

the PACOG News

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Pennsylvania's Keystone for
Intergovernmental Cooperation

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National Association of Regional Councils

The National Association of Regional Councils is known by the acronym NARC. The subject of this article is NARC, the association, not NARC, a slang term for a federal agent or police officer who enforces the law regarding illicit sale or use of drugs and narcotics.

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., NARC serves as the national voice for regionalism. It is a recognized authority and leading advocate for regional organizations and solutions that positively impact American communities through effective inter-jurisdictional cooperation. As a national public interest organization, NARC's mission is to:

- Shape federal policy that recognizes the increased value of local intergovernmental cooperation
- Advocate effectively for the role of regional councils in the coordination, planning and delivery of current and future federal programs
- Provide research and analysis of key national issues and developments that impact their members
- Offer high quality learning and networking opportunities for regional organizations through events, training and technical assistance.

NARC was created in 1965 to respond to the professional and legislative needs of America's emerging, multi-purpose, multi-jurisdictional organizations of local governments. In 1967 NARC became an independent entity.

According to NARC's website (www.Narc.org), the organization exists due to the recognition that the region is the arena in which local governments must work together to address challenges - social, economic, workforce, transportation, emergency preparedness, environmental, and others. Regional councils are experienced collaborators, adept at bringing people together and getting results.

States are relying more on these organizations as vehicles for engaging local governments and delivery of programs.

The groups are dedicated to solving problems the regional way.



Various regional organizations in most US states are members of NARC. Although PACOG is not a member of NARC, the Local Development District (LDD) Association of Pennsylvania is a member. Fifty-two counties in PA are served by LDDs which are multi-county organizations providing services in such areas as community and economic development, transportation, international trade, strategic planning, and much more. Counties share information through their LDD, respond to common concerns, and develop solutions to today's critical issues. PACOG has been reaching out and working with the LDDs.

NARC had its annual conference in June in California. It is interesting to note that many of the sessions at their conference were topics similar to those at Pennsylvania conferences, including: Tools for a Sustainable and Resilient Community (GIS, stormwater runoff, water quality), Transportation Funding, Alternative Fuel Vehicles, Civic Engagement and Civility, Tools for Preparedness and Response, the Impact of Emerging Technologies, and Strengthening Local Leadership Through Good Planning and Good Government. Some award winners at the conference had projects that reflected PA initiatives: introduction of broadband internet service to rural, mountainous and isolated communities; community outreach and engagement to give communities the ability to plan housing, economic development and conservation as a unified planning strategy; and developing 150 miles of rivers and creeks into recreational attractions through a Water trails and Greenways Committee.

Even though NARC is a large association and PACOG is a relatively small association, they both share the regional approach to addressing and resolving problems. Sometimes a regional or holistic perspective is needed.

COG Talk... What's Happening in Our COGs?

Three members of the **Back Mountain Community Partnership** are joining together to produce an agreement to work together to comply with federal water pollution reduction mandates. The 3 municipalities (Dallas Borough, Dallas Township and Kingston Township), are hoping to work together in a joint plan under the Dallas Area Municipal Authority (DAMA), even though DAMA does not yet have a finalized compliance plan. Since DAMA already handles sewage, garbage and recycling for the 3 municipalities, stormwater management and pollution reduction seemed to be a realistic extension of responsibilities. The municipalities are used to working collaboratively since they have been sharing equipment, the cost of a regional emergency management center, and other cooperative programs.

Adams County COG has scheduled a County-Wide E-Cycling Event for September 9. The COG is partnering with the Adams County Commissioners to split the cost for the event with the COG. TVs and CRT computer monitors will be recycled for a fee, and other electronics for free. They have contracted with a Maryland company to dispose of the collected electronics.

