



# CountyLine

January, 2006



**2006 NACO Legislative Meetings Slated For January**



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- ⇒ **NACO Scholarship Applications Available On Line**
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## NACO Countyline

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Subscriptions: \$20 per year.  
 Advertising rates available on request.

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## Executive Director's Comments

# The Bridges Of Nebraska Counties



Larry Dix  
Executive Director

*"If you have never attended, there is no time like today to learn from others' experience."*

A few years ago there was a book and movie made about the Bridges of Madison County. This of course was in reference to structures in Iowa. Over the past couple of weeks, I have had the chance to meet with a number of representatives who are very knowledgeable about bridges in Nebraska. The topic was the rating system we currently use and the information that the federal government is asking us to provide. I have learned a few new acronyms, SCALP, SCOUR, LF and LRFD to name a few. The participants have been extremely patient with me in my learning curve.

The results of these meetings have reconfirmed

an old adage that many of you have heard: "Every day you learn something new".

This is the case no matter how many years you have held a position. This also brings me to the importance of county board members' attendance at the upcoming County Board Workshop in February, 2006. No matter how many years you have been a county board member, you will pick up new ideas and problem solving measures just by attending. The topic of bridges is just one of the many topics that will be on the agenda.

If you have attended previously, you know the importance of being there. If you have never attended,

there is no time like today to learn from others' experience. I challenge each of you to make plans on attending. There is no reason why all 93 counties should not be represented at this County Board Workshop.

Just to start the learning process I will give you a couple of pieces of information that you probably did not know. There are 415 county board members in the state of Nebraska and 11,570 county bridges that span over 20 feet. My challenge to you is to determine which counties have no bridges over 20 feet.

I look forward to seeing you at the County Board workshop.

## A Message From NACO Past President



### NEBRASKA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY

My Dear Friends in County Government and the NACO Organization,

Just a short message to thank all of you for your support and hard work, your dedication to service, and willingness to become involved.

I have been so blessed to serve as your president. May God bless you and yours.

Merry Christmas,

Ken Stuhr

## NACo Representative's Comments

# From Far And Near

## National Association Of Counties Representative



Tim Loewenstein  
NACo Representative

Today – as I reminisce about my childhood, I remember that my mother seemed to worry a lot about what tomorrow would bring. On one occasion I remember my grandmother telling her – “Today is the tomorrow that you worried about yesterday – and all is well”. Energy and emotion certainly appeared to have been expended on the unknown. 2005 is now coming quickly to a close. For each of us in county government we have faced challenges and opportunities. With each of those we have looked to our colleagues, the Nebraska Association of County Officials and the National Association of Counties for support and assistance.

During the recent National Association Board meeting in San Diego, the Financial Services Center presented several new programs to be available to members in 2006. One such program that quickly caught my eye was D-MED. When I heard that here was a tool to qualify an applicant for court-appointed attorney (indigent defense), my focus was keen. D-MED's proprietary software allows you to make an immediate determination whether an applicant meets the criteria established by the court to be given court-appointed legal counsel. Each of us recognizes this cost to our budgets climbing at a steady rate. I've been

on the phone with National and this program is so new that I don't have particulars to share in this article. But what I can share is the promise that very soon you will be hearing about how you can take advantage of this tool and reduce costs.

The Prescription Drug Program continues to grow and flourish in Nebraska. Here are some statistics: For the first 11 months of 2005 in Nebraska, with 19 counties having the Drug Prescription Discount Cards on the streets, the residents of our Nebraska counties have saved \$210,591.00 with a total of 10,443 utilizers (this figure could contain the same person counted more than once from month to month). I think the numbers speak for themselves.

Back to mom. Well I've thought about what I could share with you as this year comes to an end. Certainly I wish each and everyone a Merry Christmas and now when it comes to the new year, well here goes: I wish for each day to be the tomorrow that you dreamed about with excited anticipation yesterday.

Reporting from far and near,

Timothy

# 2006 Nebraska Legislature

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		Phone	Room				
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Schimek, DiAnna	27	471-2632	1114	2321 Camelot Ct	Lincoln	68512	<a href="mailto:dschimek@unicam.state.ne.us">dschimek@unicam.state.ne.us</a>
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Thompson, Nancy	14	471-2730	2011	9406 Bayberry Ct	La Vista	68128	<a href="mailto:nthompson@unicam.state.ne.us">nthompson@unicam.state.ne.us</a>
Wehrbein, Roger	2	471-2613	1016	5812 Highway 66	Plattsmouth	68048	<a href="mailto:rwehrbein@unicam.state.ne.us">rwehrbein@unicam.state.ne.us</a>

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# Register Now For County Board Workshop

The 28th annual County Board Workshop sponsored by NACO for all Nebraska county commissioners and supervisors will be held in Kearney on February 8-10, 2006. Commissioners and Supervisors planning to attend the workshop are encouraged to begin submitting advance registration by completing the registration form at left or by registering on line. If on-line registration is at all possible, NACO encourages board members to use this registration process rather than completing and mailing the registration form via U.S. mail.

Educational sessions covering a variety of topics will be presented on Thursday and Friday. A complete agenda will be sent to all county board members and posted to NACO's website [www.nacone.org](http://www.nacone.org) as soon as all sessions are confirmed. A tentative agenda is shown on the following page.

Tentative plans call for the workshop to begin on Wednesday at approximately 7:00 p.m. with a review of legislation and an introduction of NACO Executive Branch Committee members. Following a breakfast buffet on Thursday morning, plans for Thursday's agenda tentatively include general session for all board members in the morning, followed by several break out sessions on Thursday afternoon. General session will again be the order of the morning on Friday morning. The workshop will conclude at approximately noon and a box lunch will be provided. Attendees will be able to take their lunch with them as they leave the workshop or enjoy it leisurely in an informal atmosphere with their peers before heading home.

Cost to attend the workshop will again be \$70.00. Please note that there is no per-day or per-session fee and that all attendees will be required to wear their name tags to gain entrance to workshop events. Additional meal tickets may be purchased at the registration desk during the workshop.

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Holiday Inn at the rate of \$67.00/single, \$73.00/double. If you have not made reservations, you are encouraged to do so by contacting the Holiday Inn at (308) 234-5807. When making room reservations, be sure to indicate you will be attending the NACO County Board Workshop to receive the contracted rate.

