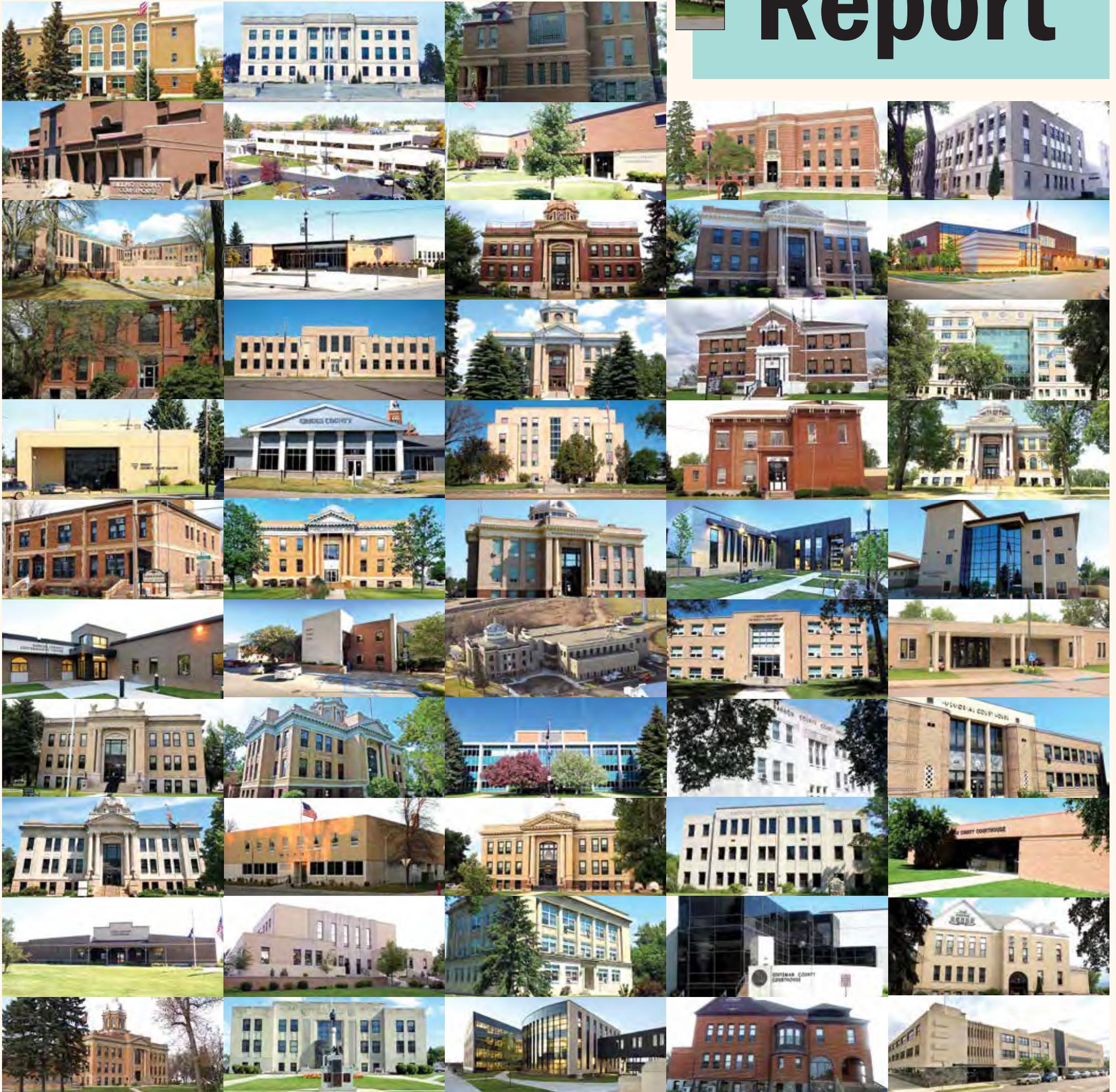


2022 Annual Report



State of the Counties



Aaron Birst
Executive Director

At this midpoint of 2022, NDACo finds itself in a position similar to many counties; budgeting at a time of economic uncertainty, putting new people in jobs long held by retiring officials (this includes me) and as our conference theme says, trying to get “Back to the Future.” By that, we mean getting back to the business of working toward a better future.