Central Westmoreland COG suffered a great loss when Deputy Director Mike Pacelli passed away last month after 20 years of service to the COG. Not only will he be missed at the COG, but in his home borough of Youngwood where he held numerous positions on council and committees in addition to being fire chief and Past President of the Westmoreland County Borough's Association. The COG welcomes a new employee, Deanna Turpin, as Secretary/Treasurer. Please note that the COG has moved and their new address is: 3337 State Rt. 130, PO Box 396, Harrison City, PA 15636. The address has changed, but their motto of "Doing More With Less" has not changed.

Mountain COG has had interesting presentations on the following topics at their monthly meetings: McMahon & Associates on a special software program called TRAISR, which is a real-time asset infrastructure software program designed to help local governments in their day-to-day operations; a presentation from SAFE on autism awareness and how the organization is available for volunteer projects if the municipalities need them; LTAP training programs; seminar by the owner of Capital

Drug & Background Screening; the annual "Spring Fling" evening meeting where members of state agencies explain how they can help local governments; and a "Law and Order Forum" at Lackawanna College in Hazleton, to discuss the problems local governments face in the law enforcement category and ways those problems might be addressed. The Law and Order Forum was moderated by Judge Emeritus Correale Stevens, and consisted of a panel of local police chiefs, District Magistrates, a District Attorney and a State Representative.

Moshannon Valley COG hosted its 12th annual Equipment Show and Training Day. It was another successful day with 49 vendors and more than 250 local government officials and employees in attendance. Training sessions were conducted on the following topics: Work Zone Traffic Control, Hi Vis Safety Equipment, and Geosynthetics in Road Maintenance. A cold mix paving demonstration was sponsored by Midland Asphalt. Also of note, is that the COG's Property Maintenance Program is up and running with 17 participating members.

PennDOT News

New Drivers Licenses and Photo ID Cards.

PennDOT is introducing the "next generation" of its Pennsylvania driver's license and photo identification cards. The pilot deployment of the new products began in June at the Harrisburg Customer Service Center location. All Driver and Photo centers will transition to the new products by the end of October 2017 and will replace the current products. As part of its ongoing efforts to help protect customers against counterfeiting, fraud and identity theft, PennDOT has updated the design and enhanced the security features of its driver license and identification card products. The new cards are not currently REAL-ID compliant.

REAL-ID Compliant Drivers Licenses and Photo ID Cards.

The Department of Homeland Security has granted Pennsylvania a REAL ID extension through October 10, 2017, and PennDOT anticipates that the Department will continue to issue extensions to PA until REAL ID products are available for residents. Governor Wolf signed Act 3 of 2017 into law recently, which will allow PA to offer residents an optional REAL ID-compliant driver license or state identification card, which can be used to access airports and federal facilities. PennDOT has begun preliminary work on REAL ID cards and estimates the cards will be available in 2019. The final Department of Homeland Security effective date for REAL ID compliance is October 1, 2020.

Right-to-Know Law Survey

The Office of Open Records had an online survey for municipalities to complete by June 30. The survey was mandated by House Resolution 50 that directed the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to study the costs of implementation of the Right-to-Know Law for state, county, and local agencies.

Detailed information (e.g. types of requests, time required to answer requests, requests denied, requests appealed, etc.) was requested in the survey in order to determine real costs of compliance and what, if any, financial impact there has been on communities.

Spotlight on Warren County Intergovernmental Co-Op



The Warren County Intergovernmental Co-Op is a council of governments founded in 1996 based on a recommendation of the Pennsylvania Economy League (PEL). PEL identified formation of the entity as a vital means to improve governance in the Warren County community. Prior to the Co-Op, intergovernmental relations between the City of Warren and the neighboring municipalities were largely non-existent or severely stressed. The emergence of the Co-Op and its active programs has enabled dramatically enhanced relations between the City, County government, and the municipalities countywide.

The Co-Op began with just the City, four surrounding townships and one borough. It has grown substantially and now comprises 22-member governments, including the County. The municipalities encompass 83 percent of the county's total population.