## County Board Workshop Advance Registration Feb. 8-10, 2006 Holiday Inn, Kearney

*(Please complete a separate form for each registrant or you may register on-line at [www.nacone.org](http://www.nacone.org))*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

### Press Release

Please check here if you would like NACO to send a press release of your attendance at the 2006 County Board Workshop to your local newspaper. Please list the newspaper(s) you would like NACO to send notice to below:

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**Registration: \$70.00 per person  
Deadline: January 27, 2006**

*Includes one breakfast, two lunches, one dinner, all hand-out materials.*

***Cancellations must be made by January 27 to receive full refund. Any cancellations made after this date will be subject to a \$10.00 administration fee.***

Payable to: **NACO**  
**625 South 14th Street, Suite 200**  
**Lincoln, NE 68508**



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# County Board Workshop Tentative Agenda

## Wednesday, February 8

1:00 p.m. Registration  
 7:00 p.m. Meet Your County Board  
 Representatives On The  
 NACO Board  
 7:30 p.m. Legislation  
 8:15 p.m. Welcome Reception

#9 Defining Responsibilities For  
 Weed Superintendents  
 #10 Your Options For Channeling  
 Lodging Tax Funds  
 5:30 p.m. Social Hour  
 6:30 p.m. Banquet  
 7:30 p.m. Entertainment

## Thursday, February 9

7:15 a.m. Informal Breakfast Buffet  
 7:30 a.m. Registration  
 8:00 a.m. General Session - Meth, Make  
 It A Priority  
 8:45 a.m. General Session - Drug Court—  
 Is It More Cost Efficient And  
 Effective Than Incarceration?  
 9:30 a.m. General Session - Containing  
 The Cost Of Court Appointed  
 Counsel  
 10:15 a.m. Break  
 10:45 a.m. General Session - Federal  
 Re-Evaluation Of County  
 Bridges  
 Noon Lunch  
 1:00 p.m. Explanation Of  
 Breakout Sessions  
 1:30 p.m. Breakout Sessions  
 #1 General  
 Assistance And  
 Stricter  
 Indigent  
 Requirements  
 #2 UNL Footprint  
 Technology  
 #3 Religious And  
 Charitable  
 Exemptions  
 #4 Housing Non-  
 County Entities  
 #5 Campaigning 101  
 3:00 p.m. Break  
 3:30 p.m. Breakout Sessions  
 #6 Accessing  
 Economic  
 Development  
 Funds  
 #7 Q & A With NACO  
 Legal Counsel  
 #8 Boards  
 Appointed  
 By County  
 Boards

## Friday, February 10

8:30 a.m. General Session - Deal With  
 Diversity In The Workplace  
 9:30 a.m. General Session - Examining  
 Medicare Plan D  
 10:00 a.m. Break  
 10:30 a.m. General Session - Governor  
 Candidates' Forum  
 Noon Lunch

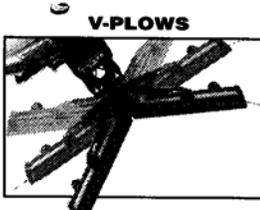
**NOTE: NACO has not received confirmation from some of the speakers anticipated to be on the agenda. Therefore, agenda items may vary slightly.**

# HINIKER PLOWS

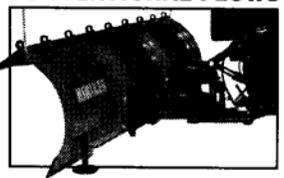
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# NACO Now Conducting Surveys Online

**By Jon Edwards**  
**NACO Research Analyst**

Let me be one, in what I am sure is a long line of people, to wish all of you a Happy New Year. The new year brings with it new and interesting prospects for the way NACO conducts research and gathers information. During 2005, NACO started to look into different ways to improve how we gather information and how we survey county officials. That process prompted us to look at software and/or web based research products. Through our research, we arrived at a product called Survey Monkey. Survey Monkey is a web based research system that allows us to more easily conduct research activity and catalog survey information.

Before I go any further with my discussion about Survey Monkey, let me take a minute and talk just a bit about the research we do at NACO and the important part that research plays in what we do in our service to Nebraska county officials. Those of you that receive surveys from NACO may think that we maybe tend to send out a few more surveys than necessary. While I do understand that it does take valuable time to go through these surveys, please understand that the information you provide to us through these surveys is invaluable. Without that information, we can't do our jobs. Every time a survey comes to you from NACO, it is imperative that you make every effort to fully and promptly go through the survey and submit your answers. Each and every county has a different perspective and unique traits that need to be accounted for. Without your responses, certain counties may not be fully accounted for and it is quite possible that in the end, the interests of your county may not be fully reflected in our dissemination of information. I say all this only to make you aware that information is extremely important to the work that NACO has done and continues

to do, and surveys are many times the only viable conduit through which to gather that necessary information. So, thank you for your hard work and effort in going through and filling out NACO surveys. The number of surveys that NACO conducts will probably grow in the future and your prompt and faithful attention to these surveys permits us to continue what is and what will be a vital part of NACO's work as we look to the future.

Back to the Survey Monkey discussion. As previously stated, surveys can be a bother and time consuming. Web based surveys are a way to make the process easier for both those that participate in the surveys and for those that collect and catalog the data generated from those surveys. Every county clerk in Nebraska should have already received notification regarding NACO web based surveys that we either have already concluded or are in the process of conducting. Most of you have been very diligent about participating in these surveys. For the most part, there have been very few problems. For NACO, the ability to administer surveys without information duplication has been very positive. While it will be impossible to completely eliminate overlapping emails, letters and general information, this system will allow us to cut out a great deal of duplication. Another very important benefit is the elimination of data entry here at NACO. Once a participant enters their answers online and submits those answers, there is no need for any further data entry. The data base is automatically updated, eliminating the need to enter survey answers by hand into a database. This greatly reduces the possibility of data entry mistakes. Ultimately, this leads to more definitive data upon which more confident conclusions can be drawn.

In addition to creation and data collection benefits, Survey Monkey makes participating in

surveys much easier. For those of you that participate, or will participate in NACO surveys, you merely click on the link that is provided in the email survey notification and you are then directed to the survey. They are very user friendly and are completed right on your computer. Once the survey is complete, the participant clicks the "done" button and the information is automatically submitted into an existing database and there is nothing further required of the participant. NACO maintains and tracks the database for every survey we do through Survey Monkey. We then have the ability to extract the information from the survey database into files within NACO's own database.

NACO wants all counties to have access to, and to make use of, the information that we gather. To that end, we are now offering, with almost every survey we conduct, the chance for participants to receive a summary of the information gathered once a given survey is complete and the information from that survey has been compiled. Each survey will include a "survey summary" request option. If you would like to receive a summary for that survey simply choose yes. If not, choose no. Once we have completed the survey and cataloged all the information, if you choose to receive a summary of the survey, you will receive an email with an attached spreadsheet summarizing the information received from that survey. We hope that all of you will take advantage of this service.

