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February 2016 — LuAnn Kennedy, Editor

Belomar Hosts Source Water Protection Workshop

The Belomar Regional Council, in conjunction with the West Virginia Rural Water Association (WVRWA), conducted a one-day workshop to provide training on protection of the region's public source water supply systems.

The training was held in September at the Grand Vue Park Banquet Hall in Marshall County. Public utility managers and operators, mayors, county commissioners, city managers, emergency response representatives and health department officials were all invited to attend. Amy Swann and Lew Baker of WVRWA conducted the trainings which covered such topics as the introduction of Senate Bills 373 and 423 (above-ground storage tanks), spill hotlines and response times, resources available to public water supply systems, contingency planning and tabletop exercises. Approximately 25 people attended the workshop.

The workshop was funded using 604b funding through the WDEP and administered by the WVDHHR.

The 604b funding Belomar receives can be used for such activities as enforcement, technical assistance, financial assistance, education, training, technology transfer, and demonstration projects to achieve implementation of best management practices (BMPs) and water quality goals.

Our plan for 2016 is to provide additional trainings and workshops emphasizing educational outreach pertaining to stormwater management. We will keep our utilities and municipalities updated on the dates and details of these trainings as they are available. In the meantime, we welcome any feedback you may have on the relevancy and type of training needed for improved water quality within the region.

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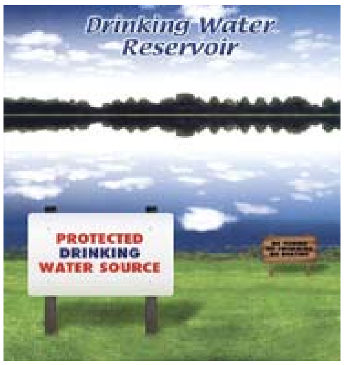
Source Water Assessment and Protection Program (SWAP)



The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau of Public Health was designated by the Governor and Legislature as the lead agency responsible for developing and administering the Source Water Assessment and Protection Program. The goal of the program is to prevent degradation of source waters, which may preclude present and future uses of drinking water supplies to provide safe water in sufficient quantity to users.

The BPH established a grant program to provide funding to the Regional Councils to assist Public Water Supply Utilities that use Surface Water and Surface Water influenced Groundwater sources to provide an Engineering Contractor to develop the assessment and protection plan.

Belomar Regional Council was successful in securing a $58,630 grant through the West Virginia Bureau of Public Health to complete the engineering portion of the Source Water Assessment and Protection Program for the Cities of Cameron and Wheeling along with the Town of Pine Grove. The Thrasher Group, Inc. has completed the engineering portion of the SWAP for the City of Cameron and Town of Pine Grove. They have presented the Source Water Protection Contingency Plan to the Town of Pine Grove Council on February 16th and will be presenting the City of Cameron's on March 7th. CT Consultants, Inc. are working on the City of Wheeling's Contingency Plan.

The West Virginia Bureau of Public Health has informed the City of Cameron and Town of Pine Grove that Tetra Tech, Inc. will be completing the remaining components of their Source Water Assessment and Protection Plan due June 30, 2016.

2016 Community Housing Impact & Preservation Program (Belmont County)

On behalf of the Belmont County Commissioners, members of the Management Services staff attended an application training on January 19, 2016 for the 2016 Community Housing Impact & Preservation (CHIP) Program. The CHIP Program will allow the Commissioners to continue their quest to upgrade housing stock in the entire County. Eligible residents must meet low to moderate income criteria. Once qualified, the CHIP Program will identify health and safety, and standard deficiencies in the homes. If applicable, a lead-based paint risk assessment will also be completed. The Program then works with contractors to have the deficiencies corrected.

The training outlined changes in the program for the new grant year, and reviewed the application. For 2016, the guidelines have been revised for eligible jurisdictions. Belmont County is eligible, and the City of Martins Ferry, as well. Martins Ferry met the criteria of population over 15,000 and LMI percent of at least 25%. The City of St. Clairsville is not eligible to apply this year, but residents will be able to apply through the County. Because of increased competition, a partnership application is highly recommended. Partnering also allows for additional funds to be granted to both jurisdictions. This year, Belmont County will be eligible for $450,000, and Martins Ferry for $350,000, by partnering.