Both the City of Warren and Warren County governments are extremely active in the Co-Op. The County government annually underwrites the full cost of administration of the Co-Op through staffing and other in-kind contributions provided through the offices of the Warren County Planning and Zoning Commission. Additional financial contributions totaling \$5,000 are made by the 21 municipal member governments to finance the cost of consulting services to

the Co-Op. With contributions based on population, the City of Warren is by far the largest municipal contributor.

The Co-Op member governments meet monthly. All policy making elected officials are invited and several from each municipality, along with the County Commissioners, regularly attend. The meetings are extremely well attended. The expressed purposes of the Co-Op are to:

- serve as a forum for the identification, discussion and examination of inter-municipal issues and concerns;
- facilitate agreements and cooperative actions for specific projects and programs agreed to by the members; and
- administer, undertake and execute projects and programs assigned to the organization as agreed to by the members.

In addition to the regular business of the Co-Op, each month there are guest speakers. There are also numerous other Co-Op meetings and activities taking place such as: a countywide Fire Services Support Committee, a Legislative Affairs Committee, and an active countywide Municipal Secretaries Association. In one way or another, the Co-Op addresses all significant issues impacting the municipalities and has helped to achieve dramatically improved cooperation between governments.

The Warren Regional Partnership, an advisory committee composed of civic, business and government leaders, was established to assess public service delivery in Warren County and make recommendations to the Co-Op regarding improved inter-municipal cooperation and joint provision of services.

In the years since its formation, the Co-Op has resolved the problem of failure to communicate among the municipal officials, and has especially helped improve the relations with the City of Warren and adjoining municipalities. As a result, significant accomplishments have taken place directly through, or in partnership with the Co-Op.

The staff of the Warren County Planning and Zoning Commission organizes the Co-Op meetings and the formal agenda. A former County Commissioner chairs the meetings at the request of the member governments and a representative of PA Futures serves as the consultant to the Co-Op. Dan Glotz, Warren County Planning Director, sums it up best saying "This organization (the Co-Op) is the best thing that could have happened to break down the barriers between our local governments and let them work together for the good of the community as a whole."

Grant Opportunities

The FAST Act eliminated the MAP-21 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and replaced it with the set-aside of **Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)** program funding for transportation alternatives (TA). Guidance for this program is provided by PennDOT, with an application round July 10 - September 22. Reference www.dot.state.pa.us/portalinformation/trafficsignalportal

Section 904 **Municipal Recycling Program Performance Grants** are being awarded by the Department of Environmental Protection. Applications must be on forms provided by DEP. Grant awards are predicated on the receipt of recycling fees required under sections 701 and 702 of Act 101 and the availability of moneys in the Recycling Fund.

Application deadline is October 2, 2017. Reference www.elibrary.dep.state.pa.us

The **COPS Hiring Program**, funded through the U.S. Department of Justice, provides funding directly to law enforcement agencies to hire and/or rehire career law enforcement officers in an effort to increase their community policing capacity and crime prevention efforts. Application period closes July 20, 2017. Go to <https://cops.usdoj>.

PA's Municipal Signal Partnership Program (**Green Light-Go Program**) is designed to improve safety and mobility by reducing congestion and improving efficiency of existing traffic signals on state highways. Municipal applications require a 20 % match using



municipal or private funds. Application period is August 8-September 30, 2017. Go to www.dot.state.pa.us.

Our Town Grant Program, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, supports creative placemaking projects that help transform communities into lively, beautiful, and resilient places with the arts at their core. Application deadline is September 11, 2017. Go to www.arts.gov/grantsorganizations

