

October 16, 2026



# The Ninety-Three

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## **Governor Pillen Signs Executive Order on Study of Emergency Radio Systems**

This week, Governor Pillen [signed an executive order](#) creating a task force to study emergency radio systems statewide. The development of this task force is due in large part to the local leaders who raised concerns about gaps in communication during the Morrill and Cottonwood fires this spring.

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## **Planning Today for Tomorrow's Needs: Technology with Purpose and Guardrails**

Technology continues to create opportunities for counties to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and better serve residents. From artificial intelligence (AI) and cybersecurity tools to online services that improve public access, technology investments can help counties streamline operations and make the most of limited resources.

As counties explore these opportunities, it is equally important to establish appropriate guardrails. Clear expectations around data security, responsible AI use, accessibility, costs, and vendor accountability can help ensure technology supports county operations while protecting public resources and maintaining public trust.

Check out our newest blog post from NACO Deputy Director Candace Meredith about the practical steps counties can take to maximize technology investments.

**NACO Blog**

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# Counties - Foundation of the Nation - Register for the NACO Annual Conference!



We're excited to announce the theme of this year's [NACO Annual Conference](#): *Counties – Foundation of the Nation*. The theme reflects our celebration of America's 250th and highlights the integral part that counties play in laying the foundation for thriving communities across the nation.

Registration closes November 20th, so please be sure to [sign up](#) as soon as you can!

[Register Here!](#)

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## Negotiated an energy or data center agreement? NACo wants to hear from you

Counties are on the front lines of a changing U.S. energy sector. To help counties navigate today's energy landscape, NACo is launching a new initiative to build tools, training, and educational resources to help counties apply community-informed development practices and secure real benefits for residents from energy and data center projects.

NACo is hosting a series of **virtual listening sessions** with county leaders who have negotiated agreements with energy project or data center developers. These small-group, one-hour conversations are a chance to share your story and what you face at the negotiating table. These discussions will directly inform the resources and trainings NACo develops for counties across the country. Separate sessions will focus on energy generation/infrastructure projects and on data centers.

### [SIGN UP TO TAKE PART IN A LISTENING SESSION](#)

Once you have completed the sign-up form, NACo staff will reach out in the coming days to confirm a particular listening session based on the availability you indicate in the form.

### **Available sessions (all times listed in Eastern Daylight Time):**

Thursday, Oct. 22, 2pm to 3pm ET

Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2pm to 3pm ET

Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2pm to 3pm ET

Thursday, Nov. 5, 2pm to 3pm ET

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## Nominations for Annual County Official Awards Close TODAY!

Time is running out to submit your nominations for the annual county official awards, which we'll announce at the [2026 NACO Annual Conference](#) in Kearney. These awards are an excellent opportunity to celebrate the hard work and dedication of Nebraska's county officials.

Click the link below to view and fill out a nomination form:

[County Official of the Year](#)

[Next Generation Award](#)

[Lifetime Achievement](#)

As a reminder, nominations must be submitted to [Candace.Meredith@NebraskaCounties.org](mailto:Candace.Meredith@NebraskaCounties.org) by the end of the day.

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## Updated LB663 Land Use Toolkit Now Available on NACO Website

NACO has updated the 2026 Land Use Permit Toolkit with additional content. The new section, "County Zoning Maps: Modernization and Accessibility," explains what a county zoning map is, summarizes pertinent statutes, details the conversion of paper zoning maps to GIS-based zoning maps, and discusses shared GIS services in general. NACO expects to further amend the Land Use Permit Toolkit with up-to-date content as we meet with county officials at district meetings and continue working with the Land Use Committee.

The most current Land Use Permit Toolkit can be found [here](#).

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## Interim Study Special Hearing Schedule

The Legislature's standing committees have begun scheduling public hearings on issues designated for study over the interim. The legislative resolutions are introduced by senators during the regular session. Ideas generated from the

studies are often introduced as legislation in the following session. A full list of the resolutions can be found [here](#), and hearings are [here](#).

Here are some of the hearings of interest to counties. Note that other studies may be heard at the same hearing. Hearings held at the State Capitol are generally livestreamed on [Nebraska Public Media](#).