Eligible project categories and activities remain the same as 2014, and include Private Rehabilitation, Rental Rehabilitation, Owner Home Repair, Rental Home Repair, and Home Ownership/Rehab.

Two public hearings will be held, and the application deadline is May 6, 2016.

2016 CDBG/Home General Public Hearing Notice

Belmont County will be holding a Public Hearing to provide citizens with pertinent information about the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME programs for 2016. Information will include an explanation of the eligible activities and program requirements. The County is eligible for approximately $175,000 of Fiscal Year 2016 CDBG funding provided the County meets applicable program requirements. In addition, the County and City of Martins Ferry are eligible for Community Housing Impact and Preservation Program funds (County $400,000/City $300,000 if applying separately, or $800,000 if the County & City apply as a partnership. The County is eligible for various competitive programs including: Neighborhood Revitalization Program ($300,000); Downtown Revitalization Program ($300,000); Critical Infrastructure Program ($300,000); and Residential Public Infrastructure Program ($500,000).

The Public Hearing will be held on Monday, March 7th at 3:30 P.M. in the Belmont County Commissioners Office. Citizens and officials from cities, villages and townships are encouraged to attend.

If you have any questions, please call A.C. Wiethe, Rick Healy or Lisa Mullin at (304) 242-1800.

Meet Our New Employees

In the past six months, Belomar has filled three vacated positions within the Management Services, Transportation and Aging Departments. Brief bios for our newest employees are listed below.

Lisa Mullin is the Community Development Specialist at Belomar. She currently works in the Management Services group. Lisa comes to us via the Wheeling Area Chamber of Commerce where she was the Vice President of Operations. Lisa is a native of Wheeling and a member of St. Michael Catholic Church. She loves to spend time volunteering at school and watching her kids play baseball, hockey and dance. Lisa also likes to shop, travel and spend time with her family. In her spare time, she enjoys working on home improvement projects.

Lisa graduated from Wheeling Central Catholic and West Liberty University. She and her husband Marcus reside in Wheeling. Marcus is the Vice President of Finance at Tri-State Machine. They are the proud parents of three children, Grady, Owen and Lillian. Lisa also currently serves on the Habitat for Humanity and WV Mountaineer Brewfest boards.

Ellen Roeth is the new Transportation Engineer. She recently graduated from the Ohio State University with a degree in Civil Engineering. Ellen is from the Cincinnati area, where she worked at the amusement park Kings Island for four summers. She currently resides in Wheeling.

Cynthia Wells is the Monitor for the Northwestern Area Agency on Aging here at the Belomar Regional Council. She graduated from Wheeling Jesuit University with an MSA and an MBA in 2012. Her previous work experience includes being an Adjunct Professor at Wheeling Jesuit University, a Staff Accountant at Bethany College, and Assistant to the Controller at Russell Nesbitt Services. Cynthia is from Moundsville, WV and currently resides in Martins Ferry, OH.

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging's (n4a) Analysis of the President's FY 2017 Budget Proposal

Last week, President Obama sent his FY 2017 budget request to Congress, thus beginning the annual process of setting spending levels for all discretionary federal programs. While the President's budget theoretically serves as a starting point for congressional budget discussions, a Republican Congress is expected to reject most of his proposals. Despite this fact, the Administration's budget still serves as an important framer for the public on its federal investment priorities. It also annually kicks off the larger conversations on our nation's budget, deficit and debt that Congress and the President will have to resolve before year's end.

In total, the budget reflects $4.23 trillion in spending authority, $4.15 trillion in actual anticipated spending and $3.64 trillion in proposed revenue—resulting in an anticipated $503 billion deficit for FY 17. Unlike last year, the FY 17 budget conforms to budget caps signed into law last fall under the Bipartisan Budget Agreement (BBA), which lifted, by a total of $80 billion for FY 16 and FY 17, the sequester-driven budget caps mandated for FY 16 by the Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA). The President also proposed eliminating the budget caps entirely, as well as the threat of future sequestration, starting in FY 2018. For this year, however, because the President proposed spending in line with the BBA, spending increases proposed for many programs were more modest than we saw in last year's budget proposal. This strategy was anticipated by n4a based on our meetings with budget officials last fall.

n4a examined the President's budget with special attention given to programs that help older adults remain in their homes and communities. The following analysis focuses on key programs that serve older Americans and their caregivers.

