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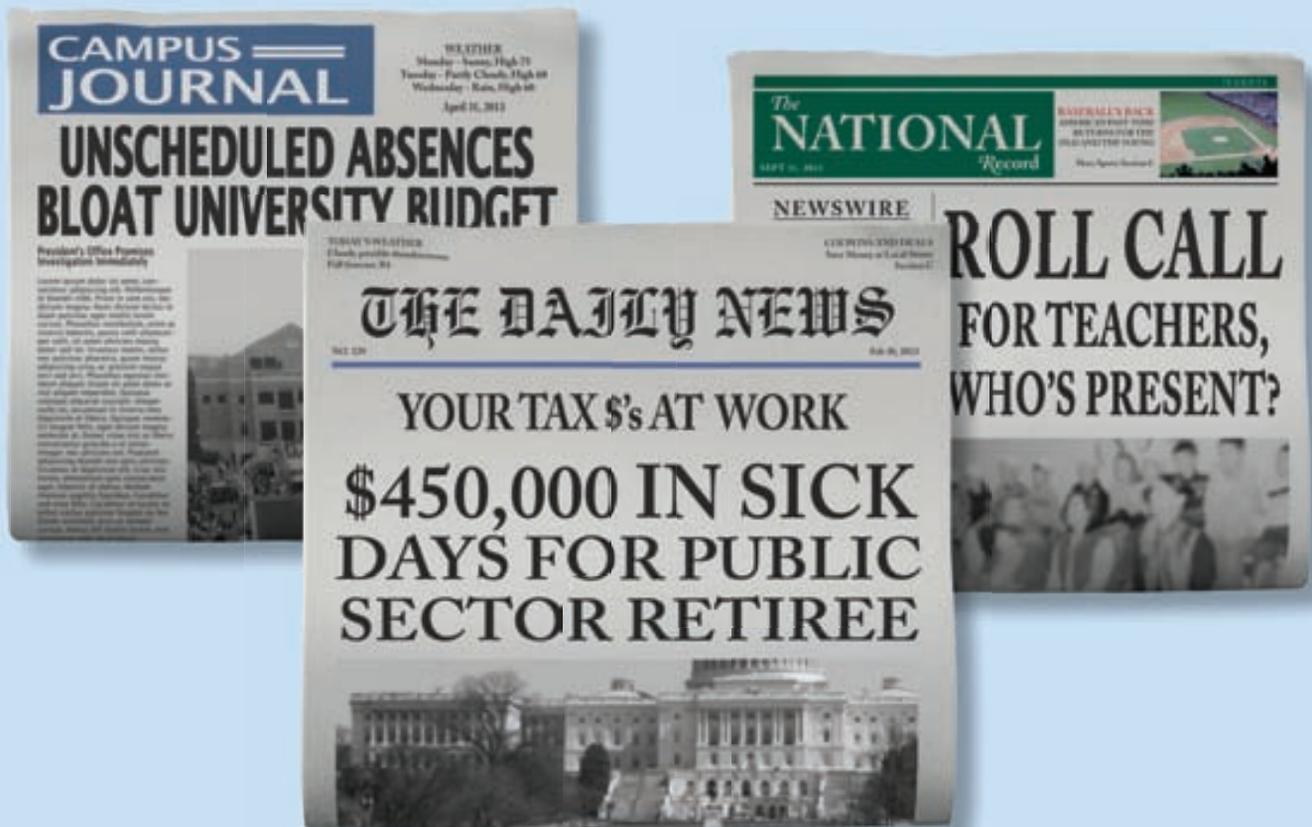
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THE MEDIA LOVES TO CRITICIZE THE PUBLIC SECTOR. LET'S NOT GIVE THEM ANOTHER REASON.



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Covering the Seats in Play

"You can't ignore politics, no matter how much you'd like to."

—Molly Ivins

With coverage of this year's presidential elections already saturating the media, some of us may wish there was a way to ignore politics. But the American political process, as loud and messy as it may appear, does what it is supposed to do: It helps us understand who the candidates are and the issues they believe in. While cynicism seems hard to avoid, especially at the federal level, public approval of state and local government remains relatively high. Combine that with the fact that states and localities are making more important decisions than ever before, and you have an excellent reason to follow the 2012 elections closely.

This year, we're making that easier for you with Election Center 2012, which can be found at governing.com/election. "It is a one-stop shop for state and local election news and insightful analysis, which nobody does better than *Governing*," says Web Editor Kathy Gambrell. "The Election Center provides the most up-to-date news, analysis and polling, together with useful data visualization tools."

Gambrell, a veteran news editor who has covered state, local and federal politics, leads a team of reporters and correspondents who are going behind the headlines to provide timely updates and analysis on the governors' races, legislative battles and key local campaigns.

To bolster our coverage, the Election Center contains interactive data analysis tools that allow viewers to use maps to drill down into information ranging from party breakdowns in state chambers, the number of vacant seats in a particular state and much more.

We also will be posting poll results on a variety of political issues at regular intervals. Governing Exchange, the online community of state and local leaders created by our research division, will be doing the polling. They've already found that a plurality of public officials are optimistic that the partisan rancor of the past few years will ease a bit in 2012: 40 percent expect less political conflict, 34 percent expect more and 25 percent expect about the same.

Since its launch in late February, the Election Center has been one of the most heavily visited features on our website, showing that it's always hard to ignore politics, especially at the state and local level, no matter how hard you try.

As always, please let me know how you think we're doing at publisher@governing.com.



By Fred Kuhn, Publisher

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Reprints of all articles in this issue and past issues are available (500 minimum). Please direct inquiries for reprints and licensing to Wright's Media: 877-652-5295, sales@wrightsmedia.com

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<http://www.governing.com/subscribe>

Governing (ISSN 0894-3842) is published monthly by e.Republic Inc., with offices at 1100 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 1300, Washington, D.C. 20036 and at 100 Blue Ravine Road, Folsom, CA 95630. Telephone: 202-862-8802. Fax: 202-862-0032. E-mail: mailbox@governing.com. Web: Governing.com. Periodical postage paid in Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. Copyright 2012 e.Republic Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of the publisher is prohibited. Governing, Governing.com and City & State are registered trademarks of e.Republic Inc.; unauthorized use is strictly prohibited. U.S. subscription rates: Government employees—free; all others—\$19.95 for one year. Foreign subscriptions: \$74.95 in U.S. funds. Post-master: Send address changes to Governing, 100 Blue Ravine Road, Folsom, CA, 95630. Subscribers: Enclose mailing label from past issue. Allow six weeks. Member: BPA International. Made in the U.S.A.

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Priced Out of Portland

Part of the reason there are relatively few transit-dependent riders on TriMet [the regional transit system] is that all the redevelopment in Portland, Ore., has chased low-income residents outside of the urban growth boundary, where there's no transit service [*The Portland Problem*, March 2012]. People who used to be able to hop on a bus in the Ride Free Zone downtown to get from their studio apartment to their job now have over two-hour commutes. This was documented in *The Oregonian* over a decade ago. Urban planners in Portland may pat themselves on the back for their urban livability, but it's not affordable for many. Though many decry roadway investment as unsustainable, the inability of transit systems to keep up with growth is showing that transit isn't very financially sustainable either.

—Richard Perez
Federal Way, Wash.

While light rail does help foster a certain ambiance in Portland [that] is quite nice, the growth boundary makes the city an expensive place to live and the actual diversion of auto trips to transit is trivial. Mr. Perez's comment is very apt.

—Marty Johnson
Chicago

The Sugarhouse district of Salt Lake City faces a similar “balance of power” between bus transit and a proposed/scheduled streetcar line. The streetcar scenario appears to be winning, largely due to intangibles: charm, historic memory, preservation. Most agree that buses are more flexible and less expensive per mile.

—Steve Parkin
Salt Lake City

A Dental Threat?

Readers deserve the facts about the potentially devastating effects of mid-level provider dental care, as well as information on several successful programs dentists currently provide as safe, effective alternatives [*The Tooth of the Matter*, January 2012].

Prior to being elected to Congress, I served as a dentist for more than two decades and have cared for thousands of patients. What we must be wary of is giving patients a false sense of security about the quality that midlevel providers can offer. While I support innovations in the dental team, I unequivocally oppose proposals to allow nondentists to perform irreversible surgical procedures like extractions. ... Midlevel providers simply don't have adequate training to perform these surgical processes safely and effectively. This is especially true for populations who have not utilized adequate access to dental care;

and therefore, often present with the most complex oral health problems.

This recent push for unqualified mid-level providers is a Trojan horse to give untrained providers comparable access as trained professionals. The American Dental Association created a pilot in 2006 to train community health workers. These Community Dental Health Coordinators (CDHCs) are modeled on medical community health workers, who have been successful in coordinating aspects of care not normally addressed by physicians or hospitals. CDHCs focus primarily on oral health education and prevention. They also help patients navigate the system to receive care from dentists, by assisting them with such functions as child care, transportation or getting permission to take time off from work. Many states have implemented or are exploring this enhanced dental assistant position.

My bottom line is that dental workforce innovations are only one component—and not the most significant one—of improving oral health. Any such innovations must not diminish our nation's high standards of quality and safety in dental care.

—U.S. Rep. Paul Gosar, D.D.S.
Arizona

AUDIENCE BREAKDOWN

The following chart shows which articles from the March Issue of *Governing* drew the most reader views. Although we receive many article comments online, letters to the editor are still welcome and encouraged at mailbox@governing.com.

46% **The Portland Problem**
by Ryan Holeywell

21% **Kris Kobach's Controversial Crusade**
by Alan Greenblatt

8% **California's TIF Over Redevelopment**
by William Fulton

7% **The Central Question**
by Katherine Barrett and Richard Greene

5% **Nueva Orleans**
by Zach Patton

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A nighttime photograph of a city street in Los Angeles. The scene is dominated by a large, multi-story office building on the left with many lit windows. In the center, a curved elevated highway or bridge is visible, with light trails from cars creating a sense of motion. To the right, several tall palm trees stand against the dark blue night sky. In the background, other city buildings are visible, including one with a prominent blue light trail. The overall atmosphere is urban and modern.

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Wisconsin Recall Draws Attention—and a Lot of Cash.

Gov. Scott Walker

AS WISCONSIN'S RECALL season gets under way, two things are abundantly clear. First, the elections will be enormously expensive. Second, they will do nothing to end the partisan brawling that has become endemic in the state.

Last year's attempts to recall a half-dozen state senators over a law that curbed collective bargaining for public employees is being followed by recalls involving four more state senators, not to mention GOP Gov. Scott Walker and Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch. Because of Walker's notoriety—or stature—as the elected official who has most aggressively targeted public-sector unions, total costs for the special elections are expected to top \$100 million.

That's a lot of money for a state the size of Wisconsin. As was the case last year in the recall districts, voters will be completely saturated with robocalls, TV ads and mailers.

"I live in a state Senate district where there was a recall last sum-

mer," says Mordecai Lee, a former state legislator who teaches political science at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. "It's baffling how much money was wasted."

Money is wasted, Lee argues, because most people in the state have already made up their minds. Where a normal election season may start out with as many as a third of voters undecided, in this case just "a lousy 4 to 5 percent of the people have no opinion about Scott Walker," Lee says.

Still, Walker and his opponents will seek to mobilize as many voters as possible. And every interest group with a stake in the race—unions and their allies but also many business groups—will want to play a role to show its supporters that it had an influence over this symbolically potent battle.

Heading toward the vote (set for May 8, with a general election held June 5 if needed), Wisconsinites can expect an endless stream of attacks and counterattacks. But that may yet

serve only as a prelude to the fall. Because even if Democrats manage to unseat Walker and pick up the solitary Senate seat they need for control of that chamber, Republicans will retain a large majority in the state House.

Given the GOP's 20-seat edge, regaining full control of Wisconsin's government is a tall climb, concedes Jim Smith, a Democratic consultant in Madison. But if they can take out Walker, Democrats will inevitably target the state House, in order to have any hope of real success in rolling back his policies.

Under this scenario both parties—even after spending so much in the recalls—will be making the case yet again to their national funding networks that the House is the ultimate battleground.

"Their campaigns will be national, too," Smith says, referring to fundraising by House members this fall. "There will be money and the effort with national conservatives. I would imagine they'll play that up to the hilt." **G**

Drilling Down in Frogtown

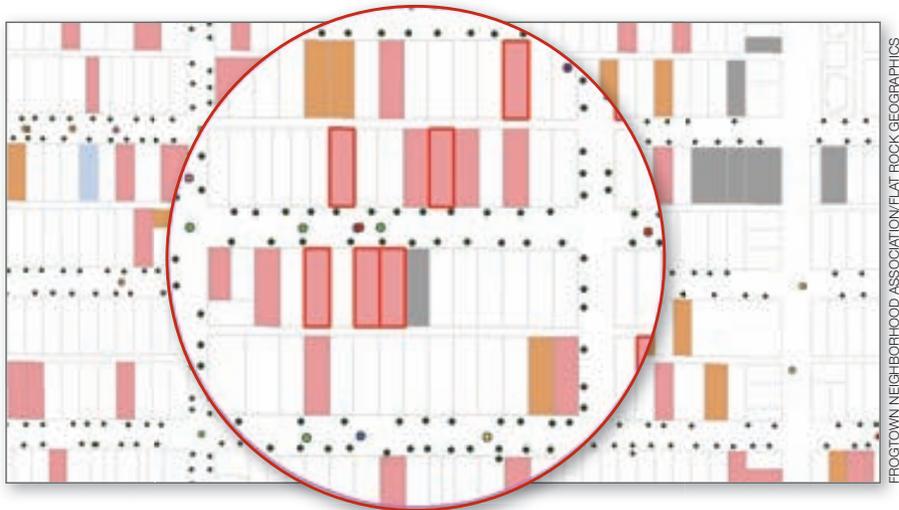
THERE HAVE ALWAYS been nosy neighbors. But sometimes, sharing information with the people around you can be useful.

That's certainly the impetus behind neighborhood email discussion groups that offer up all the latest news about crime, missing pets and school closings. And many communities are making more sophisticated use of such data through mapping and geographic information systems (GIS).

Frogtown, a section of St. Paul, Minn., is taking mapping further than most. The Frogtown Neighborhood Association, with foundation support, has put together a mapping tool that brings together all manner of data—public records, such as property lines and crime statistics; hand-collected tallies, such as the number of lampposts in alleyways; and information that residents have self-reported about their interests and organizational affiliations.

The result is a map that can look at any number of issues, and, perhaps more importantly, layer them together to see how different factors in the community interact. Early examples include sending targeted emails to residents in areas most immediately affected by crime waves and by sewer repair work. The association also paired information about residents who are interested in gardening with the locations of vacant lots to pick several spots for community gardens that would be most convenient for those likeliest to participate.

None of this has changed residents' lives dramatically, but it has made it easier for an area of 17,000 people to use resources more efficiently and know more about what's going on close to home. GIS maps have long been able to help residents learn more about structures and the physical environment, says Jeff Matson of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs



FROGTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION/FLAT ROCK GEOGRAPHICS

A St. Paul neighborhood is using detailed “relationship” information to create custom maps. This image shows a vacant plot of land and all the households within a given vicinity that have expressed an interest in community gardening.

at the University of Minnesota. But the Frogtown project adds another element: more of the social aspects of residential life. “It’s fairly common in other places for nonprofit agencies or universities to create neighborhood mapping or profiles,” Matson says, “but not down to the level of trying to collect data from individual residents.”

That’s what makes this tool unique, says Tait Danielson Castillo, the association’s executive director. It’s based on information gathered by talking with people in the neighborhood, he says. “It’s

a relationship-based system.”

Most such efforts require a lot of handholding and technical assistance from more experienced data collectors, but Matson says the Frogtown folks were self-starters. The type of information they’re collecting—and getting residents to collect—is becoming a lot easier as clunky and expensive GIS devices give way to smartphones. “They hired a private software developer to create this site,” he says. “The idea now is to replicate it at a much lower cost for similar groups.” **G**

“Is there some war they have to be ready for? Is there something pending that the rest of us need to know about?”

—Georgia state Rep. Roger Bruce, who said he doesn’t understand why gun rights advocates have filed so many bills in recent years to ease the requirements for who can carry guns and where. A bill in the House now would allow guns in bars, public schools, most government buildings and college campuses. Source: Atlanta Journal-Constitution



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Out of the Frying Pan...

For years, restaurants have had to pay companies to haul away the used cooking grease they throw out every night. But now, thanks to an increasing demand for biofuel—the commodities price of fryer oil is four times what it was 10 years ago—the back-alley oil has become an attractive target for thieves, *The New York Times* reports. California and Virginia have both passed statutes to regulate the way grease is disposed, and North Carolina lawmakers may vote on a similar measure in May. The rendering industry wants to protect the growing grease market from freeloaders, according to the *Times*. But making it a legislative priority isn't easy. Indeed, as many accused grease-snatchers have successfully argued in court, if a restaurant is throwing the oil out, hasn't it become garbage? Can hauling someone's trash away really be considered a crime?

Tuition? Bill me later.

FACING THE PROSPECT of double-digit increases in tuition for the remainder of their college careers, the editors of *Highlander* did what any self-respecting campus journalists would do. They wrote columns complaining about it.

But then they did something more. They kicked off a movement at their campus—the University of California, Riverside—that now has university officials rethinking their entire fee structure.

Rather than collecting tuition up front, the students' proposal would have UC take a share of each student's salary, 5 percent of their incomes for the first 20 years after they graduate. "When we found that no one was really working on anything like this, that no real solutions were being put forward, we decided to work on one ourselves," says Chris LoCascio, *Highlander's* editor-in-chief and now leader of a group called Fix UC.

The idea is getting a "serious hearing," says Steve Montiel, a spokesman for the UC system. University budget mavens are working on mechanical questions such as how collections and income verification



THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

might work. At the same time, there are serious doubts about the plan. Since the university couldn't collect until students graduated and started working, Montiel says, it would be left with a serious cash-flow problem for years to come.

And it's not clear that paying a percentage of future income would be such a great deal for students themselves. LoCascio objects to descriptions of his scheme as a loan, but that may be what it amounts to. Students could end up paying more as a result, especially since many get a big break on current tuition rates through financial aid.

The plan does nothing to address the underlying problem behind the sharp

tuition increases—major reductions in state aid—says Bruce Johnstone, an expert on higher education finance at the University at Buffalo. Instead, it mainly serves to shift costs from higher-income parents onto students themselves, Johnstone says, while "making the low-income students, whose parents do not have to pay now because they are financially unable, have to pay when the tuition is shifted to the deferred form."

Still, despite its potential downsides, LoCascio's idea is getting attention from student groups around the country. At a time when everyone is eager to figure out how to keep college affordable, it seems, any idea is worth talking about. **G**



5%

Sales tax on medical marijuana in Maine, unless it's baked into brownies, which are subject to that state's 7 percent tax on prepared foods.

—Source: Bangor Daily News

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THE BREAKDOWN

549:

The number of major environmental or safety violations handed out between 1998 and 2011 to oil and gas companies that drill on public lands, resulting in fines totaling less than \$275,000, according to a recent report from congressional Democrats.

668,000:

The number of state and local government jobs that have been lost since the recession hit, from a new study of national labor statistics by the Rockefeller Institute of Government.

867:

The number of prisoners per 100,000 residents in Louisiana in 2010, the highest imprisonment rate of any state that year. Maine had the lowest with 148.