As always, we want to know what you think. If you have suggestions, observations, concerns, please let us know. Give us a call or send me an email at [Jon.Edwards@nacone.org](mailto:Jon.Edwards@nacone.org). Once again, we are doing this in an attempt to make the process easier and more effective for all those involved. Thank you for your help in this area.

# Saunders County Working For Its Own 'Route 66'

By Jonnie Taté Finn,  
Lincoln Journal Star

It's a secret Sheri Skeahan wants everyone to know. "There's one paved road connecting (Valparaiso), Ceresco and Ashland," the village clerk for Ceresco said. "A lot of people just don't know it."

Though the 25-mile road doesn't require drivers to use a turn signal, Skeahan said the route confuses some drivers because it shares three names: County Road A, County Road 11 and Ashland Road.

"A lot of people think it's a county gravel road, but it's not," she said. "It's really a logical way to travel between the three towns."

To end the confusion and promote tourism and economic development in the area, Skeahan and others are working to rename the stretch of concrete Saunders County Route 66.

County governments in Nebraska have the authority to designate names for county routes, thanks to state and federal laws.

However, counties have to follow state policies on naming county routes, and Nebraska doesn't have a policy.

"It's become something much bigger than Saunders County," Skeahan said. "It'll be really interesting if we cause the state to create a policy, because that would mean other communities can benefit." After getting formal approval to go to the Nebraska Departments of Roads to create the county route from the Saunders County Board of Supervisors in mid-November, Skeahan sought out Randy Peters with the roads department to help expedite the policy-writing process.

"In terms of the big picture, this would be a first — a precedent for county route identification," said Peters, a state traffic engineer. "There's a distinction there that's subtle, but important: the county has always had the authority to put up a street name, but route identification is different. This is the first time a request like this has come to us."

Peters said county route identification requires a highway number and a shield similar to state route identifiers, with blue, pentagon-shaped signs that must meet a series of formal specifications and federal guidelines.

The cost of a project like this is only a matter of hundreds of dollars, Peters said. Including the cost of the sign, installation and labor, he said each sign would cost about \$100. Once the route is designated as a county highway, the county would be responsible for road maintenance.

The state roads department will have the responsibility of creating the new policy, which could take about a year to implement, he said.

"My question is how would this work statewide if we had this system of county route numbers?" Peters said. "We'd need orderly rules, like what happens when a route reaches the edge of a county and continues into another county? Would you have to switch route numbers? We'd need to set the ground rules for these types of things."

Peters is seeking input from the Nebraska Association of County Officials to see if other counties would be behind a county route identification policy. A meeting with the association's executive secretary is scheduled for next month, Peters said.

Skeahan's mission doesn't stop with creating a policy, however.

Over the summer, the roads department realigned Nebraska 66 from Interstate 80 at the Mahoney Park exit to Ashland at the intersection of Nebraska 63 and U.S. 6. When the alignment was complete, the department renamed part of Nebraska 63 so that it extended Nebraska 66 through Ashland to meet with U.S. 77 south of Wahoo.

The problem for Skeahan is that having a Route 66 connect with Nebraska 66 could confuse drivers even more.

"The roads department just wanted to simplify that  
(Continued on page 16)

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# NACO's 2006 Directory Of County Officials

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## NACO And UNL To Sponsor Leadership Training

### Nebraska Association of County Officials and UN-L Extension News Release For Immediate Release

NACO and University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension have joined forces to help county officials become better leaders.

Work has begun to create an assessment tool that will allow NACO members to specify leadership training needs. From there, the two groups will plan and develop training programs to meet those needs.

The goal is to make training modules available for all levels of elected and appointed officials at the county level. NACO and UN-L Extension will be working closely with the National Association of

Counties in an attempt to extend this opportunity beyond the boundaries of Nebraska. While this project will be challenging and difficult, the ultimate reward to Nebraska residents all across the state will be an elevated level of service and understanding from their elected officials. In the end, we hope to be a nation-leading state in the development of leaders, making them examples of what good local government can and should be all across the nation.

NACO Director Larry Dix will have more to say about this project at the NACO County Board Workshop, February 8-10 in Kearney. We hope to begin surveying in either late February or early March. More information concerning this project will follow in the coming weeks.

Stay tuned.

# NACO Scholarship Winners' Essays

## The Importance of County Government in Nebraska

By  
Maggie Mitteis

In a way, I grew up around county government. My mother was elected to the office of County Clerk when I was only seven years old. I distinctly remember helping mom with her first campaign back in 1994. We spent a string of Saturdays, traveling to all the towns and villages in Sherman County. In order to meet the voters, my family attended every fish fry, church bazaar, and soup supper in the area. My mother understood that in a small community such as ours, the public wishes to know their representatives on a first name basis. When voters go to the polls, they are electing not only the best person for the job, but also the candidate that will give a voice to the average citizens that he or she is representing-the public wants their local officials to be relatable as well as reliable.

Often, when I stop by my mom's office after school, I find a random patron standing at the counter, casually chatting about the local high school basketball team or the latest crop prices while his or her automobile is being processed. Only in local government can the average community member relate to his or her representatives in such a way; essentially, these elected officials are "average citizens" themselves. Take the Sherman County Commissioners for example: these men are simply local farmers trying to do what is best for the community in which they live. As with all forms of government, not everyone always agrees with the decision made by the commissioner; however, sometimes the opposing party fails to see the "big picture." These officials are not merely acting in the optimum interest of a few individuals; they are doing what they believe to be best for

the majority.

County officials are no different from the people they represent. The local county sheriff or assessor could also be one's friend and neighbor, living right down the street. Unlike those working in large scale governmental branches, these local elected officials are affected by every issue they are working to resolve. They drive on the same roads and their children attend the same schools as the people that they represent. Because of this detail, each decision they make is given careful consideration. Any changes in the community-good or bad-will affect the officials' friends, family and the future of the small "society" in which they live. County officials are familiar with the citizens who they represent, and they care about well-being of the public.

County government is the most personable level of representation, the foundation on which all other forms of government are based. Without these locals representing other locals, small town needs would never be addressed in larger governmental bodies. County government is where all representation truly begins. Most politicians who have ever made a difference in the world began their careers in local government. This simple system of representation emphasizes the American way-every opinion is important and each voice can be heard. Representation for every citizen and a voice for all...that's the importance of county government.

## The Importance of County Government in Nebraska

By  
Heidi Nienhueser

County government provides many things for my community. Not only does it provide for safety and safer traveling but

also fun and learning opportunities.

