

MAC LOOKS AHEAD TO THE NEW YEAR

December 31, 2007

MAC's 36th Annual Conference Held In November Was A Huge Success

The Nov. 18-20 Annual Conference at Tan-Tar-A was one of the best! Attendance was at a record high; our speakers were top-notch; exhibit space sold out early; and sponsors contributed handily to defray overall costs. Due to the generosity of our gold, silver, and bronze sponsors, we were able to keep MAC registration fees at a very reasonable rate. Please extend your appreciation to them when you have a chance! Company names are posted on our website – www.mocounties.com.

Meet Your New Executive Committee

At conference, the following persons were elected to serve as executive officers for the coming year: President and **Cole County** Associate Commissioner Mike Forck, President-Elect and **Carroll County** Clerk Peggy McGaugh, 2nd Vice President and **Livingston County** Presiding Commissioner Eva Danner, 3rd Vice President and **Iron County** Treasurer Jack Adams, Treasurer and **Polk County** Collector Debbi McGinnis, and Past President and **Greene County** Recorder Linda Montgomery. These are the people that you will be working with (along with the full board of directors and MAC staff) to implement the association's policies in the coming year.

**Gearing Up For A New Session ...
The General Assembly Convenes On Wednesday, Jan. 9**

MAC Legislative Services For 2008

With the Missouri General Assembly convening on Jan. 9, the MAC staff will utilize a number of legislative tools to keep you abreast of what is going on in Jefferson City. Periodic bulletins (including bill numbers, brief summaries, and dates of importance) will be sent out to help you track county legislation. Urgent messages will be sent out by broadcast fax and/or e-mail (for those of you who prefer it). Our website, www.mocounties.com, is also a great tool for tracking legislation and keeping informed of governmental changes. The website is connected to the state government website and will allow you easy access to the Missouri Senate and House web pages.

2008 Missouri County Government Platform

The membership adopted the following four resolutions during the Nov. 19 annual business meeting. *(The resolution summaries are in no particular order. All four are MAC priorities and will be given the same attention.)*

1. **Support Upgrading Statewide 9-1-1 Wireless Emergency Services.** Missouri trails the nation in wireless 9-1-1 accessibility. MAC will support legislative action to design a complete and detailed plan for upgrading Missouri's 9-1-1 wireless emergency services.
2. **Oppose Legislation That Erodes The Local Tax Base And Call Upon The General Assembly To Address Missouri's Antiquated Tax Structure.** MAC will be calling upon the General Assembly to limit legislation that would have a negative budgetary effect on local governments without guaranteed replacement revenue. Additionally, MAC will request the General Assembly address Missouri's antiquated tax code, especially as it relates to sales tax, so that both state and local governments are well-positioned in the future to meet the increasing service needs of their citizens.
3. **Oppose The Pre-Emption Of Local Authority.** MAC will oppose legislation that would pre-empt a county's authority to deal with local issues and local problems.
4. **Support Fully Funding State Mandates On County Governments.** MAC will respectfully request that the Missouri General Assembly and Gov. Blunt include in the state's FY 2009 budget (1) an increase in the appropriation for prisoner per diem reimbursement authorized under 221.105, *RSMo*, (2) an appropriation to fully fund state assessment maintenance reimbursements, (3) an appropriation to fully fund any new obligations placed on the election officials of this state, (4) both an appropriation to fully fund the reimbursement for the detention and care of neglected and/or delinquent juveniles and the salaries of juvenile court personnel in single-county circuits, and (5) an appropriation that would relieve counties of the

cost of providing office space and certain utility expenses for the various state public defenders' offices.

Collection Fees To Be Withheld From A Portion Of The CART Fund

As most of you already know, the Department of Revenue has sent a memo to local officials outlining the effects of an error in the collection of the state motor vehicle sales tax, as well as any increase in license fees on motor vehicles. This error does not pertain to gas tax collections.

The *Missouri Constitution* was amended in November 2004 to specify that cities and counties pay 25 percent of the 3 percent cost of collecting the motor vehicle sales tax and license fees. The 25 percent should have been deducted prior to distributing the monies to the State Highway and Transportation Department Fund. The 25 percent local portion was never collected in the state's FYs '06, '07, and '08, and now the Department of Revenue will be withholding funds over a 32-month period to recoup the uncollected monies.

The department held a meeting to discuss issues surrounding the deduction of funds and the criteria for counties to make the necessary repayments. Not much was learned at the meeting, other than rough averages of what it was going to require on a statewide basis. The only noteworthy portion of the meeting was assurance that a letter from DOR would be sent to each county in the state outlining its estimated monthly payments for the next 32 months. If you have not received your estimate by the time you get this bulletin, feel free to call the Department of Revenue's Taxation Bureau, and they will provide your estimate over the phone. You may contact Keith Gast with the Taxation Bureau at 573-751-2008.