SOURCES: THE NEW YORK TIMES; GOVERNING DATA; ASSOCIATED PRESS

Locking Up Less

A FLURRY OF LEGISLATION in recent years has taken aim at reducing growing prison populations, one of states' costliest endeavors. There's now evidence those efforts are having an effect, with the Bureau of Justice Statistics reporting the nation's prison population dipped in 2010—the first annual decline in nearly four decades.

States have pursued a range of reforms, from cutting sentences for nonviolent offenders to boosting community supervision programs. Federal and state prisoners totaled about 1.6 million at the end of 2010. That's a small decline—less than 1 percent—over the previous year, the first decrease since 1972. Release rates and average incarceration time remained the same; it's the number of new inmates that has fallen. Half of states reported fewer prisoners under state and federal jurisdiction in 2010, led by California (which cut its prison population by 6,213) and New York (which cut 2,031). Only Illinois and Texas saw their populations rise by more than 1,000.

Experts are unsure whether the dip signals a new trend. "It's too early to tell if this is a tap on the breaks or a shift in reverse," says Adam Gelb, director of the Pew Center on the States' Public Safety Performance Project. —Mike Maciag

“The guy is a walking example of the need for pension reform.”

—California Pension Reform President Dan Pellissier, referring to John Sandbrook, the L.A. Memorial Coliseum's interim general manager, who used about 35 years' worth of unused sick leave to boost his annual pension by \$655 a month. Source: Los Angeles Times



Blue Laws Getting a Little Less Blue

There was a time when would-be tipplers looking for a Sunday swig faced very limited options: Most states banned sales of hard liquor on Sundays. But that's changing. In the past decade, 15 states have repealed bans on Sunday sales, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Thirteen states still restrict such sales, but only Connecticut and Indiana ban Sunday sales of all alcohol, including beer and wine. Some Connecticut lawmakers want to repeal the Prohibition-era ban and let localities decide whether to sell on Sundays. That effort recently scored a major victory, when the state's package stores' lobby came out in favor of repealing the law.

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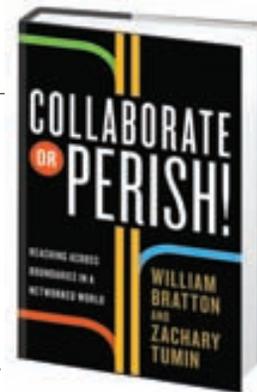


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Everybody Get Together

IN THEIR NEW BOOK, *Collaborate or Perish!*, former Los Angeles and New York City Police Chief William Bratton and Harvard Kennedy School professor Zachary Tumin talk about how learning to work together is imperative for the nation's future—and what that means for state and local governments.

—John Buntin



The title of your book suggests collaboration isn't just desirable, it's essential. Yet government is full of agencies that collaborate poorly, if at all. What's changed to make that unacceptable?

For more than a generation, government agencies have wrestled with issues around automation and IT technology. They still do, of course, but today everyone is automated—that's no longer the issue. The issue is what we do with all that automation. Keep it dumb and locked down in stovepipes and cylinders, or combine and transform into high performance? Collaboration is the difference.

What are the most common things that block effective collaboration in the public sector?

It's critical to overcome the mindset against collaboration, the idea that, "Sure, we'll collaborate, but only as a last resort." Sometimes there's an attitude of pessimism: "This is as good as it gets." Sometimes, it's an attitude of arrogance: "No one does it better."

You tell people to "have a vision," but also to "right-size the way forward. Make it doable." But in New York City and Los Angeles, Chief Bratton famously set—and achieved—crime reduction targets that were widely viewed as unreasonable. When should leaders set "blue-sky" goals, and when should they go for a modest win?

Set "blue sky" stretch goals, but then right-size the problem to get value in the hands of users fast and prove to everyone, "We can do this." You can't see the end of the journey from the begin-

ning. A vision keeps you moving, but oversized problems defy progress. It's that combination—a blue sky vision, a right-sized problem—that shows the path forward, delivers the win and value fast, and gets people going.

People usually think that right-sizing a problem means breaking it down into more manageable issues. But you argue that sometimes right-sizing means making it bigger.

It depends on what you need for success. And you go back and forth between both approaches as you progress. Sometimes you need to make the sandbox bigger, involve more folks. But that's all to make progress on a problem that everyone agrees is just the right size: big enough to make a difference, small enough to win against.

You write that a shared platform is the essential component of a successful collaboration, and "the platform is the strategy." What do you mean?

It means your platform for collaboration shapes your results and has to align with

your stated goals. If you want information sharing but your platform doesn't support it; if you want engagement but your platform has no capability for it; if you want visibility and transparency but your platform obscures or hides it, then that's your *de facto* strategy, whatever else you might say. So make sure that the platform supports your goal and mission because at the end of the day, your platform will either make mincemeat of your stated strategy, or make it soar.

OK, you have the vision; you've right-sized the problem; you have a platform. How do you get other agencies—and other people—to play?

Collaboration has to pay. It can pay financially or in mission effectiveness or in conferring status and stature. It's best if collaboration helps people do what they're going to do anyway—only together it gets done better, faster, cheaper. You need to signal with the A-team that this is going to be a win for all. You need to show that you have executive cover and support, that there is leadership that gets it and expects it. That all adds up to making collaboration pay. **G**



Bratton, left, and Tumin

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Angling for a Better Future

Are we ready to govern a more optimistic America?

ORLANDO, Fla.—In the 21 miles between the airport and Disney World, it is possible to find the Florida you've been reading about in the news over the past five years.

The drive produces evidence of some of the state's 2 million mortgage holders who owe an average of \$65,000 or more on their houses than they are worth, a strong sign that the housing market is still in deep trouble here. Yet there is also evidence of the 71 percent year-over-year increase in housing starts in the city.

Florida's retail market also serves up similar distinctions. The desolation of a half-dozen shuttered or failing shopping malls along State Road 426 stands in contrast to the shopping frenzy at an Outdoor World. The parking lot is full of late model pickup trucks, SUVs and minivans, and the store is crowded with people preparing for some serious camping, hunting and fishing. Standing in line, it is tempting to ask, "Recession? What recession?"

Retail is a powerful indicator of how we feel about our lives. Reflecting either increased consumer confidence or austerity fatigue, consumer credit card debt rose consecutively in the final four months of 2011, as shoppers reached for their cards in order to get on with their lives—even if it meant slipping back into old habits.

There is an opening in all of this for government leaders. It's a long list of to-do's, including the important busi-

ness of thinking, planning, engaging and investing in the future of our communities and country. Governments cannot simply muddle through this moment as improving revenue forecasts meet pent-up demand. Instead, they must lead toward a preferred future rather than simply restoring an unsustainable past.

This is a campaign that begins in cities and towns and coalesces in a critical mass at the state level. There is certainly a role for the federal government in all of this—an important one at that—but the feds cannot do it by themselves, and they should not be relied upon to lead.

The public expects nothing less. In its longitudinal tracking survey, the polling firm Gallup reports that localities are alone among levels of government in not having lost the public's trust and confidence to handle problems. Local governments have scored consistently well since 1997, keeping two-thirds of the public approval during two severe recessions. In the intervening years, trust in state government took substantial hits during those recessions. Even as state ratings improve during the still nascent recovery, their overall approval has dropped 16 percent since 1997. In contrast, trust levels in the federal government have been in steady decline since 2005, with Congress' approval ratings languishing at an all-time low in the teens.

There is new data to suggest that public officials get the point, and have internalized it. A poll by our readers panel, Governing Exchange, found that 84 percent of *Governing's* readers are now somewhat or very optimistic about their ability to make a meaningful contribution through public service, and the responses suggest that now is the time to do it. (Poll results were based on a survey of 312 readers.)

Almost two-thirds of the survey respondents (62 percent) report being somewhat or very optimistic about their jurisdiction's fiscal condition in 2012 and nearly half (45 percent) expect little or no net change as a result of legislative elections this fall. These results suggest that people on the ground are sensing a change in both direction and momentum after a very dark five-year period.

None of this suggests that our communities will magically transform into the happiest place on earth, but there is reason for optimism that things have begun to get better. **G**

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Retail stores are rebounding, an indication that American confidence is on the rise. Is government prepared?





Talking Water
Gardens Southern
Influent Point
Albany, Ore.

Leveraging Private Partners for Sustainable Solutions

For a government official, navigating a complex environmental regulatory environment and ensuring compliance can be a murky endeavor. An aging infrastructure only complicates the situation, saddling government agencies with systems that are in dire need of renovation. This is especially true of local governments and utilities managing wastewater and sewage treatment programs on outdated technologies. Many jurisdictions are running low on capital to fund improvements that support the long-term vitality of their communities.

How can they bridge this gap? For many years, public sector decision-makers have been successfully partnering with private industry to plan, design, construct and even operate water and wastewater infrastructure. Today, forward-looking governments and their consulting partners are also finding innovative ways to team with local businesses to help finance infrastructure solutions, effectively extending the reach of government resources.

And there's a lot more to a modern municipal environmental program than the latest and greatest water

treatment facilities. Broad-based initiatives promote energy savings, water recycling, wildlife areas, community walking trails, education efforts and much more. Some sustainable programs even offer revenue generation opportunities, and all support growth of green, local jobs and businesses.

Learn how three jurisdictions are using unique public-private partnerships to deliver creative, sustainable solutions that preserve and enhance their community's economic and environmental health for today, and tomorrow.



Skiddy Park Basketball Court
Syracuse, N.Y.

Green infrastructure gains momentum as viable alternative

TO SAY ONONDAGA LAKE in Syracuse, N.Y., wasn't exactly a destination would be an understatement. Marked by a foul smell that kept visitors away, it was described as an "open sewer" and a "dumping ground" for industrial waste.

A consent judgment from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency gave local officials until 2012 to reduce combined sewer overflow into the lake by 80 percent. Onondaga County planned to meet the EPA's demands by constructing a total of four sewage treatment plants.

But not everyone in the community was on board with the approach, fueled by antiquated technologies that provided limited treatment to the rainwater and snowmelt that combines with raw sewage and causes these overflows. The process utilized high doses of chemicals and consumed considerable amounts of energy. In addition, the new plants would disrupt established residential and commercial neighborhoods.

When Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney took office on January 1, 2008, one of the new sewage treatment plants had already been built, and the others had been designed and advertised for construction. But Mahoney, a former Syracuse Common Council member, had some ideas for a different approach.

"I wanted a fresh perspective about what was possible. I didn't want to just be tied to what we had been aiming for over the last several years," Mahoney says. Gathering a diverse group of stakeholders, they enlisted a critical external partner as well: CH2M HILL.

The group successfully lobbied for a one-year moratorium to formulate a more sustainable approach. "CH2M HILL showed people that what we were talking about here really was possible," Mahoney says. "They gave a lot of credibility to the discussion right in the very beginning."

A comprehensive planning process resulted in a new proposal going before the EPA. The result? The original EPA consent order was amended in a first-of-its-kind decision that incorporated "green" infrastructure into the solution.

Dubbed "Save the Rain," Onondaga County is supporting many different projects throughout the county aimed at keeping rainwater from costly and unnecessary treatment alongside municipal sewage. High-profile public projects include a 66,000 square foot "green roof" on the Syracuse Convention Center, which captures one million gallons of rainwater annually. Syracuse's professional hockey team, the Syracuse Crunch, now plays on ice made of recycled rainwater. Porous pavement surfaces, which also capture significant amounts of rainwater, are showing up in parking lots, parks and basketball courts throughout the area too.

But in Syracuse, publicly funded projects are only part of the solution. Many projects on private property are making significant contributions to rainwater capture goals too. In fact, leaders attribute much of their progress to their ability to leverage these private dollars. "A lot of our success has had to do with public-private partnerships," Mahoney

explains. "Our money goes further when private entities participate."

CH2M HILL worked with the County to develop and implement the "Green Improvement Fund" in Syracuse, a program that awards grants to private business owners that align their building and property improvements with Save the Rain project goals. To date, nearly \$1.5 million worth of projects have been funded in this manner, capturing nearly 4 million gallons of runoff. Officials cite evidence that the program is gaining momentum, with two to three times that number of projects currently in the award and contract phases.

You could say that the story of Onondaga Lake is coming full circle. Mahoney explains that one upside to all the cleanup efforts in recent years is that the county now owns 95 percent of the lake's shoreline. And Mahoney is committed to the lake realizing its potential as a true community resource.

That goal is now within reach. "We're building a walking path and a bike path around the lake," says Mahoney. "Now you'll see boats, jet-ski races, fishing derbies, regattas... people are starting to use the lake more. The water looks blue, it smells good and people want to be near it," she adds. A public process is now under way to gather input on the future of public uses at the lake.

Onondaga County Green Infrastructure Fund (GIF): Private Funding Extends Reach of Public Dollars

Project: Central New York Philanthropy Center

Description: Several types of green infrastructure solutions, including a rooftop garden, porous pavement parking surface and on-site bioretention.
Run-off Reduction: 194,000 Gallons/Year
GIF funding: \$62,700
Private funding: \$100,000

Project: Hotel Skyler

Description: Conversion of a 9,800 square foot asphalt parking lot to a porous lot and installation of two dry wells (cisterns) to capture storm water for on-site use.
Run-off Reduction: 173,000 Gallons/Year
GIF funding: \$100,000
Private funding: \$136,460

Project: King & King Architects

Description: As part of a complete building renovation, a green roof system was installed over 11,200 square feet of the roof surface.
Capture: 197,000 Gallons/Year
GIF funding: \$100,000
Private funding: \$136,000

A well-rounded partnership: shared vision breeds environmental innovation

IN THE 1980S IN FAYETTEVILLE, Ark., a nearly two-decade old wastewater treatment plant was operating on aging technology. Water discharged into the White River was not meeting water quality standards — a significant concern for the primary source of the area's water supply. The city brought in CH2M HILL to help design a modern facility that could satisfy more rigorous new standards and position Fayetteville for the future.

At the time, constructing and operating a biological nutrient reduction plant of this size was a significant undertaking. Not satisfied that it had the resources to run the facility, Fayetteville again enlisted CH2M HILL for operations and maintenance. They have enjoyed a symbiotic relationship ever since.

"In the City of Fayetteville, we are constantly striving to improve, and CH2M HILL has constantly shared that vision," says Utilities Director David Jurgens. "They don't simply operate what they've got. They constantly look for ways to make our process better — to provide better customer service and better environmental protection."

Several public, competitive bidding processes through the years have validated that Fayetteville and CH2M HILL are well-suited partners. Together they have implemented a number of new programs on the leading edge of sustainable environmental policy, representing a model for other jurisdictions to emulate.

Energy conservation efforts at wastewater facilities are bringing significant cost savings for the city. Onlookers notice facility staff pedaling bicycles and tricycles on premises, rather than powering up golf carts or pickup trucks for the transport of lightweight materials. But that's just the beginning.

A back-up generator at one wastewater facility brings more than \$16,000 in monthly savings by allowing the plant to be off the electrical grid entirely during periods of heightened demand. This successful initiative was also implemented at the second plant and the largest pump station, resulting in similar savings. The community at large benefits too from a significant amount of electrical capacity being added back to the power grid, since they are less likely to lose power at their homes and businesses during periods of peak usage.

CH2M HILL engaged academics at the University of Arkansas, located in Fayetteville, who had developed a dissolved oxygen system that more efficiently oxygenates wastewater effluent. Seeing a return on investment in just four years, the City of Fayetteville was the first to purchase this unique system that has since gained recognition for its role in helping clean up the 2010 Gulf oil spill.

The grounds of the Noland wastewater treatment plant are now home to a 13-acre wildlife habitat, frequented by nature lovers and

bird watchers. The first city-owned property to be recognized by the National Wildlife Federation, the area is xeriscaped with native trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers, and features Bluebird boxes and a nature trail.

Fayetteville has also implemented an innovative biosolids drying program, which taps solar energy and a natural gas-powered thermal dryer to reduce the moisture content of treatment residuals to less than 10 percent. The end product is expected to be sold as fertilizer, representing a new revenue stream for the city. "We have a salable asset that has beneficial use to other people," Jurgens notes, "who then don't have to buy manufactured fertilizer because we can provide a very natural, organic product for less."

CH2M HILL has been an integral part of Fayetteville's environmental leadership, sponsoring and playing a key role in the 2007 International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives conference. In subsequent years, CH2M HILL has sponsored additional events, including citywide green workshops for citizens and businesses.

Jurgens strongly believes that all of these efforts, led by the strategic partnership between the city and CH2M HILL, have helped increase the community's environmental consciousness. "We've used these processes to lead by example," he concludes.

Noland Wastewater
Treatment Plant
Solar Drying Facility
Fayetteville, Ark.

Talking Water Gardens
Albany, Ore.

Award-winning wetlands project cools Oregon waters

THE WILLAMETTE RIVER in northwestern Oregon was named an American Heritage River in 1998, one of only 14 in the nation. One of the main tributaries to the Columbia River, the Willamette is a vital resource that runs through many Oregon communities, including Albany and Millersburg.

But impacts from local industry as well as treated wastewater entering the river raised the water temperature in the area, threatening wildlife and prompting action by the state Department of Environmental Quality. While many species were potentially impacted, the salmon the Pacific Northwest is known for were of particular concern.

A partnership with nearby Millersburg, established several years earlier with the construction of joint water treatment facilities, proved vital to addressing these challenges. The jurisdictions enlisted the help of CH2M HILL to develop a sustainable, cost-effective solution that focused on the long-term health of the community as a whole.

"CH2M HILL has been very responsive to our needs. They are innovative in their thinking, both in addressing the water temperature problem and leading the discussion of alternatives, and even getting the project designed and built in the most economical way," says Mark Shepard, Albany's Public Works Director. "They've been a great partner."

Local rare metals manufacturer ATI Wah Chang faced their own regulatory challenges. Required to treat effluent from their manufacturing facility, meeting their compliance obligations would have required an extensive permitting process, as well as design and construction of another discharge point.

CH2M HILL seized this opportunity to unite ATI Wah Chang with Albany and Millersburg to develop a collaborative solution that served both public and private interests. Bringing these three stakeholders together, CH2M HILL reduced costs by allowing ATI Wah Chang to avoid permitting and constructing their own wastewater outlet, instead relying on Albany's discharge point.

Together, they built a 39-acre functional wetland area, along with 11 acres of perimeter landscaping, offering multiple benefits. This innovative public-private engineering project cools the water, provides additional natural water treatment through the addition of vegetation and offers a significantly enhanced wildlife habitat.

The wetlands project was funded in part by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) dollars, with a \$2.5 million contribution from the cities of Albany and Millersburg. ATI Wah Chang contributed \$3.25 million, a figure that would have been much higher absent the partnership with the municipalities.

Called "Talking Water Gardens," the name references the local American Indian term for waterfalls, "talking waters." The wetlands system is joined by seven man-made waterfalls constructed by stacking boulders, which provide aeration and cooling, along with the natural hum of "talking" waters.

Evidence of the project's environmental benefits abounds. Shepard cites increased use from bird watchers and nature lovers, even in advance of the official grand opening, expected this summer. "We're seeing birders come through. We had a group of artists who came through and set up and actually did their painting out there in the wetlands. We see people from the community with strollers walking through the area," he adds.