The Cheyenne County Sheriff's Office is one of the many ways that county government provides safety for the county. The sheriff's department patrols the city and also the rural areas. They enforce the laws and regulations to keep citizens law abiding and protect against criminals. Without the sheriff's department there wouldn't be any enforcement of laws and the community would be chaotic.

Along with the sheriff's department the Cheyenne County Ambulance Service and the Region 21 Emergency Management provide for the safety of the community. They are at the citizens beck and call. Without the ambulance service many citizens of our county would not survive some of the situations that need urgent assistance. Region 21 Emergency Management is always on the look out for the safety of the county from bad weather to chemical spills.

Being raised on a farm I realize how important the county road department is. Having to travel dirt roads every morning and night made my family and I realize this. The county road department maintains all the gravel roads and highways in the county providing for safer travel. Without the county road departments roads would be washed out, unsafe, and hard on vehicles to travel on.

The Cheyenne County Fair Board and the Cheyenne County Commissioners provide for our county fair. I have been a member of 4-H for eight years. Through 4-H I have been able to participate in fair activities and been given many other opportunities also. Without these two offices this wouldn't be possible for me! Without having a fair, 4-H wouldn't have been

*(Continued on page 14)*

# NACO Scholarship Winners' Essays

*(Continued from page 13)*

able to give me the opportunities to make myself a more rounded person or to be who I am today.

There are many other departments involved in our county government that are very important such as the Cheyenne County court system, extension office, jail, and court house. Being a citizen of Cheyenne County, I am very thankful for everything that they provide for me and my citizens.

## **The Importance of County Government in Nebraska**

**By  
Michael Powell**

A county's ability to govern itself is vital to the county's existence. A county may cease to exist without specific procedures and guidelines set out for the county to follow. In order to function efficiently, a county needs to exhibit all branches of government-legislative, executive, and judicial. It would be too difficult for a state such as Nebraska, which has 93 counties, to have just one state government. Each county governing itself takes pressure off the state government.

County law enforcement is a major part of county government. All counties need some form of

law enforcement so that they can maintain order in their county. Law enforcement bodies usually consist of a county sheriff and the sheriff's deputies. Their duty is to prevent disorder in the county. They do this by patrolling roads, keeping them safe, and answering public complaints dealing with disorder.

Most counties also have public attorneys for situations which arise when someone breaks a law. Most counties also have a county court where these cases can be tried. This takes pressure off the state so that the state does not have to hear every single case, especially the minor offenses.

A county courthouse provides people with a local place to take care of many necessary transactions. This is usually where one will find the county treasurer, assessor, and the county clerk. The county treasurer's office is where a person may go to pay their taxes, such as automobile tax and property tax, and a person may also license and register an automobile there. The assessor's office keeps records on the value of the taxable property throughout the entire county. The clerk's office register and records such as

deeds, mortgages, birth and marriage certificates, and divorce decrees. The clerk is also usually in charge of administering elections within the county.

Due to the geographical diversity of the state of Nebraska, it is very important for every county to possess self-government. Nebraska is divided into urban and rural areas. Most of Western Nebraska is considered rural. By being able to govern themselves, Western Nebraska counties can ensure that things are done in the best interest of the county and not the state. It would be unfair if Eastern Nebraskans were able to dictate how Western Nebraskans could live their lives.

There are 93 counties in the state of Nebraska and each one contributes to the welfare of the state. County governments keep the state safe and make governing the state easier by reducing stress on the state government. Without the individual governments in counties, the state would be one large, chaotic system of government which would have to keep records on every single event and problem throughout the state.

## **2006 Scholarship Application And Information Available On Line At NACO's Website**

Do you have a child or stepchild who will be graduating from high school this spring? If so, be sure to check the NACO website ([www.nacone.org](http://www.nacone.org)) in late January for an application for a 2006 NACO scholarship. Since 1999, the NACO Board of Directors has approved 78 awards to outstanding young students whose parents or stepparents are county officials or employees. Last year, 12 scholarships of \$1,000 were awarded. To be eligible, students must

plan to graduate from an accredited Nebraska high school this spring and plan to further their education within the state. Students must submit a completed application form, a seven-semester transcript, ACT/SAT scores, and an essay on the importance of county government. Excerpts from the scholarship recipients' essays will be published throughout the year in the *Countyline*. Applications will also be available from the NACO office at (402) 434-5660.

# Meth: America's Homegrown Drug Epidemic

Created in neighborhoods across the country, methamphetamine (meth) is America's homegrown drug epidemic. It's sweeping the Nation from the California coast to the eastern seaboard. Meth is leaving a path of destruction, particularly among small towns, where youth are more than twice as likely to use the drug than young people living in larger cities.

## What is meth?

This powerful drug works in the brain and gives users a sense of energy that can make them push their bodies faster and further than they are meant to go. Even small amounts of meth can cause a person to be more awake and active, but it also makes people lose their appetite and become irritable and aggressive. Meth also causes a person's blood pressure to increase and heart to beat faster.

## Why are small towns more affected?

Most drugs—such as cocaine or heroin—come from other countries and are sold by dealers. Meth can be cooked at home in kitchens and garages, in vacant barns, and in other buildings. It is created with common household items such as batteries and cold medicine. These items are cheap and can be bought in local stores. The chemicals in them can pollute neighborhoods and make the environment unsafe for kids.

Treatment for meth use can be hard to find in small towns. Rural communities often have fewer health facilities and treatment options than larger cities. This means that youth and adult meth users may find it hard to get the help they need.

## How many people are using it?

Numbers on meth use can be deceiving. While statistics show that use among teens and middle school students has been the same for the past few years, those numbers don't tell the whole story. Meth seems to spread in pockets, leaving some areas or populations nearly untouched while others are devastated.

## Why would anyone use meth?

Some people use it for the strong "rush" they get when they smoke or inject the drug. Other people use meth to help them lose weight or give them an energy boost so they can work more. Athletes and students sometimes begin using meth because it makes them feel like they are doing better in sports or schoolwork. At first, meth gives them more energy to practice sports and to study for longer periods of time.

## What are the effects of meth use?

When the high wears off, people who use meth go through a severe "crash." Because meth can be made

from lethal ingredients like battery acid, drain cleaner, lantern fuel, and antifreeze, there is a greater chance of having a heart attack, stroke, or serious brain damage with this drug than with other drugs. Long-term meth use can result in fatal kidney and lung disorders, brain damage, liver damage, chronic depression, paranoia, and other physical and mental disorders.

## How can you tell if someone is using meth?

Symptoms of meth use may include:

- Inability to sleep
- Increased sensitivity to noise
- Nervous physical activity, like scratching
- Irritability, dizziness, or confusion
- Extreme anorexia
- Tremors or even convulsions
- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, and risk of stroke
- Presence of inhaling paraphernalia, such as razor blades, mirrors, and straws
- Presence of injecting paraphernalia, such as syringes, heated spoons, or surgical tubing.