Speaking of looking toward the future, this November’s election will NOT include 35 commissioners and 29 other county officials who have chosen not to run. Even if all the incumbents on the ballot were to win, that is a lot of new faces across the state. We thank all those officials for their dedicated service, and we welcome all

the new officials into the county family. By the way, counties are not the only ones seeing major changes. The legislature itself will be looking at a 20% plus turnover!

But with change comes opportunity. I am optimistic about our future together in the counties. I have seen how county people lean on each other, lift each other up, and work for the common good. Despite all that will be new and unfamiliar in the future, I believe that spirit will continue, and will help us meet the challenges ahead.

County Employer Group

For the purpose of “worker’s comp,” all county employees are covered together – rather than in 53 separate employers – saving money, time and administration. This model, called the County Employer Group (CEG) has been modeled in other states due to its success here.

CEG saves money and lives in **three important ways:**

1. Safety Training to prevent workplace injuries

Over the past year, CEG trained over 7,000 employees on safety topics, ranging from the general - like lifting safely - to the highly specialized - like bloodborne pathogens. County employees in 27 counties received over 10,000 hours of safety training. While the pandemic prevented person-to-person training efforts, CEG more than made up for it, offering nearly 4,800 computer-based safety training courses - 800 more than in 2020.

2. Risk Management

Fifty-six risk managers assist CEG with compliance issues such as investigations, inspections, reporting and injury prevention, among other duties, resulting in discounts of up to 17% in worker’s comp premiums.

3. Transitional Work Program

CEG handled 306 claims in 2020 - a 23% decrease from 2019 - largely a result of COVID reducing the number of hours the workforce was on the job.

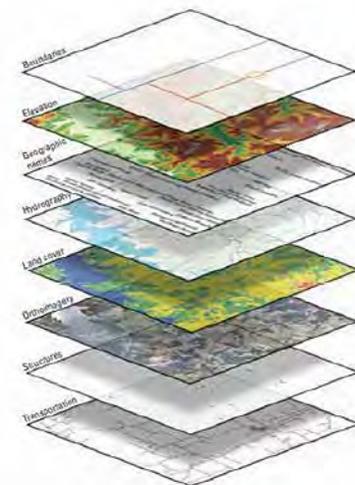
We’re proud that CEG’s indemnity claim (lost time) is less than half of the average cost of other North Dakota employers, according to ND Workforce. CEG is one of our earliest and most successful programs; a fine example of how we work for the good of all counties.

Human Resources Service

The HR Collaborative for Local Government continues to be an important element in NDACo’s HR effort. The statewide HR Conference was held in 2022 with nearly 200 participants in attendance. The Collaborative continues to work with local government partners, including NDACo and ILG, in providing HR training to its members. The online HR Reference Guide for Local Governments was updated in 2022; this resource is a great tool for government officials/department heads to understand many facets of human resources for government. You can find this resource, along with many others, at www.HRNDGOV.org. If you are new to local government or would like to stay connected on HR updates and guideline changes, please join the email group, which has over 400 subscribers. Go to the HR Collaborative website and click on JOIN NOW.

Geographic Information System (GIS) Program

In the spring of 2022, NDACo launched the new GIS Program in response to a need in many counties. The program is designed to support counties with access to a qualified GIS resource and empower counties to get the most from GIS data. As with other NDACo programs, the GIS Program is envisioned not to replace county employees or vendor relationships, but as a support for counties to increase their usage of GIS data and GIS technologies. NDACo has dedicated one staff person to the program, although other staff with the appropriate expertise are available if needed. Six counties have already taken advantage of this new program, and we are excited to see what lies ahead for it.



