

NJAC COUNTY BIZ

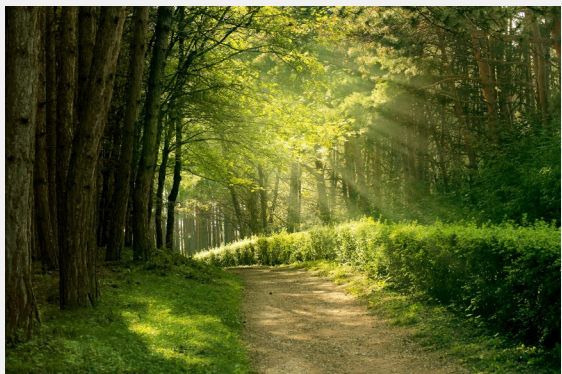
An Educational and Informative Newsletter for Counties and Businesses

New Jersey Association of Counties

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Are Your Grant Management Programs Living In The Past?

by Raj Juttukonda, Right Angle Solutions



It is no small task to measure, track and compare investment requests for programs that are supported by taxpayer's levy or other grant sources. There are numerous steps required for approvals many of which are validated only at the end of the cycle. Especially when Counties rely on spreadsheets to manage the process the accuracy of the data and the ability to retrieve information is challenging.

Fortunately, technology is now at a mature stage that allows County Administrators to create standardized, web-enabled processes that help stakeholders by eliminating countless bottlenecks and obstacles administrators face every day.

Right Angle Solutions (RAS) has worked with Morris County Administrators to effectively manage their Preservation Trust Initiatives programs for Open Space, Historic, Farmland, Flood and Trails Preservation Programs. This tailored and approachable solution leverages technologies to automate and simplify the application submission, approval, and grant management processes.

Here is what the **CIO of the County of Morris, Mr. John J. Tugman** had to say.

“Morris County had created numerous disparate static databases over the years to support the management of critical high-visibility Planning and Preservation programs Open Space, Historic Preservation and Flood Mitigation.

The re-engineered process and Web App RAS is delivering has enabled Morris to standardize and modernize grant program management. The modern web-based platforms RAS is delivering will allow the various Morris municipal, non-profit, and private applicants to submit applications interactively and monitor the processing of their application(s) in real time.”

The benefits of modernizing the grant management process are:

- **Electronic Organization:** Electronic submission of applications, deeds, surveys, and other associated legal documents that can be uploaded, retrieved, and shared through the application.

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Are Your Grant Management Programs Living In The Past?

(continued)

- **Seamless Integration with County GIS:** Parcels, easements or structures that are included in the program are virtually connected to GIS maps. The maps visually display where and "when" program dollars were spent.
- **Historic:** The nature of the application allows accessibility of ALL projects, past and present; thereby providing real-time metrics of the cumulative preservation information.
- **Multi-level Communication:** Information is tailored to and shared between County commissioners, administrators, committee members as well as municipal and non-profit applicants.

Who are the direct beneficiaries of this solution in the County offices?

- **Program Directors:**
 - Powerful, real-time infographics of monies received, monies distributed, account balances and spending trends that can help decision makers direct the future of program(s).
 - Integration with County GIS gives local awareness of the lands that were preserved through the programs.
- **Administrators:**
 - Complete project tracking throughout all phases between application, review, funding and monitoring
 - Improved data influx with secure cloud storage that enables easy access to authorized personnel
 - Transparency in the program fund utilization provides comprehensive information
- **Commissioners:**
 - Residents see exactly where their tax dollars were invested, and can appreciate the tangible, cumulative value of the preservation program(s).
 - Commissioners have secure access and review audited documents that fulfill all the required county criteria.

There are endless possibilities of creating substantial impact by extending this framework to various programs.

To access a case study that will explain in detail on how to go about this process of modernization from conception to implementation, click on [Case Study Please!](#)



Still Time To Register On-Site! **Exhibit Booths Are Sold Out**

NJAC Celebration of County Government
May 4th thru 6th
Caesars, Atlantic City, New Jersey

Schedule of Events

Caesars Online Room Reservation

Hunterdon County Commissioners Bring Donations To Ukrainian Catholic Church

by John E. Lanza, Hunterdon County Commissioner Director



Photo L to R:
 Father Orest Kunderevych,
 Commissioner Director John E. Lanza, and
 Commissioner Susan J. Soloway

Hunterdon County Commissioner Board Director John E. Lanza and Commissioner Susan J. Soloway met with Father Orest Kunderevych, from St. Michael the Archangel Ukrainian Catholic Church in Hillsborough this week, to donate nearly 500 meals ready to eat (MRE's) for distribution to the people of Ukraine who are under siege.

Director Lanza said, "Hunterdon County supports the Ukrainian people and is dedicated to helping with the Humanitarian Crisis. There are millions of people who are fleeing the Ukraine because of an unprovoked war and they are in desperate need of food, shelter and medical supplies."

Director Lanza and Commissioner Soloway coordinated with the county's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and Public Safety Department Head, Brayden Fahey, to provide the meals that will be distributed to the Ukrainian people.

Soloway, the Board's Public Safety liaison, stated, "The MRE's came from a surplus supply held by the Office of Emergency Management, and I am advised the county still has a sufficient

supply for use in response to local emergencies."

Hunterdon's Commissioner Board is committed to sharing available resources with those who are helping in the crisis, such as St. Michael's Church.

Lanza added, "The Board stands by its commitment to ensuring that no county purchases are made of any products produced in Russia or by Russian companies.

We continue to pray for the brave people of Ukraine as they stand strong against the enemy and are fighting for their lives."

Those wishing to donate can find information [here](#).



BECOME A MEMBER OF THE NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

Learn about the benefits of being a part of NJAC and how you can join.
 Contact Loren Wizman, Business Development Director at
 (609) 394-3467

or

loren@njac.org [Click here for an application.](#)

With Global Instability And Inflation, Investment Fees Need To Be More Transparent

by Andrew S. Bluestone, CFP for Selective Benefits Group

For many young investors, the drastic drop in the stock market from the beginning of the year is cause for great alarm, especially as high inflation, a shaky supply chain and the invasion of Ukraine has added a whole new level of unpredictability.

But in a macro sense, considering the New York Stock Exchange was founded in 1792 and has withstood global and domestic strife again and again, what we are now seeing is just a blip in time. (Dow Jones Industrials Average Historical Trends – Guggenheim).

Most hardened investors will urge you to avoid checking your 401(k) balance or other investments during this rocky time. As historical facts are the closest indicator of future performance, in my advisory practice we often suggest our clients to look at a longer time horizon and stay the course as your risk tolerance allows.

However, I strongly believe this is the ideal time to review your broker fees and other underlying hidden fees that could make this down market even more difficult to navigate.

When the market is robust and seems like it will only grow faster, most investors don't really consider the overall fees of the investment portfolio, including retirement plans such as 401(k), 403(b) and 457(b) plans. Now, as the market has dropped into correction territory, with inflation eating away at our hard-earned investments and this horrific war continuing with no clear end, every nickel counts.

The hardest hit, in many sectors, are our public servants and retirees who rely on public pensions and voluntary retirement programs. In my role as a financial advisor to municipal and county governments, I have found abuses in fees across the board, occurring for years and having a direct effect on the amount of money remaining in the retirement account at the time of retirement potentially changing the quality of life of retirees.

Costs relating to mutual funds, annuities and third-party administrator fees all have an impact on overall returns. When fees are paid by the participant, rather than the employer, the net returns take a hit. Over time, these steady and consistent losses may cost a retiree hundreds of thousands of dollars, considering compounded interest and lost investment opportunity, in a retirement account.

We acknowledge there is no such thing as a free retirement investment program. Fees need to be paid to whoever is administering the plan. But retirees need to be reassured they are not getting fleeced.