For treatment options, call your local health department, family doctor, or health care provider.

Meth use poses a real and growing threat to individuals, families, and communities across the country. Talk with your children about the dangers of using meth and help them find safe ways to "boost their energy." For example, they can take a 15-minute power nap after school, eat a high-energy snack, or exercise for 30 minutes. Meth is sweeping the Nation, but you have the power to prevent it from reaching your family.

Reprinted from *A Family Guide to Keeping Youth Mentally Healthy and Drug Free* at <http://family.samhsa.gov/talk/drugapi.aspx>

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# Thomas County To Build New Courthouse

By Teresa Wickens  
North Platte Telegraph

Thomas County could feasibly hold the November 2006 general election in its new courthouse," the architect for the new courthouse said Tuesday.

After more than three years of discussion and research, the Thomas County Board voted Tuesday to accept the \$868,575 bid by Hausmann Construction of Lincoln for a new courthouse and demolition of the current 80-year-old building.

The new Thomas County courthouse would be completely handicapped-accessible, according to Steve Granger of CG Architects.

Commissioner Charlie Daly said liability is big reason for the new building.

The current courthouse has three floors with no elevators or ramps for handicapped use. County Clerk Wendy Rinestine and Treasurer Judy Taylor say they often go downstairs to help elderly residents so they don't have to climb the stairs. In the County Extension office, Pat Neben said she often helps people on the upper landing, and Sheriff Randy Barnes usually helps people in wheelchairs by pulling them up the stairs. Daly said the current building "is a lawsuit waiting to happen."

Tammy Purdum said she has been following the project and asked if the old courthouse would

really have to be demolished. "I love these old buildings," she said. "Surely, someone could buy it and use it for something."

The first courthouse in Thedford was built in 1887 and rebuilt in 1926 after it burned down. The new courthouse will be the third in the county.

Granger explained that the current building would have to be brought up to code, especially if it would be used for the public.

Audrey Jones questioned the sense of building a new courthouse when "there is uncertainty about us even being a county."

"I hope we can keep our county forever, but it's not looking good," she said.

Rinestine said a new courthouse might go a long way to show the state that Thomas County wants to stay viable, even with its low population.

Purdum told the commissioners that it sounded like they had really looked at all of the options and "you will be in trouble either way you go."

"You have to make the tough business decisions, even though it is emotional," she said.

Granger said the groundbreaking could happen as early as January. Hausmann Construction bid a completion date of 245 days.

After the vote to accept the bid, Commissioner Stan Pettit's comment was, "Let's get 'er done."

Reprinted with permission from the North Platte Telegraph

## Saunders County Working For Its Own Route 66 (Continued from Page 11)

Ashland intersection, which I think was a great idea," Skeahan said. "But it's very much in conflict with this plan."

The roads department is considering Saunders County's request to change the highway back to Nebraska 63, but Peters said the department usually doesn't change highway numbers just because the highway intersects with a local street.

In any case, Skeahan said she hopes the roads department gets a new policy approved and is already thinking of ideas to make Route 66 a destination for drivers in Saunders County.

"We've talked about having car club cruises, motorcycle poker runs and community garage sales going from Valparaiso to Ashland," Skeahan said. "Goodness knows there's a lot of things the county has to deal with right now, but I definitely don't want to see this drop off the radar screen. We've gotten this far and I'm going to pursue it the rest of way."

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from the Lincoln Journal Star

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# January Legal Calendar

1	Assessor	Real and tangible personal property subject to taxation shall be assessed as of 12:01 a.m. on this date. 77-1201, 77-1301, 77-1211
1	Assessor	Railroads must report locally assessed property to the assessor. Public service entities operating within the state must report to the county assessor of each county in which it has situs all non-operating property belonging to such entity which is not subject to assessment and assessed by the Property Tax Administrator. 77-606, 77-801
1	Assessor	Applications requesting separate listing of severed mineral interest and surface estate must be filed with the county assessor by this date. 57-237
1	Clerk	By this date county, agricultural extension societies must file a report of their work and expenditures for the preceding year and a budget estimate for the ensuing year. 2-1606, 2-1607
1	Treasurer	All bonds given to secure deposits of public money expire on this date each year. 77-2327
1	Treasurer	Irrigation district assessments are due on January 1 next following the date of assessment thereof and may become a lien on the property. Irrigation district bond interest semiannual payments are due. 46-140, 46-196
1	Treasurer	Camper permit renewals become due on this date and delinquent on March 1. 60-1805
1	Counties over 200,000 population	Fiscal year begins unless a majority of the county board approves a change to a fiscal year beginning on July 1. 23-920
1	County Board, Weed Control Superintendent	By this date, organizations sponsoring continuing education for weed control superintendent's continuing must notify county board of the education hours completed by its weed control superintendent during the year. 2-954.02
First Tues.	Sheriff, County Board	Make a report to the County Board describing fees, fee totals and activity since last quarterly report. 33-117(3)
First Tues.	Clerk of Dist. Ct., Board	Quarterly remittance to state treasurer of money other than witness fees, fines, penalties, forfeitures and license money in the possession of the clerk of the district court which remains after 3 years. 24-345 Witness fees which remain for 6 months are reported to the county board, and after an additional 6 months are paid over to the county treasurer for credit to the common school fund. 33-140
5	Clerk, Election Commissioner	Last day for the governing board of each political subdivision which will hold an election in conjunction with a statewide primary election to certify to the Secretary of State, the election commissioner, or the county clerk the name of the subdivision, the number of officers to be elected, the length of the terms of office, the vacancies to be filled by election and length of remaining term, and the number of votes to be cast by a registered voter for each office. 32-404, 32-601
5	Clerk	Report to the Department of Health and Human Services Finance and Support a statement of all marriages recorded during the preceding month. 71-614
5	Clerk	Remit fees to the State Treasurer for credit to the General Fund for certificates of title, notation of liens, duplicates for boats and motor vehicles. 37-1287, 60-161
Not more than 6 nor less than 4 weeks before March 1	Treasurer	Prepare for publication a list of all real property subject to sale and amount of all delinquent taxes against each. An accompanying notice must state that the described property will be sold by the county at public sale for the purpose of collecting delinquent taxes, interest and costs. 77-1802
10-30	Clerk	The city, village, or county clerk must cause to be published in a legal newspaper in or of general circulation in such city, village, or county one time between these dates of each year, individual notice of the right of automatic renewal of each retail liquor and beer license, except that notice of the right of automatic renewal of Class C licenses must be published in July.
15	County Board	The salaries of all elected officers of the county must be fixed by the county board prior to January 15.
15	Assessor, Treasurer	Owner, lessee or manager of land upon which is parked a mobile home must report to the county assessor, the year, make, model, and size of each mobile home, the owner or occupant's name and address, and the date the mobile home was first parked or located on such land. 77-3706 Annual permits must be renewed during January. 77-3707