Proposed Increases
Older Americans Act Title III B and III C

In a win for advocates, increases for III B Home and Community-Based Supportive Services and III C Nutrition Services totaled $24.4 million. An increase of $10 million (3 percent) for III B services; $5.8 million (1.2 percent) for III C1 Congregate Meals; and $8 million (3 percent) for III C2 Home-Delivered Meals reflects the bulk of the overall boost for ACL. Additionally, ACL proposes making one percent of III C available for national innovations investments to improve and modernize nutrition delivery models.

Aging and Disability Resource Centers

Funding for Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) also received a modest, but important, increase of $2 million (32 percent), which reflects the Administration's continued commitment to evolving and building out the ADRC/No Wrong Door (NWD) network across the country. However, this proposed funding, which is significantly below recent requests, also indicates a shift in investment strategy for ADRCs.

Since $10 million in annual mandatory funding for ADRCs expired in September 2014, advocates and Administration officials have been unable to fill that gap with additional discretionary (annually appropriated) or restored mandatory funding. The $2 million increase in the FY 17 request for the ADRC program represents the commitment to providing additional technical assistance to ADRC networks, but also recognizes that the bulk of infrastructure funding for ADRCs is occurring via investments by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) through other initiatives (e.g., the Balancing Incentive Program and Veterans-Directed Home and Community-Based Services program). Assistant Secretary for Aging and ACL Administrator Kathy Greenlee specifically cited recent CMS guidance released to states to support state operations of ADRC/NWD networks. While n4a will continue to advocate for increased ADRC funding with Congress, the FY 17 ACL budget reflects the reality that major investments in ADRC/NWD networks are being implemented at a state level.

Elder Justice and Adult Protective Services

Again, in a pivot from ambitious investments included in previous budget requests, but still reflective of Administration priorities, a $2 million increase (25 percent) was included for the Elder Justice Initiative—specifically to continue developing a national Adult Protective Services (APS) data

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system and to continue APS research. In FY 15, advocates secured first-time funding from Congress for Elder Justice Act–related activities included under this request, with an appropriation of $4 million. Last year, Congress doubled that funding to $8 million. The Administration's FY 17 request would continue to promote incremental investments in developing a national APS data system, including grants to states to test and develop infrastructure.

Other Core OAA Programs

Funding requests for other core OAA services—including Title IIIE Family Caregiver Support, Title VI Native American Aging Programs and Title VII Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program—remained at their FY 16 final spending levels.

State Health Insurance Assistance Programs

During the congressional appropriations process, n4a and other national, state and local aging advocates successfully fought off a dramatic and potentially devastating 40 percent cut that the Senate proposed for the program. Ultimately Congress level-funded the program, and the President has proposed FY 17 funding at the final FY 16 level of $52.1 million.

Transportation

The President's FY 17 budget request for the Department of Transportation (DOT) supports fully funding transportation programs at the authorized levels passed in the recent five-year transportation reauthorization bill, the FAST ACT, totaling $98 billion for FY 17.

This request includes $12.1 billion—a $400 million (8.5 percent) increase over FY 16 enacted levels—for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which falls far below last year's request, but which reflects the bipartisan transportation bill's agreed-upon levels. The budget request for FTA Section 5310, transportation programs targeted at serving seniors and people with disabilities, included a $4 million increase (1.5 percent) over last year's funding. Again, this amount is consistent with the FAST Act–authorized funding level. The request also includes $5 million in funding for the n4a and Easter Seals–led National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC), as part of the Federal Transit Administration's technical assistance program to assist local communities and states in the expansion and provision of transportation services for older adults and people with disabilities.

What Happens Next?

The President's budget reflects both the government agencies' requests and the Administration's political and policy agenda. The President's budget is the first step in the process to determine government spending for FY 17.

In the coming weeks, Congress will hold hearings on some components of the President's recommendations. In Congress, traditionally, a formal budget resolution is prepared by budget committees in each chamber in March. A congressional budget resolution sets the total level of spending authority and revenues, with specific allocations to each major budget category. This non-binding plan, if adopted by April 15, then guides the appropriations committees, as well as tax and finance panels, for the rest of the year.

