the horizon.

According to Totman, a long-term approach also means “balancing mitigation versus environmental stewardship.” Accessible data makes keeping an eye on sustainability and ecological protection all the more possible. For example, many counties are using GIS to map known bee colonies, so when anti-mosquito fogging must take place, those vulnerable pollinator populations may be avoided.

Vector control isn’t just important because of Zika. A robust vector control strategy should be a focus for every county, regardless of the disease du jour. 🌐



SPECIAL REPORT: COUNTY GOVERNMENTS AND OPIOID ABUSE

# An Illinois County Provides Model to Get a Pill-Disposal Program Up and Running



By Quinn Libson

Lake County knew that preventing prescription drugs from getting into a water supply or the wrong hands is important. And it got help from Walgreens in its prescription turn-in efforts.

Once every month, police officers from departments across Lake County, Illinois, converge on the Solid Waste Agency of Lake County, or SWALCO. They carry with them containers stuffed to the brim with unused prescription drugs.

“It’s literally huge garbage bags filled with pills,” says Michael Nerheim, the state’s attorney for the county, which is north of Chicago, south of the Wisconsin state line and is home to about 700,000 residents.

Mixed in among the standard over-the-counter medications are scheduled opioids destined to be sorted out, dumped into a vat of gasoline—which renders them inert—and then destroyed in a closed-loop incinerator.

The whole process is part of the Lake County Prescription Drug Disposal Program, a local measure to fight the substance abuse epidemic.

### Why Invest in Drug Disposal?

“We’re trying to attack the drug issue from multiple angles,” says Eric Guenther, police chief

for village of Mundelein, a local jurisdiction in Lake County that has participated in the drug disposal program for several years.

Fighting drug abuse from the supply side makes sense. In one study, 62 percent of teens polled said they had started misusing prescription drugs in part because the pills were easy to get from their parents’ medicine cabinets. As a result, take-back events have long been a part of the Drug Enforcement Administration’s national strategy—this year’s National Prescription Drug Take-back Day falls on April 30.

According to Bill Gentes, a former mayor from the village of Round Lake who oversees the drug disposal program as the project coordinator for the local Drug Free Communities Program, Lake County destroys about 300 tablets of scheduled substances for every 100 pounds of pills collected.

That may not sound like a big deal. But give that data some context and the potential impact becomes more impressive.

In 2015, the program took in 30,000 individual doses of scheduled medications—which include powerful opioid painkillers like codeine, fentanyl and oxycodone. Accounting for the estimated \$25-per-tablet street value of these medications, Gentes concluded that in one year, the program destroyed about \$750,000 worth of controlled substances that might have ended up in the wrong hands, or, for that matter, in the county’s drinking water supply.

The environmental argument on behalf of sensible pill disposal cannot be overstated. In a 2009 study carried out by the University of Illinois, residents of Cook County—Lake County’s larger neighbor to the south and home to Chicago—were polled on their personal drug disposal habits. Of those that responded, 59 percent said they throw

program has picked up steam.

In 2011, 41 Lake County residents died from prescription pill overdoses. Four years later, in 2015, that number has dropped to 18.

Local government leaders aren’t the only ones taking notice of the importance of pill disposal. In February, the national pharmacy chain, Walgreens—which is headquartered in Deerfield, Illinois—announced that it would be rolling out medication disposal kiosks in more than 500 stores in 39 states and Washington, D.C.

While Walgreens would like to have kiosks in all 50 states, regulations that prevent drug take-back at retail locations have kept the company from reaching that goal.

Casey Cesnovar, the senior director of state and local government relations for Walgreens made it clear that the company will be working closely with state

legislatures to address those regulations.

The Walgreens decision, and the Lake County project are somewhat linked. Members of the coalition that runs the Lake County pill disposal program have been in conversation with Walgreens’ policy office, and a member of that office sits on the Lake County opioid task force. State’s Attorney Michael Nerheim was present at Walgreens’ announcement of its drug take-back project.

#### **Too Successful for Its Own Good**

Lake County’s Prescription Drug Disposal Program began in 2007 when the county installed its first collection boxes—refurbished mailboxes—that are provided by a locally-based non-profit, Save a Star Drug Awareness Foundation. The boxes went into the lobbies of a handful of county police

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## **“It’s literally huge garbage bags filled with pills”**

**Michael Nerheim, State Attorney, Lake County, Illinois**

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away unused or expired medications in household garbage and 31.3 percent of respondents said they flush these meds down the sink or toilet.