(Continued on Page 18)

# January Legal Calendar

*(Continued from Page 17)*

15	Clerk of the District Court	Make a report to the county board, under oath, showing the different items of such fees, revenue, perquisites, or receipts received, from whom, at what time, and for what service, and the total amount received by such officer since the last report, and also the amount received for the current year. Account for and pay any fees, revenue, perquisites, or receipts not later than the fifteenth day of the month following the calendar month in which such fees, revenue, perquisites, or receipts were received. 33-106.02
15	Clerk, Treasurer	Each county clerk or register of deeds shall, not later than the fifteenth day of the month following the calendar month in which fees are received, pay over to the county treasurer all fees received and take the receipt of the county treasurer. 33-130
25	Treasurer	By this date each month, the treasurer must transmit all motor vehicle registration fees collected to the state. 60-3,141(3)
31	Assessors	The State and political subdivisions must provide assessors with copies of leases or descriptions of property which is leased by this date. 77-202.11
31	General	Furnish Form 1099 statements to recipients. Furnish copies of W-2 forms to employees.
During month	Board	Commissioners elect a chairperson to serve for the ensuing year. 23-156
During month	Board	Supervisors must meet, organize and choose a chairperson. 23-272, 23-274
During month	Treasurer	Publish the receipts and disbursements of the treasurer's office for the last preceding six months ending Dec. 31. 23-1605
During month	Board	County board must make quarterly visit to county jail. 47-109
Last Business Day	Treasurer	State reimbursement of tax revenue lost due to homestead exemptions is issued on the last business day of the month for six months beginning in January. 77-3523
Within 30 days after First Tues.	Treasurer, Clerk, County Board	Make settlement with county board and file statement with county clerk showing the amount and source of money collected since last settlement, vouchers, amount of taxes due and unpaid, and money on hand. 77-1745.

# February Legal Calendar

1	Clerk	Report list of county officers to the Secretary of State. 23-1306
1	Assessor	Last date for owners, lessees and/or managers of any aircraft hangars or land upon which aircraft are parked to report such aircraft in the county as of January 1. 77-1250.02
1	Assessor, County Board of Equalization	Deadline for assessor to examine applications for tax exemptions and recommend taxable or exempt status to the county board of equalization. 77-202.01, 77-202.09
1-June 30	Assessor	First date for homestead application. 77-3512
1-June 1	County Board, Assessor	Between February 1 and June 1, the county board of equalization must grant or withhold tax exemptions requested for real or tangible personal property. 77-202.02
1	County Board, Highway Superintendent, Clerk	Submit county road annual program and annual report to county board and file current map of county roads with county clerk. 39-1508, 39-1512
5	Clerk	Return to the Department of Health and Human Services Finance and Support a statement of all marriages recorded during the preceding month. 71-614
5	Clerk	Remit fees to the State Treasurer for credit to the General Fund for certificates of title, notation of liens, duplicates for boats and motor vehicles. 37-1287, 60-161
First Week	Treasurer	Publish once a week in a legal newspaper, for three consecutive weeks prior to the date of delinquent tax sale, a list of real property subject to sale. In counties of more than 250,000 inhabitants, publish in a daily legal newspaper. Also post a copy of such notice in the treasurer's office. 77-1804

*(Continued on Page 19)*

## February Legal Calendar

*(Continued from Page 18)*

2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday	County Board	Library board shall, make a report to the board on or before this date about the condition of its trust on the last day of the prior fiscal year. 51-213
15	General	Last day for incumbents to file for office on the primary ballot. 32-606
15	Treasurer	Motor vehicle rental fees due and payable to the treasurer. 77-4501
15	Clerk, Treasurer	Each county clerk or register of deeds shall, not later than the fifteenth day of the month following the calendar month in which fees are received, pay over to the county treasurer all fees received and take the receipt of the county treasurer. 33-130
15	Clerk of the District Court	Make a report to the county board, under oath, showing the different items of such fees, revenue, perquisites, or receipts received, from whom, at what time, and for what service, and the total amount received by such officer since the last report, and also the amount received for the current year. Account for and pay any fees, revenue, perquisites, or receipts not later than the fifteenth day of the month following the calendar month in which such fees, revenue, perquisites, or receipts were received. 33-106.02
25	Treasurer	By this date each month, the treasurer must transmit all motor vehicle registration fees collected to the state. . 60-3,141(3)
28	General	File 1099 forms with the Internal Revenue Service. File Forms W-2 and W-3 transmittal form with the proper revenue agencies.
During Month	Assessor	Property Tax Administrator holds examination of applicants for certification. 77-421

## March Legal Calendar

1	Assessor	On or before this date, following any construction thereof or any change in the improvements made on or before January 1, the owner of the improvements must file with the county assessor an assessment application on a form prescribed by the Property Tax Administrator. 77-1374
1	Assessor	By this date, improvements on leased land list must be filed with the county assessor and assessor must send notification of government subdivisions of intent to tax property not used for a government purpose and not paying an in lieu of tax. 77-1376, 77-202.12
1	Board, Highway Superintendent	By this date, a county highway annual program must be adopted. 39-1503 Annual plan for specific road or street improvements for the current year must be submitted with the Board of Public Roads Classifications and Standards following a public hearing and approval. The board must review each such annual plan within sixty days after it has been filed to determine whether it is consistent with the county's or municipality's current six-year plan. 39-2119
1	Treasurer, Sheriff	Camper permit annual renewals become delinquent on this date. 60-1805
1	Treasurer	Registration deadline for expired motorboat certificates. 37-1226
1	Emergency Managers	Local emergency planning committee must review and update emergency plan as needed each year. 81-15,217
1	Clerks, Election Commissioners	Last day for non-incumbents to file for office. 32-606 Last day to withdraw filing for office. 32-622 Deadline for subdivisions to submit special issue for primary ballot. 32-559
5	Clerk	Report to the Department of Health and Human Services Finance and Support a statement of all marriages recorded during the preceding month. 71-614
5	Clerk	Remit fees to the State Treasurer for credit to the General Fund for certificates of title, notation of liens, duplicates for boats and motor vehicles. 37-1287, 60-161
First Mon.	Treasurer	Public auction for delinquent taxes against real property is to be held. 77-1802
9	Clerks, Election Commissioners	Deadline to mail special absentee ballot to those specifically requesting special absentee. 32-808
15	Clerk of the District Court	Make a report to the county board, under oath, showing the different items of such fees, revenue, perquisites, or receipts received, from whom, at what time, and for what service, and the total amount received by such officer since the last report, and also the amount received for the current year. Account for and pay any fees, revenue, perquisites, or receipts not later than the fifteenth day of the month following the calendar month in which such fees, revenue, perquisites, or receipts were received. 33-106.02