Talking Water Gardens also helps control costs for local rate payers, both residential and commercial, by virtually eliminating ongoing operations and maintenance expenses that would be associated with cooling towers or other more mechanical fixes, Shepard explains.

Future plans, if additional funding becomes available, include signage and an interpretive center to help educate wetland visitors about local water systems.

In addition to many industry accolades, the Talking Water Gardens project has inspired renewed community interest in the river from outside groups as well. A private foundation, for example, is considering riparian enhancements near Talking Water Gardens.

The CH2M HILL team in Albany-Millersburg was recognized with their internal CH2M HILL CEO Excellence Award for the integral role they played in the project's success. Rather than using the \$30,000 cash award for themselves, the group donated their winnings to the Albany Millersburg Economic Development Corp (AMEDC) to support additional local sustainable economic development.

"The Talking Water Gardens project showcases how public-private partnerships can transform our local environment and economy," says AMEDC President John Pascone.

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By Donald F. Kettl

Bringing Jobs Back Home

Insourcing can only happen with heavy lifting by states.



Master Lock has been hailed for bringing factory jobs back to the U.S. But the story's not that simple.

AP IMAGES.COM

Early last year, President Obama met with top Silicon Valley entrepreneurs. After decades of watching companies outsource jobs to other countries, the president wondered, can we bring them back by insourcing? Obama zeroed in on Apple's then-CEO Steve Jobs. How could Apple, the most successful IT firm on the globe, bring the manufacture of iPhones back to the United States?

Jobs' answer was simple. "Those jobs aren't coming back." Much of the company's engineering is done in the U.S., but almost everything in the array of Apple products is manufactured abroad. When Apple needs fast production changes and high-quality results, foreign manufacturers can do what American companies can't.

We've lost a staggering number of manufacturing jobs. In the past decade, work in manufacturing shrank nearly a third, from 16.9 million in 2000 to 11.5 million in 2009. A February study by the Pew Charitable Trusts concluded that "many of the manufacturing jobs that were lost have not returned."

With the issue plaguing him in the presidential race, Obama held a White House forum in January featuring companies that had insourced jobs, whether by bringing them back to the U.S. or by creating new ones. The forum celebrated companies that had returned call centers, among other functions, to our shores. One firm, GalaxE.Solutions, received accolades for its Outsource to Detroit campaign, which is focused on hiring 500 IT professionals in the next five years.

Then, in his State of the Union address, Obama highlighted Master Lock, which has brought several jobs back from abroad.

For the "first time in 15 years," Obama told Congress, "Master Lock's unionized plant in Milwaukee is running at full capacity."

How to convince other companies to follow their lead? In his speech, the president laid out a plan that proposed eliminating tax deductions for companies moving jobs overseas and imposing a minimum tax on multinational companies, even if they generate some of their profits abroad. He called for bigger tax cuts for U.S. manufacturers and for providing "help financing a new plan, equipment or training for new workers." Rounding out his list: Get tough on unfair trading practices, equip 2 million Americans with high-demand job skills through a one-stop job training system, have states require students to remain in high school until age 18, increase student aid for college, ensure states provide more higher education support and rein in college tuition costs.

This is a tall order, from changes in tax breaks for companies that create jobs to a transformation of the job training system. It calls for states to make major investments in higher education and community colleges while holding down tuition, and it calls for regulatory changes in compulsory school attendance laws. In fact, much of Obama's federal job-creation effort is really a state-based strategy.

Since the 1960s, job training and development has been a federal-state partnership, with states in the operational lead. The big expansion of federal job training programs in the 1970s came via block grants with federal cash and local responsibility.

The Master Lock story, though, shows just how hard it will be for the states to change gears on the globalization engine.

A *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article found that the company began shifting jobs from Wisconsin to China in the mid-'90s because of cheaper labor costs. A few years later, Master Lock expanded production in Mexico. In recent years, however, enhanced automation, better equipment and improved material management helped the company vastly increase its manufacturing efficiency in Milwaukee. Because of this lean manufacturing approach, the company now produces components to sell in China.

That's led to jobs shifting back to the U.S. Yes, Master Lock is running at full capacity, but with 750 fewer workers than it had in Milwaukee 15 years ago. And it still has factories in Mexico and China.

This is a lesson for the jobs debate. Even if many of the lower-skilled jobs that went to foreign factories aren't returning, America still has a strong future in manufacturing. However, it will likely follow the Master Lock insourcing model: fewer workers in more sophisticated factories doing more highly skilled jobs at good pay. These jobs will build on America's comparative advantage, engineering sophistication and innovative know-how. But they won't be the large-scale assembly jobs that Apple and other global firms long ago outsourced to China for making the latest consumer products.

Still, the feds do have a part to play in returning jobs to America, say insourcing experts. The federal government can help level the international playing field in tax and trade policy, and tax incentives can help. They can also lower barriers for international trade.

But neither bargaining nor incentives can fill the gap if workers aren't up to the job. In the end, insourcing is about upsizing education, and that buck stops in our local schools, community colleges and universities. State and local governments will have to be the engine that drives that future, since so much of the future relies on skilled and creative workers with a high-quality education. **G**

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Make Roads, Not War

Can savings from Iraq and Afghanistan really fund infrastructure needs at home?

President Obama has been pitching a simple solution to fix the country's infrastructure: "Take the money we're no longer spending at war, use half of it to pay down our debt and use the rest to do some nation-building right here at home," he said in his State of the Union address to Congress in January.

It sounds easy enough. This fiscal year, the country will spend an estimated \$126.5 billion on Overseas Contingency Operations—Washington jargon for war—and Obama has proposed ultimately reducing that figure to \$44.2 billion. The president reasons that the billions saved by winding down the wars can now be spent building much-needed infrastructure at home. But are war expenses really savings at all?

It depends on who you ask. James Horney, a specialist on federal budget issues at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, says that Obama's position can be viewed two ways. Critics would contend that since war doesn't occur in perpetuity, there is no cost savings—it was expected that the expenditure would end at some point anyway. But from a broader perspective, Obama may have a point. Money is fungible, and it's true that U.S. war spending is on the decline.

Still, Horney says, Obama's speech didn't provide much guidance to the congressional committees tasked with making tough decisions about funding transportation. "Simply saying it's coming from [war savings] doesn't provide a funding stream," Horney says. Even lawmakers in the president's own party are skeptical. "I've always been reluctant to use Overseas Contingency Operations to pay for something," Democratic Sen. Kent Conrad of North Dakota said at a hearing on the issue.

The idea behind using so-called peace dividends to pay for infrastructure relies on an oversimplification of the key funding challenges at the root of Congress' ongoing failure to pass a highway and transit bill: the declining purchasing power of the gas tax, which has been unchanged since 1993. Critics say the president is trying to bolster his credentials by making bold calls for infrastructure investment without a real payment plan. "Anything would have been better than saying 'war savings,'" says Joshua Schank, head of the transportation policy think tank Eno Center for Transportation. He adds that the president's call for a six-year, \$476 billion surface transportation bill—which vastly exceeds the cost of legislation considered in either chamber of Congress—is unrealistic. "It's just red meat to the base. It's not something that's constructive."

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Smoke in Their Eyes

Studies show anti-smoking programs save millions. So why are states cutting them?

Although obesity-related diseases are making a charge, smoking still holds a Secretariat-like lead in the nation's death-race derby. Tobacco use is far and away the single leading preventable cause of disease, disability and mortality in the United States. Each year, an estimated 443,000 people die prematurely from smoking or exposure to secondhand smoke, and another 8.6 million live with a serious illness caused by smoking, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The costs of smoking-related illnesses, of course, are staggering: about \$193 billion a year in medical expenditures and lost productivity, the CDC reports. Since Medicaid recipients are disproportionately affected by tobacco-related disease—smoking is approximately 53 percent more prevalent among them than among the overall U.S. adult population, according to the National Institutes of Health—states should be looking here to lower their health costs.

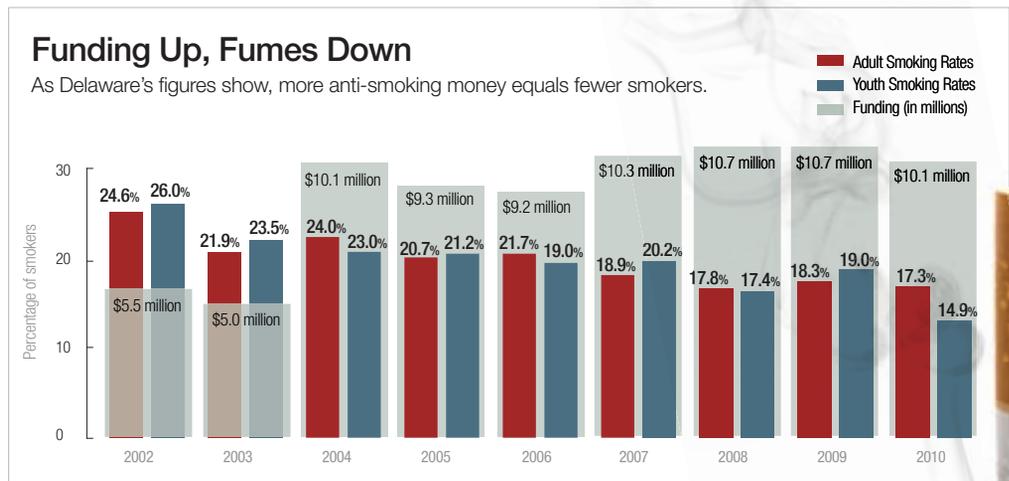
After all, there is no clearer link in medicine. Get people to kick the habit and their health improves fast. You no longer have to pay to combat smokers' lung and other cancers, cardiovascular and pulmonary diseases, or their children's asthma, respiratory infections, ear infections or a host of other secondhand smoke-induced problems.

Even better, there is a wealth of reliable evidence that smoking cessation programs not only work, they work in wonderfully cost-effective ways. Most recently, a study from George Washington University's Center for Health Policy Research looked at Medicaid data from Massachusetts and concluded that every \$1 invested into the smoking cessation program yielded \$3.12 in medical savings. "These results suggest that an investment in comprehensive tobacco cessation services may result in substantial savings for Medicaid programs," the study concluded.

No-brainer, right? Wrong. States from coast to coast are slashing or eliminating the very programs that could be saving them tons of money, according to the American Lung Association. It gave a grade of "F" to 43 states and the District of Columbia for funding programs at less than half the level called for by the CDC in its 10th annual State of Tobacco Control Report Card.

"There are very few no-brainers in government," admits Gov. Jack Markell of Delaware, one of the few states that received a good grade on the report card. His state managed to cut the budget elsewhere and leave anti-smoking programs intact. "We know smoking is pretty much the top health problem," he says, "and we are focusing as much as we can on disease reduction to reduce everybody's health-care costs."

The state doesn't actually track its return on investment, says Dr. Karyl Rattay, director of Delaware's Division of Public Health.



But she has seen other states earn returns as much as 10 to 1. "That's huge when you're looking at really high health-care costs," she says, "and we've also observed what happened where other programs were reduced. When funding is cut, you see increases in tobacco use."

It takes more than just money to beat the marketing might of Big Tobacco. "When you align all the different sectors of public or private partners, you are much more likely to be successful," Rattay says. "Our governor is a health champion, which is so important. Cancer prevention is very important to many of our legislators. We have a cancer consortium that includes legislators, state health-care leaders, agency heads and strong anti-smoking advocates."

Still, money is critical, and "no program is hands-off," Rattay says. "You have to look closely every year and show improvements in our smoking rates." Markell adds that while budget pressures will continue as far as the eye can see, "we are very pleased with the progress we have made." **G**

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Tapped In

Cities are stepping up efforts to tout tap water.

Six years ago, the Fiji Water company made headlines for a cheeky advertising campaign that quipped, “The label says Fiji because it’s not bottled in Cleveland.” Naturally, the ads suggested, bottled spring water imported from the South Pacific must be better than tap water from northeast Ohio. Right?

Well, no. In response to the ads, Cleveland tested its city water against the Fiji brand. What it found was that the bottled water contained 6.3 micrograms of arsenic per liter; the city’s tap water was arsenic free. Fiji apologized for its *faux pas*—or is that *eau pas*?—but the story is still gleefully repeated by water utility directors, who will tell you that tap water is almost always better than bottled.

“[Tap water] is right for the environment, it is cost effective and it is tested more extensively than the water in a plastic bottle,” says George Hawkins, general manager of DC Water, the water and sewer authority for Washington, D.C.

Municipal drinking water is strictly regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency under the Safe Drinking Water Act, and utilities test their drinking water at least once a week. Bottled water regulation is decidedly less stringent. DC Water, for example, conducts more than 30,000 tests a year, but the Food and Drug Administration has only 2.6 full-time positions to inspect and regulate the thousands of bottled water facilities throughout the U.S. Meanwhile, the waste produced from water bottles is an environmental nightmare. Only 25 percent of them are actually recycled, which means about 1 million tons of the plastic waste ends up in landfills, waterways or as roadside litter every year.

Efforts to sell residents on the virtues of tap water aren’t new. In 2007, San Francisco became one of the first municipalities to ban the purchase of bottled water with city funds and install refilling stations throughout the city. New York City has long promoted its tap water, recently touting its trendiness in a splashy marketing effort during fashion week. Some places have gone further: In 2009, the city of Venice, Italy, rebranded its drinking water as Acqua Veritas (“true water”) and launched a slick campaign mimicking bottled water ads.

Nevertheless, touting tap water is an effort that’s really only just getting under way. Hawkins says

many of his colleagues in other cities probably haven’t given it much thought. But they should, he says. “We in the industry should fight hard for this product. People need to understand what we do and what their water bill pays for.”

Hawkins has become something of a tap water evangelist. Since taking over at DC Water in 2010, he’s rolled out a series of programs emphasizing the tap. He started by rebranding the agency, ditching the former wonky and bureaucratic name, D.C. Water and Sewer Authority. Last June, he joined the national TapIt campaign, in which cities work with businesses to get them to provide tap water to residents carrying reusable bottles. There are more than 150 TapIt locations in D.C., and the program is expanding into Maryland and Virginia. Hawkins has convinced a handful of local restaurants—19 so far—to serve tap water in glasses bearing the authority’s logo. And DC Water has worked with all the major universities in the city to place signage at every drinking fountain reminding students they’re drinking city water. The agency has even slapped all of its trucks with advertisements reminding residents to “drink tap.”

Finding funds for these efforts has been a challenge. But it’s money well spent, Hawkins says. “We have aging infrastructure that we need to fix. If our customers don’t recognize what we do and what we provide to them, then we will never get support to pay for upgrades when the time comes.” **G**

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D.C. uses its trucks to remind residents to drink city water.



DC WATER

$$\begin{aligned}
 &x^3 + 3xy + y^2 + 3x^2y - 7xy^2 + \\
 &x^2 + 4xy^2 + 5^{(2)} = 0 \\
 &(x+y)^3 = x^3 + y^3 + 3xy(x+y) \\
 &(-y)^3 = x^3 - y^3 - 3xy(x-y) \\
 &x + (2y)^2 =
 \end{aligned}$$



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DAVID KIDD

Walking the Walk

How do we encourage walking and biking in our spread-out landscape?

If you can walk to a friend's house, a neighborhood playground or church—even if you have to drive to work every day—your life will be richer because if you can easily walk or bicycle somewhere, you do it more.

Physical proximity is important. Unfortunately, many trends are pulling us apart. Even as smartphones and computers bridge space and bring us together instantly online, our physical bodies are getting further apart from each other, and becoming more entombed in our offices, our homes and our cars.

For the past 150 years, metropolitan areas have grown ever wider around successive transportation revolutions, with the car and the highway being the most recent and the greatest distance enhancer. A metropolitan area now covers hundreds of square miles, and

distances in both time and space can be daunting.

Have a friend at work? It's more than likely he or she may live on the other side of town. This might mean an hour's drive or more, sometimes into another state, as is the case in New York City, suburban Washington, D.C., or even Portland, Ore. Our metro areas have expanded physically at a much higher rate than their population growth. Even areas that have shrunk in population, like Pittsburgh, continue to expand physically outward.

The merits of living more compactly are part of the appeal of smaller towns and cities. Home, work, school, shopping and church are in closer proximity, and so travel is easier.

Can state and local governments do much to manage this process? We can't change the past, but for the present and

the future, it would help if government built roads more strategically and less indiscriminately, and put more money into sidewalks, buses, bike paths and streetcars. If these policies are pursued consistently, our cities change. We can see this by looking at the effect of transportation spending in the past.

In his highly readable 2004 study *Canadian Cities, American Cities*, University of British Columbia professor Patrick Condon says Canadian and American cities were very similar in form up until World War II. After this, American cities began sprawling outward far more rapidly. This was mostly because America built far more highways per capita than Canada, even though our neighbor to the north arguably has vaster spaces to bridge. Condon details the structural differences that account for this. In Canada, gas tax



revenues have gone into the general budget and only a small portion has gone into roads. The effect of these spending differences is that Americans now drive far more than Canadians, as measured by both distance traveled and time spent in a car. Only a few car enthusiasts would argue this is a good thing.

If we drive more, we usually walk or bike less. The distances become greater and the time in the car becomes longer. The major challenge for American cities now is finding ways to make their spread-out landscapes more hospitable to human-scale transportation like walking and bicycling.

First lady Michelle Obama is leading an anti-obesity campaign for children. Her “Let’s Move” effort revolves around eating better and exercising more. To its credit, the campaign does not ignore walking as a component of healthy living. Instead, it looks at how communities can make it easier for kids to walk or bike to school or a park. While playing a sport or pedaling an exercise bike is nice, our waistlines will also improve if we simply walk and bike more in our daily lives.

This story of a friend of mine illustrates this issue: He went back to graduate school in his mid-50s and found himself living for a year without a car on a college campus. He did nothing particular except walk to classes. Yet he lost 15 pounds. A year later, back in a more car-oriented lifestyle in Washington, D.C., driving to work each day, he gained it all back.

Our feet and legs relate inversely to our bellies and bottoms. When we use our feet and legs less, our bellies and bottoms grow larger. And vice versa. Investing in mass transit helps us use our feet and legs more. Generally the more you invest in buses, streetcars and light rail lines, the more your citizens walk and bicycle.

But changing private transportation habits as well as public policies remains a challenge. While the sedentary pleasures of computers are many and the convenience of driving remains so alluring, let us not forget the lower halves of our bodies. Use them, or lose them. **G**

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Trainspotting

Birmingham, Ala., designs a unique park for rail enthusiasts.

Back in the 1880s, Birmingham, Ala., was a steel town nicknamed the “Pittsburgh of the South.” It was also home to the production of rails and railroad cars. Today, its steelmaking days are behind it. Instead, the city is repurposing itself with an economy based on services, health care and education. But the legacy of its more brawny past remains, and rather than hide it, the city has decided to embrace it.

Even as freight trains still rumble through the city day and night, Birmingham is honoring its industrial past and present in the form of a park. Aptly named Railroad Park, the 19-acre site was designed by renowned landscape architect Tom Leader to give visitors opportunities to watch the “industrial ballet” of freight trains as they pass by on a viaduct that abuts the park.

In many ways, Railroad Park is your classic, multipurpose green oasis in an urban environment, complete with grassy lawns, fountains, walking trails, a stream and more. On summer evenings, movies are shown or concerts by the Alabama Symphony are held at the amphitheater. But in one way, the park distinguishes itself. It is a trainspotter’s paradise. Visitors can sit and relax on a series of knolls along the viaduct, watching the trains up close as they glide by.