### **November 5, 2026, 9:30 a.m.**

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, Room 1507

[LR384](#) ( Sanders) Interim study to review the Licensing of Truth and Deception Examiners Act and any rules and regulations for truth and deception examiners in furtherance of the purposes of the Occupational Board Reform Act

[LR385](#) (Sanders) Interim study to examine any issues within the jurisdiction of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee of the Legislature that may arise in the interim

### **November 6, 2026, 10:00 a.m.**

Urban Affairs Committee, Room 1510

[LR415](#) (Conrad) Interim study to examine current practices under Nebraska law related to the designation of real property as blighted and substandard

[LR407](#) (McKinney) Interim study to examine revitalization of urban areas and how cities and villages may utilize the role of culture as a driver of economic development, workforce attraction, tourism, and community revitalization in Nebraska

[LR419](#) ( Urban Affairs Committee) Interim study to examine volunteer burnout on municipal boards and commissions and identify specific municipal boards or commissions that could effectively function with a reduced number of members

[LR467](#) (McKinney) Interim study to examine strategies, policies, and investments that cities, villages, and the State of Nebraska may use to make the state more attractive to young people

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## **Mark Your Calendars! NACO's 2027 Event Dates Now Available**

Get a jump on your 2027 schedule! All of NACO's 2027 events are now posted on the event calendar on our website. Click the button below to view the calendar.

**2027 NACO Events**

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# **Savi & NACO Quarter 3 Update, Impact, and October Policy Briefing**

## The rules just changed. Here's what you need to know.

The **One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA)** reshaped federal student loans, ending SAVE, PAYE, and ICR, capping borrowing, and replacing income-driven repayment for new borrowers. At the same time, **federal collections restarted in May 2025** after a five-year pause. If you have federal student loans, doing nothing is the most expensive option.

### HAPPENING RIGHT NOW

#### Collections are back on.

##### 5M+ borrowers

in default when collections restarted May 5, 2025

##### 15%

Of disposable pay can be garnished with just a 30-day notice

##### +25%

Collection fees added to your balance on default.

##### 50-150 points

FICO point drops reported on newly delinquent accounts

### DEADLINES THAT WILL RESHAPE YOUR PAYMENT

#### ONGOING • ON YOUR OWN CLOCK

#### MOST URGENT

##### SAVE forbearance deadlines

- Servicers began issuing 90-day notices starting July 1, 2026. Each borrower's deadline is personal to their own notice date, and the first wave of deadlines passed in late September.
- Many borrowers are reporting their window running 14–30 days longer than originally scheduled. There's no single date to rely on secondhand: check your own notice.
- Time in forbearance does not count toward PSLF or IDR forgiveness.
- Borrowers must select a new plan (RAP or Tiered Standard) within their own window or be auto-enrolled.

#### EXTENDED TO DEC 31, 2026

##### Auto-pay interest discount

- The Department of Education extended the 1% auto-pay interest rate reduction deadline from September 30 to December 31, 2026.
- Borrowers who enroll in auto-pay by the new deadline (or are already enrolled) keep the reduced rate through June 30, 2028.
- This replaced the old 0.25% discount on July 1, 2026 for eligible borrowers.

Looking further ahead: PAYE and ICR are set to end July 1, 2028. Not an action item today, but worth knowing if you're currently on either plan.

### IF YOU WORK IN PUBLIC SERVICE

#### Your PSLF clock may not be ticking

120 qualifying payments still earns full forgiveness. But the wrong plan, or time stuck in SAVE forbearance, can erase years of progress.

**RAP payments qualify for PSLF.** Tiered Standard payments do not. IBR still works. Pick wrong and you restart the clock.

**PSLF Buyback** can reclaim SAVE-forbearance months, but requires 120 months of certified qualifying employment and the backlog is growing.

#### You have a free benefit built for exactly this.

GET STARTED

Savi is an employer-provided student loan benefit. We model every plan against your actual loans and income, file the paperwork, and tell you exactly what to do before each deadline. Most members find five-figure savings in minutes.

**bysavi.com**

Check with your employer or association for access

Sources: U.S. Dept. of Education studentaid.gov OBBBA updates; Federal Register 2026-08556 (RISE final rule, May 2026); NASFAA OBBBA analysis (July 2025); Forbes, "Education Department Extends Student Loan Interest Rate Reduction Deadline To End Of 2026," 9/29/2026; Forbes, "SAVE Borrowers Are Reporting Deadline Extensions Up To 30 Days," 9/29/2026; 20 USC 1095a (admin wage garnishment); Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 (Social Security offset). Collections figures reflect ED statements at the May 2025 restart. Informational only; not legal or financial advice. Last updated October 2026.

Support provided by our generous business members helps NACO expand our educational programming for Nebraska county officials. Business members enjoy a number of benefits, including features on our website and social media pages. We also offer our business members discounts on sponsorships and 15% off the cost of booking our NACO West Training Center in Ogallala.

2027 NACO Business Memberships are now open on our website! [Click here](#) to learn more.

**NACO Business Memberships**

# 20 BUSINESS 26 MEMBERS



## ELITE MEMBERS



## PREMIUM MEMBERS



## RESOURCES

**Legislative Newsletter**

**County Employment Opportunities**

**August 2026-August 2027 Legal Calendar**

**2026 Election Calendar**

**Property Assessment and Taxation Calendar**



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