*(Continued on Page 20)*

# March Legal Calendar

*(Continued from Page 19)*

19	Assessor	Assessor must complete assessment of real property and file abstract with Property Tax Administrator. 77-1301, 77-1303, 77-1514
19	Assessor	The county assessor shall, after March 19 and on or before June 1, implement adjustments to the real property assessment roll for actions of the Tax Equalization and Review Commission. 77-1315
19	Assessor, County Board of Equalization	It is the duty of the assessor to report to the county board of equalization all real property in his or her county that, for any reason, was omitted from the assessment roll for the current year, after this date or any former year. 77-1317
19	Assessor, County Board of Equalization	After March this date and on or before July 25 or on or before August 10 in counties that have adopted a resolution to extend the deadline for hearing protests under section 77-1502, the county assessor shall report to the county board of equalization any overvaluation or undervaluation of any real property.. 77-1315.01
25	Treasurer	By this date each month, the treasurer must transmit all motor vehicle registration fees collected to the state. 60-3,141(3)
29	Clerks, Election Commissioners	Publication and posting date for notice of statewide primary. Notice also required to for political subdivisions. 32-802.

## NACO Calendar Of Events

January 20	NACO Legislative Meeting	Lincoln, Embassy Suites
January 27	NACO Legislative Meeting	Lincoln, Country Inn & Suites
February 8-10	County Board Workshop	Holiday Inn, Kearney
February 14-15	Nebr. Asphalt Paving Conference	Kearney, Holiday Inn
February 15	Panhandle District Meeting	To Be Announced
February 16	West Central District Meeting	To Be Announced
March 9	Southeast District Meeting	Beatrice, Holiday Inn Express
March 10	Northeast District Meeting	Columbus, New World Inn
March 16	Central District Meeting	Aurora, Leadership Center
June 14-15	Clerks of the District Court Workshop	Lincoln, Embassy Suites
June 21-23	Clerks, Election Commissioners, Register of Deeds, Treasurers Workshop	Grand Island, Midtown Holiday Inn
August 28-31	Assessors Workshop	Grand Island, Midtown Holiday Inn
September 14	Southeast District Meeting	Beatrice, Holiday Inn Express
October 5	NACO Legislative Conference	Kearney, Holiday Inn
December 6-8	112th Annual NACO Conference	Omaha, Holiday Inn Central

## County Classified

### FOR SALE

Snow wing for John Deere motor grader for sale by Dundy County. Contact Kent Anderson at (308) 289-3125

### Appraiser Position Open In Dodge County

The Nebraska Department of Property Assessment and Taxation is seeking an individual for the Appraiser position in the Dodge County Assessment Office. This individual will be primarily responsible for the assessment of all real property in Dodge County, but could also include other counties in Nebraska where the Property Tax Administrator has assumed the assessment

function.

Must hold or be able to obtain within 6 months a current valid Real Estate Appraiser registration issued by the Nebraska Real Estate Appraiser Board. Must have a valid Nebraska driver's license.

Starting salary \$35,350 annually plus excellent fringe benefits. You can view the job description and detailed requirements at the Department's website: <http://pat.nol.org> under Employment Opportunities. Also requires completion of a supplemental questionnaire. Apply on-line at [www.wrk4neb.org](http://www.wrk4neb.org) or contact DAS-State Personnel at (402) 471-2075.

# NACO Legislative Meetings Slated For January

Meeting dates have been set for county officials' review of legislative bills for the 2006 session. The meetings will be held in Lincoln at the Embassy Suites on Friday, January 20th and the Country Inn and Suites on Friday, January 27. Morning sessions will begin at 9:30 a.m. and will consist of round table discussions of each affiliate group. Lunch will be

provided at each meeting and the afternoon sessions will be a general discussion to establish NACO's position on each bill.

County officials are urged to attend one or both of these meetings. This is your opportunity to have input into the new laws that will determine how and when you perform the duties of your

office. If you are unable to attend either of the meetings, be sure to contact your group's legislative representative with your input. Please contact the NACO office at (402) 434-5660 or e-mail De Troxel, NACO Receptionist/Secretary at [dtroxel@nacone.org](mailto:dtroxel@nacone.org) if you plan to attend so that appropriate counts can be given to the hotel for luncheon.

## January Contest Based On Nebraska Legislative Trivia

The opening day of the 2006 Nebraska Legislature will be January 4. Test your knowledge of Nebraska legislative trivia and procedures by answering the following questions. Send your answers on a separate paper to NACO no later than January 30 to be entered into the contest drawing. Include your name, county and the office you work in, and be sure to mark the outside of your envelope with "Contest Entry." Good Luck!

1. How many states, other than Nebraska have unicameral legislatures?
2. What year did voters pass an initiative to amend Nebraska Constitution providing for a one house legislature?
3. Who was the first female member of Unicameral?
4. What year session did this person serve in?
5. How many bills were passed in the first unicameral session of the legislature?
6. Who was the Unicameral's first clerk?
7. When a bill is introduced, the Legislative Fiscal Office prepares budget statements estimating the anticipated change in state, county, or municipal expenses or revenue under the provisions of each bill. What is this statement called?
8. The statement in question #7 contains three estimates. Who calculates each of these estimates?
9. List the 14 standing committees of the legislature.
10. How many votes does it take to adopt amendments and move a bill from General File to the next stage of consideration?
11. What does the term "E&R Process" mean?
12. Can bills on select file be amended?
13. How much time must pass before a bill that has been introduced can be passed?
14. How many votes of the legislature does a bill with the emergency clause require to pass?
15. In order to override a gubernatorial veto of a bill, how many senators must vote to do so?

# NACO Conference Articles For Sale

Were you unable to attend NACO's Annual Conference in October or were there items in your registration material that you would like to purchase additionally? Below is a list of items and the cost to purchase each item. The cost of each item is listed along with postage for each item. Send your requests to NACO along with a check made payable

to NACO. NACO has a limited supply of each item so order early. Requests will be filled on a first come, first served basis. If you would like to purchase items from previous conferences that are not listed, please contact the NACO office at (402) 434-5660.