New Jersey legislators need to ensure fair, market-driven compensation for financial professionals who oversee and service retirement plans. More transparency and policies that help protect retirees from individuals who gouge them behind the scenes. Employers also have a responsibility to help find competent financial professionals and managers for retirement programs, armed with easy-to-understand fee disclosures to comparatively shop for suitable service and price.

The other ugly fact about fees is that some are deliberately *hidden* to both the participant and plan sponsors. These fees, often called "wrap fees" or "revenue sharing," should require explicitly disclosures in the reporting documents 408b-2 and 404a-5, along with the tax filing form 5500.

Lastly, bad investment selections are some of the reasons why 401(k) plan fiduciaries have found themselves in lawsuits with participants. While the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) establishes minimum standards for pension plans in the private industry, it does not define a "prudent" investment.

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Investment Fees Need To Be More Transparent *(continued)*

To me, a prudent investment is one that is cost-efficient and meets the investment objective of each participant in the retirement plan and its mutual fund line -up investment's choices.

In this topsy-turvy market, inflation and global instability, it is my hope our state lawmakers can focus on mandating more transparency in fees for retirement plans. Moreover, many more employees should have a stronger education about investment options before deciding what could be a very expensive plan sponsor on behalf of their employees.

It is the only way to help ensure our retirees can maximize the potential of their nest eggs.

Andrew S. Bluestone, CFP, and Selective Benefits Group name offers products and services using the following business names: Andrew S. Bluestone, CFP, and Selective Benefits Group – insurance and financial services | Ameritas Investment Company, LLC (AIC), Member FINRA/SIPC – securities and investments | Ameritas Advisory Services (AAS) – investment advisory services. AIC and AAS are not affiliated with Andrew S. Bluestone, CFP, and Selective Benefits Group.



WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER

Infotech is a leading SaaS solutions provider for the infrastructure construction industry. Informed by DOT relationships and decades of experience, Infotech develops software solutions that bridge the gaps between owners, consultants, contractors, and other project stakeholders. Whether it be tools for construction administration and inspection or secure online bidding, all of Infotech's solutions are built to increase transparency, productivity and the availability of data. Infotech is the developer of Appia®, Bid Express®, and Doc Express®, as well as the official contractor for AASHTOWare Project™.

For additional information regarding infotech please contact Joe Rowland, Director of Business Development and Strategic Direction at joseph.rowland@infotechinc.com.

The logo for infotech, with 'infotech' in a blue sans-serif font and a registered trademark symbol (®) to the right.

The Benefits Of Vendor-Paid VS. Agency-Paid e-Procurement Models

by Joe Rowland, Phd., Director of Business Development for Infotech

e-Procurement, or e-Bidding, depending on your industry, is the concept of business-to-business or business-to-government acquisition of supplies, work, and services that occurs entirely within an online platform. For consumers, eBay was one of the first sites that allowed for an online bidding process. Our own site, Bidx.com, took its first bids in 1998 as the first e-bidding site for construction. For government agencies and businesses, there are a range of platforms available that offer different procurement models, depending on what works best for the organization.

These e-Procurement platforms offer benefits to agencies and their vendors alike. When an agency decides to adopt an electronic bidding system, they introduce several cost-saving efficiencies into their process. These include:

- Reducing the risk of rejected low bids with error and omission alerts
- Eliminating paper, printing, and storage costs for all parties
- Saving time and money through simple electronic submissions
- Hosting safe, remote bid openings in the pandemic environment

Often, SaaS-based bidding platforms also add new features and functionality that come directly from agency and vendor suggestions. By giving users a voice in software development, e-Procurement platforms can evolve alongside the bidding community's needs.

When it comes to adopting an e-Procurement or e-Bidding solution, agencies are often faced with one key question - how do they want to pay for it? Many platforms offer two options: agency-pay and vendor-pay. As the names suggest, these options indicate which party will pay for use of the online platform.

The benefits of the vendor-paid model

In a vendor-paid model, the vendor pays to respond to solicitations in the e-Procurement platform, whether one at a time or through an unlimited subscription model. Some agencies balk at the idea of rolling out a new electronic bidding process and also charging vendors for it, but the reality is, many vendors quickly see that the benefits outweigh a monthly or per-bid fee.

We've spoken with various state agencies about their use of a vendor-paid, online bidding model, and many have shared sentiments along these lines:

"The contractors don't mind spending the money to place a bid because it's saving them postage and a trip to the courthouse, I haven't heard any complaints about that." - Adam Fricke, Deputy Engineer, Clinton County

"From a contractor perspective, if they can be in their office, get calls on quotes, and incorporate a last-minute price change on their bid instead of having to do that early to mail in their bid, that's a win for everyone." - Tina Collins, IT Consultant, Ohio Department of Transportation

As Adam and Tina both touched on, submission fees for online bidding platforms are often dwarfed by the costs of printing, postage, delivery, gas, courier fees, etc. The contractor's ability to make last-minute updates to their bid is also often worth the cost. Here are some other benefits of the vendor-paid procurement model:

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The Benefits Of Vendor-Paid VS. Agency-Paid e-Procurement Models *(continued)*

Get up and running quickly with e-bidding

Over the past year and a half or so, many organizations have had to quickly implement an online bidding process due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Agencies are often locked in to their annual budgets or dealing with budgetary restraints, so the ability to quickly offer an online bidding solution with a vendor-pay model allowed them to be up-and-running in a matter of days. These agencies have the ability to reassess during budget planning periods if they would like to stick with vendor-pay or take on the costs themselves.

[Read more about the benefits of vendor-paid vs agency paid e-Procurement models.](#)



Save The Dates And Come Join Us!!

May 1st – 3rd, BrainStorm at Kalahari Resorts and Conventions, Sandusky, OH

- Booth #507
- Exchange ideas among fellow education IT technologists and ED Tech vendors.

May 4th & May 5th at the Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY

- Booth #E81
- Connect with New York State agencies, municipal governments, public and private schools, and other authorized users of New York State centralized contracts.

May 4th – May 6th, NJAC's Annual Celebration of County Government at Caesars, Atlantic City, NJ

- Celebration of county government that brings together over 500 elected and appointed officials and business leaders to focus on issues that impact our counties and residents within the state of New Jersey.

May 18th - May 20th, NJASA Spring Leadership Conference at Harrah's, Atlantic City, NJ

- Booth #'s 105 & 107
- Address the most critical educational issues of our time

MRA International is a leading technology expert and a value-added HP and HPE Partner with over 20 years of experience providing unique IT solutions and turn-key results to the public sector.

As a full-service facility with all the benefits of a local, family-owned company, we consistently provide a top-notch level of personal service. We always lead with our clients' best interests in mind and accelerate their success by serving as a trusted partner who understands their business goals and stays one step ahead on new technologies to provide buying recommendations and best support their ongoing operations.

With MRA Warranty Services- our expert technicians will repair or replace your computing device. MRA's expert configuration and deployment services bring you fast, accurate, and globally standardized IT solutions.

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Bigger Infrastructure, Better Operations With Asset Performance Analytics

by Jake Yockel, US Public Sector Account Executive for SAS

Capital investments mean ongoing maintenance. And, with capital spending on infrastructure going into overdrive in the coming years, that means government maintenance budgets will be stretched. How will counties stay on top of managing their assets without enlarging their operations budgets? Without new technologies, this would be a daunting issue, especially now as governments are losing employees to the silver tsunami.

The way to avoid high maintenance costs and help your staff do more with less is by using **predictive maintenance** for your fleets, buildings, and infrastructure.

Predictive maintenance is the process in which sensors take the pulse of equipment performance and analytic models interpret that data to provide accurate guidance on when maintenance should be performed. Unlike *preventive* maintenance in which equipment is tuned up based on a set schedule, *predictive* maintenance means that you are not performing unnecessary work. In other words, you fix your machinery or equipment when you need to – not too soon (wasting money) and not too late (after it has failed and resulted in costly downtime).