Park Executive Director Camille Spratling describes the place as a unifier—and she means that both physically and symbolically. With Railroad Park as the anchor, plans are under way to develop a number of other open industrial spaces nearby, eventually giving Birmingham the most park acreage per capita in the U.S. “It’s a place where people of all walks of life in the city come together,” she says. More than 200,000 visitors have stopped by Railroad Park since it opened in 2010.

The park is part of a growing trend where abandoned urban, industrial spaces are reclaimed as parks. Examples include the High Line in New York City, the C&O Canal in Washington, D.C., and the Gasworks, a former coal gasification plant, on the shores of Lake Union in Seattle.

While Railroad Park embraces all that is new and trendy with urban parks, its gestation period has been long—nearly 20 years, according to Spratling. It was also expensive, costing approximately \$22 million to build, of which the city contributed about \$7.5 million. Annual maintenance and security costs run upward of \$1.2 million. But judging by the number of visitors and the glowing remarks posted on the park’s Facebook page, it may be worth the expense.

Railroads once tied this far-flung country together. It’s nice to see a park that celebrates their presence and unifies a changing city. **G**

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Birmingham’s aptly named Railroad Park incorporates a nearby railroad as part of the park experience.



A photograph of a person with long brown hair, wearing a dark jacket, sitting on a black rolling suitcase in a doorway. The person is facing away from the camera, looking towards a closed door. On the door, there is a pink notice with illegible text. To the right of the suitcase, there are several cardboard boxes, including one labeled 'CITRUS-COOL' and another with 'MAX / CERA / CIRE' printed on it. A small orange object is on the windowsill to the right. The doorway is framed by dark metal and glass panels.

Long Way

Home

**Whatever
happened to ending
homelessness?**

The title was audacious: *A Plan, Not a Dream: How to End Homelessness in Ten Years*. When the National Alliance to End Homelessness released its report in 2000, there was an expectation that it could be done.

It wasn't the only plan or promise out there. Throughout the early 2000s, similar pledges were being bandied about by various governmental entities, notes Rev. Chuck Currie, a minister in the United Church of Christ and a former board member of the National Coalition for the Homeless. Those pledges included a 2004 plan adopted by his home city of Portland, Ore., (in conjunction with Multnomah County) to "end homelessness by 2014."

More recently, a promise came from a far more prominent level of government. In June 2010, President Obama unveiled his strategic plan to "prevent and end homelessness" by 2015.

And yet, 12 years after the first pledge of the 21st century was made, homelessness in the United States has not ended. By all accounts, it has moved steadily upward in the past decade to about 750,000 this year, according to the best available numbers. Moving the bulk of the nation's homeless population into relative independence doesn't look like it is going to happen anytime soon.

That's not to say there won't be progress. But there is a big difference between the progress and the promise. Currie says it is a bad idea to pledge to end a problem as complicated and endemic as homelessness. "When we make these promises and then don't succeed," he says, "all it's saying is that government has failed again." But his skepticism runs deeper. He sees no political will to follow through on such declarations. The president's proposed fiscal 2013 budget does call for an increase in spending on key programs to fight homelessness, but it's not enough, Currie says. "We're moving in the right direction, but not at the right pace."

It would be easy to blame the Great Recession for the failure. Millions lost their jobs and thousands saw their homes foreclosed on, thereby put-

By Jonathan Walters

P H O T O G R A P H S B Y D A V I D K I D D





ting many of them out on the streets. But the whole subject of ending homelessness is much more complicated than that. It is bound up in a web of forces that reach into the deepest causes of poverty and issues about human behavior. Homelessness is an issue that encompasses medical health, mental health and substance abuse. It's also an education and job training concern, as well as a criminal justice matter and a housing problem. It touches on family planning and family stability, and on big city, suburban and rural questions. There are moral and political issues as well as budget and policy concerns, all with a huge economic overlay.

Ending homelessness, Currie says, will take a massive push on curbing poverty—including not only creating jobs, but also preparing workers for those jobs—and on making huge investments in affordable housing and building up programs for in-home support of the elderly, those with physical disabilities and those suffering from other health, mental health and addiction problems.

The seemingly overblown rhetoric about ending homelessness, therefore, might sound like little more than hopeful cheerleading. Yet despite the apparent challenges, the country has made one significant step forward in just the last decade. A growing army of experts, activists and advocates have come together in a concerted effort to understand the phenomenon. Advocates and policymakers now know vastly more about who becomes homeless and why, how they can best be helped and how to prevent homelessness in the first place. New York City advocate Rosanne Haggerty, who has helped revolutionize tactics for getting the chronically homeless into permanent housing, puts it this way: “We’ve kind of cracked the code. It’s applying what we now know at the right scale that’s the hard part.”

Haggerty, who is founder and director of the nonprofit Common Ground, which comes at homelessness from both the housing and the treatment side, asserts that eight cities—Columbus, Ohio; the District of Columbia; Fort Worth, Texas; Hartford, Conn.; Pittsburgh; Omaha, Neb.; Shreveport, La.; and Tulsa, Okla.—are on a path to essentially ending homelessness in their metropolises in the not too distant future.

Salt Lake City is another such place pushing to reduce chronic homelessness to near zero. It is often cited by national experts and advocates as a model for its integrated, coordinated and sophisticated approach to reducing homelessness, and is therefore very likely to join the eight cities cited by Haggerty. As Mayor Ralph Becker admits, “There will always be some level of homelessness.” That said, he adds, “You can make enormous progress in helping homeless folks in your community, and that’s what we should be doing.”

Before 1970, homelessness wasn’t seen as a widespread social problem. The usual view was that homelessness was limited to large cities and that the vast majority of those living on the streets were drug-addicted or mentally ill men, some of whom preferred life under a highway overpass or on a steam grate to a cozy downtown apartment. That perception was strengthened as large-scale mental health

Since 2000, homelessness nationwide has moved steadily upward to about 750,000.

deinstitutionalization efforts of the 1970s and 1980s turned more mentally ill patients out on the street.

That singular view began to change in the late 1980s, however, when people like Mark Johnston, currently deputy assistant secretary of Special Needs Programs at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), began to work on the problem. He'd first become intrigued by the issue when he stopped to talk to a group of homeless men attempting to warm themselves on a steam-shrouded grate on a freezing afternoon in Washington, D.C. He found himself caught up in a conversation about why they preferred to stay out in the cold rather go to a homeless shelter that had just opened nearby.

That discussion set him off on an investigation of the state of homelessness in the country. What he discovered was that there was not much known about the problem. There was no comprehensive, reliable national data on homelessness, nor had

approach to dealing with homelessness. HUD grants would no longer go to individual service providers, but rather competitive grants would go to continuum of care consortia that presented the most cohesive and comprehensive plan to address all aspects of homelessness—from substance abuse and health to housing and joblessness. The idea was to align efforts toward the goal of finding people permanent housing.

As federal policy evolved, an Interagency Council on Homelessness (which has numerous equivalents at the state level) was established to coordinate federal efforts. The council is made up of 19 departments and agencies, including the departments of Housing and Urban Development, Veterans Affairs, Health and Human Services, and even the U.S. Postal Service.

Meanwhile, under the auspices of HUD, the separate continuums of care began collecting data on the homeless through a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), established in 2004. HMIS now includes more than 400 separate continuums reporting key data, including annual “point in time” counts of the homeless. That data, along with vast amounts of other information, are now reported to Congress in an *Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR)*, currently in its sixth iteration.

The report includes exhaustive and spectacularly disaggregated data. The information ranges from who is most at risk of homelessness, from kids aging out of foster care to families on the edge of deep poverty, to the role that temporary shelters, permanent supportive housing, and homeless prevention and rapid re-housing programs play in helping to get individuals and families permanently settled.

As the country has improved its ability to count and track the homeless population, there is now greater clarity around how to significantly curb it and what the most effective ways are for dealing with different types of homelessness. For instance, there would be a very different way of dealing with a young adult who's homeless because she's aged out of foster care as opposed to meeting the needs of an infirm war veteran. Nan Roman, executive

director of the National Alliance to End Homelessness, sums it up this way: “One size does not fit all.”

With this clarity has come the obvious challenge raised by activists like Rev. Chuck Currie: developing the political will necessary to muster and focus resources. To that end, two basic camps have emerged. These camps are by no means adversarial, nor do they even fundamentally disagree, but they are focusing on two separate strategies.

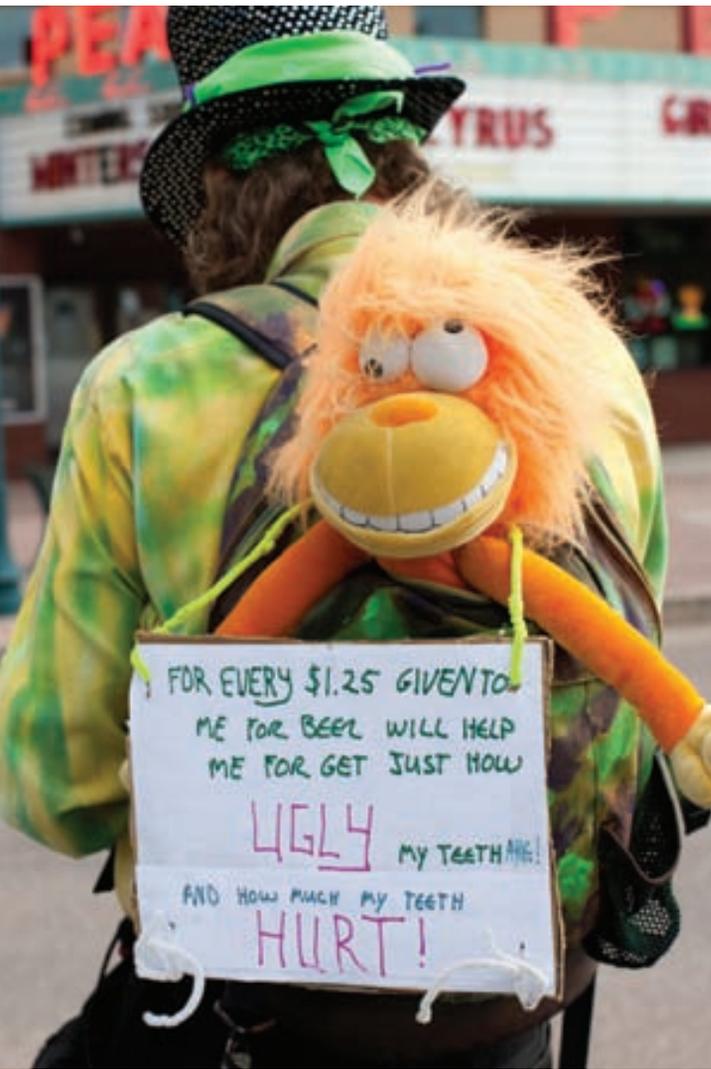
The first camp comprises advocates and policymakers who are focused on a coordinated, cohesive approach that directs resources to where they'll do the most good. Elected officials like Mayor Becker credit a remarkable level of communication, cooperation and coordination as the key to why Salt Lake City is making substantial prog-



While most homeless people are in shelters, nearly 4 in 10 live on the street, in a car or in another place not intended for habitation.

there been any sophisticated parsing of the different reasons why people might be homeless. And the reasons, he found, are key. They suggest the need for a wider variety of strategies for dealing with the problem than just temporary shelter, warm clothing giveaways and soup kitchens. The problem, policymakers and experts began to understand, might be vastly complicated, but it also just might be solvable given the right intelligence and attendant action.

One of the first major policy breakthroughs arrived with the Clinton administration. Andrew Cuomo, then-secretary of HUD, launched “continuum of care,” which eventually won an Innovations in American Government Award from the Ash Center at Harvard University. Continuum of care required that geographically designated areas (it could be a city, a region or a whole state) be created for the purposes of a more methodical and coordinated



About half of people experiencing homelessness report having an alcohol or drug use problem.

ress in reducing homelessness. In Salt Lake City, Becker reports, CEOs from Utah's largest banks have been sitting down with leading homelessness advocates and other community and business leaders to use solid data to best allocate resources and make the biggest difference for long-range results. "To me," Becker says, "that's really exceptional."

It's that sort of cooperation and coordination, says Becker, that has allowed the city to make remarkable progress in getting the chronically homeless housed.

For example, a local bank in Salt Lake City helped homelessness advocates raise \$1.7 million to help renovate 200 units of permanent supportive housing for individuals and families locked in chronic homelessness. That money—along with corporate donations—allowed the Road Home, a nonprofit homeless services group, to open the facility debt free, says Executive Director Matt Minkovich.

Numerous service providers, local landlords, housing authorities, and other state and local units of government also joined forces to develop almost 100 new units of scattered housing for the city's chronically homeless. In the past six years another 300 housing units have been built to help Salt Lake City's homeless.

Perhaps less flashy, but no less creative, downtown businesses have also worked with service providers and the police to implement a way to deal with panhandlers. Modeled on a Denver initiative, those who want to donate spare change to a homeless person can put the money in specially marked parking meters to support services for the homeless. The effort has helped the police back off formerly draconian approaches to dealing with panhandlers, says Minkovich.

Also in the coordinated approach camp are high-level state officials like Massachusetts Lt. Gov. Tim Murray. Like Becker, Murray, Gov. Deval Patrick's point person on the Bay State's ambitious effort to end homelessness, sees contact in and among important state and local players in the public and private sector as key. "It's a matter of getting everyone to go back to their mission statements," he says. "We're all here to help the homeless, not build empires, so it's really a matter of getting people around the table and introducing each other and collaborating."

The vehicle for that kind of cooperation in Massachusetts has been to divide the state into 10 regional networks. The networks bring together an assortment of government officials, nonprofit service providers, foundations, faith-based institutions and other community leaders. "Everyone gets to know one another," Murray says. "That creates an atmosphere where you can pick up the phone and talk."

One key benchmark of the effort's success is the reduced number of homeless people being sheltered in hotels. Prior to implementing its housing first program and creating the regional networks, the state had a hotel population of between 1,200 and 1,700. The program brought that number down to 600. Since the economic downturn, it has gone back up to 1,400, but Murray argues that the number would be much higher were it not for the programs put in place to deal with the problem.

Rosanne Haggerty of New York's Common Ground says that while progress is being made, services are still stuck in silos and many resources aren't being expended strategically. For example, she cites how public housing is handled. "At most public housing authorities, need and process are really disconnected," she says. "If there's a waiting list, there's a totally random lottery system to fill openings, even though there are people out there in desperate straits who might either die or remain trapped in a cycle of institutionalization." That cycle, she says, is a problem from both a public health and a cost standpoint—it's hugely expensive. House the at-risk folks first, Haggerty argues, and then work your way down your waiting list based on actual circumstances and need, not luck of the draw.

In the second camp are those who come at homelessness from a more macroeconomic viewpoint. The best way to end homelessness is to end poverty, argues Melissa Boteach, director of Half in Ten, an organization devoted to cutting poverty in the U.S. in half by 2020.

Boteach and others like her are much more focused on issues like minimum wage, the earned income tax credit and child support credits, than on initiatives like getting the chronically homeless into permanent supportive housing. Their strategy has standing inasmuch as the population of homeless families in the U.S.



More than 270 communities have adopted the National Alliance to End Homelessness' 10-year plan.

has been going up at a faster rate than that of homeless individuals, according to the most recent AHAR report.

Arguably, though, Boteach's approach is a much more difficult battle than focusing more narrowly on the chronically homeless. Half in Ten is taking on the daunting issues that are at the core of the Occupy Wall Street movement: income inequality and basic social equity and fairness.

Again, neither camp would take issue with the strategies or goals of the other. Each agrees that fewer silos, better intelligence and more coordination—along with higher wages and affordable housing—are key to ending homelessness. And of course, both camps want to see homelessness in America ended. Can the promises of 2000 come true? The most accurate assessment seems to be that they can, but absent major shifts in income distribution, substantial improvements in the economy and a significant push on education and job training, it will happen only in certain places and among specific homeless populations.

One of those populations is veterans. HUD and Veterans Affairs are now teaming up on efforts to end homelessness among vets by 2015. Even skeptics figure that this goal is achievable. After

all, no politician in the U.S. wants to be accused of allowing U.S. veterans to live on the street. That means the political pressure is there to deploy the necessary resources to meet that goal.

As for the overall promise to end homelessness, that will always be controversial. Salt Lake City's Becker is all for stating a commitment. "Setting goals makes a huge difference," he says. "We can make enormous progress." He likens the promise to one made by the federal government in the heyday of the early environmental movement. At that time, the pledge was that all waters in the U.S. would be made "fishable and swimmable." Nobody took the promise literally, but the goal was clear and inspiring.

Rev. Currie, for his part, would still prefer a more low-key pledge. "My biggest frustration is how we label these efforts," Currie says. "We need to be very careful in our use of rhetoric. We need to announce a new plan that we are subtly going to impact homelessness for a one-year period." That way, he says, "progress can be measured, and people can see the results and not think that government has failed." **G**

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THE STATES AND LOCALITIES

The screenshot shows the governing.com website interface. At the top, the logo "GOVERNING THE STATES AND LOCALITIES" is displayed alongside "Election Center 2012". A navigation menu includes "HOME", "NEWS & TOPICS", "COLUMNS & BLOGS", "MAGAZINE", "EVENTS & WEBINARS", "BOOKS", "PAPERS", and "PHOTOS". Below the navigation is a search bar and a sidebar with "SUBSCRIBE NEWSLETTERS ADVERTISE". A prominent advertisement for "sas" is visible, with the text "Optimize existing staff usage and maximize information resources." and a "CLICK FOR WHITE PAPER" button. The main content area is titled "State Legislatures: Elections and Current Party Control" and features a map of the United States with states colored by party control: blue for Democratic Majority, red for Republican Majority, and purple for Split/Other. A "LATEST NEWS" section on the right lists several articles, including "California Congresswoman's Redistricting Shenanigans Catch Eye of Ethics Committee" and "Michigan Senate OKs Voting Law Changes".



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Nearly everyone agrees that it's critical for the country to improve its transportation infrastructure. Doing so will create jobs in the short term and, perhaps more important, help strengthen the backbone of the economy that allows workers to commute to their jobs and businesses to ship goods across the country. As President Obama said in his State of the Union speech earlier this year, "There's never been a better time to build."

Here are 10 of the nation's highest-profile infrastructure projects—five making steady progress, and five facing some serious challenges—under way right now.



Under Const

The five biggest projects in the country right now—



Seattle's Alaskan Way Viaduct is being torn down and partially replaced by a tunnel.

struction

APIIMAGES.COM

and the five biggest ones in jeopardy. By Ryan Holeywell and Daniel Lippman

The 5 that are happening...

1. Dulles Transit Extension

Washington, D.C., residents often try to avoid flights out of Dulles International Airport, located more than 20 miles from downtown, for good reason. With no Metro rail access, trekking to Dulles often involves a long car ride, an infrequent bus or an expensive taxi. That will soon change, thanks to the biggest expansion in the history of the Metro system. Upon completion, the Silver Line will provide public transportation access from downtown D.C. to Dulles, as well as the Northern Virginia suburbs of Tysons Corner, Herndon, Reston and Ashburn. In addition to connecting the airport to the region's transit system, the new line should help reduce traffic congestion on the Beltway.