Either do-it-yourself disposal method means that these drugs have a chance at ending up in the water supply. Researchers examining the problem nationally have found traces of pharmaceutical drugs in the drinking water of up to 40 million Americans.

In terms of the project’s impact on substance abuse, Lake County officials involved with the program—including Gentes and Nerheim—were quick to emphasize that no causal link has been established between the success of the project and changes in the county’s rate of fatal overdoses. Yet, it must be said that the county has seen a steep decrease in the number of deaths involving scheduled prescription medications as the





departments.

At this time, federal regulations made prescription drug diversion options—other than law enforcement—prohibitively difficult, and places like hospitals and long-term care facilities were barred from accepting unused prescription medications. Up until 2014, even pharmacies weren't allowed to collect these drugs, which explains why Walgreens is just now joining in with its initiative.

By 2012, Lake County's program continued to grow and had been instituted in nine local police departments. At this point, the initiative was

running up against several logistical roadblocks. For one, the only way to destroy the drugs police departments were collecting was to drive them 4.5 hours away to a DEA-sanctioned facility in Indianapolis. And, this option was only available twice a year as part of nationwide DEA take-back events.

Aside from the lengthy drive—which on its own made recruiting additional police departments to the program difficult—the overwhelming success of the program in terms of pounds of medications collected, had become a barrier to scaling up.

For instance, the community of Zion, with a population of about 20,000 residents, was collecting upwards of 100 pounds of medication per month. According to Gentes, 100 pounds of drugs take up about two phone booths worth of space. Put simply, smaller police departments in the program were running out of storage space in their evidence lockers.

**Overcoming Obstacles**

So Gentes, working closely with a coalition of partners—including the Lake County Underage Drinking and Drug Prevention Task Force, the Lake County Opioid Initiative, the county State’s Attorney’s Office, the Sheriff’s Office and municipal police departments—set out to find a new way for the program to dispose of pills more often and closer to home.

The first step was to identify a site that would be able to handle the disposal of these medications. That’s where the Solid Waste Agency of Lake County came in. SWALCO is one of six facilities in Illinois that’s permitted to handle prescription drugs.

If the coalition could secure funding, they could make prescription pill disposal a monthly occurrence, right in Lake County—no four or five hour drive to Indianapolis was needed.

The coalition took their plan all the way to the Illinois State Senate, and proposed a bill that would make Lake County prescription drug disposal a state pilot program. That bill, S.B. 2928, was passed unanimously in both the House and the Senate in early 2014. By the end of 2014, the pilot project status was removed, and the pill disposal program was recognized as an official state program.

The coalition was also able to secure funding through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, which allows for continued monthly

destruction days at SWALCO.

In January 2015, the county held its first monthly take-back day, at SWALCO, funded by the IEPA, with a total of 18 participating police departments. By the end of that year, Gentes and others in the coalition had helped recruit 10 more departments, bringing the total of participating municipalities to 28 out of the 33 in the county that are eligible for the program.

In 2015 alone, the program managed to collect 12,000 pounds of pills. To put in perspective how

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**“You’re putting an officer out there to do a job, and too often he’s also required to be a social worker, a marriage counselor and an addiction counselor.”**

**Eric Guenther, police chief for village of Mundelein**

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successful this program has been, Lake County makes up just 5 percent of the total population of the state of Illinois, yet the county was responsible for collecting close to 25 percent of the unused prescription medications in the state.

**Lessons Learned**

The primary factor to which Gentes attributes the success of Lake County’s drug disposal program is that he made it a goal to, in his own words, “clear away the undergrowth.”

From the very beginning, the program needed



buy-in from police departments all over the county to succeed. Beyond the effort to bring the disposal option closer to home, and to increase the frequency with which departments could empty the boxes, Gentes went out of his way to streamline the experience for departments.

Gentes created a set of model general orders through the sheriff's office, so that police departments that are new to the program could hit the ground running with the initiative from day one.

By working with the county Sheriff's office, Gentes also ensured that every monthly collection is as simple as possible for each individual municipal police department—which makes the process, in the words of Chief Guenther, “really easy when you drill down into it.” Each month, the Sheriff's Office staffs the destruction site, so all the individual departments have to do is send a few officers with the contents of their collection box to SWALCO, and then go back to work.