Organizations that combine sensors and data analytics to perform predictive maintenance will keep high-capital assets running at maximum efficiency and achieve greater service targets, lower operating costs, and minimize environment, health, and safety risks.

New mechanical devices – from vehicles to chillers – are coming equipped with sensors that track their performance. Some of these sensors produce a read as frequently as every millisecond. If your county is investing in new fleets, buildings, and infrastructure, you will be collecting massive amounts of data from those sensors. While it might be tempting to keep storing the sensor data in hopes of needing it one day, savvy governments will put it to work. By doing so, they will not only optimize their performance and discover valuable insights, but they will avoid amassing huge amounts of data (some of which does not need to be stored).

Using data mining, advanced analytics, and data visualization, you can detect hidden patterns in the data that is produced by the sensors, allowing you to troubleshoot performance issues faster and more effectively – so that corrective action can be taken quickly.

For example, GE Transportation locomotives are equipped with edge devices that manage hundreds of data elements per second to optimize locomotive operation. Having this real-time insight into operations results in just-in-time maintenance that keeps costs down and performance time up.

If you would like to learn more about predictive maintenance, join the IoT Community who is hosting its conference on June 22 and 23. Sign up at <https://iotslam.com/>, choosing “FREE - Standard VIRTUAL Pass - IoT Slam Live 2022.” The conference will include an educational panel discussion on the Artificial Intelligence of Things (AIoT) for predictive maintenance and reliability. This panel will discuss the experiences, lessons learned, and best practices that can help organizations striving to improve asset performance.



Key Elements Successful Surplus Sales Have In Common

by Stacey Collier, Marketing Communications Specialist for GovDeals

Conducting successful surplus sales can sometimes be a challenge for many counties. Surplus is often one of those easily forgotten tasks that not everyone wants to deal with. But ignoring your surplus will not get your county the ROI they could truly use. Read below to find the key elements your county needs to have successful surplus sales.



An Established Marketplace

GovDeals has sold surplus online for over 16,000 state and local Government over the past 20 years, including nearly 1,200 sellers in New Jersey. Plus, you'll have access to 4.7 million qualified buyers worldwide.



Risk Mitigation

GovDeals will collect the proceeds from your auctions and remit payment to you directly. We also absorb all risk of credit card chargebacks. Once the item is picked up, the money is guaranteed yours, with no exceptions. We provide a comprehensive reporting system giving you access to all information regarding your sales, past or present.



Complete Control

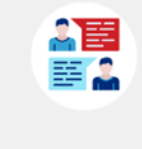
We can provide on-site training, online training, and turnkey service – You decide! Based on your needs, our team can help you develop a plan of action for your surplus!

We offer single item auctions, so once an asset is declared surplus, it can immediately be listed for sale. Sell your assets for as much or as little as you want, we also offer minimum reserve prices.



No Binding Contracts

When selling with GovDeals, there is no operational contract that must be signed. Use us when you need, as you need.



Dedicated Support

Your Surplus team will include an Area Account Manager, your main contact, ready and available to assist you. Plus, a Business Development Manager, who can help you with sales questions and contract inquiries.

Sellers on GovDeals enjoy targeted marketing of their high dollar and unique surplus auctions. Additional services are available upon request, all at no additional cost to your county.



Reduce Your Carbon Footprint

GovDeals, by design, is a sustainable, green solution that powers the circular economy by: extending the life of assets, preventing unnecessary waste, deferring inventory from landfills, providing alternative choices for the public, and generating profits and cost savings you put back into your county.

Don't settle for less when it comes to your surplus, you can rely on GovDeals to provide your county with all these elements and more when conducting your surplus sales. To find out how to start selling today, contact Mike Baker, at 609-713-7888 or email him at mbaker@govdeals.com



Reentering the Workforce After an Extended Absence?

We can help!

Displaced Homemaker Programs help individuals who have worked in the home for a number of years and, as a result of various circumstances, including divorce, separation, death of a spouse, disability of a spouse, or domestic violence, now find themselves as the primary source of household income.

Displaced Homemaker Programs help to enhance employability and earnings of qualified participants through supportive counseling, educational training, job readiness, and emotional support.



NJ Displaced Homemaker Programs

** The Displaced Homemaker Programs are funded by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families' Division on Women.*

To locate the Displaced Homemaker Program nearest you, call 2-1-1 or Google 'New Jersey Displaced Homemaker Program'



May is “Displaced Homemaker Awareness Month” in New Jersey. It’s a time to highlight the unique challenges that women (and some men) face when reentering the workforce after an extended time away to raise a family. For women who have to reenter the workforce due to divorce or the death of a spouse, there are resources available in support of their success. Each county has a Displaced Homemaker (DH) Program, funded through the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Division on Women.

To learn more about the Division on Women and the Displaced Homemaker Programs, visit [DCF | Office of Support, Employment and Training \(nj.gov\)](https://www.nj.gov/education/office-of-support-employment-and-training/), email DOW@dcf.state.nj.us , or call 609-888-7164.

To locate the program in your county, please visit weblink: [DCF | NJ's Displaced Homemaker Programs by County](https://www.nj.gov/education/office-of-support-employment-and-training/) or scan the QR Code embedded in the graphic. On the DCF website, the graphic is made available in several [languages](#) to better reach New Jersey’s diverse communities.

Superior Customer Service: The New Must-Have In HCM Software

by Paul Calobrisi, Industry Marketing Specialist II for UKG

It's no secret that buying new human capital management ([HCM](#)) software can be a stress-inducing process for governments, with challenges stemming from: determining your needs, interviewing vendors, securing dollars in your budget, and ensuring everyone is on the same page internally.

At the end of the day, the HCM software you purchase is only one part of the equation. The service you receive after the purchase is equally important. Research shows that when organizations are dissatisfied with their selection, the software is not their biggest gripe — it's the lack of customer service, that's the No. 1 cause of regret in software selection.

And in government especially, wasteful spending due to a poor software selection can lead to serious consequences, as spending taxpayers' money is a great responsibility and the public demands information on how it is being spent.

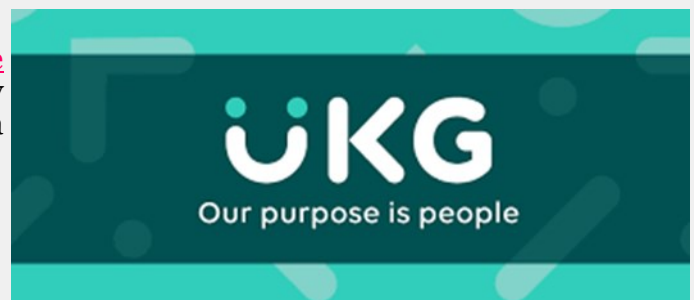
A [white paper](#) from [UKG](#) discusses why customer service should be a priority when choosing an HCM vendor and identifies the key factors to look for in the partnership, including:

- **Dedicated Services Team** — Implementation is the foundation of any agency's success with a new solution. Your dedicated services team must make the project a priority, understand your business requirements & desired outcomes, define processes, identify potential bottlenecks, and champion the solution. The team must clearly define accountability, responsibility, and lines of reporting. The structure must balance and facilitate project objectives, your needs, and the strategic vision while delivering a quality project on time and within budget.
- **Support** — Continued support after onboarding is an important identifier of strong customer service, and you can often gauge this commitment with one phone call. Finding help should never feel like an uphill battle. If your vendor is truly committed to supporting you, you'll have a dedicated point of contact ready to assist you at a moment's notice. Waiting in a phone queue to reach someone who is unfamiliar with your account is a red flag and should be avoided. Having direct access to your consistent team of subject matter experts provides you with the answers you need without having to jump through hoops.
- **User Experience** — It's crucial for your vendor to ensure that you and your people understand how to utilize your new solution, as an educated workforce that is skilled at using the solution leads to a faster return on investment. In addition, your vendor needs to tailor this experience to you, as your agency is unique, so a one-size-fits-all offering of services simply won't do.