Construction began on the long-awaited expansion in 2008. The new line, almost all of which is above ground, consists of 11 new stations and 23 miles of new track. Who's paying the estimated \$6.2 billion cost of the project? The federal government is footing \$975 million, and the state is kicking in \$200 million. The rest will be funded by the airport itself, local county governments and through fee increases on the existing toll road leading to the airport. The first phase of the line, connecting D.C. to Reston, is scheduled to open in 2013. If all goes according to plan, the second phase, extending the Metro to Dulles and outlying Loudon County, will be finished in 2016.

2. Otay Mesa East

In the San Diego region, there are two border crossings. One is the busiest U.S.-Mexico crossing for personal travelers. The other is the second-busiest crossing for commercial trucks. As a result, vehicles traveling north can find themselves sitting in line for hours to cross. Local economic studies argue that those delays are costing the U.S. billions of dollars each year, with much of that loss concentrated in the San Diego area.

To alleviate the bottleneck, state and local officials are planning a third land port in the area. The proposed Otay Mesa East port facility, along with a new 2.5-mile roadway connecting it to the highway system, could cost as much as \$715 million. Officials are banking that speedier travel times could be an economic boon for the region, since it would make visits to San Diego easier and more efficient for both Mexican tourists and for shipping companies. They're also betting that visitors are willing to pay tolls to avoid the congestion at the other facilities. Consultants are currently studying just how much traffic the new crossing could expect and how much drivers would be willing to pay to bypass congestion at the other crossings.

The federal government authorized a new border crossing in 2008, but what's more crucial is getting the commitment from U.S. Customs and Border Protection that it will staff and operate the facility. That makes the study critical, since that data will help show just how much pent-up demand exists for a new facility. While the region can build the road that connects to the crossing—construction could start late this year or early next year—it will have to wait on the port-of-entry until getting the go-ahead from Washington, says Marney Cox, an economist with the San Diego Association of Governments. "We clearly need the feds to give the thumbs up on that one."



DAVID KIDD

3. O'Hare Modernization

More than 65 million passengers pass through Chicago's O'Hare International Airport each year, and those travelers have experienced their fair share of delays. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation, almost a quarter of the flights both in and out of the nation's second busiest airport weren't on time. As O'Hare traffic grew during the 1970s and 1980s, the airport's capacity couldn't keep up. But now a major modernization project is increasing the facility's efficiency and capacity, helping to reduce flight delays. In 2008, O'Hare finished a new runway, extended another and built a new air traffic control tower. The Chicago Department of Aviation hopes to complete two more runways in 2013 and 2016.

The modernization effort—estimated at \$8.8 billion—is being paid for with a mix of airport revenue bonds, grants from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and passenger fees. According to a recent report from the Eno Center for Transportation Policy, a national think tank, Chicago "has managed to finish key aspects of the work under budget and ahead of schedule."

Transportation expert Joseph Schwieterman, a professor at Chicago's DePaul University, says he agrees the effort has been well run. "The biggest winners," he says, "are the region's economy and O'Hare fliers, who will see better service and lower fares."



23
miles of
new track

The extension connecting Washington, D.C.'s Metro system to Dulles International Airport. At \$6.2 billion, it's the largest expansion in Metro history.



Seattle's old
Alaskan Way Viaduct

DAVID KIDD

4. Crescent Corridor Expansion

The existing system for moving most goods across the country has long been based on railroads and an array of interstate highways. But increasing congestion on the nation's roads has sparked renewed interest in intermodal transportation and an

increasing role for methods other than trucking. Spurred by interest from freight companies eager to save money on costly long-haul truck routes, railway company Norfolk Southern is working to upgrade the Crescent Corridor, a freight rail network that runs through 13 states and connects New Orleans to New Jersey. A series of projects will lay 300 new miles of track and build or expand intermodal terminals in 11 markets. Construction has already begun on terminals in Memphis, Birmingham, Ala., and two Pennsylvania communities.

The estimated \$2.5 billion expansion will enable shippers and trucking companies to move more of their goods using rail, instead of relying on trucks, which are more expensive and produce more pollution. Because of the public benefits of the cleaner air and reduced highway congestion that will result from the upgrade, the U.S. Department of Transportation has chipped in more than \$136 million to support the project, with the rest of the funds coming from states and Norfolk Southern itself. The company hopes to finish the upgrade by 2030 but says the timing depends on how easily it can obtain enough public funds for the project.

5. Alaskan Way Viaduct

In 2001, seismic experts began considering the possibility of strengthening Seattle's iconic Alaskan Way Viaduct, a double-decker elevated highway that skirted downtown along Puget Sound. The team's work was prescient: An earthquake struck in the midst of their study, damaging the structure. Replacing the viaduct turned out to be more cost-effective than repairing it. The effort hasn't been easy. For nearly a decade, the project has been subject to bitter political debate over whether the elevated road, which effectively cut off downtown Seattle from the waterfront, should be replaced with a tunnel. Mayor Michael McGinn won election in 2009 after campaigning against the tunnel, which he said would be too expensive. Since then, however, the tide has turned. In a 2011 referendum, voters endorsed the tunnel plan, allowing the project to move forward.

The south half of the viaduct was demolished in October, and traffic was shifted onto a new bridge near the city's sports stadiums. A new roadway on the south end is scheduled for completion next year. Meanwhile, the remaining portion of the viaduct—the section along the downtown waterfront—will be removed after the new tunnel opens to traffic in late 2015. Boring of that tunnel is expected to start next year. Both the new roadway and the tunnel are designed to withstand an earthquake registering a 9.0 magnitude.

The \$3.1 billion project is being funded by a combination of state gas tax revenue, federal funds, tolls and a contribution from the Port of Seattle. Officials with the state transportation department have downplayed comparisons to Boston's infamous Big Dig, noting that the Seattle tunnel is shorter than Boston's and seeks to minimize the impact on its waterfront and downtown. A panel reported to Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire earlier this year that the project is on time, on budget and "has the ability to be successfully completed."

...and the 5 in limbo.

1. Columbia River Crossing

This joint Oregon-Washington project, which could cost up to \$3.5 billion, would replace the existing Columbia River bridge that connects Portland to the suburb of Vancouver, Wash. Additionally, the project would rebuild a series of highway interchanges around the bridge, extend light rail across the river, improve the existing highway, and build pedestrian and bike paths. Officials say the effort will also improve safety, since there is an average of one collision per day in the project area, nearly double the rate on similar urban highways. It's viewed as an important investment in the region's economy, since the more than \$40 billion of freight crossing the existing bridge each year is increasingly facing delays due to congestion.

The next 18 months will be critical. That's when both states' legislatures will hammer out many of the details of financing the project, which includes a tolling component. Officials hope to begin construction next year. But already, some are starting to balk at the cost. A report last year from the Oregon state treasurer suggested the project may have overestimated its revenue projections from tolling by as much as \$598 million. As a response, the project team has put together a scenario that would postpone about \$140 million worth of improvements to the Oregon interchanges. Meanwhile, the project relies on \$1.25 billion in federal funds, which are by no means assured, given Congress' focus on spending reductions. If that money doesn't come through, it "may require rethinking of the overall project scope, timeline and financing plan," according to the treasurer's report.

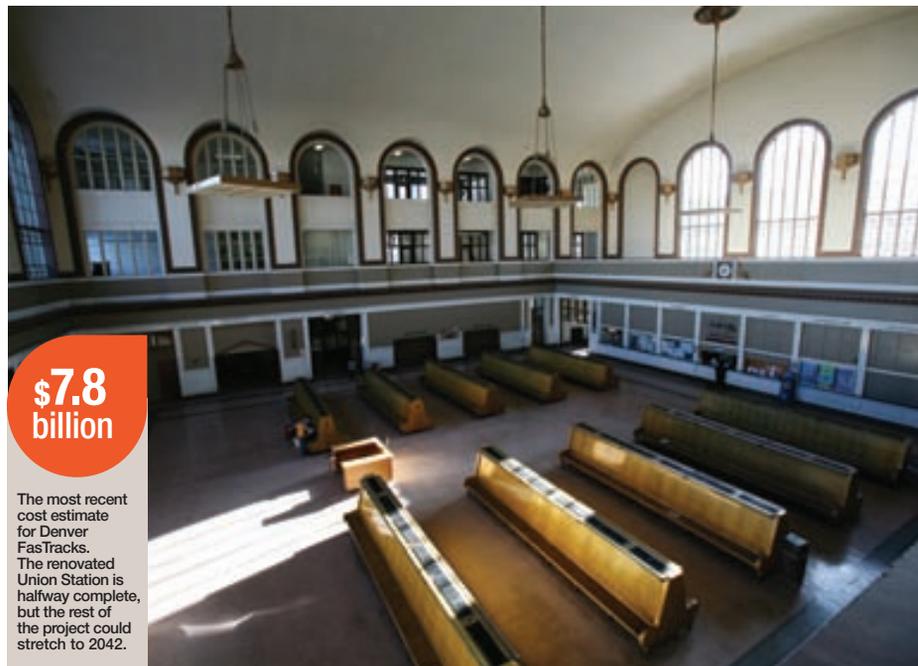
2. Denver FasTracks

One of the country's most ambitious transit projects, the FasTracks system will culminate in 122 new miles of commuter and light rail and 18 miles of bus rapid transit service across the Denver area. It's part of the region's goal to push transit-oriented development that will reduce sprawl, congestion and pollution. Residents voted in 2004 for a 0.4 percent sales tax to fund the \$4.7 billion effort. Then the costs started ballooning. The latest estimate is that the project will cost \$7.8 billion to complete by the original 2024 target date. In the last year alone, the cost of one particular commuter line has increased from \$894.6 million to \$1.7 billion, due largely to stalled negotiations with an existing freight line. Some officials are now discussing whether they could cut costs by turning the rail line into a bus route, even though that's not what voters originally agreed to.

What else went wrong? Thanks to the recession, sales tax revenues didn't grow as much as expected. (Some critics say the growth estimates were overly optimistic to begin with.) Meanwhile, the costs of materials have increased and the project has been pegged with expensive new safety requirements. "It all just worked together at exactly the right time to scuttle the viability

of the project as originally priced," says Diane Barrett, chief project officer for Denver Mayor Michael Hancock.

This year, voters will likely be asked to double the tax they've allotted to the project. If they fail to do so, the project won't be fully complete until 2042, according to the Regional Transportation District of Denver. Getting approval from voters is far from a sure thing. Last year officials opted against holding a vote, largely because citizens were expected to reject it. Still, the project is marking some successes. The first of the new light rail lines is on track to open next year, and the renovated Union Station transit hub—the public face of the project—is more than halfway complete and expected to open in 2014.



\$7.8 billion

The most recent cost estimate for Denver FasTracks. The renovated Union Station is halfway complete, but the rest of the project could stretch to 2042.

3. NextGen

When airplanes are delayed, nobody wins. Airlines lose money. Passengers become inconvenienced. Airports get overwhelmed. That's why the FAA is touting an effort that it says could reduce delays by 35 percent by 2018.

The project, which aviation administrators began planning in 2003, is dubbed NextGen, and proponents say it would revolutionize air travel in this country by switching from radar-based to satellite-based flight-tracking technology. That, along with other technological advances like improved weather forecasting and communication systems, would allow planes to fly more direct routes instead of following the existing, inefficient flight paths that are arranged like highways in the sky. The result: More flights in the air at any given time, fewer delays and less wasted fuel.

But the cost is enormous. FAA officials say they'll need between \$20 billion and \$27 billion for the project through 2025. The Government Accountability Office says the cost could actually be as high as \$160 billion. Meanwhile, there's an ongoing debate about what proportion of the cost should be picked up by

DAVID KRIDD



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the airline industry, which has historically been skeptical of the benefits of government-mandated technologies. A recent report from the Department of Transportation's inspector general said the system will likely face delays because the "FAA has not made critical, longer-term design decisions on NextGen ground and aircraft systems."

To complicate matters, the FAA has spent more than four years without a long-term funding bill, thanks to congressional inaction. That's made it difficult to pursue larger projects like

approved \$9.95 billion in bonds to usher in a new era of transit for the Golden State.

But times have changed, and the past year has been a rough one for the project. A recent poll showed that 59 percent of Californians would vote against the bond if they could do it again. Cost estimates have grown from \$43 billion to at least \$98 billion, and the completion date of the first phase has been pushed back 13 years. The project has been subject to congressional hearings. Both the CEO and the project chairman resigned. Most recently,

a state auditor's report noted that the largest potential funding source for the project is the federal government, and it's unclear what happens to the project if those funds aren't secured.

Gov. Jerry Brown has staked his reputation on the project, and its new board chairman is a longtime aide of his. Brown chose to highlight high-speed rail in his State of the State speech in January. He's hinted that a finalized business plan will bring its costs below \$98 billion, and he says he's working to find new revenue sources.

5. Second Avenue Subway

First proposed in 1929 and more recently dubbed by *New York* magazine as "the line that time forgot," the Second Avenue subway line on the East Side of Manhattan has been a perennial wish-list item for the better part of a century. The line would ease overcrowding on the Lexington

Avenue line, which currently shuttles 1.3 million people every day, but over the years it's been repeatedly delayed by economic downturns and political in-fighting. A construction attempt in the 1970s was eventually aborted due to lack of funds. Finally, in April 2007, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) broke ground on the Second Avenue line. The first phase—a \$4.45 billion two-mile section with two new tunnels and three new stations on the Upper East Side—could be operational by the end of 2016, according to the MTA.

But the Federal Transit Administration is not as optimistic. It believes the project could take significantly longer and will end up costing \$410 million more than MTA's estimate. And that's just Phase 1. Extending the line uptown to Harlem and downtown to the Financial District, a total of 8.5 miles, is expected to cost at least another \$13 billion, and none of that money has been secured. A fully functional Second Avenue line could remain a Big Apple fable for many years to come. **G**

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35%
reduction
in delays

The FAA's estimated improvement in the nation's air travel if the NextGen system—which could cost \$27 billion by 2025—is approved.

this one. A long-term bill signed earlier this year should help on that front, but the funding for the effort is still in question. The president's 2013 budget calls for just over \$1 billion for NextGen, which is a drop in the bucket. In a Congress focused on spending cuts, launching something like NextGen could be tough. "I'm guessing we'll muddle along," says David Plavin, an aviation consultant. "They won't provide the big, incremental investment ... that's ultimately necessary."

4. California High-Speed Rail

It started off with the kind of heady promise and excitement that prompted comparisons to California's most iconic infrastructure project, the Golden Gate Bridge.

The visionary plan was for 800 miles of high-speed rail lines connecting Los Angeles and San Francisco. Riders could whoosh from Southern California to Frisco in an unheard-of two hours and 40 minutes. The train would reduce air pollution and ease congestion on the state's famously clogged freeways. Construction would create tens of thousands of new jobs. Voters in 2008



A rendering of a station on California's proposed high-speed rail line

Bridging the Broadband Gap

By Mike Maciag

Kansas City, Mo. will soon be the nation's most wired city.

Google began installing thousands of miles of fiber across Kansas City, Mo., in February, laying the foundation for what will become the nation's most wired city. When complete, Kansas City residents will surf the Web at speeds 100 times faster than typical broadband connections. But less than 100 miles away, in rural Chariton County, about half the residents still don't have any broadband access at all.

This type of digital divide persists throughout the country, putting entire populations at an economic disadvantage. Cities enjoy speeds far exceeding rural areas. Wealthier neighborhoods typically have more broadband providers than poorer communities. White areas have better access than black ones.



Show-Me Service

To expand broadband access throughout the state, Missouri established public-private partnerships with telecoms serving rural areas. Gov. Jay Nixon announced the initiative in 2009, pledging to deliver broadband to 95 percent of residents by the end of 2014. In all, \$311 million in stimulus grants, state money and private investment will fund various projects. As part of the initiative, representatives from governments, schools, public safety and other areas have formed regional commissions to develop plans for each community. "These teams are coming together and really, for the first time, talking about broadband and how it can have a positive impact on the community," says Damon Porter, director of the MoBroadbandNow initiative.

The Poverty Gap

Poverty frequently acts as a barrier to broadband availability. The table below shows the variations in providers and speeds for the poorest and wealthiest counties in Missouri.

Top Five Poorest Counties

Missouri county	Population	Median income	Population with access to 2 or more wireline providers	Percent with broadband access
Carter	6,324	\$24,263.65	25.6%	52.1%
Wright	18,967	\$27,475.33	34.9%	93.3%
Wayne	13,421	\$27,854.47	44%	77.3%
Oregon	10,858	\$28,277.03	0.6%	43.4%
Shannon	8,495	\$28,566.58	0%	39.1%

Top Five Richest Counties

Missouri county	Population	Median income	Population with access to 2 or more wireline providers	Percent with broadband access
St. Louis County	993,879	\$63,676.46	100%	100%
St. Charles	365,874	\$68,021.19	99.7%	100%
Platte	90,168	\$66,207.27	92.2%	99.9%
Clay	226,707	\$59,133.72	90.9%	100%
Cass	100,918	\$61,792.32	74.2%	99.9%

BROADBAND DATA WAS REPORTED TO THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION AND IS CURRENT AS OF JUNE 30, 2011. BROADBAND ACCESS IS DEFINED AS DOWNLOAD SPEED 3 MBPS OR HIGHER AND UPLOAD SPEED 768 KBPS OR HIGHER. INCOME DATA SOURCE: 2011 GEOLYTICS DATA

Telecoms used stimulus grants to expand their networks in recent years. But the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reported last year that broadband was not being deployed in a “reasonable and timely” manner. Eighteen million Americans still don’t have access at all. In response, the FCC announced plans to redirect \$4.5 billion a year from subsidy programs originally intended to expand phone service into the new Connect America Fund, which will support broadband projects in rural America. Missouri and other states joined the effort, investing millions of dollars in broadband expansion and network upgrades.

Still, national broadband is a long way off. And don’t even think about other countries’ access speeds, which can make U.S. broadband seem like dial-up.



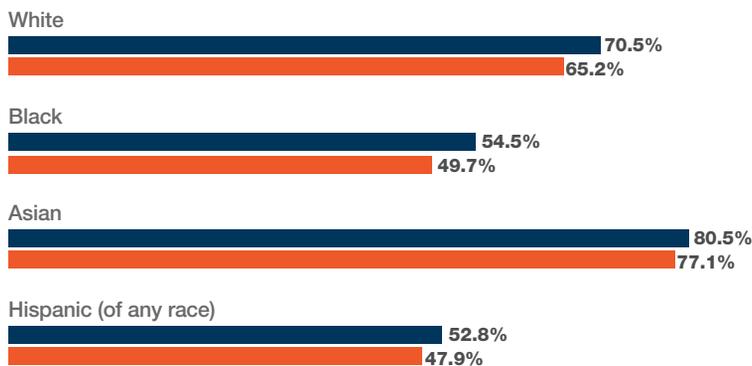
The Speed Gap

Download time for a movie like *Fast Five* varies depending on where you are.



