



COUNTY NEWS

Maine County Commissioners Association Newsletter

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In partnership with The Solar Foundation, the National Association of Counties (NACo) is pleased to announce the launch of the SolSmart program, made possible through the U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative. The SolSmart program provides national designation to leading solar counties and cities and empowers communities to become solar leaders through no-cost technical assistance. Why SolSmart? This program provides high-profile, national recognition for counties that have made it easier and more cost-effective for homes and businesses to invest in solar energy. Counties committed to pursuing SolSmart designation are eligible for no-cost technical assistance from a team of national solar and local government experts. SolSmart aims to help counties reduce administrative fees known as "soft costs." Eliminating red tape and lowering soft costs can help county governments operate more efficiently, attract new solar jobs and companies, and make solar more affordable.

[~Click here for more information posted in the NACo blog by Jack Morgan.](#)



York County is comprised of the geographic area that includes 29 municipalities. York County has been a government in continuous existence since 1636. County Commissioners are the policy-making body of the county, and a professional county manager manages 200+ employees and an annual budget of \$18,246,501. York County has a population of over 186,000 people. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 989 square miles. Among all counties in the United States, York County ranks among the largest in terms of geographic size.



York County's governance structure is Commissioner-Manager. There are five County Commissioners that are elected by popular vote in each of five districts. In addition, there are six positions elected county-wide: District Attorney, Sheriff, Judge of Probate, Registrar of Probate, Registrar of Deeds and Treasurer.

The five commissioners are the chief elected officials of the county. Their primary role involves the approval of the county budget. This process allows the commissioners to assess county operations for both efficiency and effectiveness. The commissioners establish these priorities when they levy a county tax on the towns and cities which are part of York County. The commissioners also provide representation on numerous boards and committees in furthering the goal of inter-agency cooperation.

The County's jurisdiction and responsibilities include a 250-bed jail, two of the largest Registries of Probate and Deeds in New England, the District Attorney's Office, and a county and federally-funded Domestic Violence Program. York County provides law enforcement for 14 of its 29 municipalities and Emergency Management for the entire County.



Wellness Fair

York County Government held its annual Employee Wellness Fair on April 21st. Attendees of the Wellness Fair had the opportunity to participate in a variety of free and fun activities and left armed with gifts from various vendors and valuable information about maintaining a healthy lifestyle for themselves and their families.



The fair was open to all employees and their families. York County believes that providing healthy information to the entire family makes for happier and healthier employees overall.

Attendees had the opportunity to talk with representatives from many vendors who provide employee benefits to County employees, such as Harvard Pilgrim, Delta Dental, Anthem, Aflac and Acadia Benefits and to participate in activities such as free cholesterol screenings, nutrition assessments, skin cancer screening, Braintap stress testing, neck and back massages and fitness demos. The opportunity for all our employees and their families to take advantage of free health screenings, regardless of whether or not they are covered by County health benefits is one of the many goals of the County Wellness Team.

In addition to Wellness information, departments within York County had informational tables set up to explain what services they can provide to employees as part of National County Government Month. A healthy lunch was also provided for all vendors and attendees and participants had the option of taking home several recipes for healthy bag lunches.



York County is in the throes of its biggest initiative this year - the schools preparedness program. This is a long-term sustainable way to ensure citizens are being taught preparedness for any large emergency or disaster that could happen in their area. High schoolers are introduced to EMA by bringing them to the York County EOC where Megan Arsenault, Emergency Planning and Preparedness Manager, trains them on how to teach the emergency preparedness curriculum. What makes this program unique is that after the initial training, the 10-week curriculum is taught solely by high school students to 4th and/or 5th grade classrooms. With only 5 full-time staffers, they are able to make the message of individual and household preparedness widespread by embedding it within the school's curriculum and capitalizing on the approximately 30,000 students in York County who will all eventually be involved in the program.

The second big initiative in York County is the PrepareAthon program whereby all aspects of emergency preparedness are promoted through local emergency management directors, community leaders, and businesses and industry leaders. "PrepareAthon" uses all available opportunities such as media, promotions of individual family preparedness by businesses, and the use of civic organizations. The premise is to convince stakeholders, employees and citizens, to do even one thing to better prepare themselves for an emergency such as download an alert and warning app.

York County EMA has acquired an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) often referred to as a "drone" to assist first responders and search and rescue teams. York County is the first government entity in Maine to utilize a UAV. The YCEMA employs the UAV in conjunction with its Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT) and has incorporated a full standard operating procedure to ensure safe and FAA-compliant operation of the vehicle. The IMAT is deployed for every mission and the UAV is only operated by licensed pilots.



YCEMA has recently initiated a County Animal Response Team (CART). The CART will be an integral part of YCEMA's response to disasters or incidents affecting pets and people in our communities. The team will assist communities in providing temporary sheltering, rescue and education and outreach. The first kickoff meeting was attended by 55 volunteers who were introduced to the vision and mission of the CART.