Committee Findings On The State's 9-1-1 Wireless Emergency

The House Interim Committee to Evaluate the 9-1-1 System has held hearings across the state to learn more about the critical 9-1-1 issues that are prevalent in Missouri. The committee's charge was as follows: *"The duty of the Interim Committee to Evaluate the 9-1-1 System is to assess current 9-1-1 capabilities across the state, including evaluating shortfalls within the current system and addressing possible solutions for such deficiencies, and to ensure the system's interoperability."*

A report has been issued and in the committee's findings four options have been recognized as possible solutions:

1. **Generate an on-going source of revenue by way of ballot measure.**
2. **Establish a recovery fee through action of the state Legislature.**
3. **Give the Public Service Commission limited oversight so that they may establish a recovery fee.**
4. **Appropriate funds from state general revenue.**

Each of these solutions has its own respective problems and all are possible solutions to a very complex issue at the local level. The chairman of the committee, Rep. Mark Bruns, has vowed that he would file legislation on the matter. At print time no bill has been filed on 9-1-1. MAC advises all of you to contact your legislators and urge them to work on this very crucial issue during the 2008 legislative session.

Counties Are Urged To Join MAC's Self-Insured Workers' Comp Fund

We are happy to report that for the 16th time in the fund's 20-year history, the MAC Workers' Comp board has declared a \$180,429 dividend for 2008. Throughout the pool's long and successful history, dividends totaling roughly \$7.1 million have been issued to members in good-standing.

The 2008 dividend is performance driven – rewarding those with experience mods of 1.0 or below with a 5 percent dividend credit to be applied to their renewal premiums. Unlike many pools, entities with unfavorable losses (experience mods over 1.0) will not be penalized at this point in time. However, these members will be the primary focus of the fund's loss-prevention coordinator, who will make a concerted effort to assist them in enhancing/upgrading their safety programs.

Another benefit of membership in the fund is a 10 percent scheduled credit. The board has again approved the use of this credit, which automatically reduces your total premium by 10 percent.

In other action, largely due to an increase in severe claims and medical costs, the board approved a rate increase of 3.5 percent for the coming term. This increase is not much above an inflationary adjustment and was implemented to maintain the long-term financial integrity of the pool. We believe that a prudent rate increase will help us avoid large percentage rate increases in the future. Both the dividend return and the 10 percent scheduled credit will help to offset the effect of this increase.

We strongly urge those of you not in the pool to consider the benefits of membership. Deciding whether to enroll in the Fund will be one of the most important budget decisions county officials can make. There are too many advantages to ignore: (1) ownership in the company, (2) improved loss control/cost-containment, (3) stability during highs and lows in the market, (4) national pooling for re-insurance, and (5) cash flow benefits (rather than turning over profit to an outside insurer, MAC has invested your unpaid loss reserves and has earned over \$9 million in interest to date).

Consider Joining MAC's Prepaid Legal Services Program

Forty-two counties have signed up to take advantage of the Prepaid Legal Services Program managed by Ivan Schraeder, the association's legal counsel.

Under contractual agreement, Mr. Schraeder will provide to participating counties 10 hours of advisory or opinion services per month via telephone or written communication.

Participating counties pay an annual fee, based on their assessed valuations. Counties who are interested in the program should contact Cindy Wells at the MAC office (573-634-2120) for an application form. Ivan Schraeder, who is newly associated with The Lowenbaum Partnership L.L.C., may also be contacted at 314-746-4823 for more information about the program.

Your State (MAC) & National (NACo) Membership Service Fees Are Due

All of the 114 counties were members of MAC in 2007, so naturally we are anxious to reach 100 percent participation in 2008. What happens this year in the halls of the State Capitol will not only have impact on your duties, but it will also influence the public's perception of your ability to extend much-needed services to the friends and neighbors who elected you.

For budgeting purposes, you have already received the formula for estimating your 2008 member service fees and you may compute the calculation, as long as you obtain the exact figure that your county assessor submitted to the State Tax Commission for your 2007 assessed valuation.

MAC will also do the calculations as soon as we receive the current assessed valuations from the Tax Commission the first week in January. **Immediately after receiving the figures, we will send out the invoices for MAC member service fees. Please wait for your invoice before submitting your payment.**

Current members of NACo should have received a dues invoice from NACo in October. If you have not already paid your NACo dues, please forward your check directly to NACo at P.O. Box 79007, Baltimore, MD 21279-0007. Non-member counties wishing to join NACo may call 202-942-4242 to obtain the amount of dues for 2008.

Here's A Great Incentive To Join NACo!

This is your invitation to "*Get Jazzed in Jackson County*" as the National Association of Counties' 2008 Annual Conference is "Goin' to Kansas City!" The July 11-15 national meeting will be the hottest ticket in town as this high-profile convention convenes on the eve of the 2008 August Presidential Primary. A prestigious list of speakers and star-studded entertainment will top the marquee, attracting an audience of thousands.

Please know that by joining NACo as a new member county, you get one free registration (a value of \$490) for the July conference. This special offer, in itself, is worth more than a lot of the counties' dues! Plus, did you know that member counties who recruit new member counties also receive a free conference registration?

We're hoping Missouri county officials will attend in record numbers! MAC will be asking you to help out in numerous ways – by volunteering as greeters, by helping us host a hospitality suite, and by contributing whatever you can to defray costs associated with such a huge event. Over the next six months you'll be receiving more detailed information. We want to make NACo '08 in Kansas City as successful as NACo '99 was in St. Louis. This is quite a tribute for our state to host the national convention twice in one decade!