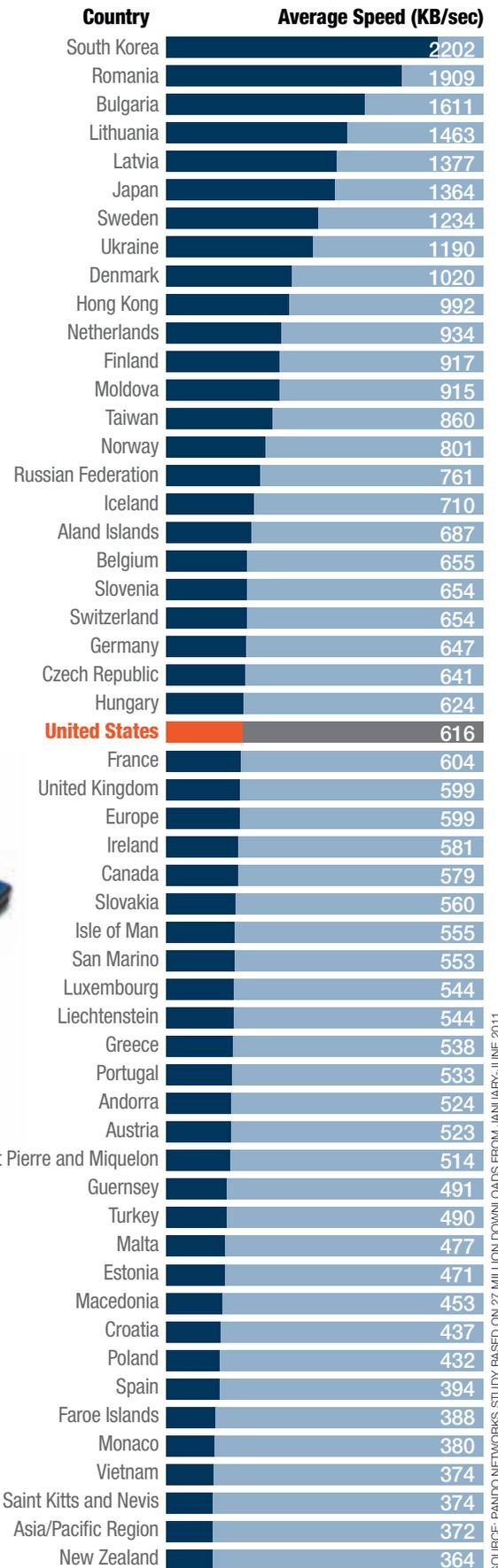
The Race/Origin Gap

■ Percent with any Internet access in home
 ■ Percent with broadband in home



U.S. CENSUS BUREAU CURRENT POPULATION SURVEY, OCTOBER 2009

The International Gap



SOURCE: PANDO NETWORKS STUDY BASED ON 27 MILLION DOWNLOADS FROM JANUARY-JUNE 2011.

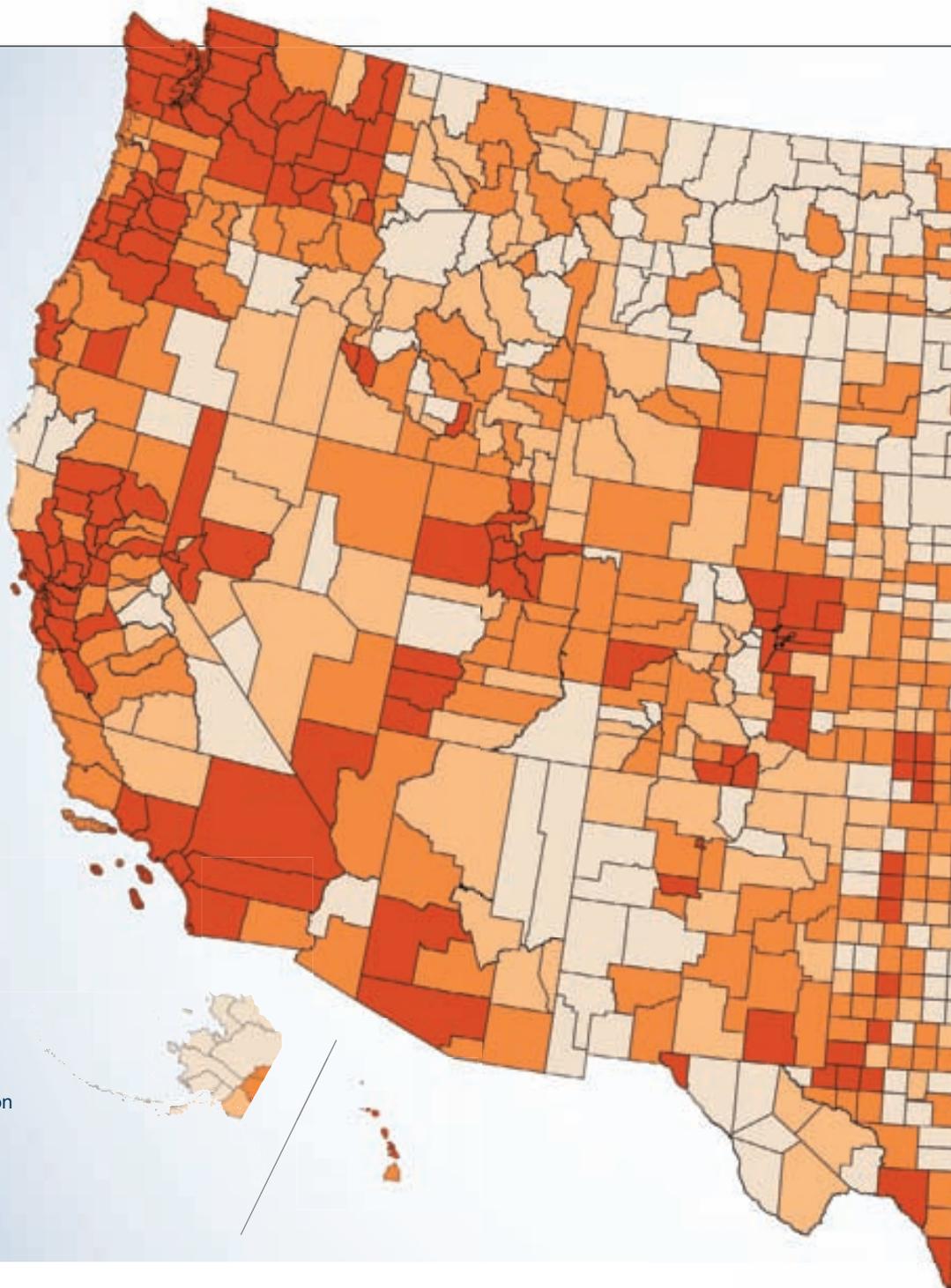
A Patchwork of Access

High-speed Internet is crucial for states as they compete to attract employers and encourage participation in today's global economy.

A slew of states are pursuing projects aimed at expanding broadband availability and boosting speeds. In recent State of the State addresses, eight governors cited the importance of broadband or fiber networks. California, Indiana and Ohio also announced upgrades to higher education networks earlier this year.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) awards broadband development grants and collects data from grantees. *Governing* compiled NTIA's most recent county-level data, current as of June 30, 2011, into a map representing percentages of residents with access to advertised download speeds of at least 6 megabits per second.

- Less than 50 percent of population
- Up to 75 percent of population
- Up to 95 percent of population
- Greater than 95 percent of population



Narrowing the Gap

Arkansas

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences is utilizing a \$102 million stimulus grant to upgrade networks connecting hospitals, colleges, libraries and other public institutions. The effort, expected to reach most areas of the state, is scheduled to be completed by August 2012. Arkansas' available Web speeds rank among the slowest nationwide.

Vermont

Gov. Peter Shumlin set a goal of providing broadband access to all Vermont residents by 2013. So the state Legislature worked last year to establish policies facilitating cellular, smart grid and broadband growth. In January, Connect VT Chief Karen Marshall told the Senate that broadband had been deployed to 95 percent of the state. Better wireless technology will further help the state meet its goals, she said.

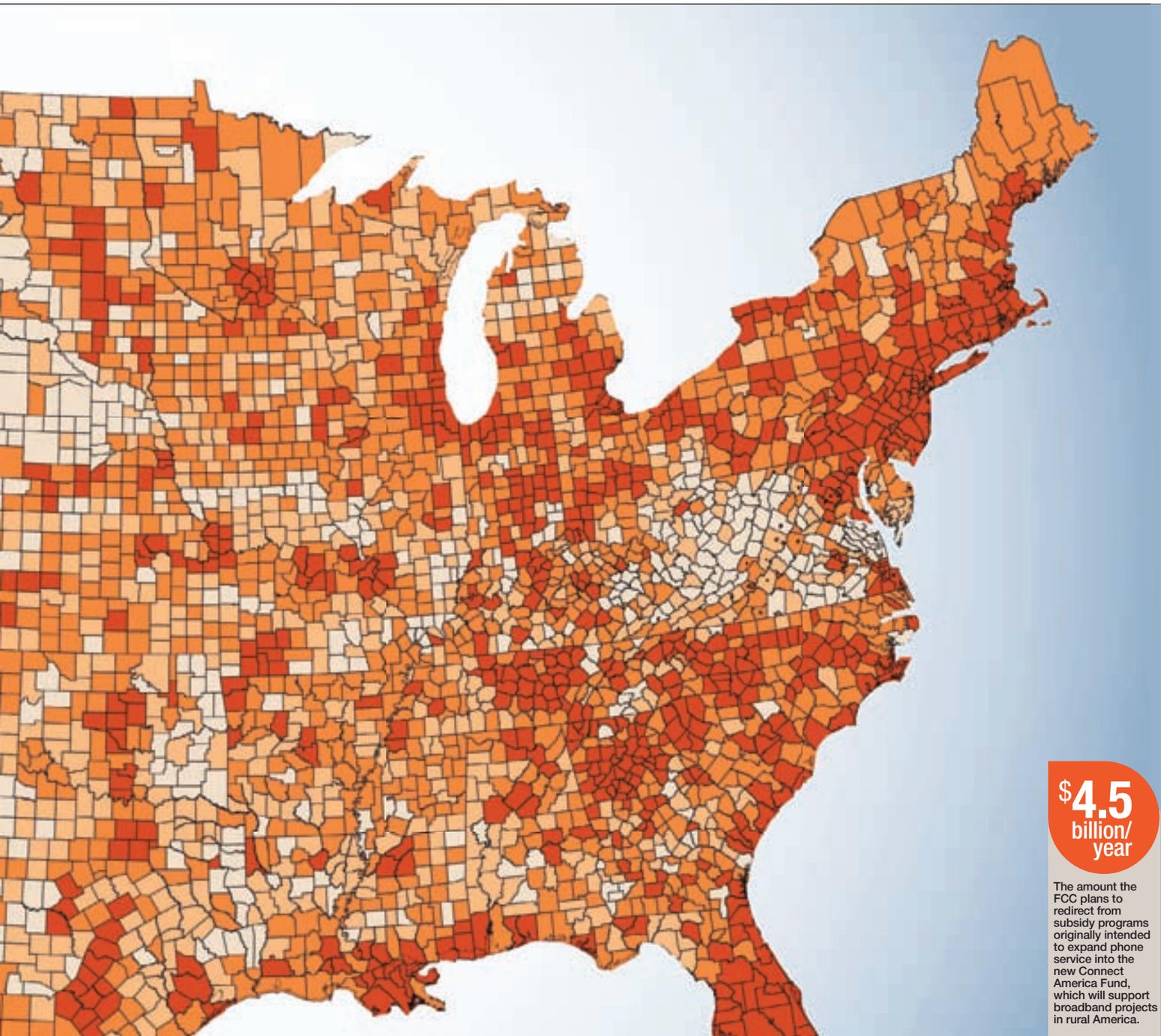
Hawaii

Gov. Neil Abercrombie launched an economic initiative last fall pledging connection speeds of 1 gigabit per second statewide by 2018. The Hawaii Broadband Initiative aims to boost use of high-speed Internet for economic development and establish regulatory and permitting guidelines to encourage investment. Abercrombie has also signed a bill to relax requirements for telecoms making broadband infrastructure improvements.

Massachusetts

Massachusetts began constructing a 1,000-mile fiber network spanning the western and north central region of the state last summer, an effort hailed as one of the nation's largest broadband expansion developments. Internet providers will lease space on the network and are expected to expand service to unserved areas for the project, scheduled to be completed by mid-2013.

Learn more about states' efforts to expand broadband coverage and view data for your area: governing.com/broadband



\$4.5
billion/
year

The amount the FCC plans to redirect from subsidy programs originally intended to expand phone service into the new Connect America Fund, which will support broadband projects in rural America.

Ohio

Gov. John Kasich recently announced plans for an \$8.1 million revamp of the state's existing fiber optic network, connecting schools, governments and other institutions. The plan calls for a 10-fold increase in download speeds. John Conley, chief technology officer for the Ohio Board of Regents, says companies can also tap into the state's central network hub for product testing. This first phase of the plan, linking Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton and Toledo, should be in place by June.

New York

The Empire State would allocate \$25 million to extend broadband access to unserved areas of the state under a new plan proposed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo. The proposal calls for lawmakers to shift money from the state's economic development fund and approve partnerships with telecoms to expand coverage. Many areas of upstate New York and the Adirondacks have limited or no Internet access.

Indiana

The state is currently boosting its high-speed network linking Indiana University (IU) and Purdue University to a national research network in Chicago. When completed in April, researchers will share information at 100 gigabits per second. Other institutions in the state will also share connections to the Indiana GigaPoP network. "Every school sees this as an economic driver," says David Jent, associate vice president for networks at IU.

A close-up, low-angle photograph of a clock face. The numbers 8, 9, and 10 are prominently displayed in a dark, serif font against a light, warm-toned background. The clock's hands and the texture of the dial are visible, creating a sense of depth and focus on the time.

Off the Clock

EVA SERRABASSA / ISTOCKPHOTO.COM



9-to-5 is so 2011. In some places, the hourly timesheet is being replaced by a focus on results.

Back in 2003, Cali Ressler and Jody Thompson were working in human resources at Best Buy's headquarters in Richfield, Minn., when they were asked to come up with a flexible work program that would energize the workforce at corporate and make them more productive. But they had a problem, one that's common with practices like flextime. It wasn't what people wanted, and it came with a lot of problems and challenges.

So Ressler and Thompson shifted gears. They set out to find what would make the corporate workforce more engaged and excited. After talking to people at the company, they realized that today's workforce didn't care about flexible hours. "The reason people have a job is they're getting paid to produce results," Thompson says. The hours they work—flexible or not—don't matter as much as the results.

What the pair developed became known as the Results-Only Work Environment (ROWE), which focuses on giving workers the leeway and headway to do the work that meets the critical needs of an organization and its clients rather than on when or where the work is taking place. Under ROWE, Thompson says, employees "actually get to act like an adult and live their lives in a way where they can do what they need to do every day in the best way possible."

While ROWE has taken off in the private sector—cutting down on turnover and increasing productivity—governments have been slow to come on board. A few have tried or are trying it out. But based on results in the private sector, ROWE's manage-

By Heather Kerrigan

rial approach has the potential to cut workforce costs and boost morale for state, local and federal employers and employees. At a time of major budget cuts, that might be hard for policymakers to ignore.

What ROWE does is make an organization more employee driven than management driven. A manager isn't in charge of assigning goals and making sure employees show up every day at 8 a.m. Instead, the manager is there to help a team develop results, track those results and clear barriers to performance. Each ROWE team is expected to work together to develop an agreement that lays out what results each employee in the group is expected to accomplish and what days or times each person will be in the office—agreements are flexible and can change as employees or caseloads change.

A key point in the ROWE approach is that the "R" doesn't necessarily stand for remote. Not everyone in an organization has a position that is suited to working from home. No one is forced to work at home either. If employees prefer working in an office setting, they can continue doing that. But that doesn't mean every job can't have some form of flexibility.

Not everyone in an organization has a position that is suited to working from home. But that doesn't mean every job can't have some form of flexibility.

In developing and implementing ROWE at Best Buy, Ressler and Thompson believed the program would not only increase productivity within the organization, but would also improve morale and reduce turnover at headquarters. So far, they've been right. Studies conducted by the University of Minnesota found that turnover fell by 45 percent and employees reported getting extra sleep and being more likely to see a doctor when necessary. This helped reduce the strain work placed on their families, thus decreasing emotional exhaustion and psychological distress.

While several private companies have incorporated ROWE

into their management plans, governments have taken a more calculated, cautious approach. In 2010, Bryan Sivak, Washington, D.C.'s then-chief technology officer, started to implement ROWE within his office of 550 employees, only to see the program halted by then-Mayor Adrian Fenty. Fenty was nearing the end of his term and wanted his successor to be able to review the program before determining whether it would move forward. So far, it hasn't been revived.

Also in 2010, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) developed a ROWE pilot for 400 employees—the first attempt to implement the program at the federal level. The initial results were positive enough for OPM to extend the program through fiscal 2011. Employees reported increased job satisfaction, a cultural shift in behavior toward results, more proactive leadership and clearer agency priorities. OPM is currently in the process of reviewing the results and impact of the ROWE trial.

One local agency, however, has had clear success with ROWE. The Human Services and Public Health Department (HSPHD) in Hennepin County, Minn., began transitioning employees to ROWE in 2009. With the support of the county administrator, the department won a grant from the state Department of Transportation aimed at reducing traffic congestion in high-volume corridors. The HSPHD had already been trying to boost the number of department teleworkers from 300 to half of HSPHD's 2,700 employees. The idea was to get staff more comfortable working from a variety of locations in order to deliver client services more efficiently within neighborhoods rather than solely from its downtown offices.

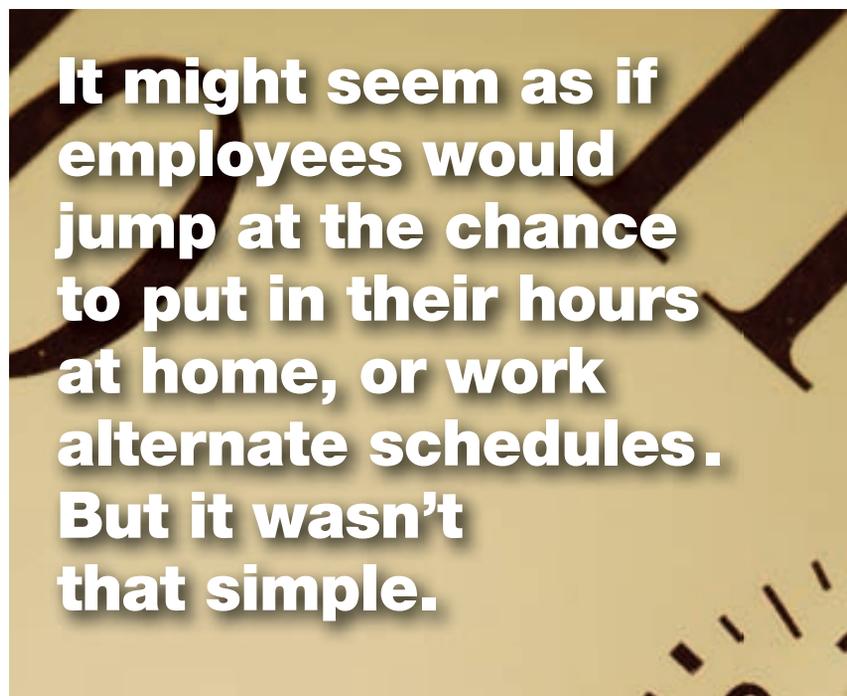
Once HSPHD received the state grant, it contracted with CultureRx, the company created by Ressler and Thompson, to work toward ROWE. The program was slowly phased in across the department, with the final round of ROWE training wrapping up last July. As each wave of transitions occurred, teams were asked to sit down with their managers and figure out what their higher purpose was. For example, in the case of child placement, an employee's purpose is not to process as many cases as fast as possible, but to ensure that a child has a safe home to sleep in at night. From this, the team determines what steps can help achieve that result. Once that's established, they can begin

to look at how many people need to be in the office on a daily basis, who prefers to work in the office and what hours are most critical for face-to-face client meetings. This enables the team to set up a schedule that makes the most efficient use of everyone's time. Managers track results regularly and provide guidance to employees when necessary.