In late spring and through the summer, the House and Senate Appropriations subcommittees of jurisdiction make the specific programmatic determinations for each discretionary line item (e.g., a specific program such as OAA Title III B). This takes several months to move through committee, and larger or more contentious bills can take all summer or fall before being passed. Like all other legislation, the House and Senate must agree on appropriations bills. Achieving agreement further lengthens the process, but with the commitment from Speaker Paul Ryan to produce appropriations bills that are consistent with the increased budget caps agreed to in the 2015 BBA, it is possible that individual bills may move through Congress by the October 1 deadline.

2015 WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE on AGING

Administration Releases Final Report for 2015 White House Conference on Aging

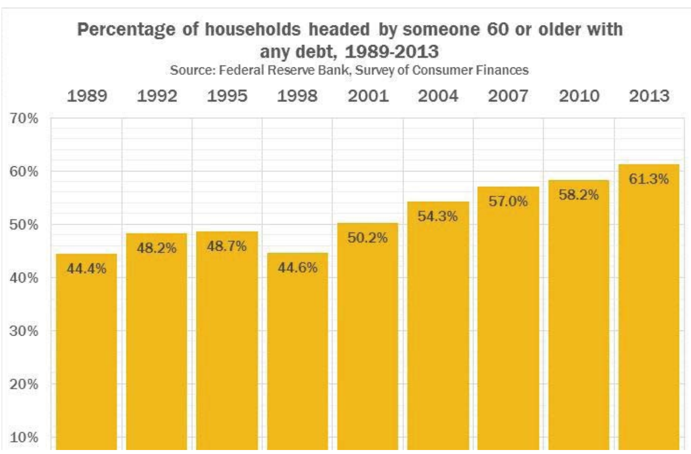
In a year that marked the 50th anniversary of Medicare, Medicaid, and the Older Americans Act, as well as the 80th anniversary of Social Security, the 2015 White House Conference on Aging provided an opportunity to reflect on the importance of these programs, highlight new actions to support Americans as we age, and focus on the powerful role that technology can play in lives of seniors in the decade ahead.

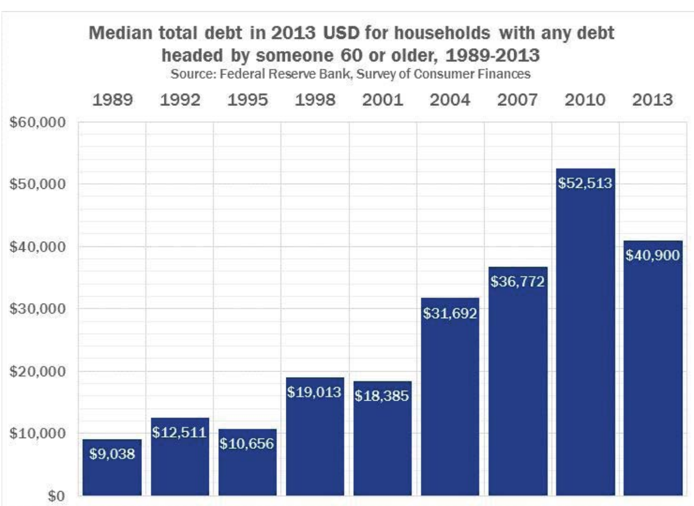
To download a copy, go to: http://www.whitehouseconferenceonaging.gov

National Council on Aging's Profile of Senior Households with Debt

In 2015, NCOA surveyed aging network professionals on their clients' debt, and how it impacts these clients' economic security. The results of this survey, combined with data from several national surveys of consumer finances and debt, are featured in the issue brief, Older Adults & Debt: Trends, Trade-offs, and Tools to Help.

According to the Survey of Consumer Finances, senior households with any debt increased from right around 50% in 1989, to just over 61% in 2013, as illustrated in the chart below.





Medical debt

Increasingly, medical debt poses the most significant barrier to economic well-being.

- More than 84% of people aged 65+ are coping with at least one chronic condition, and often more as they age.
- A study in the Journal of General Internal Medicine revealed that out-of-pocket medical expenditures in the five years prior to an individual's death totaled more than $38,000, leaving 1 in 4 seniors approaching bankruptcy.

Credit card debt

Another common source of debt among senior households is credit cards.

- In 2001, approximately 27% of senior households held credit card balances; by 2013, more than 32% did.
- One in four senior households with any credit card debt had a balance of at least $7,200 in 2013.