Overall, when a vendor takes as much pride in their customer service as they do in their product, you receive the full value of your purchase — powerful technology coupled with continuous support. Prioritizing great customer service in HCM software selection is more than just a precautionary measure.

Want to learn more?

Download our [Partner for Life Customer Experience Overview](#), to learn how partnering with UKG not only delivers exceptional value — it also provides you with a partner for life.



HPC Services Bring Artificial Intelligence Into The Mainstream

by Joanne Goodstadt, Marketing Manager for PKA Technologies

Adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) is growing steadily as organizations look to leverage the technology to optimize operations, drive digital transformation and automate more business processes. In a recent PwC survey, 86 percent of companies said AI is becoming a mainstream technology.

Much of this growth is linked to advances in high-performance computing (HPC) systems.

AI technologies such as deep learning, machine learning and natural language processing all use special algorithms that help computers “teach” themselves to perform tasks by finding patterns within massive datasets. However, AI faced practical limits for decades because of data processing constraints. AI algorithms may need millions or billions of examples before they start working well, but standalone computers simply can’t meet the data analysis and calculation requirements for effective modeling.

Making HPC Accessible

HPC systems have removed those limitations. By aggregating the computing power of hundreds or thousands of processors, HPC systems deliver exponential increases in processing power that make AI increasingly accessible for organizations across all industries.

HPC has become more accessible in recent years. Although people often think of HPC in terms of monster supercomputers crunching data in search of cancer cures or the nature of black holes, almost any size organization can achieve HPC performance using off-the-shelf components and the latest system management tools.

HPC systems now support a wide range of workloads, including financial modeling, R&D and big data. Organizations are using HPC systems to replace aging proprietary platforms, reduce server sprawl and gain business benefits such as high availability and improved manageability.

However, building, operating and maintaining an in-house HPC environment can also introduce a variety of challenges, such as increased infrastructure costs and management complexities. Even with commodity components, HPC can become pricey due to real estate, power, cooling, networking and staffing costs.

Reducing Cost and Complexity

HPE, which has developed one of the world’s most advanced HPC portfolios, is eliminating many of those challenges by offering its HPC solutions as a service through its HPE GreenLake Cloud Services. Organizations can access fully managed, pre-bundled services based on HPE hardware, including its Apollo and Cray Exascale systems, along with all necessary software, storage and networking solutions. Customers can order small, medium, or large configurations through a self-service portal with simple point-and-click functions to get started quickly.

According to an economic impact study by Forrester Consulting, accessing HPC through HPE GreenLake Cloud Services speeds deployment by up to 75 percent and reduces capital expenditures by up to 40 percent. The elastic, pay-per-use cloud experience also provides the scalability to add processing power and storage as necessary to handle changing requirements.

HPC advances have made it possible for more organizations to experience the business benefits of AI, but cost and complexity remain limiting factors. By offering its portfolio of advanced HPC platforms as a service, HPE is removing those limits and pushing AI further into mainstream usage. Contact PKA to learn more about putting HPC-powered AI to work in your organization.





SENATE BILL S994 on the Purchase of Goods from the Central Nonprofit Agency

WHAT IS S994?

- New law signed by Governor Murphy in January of 2022.
- Requires State departments, agencies, and authorities to make a good faith effort to purchase at least 5 percent of their goods and services from the Central Nonprofit Agency.

WHAT IS THE CENTRAL NONPROFIT AGENCY?

- ACCSES NJ serves as the Central Nonprofit Agency.
- ACCSES NJ works with a network of nonprofits that employ individuals with disabilities.
- The program provides jobs for over 1,500 residents with disabilities who provide various services and goods to state departments, agencies, and authorities.
- Customer satisfaction has been the driving force behind the growth of this program since 1984.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PURCHASING THROUGH ACCSES NJ?

- The program provides employment for NJ residents with disabilities, the group with the highest rates of unemployment.
- Goods and services provided with consistently high quality and customer satisfaction.
- Goods and services purchased through ACCSES NJ remain part of the program at contract renewal and do not need to be rebid. All goods and services are on NJ STATE CONTRACT.
- Pricing for all goods and services at the fair market price approved by the NJ Division of Purchase and Property.
- Goods and Services are made in New Jersey by New Jersey Residents.

ACCSES NJ FACTS

EMPLOYMENT



1,500+
People with Disabilities
Employed Statewide

WAGES



\$8 MILLION+
Paid to ACCSES NJ
Program Participants

HOURS



700,000+
Avg Labor Hours
Each Year

To learn more about ACCSES NJ and the Central Nonprofit Agency purchasing program and for assistance in meeting the obligations of S994, please reach out to the following contacts:

Sal Coppola – Vice President of Sales and Operations – scoppola@accsesnj.org
For assistance with sales or analyzing available purchasing opportunities for your organization

Matthew Putts – Vice President of Government Affairs – mputts@accsesnj.org
To learn more about S994 and other ACCSES NJ programs

Strategic Capital Planning: Aligned Projects From Concept To Results

By Katie Ashmun, Demand Generation Manager for OpenGov

Strategic capital planning: One of the most important cross-functional activities that you as a government finance leader undertake on behalf of your community, but also one of the most challenging.

You've watched expectations around future-focused capital planning and reporting become more complex with each passing year, accelerated by federal stimulus dollars (ARPA and Infrastructure) that require more purposeful planning and documentation and deeper downstream reporting.

Everyone's seen the headlines and now they expect their governments to deliver. But let's face it: Even in the best of times, capital planning often lacks a formal, ongoing tie between the plan, current status, and how dollars are spent to further strategic priorities.

Are you set up to allocate, spend, and analyze how capital improvement projects impact your community? Can you track projects based on strategic priorities? Can you communicate with your residents about projects in a clear and concise way the public will understand?

If the answers to these questions aren't crystal clear, not to worry. We break the biggest must-haves for strategic capital planning into five major elements. [After reading, download our ebook, *The Strategic Planning Guide for Local Government*, for even more tips on strategic capital planning.](#)

Element 1: Plan - Transparently determine the use of funds

Arguably the most important element, initial planning, sets the stage for proactive, inclusive public engagement and prioritizing community values and long-term strategic priorities. This is your opportunity to determine what would have the biggest impact on your community. Be sure to solicit and capture input on how both your community and internal teams wish to spend the funding.

Element 2: Measure - Proactively measure performance.

To determine impact and highlight results, as well as prepare for federal reporting guidelines, adopt shared standards and processes for measuring performance out of the gate. Start by aligning your Chart of Accounts with the capital planning project to surface the data needed to drive the performance metrics that best reflect the project's impact.

Element 3: Collaborate - From budget to execution, use input across teams.

When you think of collaboration, we have three words: transparency, efficiency, and strategy. These big three need to work hand in hand across all of your departments to ensure a better process.

Element 4: Procure - Make your procurement and contract management process more strategic.

Call your procurement team. It's time to execute. From RFP creation to contract management, there are many opportunities to streamline the entire procurement process to make it easier to keep capital projects on-time and under budget. Work smarter with efficient and timely bidding, leading to a more strategic purchasing plan.

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Strategic Capital Planning: Aligned Projects From Concept To Results

(continued)

Element 5: Report - Improve your reporting for compliance and transparency.

From start to finish, it's important to effectively report and communicate progress to both the community and policy makers. Throughout the entire capital project, everyone will be expecting regular updates. At completion, internal stakeholders and your community want results. Make your life easier by ensuring data is easily accessible from the beginning.

[For even more on each of these five elements, download our ebook, The Strategic Planning Guide for Local Government, here.](#)



Watch a video product tour about OpenGov Budgeting and Planning, [click here](#).
Listen to the OpenGov Podcast, Local Government Matters, [click here](#).