It might seem as if employees would jump at the chance to put in their hours at home, work alternate schedules or even be free from an environment that values clocking in at 8 a.m. more than anything else. But it wasn't that simple. According to Deb

Truesdell, HSPHD's ROWE manager, some employees expressed fear about what they would be expected to do in the new environment—whether it would mean more work—and how they would maintain relationships with clients and colleagues. The culture shift was slow. “Not everyone thinks this is a great idea,” says Truesdell. “It’s rocking the boat. Sometimes people don’t understand that just because they have to focus on results, it doesn’t mean the world has to change.”

Helping employees grasp this concept is one of the main challenges, and there is still some resistance. It has also been difficult



helping managers adjust to ROWE. “We have always been a command and control organization,” Truesdell says. “In ROWE, that doesn’t exist.” Instead, managers need to be clear about outcomes, trust their employees, monitor results and coach employees when necessary. That can be freeing. “I bring value to the department as an employee and I love to do this work,” says Jean Diederich, a child support officer and president of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 34. “So get the heck out of my way and let me do my work. Don’t be a barrier, be a supporter. Be with me, not in front of me or behind me.”

But managers don’t necessarily see things that way. As ROWE rolled out, Truesdell realized that some managers no longer understood what their role was. Previously they made sure employees were at their desks and told people what to do. Not with ROWE. “There really is that concern about whether or not people are doing their work,” says Debra Bean, an area manager within HSPHD. So Truesdell and her team have collaborated with managers to find out what kind of support they need in order to make ROWE work. “What it really demands of us is that we stay maybe more on top of our employees and the results,” Bean says. “In this environment, you’re agreeing you’re going to be more proactive and interactive with your employees.”

CultureRx’s Thompson found that once managers adapt to this new way of thinking, they find themselves actually doing what they had always wanted to do in a management position: develop their people and get roadblocks out of the way. Truesdell cautions that it is vitally important to bring managers and leadership on board during the beginning phases of ROWE so they understand why, how and what it will mean not only for them, but for the organization as a whole.

The department has also worked closely with the unions during ROWE’s implementation. This included ensuring that employees met both their new results and the number of hours they were contractually bound to work. Luckily for HSPHD, a good working relationship with the labor unions helped keep the program on track. The unions have been supportive of it, and HSPHD has been willing to keep the unions in the loop throughout the transition to monitor any systemic issues that get in the way. The agency even invited a chief union steward to be part of ROWE planning and implementation.

Since implementing ROWE back in 2009, HSPHD has benefited in several ways, including increased productivity; reduced sick leave; a reduction in mileage, parking and office space costs; and a higher level of client services. Citizens, for example, are waiting less time to have their cases processed and employee morale is up. Those with responsibility for children or other family members report that they have been able to balance what they need to get done at work and at home better than before. Employees even say

that by carefully planning what hours to be in the office, they’ve been able to reduce the financial impact of rising gas prices.

One of the other advantages of ROWE has been the ability to attract the best employees. Those that do come to HSPHD mention being attracted by ROWE. Many come from other government child support positions, meaning that they can hit the ground running and save HSPHD time and money in training. “We certainly knew that we would be able to attract good candidates,” Truesdell says. “We didn’t know we’d be stealing them already trained.”

It’s still too early to say whether ROWE will be the next big thing in government, or whether it’s just another performance management fad that will fade in time. Public perception will remain an obstacle to implementation—taxpayers don’t like to see government employees in the supermarket at 10 a.m.—as will overcoming a command-and-control mindset. But, says Truesdell, “I don’t think ROWE is going away. If people are benefiting, you’d have to come up with a good reason to not want to work in this way.” **G**

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THE GREAT INVERSION

By Alan Ehrenhalt



The cities of the future may look surprisingly like those of the distant past.

In the midst of the 1980s, at a time when poverty, violence and abandonment had settled over most of the big cities in America, the great urban historian Donald Olsen made an intriguing prediction. “If we are to achieve an urban renaissance,” Olsen wrote, “it is the 19th-century city that will be reborn.”

It was a cryptic comment, and Olsen is no longer around to be asked precisely what he meant, but he was not the only urbanist of taste and judgment who voiced similar sentiments. Jean-Christophe Bailly, the French architect and critic, looked at cities all across North America around the same time and declared that “the 19th century invented modernity, and it must now be reinvented to make up for the damage done by the systematic negligence of 20th-century urban planners.”

Today, more than a quarter century later, at least a part of this vision seems to be coming true.

It would be absurd to make the claim that the great European cities of the late 19th century will reappear in this country in anything like their original form. No American city will create a *Ringstrasse* like the one that circled central Vienna.

None could reproduce the city of London even if it wanted to. And it's impossible to imagine a central planner with the powers of Baron Haussmann in Paris (or even Robert Moses in New York) emerging anywhere today.

But it would also be a mistake to deny the relevance of these older cities to the evolving urban experience, or not to notice that Donald Olsen, hyperbole notwithstanding, was onto something.

American cities all but lost their street life in the last decades of the 20th century; anybody walking around downtown Philadelphia, Boston or Chicago after 5 in the afternoon found the sidewalks deserted and dangerous. Today, in various forms, street life is returning. One can walk down Michigan Avenue in Chicago or Walnut Street in Philadelphia long after dark and find them throbbing with activity.

Much of this activity, as in the Paris or Vienna of another time, is clustered around entertainment. In the 21st century, this is less likely to mean performances at an immense concert hall, although a few cities have built them, and more likely to mean plays at storefront black box theaters and live music coming out of the bars that line the street. Most of all, however, street life in the emerging city means restaurant life. Walk along Tryon Street in downtown Charlotte, N.C., that highly untraditional American city, and you will see diners at sidewalk tables on every block. There is little retail shopping in downtown Charlotte, but there are restaurants almost everywhere.

And there are cafés. One can make fun of the ubiquitous presence and the uniformity of Starbucks, but the fact remains that just 20 years ago, the idea of coffeehouses in urban centers seemed a quaint vision of the vanished past. Now one can walk into a Starbucks in the center of any large American city at 10 in the morning or

8 in the evening and find clusters of coffee drinkers deep in conversation, many of them lingering as much to talk as to consume. It is not going too far to say that Starbucks resurrected the coffeehouse experience in present-day America: Small independent cafés have returned to the street along with it. We have not recreated the *Ringstrasse* café, where raconteurs held forth for hours at a time—but we have taken a step in that direction.

We have also taken a step toward the urban diversity and tolerance that prevailed in European cities a hundred years ago. People with widely different backgrounds and modes of living come together on the sidewalks of Boston, Chicago, San Francisco and a growing number of other cities in ways that would have been unthinkable in 1980. American cities are also returning to diversity of use. The idea of zoning for segregation of uses is slowly dying in America. Virtually every city planning official is now looking for ways to promote mixed-use zoning, perhaps not the chaotic jumble of much of 19th-century Paris, but a mixture of uses nevertheless.

At the level of the metropolitan region, modern American urban patterns are coming to resemble older ones in a more dramatic fashion. For most of Western history, affluent people lived in the center of metropolitan areas. The latter half of the 20th century was defined by fast-growing suburbs and shrinking inner cities, where wealth moved to the periphery and poverty was concentrated close to the core. The 21st-century city will be defined by the opposite—affluent inner neighborhoods, striving and sometimes struggling farther-out neighborhoods. In short, American cities are undergoing a full-fledged demographic inversion. Midtown Atlanta, for example, is filling up with upper-middle-class professionals, both black and white, while exurban counties that were all but homogeneous white bastions of cul-de-sacs and shopping malls as recently as 20 years ago now have become magnets for immigration. Similar events are taking place in Boston, Chicago and Washington, D.C. Look closely at the changes under way in or near the center of these cities and the 19th-century flavor of 21st-century urban America becomes clear.

Sheffield is a quiet neighborhood three miles north of downtown Chicago. It is six thirty in the morning, and I'm sitting by the window at a bagel and coffeehouse just off the corner of Sheffield and Armitage, across the

street from the Armitage elevated train station. Every few minutes a Brown Line train rumbles by directly overhead, its noise so consistent and regular that it feels like an icon of neighborhood life, not an annoyance of any sort.

Armitage Avenue is no Parisian boulevard; there are no boulevards in Sheffield, only business streets and residential streets.

Previous page:
The Sheffield neighborhood on the north side of Chicago

But the buildings are about the same age as those in central Paris. Nearly all of them were built between 1880 and 1910. The Argo Tea Café on the other side of the street reveals the date 1885 in large letters on the second story wall.

A parade of early risers marches down the street in front of me: joggers, men in suits on their way to the train, art students from nearby DePaul University carrying their supplies to the studio. It is the sort of diversity Jane Jacobs saw in Greenwich Village in the 1950s, a diversity of occupations, ages and daily schedules. There are people on their way to 9-to-5 jobs, others returning from night shifts, young singles who jog this route every morning, older people who cover the same route at a slower pace. The one thing you won't notice about Sheffield through the windows of the Chicago Bagel Authority may be the most important thing about the place. It is rich. Actually, very rich.

In 1970, Sheffield was poor, unstable, gang-ridden and dangerous to roam around in. But by the time the 2000 Census was taken in Tract 711, where comparatively modest old houses still fill the residential blocks north of Armitage, the median household income was \$93,279. The median home value was \$675,532. When mid-decade projections were released in 2007 by Esri, an independent demographic research company, the median household income was up to \$133,535, and the median home price had surpassed \$1 million. Gentrification is not a word that accurately describes Sheffield. It is a neighborhood of stable and substantial affluence where scarcely any of the people we normally consider gentrifiers can afford to live.

It is easier to demonstrate that Sheffield is rich than to explain why. "At first glance," the *Chicago Tribune* wrote in 2006, "it's hard to see why some of Chicago's most wealthy people have chosen this formerly nondescript area as their new enclave. It doesn't have a lake view. It isn't even that close to the lake." And the land is flat as a pancake.

In fact, Lake Michigan is a little more than a mile from the center of Sheffield, and one can walk there in half an hour at a leisurely pace. But few of the residents do that very often. There are other factors that clearly have something to do with what has happened—the 14-minute train ride to downtown, the presence of DePaul University, the tree-lined streets and pleasingly eclectic stock of houses—but none of these quite suffice as explanations. It is more instructive simply to say that Sheffield's current prosperity reflects a realignment of urban life.

This is a controversial subject. Free market purists argue that once the economic downturn ends, Americans will resume their 20th-century thrust outward and seek ever newer greenfield homes on plots of land further and further from the city, transporting themselves back and forth on longer and longer commutes by means of the automobile.

They have some statistics to back them up. One study in 2009 reported that only a small portion of Generation Y (or the Mil-



Walnut Street in Philadelphia, like other central city neighborhoods, has rebounded in recent years.

lennials, born roughly between 1980 and 1995) expressed a preference for urban living over a suburban mode of life. But there are equally compelling results on the other side. A competing study by the consulting firm RCLCO in 2008 revealed an almost precisely opposite result: 77 percent of Generation Y wanted to live some variant of the urban life. "Generation Y's attitudes toward homeownership have been changed by the housing crisis and the recession," the Urban Land Institute found in commenting on the RCLCO study. "The number of people trapped by underwater homes that cannot be sold and the millions of foreclosures are tempering their interest in buying their own homes and they will be renters by necessity rather than by choice for years ahead." In many cases, if not most, that means urban rather than suburban rental.

Between 1990 and 2007, central cities increased their share of housing permits within their metropolitan areas by more than double, the Urban Land Institute found. This continued after the housing recession caused the number of permits to plummet in the outer suburbs. What is more, statistics show, housing in cities and inner suburbs held their value during the recession far better than their exurban counterparts.

Where does the Millennial generation want to live? In many ways, this is the question that will determine the face of metropolitan America in the next 20 years. This seems to me a case in which common sense wins a battle of dueling statistics. Most of the major demographic trends going on right now work in favor of an urban preference, at least among a significant cohort of the emerging adult population—smaller households, later marriages, decisions not to marry at all, decisions not to have children, the emergence of a huge and active baby boom population in its 60s and 70s—point to some form of re-emergence of urban choice.

But suppose one grants many of the predictions made by those who attempt to debunk any significant back-to-the-city movement among the Millennial generation. The generation is simply so large—by one measure, 60 million to 70 million people—that even a respectable minority of this cohort seeking an urban life is bound to change American metropolitan areas dramatically.

In a poll cited by *The New York Times* in 2009, 45 percent of Americans between the ages of 20 and 35 said they would like to live in New York City someday if they could. This is an absurdly large number of people—well more than 20 million, in fact. It's a safe assumption that, other than the ones who already live in New York, not too many of them will ever get there. So the poll does not offer much insight into the future demographics of the nation's largest city. But it says a great deal about the values, tastes and wishes of an enormous cohort of American young people.

There is a thirst for urban life among Millennials. It shows up in polls, in anecdotal conversation, in blogs and other casual writing. It is not based primarily on watching television shows

the most part those for whom prices in the center are prohibitive. As the Urban Land Institute concludes, "Once the economy recovers and household formation resumes, the demand for urban housing will greatly outstrip the supply."

For students of cities and community, perhaps the final intriguing question is what will happen to the structure of urban life in general. Will the enhanced street vitality and personal contact that is already occurring in

many of America's largest cities bring about a return to the casual social cohesiveness that Jane Jacobs praised in 1961 in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*? Or will the immense changes in human technological communication diminish the ultimate importance of the street life that seems to be a magnet for so many youthful newcomers in the first place?

When Jacobs wrote her book, there were really only two methods of real-time personal communication. One was the telephone. The other was face-to-face human interaction. The world of communication that the microchip has wrought is so fast and so current as to make detailed explanation unnecessary. The person we run into on the street possibly several times a day—the contact that Jacobs prized—has been compromised by iPads, cellphones, email, social media and other tools Jacobs could not imagine in her wildest dreams. To put the question simply, will technology be a substitute for the regular social contact of Jacobs' day, or will it provide a crucial supplement? As anyone who walks down an urban street knows, a significant proportion of the cellphone conversations that take place are simply logistical arrangements, as people seek to reveal to others where they are in space and how soon they can meet each other at an agreed-upon location. Social media are, among other things, ways for large numbers of people to settle on mutual congregating spaces instantly. The more that people are enabled by technology to communicate with one another while remaining physically solitary, the more they crave a physical form of social life to balance out all the electronics. They are settling in cities—those that have a choice—to experience the things that citizens of Paris and Vienna experienced a century ago: round-the-clock street life, café sociability, casual acquaintances they meet on the sidewalk every day, local merchants who recognize them. This is the direction we are heading in, even if we do not get there for a while.

The 23-year-old student glued to a laptop computer in a corner café in a Chicago neighborhood like Sheffield should not be seen as too different from the Viennese reading his newspaper in a café on Vienna's *Ringstrasse* in 1910. He remains a social animal. He merely expresses the balance between his sociability and his individuality in a different, 21st-century way. **G**

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Alan Ehrenhalt was the editor of Governing for 21 years and is author of The Great Inversion and the Future of the American City (Alfred A. Knopf), from which this article was adapted. The book is available April 24.



Lower Manhattan has seen a population boom in the past decade as younger people have moved to the Financial District.

such as *Friends* or *Seinfeld*, though those should not be discounted. It is based on an inchoate feeling that the cul-de-sac suburbia in which millions of them grew up is a cul-de-sac in more ways than one: It cuts off not only streets, but also diversity and the casual outdoor life crucial to meaningful human sociability.

Once again, it is necessary to say that outer suburbs are not going to empty out in the coming generation. They remain home to millions of current residents with families who like the space, are concerned about safety and want to stay put; newcomers to this country who are determined to avoid the crowding they encountered in other parts of the world; and poorer people who simply are able to find acceptable housing on the periphery that is not available in the center.

The inhabitants of the center cities of the 21st century will be largely those with money—those who have the greatest choice about where to live. Those who inhabit the periphery will be for

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Cleaning Up After Meth

With use on the rise again—and a lack of federal funding—states are struggling to attack the mess.

By Caroline Cournoyer

Flickr/Andrew Russett

On Feb. 22, 2011, state and local law enforcement agencies got a scary message from the feds: The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) could no longer pay to clean up methamphetamine labs, which had risen to near-record levels in recent years.

By that time, most jurisdictions had already written their budgets, which didn't include picking up the federal government's tab for cleaning up meth labs. The feds' money, however—roughly \$10 million under the Community Oriented Policing Services program—had ran out just half-way through the fiscal year.

"To say that it opened up Pandora's box is an understatement," says Tommy Farmer, director of the Tennessee Meth and Pharmaceutical Task Force, which had the nation's highest number of meth lab seizures in 2010. "All of a sudden, the state and local agencies were faced with this bill. We didn't know what to do."

Because the money needed to replace federal cleanup funding could bankrupt smaller municipalities, "some law enforcement agencies were pressured to turn a blind eye," Farmer says. Heads may have been turned more often than not, because lab seizures in Tennessee plummeted 75

percent in March 2011—right after federal funding ran out—and then rose by 73 percent in July 2011, when the state started a cheaper cleanup program.

Despite the federal Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act of 2006, which put strict regulations on over-the-counter products that contain pseudoephedrine, like Sudafed and Claritin, the labs ultimately prevailed. Initially, the law was extremely successful—meth lab-related seizures plummeted from more than 12,000 in 2005 to 6,000 in 2007, according to the DEA. But by 2008, meth lab-related seizures began creeping back up nationwide, reaching near-record highs in 2010. In Tennessee, law enforcement dealt with more meth lab seizures than ever before—mainly because people who produce meth, referred to as meth cooks, quickly adapted to the new federal law.

It led to a new cottage industry called "smurfing," says DEA Special Agent Jeffrey Scott. Meth cooks hire "smurfs" to recruit third parties—often homeless people, college students and the elderly—to buy over-the-counter drugs for them. Fifteen states, including Tennessee, have implemented electronic tracking systems to monitor pseudoephedrine sales and cut down on smurfing. But tracking pseudoephedrine sales hasn't reduced use or production, says Farmer. "It's just provided us with more information."

Another development since the 2006 law was the discovery of the "shake-and-bake method," which requires fewer chemicals and less equipment, time and money, but is significantly more dangerous and leads to more explosions than the traditional meth-making process. Because of this new method, rural area labs have been able to produce higher quantities, while at the same time, meth labs have begun expanding into urban areas.

With more meth, more mess and no funding, Tennessee was forced to find an affordable way to pay for cleanup. It looked to other states battling the meth epidemic

for solutions and settled on “an authorized central storage container program.”

For years, state and local law enforcement would bust meth labs and then wait for specially trained DEA contractors to arrive and clean up the hazardous mess. It was an expensive process since the agents were often needed past normal working hours, increasing the costs of contractors’ visits. Now, instead of waiting for contractors to do the work, state and local law enforcement are trained to do it themselves—consider it DIY meth lab cleaning. Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky and Oklahoma have each established a similar program in the last few years.

