



News from the County of Cumberland

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Commissioner Shaughnessy Pledges to Help “Restore the Partnership” for Counties

Cumberland County, Me: Cumberland County Commissioner Malory Shaughnessy recently participated in the National Association of Counties (NACo) 73rd Annual Conference and Exposition in Jackson County, Missouri and pledged to work to help “Restore the Partnership” between the White House, Congress and the nation’s counties. The conference was held in the Kansas City Convention Center.

“For decades county and federal government worked together to answer the challenges facing the nation, but in recent years that partnership has diminished considerably,” pointed out Shaughnessy, “that is why the theme was all about restoring that partnership”.

More than 3,500 elected and appointed county officials representing nearly every state and the District of Columbia adopted resolutions on national issues facing counties – such as emergency preparedness, infrastructure funding and rising medical costs in county jails – and participated in educational seminars and workshops to strengthen their public service skills.

Commissioner Shaughnessy was voted in to represent Maine on the NACo Board of Directors, as well as sitting on the Health Steering and Membership Committees. She was also appointed by incoming NACo President Don Stapley to represent northern New England on an Ad Hoc Committee which will review the governance policies and bylaws of NACo to update them and assure an equal voice for all areas of the nation.

“Attending the NACo Annual Conference is in itself an amazing educational experience in best practices and new ideas,” said Commissioner Shaughnessy, “especially with the exchange of information with other Commissioners. But this year there was the added excitement in helping to create a new North East Caucus of Counties. Working with several other commissioners and our

Cumberland County manager Peter Crichton, I was able to facilitate a meeting in which every state in the North East participated.”

All states with active counties from Maine south to Delaware, Maryland and Philadelphia joined into the newly formed North East Caucus of Counties to bring the issues specific to these states and counties to the forefront of the NACo legislative agenda. NACo works with our national delegations to educate and advocate on policies that impact local government.

“For many years the western Counties have dominated the political agenda of NACo with their concerns about water rights, PILT [payment in lieu of taxes] and other equally valid concerns,” according to Shaughnessy, “but we have equally valid and pressing concerns in the North East such as our aging infrastructure, shrinking manufacturing sectors and the need for economic development.”

County services and infrastructure are under great financial and operational duress across the country as a result of shrinking revenues, increased costs and increased mandates. In addition, emergency disaster preparedness and response challenges are overwhelming many understaffed and budget-crunched counties.

“That’s why the White House and Congress need to restore the partnership with the nation’s 3,068 counties to develop pragmatic solutions to our shared problems and responsibilities,” said Eric Coleman, who completed his one-year term as NACo president at the conclusion of the conference.

For more information, contact County Commissioner Malory Shaughnessy at 400-1540 or shaughnessy@cumberlandcounty.org.

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