Signed Legislation

- Act 5 - changes to **PA's state public pension systems**. State employees hired after January 1, 2019 and school employees hired after July 1, 2019 will have to choose one of three new retirement savings option plans: a straight defined contribution plan, or two different hybrid defined contribution/defined benefit plans split between a guaranteed pension and a 401(k) style plan. Employees hired before those dates will have the option of making a one-time switch to one of the three new retirement plans. State lawmakers and judges taking office after January 1, 2019 will have to select one of the three new retirement plans. Exempted from the new plans are most uniformed or hazardous-duty state employees such as state police, correctional officers, game wardens, state park ranger and Capitol police.
- Act 6 - allowing career and technology students to demonstrate proficiency using an **alternative to the Keystone Exam**.
- Act 9 - the **"stolen valor bill"** that protects Pennsylvania veterans. The new law "makes it a crime to impersonate a soldier, a veteran of the armed services, or a recipient of a service medal or decoration in order to gain access to benefits, resources, or job opportunities that we set aside specifically for those who have heroically served our country," Governor Wolf said. "This legislation is incredibly important because Pennsylvania has the fourth-largest veteran population in the country and it is our duty to be certain that benefits for those veterans are available to those who have earned them."
- Act 10 - Libre's Law, a strict **animal protection law** that increased penalties for animal abuse and added protection for horses.
- Act 12 - strengthens **child endangerment laws** by taking into account the age of a child and the degree of harm. It also increases the penalties for those who endanger children.

- Act 13 - reforms the process that law enforcement follows to **take possession of the property of individuals suspected of a crime**. The law makes asset forfeiture reforms, including imposing a higher burden of proof on the Commonwealth, to further protect property owners.
- Act 16 - The **Medical Marijuana Law**, was signed into law in April 2016, making Pennsylvania the 24th state with a comprehensive medical marijuana program. The new law will protect registered patients and their physicians from civil and criminal penalties and create a well-regulated system for safe access to medical marijuana. Act 16 went into effect May 17, 2016 and is expected to be fully implemented in 2018. The PA Department of Health has issued permits to 12 entities for medical marijuana growers/processors in the state. The entities have six months to become operational before they can begin growing medical marijuana. The state will perform inspections before they certify the locations as operational. It is unclear when the department will begin accepting patient applications.

Pending Legislation

- SB 5 - would prohibit municipalities from adopting ordinances **regulating firearms and ammunition**.
- SB 168 - establish a **Public Employer Collective Bargaining Transparency Act** requiring an employer to post on their public website any/all proposed collective bargaining agreements at least 2 weeks before and 30 days after the signing of any/all agreements.
- SB 503- would **prohibit holding executive sessions for collective bargaining negotiations**, and would restrict the purpose of the session to information and strategy only.
- SB 527 - creates an **independent Office of Inspector General**
- SB 561- requires the General Assembly and Governor to **approve all regulations with an economic impact or cost exceeding \$1 million**.
- SB 594 - would **exempt firefighters from paying the sales and use tax when purchasing protective equipment** and accessory communications equipment using their personal funds.
- SB 646 - would remove the sunset provision and **reauthorizes the Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act (Act 101)**.
- HB 479, 480 and 481- would **make inter-governmental cooperation easier and more efficient** by allowing municipalities to enact a resolution, rather than an ordinance for inter-governmental cooperation agreements.
- HB 1049 - creates a tiered systems that increases fines and sentences with each subsequent offense, for anyone **convicted of Driving Under the Influence (DUI)**.
- HB 1071 - prohibit municipalities from enacting bans, fees, surcharges or taxes on **recyclable bags** at the point of sale. On June 30, 2017, Governor Wolf vetoed HB 1071 citing environmental concerns and a loss of local autonomy.
- HB 1450 - would allow communities to extend their **participation in the Main Street Program** from 5 years up to 10 years.
- HB 1469 - would change requirements for municipalities using a **Third Party Agency** to enforce the PA Uniform Construction Code

New Telephone Area Code

Sometime after September 26, 2017, a new 223 telephone area code in the 717 southcentral Pennsylvania region will be assigned. This "overlay" is necessary to address the dwindling inventory of new 717 numbers. After August 26, 2017 all calls in the 717/223 area will require dialing the area code.



2017 PACOG Annual Conference

in conjunction with the
PSAB Fall Leadership Conference
Kalahari Resort
Mount Pocono
Oct. 13-14, 2017