Another goal for Gentes was to uncover and take advantage of the data coming out of the collection boxes. When scheduled substances are found within the boxes, the contents and amount is noted. This isn't merely a measure to satisfy curiosity. Rather, Gentes uses the

data collected as a tool to recruit new police departments to the program, and to remind participating police departments that their efforts are making a difference.

Gentes says that “circling back to law enforcement and telling them, ‘look, you guys dropped off 500 pounds and I want to tell you what that means,’” makes it easy for those police departments to then get their mayors, and their village boards invested in the process.

#### **A Wicked Problem**

Chief Guenther would be the first to admit that policing the substance abuse epidemic is complicated work.

“You're putting an officer out there to do a job, and too often he's also required to be a social worker, a marriage counselor and an addiction counselor.”

Therefore, when opportunities like pill disposal programs present themselves that allow law enforcement to participate in a project that is relatively low-cost, a low burden in terms of manpower, but with the potential for a high impact, it's something that every county should take advantage of. 🗣️



SPECIAL REPORT: COUNTY GOVERNMENTS AND OPIOID ABUSE

# Lack of Funding Limits County Officials' Ability to Fight Substance Abuse Crisis



By Quinn Libson

**They're willing to collaborate and try innovative solutions, but until treatment and prevention programs are fully funded, it will continue to be an uphill battle.**

**D**rug overdoses are now the leading cause of accidental death in the United States and heroin overdoses account for more than half of those deaths.


“Counties are the boots on the ground” in the fight against the substance abuse epidemic.

That’s according to National Association of Counties President Sallie Clark, during the first of two workshop sessions dedicated to substance abuse at NACo’s 2016 Legislative Conference in the

nation’s capital in February.

Given the number of jails, 911 call centers, mental health facilities and public health facilities that are financed and operated on the county level, Clark, a commissioner in El Paso County, Colorado, views county governments as the “front lines of the crisis” and acknowledges that it will take “an all-hands-on-deck approach to improve the health and safety for those at risk.”

In keeping with this call for collaboration, NACo had previously announced that it was joining with the National League of Cities in an effort to fight substance abuse in local communities. The two organizations will create a joint national task force made up of city and county leaders from across the country. “This new initiative will build on our efforts to mitigate this crisis and strengthen the safety and security of our

 *Hydrocodone is said to be one of the most common recreational prescription drugs in America. David Smart / Shutterstock.com*



neighborhoods,” Clark said in an announcement.

The need for greater collaboration was a theme that ran throughout both conference sessions on substance abuse. “More than ever we have to be in this together,” said Mary Lou Leary, deputy director of state, local and tribal affairs for the Office of National Drug Control Policy, calling for cooperation across various levels of government.

Beyond multi-level government collaboration, many county officials speaking on the issue emphasized the need for bringing multiple sectors and disciplines into the broader conversation. The era of assuming that responsibility for drug issues falls solely on the shoulders of police departments and prison systems seems to be over.

County officials expressed widespread consensus throughout these discussions that this epidemic needs to be thought of as an issue for public health systems, mental health systems, the education sector, the private sector and others.

“This epidemic can’t be addressed by the justice system or the health system alone but requires a collective and coordinated effort,” said Joan Garner, a commissioner in Fulton County, Georgia, which includes Atlanta.

Medical professionals—particularly those who prescribe painkillers—are one group that must be included in the dialogue on substance abuse prevention measures.

According to current data, painkillers are so heavily prescribed that, if the total number of prescriptions were to be added up, there would be enough to give one to every adult in the United States, a fact cited by Michael Botticelli, the director of national drug control policy, during Monday morning’s conference session.

“Doctors get training on pain management in medical school and are taught to prescribe

opioids. But they need more education about the appropriate amount to prescribe,” Leary noted, adding that “oftentimes, the medical community underestimates the addictive potential of prescription painkillers.”

In the same vein, Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck, a

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**“If you’re trying out two-month programs, forget it. You need a minimum of six months for treatment.”**

**Thomas Carr, executive director of the Washington Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area**

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physician and director of the National Association of County and City Health Officials, argued that simply educating physicians doesn’t go far enough. The patient, as the consumer, must be made aware of the risks of taking this type of medication.

Going beyond the “why” of collaboration and getting into the “how,” panelist Thomas Carr, executive director of the Washington Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, encouraged the county officials in attendance to make the exchange of data and information across sectors a priority.