PSE&G Association Content—Earth Day 2022

By Lesa Diggs, Associate Marketing Manager for CMC Energy Services, Inc.

This Earth Day Invest in the Planet While You Invest in Your Business

Every year, more businesses realize that conserving energy is key to delivering a sustainable future, and are taking the initiative to support communities by reducing their impact on the environment.

Doing business in a way that delivers value and fosters environmental stewardship doesn't have to be a complicated process. **Energy efficiency easily aligns with the overall needs and goals of your organization.**

Becoming more energy efficient can reduce operational expenses, improve productivity, and create safer, healthier spaces for staff, clients, and customers—all while contributing to a clean, sustainable future.

And, with New Jersey focused on [reducing greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050 from 2006 levels](#), there's ample opportunity and equal parts motivation for businesses to cut back on energy use. Just follow a few simple steps and energy and cost savings can be realized in a relatively short period of time.

Take action this Earth Day by investing in the planet with an energy-efficiency investment in your business. There are many opportunities to save, including:

- LED fixtures, sensors, and controls
- HVAC systems
- Water heating equipment
- Food service equipment
- And more

PSE&G is ready to assist business customers with a wide array of financial incentives, such as interest-free, on-bill repayment plans, designed to make energy-efficiency upgrades easy and affordable. To learn how to maximize your energy savings, contact PSE&G at 1-844-300-PSEG (7734) or visit bizsave.pseg.com.



PSE&G

We make things work for you.

NJHealthConnect @ Your Library Helps New Jerseyans In Need

by Julia Giantomasi, Public Relations & Marketing Coordinator for New Jersey State Library



The ongoing pandemic has emphasized a need for health literacy, especially among vulnerable populations. To address prevalent inequities in health literacy, the New Jersey State Library developed the NJHealthConnect @ Your Library initiative, a statewide telehealth program designed to bridge the digital divide. The project is funded

by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, administered through the New Jersey State Library, and facilitated by *Just For The Health Of It*, a health literacy program developed by the East Brunswick Public Library.

As of January 2022, 152 libraries across New Jersey have come together to participate in this program which will tap into the talents of librarians and the physical accessibility of public libraries, to support the state's mission to help people get timely, high-quality health care services. The residents of these participating communities consist of vulnerable populations who unjustly bear the consequences of low health literacy. These consequences can include longer hospitalizations and recoveries, more frequent visits to the emergency room, diagnosis of disease at a later stage, depression, higher risk of COVID infection, lack of health insurance, and a higher risk of death. Many NJ residents do not own a computer to research vital health information, and many also need health information translated into their native language or written at a lower literacy level. In addition, lifestyle constraints such as working irregular or nighttime shifts prohibits vulnerable people, especially immigrants, from seeing a doctor during normal visiting hours.

Thanks to the federal funding, the State Library was able to equip each participating library with iPads to support the NJHealthConnect @ Your Library program. More than 450 iPads were distributed to libraries statewide. These iPads were preconfigured with apps and links to 24/7 telemedicine sites, mental health support for all ages, bilingual Covid updates, and multilingual health information. The iPads include apps for Google Meet and Zoom for telehealth appointments. Patrons may also use the iPads for job interviews, since employment is a social determinant of health. The East Brunswick Public Library delivered the iPads, provided a basic tutorial at participating libraries, and will remotely manage the iPads through the duration of the program.

Not only does the NJHealthConnect @ Your Library program bring New Jersey libraries together to play a vital role in advancing health equity, it also aligns with the federal government's [Healthy People 2030](#) mission. The focus of this mission is to help people access timely, high-quality health care services so that good health is within everyone's grasp.

NJHealthConnect @ Your Library is already under way and through the leadership of the New Jersey State Library and the East Brunswick Public Library, participating libraries statewide are working to keep healthy communities together.

For more information about the NJHealthConnect @ Your Library, contact Michele Stricker, mstricker@njstatelib.org, or visit: <https://www.njstatelib.org/NJHealthConnect>.



Employment Opportunities

by Burlington County

**HELP
WANTED**

COUNTY PARK SUPERINTENDENT

Burlington County, NJ government is seeking a qualified candidate for the position of County Park Superintendent.

The Park Superintendent is responsible for the operation and management of the County's Parks System consisting of over 1,000 acres of developed parkland; a regional trail network; the County fairgrounds; an Amphitheater and a historic industrial village along with other historic buildings.

The Park Superintendent will oversee an operation with a staff of 48, consisting of Park Rangers, Maintenance and Support staff.

Burlington County prides itself on the quality and appeal of its Parks System. The County Board of Commissioners has dedicated a significant amount of financial resources to ensure that the Burlington County Parks System provides residents with a bucolic, attractive and safe recreational outlet to be enjoyed by the residents.

The successful candidate will have an appreciation of the outdoors through their own personal pursuits as well as having the organizational skills and management ability dedicated to maintaining a level of care that ensures an attractive and inviting Park System.

If you are interested in applying for this position, please send a detailed resume explaining your background and experience in maintaining and working in open space/park like environments. Include your experience working with maintenance staff in terms of results oriented management of personnel and materials.

This position is a Senior level management position within Burlington County government and as such a generous compensation package will be offered based on an individual's experience. Relevant professional degrees and certifications are desirable and should be presented accordingly as part of the application process.

Interested parties should submit a detailed resume and cover letter to the attention of:

Mr. Rick Lombardo, Director of Human Resources
Rlombardo@co.burlington.nj.us

Burlington County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



Continued on page 18

Employment Opportunities

by County of Monmouth

**HELP
WANTED**

DIGITAL MEDIA MANAGER MONMOUTH COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Monmouth County Department of Public Information is an exciting office that is responsible for relaying information regarding County news and services to residents, visitors, and business owners in Monmouth County. This is done through various communication sources including the County website, social media channels, press releases, photographs, and videos.

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS:

- Under supervision of the Department Deputy Director, manage the County Digital Media team including the photographer, videographer, and social media coordinator.
- Coordinate all official County photography and videography.
- Oversee all County social media accounts and County website.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in communications or related field
- Minimum two (2) years management experience of a digital media team
- Demonstrated knowledge of video production, social media, and photography experience
- Demonstrated knowledge of Adobe Cloud Creative programs (Premiere Pro, Illustrator, Photoshop, etc.).
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Strong attention to detail
- Understanding of AP style of writing
- Must be able to work evenings and weekends as needed

TO APPLY:

In order to be considered for a job opening, an [Application for Employment](#) must be completed for each position. Resumes may be attached but are not considered as substitution for a fully completed job application form.

Completed job applications shall be submitted by email to: mc-humanresources@co.monmouth.nj.us or faxed to 732-431-7924.



Continued on page 19

Employment Opportunity *(continued)*

by County of Monmouth

HELP WANTED

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS SPECIALIST 1/SUPERVISOR MONMOUTH COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Monmouth County Department of Information Technology is an exciting office that is responsible for supporting geographic information systems (GIS) in Monmouth County. This is done through working with the GIS division, county departments, state, and federal agencies, as well as third party vendors.

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS:

- Under supervision of the Director or Information Technology, the Supervisor of GIS oversees all enterprise GIS operations including:
 - System Administration
 - Program Governance
 - System Architecture
 - Database Management and Structure
 - GIS Software Selection and Implementation
 - User Support
- Supervises a team of GIS Specialists that supports the county GIS architecture

REQUIREMENTS:

- Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's degree in Geography or related field
- Minimum four (4) years experience with Geographic Information Systems, including computer graphics and computer hardware digitizing procedures
- Minimum one (1) year experience with independent coordination and analysis of computerized geographic survey data.
- Minimum three (3) years supervisory experience
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Strong attention to detail
- GISP Certification Preferred

TO APPLY:

In order to be considered for a job opening, an [Application for Employment](#) must be completed for each position. Resumes may be attached but are not considered as substitution for a fully completed job application form.