8 base layers of the National Map.

Juvenile Justice Services

To assist counties with at-risk youth, the Division of Juvenile Services (a division of the ND Dept. of Corrections) contracts with NDACo to employ our state’s Juvenile Justice Specialist. This position is federally mandated by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. NDACo staff work with state and



local officials on best practices and policies, administer federal funding and coordinate the activities of the Governor’s Juvenile Justice Advisory Group.

The Advisory Group provided funding to support a study of the state’s juvenile justice system, which was conducted by the Council of State Governments Justice Center (CSG). CSG’s findings and recommendations were incorporated into a bill draft (House Bill 1035) introduced during the 2021 Legislative Session. Passed with unanimous support, the bill will assist the state in aligning its various systems serving juveniles with policies and practices shown to improve outcomes for youth, helping them to become productive members of their communities.

In preparation for the implementation of House Bill 1035, three planning committees were created with the passage of another legislative bill (House Bill 1427). The planning committees will address:

1. Alternatives to juvenile detention
2. Youth, formerly known as status offenders and reclassified as Children in Need of Services, being referred to the Human Service Zones; and
3. Increasing community-based services.

NDACo also provides specific HR consulting services for ND counties and related political subdivisions. HR services include, but are not limited to, updating employee handbooks, specific training in areas such as recruitment and selection, FMLA, sexual and workplace harassment, etc. Assistance can also be provided for Fair Labor Standards interpretations, writing job descriptions and consultation on specific HR issues and strategy. A networking group has been developed for the County HR Directors and can be accessed as a resource for guidance and direction.

The **HR Collaborative** has a number of resources to use in assisting counties with their HR needs and questions, including the online HR Reference Guide and HR Checklist.

Member Services and Communications

While you might say everything we do at NDACo is a member service, there are certain activities that are designed solely to keep us in close touch with county officials – members – to be sure we are meeting their needs

County Tours

Our goal is to reach every county approximately every three years, which means four or five counties per tour, spread out over the year in four tours. Select NDACo staff, along with the NDACo and NDCCA presidents and other board members have visited Burke, Cavalier, Divide, Kidder, Logan, McIntosh, Mountrail, Pembina, Stutsman, Towner, Walsh, Williams, and Counties so far in 2022, with one more trip planned for late fall.

Onboarding

As referenced in the State of the Counties section, NDACo will be welcoming record numbers of county officials in 2023. Each will receive an introductory

letter and packet of information on resources and programs NDACo offers that can help them in their new jobs. This welcome will be followed up by one or more phone calls from staff and board members.

Events

Our Annual Conference was live again in 2021, after conducting it online in 2020. Our members were thrilled to be able to meet face to face again.

Social Media

We keep in touch with our members through the major social media outlets (below) and encourage counties to connect with us so we can also follow their accounts.

- **Website** – www.ndaco.org
- **Facebook** – facebook.com/ndcounties
- **Twitter** – @ndcounties
- **YouTube** – youtube.com/ndcounties

Institute of Local Government

The Institute of Local Government (ILG) soared through this past year hosting widespread training webinars. Subject matter is dominantly member driven and ILG strives to offer the best content from highly qualified experts. We continue to partner with local and state agencies to bring you optimum presenters, experience and knowledge. The online library of recorded webinars offers a variety of training opportunities and keeps expanding. In the last 12 months, ILG has sent out nearly 1,000 recordings.



In 2022, ILG will honor over 80 hour-level award recipients!

In addition to webinars, ILG continues to offer training with member conventions and on site by request. Also, with our valuable partnership with the HR Collaborative for Local Government, ILG continues to offer HR training relevant to counties. ILG trainings are listed on the NDACo website at www.ndaco.org/ilg.

Over the past 12 months, ILG has **reached** more than **6,000** county officials with more than **60 training sessions!** Webinars are the perfect professional development solution for all county officials.

NRG Technology Services

NRG was created by NDACo to support all North Dakota counties with their IT needs. NRG's owners are all North Dakota counties.