“All of us have to work together to tear down

the silos,” Carr said, directing his remarks to the practitioners in the room. “Law enforcement, you have to share information with public health. Public health, you have to share information with law enforcement . . . get the information going back and forth.”

Mike Nerheim, the state’s attorney in Lake County, Illinois, presented his county, which is located north of Chicago, as an example of another way to prioritize collaboration. He helped form the Lake County Opioid Initiative, which now has 300 members that represent a diverse range of backgrounds—from behavioral health professionals to police officers.

One of the first projects LCOI undertook was to train and equip police officers with Naloxone, a drug that can reverse the deadly effects of an overdose. Since this program took effect at the end of 2014, police officers have used Naloxone to save 56 lives, according to the county.

However Nerheim, along with many other county officials in attendance, acknowledged that Naloxone-based initiatives alone are not enough to fully tackle this crisis. Nerheim emphasized that “the police can save a life, but if that person isn’t put into treatment immediately, that is only a temporary solution.”

County officials agreed that, while evidence-based treatment and prevention are the most important part of tackling the crisis, they are also the weakest links in the current response.

Treatment is more complicated than giving

someone a dose of Naloxone and sending them on their way. In his panel presentation, Carr cautioned county officials that treatment “has to be immediate,” and added that treatment takes time. “If you’re trying out two-month programs, forget it. You need a minimum of six months for treatment.”

Unfortunately, many counties don’t have the infrastructure needed for evidence-based treatment, let alone the funds necessary to manage these extensive programs. One audience member in the second part of Monday’s discussion, Wendell Bostick, a commissioner in Curry County, New Mexico, explained to the panel that the wait time for a bed in a treatment facility in New Mexico starts at six weeks, well beyond the “immediate” response Carr recommends.

Matthew Bell, commissioner for Weber County, Utah, said he faced a similar problem. “We all know treatment is the best option,” he acknowledged. But, when discussing the treatment options in Weber County, Bell added, “we just don’t have enough bed space.”

The question of how to finance these treatment options at a scale that matches the current epidemic remains unanswered. The Obama Administration has made this issue a priority by proposing that \$1.1 billion of the budget be allocated to treatment and prevention of opioid addiction. Until funding for these programs is found, counties will continue to operate with treatment budgets that simply do not match the level of need. 🌀



LAW ENFORCEMENT BODY CAMERAS

# Sound Advice When Implementing Police Body Camera Programs



By Michael Grass

“It’s important to slow down and get things right,” the assistant chief in Montgomery County, Maryland, said during NACo’s 2016 Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.

**T**here’s a lot at stake when it comes to a law enforcement agency rolling out a body-worn camera program for police officers or sheriff’s deputies. A poorly executed program can “erode public trust.”

That’s according to Luther Reynolds, the assistant police chief in Maryland’s Montgomery County, who spoke about his agency’s experience with the policing technology at the National Association of Counties 2016 Legislative Conference in the nation’s capital in February.

“Hit the pause button,” Reynolds told the assembled county officials who sit on the NACo Justice and Public Safety Committee’s law

enforcement subcommittee. “It’s important to slow down and get things right.”

Reynolds said that while cameras brought “a bit of a cultural change” within the department, his county’s experience with body camera implementation has been good, thanks to a “highly effective” county committee that planned and introduced the program.

Reynolds was joined by Brian Acken, the director of the police department’s Information Management and Technology Division, and federal officials in the panel discussion, which examined best practices, research and resources available to local governments and agencies when designing and implementing programs.

As many local government jurisdictions have moved forward on developing body camera programs, plenty of them have delayed their implementation or otherwise pressed the pause button. Some recent examples? Durham, North Carolina, and Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

In Durham, concerns have involved the city’s

 [Dmitriy Rybin / Shutterstock.com](#)

policies on public access to body camera videos and in Fort Lauderdale, officials need to navigate privacy laws that could make officers subject to lawsuits.

But there are other potential bumps in the road jurisdictions have to navigate with body-camera programs, the panelists said, including negotiations with police unions and hiring additional staff to process and manage the video data.

In Montgomery County, the police department had to wait for a change in Maryland law to modify the state’s all-party consent requirements to allow body camera recording, Reynolds said.

“The department, which covers a diverse jurisdiction with more than 1 million residents located just outside Washington, D.C., rolled out its body camera program last year, starting out with about 150 cameras. The county police department is currently expanding its program to include to 1,000 cameras.

Montgomery’s investments in body cameras will cost \$5.5 million over five years, Reynolds said.