Completed job applications shall be submitted by email to:
mc-humanresources@co.monmouth.nj.us or faxed to 732-431-7924.



Continued on page 20

Employment Opportunity *(continued)*

by County of Monmouth

**HELP
WANTED**

COUNTY DIVISION HEAD, AGING, VETERAN, AND DISABILITY SERVICES

Under the direction of the Department of Human Services, functions as the Director of the Division of Aging, Veteran, and Disability Services overseeing the organization and coordination of the functions, programs and activities of the Division and other related duties. Responsible for oversight of activities within the Division including but not limited to coordination of activities with private sector agencies and not-for-profit organizations; serves as the liaison with the State and other agencies concerned with the subject of aging, veteran, and disability services. Interacts with other County departments and divisions as they relate to the functions of the Division, for example, budgeting, purchasing, contract negotiations, monitoring and evaluation, and grant management. Represents the Division of Aging, Veteran, and Disability Services in Monmouth ACTS

REQUIREMENTS:

EDUCATION:

Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's Degree.

NOTE: Applicants who do not possess the required education may substitute additional experience as indicated on a year-for-year basis with thirty (30) semester hour credits being equal to one (1) year of experience.

EXPERIENCE:

Five (5) years of professional experience relating to elderly people in the fields of social work, public health, nursing, teaching, recreation, gerontology, psychology, vocational counseling, community organization work, or a related field.

NOTE: Possession of a Master's degree in any of the above fields from an accredited college or university may be substituted for two (2) years of indicated experience.

TO APPLY:

In order to be considered for a job opening, an [Application for Employment](#) must be completed for each position. Resumes may be attached but are not considered as substitution for a fully completed job application form.

Completed job application shall be submitted by email to: mc-humanresources@co.monmouth.nj.us or faxed to 732-431-7924.



Inflation Is Hurting New Jersey Taxpayers - Here's One Way Your County Government Can Help Ease The Pain

by William Cherry, Director of Public Partnership at three+one®

Inflation is a double-edged sword. Yes, it hurts our wallets when the prices of the things we need to buy increase in price. On the other hand, cash-on-deposit and overall liquidity can have a higher value as interest rates rise in conjunction with inflation. County governments generally have a lot of cash on deposit, and they can use that cash to take advantage of inflationary trends in order to generate higher revenues. Every dollar a county earns in interest is one less dollar they need to collect from taxpayers.

Based upon public information and available online budgets, New Jersey's 21 counties will have a combined total of about \$5.0 *billion* in cash sitting in their bank accounts during 2022. Understandably, some portion of this vast amount of liquidity (say, 20%) must be readily available for operating expenses and will have to remain in zero-interest checking accounts or low-interest, daily money-market accounts. But that still leaves available a whopping \$4.0 billion dollars that New Jersey's county governments can use to safely generate interest income through a series of laddered CDs, staggered-maturity U.S. Treasury bills, and other safe, secure, structured, time-deposit investments. Those investments, at the time of this writing, are averaging 1.5% to 1.6% on one-year CDs, and 1.73% on U.S. Treasury bills. That means that the \$4.0 billion in cash can be used by counties to **generate over \$65 million in interest and non-tax revenues!**

One year ago, the average price of a gallon of gas in New Jersey was \$2.90. Today the average price statewide is \$4.12 per gallon. That's an increase of \$1.22 per gallon, up a staggering 42%! Fuel, food, and housing costs are all going up, but some items, including many grocery items, have gone up by 15% or more. The last thing working families need is for property taxes to *also* increase as local municipalities are forced to deal with their own higher costs of fuel and other operating expenses.

Harnessing that \$65 million in interest earnings is one surefire way for local governments to help stave off the negative impacts of inflation. And it makes sense to use every available tool to accomplish that goal.

three+one is proud to be working with John Donnadio and the team at **NJAC**—and in partnership with the National Association of Counties (**NACo**)—to help counties manage liquidity and generate higher-interest revenues through our **cashVest**® platform. This powerful liquidity-management tool includes market interest-rate comparisons and highly accurate future cash-flow forecasts—and has generated more than \$500 million in savings and/or earnings for counties nationwide.

William Cherry can be reached by phone at (585) 484-0311, ext. 709, or by email at wec@threeplusone.us. His long career in public service includes more than 24 years serving as a county treasurer and chief financial officer responsible for cash management along with extensive experience as a municipal budget officer and disaster-recovery coordinator.



SHARE THE NEWS!

Let us know what educational or informational articles you would like published in the NJAC COUNTY BIZ

Contact

Loren Wizman, Director of Business Development
(609) 394-3467 or loren@njac.org

Mail-In-Ballots- - - The Good, The Bad, The Solution

by Evelyn S. Caterson, Chair for Atlantic County Board of Elections

The Good

In July 2009, the Legislature eliminated the use of “Absentee Ballots”. In order to receive an Absentee Ballot, voters were required to apply, in writing, why they would not be able to get to their assigned polling place on Election Day. The Legislature replaced the Absentee Ballot with the “Mail-in-Ballot” [MIB] which is much more responsive to voter needs. No reason is required to request a MIB. The voter has the opportunity for early voting and can vote as soon as the ballot is received. The voter can vote in the calm and quiet of his/her home. There is no concern about getting to the polling place on Election Day. And, moreover, the Legislature created Drop Boxes in order to mail the MIBs without postage costs.

The Bad

Many more MIBs are mailed out than are returned . In the past 7 years in Atlantic County, and just counting the General Elections, over 75,000+ ballots which were printed, addressed, and mailed out, were never used, at a cost to the taxpayer of over \$7.00/ballot.

Also, some voters do not properly fill out the MIBs resulting in overvotes, incorrect attempts to correct mistaken votes, failure to fully fill-in the required bubble in order to have the vote count, and using the wrong color ink.

Hundreds of cure letters are sent out each election because voters do not sign the Voter Certification or remove it from the envelope holding the MIB. The cure letters are an effort to obtain a proper voter signature or other identifying document in order to validate the MIB. Many cure letters are never returned so those ballots are not counted.

The Solution

The solution lies in sending MIBs only to those voters who request them, rather than sending the MIBs according to the New Jersey statutes which require that any voter who received an MIB for the General Election in 2016, or who received an MIB for any election in 2017 and 2018 receive an MIB.

Voters in that situation can stop receiving an MIB by filling out the Opt-Out form which is found on the Atlantic County Clerk’s web site www.atlanticcountyclerk.org, click on elections and then Mail-in-Ballots. At the end of that information piece, there is the ability to click on “Opt-Out” to get the form.

Additionally, the State Voter Registration System [SVRS] must be updated. Voters themselves have a big part in making this happen. Any voter at a residence receiving an MIB for someone who is deceased, or who no longer votes from that address, should notify the Superintendent of Elections and follow the necessary procedures to have that voter’s name removed from the SVRS.

MIBs are absolutely great and should be readily available to everyone who wants one – but only to those who do.

Preventing Government Data Breaches

by Evan Achiron, Director of Marketing & Communications for GovPilot

Government data breaches pose one of the largest threats for US government entities in 2022 and beyond. As geopolitical tensions rise between Russia and the West, targeted cyber attacks against the federal, state, and local governments are increasingly likely. In fact, the FBI recently warned that ransomware is straining local government services, as local governments are favorite targets of hackers, second only to academic institutions.

Here are some ways to mitigate the risk of a local government cyber attack:

1. Spend Federal Grant Funds on Improving Digital Infrastructure

The federal government has approved billions in grants for local governments to improve their digital infrastructure via the American Rescue Plan Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Both bills grant local governments to allocate funds towards preventing data breaches by improving broadband infrastructure and embracing cloud-based government software.