After officers properly clean the premises, they take the hazardous materials to one of 12 strategically placed containers throughout the state. Instead of being called to every meth lab seizure in the wee hours of the night, the DEA contractors now pick up the hazardous materials from the central storage bins during regular business hours. By removing the contractors from the cleanup process and cutting down on the number of times they’re used for disposal, the cost of cleanup has dropped from the national average of \$2,500 to just \$500 in Tennessee. Since starting the program in July, the state has amassed a cost savings of \$3.47 million. “We’re really pushing the envelope as to what we’re asking our law enforcement to do, but we don’t have a choice,” says Farmer.

In his fiscal 2013 budget, President Obama proposed \$12 million for anti-meth activities—roughly the same amount as last year. But if the number of meth labs keeps going up, the cost savings from the new program may not be enough. That’s why some states want to take the federal meth law even further and make pseudoephedrine a prescription-only drug. Oregon and Mississippi have already done so, and seven other states, including Tennessee, have pending legislation to follow suit. But there is some resistance to the idea. Oklahoma recently killed just such a bill. The pharmaceutical industry and several local associations representing doctors, pharma-

THE TAKEAWAY:

- Halfway through fiscal 2011, the DEA ran out of funds to clean up meth labs. A new program—in which local law enforcement now cleans up labs and places hazardous materials in strategically placed containers for the DEA to pick up—saves time and money.
- Contact Tommy Farmer, director of the Tennessee Meth and Pharmaceutical Task Force, at 423-752-1479 for more information.

cists and grocers lobbied against it, saying the bill would only place new costs and access restrictions on law-abiding citizens.

That argument doesn’t phase Farmer, who says state action won’t be enough. After Mississippi passed its prescription-only law, Tennessee’s sales of pseudoephedrine doubled—largely from people crossing state lines to buy it. Farmer insists that the

only thing that will curb meth production and use is a federal law returning pseudoephedrine to a controlled substance.

“States doing it piecemeal is better than nothing,” he says, “but with as many border crossings as we have, it makes it very difficult for a state by itself to do something.” **G**

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By Katherine Barrett and Richard Greene

Fleet Fulfillment

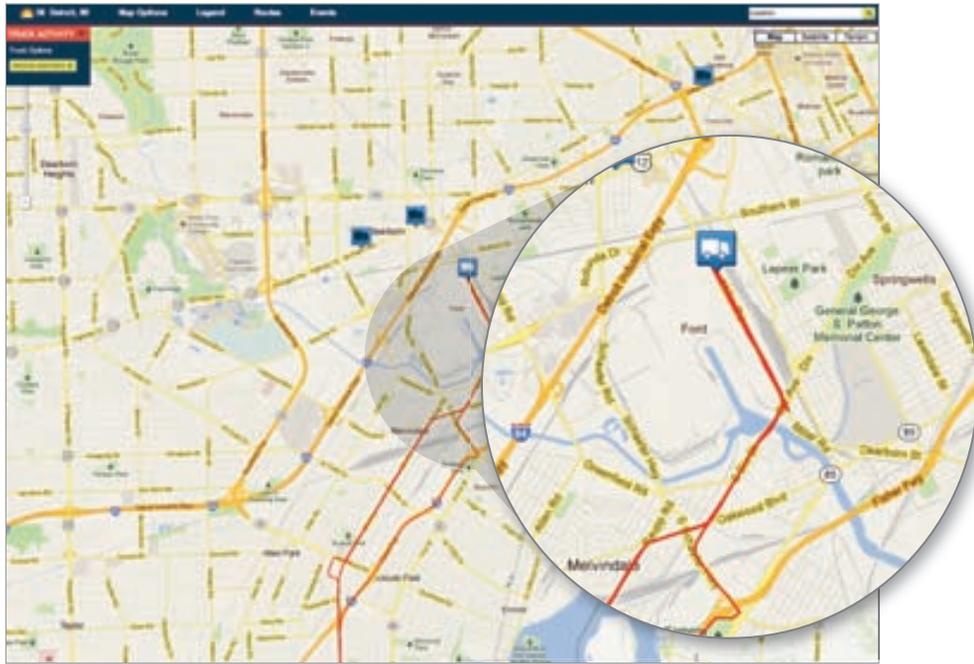
New management and technology tools can save state and local fleets millions.

Consider how much time and effort many of us spend when buying a car. New or used? Buy or lease? Heavy-duty SUV or fuel-efficient compact? Basic black or a daring shade of electric blue?

Cities, counties and states aren't generally concerned about the color of the vehicles in their fleets. But a host of trade-offs are necessary to make sure their fleets are well maintained and able to deliver high-quality service. Recent fleet management efforts are beginning to focus on administrative techniques and technology tools that can bring down the cost and improve efficiency and quality of service.

Many fleets aren't there yet. A slew of evaluations and audits have found problems with fuel inefficiency, inappropriate usage and suboptimal maintenance of fleet operations. Many entities don't even have the data in hand to make smart management decisions. A recent audit in Sacramento, Calif., for instance, cited 240 underutilized vehicles and identified instances where an estimated \$5 million could have been saved. While the city's fleet division provided departments information on vehicle use, the audit noted that "the division has not always adequately and accurately presented usage data to enable optimal decision-making."

Similarly, an evaluation last year of vehicle operations by Florida's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability found that while the Department of Management Services was the agency charged by state law with adopting and enforcing rules and regulations for motor vehicles, it had delegated the management task to 30 agencies, resulting in a wide variety of policies and procedures. These inconsistencies, the report said, "result in poor overall management, unnecessary fleet expenditures,



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Wayne County, Mich., uses this online mapping tool to track fleet vehicles in real time.

duplication of effort, and agencies spending resources on activities that are not central to their core missions."

Consider North Carolina. No law there requires agency-level data collection about vehicles. As a result, the Program Evaluation Division reported in December that just five of 14 agencies and institutions that owned 200 or more vehicles were collecting the data they needed to evaluate if the fleet was the right size for the agencies' needs. This isn't a case where pennies are at stake. In fiscal year 2011, agencies and institutions in North Carolina spent \$182.7 million to own and run their vehicles—that's the entire cost of the Division of Social Services.

What's more, North Carolina's Division of Motor Vehicles is supposed to have a list of state-owned vehicles, but its numbers differed by more than 2,000 from

those reported by the agencies themselves. "The state," the report simply said, "does not know the number of vehicles it owns." Fortunately for North Carolinians, legislators have been responding to the evaluation aggressively.

When governments direct attention to this issue, the potential for savings is huge, says Jeff Strane, director of Georgia's Office of Implementation. Georgia began to build better information about its cars and centralize management at the enterprise level under former Gov. Sonny Perdue's Commission for a New Georgia. That work continues under Gov. Nathan Deal. One result: The fleet of 20,000 is now closer to 18,000. Savings from eliminating cars identified as unnecessary are estimated to be \$1.7 million annually.

One key element in improving management efficiency was hiring an enter-

By Caroline Cournoyer

prise-wide fleet manager. Equally crucial was making it worthwhile for agencies to work cooperatively with the central office. When the state first stepped up its collection of centralized information, agencies found it clumsy and time consuming. But an easier-to-manage system was put in place in 2010 and has vastly improved the data available. Perhaps more important, the central office began giving data back to the agencies on a quarterly basis so they could compare their vehicle and fuel use to similar agencies. Each agency can now see where it can save money and do a better job.

Once a government has the appropriate data, technology can permit it to bring heretofore impossible efficiencies to the fleet. Last year, Wayne County, Mich., installed \$360,000 worth of GPS technology for the 158 trucks and 18 sweepers that deal with winter road maintenance. On a real-time basis, it tells the Department of Public Services where trucks are located, how much salt the trucks are using, whether truck plows are up or down and how fast the trucks are going. “If there’s a route that hasn’t been cleared, we can see where the nearest truck is and clear the route,” says Cindy Dingell, deputy chief operating officer of Wayne County’s Department of Public Services. An additional element built into the Wayne County system is a website (compass.waynecounty.com) that the public can use to track the progress of trucks on county roads. Using the map option, a commuter ready to leave home for work can, for example, plan the best route to take to avoid roads that have not yet been cleared of snow.

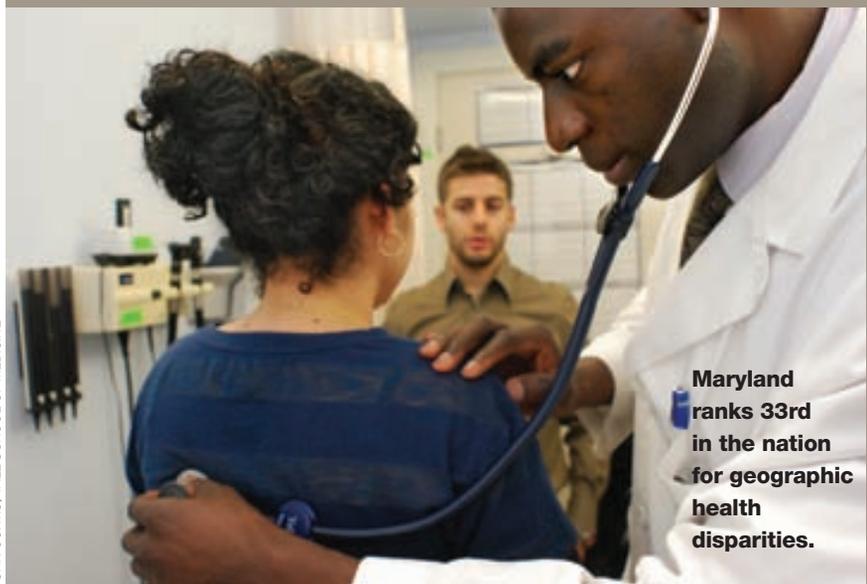
With technology able to give governments the power to provide so much information and quality service, it makes it particularly frustrating that so many governments have yet to tap into its management potential. John Turcotte, director of the Program Evaluation Division in North Carolina, puts it this way: “Technologies are further along than the practices to use that technology.” **G**

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A Healthy, Enterprising Idea?

Maryland has more primary care providers per person than nearly any other state, yet it ranks in the bottom third for geographic health disparities. In Baltimore, for instance, people living in wealthy, primarily white neighborhoods live 20 years longer than those living in low-income, mostly minority areas. In response, Gov. Martin O’Malley has proposed \$4 million in funding for the creation of Health Enterprise Zones, where care providers would be offered financial incentives for bringing more services to underserved communities. Eligible local health agencies and community-based organizations could receive loan assistance, tax credits or state funding to implement electronic health records. The idea for the approach came from the similar Harlem Children’s Zone program in New York City. The anti-poverty program provides an intensely local web of cradle-to-college social services to Harlem children. If approved by the Maryland Legislature, the program would most likely be the first to apply this approach to health care.

JOHN CURTIS, YALE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



Maryland ranks 33rd in the nation for geographic health disparities.

Counselors Not Cops

When people suffering from mental illness can’t reach a doctor or counselor, they often are instructed to dial 911 and speak with dispatchers who may not be qualified to help them. In Multnomah County, Ore., those callers will now be transferred to the county’s mental health call center, a crisis line staffed by 13 mental health professionals. The county decided to make the change after some police responses to mental health-related calls resulted tragically in wrongful incarceration or unnecessary harm. Before transferring calls to mental health professionals, the 911 dispatchers make sure callers aren’t posing a threat to themselves or others. Once the call is transferred, the mental health professional, with the help of a health records database, tries to address the callers’ concerns while figuring out the best way to help them based on their case history. The new system should also free up dispatch and police officers’ time to respond to more imminent dangers. The new policy comes on top of other efforts by the Portland Police Department to

reform the way it deals with incidents involving mental illness, including possibly walking away if it will lead to a peaceful resolution.

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Moneyball Government

Colorado is analyzing patterns and data to improve public policy.

Can “big data” help state education systems produce students who are more successful in the workforce? Colorado is about to find out.

Big data refers to the analysis of huge information sets—and the concept is picking up steam as organizations get better at capturing facts and figures about what they do, and as technology gets more adept at crunching that material into something useful. The idea, as anyone who’s seen the

hopes to answer some fundamental questions. Does preschool or other forms of early childhood education make students more successful? What’s the impact on kids when a parent is incarcerated?

The plan relies on increasingly powerful technology known as master data management (MDM), which might help solve one of the biggest challenges to using big data: the fact that much of the information collected by public and private organizations is in sad shape. “We have a

tainty can be used for fishing licenses, for instance, but much better accuracy can be demanded for health records.

Colorado’s work on education analytics is part of a larger effort to improve access to data and standardize information sharing rules across the state. This spring, it will launch the Colorado Information Marketplace, an online clearinghouse for information collected by state and local governments.

Like many other government data sites, the Information Marketplace will offer access to public data from state agencies and participating localities, like Denver. But it’ll also be something of a dating service for state and local agencies that want to share information with one another. Agencies can list the types of data they’re willing to share, along with rules for who can see the information and how it can be used. The site will spell out standards for security, privacy and data formats, and offer templates for creating information-sharing agreements. “We’re trying to give a kick-start to people who want to share their data, but don’t know how,” Hammons says. “I think this thing will go viral because people are dying for information.”

Colorado officials say connecting the dots on data collected by multiple government programs ultimately may offer an entirely new perspective on public policy decisions. But for now, they’re moving cautiously. “We’re going to roll this out in baby steps,” says Hammons, adding that the state is paying close attention to security and privacy laws like the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

But if they get it right, big data could completely change the game. **G**



Last year’s *Moneyball* explored the way data patterns changed recruiting in Major League Baseball.

hit movie *Moneyball* knows, is to uncover relationships and patterns hidden in mountains of information, and use those insights to make better decisions and gain a competitive advantage.

This summer, Colorado intends to start sifting through data from the state’s departments of education, higher education, social services, corrections and a few others to get a better picture of why some students prosper and others struggle once finishing school. The state

lot of really dirty data,” says Colorado CTO Sherri Hammons, who’s leading the project. Names are misspelled, addresses have typos and street numbers are entered into ZIP code fields, making it tough to match records from multiple agencies or programs to the same person, she says.

MDM software can analyze all of those slightly different bits of information and decide if they belong to one individual. The level of certainty can be adjusted depending on the use—85 percent cer-

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By Girard Miller

The Other Benefit Bomb

It's time for a reality check on funding retiree medical costs.

It has now been seven years since the Governmental Accounting Standards Board began putting other post-employment benefits (OPEB) into the footnotes of state and municipal financial reports. Since then, only a handful of states and localities have taken the next logical step: funding these liabilities for retiree medical benefits plans more like a pension plan. Most still “pay as they go”—budgeting enough money each year to pay the immediate bill, but failing to sock away money for benefits earned by current employees.

There are many reasons for this procrastination. In the bubble-year economies of 2006 and 2007, politicians preferred to start new programs, raise salaries and hire new employees, rather than put away money for retirement medical benefits. Nobody, after all, was ever elected on a campaign to fund OPEB properly. Then came the Great Recession, which wiped out any revenue surpluses that might have been devoted to funding OPEB appropriately for the first time.

There was also the “national health-care” smokescreen excuse, as if anyone actually believed the federal government would ever have enough money to pay for state and local government retirees’ medical benefits. And now, the post-recession recovery has been anemic. There haven’t been surging revenues and surprise budget surpluses like we used to experience in the “V-bottoms” of prior business cycles. Even as we approach the third anniversary of the end of the recession, many states and localities are still cutting their employment levels with job freezes and attrition. Many claims and priorities compete for any new money that might be used to fund OPEB plans.

But today, it’s time to face the music. The hole gets deeper every year, and relatively few employers have stopped digging.

In 2007, Credit Suisse analysts estimated state and local governments’ total unfunded OPEB liabilities at \$1.5 trillion. Since then, those liabilities have grown by an estimated 7 or 8 percent per year, in line with medical cost inflation and the aging workforce. So today’s total liabilities likely exceed \$2 trillion. Unless the employer has taken steps to mitigate benefits costs, the typical OPEB plan’s liabilities have grown by 40 percent in the past five years.

Some politicians have wishfully claimed that they could walk away from and simply renege on their OPEB promises. But as the California Supreme Court has now

practices to public employers seeking to establish an OPEB trust. This primer covers the basic questions that most public officials and managers will face, outlines the basic legal options and pitfalls, explains in simple terms the paths available and the pros and cons of each, and directs readers to literature in the field to help support sound decision-making. Any finance officer can start with this road map and easily chart a course to implement a trust within six months.

GFOA is unequivocal that once a clear and substantial liability is determined to exist, the wiser course of action is to establish an OPEB trust and begin pre-funding,

“Nobody was ever elected on a campaign to fund [retirement benefits] properly.”

held, there is usually an implied contract binding employers who adopted these benefits by official actions such as ordinances and resolutions. Retirees’ medical benefits might conceivably be abridged in federal court upon showing of necessity under financial distress—if accompanied by a reasonable plan to share the burdens and provide a replacement benefit. It’s highly unlikely, however, that many public employers will simply be able to walk away from their OPEB obligations once the economy turns the corner.

These liabilities aren’t going away. That leaves the last line of defense to the procrastinators, who now say: “It’s all too complicated. You have to set up a trust, which could make the liabilities even harder to change.” This is yet another smokescreen.

Fortunately, the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) has stepped up to the plate. It’s produced a new guidance document that provides best

just like a pension plan. Its guidance helps beginners understand the proper roles of custodians, investment advisers, administrators and other parties to an OPEB trust, and very importantly, why and how these differ from the pension plan’s traditional governance structure. For example, there may be no need, or even a justification, for employee membership in an oversight body, especially when the employer makes all contributions. In fact, some OPEB trusts provide extensive outsourcing of most governance and investment functions—with oversight capacity and accountability to monitor results and operations.

As the U.S. economy slowly gets back on its feet, it’s time to look ahead to the next recession. If OPEB funding is not initiated sometime soon, before the advocates of discretionary spending regain their moxie, the hole we’re digging will only be deeper at this stage in the next cycle. **G**

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Chris Burbank
Salt Lake City Police Chief

Once the decision was made last November to evict Occupy protesters from their encampment at Pioneer Park in Salt Lake City, Chris Burbank was ready. The police chief drew from his own past experiences—including his stint managing the police force in Salt Lake City’s Olympic Village in 2002, his 15 years on the force prior to becoming chief and even a cross-country tour as a professional squash player before becoming a cop—to find common ground with the protesters.

Burbank and his officers spent an entire night going tent to tent, calmly explaining to the Occupiers that they had a choice: They could either fold up their tents and return during regular park hours to continue their protest, or face arrest. By morning, about 200 demonstrators had decided to leave. Eighteen chose to be arrested for their cause, all of them peacefully.

Burbank’s diplomatic resolution stands in stark contrast to violent clashes in other cities between police and Occupy protesters last fall. In fact, his approach earned him the designation as Utahn of the Year by the *The Salt Lake Tribune* in December. For Burbank, it’s simple. “We all have to agree to meet in the middle,” he says. “If that doesn’t happen, you don’t have peaceful conclusions.”

—Dylan Scott

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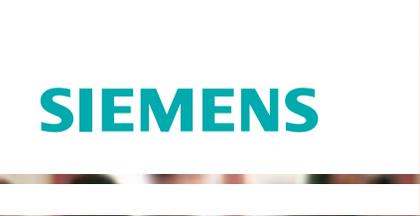
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