NRG works directly with the state's IT department, NDIT, on issues that affect all counties, meeting with them to discuss the latest issues every six weeks. NRG was asked to present at the Cyber Security Interim committee meeting on behalf of NDACo. Dwight discussed the Cyber Security features provided by the State and the ability of Counties to help fund those features



NRG's Account Manager has been attending the County Tours with NDACo staff to spread awareness of the purpose of NRG and listen to feedback from all the Counties.

NRG's President sits on the Criminal Justice Information Sharing Board and the State's Cybersecurity Collaboration Committee. As resources become available, NRG purchases government bonds to help support local governments with financing their projects.

All Human Service Zones should now be using Microsoft 365, provided through DHS and NDIT, for email. They also have access to Teams for increased collaboration. NRG will send a representative to the Human Service Zone Director meeting to complement standardization and implementation efforts.

The tagline Stress-Free IT means their customers let them worry about managing their ever-changing and complex IT infrastructures.

Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor

The Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor (TSRP) is a joint effort between NDACo and the ND Department of Transportation (NDDOT). NDDOT funds the position through federal government grants, while NDACo provides the facilities and the equipment for the TSRP program.

In 2021-2022, TSRP trainers Aaron Birst and Kristi Venhuizen were involved in providing over **120 hours of training** to more than **1,000 law enforcement officers and prosecutors**. As much of the training is by necessity hands on, this represents more training hours but fewer trainees reached, an unfortunate but expected outcome of the pandemic.

Vision Zero Outreach Program

NDACo continues to partner with the ND Department of Transportation in the Vision Zero Outreach Program.

The program now hosts four regional Outreach Coordinators who have been hard at work developing and maintaining partnerships, proving resources, and coordinating outreach activities to support communities to work toward zero motor vehicle crash fatalities and serious injuries. In the past fiscal year, the Outreach Coordinators have conducted nearly 60 Impact Teen Driver presentations across the state, educating nearly 2400 North Dakota teenagers on the dangers of distracted and reckless driving. The Coordinators have widespread partnerships in every corner of the state and continue to push the needle on the importance of traffic safety and safe driving.

The mission of Vision Zero relies on personal responsibility to obey traffic safety laws and is implemented through various strategies, including:

1. Widespread public education/outreach
2. Infrastructure/road safety improvements
3. High visibility enforcement of existing laws
4. Technology advancements
5. Working with the legislature to ensure state laws represent best practices in traffic safety

The strategy of Vision Zero is simple: **to eliminate motor vehicle crash fatalities and serious injuries on North Dakota roadways.**

Next Generation 9-1-1

The Next Generation 9-1-1 Program made some significant progress this past year including network upgrades at Dakota Carrier Network (DCN) to prepare for eventual delivery of video, images and data from 911 callers. It also kicked off a project with DCN to modernize the inbound networking from DCN's member telecommunications companies from analog to digital.

In March of this year, the three-year grant from the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration ended. The federal grant program was instrumental in progressing GIS data management and maintenance services for our counties, supporting the purchase of a new 911 call recorder for statewide use and modernizing other 911 network infrastructure.

Looking forward to the future, the program is eyeing full completion of 911 GIS data for the end of 2022. Accomplishing this milestone is an important next step towards an end-state NG9-1-1 system and complete an effort which began in 2014.

Financials

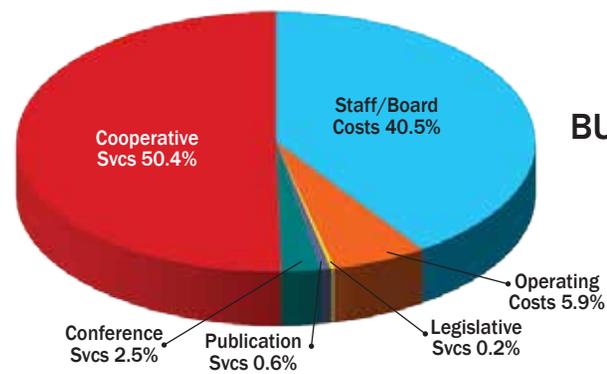
NDACo 2022 Budget

REVENUES

County Dues	9.7%	685,980
Bldg & Other Inc	3.8%	272,090
Publication Svcs	0.7%	49,600
Conference Svcs	3.2%	225,000
Cooperative Svcs	82.6%	5,854,550
		7,087,220