Trade-offs in dealing with debt

The NCOA survey found that seniors often make trade-offs to save money in the short term that can be harmful to their long-term health and finances. Among aging network professionals surveyed:

- 23% regularly encounter seniors forgoing needed home/car repairs, which increases the risk of accidents and falls–the leading cause of injuries among seniors.
- Nearly 15% regularly encounter seniors cutting pills, which can limit their effectiveness.
- Just under 14% regularly see seniors skip meals, which can lead to nutrient deficiency.

Download the full report at www.ncoa.org

Transportation Department

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST ACT)

On December 4, 2015 President Obama signed into law the new FAST ACT. This was long overdue. The previous long term transportation bill was signed into law in 2004 and was set to expire in 2009. After 36 extensions and a short term act known as MAP-21, the new FAST ACT provides certainty that funds will be available for the surface transportation projects for the next five years.

The bill increases the overall funding from approximately $52.5 billion per year to $56.2 billion per year. It places major emphasis on freight with the creation of a National Highway Freight Program (NHFP) and providing states funds dedicated for improvements on major freight routes.

The increase in funding translates into close to 10% increase in annual apportionments over the next five years for Ohio and West Virginia. Ohio will receive over 7 billion dollars for the five years from 2016 to 2020. For the same five years West Virginia will receive approximately 2.3 billion dollars.

FAST ACT provides stable funding to plan and implement project for the next five years. Because transportation projects take several years to move from plans to design and from design to construction, stability of funding provided by the new act is a welcome news for the construction industry and the state DOTs.

In terms of need, in West Virginia as per the Blue Ribbon Commission Report "to improve the highway system from where it stands today, an additional investment of $750 million per year would be needed. To provide for expansion of the existing system, an additional $380 million would be required, for a total of $1.130 billion annually". FAST ACT, on an average for the next five year, provides approximately 463 million dollars per year. A net increase of approximately 41 million dollars per year over FY2015 apportionment. For both states the first priority is to maintain the existing roadway network. A lion's share of available funds is spent on maintenance. In spite of modest increase through FAST ACT, prioritizing and funding capital improvements will be challenging for both states.

The Ohio Valley is experiencing unprecedented growth in the energy sector while the fossil fuel production is on the decline elsewhere in both states. This growth and specially the associated growth in truck traffic are already impacting our roadways. The need for roadway improvements in the valley is now and cannot be over emphasized.

We hope the local area will receive its fair share in roadway improvements with the increased funding both states are expecting over the next five years.

Transportation Plan for the Year 2040

Belomar is in the process of updating its current plan "Transportation Plan for 2035" as required by the FAST ACT. The current plan is available on our website. The long range plan (LRP) is updated every four years. The Goals and Objectives for the 2040 plan were approved in October, 2015 and are available by clicking on the Goals and Objectives link on the following webpage:

http://www.belomar.org/trans/lrp-input

A draft document is being prepared now. Your input is very important in the plan process. Comments/Views on the transportation infrastructure needs of the region can be provided via mail, email, on our website or on our Facebook page at:

http://www.facebook.com/belomarmpo

Comments will be addressed in the draft document. Also, encourage low income residents and people with disabilities, in your jurisdiction, to become shareholders in this process by contacting us via phone, email or regular mail. During the key stages of the plan development, material is sent to all stakeholders for comments. Stakeholder list includes elected and appointed officials, freight shippers, providers of public transportation, emergency management agencies, and local advocacy groups. All board members and technical advisory members and the recipient of this newsletter are identified as stakeholder and included in the list. We are open to suggestion for adding other interested parties to this list.

Working Together Across State Borders

The following article is a reprint from the January, 2016 ODOT newsletter.

Invisible Borders

Ohio and West Virginia may not always have much in common, but on January 12, during the first measurable snow storm, an ODOT plow truck broke down on Interstate 470, just a few miles from the West Virginia border. A quick call from the Belmont County transportation manager resulted in WVDOH sending a plow truck to take over the route until ODOT's plow truck was repaired. Later that afternoon, WVDOH had the same scenario happen on Interstate 70 near the busy Cabela's interchange. ODOT returned the favor by providing a truck and helping WVDOH get the highway open. A year ago this would have never happened. However, a little brainstorming meet-and-greet in November resulted in a shared effort in opening and maintaining two of the most heavily traveled arteries in the nation. The ability to work together across state borders has allowed us to better serve the travelling public in both states and maintain the flow of traffic.