Learn more with these resources:

- [What is the American Rescue Plan? What It Means for Local Government](#)
- [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act: What It Means for Local Governments](#)

Learn more with these resources:

- [What is the American Rescue Plan? What It Means for Local Government](#)
- [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act: What It Means for Local Governments](#)

2. Double Down on Your Government IT Department

In addition to recruiting great government workers to manage your community's information technology systems, you'll need to have an organized IT ticketing strategy to ensure bugs in the system and / or potential cybersecurity threats don't go unnoticed. With government management software, IT ticketing is an automated process, where tech issues from other government departments are automatically timestamped and added to the IT ticketing software module for easy accessibility. With GovPilot, municipal workers in Atlantic City reported a decline from 48 hours to respond to a tech issue to just 7 minutes.

Learn more in our local government IT resources here:

- [Modern Local Government IT Strategy Guide](#)
- [How Atlantic City Fixed It's IT Ticketing System with GovPilot](#)

3. Avoid Using Physical On-site Servers for Storing Government Data

Physical on-site servers for data storage are obsolete and are prime targets for a cyber attack as a result. They are also prohibitively expensive to maintain - especially for small to mid sized local governments who will have to continuously maintain and protect equipment from cyber threats and physical threats like fire and floods which can cause just as devastating loss of data and services. With the cloud, your data is automatically backed

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Preventing Government Data Breaches *(continued)*

up on a regular basis, meaning you'll never have to fear the permanent loss of your government data. Cloud providers regularly push system updates and upgrades meaning your government management platform will be as modern and secure as possible.

4. Regularly Train Government Workers on Cyber Security Protocols

Phishing scams affect people that are caught off guard every single day. Government workers using '12345' or 'password' as a password gives hackers a chance to break into your local government with just a few guesses. In order to prevent an embarrassing and expensive data breach in your local government, you'll need to offer annual cyber security training that explains how to prevent data breaches and why this training is growing more important year by year.

Conclusion

Data breaches as a result of cyber attacks pose a threat to local governments and to keep operations secure during this particularly tense period, you'll need to be proactive in adopting secure digital infrastructure. For example, consider automating IT ticketing for fast internal IT issue reporting and resolution.

To learn more about upgrading to a unified, secure government management platform, book a free 15-minute consultation with GovPilot today!



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so your
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NJBIA's Workplace Literacy and Basic Skills Program is a partnership of the New Jersey Business & Industry Association, the New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development, and the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The partners (representing business, higher education, and state government) came together to ensure New Jersey businesses have a well-trained and highly skilled workforce for future economic growth and prosperity.

We Can Help:

- Get your employees trained in your county at NO CHARGE
- Language, literacy, and business skills training offered at your local Community College or at your facility
- Customized training available for your company's needs

For additional information and program requirements please visit njworkforce.org.



Nationwide Economics

Weekly Economic Review & Outlook for April 18, 2022

by Dan Hadden, Financial Markets Economist of Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company and
Daniel Vielhaber, Economist of Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company

The consumer price index (CPI) sent mixed signals last week while the retail sales release left more to be desired. There are positive aspects to most of the data, but that is coming against the backdrop of heightened geopolitical uncertainty and the beginning of the removal of Fed policy accommodation.

The headline CPI jumped by 1.2 percent for March, the fastest rate since a one-month blip for September 2005. To find a more sustained period of faster inflation you would have to go back to early 1980. March's monthly rise brought the 12-month trend rate up to 8.5 percent, the strongest gain since the end of 1981. Energy prices were by far the biggest contributor, particularly gasoline prices. This is of little surprise to most consumers with WTI oil prices jumping by roughly \$17/barrel in March to average over \$108 for the month. Regular grade gasoline prices averaged over \$4.00/gallon for the month for only the second time in history—and the monthly jump was the largest in history. Food prices also continued to soar, adding to the pressure on consumers' wallets.

But the core CPI (stripping out the volatile food and energy components) surprised to the downside, rising by just 0.3 percent on the month and moving the year-over-year print up to 6.5 percent. The slower gain in the core rate was driven mostly by a 3.8 percent monthly drop in used car/truck prices. As supply chains slowly heal (a process that may be delayed by Covid lockdowns in China), production of goods should increase—helping price gains to slow (and perhaps to reverse). At the very least, core prices are unlikely to go up at the same pace that they did last year which should temper the CPI numbers in the months ahead. But there are still concerns about services inflation, especially for shelter. This component of the CPI rose for a second consecutive month at a 0.5 percent rate, with little sign of acceleration over the past six months. But both house prices and rental costs continue to grow rapidly—with house prices accelerating to over 19 percent gain year/year for January and observed rents remaining at nearly a 17 percent gain over the year for March. While these figures don't go directly into the shelter component of the CPI, they do influence it and suggest that there will be some upward pressure on inflation in coming months from this component.

Retail sales grew by 0.5 percent for March, although there were solid upward revisions to prior months, but this is based on nominal spending and much of the March gain came from higher prices (with the CPI up by 1.2 percent). Sales at gasoline stations soared by 8.9 percent for the month, as retail gasoline prices jumped by nearly 20 percent for the month. Removing spending on autos, building supplies, and gasoline, the retail control group slipped modestly—indicating some weakness in inflation adjusted consumer spending. Faster inflation will certainly impact how consumers spend in coming months and have the potential to weigh on consumer activity.

The NFIB small business optimism index fell for a third straight month. The outlook for the economy, particularly inflation and higher selling prices, led the decline. This contrasted with an early April increase in the consumer sentiment index from the University of Michigan. The rise in consumer sentiment came largely from improvement in consumer expectations with that component jumping by 10 points. Inflation over the next year to be 5.4 percent and over the next five years to average 3.0 percent. While expected inflation didn't rise, it remains well over the Fed's long-term goal of 2.0 percent.

The Week Ahead

Housing starts jumped to their fastest pace in over 15 years for February and they likely kept a similar pace through March. Input costs for builders are high and continue to increase, worker shortages persist, and there remains a shortage of buildable lots—all making it difficult for starts to expand further. But there continues to be excess demand for housing units and builders are trying to close that gap. Building permits fell only slightly for February from January's blistering pace, and weather was generally good for construction in March. We project an annualized pace of housing starts of 1.77 million units for March, little changed from February's rapid pace.

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Nationwide Economics *(continued)*

The Week Ahead

Existing home sales fell for February to their slowest pace since July 2020, when they were still on their way up after the collapse in the market caused by Covid. Sales likely dipped again for March, as pending home sales (which are measured when contracts to purchase a home are signed) fell in both January and February—from a combination of falling affordability and lack of homes for sale. As a result, we project a drop in existing home sales to an annualized rate of 5.75 million units for March—which would be the slowest since June 2020.

The index of leading economic indicators (LEI) has traditionally been a solid signal for recessions as they year-over-year growth of the index tends to go negative several months before the onset of a recession. While there have been a few false positive readings from LEI growth (i.e. the LEI growth rate falling below zero with no ensuing economic downturn), there has been only one instance of a false negative (the LEI growth rate didn't quite go negative before the 1960-61 recession). LEI growth for February (up by 7.6 percent from a year earlier) suggests that a recession is not imminent. Components of the LEI for March were mixed, but still mostly higher. We project modest monthly growth of 0.2 percent for the LEI, which would lower the annual growth to 6.7 percent—far from a recession indicator.

For further information please contact Emanuel Mahand, Program Director of DE/NJ/PA, at MAHAND@nationwide.com, or Bina Kumar, Managing Director - East Region, at kumarb1@nationwide.com.



SAVE THE DATES:

NJAC Continuing Education Series Virtual Workshops

July 6, 2022

September 14, 2022

November 9, 2022

NACo Webinars

Strengthening America's Workforce with Recovery Funds

May 4, 2022 , 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Contact Alana Hurley (202) 350-2296 ahurley@naco.org

REGISTRATION

Join us to learn how counties are using ARPA dollars to tackle the labor shortage, connecting people to good jobs, expanding childcare services and fostering a strong national workforce that meets the needs of residents through local government service.