Conference Bag/Cooler \$5.00 (postage \$3.00)



Tool Card \$2.00 (postage \$1.00)



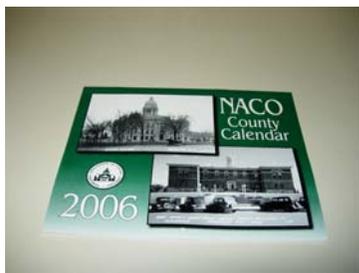
Conference Mug \$4.00 (postage \$3.00)



Guest Program Bag \$10.00 (postage \$2.00)



Pocket Calendar Free (up to three) (postage \$1.00)



Courthouse Calendar \$10.00 (includes postage)



2004 Conference Portfolio \$10.00 (postage \$3.00)

Previous years' Courthouse Calendars may be purchased for \$5.00 each. This price includes postage.

NACO has a limited supply of past year's conference mugs. If you are missing a certain year from your collection, contact the NACO office to inquire if the year you are missing is available. Past year's mugs are free but postage will be \$3.00 per mug.

# County Clips

## Services Held For Larry Kment

Services were held for Larry Kment, Dodge County Highway Superintendent on Thursday, September 22. Kment was Dodge County Highway Superintendent from 1974 until his death on September 19. NACO offers sincerest condolences to the family and friends of Larry Kment.

## State Association Presidents, Executive Directors To Meet In January

The presidents of the state associations of counties and their executive directors will meet with NACO officers and staff on January 11 – 13 in Washington, D.C. This annual meeting includes updates on potential legislative action by Congress, information on NACO programs and a briefing on issues at the White House.

## 2006 Achievement Award Applications Available

Applications for the 2006 NACO Achievement Award program are now available electronically and in hard copy. The Achievement Award program seeks to recognize innovative county government programs in a wide range of interest areas, including Criminal Justice, Health, Human Services, Transportation, and many more. The due date for submission is February 10, 2006.

## Registration Opens For 2006 Legislative Conference

NACO's 2006 Legislative Conference will be held on March 4 – 8 at the Hilton Washington & Towers in Washington, D.C. Online registration is now available through the NACO Web site.

The conference will feature a new "day" pattern for the first time. The conference will begin on

Saturday and conclude on Wednesday.

## Countyline To Be Published Every Two Months

The decision to cut Countyline Magazine to six issues yearly was made effective with the January issue. If you have articles to submit for the magazine or ads you would like to place in the County Classified section, deadlines for articles are as follows:

March Issue	February 13
May Issue	April 12
July Issue	June 13
September Issue	August 11
November Issue	October 11

You may send your articles to the NACO office or e-mail them to Lisa Wefer at [lisa@nacone.org](mailto:lisa@nacone.org) any time prior to the deadline for each issue. Please contact the NACO office if you have questions.

# Professional Directory

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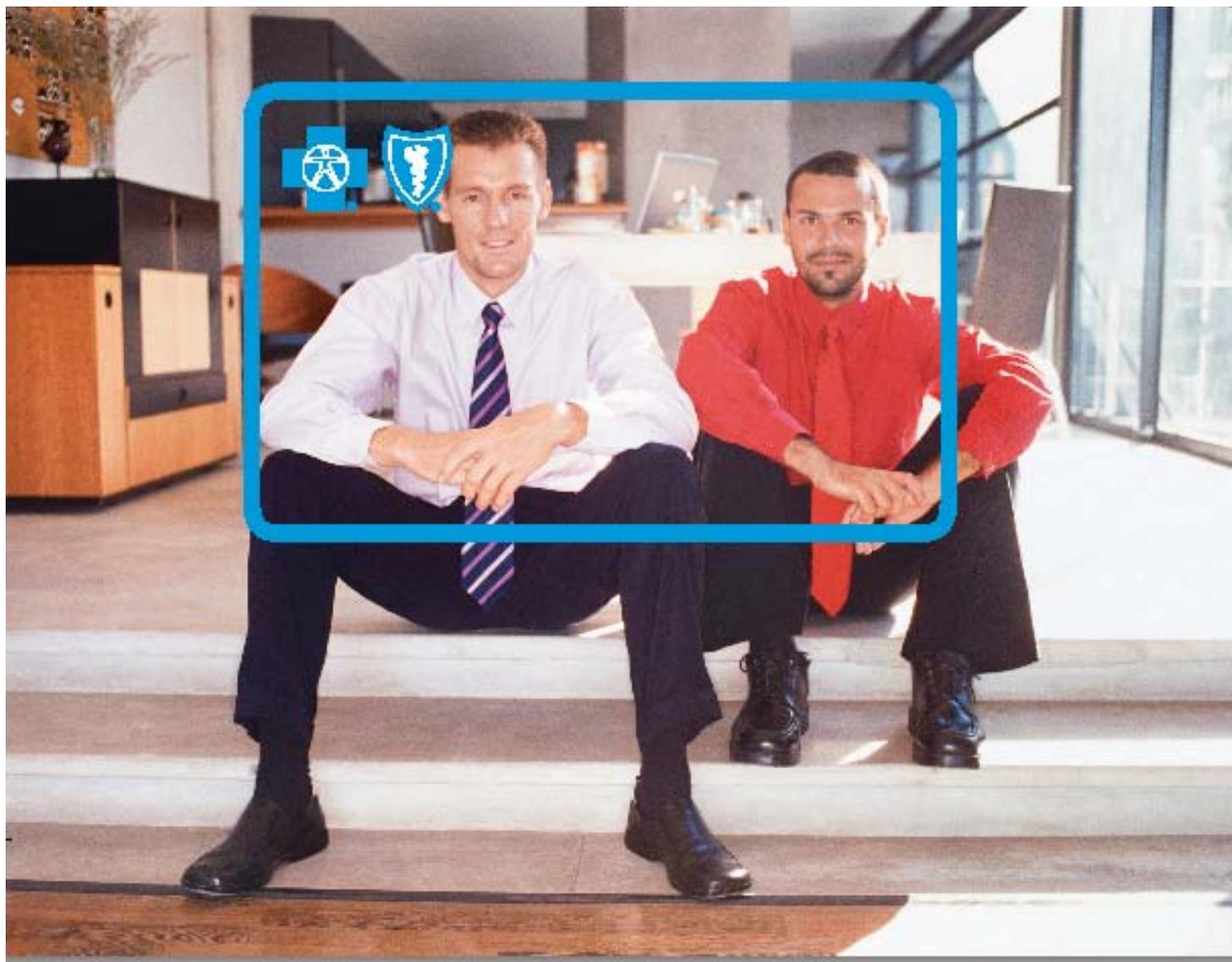
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