But isn’t just for the camera technology itself. Acken said his division, which has 90 full-time staff members, had to upgrade IT infrastructure to handle mass uploads of videos. And that required expanded electrical capacity just to handle the increased power needs.

Outside the police agency, there are other entities to consider, panelists said. For district attorneys, the introduction of body cameras usually requires an expansion of staff to deal with the video

footage. Panelists observed that the addition of 100 to 300 police body cameras will likely necessitate the hiring of an additional paralegal.

And all of this must be based on effective planning before local governments set out in developing a program.



“If there’s one piece of advice, have a policy,” Reynolds said, noting that “there are agencies that have programs but not policies.”

Another important pre-requisite before setting out on developing a body camera program: Getting all relevant players—including internal affairs, planning, elected officials—on board from “Day One,” Reynolds said.

“Lay out expectations so you don’t set things up for failure,” Reynolds said, noting that he’s seen other jurisdictions struggle to design a program where there goals and benchmarks to measure

progress were not clear.


Coordinating with neighboring jurisdictions is important, too, with body camera programs.

In the case of a county government, where there may be multiple municipal police agencies that could, in theory, use different body camera technology and systems, when they could collaborate on a jointly operated system and find multi-agency efficiencies and cost savings.

Policies governing body camera recordings in one municipality may be very different from those in a neighboring jurisdiction or in unincorporated areas of a county, which can create confusion with the public about the various rules and guidelines law enforcement must follow when using the camera technology and managing its data.

“We can’t be speaking with six different voices from six different chiefs,” Reynolds said of cooperation across jurisdictional borders. “We must move forward together.”

While the national discussion about body camera programs continues to evolve, the consensus is that they’re critically important policing tools that aren’t going away. It’s just a matter for local jurisdictions, including county governments, to design effective body camera policies to manage successful programs.

“They are your best friend as long as you know what you’re doing,” Glenn Webb, a major crimes detective in the city of Greenville, North Carolina—who is also a commissioner in Pitt County—said during the subcommittee session. 

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COUNTY GOVERNMENT IT SECURITY

# This Arkansas County Is Taking Multifactor Authentication Seriously



By Dave Nyczepir

"As technology progresses, and with the security posture we have today, biometrics have to be one of the things in the future we utilize throughout our lives, not just in our offices," according to Washington County's IT director.

It has been nearly a year since the U.S. Office of Management and Budget launched its Cybersecurity Sprint and some localities like Washington County, Arkansas, are taking its multi-factor authentication recommendation seriously.

Stealing or guessing usernames and passwords to access sensitive government information, often through privileged users, is easy, so experts suggest requiring personal identity verification cards or other forms of additional authentication to reduce risk.

Washington County began using Crossmatch's DigitalPersona Altus multi-factor authentication platform in 2008 to prevent users from sharing passwords and accurately autolog network activity.

"As technology progresses, and with the security posture we have today, biometrics have to be one of the things in the future we utilize throughout our lives, not just in our offices," said county IT Director John Adams in

an interview. "Passwords really are worthless in the sense that it just takes a matter of time to access them."

The county also wanted to protect itself when a user worked remotely or lost a laptop, opting to use fingerprints as biometric identifiers to connect to Outlook Web Access or establish a virtual private network connection to its sandbox.



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John Adams, IT Director, Washington County

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Initially, phishing attacks prompted the county to do away with usernames and passwords for certain websites dealing with financial transactions—protecting \$17 million it had banked. Employees enjoyed not having to memorize passwords, Adams said, instead setting personalized secret questions.

More recently, Washington County completed a two-month, countywide migration of the platform throughout all its offices to more than 600 users that introduced new smart features: contextual authentication and application-specific policies.

“Now more than ever, Altus provides strong, multi-factor authentication designed for the people that use it—and those that manage it,” Crossmatch CEO Richard Agostinelli said in a statement.

In the past, employees lacking proper access to software they needed would borrow

passwords from coworkers, a security risk, but no more. And the county help desk’s workload has decreased thanks to a “huge reduction” in password resets, Adams said.

New employees visit the help desk, enroll in the system, create a user account with access controls, scan their fingers, and create their secret questions in under five minutes—enabling near-instant logins using Extron Electronics’ TouchLink biometric readers later.

Washington County’s government is geographically dispersed across two campuses and three remote locations, and employees can work remotely from home by verifying their identity with a one-time password token—not unlike a smart card.