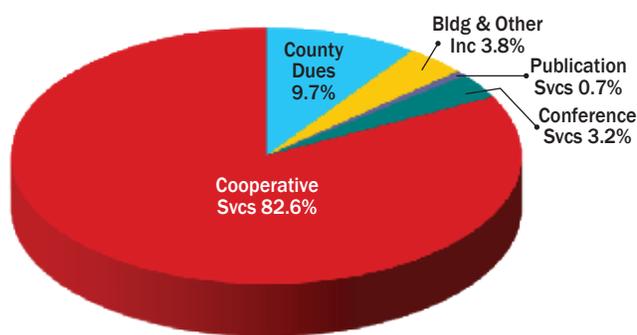
EXPENSES

Staff/Board Costs	40.5%	2,914,290
Operating Costs	5.9%	423,805
Legislative Svcs	0.2%	16,300
Publication Svcs	0.6%	44,900
Conference Svcs	2.5%	170,000
Cooperative Svcs	50.4%	3,621,250
		7,190,545



NDACo 2022
BUDGETED EXPENSE

NDACo 2022
BUDGETED REVENUE



Legislative Services

Legislators held a special session in the end of 2021, which focused on redistricting and appropriating the state's share of \$1.2 billion in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The greatest success for counties in the special session was the allocation of **\$100 million in infrastructure funding** for roads and bridges, with townships receiving an additional \$17 million. We also owe a debt of gratitude to the National Association of Counties, not only for working so hard to encourage passage of ARPA, but also helping counties deal with the money with confidence we're handling it correctly.



During discussions on the redistricting plan, NDACo encouraged lawmakers to keep counties as whole as possible when looking at district boundaries.

While 2022 is an off-legislative year, NDACo's legislative team has provided information to various interim committees that have been assigned studies to determine if legislation is desired to address particular issues for the 2023 Legislative Session.

The issue with the greatest impact to counties lies in the interim Retirement Committee where lawmakers are tasked with developing a plan to **restructure the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS)**. They have concentrated their efforts on how to close the defined benefit plan and move to a defined contribution plan for new employees. Lawmakers are exploring options due to the unfunded liability of \$1.5 billion for the main system. NDACo has provided input on this matter in relation to the impacts this decision will have on political subdivisions, and the team continues to follow the discussion closely.

In addition, NDACo conducted an extensive study on recruitment and retention of local law enforcement and provided the findings to the Government Finance Committee for their study. NDACo provided a number of potential options to help support the law enforcement workforce.

NDACo is also watching closely the progression of **"Prairie Dog" infrastructure funds**. The fund, approved by lawmakers in 2019, is expected to fill for the first time this biennium. Once full, \$250 million will go to counties, cities and airports in non-oil producing areas.

For issues and preparations related to the 2023 Legislative Session, check out ndcounties.blogspot.com. We encourage you to sign up as a subscriber to receive email alerts.



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Wells County Recorder

Steve Lee
1st Vice President
McLean County Commissioner

Jayme Tenneson
2nd Vice President
Nelson/Griggs County State's Attorney

Trudy Ruland
3rd Vice President
Mountrail County Commissioner

Stanley Dick
Past President
Cavalier County Commissioner

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Region 1
Williams County Commissioner

Nick Moser
Region 3
Cavalier County Commissioner

Steve Forde
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Nelson County Commissioner

Mary Scherling
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Region 6
Foster County Commissioner

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Directors Association
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Director

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ND Sheriffs & Deputies
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Mountrail County Tax Director

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