Evolving to AWS Cloud

May 5, 2022 , 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Contact Rita Reynolds (202) 942-4248 rreynolds@naco.org

REGISTER

Digital transformation has shown that traditional methods of delivering services and managing data need reimagining. When considering a move to the cloud, county governments need a resilient strategy that will drive real value and adapt to evolving community needs. Join this session hosted by Amazon Web Services (AWS) to learn how cloud computing can help government organizations enhance mission-critical operations, improve access to data, and meet increasing community demands for digital services.

Data-Driven Justice Relaunch: Improving Outcomes Through Coordinated Health & Justice Systems

May 12, 2022 , 3:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Contact Alana Hurley (202) 350-2296 ahurley@naco.org

REGISTRATION

Communities across the country are coming together to better support the needs of their familiar faces—individuals with complex health and behavioral health conditions who frequently cycle through jails, homeless shelters, emergency departments and other crisis services. Sharing data across health and justice sectors to align service delivery enables counties and cities to integrate their systems of care and improve outcomes for high-needs residents. Join NACo and our partners for an important event to relaunch the Data-Driven Justice initiative with new tools and learning opportunities to explore how we can better serve familiar faces. Attendees will

- hear from experts and people directly impacted by health and justice systems,
- learn how data-alignment strategies can break the cycle of incarceration and hospitalization and
- receive information on exciting new opportunities to support local efforts.

Data-Driven Justice is supported by [Arnold Ventures](#) and led by the National Association of Counties (NACo). Over 150 counties and cities participate in the initiative by developing and implementing cross-system data-sharing efforts.



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The New Jersey Association of Counties (NJAC) is pleased to present the mouth-watering menu for the highly anticipated return of the "County Vocational Technical School Cook-Off Challenge" set for 12:00 p.m. on May 6th at Caesar's in Atlantic City, where culinary art students from the following county vocational-technical schools will compete for scholarship monies and titles in taste, creativity, and food presentation with these outstanding dishes:

ATLANTIC COUNTY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Dr. G's BBQ

BURLINGTON COUNTY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Matcha Foie Gras with Pistachio Pomegranate & Herb Fins

CAMDEN COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS
Tech Mex Western Cantina

CAPE MAY COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS
Salmon Pastrami

CUMBERLAND COUNTY TECHNICAL EDUCATION CENTER
Upper Level Dog Burger

GLOUCESTER COUNTY VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL
Stnocchi's Stuffed Shrimp Gnocchi with a Sweet & Sour Balsamic Glaze

HUNTERDON COUNTY POLYTECH
Grilled Baby Rack of Lamb over Cannellini Bean Ragout with Aged Balsamic Black Mission Fig Reduction

MERCER COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS
BBQuban

MIDDLESEX COUNTY VOCATIONAL & TECHNICAL SCHOOLS
The Green Farmer's Harvest

MONMOUTH VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Braised Pork Belly with Ginger Soy Apple Slaw & Apple Jack Glaze

SOMERSET COUNTY VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL
Smoked Scallops

Each team will consist of 5-6 students and 2 staff members; and, must create 350 samples of appetizers at a total cost of less than \$550.00. NJAC officials, Atlantic City chefs, and convention guests will have the enjoyable task of judging the tough competition that will close NJAC's 71st annual celebration of county government. Make sure visit our website at www.njac.org for additional details about this one-of-a-kind event and the Association's convention also featuring: an inspirational County College Acapella Sing-Off the Nick Acocella County Leader Showcase with Eric Scott; nearly two-dozen workshops approved for continuing education credits; county service awards; and, the opportunity to network with community and business leaders from across the Garden State.

EVENTS & HOLIDAYS

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
<p>Earth Day Festival ¹</p> <p>11 a.m. - 3 p.m. FREE</p> <p>N. 3rd Avenue <i>Highland Park Middlesex County</i></p>	<p> ²</p> <p>12 p.m. 5/7</p> <p>Skylands Stadium <i>Frankford Sussex County</i></p>	<p>Earth Day Fair ³</p> <p>10:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. 5/7</p> <p>WheatonArts <i>Millville Cumberland County</i></p>	<p>Earth Day Fest ⁴</p> <p>11 a.m. - 5 p.m. 5/1</p> <p>Trail Side Nature & Science Center Watchung Reservation Loop <i>Mountainside Union County</i></p>	<p>NJAC Conference ⁵ May 4th - 6th</p> <p></p>	<p>NJCU Jazz Fest ⁶</p> <p>12:30 p.m. - 9 p.m. 5/1</p> <p>Margaret Williams Theatre <i>Jersey City Hudson County</i></p>	<p>May Day Spring Festival ⁷</p> <p>10 a.m. - 3 p.m.</p> <p>Island Beach State Park <i>Seaside Park Ocean County</i></p>
<p></p>	<p>Community Day ⁹</p> <p>12 p.m. - 4 p.m. 5/7</p> <p>Duck Pond Park <i>West Windsor Mercer County</i></p>	<p>Trio Entartete ¹⁰</p> <p>7 p.m.</p> <p>Nash Theatre RVCC <i>Branchburg Somerset County</i></p>	<p>Silver Fox Tea ¹¹</p> <p>11 a.m. - 1 p.m. 5/12</p> <p>Sharptown United Methodist Church <i>Pilesgrove Salem County</i></p>	<p>Outdoor Market Food Truck Festival ¹²</p> <p>5 p.m. - 8 p.m.</p> <p>Municipal Complex <i>Moorestown Burlington County</i></p>	<p>International Day Fest ¹³</p> <p>12 p.m. - 7 p.m. 5/14</p> <p>Main Street <i>Hackettstown Warren County</i></p>	<p>Spring Block Party ¹⁴</p> <p>9 a.m. - 5 p.m.</p> <p>Asbury Avenue <i>Ocean City Cape May County</i></p>
<p>May Fest ¹⁵</p> <p>5/14 & 5/15 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.</p> <p>Smithville & Village Greene <i>Smithville Atlantic County</i></p>	<p>¹⁶</p>	<p>Monte Irvin Orange Park Fishing Derby ¹⁷</p> <p>5 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>Orange Park <i>Orange Essex County</i></p>	<p>¹⁸</p>	<p>Piff the Magic Dragon ¹⁹</p> <p>7:30 p.m.</p> <p>MAYOPAC <i>Morristown Morris County</i></p>	<p>Drive in Movies ²⁰</p> <p>8:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.</p> <p>William Wilt Park <i>Mullica Hill Gloucester County</i></p>	<p>Centennial Day ²¹</p> <p>9 a.m. - 4 p.m.</p> <p>Veterans Plaza <i>Franklin Lakes Bergen County</i></p>
<p>Wooden Ships Band ²²</p> <p>5/21 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.</p> <p>Hunterdon County Library <i>Flemington Hunterdon County</i></p>	<p>²³</p>	<p>²⁴</p>	<p>²⁵</p>	<p>²⁶</p>	<p>May Fair ²⁷</p> <p>5/28 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. FREE</p> <p>Bus. Dist. Haddon Ave. <i>Collingswood Camden County</i></p>	<p>Memorial Day Parade & Ceremony ²⁸</p> <p>10 a.m. - 12 p.m.</p> <p>Main Street <i>Little Silver Passaic County</i></p>
<p>²⁹</p>	<p>Memorial Day Bike Parade ³⁰</p> <p>9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.</p> <p>Bayshore Elementary School <i>Middletown Monmouth County</i></p>	<p>YOU MADE IT! ³¹</p> <p></p>	<p>³¹</p>	<p>³¹</p>	<p>³¹</p>	<p>³¹</p>