“I’m now definitely able to distinguish and determine who accessed what from where and when,” Adams said. 🍌

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Rural Appalachian County Eyes Drones for a Post-Coal Economic Uplift Catalyst



By Bill Lucia

“I’m seeing my community dying around me and I need to do something about it,” says a local circuit court clerk who is courting companies to test unmanned aerial vehicle deliveries to his Southwest Virginia jurisdiction.

A downturn in the coal industry has hit hard in Wise County, Virginia, as in other parts of Appalachia.

Coal has long been at the economic core of this largely rural jurisdiction, which has about 40,000 residents and is located in southwest Virginia on the border with Kentucky. But, during the last decade, jobs in the county have disappeared as the sector has eroded.

It’s against this backdrop that a local circuit court official in Wise County is helping to lead an effort to bring fresh development to the area tied to an emerging technology: aerial drones.

“It’s a little unique for central Appalachia,” Jack Kennedy, clerk of the Wise County and City of Norton Circuit Court, said during a recent interview with *Route Fifty*, as he discussed his ongoing quest to establish the county as a locus for the unmanned aerial vehicle industry.

He added: “Innovation can come from the strangest of places.”

Last July, a six-rotor drone copter, operated by the start-up company Flirtey Inc., conducted the first Federal Aviation Administration-approved unmanned aerial vehicle delivery, flying from the Lonesome Pine Airport in Wise County, to drop off medicine at a clinic about seven-tenths of a mile away.

Kennedy believes the sparsely populated landscape in the county provides an ideal testbed for flights like these. Using drones for commercial

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applications like cargo delivery, he noted, “will most likely not be perfected in Washington, D.C., or New York City, or Los Angeles.”

But it’s not just flight testing he’d like to see take off, it’s the development and manufacturing of drone technology as well. While no unmanned

He has no illusions that drone-related businesses will quickly fill the hole the coal industry is leaving in the area economy. “It is not going to be a tremendous boon overnight,” he said. “It is going to be a long and arduous effort.”

After adjusting for inflation into 2015 dollars, total wages from mining jobs in Wise County last year were approximately one-quarter of what they were in 2001, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data. During that same timespan, the number of employees in the sector dropped from 2,216, to a preliminarily estimated 562.

Why has Kennedy, who is 60, taken it upon himself to try to stake out a place for the county as a hub for aerial drone-related ventures? When asked that, he recalls that when he was 16, he watched Apollo

14 take off from Kennedy Space Center, located east of Orlando, Florida.

“I have always had an affinity for commercial space flight,” he said.

But there was something else that prompted him to take action as well: “The realization that I’m seeing my community dying around me and I need to do something about it.”

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## “Innovation can come from the strangest of places.”

Jack Kennedy, clerk of the Wise County and City of Norton Circuit Court

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aerial vehicle firms have located in Wise County yet, Kennedy said at least a half dozen are in active talks with local officials.

In the meantime, he views creating a workforce to support these types of businesses as an important step forward. To this end, Mountain Empire Community College, in Big Stone Gap, a town located in Wise County, is now offering courses focused on aerial drones.

Kennedy has also helped launch the nonprofit Fly Wisely Accelerator Corp. It is meant to provide a venue for collaboration between the unmanned aerial vehicle industry, academia, government and other groups.

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# County Courthouses in Ohio

These historic seats of government help define their jurisdictions and are icons in their communities.

**W**hen most travelers traverse the Buckeye State from east to west or west to east, they usually opt for the more traveled routes: The Ohio Turnpike via the Cleveland and Toledo areas in the northern tier of the state or Interstate 70 via Columbus and Dayton across the Ohio's middle section.

But it's often more interesting to take the road less traveled. And if you take highways like U.S. 22 or 30, you get to travel through some smaller communities, including Steubenville, Cadiz, Wooster and Upper Sandusky, where the Wyandot County Courthouse, originally built in 1999, was used for filming in the 1994 film, "The Shawshank Redemption." Renovations wrapped up on the structure last year.

Here are some iconic courthouses from Route Fifty's semi-regular roadtrips. Follow our ongoing Roadmap series at [RouteFifty.com](http://RouteFifty.com)



Wyandot County Courthouse, Upper Sandusky, Ohio





Harrison County Courthouse, Cadiz, Ohio





Jefferson County Courthouse, Steubenville, Ohio





Wayne County Courthouse, Wooster Ohio

# About the Authors



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